

**Summary of the key messages of the General Assembly and ECOSOC  
Joint Thematic Debate/Forum on Partnerships  
“The role of partnerships in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda”**

9 – 10 April 2014  
United Nations Headquarters, New York

---

The following is a summary of the key messages that emerged from the Joint General Assembly and ECOSOC Thematic Debate/Forum on Partnerships “The role of partnerships in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda”:

**Panel Discussion One: Realizing the MDG's: Building on Key Partnership Opportunities and the Way Forward**

1. Accelerating progress towards the MDGs as well as shaping the post-2015 development agenda will require engagement of more public and private stakeholders. Governments must continue to provide policy framework at the national, regional and international levels. In addition, they must provide accountability, transparency, monitoring and oversight mechanisms for the post-2015 development agenda.
2. In a constantly changing world, partnerships must evolve and adapt. Partnerships should focus on the respective strengths of their members and avoid being drawn into areas that are not familiar. They should also be open to learning from the experience of other actors.
3. Global partnerships for sustainable development should fully respect the intergovernmental nature of the United Nations, its charter principles and programme priorities. Existing United Nations bodies as well as evolving fora such as the High Level Political Forum under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council need to play an important role in the review and monitoring of partnerships at the global level.
4. Government oversight should aim to promote public good without stifling private initiative; public policy should ensure the development impact of private economic activity, particularly of business and industry. At the same time, partnerships themselves should have built-in mechanisms for accountability, monitoring, transparency and reporting. *Every Woman Every Child* is an example of a global partnership with such a built-in mechanism.
5. Multi-stakeholder partnerships need to have an appropriate balance of the respective interests of governments, business and civil society, and take into account the needs of small and medium enterprises. In addition to philanthropic giving and corporate social responsibility, business and industry can promote sustainable development directly by shifting to more sustainable production processes, less intensive use of natural resources, and better social protection of workers in instances where this is necessary.

6. Public-private partnerships and traditional ODA complement each other but are not substitutes for each other. Similarly, triangular and South-South cooperation can complement but do not replace traditional North-South cooperation.
7. Experience with the MDG's has shown a multiplication of the varieties of partnerships that have worked, ranging from one-on-one partnerships between public and private entities, to partnerships involving various combinations and permutations of public, private and multilateral actors. The post-2015 development agenda must draw on these lessons learned.

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

8. The Post-2015 Development Agenda requires a renewed global partnership which should be inclusive, people-centred and should be inclusive.
9. The implementation of the post-2015 development agenda should include a multi-stakeholder approach, effectively engaging civil society, business sector, philanthropic organizations and other actors. Many recognized that the private sector is an important partner for development bringing knowledge and expertise. Public-private-partnerships drive innovation and technology transfer to new and innovative financing.
10. Effective partnerships require serious commitments from partners and strong governance to monitor implementation. Engaging the local community, particularly in identifying needs and formulating strategies, is crucial for fostering local ownership and accountability. The most effective partnerships are often driven by problem-solving and rely on each partner's area of expertise for success. It is a process of mutual learning for partners involved.
11. Caution was raised that governments should be mindful of the profit-driven nature of the private sector when engaging in Public Private Partnerships. However, governments should create enabling incentives for the private sector to contribute to development priorities.
12. Civil society is a key partner for development, including monitoring existing commitments. Social dialogues enrich policy discussions with various views and collaborating with civil society enhances accountability and transparency.
13. Some companies see the post-2015 process as business-critical. Companies cannot be resilient and grow if they are directly opposed to the interests of the communities that they serve. It was noted that businesses that take sustainability seriously are outperforming their competitors on the stock exchange and in their own business accounting.
14. Partnerships need to be vetted ex ante against criteria to determine fitness for purpose in pursuit of the post-2015 goals. Such criteria should consider human rights record, capacity to deliver, acts of corruption, financial transparency and compliance with taxation, and other conflicts of interest antithetical to universal norms and principles.

### **Panel Discussion Three: Towards a more effective framework for monitoring the implementation of global development goals**

15. Accountability frameworks for partnerships must be related to the post-2015 development agenda and monitor progress at partnerships level in terms of overall goals of the agenda.
16. A robust, transparent, comprehensive and independent accountability framework was called for to monitor the implementation of global development goals, supported by timely, quality data. Learning and benchmarking with effective existing accountability mechanisms would be helpful in the design of this framework.
17. Several examples of existing accountability frameworks were shared including the Independent Expert Review Group of the *Every Woman Every Child* Initiative, The African Peer Review Mechanism, Global Compact local network and reporting mechanism, the DAC peer review mechanism and the Busan monitoring framework.
18. Three major dimensions of accountability: answerability, enforcement, and a clear delimitation of responsibility. Willingness to be held accountable and be monitored builds trust. Mutual accountability in a peer environment proves effective. However, several challenges have been identified, including the difficulty of engaging all partners and the weak enforcement. It was argued that partnerships should not be recognized for the commitments they make but the commitments they fulfil.
19. Effective monitoring requires availability of information, robust data, the right indicators, and reporting with sufficient enforcement. It is within the mandate of the High-Level Political Forum under the auspices of ECOSOC to review periodically the implementation of the sustainable development goals. The modality should be developed based on interactive dialogue with governments and relevant stakeholders.
20. Many countries and stakeholders emphasized that the High Level Political Forum should take on formally the responsibility for oversight of partnerships for sustainable development. The HLPF is regarded as being ideally placed to play this role.
21. It was also stressed that the post 2015 development agenda must find a way to hold partnerships and partners accountable on sensitive themes such as child labour, girls' access to schooling, and air pollution. Also, community ownership of partnerships must be an integral part of the accountability framework for the post-2015 agenda.
22. The post-2015 agenda must be accompanied by a data revolution, especially at the country and local levels, ensuring that people on the front lines of partnership have the data and indicators to report and ensure accountability.

#### **Panel Discussion Four: Scaling up partnership opportunities in food and nutritional security and marine resources**

23. There is a need to feed more people, with more nutrition, with less land, and with less energy consumption. Intergovernmental cooperation through partnerships is essential to addressing these challenges. For example, successful results achieved through partnerships include new varieties of rice requiring less water and more resistant to salinity, and varieties of banana resistant to disease. Building a climate resilient agricultural system will require public and privately funded research and must focus on knowledge innovation and technology.
24. Sustainable partnerships are key to building long term solutions. Examples include partnerships that address maternal care and nutrition in the first one-thousand (1000) days of life which have proven to have a magnified impact on health and development.
25. Women are the guardians of the natural environment and play a crucial role in securing food and nutrition for their families. Collaborative partnerships must uphold the rights of women by design, including them in the process as equal partners. The private sector has an important role in ensuring the gender dimension is accounted for.
26. Incentive structures, both positive and negative, lead to more successful partnerships and ensure long-term commitment. Both qualitative and legislative incentives strengthen partnerships. They need to be well designed to achieve their purposes and must be nurtured politically and financially if they are to work. Common across all successful governance structures is that they possess strong foundations and are adequately funded. There is recognition that strong institutions drive activities on the ground.
27. Successful partnerships for food and nutritional security need to be well designed, human rights based, well-funded and enjoy political support from all partners.
28. Overall, it was recognised that the success of partnerships can be varied. They are best executed in an enabling political environment that provides adequate financial resources and guarantees the rule of law. The importance of trust and accountability structures was widely acknowledged in a future partnership-based approach. The framework for monitoring partnerships must be transparent and routinely reviewed.

#### **Panel Discussion Five: Scaling up partnership opportunities in sustainable infrastructure**

29. Sustainable infrastructure, including infrastructure for access to modern energy services, reliable and affordable transport systems, information and communication services, water supply systems, is an enabler and multiplier for sustainable development, particularly to the most vulnerable countries. Yet, transformative infrastructure development requires further strengthened global partnership for development as well as predictable policies to encourage multi-stakeholder partnerships.
30. Partnerships can bring together the relevant advocacy groups, as well as the policy and finance specialists to build consensus that sustainable infrastructure is a priority and to define concrete

aims. Historically, such partnerships with a concrete and definable aim have flourished better than others.

31. Partnerships for sustainable energy, including the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative, calls for universal energy access, higher share of renewable energy and energy efficiency. These require large-scale financing, technology cooperation, local (municipal) level and inter-sectoral collaboration, and triangular cooperation, which can all be achieved through multi-stakeholder partnerships.
32. Partnerships can facilitate technology cooperation that can enable a reduction in the cost of access to and use of renewable energies. Partnerships also need to be forged to increase research and development in this area to reduce the cost of storing energy.
33. It is essential that individual actors consider inter-sectoral collaboration. Partnerships can facilitate broader thinking across sectors that can be mutually beneficial to all pursuing development aims. For example, when considering energy needs, it is important to take into account local hospitals' needs, requirements for water and sanitation, transport etc.
34. Government incentives are essential to engage the private sector, development partners to scale up financing and to conduct R&D and to bring about changes on the ground, which will lead to positive gains in many relevant focus areas for sustainable development, such as healthcare services, water and sanitation, transport.
35. Infrastructure for transit transportation is particularly crucial for land-locked developing countries (LLDCs) as well as bridging the urban and rural divide. More efficient transport will facilitate trade and contribute to many aspects of sustainable development.
36. While more roads and transport infrastructure is much needed in some of the least-developed and developing countries, the majority of developing countries would substantially benefit from more efficient use and access to current infrastructure. Furthermore, implementing current and active UN conventions to facilitate border crossings and transit transportation could result in an immediate, low-cost and significant reduction in trade and transit transportation costs.
37. Trade and infrastructure are mutually reinforcing. Building trade-related infrastructure could also contribute to generating much-needed financing for further infrastructure development, including hard and soft infrastructure.
38. Member States need to engage in triangular cooperation; to partner across national borders and continents with States engaged in similar research activities in order to further develop technology and expand their research and development pool.