



**Economic and Social Council and
the Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee) of
the General Assembly
*Joint Meeting***

**Finding solutions for addressing sustainable development
challenges and accelerating the achievement of the MDGs**

**6 November 2013, Conference Room 2 (CB)
United Nations Headquarters, New York**

Background

As we approach the deadline date of 2015 for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and deeper consideration of the global vision for the period beyond, there is a need to evaluate progress and look ahead at the emerging challenges to be faced as we shift towards a path of sustainability. Although great strides have so far been made in the fight against extreme poverty, progress has been uneven and insufficient. Environmental sustainability is under threat, inequality is widespread and ever widening, and more than one billion people, most suffering from hunger and malnutrition, still live in extreme poverty.

It has become quite apparent that increasingly complex and interdependent global challenges point to a need for establishing and promoting new and effective partnerships for development. The Secretary-General, in an endeavour to scale up efforts and accelerate progress, has launched several initiatives focusing on priority issues such as Every Woman Every Child, Sustainable Energy for All, Global Education First, Zero Hunger Challenge, Scaling Up Nutrition, and Call to Action on Sanitation. These initiatives bring together governments, the private sector, academic and research institutions and others to jointly scale up efforts as well as identify opportunities for action beyond 2015.

The need for solutions

It is now clear that, in the face of these pressing global development challenges ahead, a heavy burden is being placed on national governments. Expectations of greater action against preventable diseases, providing adequate food and nutrition, for children to have at least a primary education, and for greater access to clean drinking water and better sanitation, as well as many others, call for urgent solutions. Governments have much to gain from the expertise, resources and capacities provided by outside partners.

New approaches being undertaken could revolutionize ways for accelerating the achievement of the MDGs and moving ahead the international development agenda. One of these, labeled the “Solution Revolution”, points towards the creation of multiple solution ecosystems focused on particular health, education, energy or other areas where development

challenges exist, and which could be nurtured by, for example, philanthropists undertaking social investing, innovators who find breakthroughs or shortcuts, or corporations discharging their social responsibilities. The solution ecosystems could use many currencies beside money, including data, brand and volunteerism. The underlying mechanism, however, would be the market, and creating the right incentive structures like prizes and challenges and crowd funding of investments.

Objectives of the joint special event

A special joint event to be held during the week the Second Committee discusses agenda item 19 on “Sustainable Development”, could prove valuable in highlighting possible solutions to development challenges, including from the perspective of partners from the private sector, and to also provide recommendations and policy alternatives to the international community on ways to move forward.

In particular, it will consider ways on how to:

- (a) Help accelerate the achievement of the MDGs;
- (b) Transition towards a path of sustainable development;
- (c) Support governments, including through identification of policy options, for meeting sustainable development challenges;
- (d) Strengthen partnerships in support of the above.

Proposed questions for discussion:

- How can the United Nations be an enabler for developing countries in directing solution ecosystems to tackle pressing development challenges in their countries?
 - How can those most in need of assistance, i.e. the Least Developed Countries, be provided with solutions to their urgent challenges? In what ways can their national development plans be supported?
 - What are the most effective business models/approaches available for accelerating the achievement of the MDGs?
 - How can initiatives such as the “Solution Revolution” help in supporting a transition to sustainable development? How can this model work for supporting the implementation of the Post-2015 development agenda?
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