

**Joint Side Event: Commission on Social Development****Shared Societies Project, Club de Madrid and Division for Social Development, United Nations****5<sup>th</sup> February (1.15-2.30pm)****Conference Room 6****Proposed theme:***The role of a Shared Society in achieving socially sustainable and inclusive development***Background**

There is growing urgency about the future role of Social Development in the contemporary world and this is the priority theme of the Commission for Social Development.

The Post-2015 Development Process has given the debate added impetus as the implementation of the new Sustainable Development will require a reorientation of all aspect of development including social development. Therefore the theme of the “Emerging issues” session for this year’s Commission for Social Development is the contribution of social development in the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals.

This joint side event will be convened immediately after the commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World Summit for Social Development. The timing of this side event, which follows the high-level panel discussion on the priority theme “Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world” and before the panel discussion on the emerging issue, will provide an opportunity to reflect on these themes and contribute ideas and perspectives to the emerging issues panel discussion.

A recurring theme in the Post-2015 debates has been the need for a holistic, integrated coherent and unified/universal approach, as can be seen in the reports of the Task Team, the Secretary General's High Level Panel and the General Assembly Open Working Group on SDGs. It is likely to continue to be a theme through the final year of negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and the subsequent implementation process.

A holistic approach to sustainable development, integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions, has been supported both by the Club de Madrid and the Division for Social Policy and Development, because it is predicated on an understanding that all aspects of development are inter-related and inter-dependent: progress on one aspect of development, and on the SDGs, is dependent on progress on the others.

A holistic and integrated approach requires the relevant disciplines – economics, social development, ecology, rural and urban planning, sociology, political science, etc. – to be able to work outside their traditional boundaries and develop synergies with each other to tackle the challenges of sustainable growth, environmental protection, social inclusion, participatory development planning, promotion of productive employment and decent work for all, and achieving just and stable societies. These are interlinked multi-disciplinary issues that require new models of team work and will have implications for institutional capacity building, and the training and preparation of staff to be able to work effectively in this way

The co-organisers of this event, the Shared Societies Project and the Division for Social Policy and Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs have worked profitably together to highlight the importance of a holistic and integrated approach to inclusive development, and have organised a number of related side events over the last three years.

The basic concept of a holistic and integrated approach to development is now widely accepted and the nature of some of the inter-linkages is increasingly understood, so that these insights are being incorporated into future planning and service delivery. However, there remain some linkages that are still only partially articulated and their implications are still imperfectly understood. As a result they can easily be overlooked, impeding the effective implementation of the SDGs.

### **The aims of the side event**

This side event will identify some of these missing links, particularly related to “sustainability”. It is intended to stimulate thinking and debate in order to inform the process of adoption of the SDGs and to clarify the role of social development in the Post-2015 world.

The Shared Societies Project has been championing the importance of the inclusion of all identity groups if a successful prosperous and peaceful society is to be achieved and therefore it is pleasing to see that it is at the core of the current iteration of the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is not difficult to demonstrate that a society, in which everyone has a role and opportunities to fulfil their potential, is likely to be more economically effective because it is able to call on the talents of all its citizens and residents. It also likely to be a more stable society which therefore requires less resources to be used for maintaining stability in the state.

However the dynamic relationship between social inclusion and sustainability is less well understood and only partly articulated. Why should a society that is inclusive of everyone be more responsible in its use of its resources and protection of its environment? Are those most directly affected by development the best judges of its environmental impact and how to minimise negative consequences? Can we depend on the different groups within society to work in the interests of current and future generations as opposed to narrow self interest? The session will explore why in the right circumstances this is the case. It will address questions such as:

1. How to create policy coherence and integration across social, economic and environmental dimensions to achieve socially sustainable development?
2. What linkages are not yet fully articulated in the transition from MDGs to SDGs? e.g.
  - protecting the vulnerable in the transition – investing in human capacity
  - climate change and poverty (reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience),
  - environmental degradation and well-being of people,
  - green jobs/economy and poverty
  - changing mind sets /behaviour and production and consumption pattern
  - science and technology, innovation and indigenous knowledge,
  - sustainable agriculture and rural development
  - effective engagement and involvement of local communities directly affected by issues of sustainability and development.

The session will also consider how those gaps can be effectively addressed, particularly through a Shared Society approach, which is holistic, integrated and inclusive and can contribute to promote socially sustainable development. e.g:

- How do we ensure that communities are fully informed about and have the opportunity to express their views on proposed development and its likely impact? Without such information they cannot make informed judgements and ensure that proposed development is sustainable. For example, In Latin America there has been

widespread acceptance of the concept of “consulta previa” (right of those affected to be consulted about the impact of development on them and their environment). But it has only occasionally resulted in meaningful consultation.

- How do we involve communities in resolving conflict over their competing use of resources? For example pastoralists and agriculturalists can reconcile their different needs but only through sensitive problem solving processes. Can different farming communities manage diminishing resources such as water to ensure adequate access for all?
- How can localities absorb large influxes of migrants with minimal environmental degradation and ensuring a decent quality of life for all? Migrants often find themselves living in unofficial informal over-crowded settlements, but these communities are not necessarily unstructured and can provide a better quality of life than the place of origin and can be environmentally efficient. But in order to ensure that individual, social and environmental needs are met, it is important to understand the unofficial informal processes and work with the natural community leaders.
- How can prosperous communities in the developed and developing countries become more aware of the reality of other communities particularly those most marginalised, so that they cooperate to ensure better living standards for all and at the same time ensure reductions in the depletion of the natural environment?

These challenges are more manageable if people and communities are able to retain their sense of shared ownership of the environment which leads to a sense of shared responsibility and shared benefit. For too many people, that sense of ownership, responsibility and benefit has been lost through processes of development, globalisation and migration. If the SDGs are to be effective, it will be necessary to reverse these trends and rebuild an inclusive, peaceful and Shared Society.

The session will discuss the relevance of these perspectives to our understanding of social development and their implications for the role of Social Development in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Potential participants**

The session should be relevant and useful to those knowledgeable about approaches to social inclusion, environmental issues, indigenous communities, community participation and migration as well as those engaged in the Post-2015 Process. The panel will also reflect these interests.

- Danilo Türk: former President of Slovenia, Member of the Club de Madrid, and active on indigenous issues while working at the UN.
- Navid Hanif, Director, Office for ECOSOC Co-ordination and Support, UNDESA.

- Roberto Borrero, UN Programs Consultant, representing Indigenous peoples in the Major Groups for sustainable development.
- Lori Nessel, Professor of Law, specializing in migration issues, Seton Hall University.
- Ahmed Alhendawi, UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Co-moderators:

- Daniela Bas, Director, Division for Social Policy and Development, UNDESA
- Clem McCartney, Policy and Content Coordinator, Shared Societies Project, Club de Madrid