



## **2013 ECOSOC Partnership Event**

*“Partnering for innovative solutions for sustainable development”*

**Wednesday, 24 April 2013**

### **Summary**

#### **Background**

The Economic and Social Council hosted a Partnerships Forum on 24 April 2013 in support of its 2013 AMR theme of “Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals”. The Forum served to facilitate a public-private dialogue among member states, business leaders, innovators and other stakeholders on new trends in innovation, particularly those that have the potential to spur transformative solutions for sustainable development challenges, and the most effective policies that would create an ideal environment favourable for innovation, creative outputs and entrepreneurship. The Forum also looked at specific challenges in Africa that could help the region benefit from new game-changing partnership ideas.

#### **Main policy recommendations**

##### **POLICY DIALOGUE 1: “Partnerships for sustainability”**

Strong, evidence-based incentives are necessary to establish effective partnerships between diverse stakeholders. Partnerships should be innovative themselves and take into account comparative advantages, such as those of philanthropies. Public policies must complement partnerships and there must be greater focus on capacity building for CSOs and SMEs to establish partnerships. There must be enough policy space for countries to address their own challenges. Innovation must be mainstreamed and value-driven to make ideas scalable. Promoting good governance and ownership is essential for encouraging science, technology and innovation.

##### **POLICY DIALOGUE 2: “The changing face of technology and innovation”**

Promoting innovative and cost-effective methods for delivering social services, particularly to disadvantaged communities, via ICT, is necessary and can be achieved through innovative partnerships. These partnerships could also be built around the exchange of knowledge and resources between the North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. Small investments can have big impacts and stakeholders can

incentivize innovation through modest prizes and awards. Some speakers recommended that establishing internet access as a basic human right should be given consideration.

## **PARTNERSHIPS CLINICS**

### **Session 1: “Innovative partnerships to address research and treatments for NTDs” (Organized by WIPO).**

The purpose of the clinic was to discuss how partnerships can address the challenges in **combating neglected tropical diseases** (NTDs). Panellists highlighted how **public-private sector partnerships** can significantly impact issues related to finance, access to knowledge and expertise, manufacturing and distribution capabilities that created a barrier to addressing NTDs. The role of partnerships can help increase awareness of NTDs and harness political support for efforts to eliminate them. WIPO Re:Search, an innovative initiative launched in 2011, was highlighted as a model for partnerships to enhance capacity building and provide access to existing knowledge to advance research on NTDs. To ensure momentum on NTDs in the post-2015 UN development agenda, participants emphasised the **key role of government and the UN** in creating an environment to coordinate and facilitate partnerships collaborations, which has been absent in the NTD field. It was proposed that a UN Declaration and nomination of a Special Envoy could be used as powerful tools to help raise the profile on NTD issues and provide a focal point for activities.

### **Session 2: “Mobiles for Midwives and other frontline health workers: An innovative approach for better health information systems”, organized by ITU, in partnership with UNFPA.**

The purpose of the clinic was to outline the basic principles of ‘Mobiles for Midwives’ (M4M), a mobile health platform to advance the vital work of midwives and other frontline health workers to decrease the number of unregistered births in the developing world. The session stressed the importance of **ICT/mobile technologies** as powerful tools for birth registration to help reduce child mortality and improve maternal health. The Mobiles for Midwives (M4M) technologies has the ability to enable a rapid medical consultation by telephone during life-threatening complications, increase the exchange of vital information through text messaging, and report maternal deaths as part of maternal death surveillance and response (MDSR). order for the M4M platform to produce optimum results, participants concluded that local capacity building, national e-health guidelines, open source tools, secure data management, user-friendliness, medical cloud and a community of support was necessary to enhance health delivery in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It was proposed that a white paper to be further developed with a set of recommendations from the panellists on how to address the best approach on **scalability, interoperability, affordability, usability and standardization** of the M4M technologies which will then be submitted to the mHealth Alliance and the ‘Every Woman Every Child’ initiative.

**Session 3: “Innovation and Technology: Innovative Design Solutions to Address Extreme Poverty”, organized by UNESCO, in collaboration with the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (CHNDM)**

The purpose of the clinic was to explore how **innovative industrial design**, that combined science and creativity, can effectively contribute to addressing the needs of communities that live in extreme poverty under 2 dollars a day. The panellist highlighted the importance of capacity building at the local level through **establishing community innovation centres** for local innovators and inventors in supporting peer-to-peer design exchanges between impoverished communities. Understanding local culture and partnering directly with impoverished communities was essential to creating socially and economically sustainable designs. Speakers recommended that placing designers in mission based organizations and investing in experimental socially responsible design strategies would aid in collecting and sharing the most effective practices in industrial design. Participants also highlighted the importance of creating **regional alliances and collaborative networks**, addressing **management innovation through evaluation** and convening a **group dialogue** to address specific needs by creating a pilot project for job creation is essential. The panel also noted that the post-2015 UN development agenda should recognize the specific contribution that cultural and creative industries, in design and architecture for social innovation, had made towards achieving sustainable development. The clinic concluded with identifying that need to further learn from communities that were devising innovative design solutions with limited resources in challenging environments.

**Session 4: “Breaking barriers: Innovative partnerships creating exponential change in access to quality learning”, co-organized by UNICEF and the Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations**

The purpose of the clinic was to identify the relationship between **technological innovation and learning**, and consider the ways in which recent advances in technology can address the challenges to **children’s access to quality learning**. Speakers highlighted that innovation and learning requires creative and innovative thinking, risk-taking, and new teaching approaches to redefine education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Developing innovative, effective, powerful and cost-effective strategies for education was a priority to building stronger states and ensuring developmental sustainability. Panelists identified that technology was essential to further develop innovative learning processes, programmes and products to provide better quality education in schools. Technology will empower children to engage in innovative processes and discover what future innovators needed to be learning. Speakers also stressed the need to create sustainable solutions that unite innovation with learning through partnerships. The session concluded with UNICEF expressing that it will collaborate with national and global partners, education experts, innovators, and venture capitalists to **identify five or six innovations in the field, leading to a broader meeting on the subject in the last quarter of 2013**.