

ECESA Plus Meeting of Principals
Salle XVII, Palais des Nations
4 July 2013
3-5 p.m.

Conclusions and decisions

- **Principals were of the view that ECESA Plus could serve as an effective mechanism for supporting the High Level Political Forum (HLPF). Members of ECESA Plus individually, and as a system as a whole should organize themselves better to provide the support necessary to the HLPF.**
- **Principals were informed that the Rio+20 implementation matrix on sustainable development shared by the Secretary-General last year needs to be updated. They were encouraged to launch new initiatives on the follow-up to Rio+20. DESA will seek updates from all ECESA Plus members on such new initiatives to keep Member States informed about the progress made so far.**
- **Principals were informed that the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will have a session on ‘Science-Policy Interface’ on the 16th of December 2013, at Columbia University. On the 17th of December, 2013, the UN Statistics Division is organizing a meeting on the measurement of progress and indicators.**
- **Principals shared the view that Regional Commissions (RCs) should be given a prominent role in the follow-up to Rio+20, especially on the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. ECESA plus entities should also strength cooperation on statistics, especially with the RCs.**
- **In this regard, USG DESA decided to share the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation on Statistical Activities with all ECESA Plus Principals.**
- **Principals were informed that the co-chairs of the OWG will produce an interim report for the Special Event of the President of the GA to be held on the 25th of September 2013. The Report will be available in mid-August**

Summary of discussions

The Convener, Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under Secretary-General, DESA welcomed Principals to the meeting and briefed them on Agenda Items I, II and III.

Agenda Item Ia. High Level Political Forum (HLPF):

The Convener informed the group that Ambassadors of Brazil and Italy have brought the negotiations on the forum to a successful conclusion. The GA will adopt the resolution on 9 July. **The main elements of the agreement are the following:** The forum will be a process (rather than an institution) consisting of two sets of meetings: First, meetings of Heads of State/Government every four

years under the auspices of the General Assembly; and Second, meetings to be convened annually under the auspices of the ECOSOC for a period of eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment to be held in the framework of the substantive session of the Council building upon and subsequently replacing the Annual Ministerial Review as of 2016. He added that the resolution calls for the forum to be supported by “DESA in close cooperation with all relevant entities of the UN system, including funds and programmes, multilateral financial and trade institutions, the Rio Conventions and other relevant treaty bodies and international organizations”. ECESA Plus is therefore, a good mechanism for supporting the forum.

Agenda Item Ib. Mainstreaming sustainable development in the work of the UN system:

The Convener mentioned that the Report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in the work of the UN system (mandated at the Rio+20 Conference) was prepared in close cooperation with ECESA Plus and would be introduced to ECOSOC on 18 July. The report proposes that the UN system develop a roadmap or framework to drive the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development so that it permeates all aspects of our activities. The reporting is expected to continue, pending a General Assembly decision on its periodicity. It would be important to work closely with other inter-agency bodies to push this integration further. Finally, he stressed the Rio+20 implementation matrix shared with the UN system by the SG last August needs to be updated and encouraged all to launch new initiatives on the follow-up to Rio+20. DESA will seek updates from all ECESA Plus members on such new initiatives and progress to keep updating Member States.

Agenda Item Ic. Work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

The Convener stated that Member States agreed that the UN system should be working towards a single, coherent, and ambitious UN development agenda post-2015, with a single set of goals, and with sustainable development at its core. It should engage actors in developed and developing countries alike. The work of the Open Working Group is progressing well. The group just held its fourth session and will convene again in November. Meanwhile, the Co-chairs will produce an interim report for the Special Event of the President of the GA to be held in September. Member States have many suggestions about priority areas for the SDGs but all agree that poverty eradication must remain the overriding priority. It would be important to ensure close coherence between the work of the Open Working Group and all other relevant processes to define the post-2015 development agenda. He informed participants that the OWG will have a meeting on 16 December at Colombia University on Science-Policy Interface. On 17 December the Statistics division is organizing a meeting on the measurement of progress and indicators.

Agenda Item II: Special Event of the Assembly at its sixty-eighth session to follow-up on efforts made towards achieving the MDGs:

The Convener stated that preparations for the Special Event are well underway and expectations for the event are high. The co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of the Republic of South Africa and of Ireland, are engaged in consultations on the scope, modalities, and nature and outcome of the Event.

There were calls for an outcome which is concise, clearly written and gives a sense of political renewal and rededication to the MDGs. There was also support for the Event to elaborate a roadmap to 2015. On the format, there was broad support for a short opening plenary, followed by 2 parallel roundtables in the morning and afternoon and a short closing plenary. But, a final decision has yet to be taken on the format of the event, including the participation of UN principals in the four roundtables. Based on the consultations with Member States, the co-facilitators have put together elements of the

outcome document, which was circulated to all participants. The three-page outcome document consists of five sections (1) introduction, (2) Focus on individual goals, (3) Partnership, (4) Post-2015, (5) Roadmap. There was overall support for the roadmap section which proposes the convergence of various UN processes under a single and comprehensive UN post-2015 development agenda and the call to launch an intergovernmental process once related ongoing processes have come to closure. The co-facilitators will prepare a revised text during the first weeks of July.

Agenda Item III: Third International Conference on SIDS, Apia, Samoa, 2014:

The Convener mentioned that the Secretary-General has designated him to be the Secretary-General of the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, which was mandated by the outcome of Rio +20. The General Assembly resolution adopted last fall had outlined the basic objectives of the conference which have set the tone and shape of the national, regional, and inter-regional preparations. More specific themes and priority areas will arise from the SIDS-owned on-going preparatory processes. As host country, Samoa has expressed a desire to bring partnership into sharp focus as an additional key outcome of the 2014 Conference. The Convener encouraged ECESA Plus to provide full support on this matter in areas of particular importance to SIDS.

The Convener then opened the floor for discussions on Agenda Items I, II and III.

OHRLLS on mainstreaming sustainable development into the UN system, stated that while capacity building is a key priority of LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, they lack the resources to scale up best practices. Moreover, significant progress has been made in terms of preparing UNDAFs and linking them up with national development strategies especially on incorporating the social and environmental dimensions. However, on issues pertinent to the economic dimension, such as economic growth, improving productive capacities etc., perhaps the UN system could provide more support. OHRLLS also welcomed the focus on the countries lagging most behind in co-facilitators' draft resolution on the Special Event of the UN General Assembly.

On the SIDS conference, OHRLLS noted that expectations were high. Climate change is increasingly defining the SIDS' development agenda and this would likely have an important impact on the post 2015 development agenda.

ESCAP (also in its role as coordinator of Regional Commissions) mentioned that the regional dimension is often overlooked. However, their role has been well recognized by Member States and they have done so in the resolution on the High Level. Regional Commissions (RCs) will be the regional forum for the preparatory process towards the HLPF, especially for the annual meetings to be held within the auspices of ECOSOC. ESCAP stressed that the RCs were multi-sectoral and have always worked in a very integrated manner. Inequality should become a key driver of economic policy and issues related to income security, social protection, among others should be at the forefront of any development agenda. The Regional commissions have done a lot on these issues and their experiences could be shared with others

On issues related to statistics and data collection, ESCAP requested that the information on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation on statistics be shared. On preparations towards the SIDS conference, ESCAP stressed the need for a more participatory and collaborative approach among the UN system entities.

IOM (also as current Chair of the GMG) mentioned that IOM will be actively promoting the inclusion of migration in the post-2015 agenda. Large scale migration is a mega trend of the 21 century

likely to remain so as a mega trend. IOM stressed that migration is likely to be one of the key drivers of development if provided governments are mindful of human rights and the well-being of migrants. Migration is inevitable, necessary and highly desirable when managed correctly. IOM sees migration as a critical part of a renewed global partnership. IOM reminded participants that remittances are almost half a billion a year and exceed ODA by a large margin and yet, since migration was a cross-cutting issue, many feared that it would be neglected again (as was done in 2000 when the world adopted the Millennium Declaration).

On the SIDS Conference, IOM stressed that in addition to a mitigation strategy, an adaptation strategy of orderly and planned migration could move people out of harm's way. Therefore IOM proposes adaptation strategies as an integral component of the preparation for the SIDS conference.

The Convener noted that the upcoming High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development in the GA was encouraging. However, providing solid inputs on migration to the post-2015 development agenda would be a challenge especially so, since it is a cross-cutting issue. He informed ECESA Plus of an initiative by Italy to reduce the transaction costs of remittances. Italy would like to expand this initiative to the European Union.

ITU stressed that the expansion in access and ready availability of ICTs have redefined the objective and how development objectives may be achieved. ITU urged that ICT for development be included in the work of the OWG and be mainstreamed in the UN system. ITU mentioned that it had launched a report along with CISCO during the High Level Segment of ECOSOC that makes a strong case for the role of broadband in advancing development. It called for including broadband in post-2015 where they should be given greater prominence as catalyst for economic and social development. ITU is also providing capacity building to SIDS

The High Level Task Force on Food Security and Nutrition (HLTF) inquired about the reaction of the UN General Assembly's OWG to the Report of the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda and how the five point transformation had resonated with the Group. The HLTF noted that the Report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming sustainable development in the work of the UN system stopped short of taking note of some of the systemic challenge facing the UN system and addressing said challenges. HLTF agreed with ESCAP that the regional commissions can be the crucible of integration.

The Convener informed that the Report of the Secretary-General's HLP was welcomed by Member States and the general reaction of the OWG was also positive. However, since the HLP's report was not driven by an inter-governmental process, Member States will not provide a collective response. The Special Event of the General Assembly to be held on the 25th of September will provide an opportunity for Member States to realize that they have two years to go to achieve the MDGs. As the international community has begun to devote its attention to the post-2015 agenda, accelerating progress towards the MDGs will be the main focus of the Special Event. It will also provide an opportunity to clarify relationships between the different streams of work undertaken by the UN system.

The Convener agreed that the role and functions of RCs were important, especially in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development and the ECESA platform could be used to bring this role to prominence and to ensure sharing of ideas and best practices. He recommended that the UN system assign a more prominent role to the regional commissions. On issues pertaining to statistics, he mentioned that many principals are keenly aware about the importance of data but also about the limitation of existing data. UNDESA's statistical division had been asked to beef up information and the Convener promised to share the MoU mentioned by ESCAP to all Principals.

FAO mentioned that while the UN system is expected to provide support for indicators for a post-2015 agenda- this agenda is still being defined. Yet, the UN system must begin its work now to consider indicators rather than wait for the post-2015 development agenda to be defined. However, to maintain its credibility the system must revisit and address mistakes made in the past, especially indicators. On the SDGs, FAO stressed that the Rio+20 had provided a strong mandate and the sustainable development agenda could be the basis for a different transformative vision for the world as a whole.

OHCHR stated that sustainable development cannot be reduced to social economic development. Human rights provisions permeate the outcome of Rio+20 yet, the international community continues to lag behind on issues pertaining to human rights. As we try to move towards an integrated approach the UN system needs to be quite explicit on human rights. Indeed, the UN system has embraced this in a historic way. The UNTT, national consultations, as well as the thematic consultations had all discussed human rights. The Reports of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on Post 2015 and the SDSN also mention discuss human rights, as have the OWG on SDGs. OHCHR proposed that human rights be a fourth dimension of the SDGs.

The Convener cautioned that while issues on human rights are being discussed among Member States, there are a lot of inputs for suggested goals. Member States have given themselves the mandate of defining goals that are limited in number, easy to communicate, measurable, universal and yet, adaptable to unique national circumstances. Therefore, the cluster of goals is likely to be kept at a minimum of 10. Within these clusters many elements are likely to be squeezed in.

However, he reminded participants that the concept of human rights is rather broad, and many of the goals are likely to address various aspects of human rights, such as the right to food, right to education, etc. However, if the concept is narrowed down to simply political rights, then human rights are unlikely to be included. They will probably be considered under issues on rule of law, good governance, among others. In fact, some Member States were keen to have 'good governance' as the fourth dimension of sustainable development.

UN-HABITAT emphasized issues related to urban poverty. Urbanization is taking place developing countries and is likely to continue in the next decade or more. Developed countries are in fact slowly de-urbanizing. Looking back at the phenomenon of urbanization 50 years ago, urbanization was concentrated in developed countries where per capita income at the time was around \$2000. Today, developing countries, mostly with per capita incomes at less than \$1,000, do not have the resources or infrastructure to support rapid urbanization. As a result, one-third of urban population lives in slums. In sub-Saharan Africa, 65 per cent of the urban population lives in slums.

On issues on measurement, UN-HABITAT informed that though the MDG target has been met, urbanization continues to outpace improvements in slum conditions—the absolute number of people living in slums has increased.

The Convener informed that the OWG on SDGs will have discussions on sustainable cities and human settlements in January next year. Many Member States were keen to have urbanization as a goal.

UNFCCC pointed out that 2015 provides us with a unique opportunity given to mankind. Member States had put the same deadline for climate change as well as a post-2015 development agenda. We have to embrace this challenge and bring about change within a very short frame. In this regard the Summit on Climate Change to be held in September 2014 is a timely one.

The Convener underscored out that the September 2014 Summit on Climate Change is *the* platform for Member States to renew their political will and commitment to achieve the legally binding treaties. The summit was not meant as a platform for negotiations by Member States. There are other existing fora for such deliberations particularly, the UNFCCC negotiations. The summit on the other hand would address climate change in all its dimensions.

UNCCD stressed the importance of ecosystem restoration and said that this should be an important part of the post-2015 development agenda. He noted that even in countries where progress had been made on the MDGs, there was a lack of progress in stemming land degradation. UNCCD reminded participants that issues related to poverty, child mortality, women's literacy among others are all correlated with ecosystem degradation.

ESCWA noted with comfort comments on human rights. In all its regional meetings, issues pertinent to the freedom of people from foreign occupation, freedom of expression and right to self-determination is raised. West Asia is the only region that faces foreign occupation and the enjoyment of human rights remains a top priority. ESCWA stated that the right to self-determination should be included in the post-2015 development agenda.

On the issue of advice on growth as raised by OHRLLS, **IMF** mentioned that it has been increasingly providing advice on growth strategies. In addition, IMF provides technical assistance to LDCs and SIDS focusing on important elements that help growth. This includes strategies on management of natural resources and revenue generation from such resources. In February this year, the IMF had produced a paper that suggested how these countries can reinvigorate growth.

UNDP welcomed the resolution on the HLPF and recommended that ECESA Plus should think how best to organize itself, individually as well as collectively as a UN system to best serve the HLPF. UNDP also expressed interest in the Sustainable Development Outlook Report. UNDP also mentioned that there was lot of momentum generated within the CEB on accelerating progress towards the MDGs. Members expressed their support to the MDGs Acceleration Framework (MAF) and a lot of exciting work had been done on it. On the implementation of the QCPR resolution, UNDP pointed out that a lot of work had to be done regionally and nationally and the UN system needs to take note of the roles and responsibilities of the RCs and UNDG.

WFP stated that Member States were very interested in the strengthening of ECOSOC. Strengthening of ECOSOC might also infringe on the role of the funds and programmes. Funds and programmes should remain accountable onto their stakeholders

UNEP mentioned that it had been working on an integrated approach to development goals and that the UN system should focus on how best it could help Member States develop goals similarly.

DSD informed Principals that the HLP Report was presented to the OWG by its lead author Dr. Homi Kharas. The challenge was how best to introduce its messages in the political process.

On the concern raised by the HLTF on Food Security and Nutrition on the SG's report on mainstreaming, DSD noted that mainstreaming of the three dimensions was a continuous process, to be carried out in the UN's different streams of work, namely, substantive, operational and its management practices. On issues related to land degradation, food security among others, as raised by UNCCD, DSD pointed out that there was a strong push for a goal on this cluster. DSD also informed participants of the issues that would be taken up by the OWG in its forthcoming meetings. On the Sustainable Development Report mentioned by UNDP, DSD said that it would be available in mid-August.

DSD stressed that 4 fault lines were emerging in the work of the OWG:

1. Money/financing sustainable development
2. Reflection of the principle common but differentiated responsibilities. Many ideas existed on this matter.
3. On the universality of goals and what it really means as there were several interpretations of this concept.
4. A serious concern that this would all collapse under the sheer weight of its complexity.

Agenda Item 4 a. Enhancing collaboration among the members of ECESA and other key entities within the UN system:

The Convener noted that ECESA Plus has worked together well on issues of concern to the world at large and hoped that this would continue. He added that there are many avenues of such collaboration and requested ECESA Plus colleagues to send suggestions how to strengthen collaboration in this forum. He also requested inputs on possible agenda items for future ECESA Plus Meetings of Principals and DESA would be in touch with ECESA Plus Members on possible future meetings of ECESA Plus Principals.

Agenda Item 4 b. World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and other updates on DRR, including outcomes of the 4th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction:

UNISDR informed participants that the Conference would be hosted in Japan in March to adopt the new global instrument for DRR. The modalities of the conference will be adopted later in the year. Previously, Japan successfully hosted the last two such world conferences. The world's first comprehensive framework for disaster risk reduction resulted from the last world conference held in Kobe in January 2005 where there was unanimous support for the "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA)." The post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction is expected to offer the opportunity to scale-up disaster risk reduction efforts across the globe. There appears to be an emerging consensus from on-going consultations that it should build on the strengths of the HFA and focus on those elements that are still in need of further action leading to HFA2.

The 4th session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk reduction held its meeting in May 2013. It focused on root causes of disasters and the potential role of the private sector. Six regional platforms will be hosted they will be instrumental in the development of HFA2. **UNISDR** added that the global platform was a well-attended meeting on SIDS and DRR. The SIDS have developed key DRR models which the UN system can learn from and support. CEB endorsed the plan on DRR in April 2013.

Assistant Secretary-General, UNDESA thanked the UNTT for the production of the Secretary-General's Report on post-2015 report. Principals were informed that the UNTT Working Group on financing is now addressing issues related to financing for sustainable development and FfD has the coordinating role on this matter. Eventually, once the Committee of Experts on Financing was established, this group could perform a role similar to that of the TST for the OWG. On the issue of statistical indicators, it was mentioned that the final report of the working group (of the UNTT) on monitoring and indicators that assesses options for statistics and indicators in a post-2015 setting, was ready and it provides an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the MDG indicators and outlines data innovations in new critical areas such as inequalities, governance, sustainability and population.

The meeting was then adjourned.
