

BACKGROUND NOTE

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) JOINT THEMATIC DEBATE/FORUM ON PARTNERSHIPS

“The role of partnerships in the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda”

9 and 10 April 2014

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The panel discussions are intended to provide a platform for member states to address how strengthened global partnerships for sustainable development, including multi-stakeholder partnerships, can contribute to the implementation of the post 2015 development agenda. It is intended to promote the scaling-up of the impact of all forms of cooperation in the post 2015 development agenda, and promote the urgent implementation of existing commitments under the global partnership for development while also addressing the emerging role of innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships. The sessions will address gender, human rights and peacebuilding issues, where relevant.

Panel 1: Realizing the MDGs: Building on key partnership opportunities and the way forward

Partnerships among Governments, business, civil society, foundations, international organizations and individuals have played a critical role in accelerating the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The urgency of achieving the MDGs by 2015 has inspired innovation by creating, for example, new partnership models, new and innovative sources of financing as an adjunct to official development assistance and trade, new uses of technology, and new ways of building capacity and engaging with low-income communities to increase access to basic services. Further leveraging these innovative approaches will be critical to the successful conclusion to the MDGs. We must also draw on these partnership experiences as we look to the strategic formulation and approach of multi-stakeholder participation to deliver on the post-2015 development agenda. As we talk about a renewed global partnership for development, the task at hand is to move beyond consideration of financial flows only and adopt a larger vision which encompasses resources intended as innovation, technology, research, human capacity, and more.

Key Questions

- What types of partnerships have been successful in driving progress towards the Millennium Development Goals? What sets these partnerships apart and how can they be replicated and scaled up to further advance the MDGs as we approach the finish line?
- How do we apply our experience and lessons learned on partnerships to date to ensure that the Post-2015 development agenda has the means of implementation that will be required?
- What are the current challenges at hand, the gaps that need to be addressed and critical areas needing special attention?
- Creating partnerships for each thematic area or development goal has been proposed by the Secretary General’s Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. How would these partnerships help accelerate implementation of the 2015 development goals?

Panel 2: Collaborating with businesses, foundations, civil society and other actors in support of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Implementing a unified and universal Post-2015 development agenda that is broader in scope will require additional capacity and mobilization of resources. The role of the private sector, philanthropy, and civil society has dramatically expanded in size, sophistication, and global reach. These players are pivotal in bringing to the table innovative methods and strengthened tools for leveraging funding, creating decent employment, technology, innovation and research. As Member States work toward a shared vision for a post-2015 development agenda, further exploring in particular the role of private sector engagement to accelerate the achievement of the future development agenda may offer valuable insights. It would be important to create an enabling policy and institutional environment, including incentives that would lead to stronger engagement and involvement by the businesses, foundations and other actors to ensure the success of the new development agenda in the post-2015 era.

Key Questions

- What kinds of additional efforts are needed to support the development of more transformational partnerships at the local level, which have greater potential for scale and impact?
- What kinds of policy changes might be needed to accelerate partnerships and enhance multi-stakeholder collaboration in the Post-2015 environment?
- How can local capacity be enhanced to strengthen existing partnerships and accelerate creation of new ones? What operationally is required to enhance the design, development, and implementation of transformational partnerships that impact a wider range of issue areas and that promote sustainable development, through the integration of its three dimensions?

Panel 3: Towards a more effective framework for monitoring the implementation of global development goals

A robust monitoring and accountability mechanism will be critical for the successful implementation of the Post-2015 Development agenda. The lack of an effective framework is often seen as one of the explanatory factors for gaps in MDG implementation. These mechanisms can help ensure that shared values, goals and resources are upheld and that stakeholders, including governments, commit to inclusive and sustainable development. Engaging with a diverse mix of stakeholders through partnership efforts also allows for shared decision-making and responsibilities to enhance transparency, credibility and legitimacy. The architecture of accountability frameworks needs to be flexible enough to accommodate the diverse nature of partnerships and partners. Sharing of lessons learned and further exploring ways to engage diverse constituencies is critical to deepen the understanding of the challenges and opportunities to advance best practices in partnering.

Key Questions

- What should a monitoring and accountability framework look like?
- What are some examples of accountability practices that can be used by the various partners, for example, by member states, donors, private sector companies, foundations and NGOs?
- How would different types of accountability frameworks inter-connect and function as a whole?
- What are the lessons learned from the MDG experience that can be transferred to the post-2015 experience?

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These panel discussions will provide a link between the interactive multi-stakeholder policy discussions of 9 April 2014 with the more solutions and outcome-oriented discussion of 10 April 2014. The objective of these roundtable discussions is to generate ideas and concrete solutions for specific sustainable development challenges through multi-stakeholder partnerships, with special attention to SIDS, LLDCs, LDCs and MICs. The outcomes of those discussions will help inform major conferences being held in 2014, namely the Third Conference for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States of SIDS which will be held in Samoa from 1-4 September 2014, the Ministerial Conference on New Partnerships for the Development of Productive Capacities of LDCs to be hosted by the Government of Benin in July 2014 and the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action to be held 3-5 November 2014 in Vienna, Austria. The sessions will address gender, human rights and peacebuilding issues, where relevant.

Panel 4: Scaling up partnership opportunities in food and nutritional security and marine resources

According to the Food and Agricultural organization (FAO), 842 million or one in eight people suffer hunger every day. The costs to society include lost productivity, health, well-being, decreased learning ability and overall reduced fulfilment of human potential. Malnutrition is associated with food insecurity, is particularly impactful on the unborn and young children, leading to impaired cognitive development and stunting. Eradicating food and nutritional insecurity must begin with increasing investment in food and agricultural investment. Fisheries and aquaculture also a vital source of food and therefore the unsustainable use of marine resources should also be addressed. Investing in “Blue Growth” and ensuring the sustainable management and use of aquatic resources is particularly important for small island developing states (SIDS). Solutions to food and nutritional security also rests on creating non-farm rural employment opportunities and promoting rural development while at the same time strengthening the resilience of farming systems and food supplies to climate change. While there is no magic wand, public-private partnerships are indispensable to bringing science, technology, financing and capacity building to tackle food and nutritional insecurity. Examples of multi-stakeholder partnerships of a public-private sector nature include the Zero Hunger Challenge and Scaling up Nutrition Movement as well as the Global Partnerships for Oceans.

Key Questions

- What types of partnerships can be mutually beneficial for improving food and nutritional security and marine resources? Which areas would these partnerships be most effective?
- What are the main concerns and/or conflicts of interest related to multi-stakeholder partnerships for food and nutritional security and marine resources, and how can these concerns be addressed?
- What are the best practices and lessons learned from multi-stakeholder partnerships on food and nutritional security and marine resources?
- How can best practice examples be replicated in different regions or states? And how can governments, particularly in vulnerable states, attract multi-stakeholder partnerships that contribute to food and nutritional security and marine resources?
- Food security and nutrition, as well as marine resources, oceans and seas are both focus areas for consideration of future development goals. How can existing experience from multi-stakeholder partnerships inform the discussion on future development goals in these areas and stem from concrete solutions that are currently or previously successful in existing partnerships that address these issues?

Panel 5: Scaling up partnership opportunities in sustainable infrastructure

Infrastructure is a core component of sustainable development and for most countries a key enabler for generating economic growth and the achievement of the MDGs as well as future development goals. The quality and quantity of infrastructure of a country determines its capacity to produce, the level of productivity of its economic activities, and the capacity to compete and trade in international markets. The construction and maintenance of hard or physical infrastructure such as (i) transport infrastructure, including roads, railways, airlines, ports, border crossing facilities etc., (ii) energy infrastructure, (iii) information and communications technology infrastructure, and (iv) urban planning, water management systems, waste management systems, amongst others, creates an enabling environment for sustainable and inclusive growth. This is particularly relevant for certain vulnerable groups of countries, such as landlocked developing countries, which face acute infrastructure problems affecting transport efficiency often resulting in high transit transportation costs. One of the challenges to developing sustainable infrastructure is the substantial outlay and continued use of financial, human and natural resources. Another significant limitation is the lack of integration of environmental and social aspects into all stages of infrastructure development, from planning, financing, building to management and operation. Partnerships can play an important role in helping to address such challenges and limitations, and should therefore be an integral part of sustainable infrastructure development in developing countries. They are also important for identifying new and innovative sources of financing that is critical for successful resource mobilisation for infrastructure development.

Key Questions

- What are some of the key areas for partnership opportunities in sustainable infrastructure and how can these opportunities be made more accessible and beneficial to all actors?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of current partnerships in infrastructure involving a variety of stakeholders?
- How can partnerships contribute towards augmenting critical new and innovative sources of financial, human, technical and natural resources needed for infrastructure development, especially in vulnerable groups of countries such as least developed countries (LDCs), LLDCs, and small island developing states (SIDs)?
- What additional steps could be taken to foster strong collaboration and cooperation in sustainable infrastructure between the public and private sectors in developing countries?