

## **Outcome Document of the Inaugural Agora**

### **“Transforming The World Through Sustainable Energy for All: Leaving No One Behind”**

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#### **Background Concept of The Agora**

In today’s challenging time, all regions need to step up support for research, innovation and deployment in order to ensure, in a globally competitive environment, the sustainable development of science and technology necessary for the upturn and growth of economy at all levels.

The impact of human activity on the biosphere is currently being referred to as the Anthropocene Era, indicating that scientists now recognize humanity's collective role as one species in altering biological systems. Nonetheless, the 2030 Agenda, as a political manifesto, and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, has recognized that the all-important Goal 17 on Partnerships brings humanity into a relationship with the earth that has not been witnessed before. This partnership between humanity and the earth goes a step beyond the Anthropocene Era and into another stage, the Ecozoic Era.

This new Era will require contributions from all countries and all actors, public and private, and a partnership with the planet. Progress will need to be made in four key areas: development of fragile States and States emerging from conflict; inclusive and sustainable growth in middle-income countries and least developed countries; domestic policies in developed countries that affect poverty reduction, and sustainable production and consumption patterns. Many of these areas imply a strong role for the private sector, through job creation, technology development and investment; however, partnerships with the private sector come with some caveats that need to be addressed.

The Agora explores the role of the private sector in delivering the 2030 sustainable development agenda, focusing on what business can do (and what it cannot do) and the role governments need to play to avoid risks and maximize potential.

Expectations are high for a breakthrough in multi-stakeholder partnerships as a key means of implementing the 2030 development agenda. But what exactly does partnership mean? Where does the private sector – in particular – fit in, and what are its roles in relation to governments? Above all, what would a breakthrough on the partnership agenda actually look like?

The Agora explores these questions. It stresses that partnerships with the private sector do have considerable potential – in fact, most of the heavy lifting on the 2030 agenda will need to be done by the private sector. Yet governments still have the crucial role of setting the policy framework within which the private sector operates.

The idea of partnership has been around for a long time in sustainable development circles. Agenda 21, a key outcome of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, placed great emphasis on the formation of community partnerships that could bring together different kinds of actors in driving change on the ground (UN, 1992). Over 6,000 local Agenda 21s were developed in the post-1992 Rio period, along with the 46 "citizen covenants" that were presented at the 1992 Rio Summit.

Ten years later, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg again stressed the limits to what governments could achieve without bringing along civil society, local governments, academia, faith communities and the nine Major Groups identified in Agenda 21.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) stepped out of the 9 Major Groups category and included new subsets of civil society actors such as Think Tanks. Most importantly for The Agora, a set of “business interlocutors” also was created to act as a type of steering committee to engage informally with the Bureau of the WSIS.

During the hearings held by the Open Working Group that eventually prepared the set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, “other stakeholders / non-State actors” such as the Commons Cluster, and numerous other actors were brought on board. Among these “other actors”, it is the role of the private where arguably the greatest potential lies.

As we collectively move forward, the private sector will need to play a pivotal role in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals.

At Rio + 20 in 2012, the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization stated that at least 1 million new seafarers would be needed through 2032. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that around 670 million jobs need to be created over the next 15 years to keep up with the growth of the global labor force (ILO, 2014). The International Energy Agency suggests that meeting future energy needs (and doing it sustainably) will cost USD 48 trillion between now and 2035. It is the private sector that will need to be the most active.

There are, nonetheless, questions about this new partnership agenda. Many developing country governments fear – with some justification – that the enthusiasm of some developed country governments for partnerships is a smokescreen to cover their under-achievement on official development assistance (ODA) spending targets. A focus on the potential of voluntary partnerships to drive progress could also obscure governments' role in setting the policy framework within which the private sector operates.

The major question raised here is: what are the key elements of a strategy to maximize the potential contribution of the private sector while minimizing the risks – and how should policy makers think about the role of the private sector in implementing the 2030 sustainable development agenda?

To ensure deeper and lasting economic and human progress, prosperity and planetary protection, it is necessary to call for a rethink and redesign of development policy frameworks. And for the UN to re-examine the UN Development Assistance Framework. The work of the Independent Team of Advisors (ITA), Co-chaired by Klaus Toepfer and Juan Somavia, have basically concluded their work, with a few more meetings with Member States scheduled on 22-23 June and 1 July. It is useful to look at two reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in this regard, JIU/REP/2009/9, The role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General and Resident Coordinators, and JIU/REP/2011/2, Transparency in the selection and appointment of senior managers in the UN secretariat.

Instead of relying on a silo approach to development, global development now stresses a holistic and integrated approach to economic, social and environmental concerns, within a cultural context. There is growing evidence of strong inter-dependence and inter-linkages between these three core pillars, and a coordinated response on these pillars would be self-reinforcing. Transmission channels and mechanisms between the three pillars are manifold. For instance: economic growth fostered by inclusive policies has positive spillover effects across economies which, in turn, leverage social progress.

Global, regional and national partnerships in finance and trade, as well as in science, technology and innovation, will be critical to execute and implement this complex but attainable development path. Progress on sustainable development will be contingent on:

- 1) Robust and high quality inclusive growth accompanied by job generation, with benefits shared widely across society;
- 2) Effective domestic and global governance mechanisms that support corporate and environmental sustainability, including, but not limited to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and climate action;
- 3) The ability of governments to better leverage the strengths and resources of the private sector for sustainable development; and
- 4) Augmenting multilateral frameworks to harness finance, trade, and science and technology.

The need to switch to more sustainable development paths is becoming more urgent with every passing day. The impacts of climate change have only heightened this urgency.

The private sector, as the primary driver of economic growth and dynamism, has great potential to promote sustainability in a number of ways:

**First**, the private sector's economic dynamism has potential to facilitate sustainable development. To provide an impetus to private investment, governments need to improve the enabling domestic policy environment and the overall efficiency and productivity of public investment;

**Second**, sustainable development is best served if the private sector positions itself to foster inclusive growth. There is no doubt that the private sector has the potential to lift people out of poverty and income deprivation. Evidence confirms that about 90 per cent of jobs in developing countries are created by the private sector, but only about one-fourth of the working-age population in developing countries is engaged in productive and decent employment;

**Third**, the private sector's potential to contribute to domestic revenues can help finance essential public goods and services, helping Governments to provide more and better public services, and creating a virtuous circle;

**Fourth**, private investment in inclusive business models and impact industries has the potential to create jobs, add value (such as through the application of innovative technologies, processes and skills), and extend a broader range of social and economic services to marginalized communities.

The private sector needs to adopt a longer time horizon in its investment decisions, through more effective investments in its production patterns, value addition and marketing / supply chains. The United Nations Environment Programme's Paris office is in charge of the issue of Sustainable Production and Consumption patterns, an initiative that has been in the forefront of civil society for over 20 years.

Several processes are underway to engage and raise awareness regarding the need for alignment of corporate strategies and processes with the global development agenda. The United Nations Global Compact has released a report entitled: "Building the Post-2015 Business Engagement Architecture", which calls for advancing sustainable development through action, collaboration and co-investment by aligning corporate business strategies, models and R&D priorities with global sustainability responsibilities, including support for the achievement of specific SDGs. The International Chamber of Commerce, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and other industry players have advocated on behalf of the private sector in international fora.

Given the severe energy scarcity in many countries, for instance, investments by enterprises in sustainable energy priorities of energy efficiency, energy access, and cleaner sources of energy will be key to supporting the sustainable development agenda. The Sustainable Energy 4 All Partnership has been

established. Investments in renewable energy projects, co-generation and enhancing energy efficiency are making commercial and industrial operations less vulnerable to power fluctuations and will enhance overall financial viability. Businesses around the world are discovering ‘wealth-in-wastes’ and reaping financial benefits from energy efficiency.

The economic growth and sustainable development are not zero sum games. They are both prerequisites of the future we want, mutually reinforcing, and neither can succeed in the absence of the other.

Sustainable growth strengthens all three pillars of development – economic, social, and environmental, within a cultural context – and recognizes that long-term prosperity requires a careful balance between benefits reaped today and ensuring the well-being of our people and our planet tomorrow. Ultimately it is a concept grounded in intergenerational equity, addressed eloquently by Miss Talya Ozdemir in The Inaugural Agora.

The only initiative that takes full advantage of all milestones in the roadmap for the implementation of the SDGs in the Period 1 January 2016 – 31 December 2030 is The Agora.

### **The RASIT-EkoRE Partnership:**

*Emphasizes* that the theme of The Inaugural Agora was "Transforming the World Through Sustainable Energy for All: Leaving No One Behind", which shows how the private sector is using sustainable energy to achieve the SDGs; how science can interact with policy, and how to deploy existing knowledge and innovative renewable technologies to leave no one behind, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of these efforts;

*Recalls* the Inaugural World Women’s Health and Development Forum; the groundbreaking resolution for the International Day of Women and Girls in Science brought by the Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT) in partnership with the Government of Malta on 11 February; RASIT’s partnership with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in these initiatives; its collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Honduras to the UN, and RASIT’s unique partnership with Turkish corporate EkoRE Inc., demonstrates the window of unique opportunities for global partnership, that elusive SDG 17, and is setting the stage for the next 15 years;

*Also recalls* the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that mandated the President of ECOSOC to convene a collaborative multi-stakeholder Science, Technology,

and Innovation Forum (STI Forum), to be held annually, to discuss cooperation around these three science-based issues and thematic areas for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). RASIT, and in Partnership with EkoRE, has established “The Agora” to be held in support of the STI Forum, to serve as an action-oriented response to the intergovernmental mandates;

**Bears** in mind that The Agora will showcase the first-of-its-kind partnership at the UN. The Agora will, de facto, be the unique flagbearer for private sector interests in the STI Forum and in the High-Level Political Forum;

**Remembers** also that A/RES/70/224 of the General Assembly entitled “Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the UN and all relevant partners”, adopted on 4 December, 2015, is the foundation for innovative partnerships, as envisioned in The RASIT – EkoRE Agora;

**Also remembers** A/68/6 (Sect.1), “Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, Part 1: Overall policymaking and coordination”, which defines partnerships in pp.66-72;

**Acknowledges** that The RASIT - EkoRE Agora is a deliberate delineation of multi-stakeholder partnerships, along with expenditures of resources that will be sufficient to bring partnerships to life, **and** that should be the foundation of UN and non-state actor partnership arrangements;

**Highlights** that RASIT has chosen the ancient Greek term “Agora” – meaning marketplace – but a marketplace of ideas, solutions and action plans, a gathering place of professionals, academic and research institutions, private sector as well as governments;

**Bears** in mind additionally that The RASIT – EkoRE Agora’s mission is to: Reset Priorities, Define Solutions, Act Successfully and Live Sustainably;

**Calls** upon The Agora to identify the main challenges facing countries in implementing Agenda 2030. The Agora will reflect practices, information-sharing mechanisms and concrete actions for the sustainable development goals, taking into consideration different needs of different societies and cultures. The Agora will also consider initiatives at regional and international levels to increase cooperation and partnership;

**Realizes** that The Agora is an occasion for world leaders, United Nations system entities, private sector, think tanks, professionals, members of civil society and the media to contribute to humanity and development. Special focus will be on the role of sustainable energy and energy systems in the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda;

**Recalls** that The Agora's programme reflects international and societal needs and the necessity for comprehensive global policy, the objectives and discussion topics of The Agora have been prepared through a close analysis of the output of the March 31 Partnership Forum in ECOSOC to ensure action-oriented results. In this way, The Agora will provide substantial input into the official discussions taking place at a global level, and feed into the negotiations for the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review for Development (QCPR), and will seek to:

- ❖ Provide a platform for world leaders, private sector, as well as professionals and scientists to map the complexity and interconnectivity of our changing world; and
- ❖ Develop the insights, initiatives and actions necessary to respond to current and emerging challenges in the 2030 Agenda, with an emphasis on sustainable energy and energy systems as a platform for global change and with a view to providing policy considerations to UN Member States;

**Guided by this background, The RASIT - EkoRE Partnership for The Inaugural Agora declares this Outcome Document:**

- I. During the Inaugural "Agora" meeting on 'Transforming the World through Sustainable Energy for All: Leaving No One Behind,' participants highlighted the importance of partnerships, and discussed actions and initiatives to respond to current and emerging challenges of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with an emphasis on sustainable energy and energy systems.;
- II. The meeting took place in parallel with the first Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI Forum) for the Sustainable Development Goals, and aimed to contribute to the STI Forum, to the work of ECOSOC and UN-system reform, to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), to the ongoing work of the reform of the UN Development System and the articulation of the next QCPR;

III. The Royal Academy of Science International Trust (RASIT) organized The Agora in partnership with EkoRE Renewable Energy Inc., and in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Honduras to the UN;

IV. Among essential aspects, The Agora began with the vision of the children of the world: to ensure that the voices and vision of children, who have the ability to act as intelligent contributors both actively and positively, and as interlocutors between human life and ecosystems, can both inspire and be inspired to ignite campaigns for preserving and conserving the planet's resources;

**V. The RASIT - EkoRE Agora shall:**

1. seek to enhance partnerships at all levels, local, national, regional and global;
2. join with countries such as Honduras, Sweden and Kazakhstan, that are committed to the issue of renewable energy;
3. explore different types of technologies that are now available for solar, wind and bioenergy;
4. reach the 1.1 billion people who are not served by electricity;
5. show that the proper incentives can decrease greenhouse gas emissions;
6. develop relationships with the world's largest industries, such as tourism, fashion and sports, that can maximize impacts through energy efficiency;
7. hasten the benefits of development with the access to clean and affordable energy;
8. seek to improve environmental performance of the energy agenda and engage the private sector for implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
9. work with children in "greening" rooftops in cities;
10. increase educational opportunities for all people with provision of electricity, thus providing enhanced opportunities for prosperity;
11. work with entrepreneurs and innovators and small- and medium-sized enterprises;
12. create "green main streets" that include smart energy districts, energy efficient buildings and "Edible Community Gardens" and "blue community" principles;
13. show that next generation energy can assist with implementation of SDGs in healthcare and in sustainable agriculture
14. incentivize sustainable practices in the various sectors, including sustainable fishing practices;
15. urge creation of national budgets to support infrastructure for renewable energy;
16. develop cross-sectoral collaborations in the energy sector;
17. show types of good practices of integrated simulation models that are integrating components such as energy, social and economic factors.

- VI. The Agora will be based upon partnerships for energy that are nourished at all levels by bringing together sectors, solutions across sectors and communities, and include policymakers, international developers, entrepreneurs, and the private sector, with an underpinning of science and innovation, to achieve implementation of the 17 SDGs, within a framework of monitoring and evaluation.
- VII. Other activities of The Agora will include, but not be limited to:
1. work in support of Heads of State meetings, such as the CELAC Quito meeting that was held on the occasion of the IV CELAC Summit, that promoted the latest innovations and know-how as strong engines for economic growth that fosters sustainable development and reduces in a significant manner the technology gap and differing information access levels between countries;
  2. ensure for the year leading up to the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), that The Agora devote its activities both to the themes of the HLPF and the in-depth review of the SDG clusters to be reviewed by the HLPF, in light of the QCPR and of the all-important Goal 17, which is the hallmark of The Agora's activities: Partnerships;
  3. become a key enabler for impacting the outcomes of the 2030 Agenda, implementation of the SDGs, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Sendai Framework, the QCPR, and the Istanbul Programme of Action for the LDCs;
  4. offer guidance to policy makers through a private sector lens on enhancing contributions of science, technology and innovation to the realization of the SDGs;
  5. identify technology needs and gaps, including scientific cooperation, innovation and capacity building, development of technology incubators, and facilitate South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation and innovation;
  6. create new partnerships for renewable energy, improve the environmental performance of the energy sector, and find creative ways to involve business in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda;
  7. be convened as a space for:
    - a) thinking and for utilizing new "disruptive" technology that will help popularize implementation of the SDGs;
    - b) identifying areas for political commitment to mobilize, train, deploy and payroll young scientists and innovators;
    - c) demonstrating how the benefits of technological innovation will reach communities;
    - d) developing collaborative work among representatives of UN Member States, entrepreneurs, scientists, cultural creative and innovators of all ages to discuss STI;
  8. highlight, through its Partnership Hub, how to deploy or incentivize the uptake of existing knowledge and new, innovative solutions and technologies and make them more readily available to those who need them, especially in a community context;
  9. create Knowledge and Innovation Societies at all levels that can promote the critical shift to a change of mindsets, attitudes and behaviors, as well as present examples of applied science, technology and innovations already shaping human interaction in a variety of area and that can play an essential supporting role in implementing the SDGs;

10. identify, in The Annual State of the Agora Report, trends in development and deployment of STI for the SDGs, identify emerging priorities and critical gaps in knowledge and innovation and how to fill those gaps, and build cross-sectoral/cross-cultural hybrid task-teams and new communities of practice, enabling a richer Agora to emerge;
11. establish the Children’s Agora Academy, designed to enable children to learn the skills of multi-disciplinary thinking and acting with compassion, care, respect and kindness;
12. continue to build the RASIT - EkoRE Partnership in support of SDG 17, Partnerships, on scientific cooperation and identification of entrepreneurs and young innovators who can develop and disseminate technology through projects on the ground; and
13. develop an exhibition area at its meetings called The Partnership Hub and Hall of Catalytic Connectors to facilitate dialogue and conversation by all stakeholder groups as well as change agents.
  - 13.1. The Partnership Hub will:
    - 13.1.1. identify good practices and best practices through peer-to-peer outreach;
    - 13.1.2. showcase joint actions to leverage technology for a better life for all persons, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized;
    - 13.1.3. invite the 9 Major Groups of Agenda 21 and new communities of practice, to demonstrate their impact on technology and innovation;
    - 13.1.4. support country-led initiatives such as the G-Global Initiative, the International Green Bridge partnership programme, the Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy and Astana World Exposition on Sustainable Energy;
    - 13.1.5. exhibit projects that strengthen STI capacity and literacy in every country and promote innovative knowledge societies that utilize scientific evidence to help inform policy and advance policy coherence to accelerate technology transfer, diffusion and innovation, in a manner commensurate with the ambition of the SDGs;
    - 13.1.6. showcase flexible societal action plans and technology roadmaps needed to support SDG achievement;
    - 13.1.7. hold the Partnership Hub/Hall of Catalytic Connectors during The Agora, and in support of, the STI Forum. This event could be considered the “expo of the future for the implementation of the SDGs through on the ground use of science, technology and innovation.”
    - 13.1.8. Projects will be based, in part, on the following metrics:
      - 13.1.8.1. energy conservation and efficiency needed for the challenge to implement the SDGS;
      - 13.1.8.2. objective of a project, its major components, and already-existing country-based policies that will help achieve the project’s objectives;
      - 13.1.8.3. identification of other policies needed to promote the solution the project addresses;
      - 13.1.8.4. population size of the communities involved;
      - 13.1.8.5. measure of annual carbon emissions by the host population;
      - 13.1.8.6. annual amount of emissions to be offset by the project;
      - 13.1.8.7. annual amount of emissions actually offset by the project; and
      - 13.1.8.8. evaluation of the actions taken in implementing the project.