

Side event at the 2012 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review: Towards a Post-2015 UN Development Agenda

New York, 3 July 2012, 1:15 pm – 2:30 pm

Informal summary of discussions

Mr. **Miloš Koterec**, President of the Economic and Social Council, welcomed participants to this side-event, organized by the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda. He explained the event's objective of contributing to the multi-stakeholder discussions on the post-2015 agenda and providing Member States, civil society and the UN System with an opportunity to share their views on the post-2015 process.

Mr. **Rob Vos**, Director of the Development Policy and Analysis Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, presented the report of the UN System Task Team to the Secretary-General, *Realizing the Future we Want for All*, submitted on 4 June and published on the [UN system's post-2015 website](#) on 2 July 2012. The report contained key recommendations of the UN System Task Team on a new vision for development to generate transformative change, the possible contours of such an agenda and options for moving forward in the consultation process. It arrived at these recommendations through analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the MDG framework and assessing the lessons learned for the post-2015 UN development agenda, as well as by outlining emerging and existing pressing global challenges that had to be taken into account.

Mr. Vos highlighted the report's proposal of human rights, equality and sustainability as core principles of a post-2015 agenda, to inform the four dimensions along which goals could be set: inclusive social development, inclusive economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace and security. The principles and goals should guide policy choices at various levels, without becoming prescriptive and while recognizing differences in initial conditions. He pointed to the [Rio+20 Conference](#) as an important milestone in the post-2015 process, including with the agreement to develop a set of global sustainable development goals (SDGs) as a coherent and integral part of the post-2015 UN development agenda and the establishment of a clear intergovernmental process for doing so. The report would serve as a reference for the broader consultations on the post-2015 development agenda to take place, as well as to inform the work of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015 to be launched by the Secretary-General.

Mr. **Gustavo Prada**, Director of EU Development Policy of the European Commission, echoed the need not only to build on the success of the MDGs, but also to address some shortcomings in focus. For the post-2015 development agenda, Mr. Prada noted that the European Union shared most of the principles put forward in the report of the UN System Task Team. The European Union had endorsed a new development policy called *Agenda for Change* only last month, which placed high importance on good governance and inclusive and sustainable growth, as well as human rights. Mr. Prada outlined four criteria to guide formulation of the new agenda ('the four A's'): ambition, achievability, accountability and affordability. He called for an inclusive consultation process with broad stakeholder involvement. The European Union had just launched its own large [public consultation on the post-2015 development framework](#). He also emphasized the importance of ensuring that the process to develop sustainable development goals, in the follow-up to Rio+20, is also inclusive and coherent with the work on the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. **Rajiv Joshi**, Director of Programs at the Global Call for Action Against Poverty, called for strong involvement of civil society in not only the consultations, but also the decision-making process on the post-2015 development agenda. He outlined the importance of: national consultations to engage actors, such as civil society organizations, trade unions and academia; inclusion of the voices of the poor and marginalized to ensure that real ownership is built for a transformative agenda that really matters to people, regardless of their origin. In this sense, he urged the United Nations to operationalize what was written in the Task Team Report, which included valuable steps and ideas.

In the interactive discussion among panelists and participants, a number of key messages emerged. On the process for defining the agenda, the need for a truly inclusive process engaging all actors, especially the poor and marginalized, was stressed. On substance, several speakers emphasized the need: to improve on the MDGs, particularly through a much stronger focus on inclusive growth and sustainable development, as well as inequalities; and to ensure the convergence of the SDGs into the post-2015 agenda. On format or design of the agenda, there was a call for some flexibility, particularly with respect to targets, to allow adaptation to national conditions and priorities, as well as to emerging issues or changing circumstances over time.

Participants posed a range of questions, a number of which focused on the prospects for integrating human development and sustainable development concerns in the same agenda. Mr. Vos emphasized that such integration would be essential for the agenda's effectiveness, in light of the recent economic, social and environmental crises; it also related to the need to rethink the global partnership for development as one of shared responsibilities among all countries and stakeholders. Mr. Joshi pointed to citizen engagement as a critical factor in mobilizing the necessary political will to ensure the world stayed within its planetary boundaries while also moving people out of poverty. Mr. Prada saw no contradiction in approaching development as a long-term process of economic and social transformation that would lead to both sustainable growth and fulfillment of human development goals. He noted the emphasis of the EU on green economy as the only long-term way of achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Other questions discussed focused on: the role of social protection in the post-2015 agenda; ways to measure growth; the pace of the process for developing goals; measures to engage civil society, particularly the most vulnerable, in the consultation process; and ways to ensure coherence with the private sector and inculcate its engagement and sense of ownership of the post-2015 agenda.

Mr. **Jens Wendel**, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director, Bureau of Management, reiterated the message from panelists and participants on the need for an inclusive consultation process. He informed that addressing this need was the major focus of the project underway by the United Nations Development Group, including support for at least 50 national consultations and nine thematic consultations. He also indicated that the Global Compact, which was part of the UN System Task Team, was an important vehicle for engaging the private sector.

Mr. **Miloš Koterec**, **President of ECOSOC**, closed the side event by thanking participants and discussants for their participation in this fruitful discussion. He reiterated the importance of an inclusive, Member State-led process, with involvement of all stakeholders, as the best, and indeed the only, option moving forward when defining a truly global development agenda for the post-2015 period.