Commission for Social Development
Fifty-third session

Concept Note and Programme

Panel discussion on emerging issues
"Contributions of Social Development to the Transition from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals"

Friday, 6 February 2015, 10:00am – 1:00 pm
Conference Room 4

1. Background

Pursuant to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) decision in 2006, the Commission for Social Development has included the agenda item entitled 'Emerging issues' in its work programme since its 2007 -2008 review and policy cycle. Under this agenda item, the Commission addresses current issues affecting social development requiring urgent consideration or new cross-cutting issues in the context of evolving global development challenges. The Bureau of the Commission decided "Contributions of social development to the transition from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals" as the topic of emerging issues of the 53rd session.

The panel discussion will be informed by the Note by the Secretariat on the "Emerging issues: Contributions of social development to the transition from Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals (E/CN.5/2015/6).

Social policy can contribute to the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals in a number of areas across the three dimensions of sustainable development. Social science and social policy provide frameworks to analyse the negative impact of climate change and environmental degradation on vulnerable groups, communities and individuals and provide the means to build their resilience and reduce their vulnerability. In addition, it provides the mechanisms to change social norms, values and behaviours and to empower people as active agents of change towards more sustainable paths to development.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the panel discussion is to discuss, drawing on the background note as well as insights of experts, how social development can contribute to achieve socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development. In specific, the panel aims to: 1) identify specific areas in which social policies and development have demonstrated to be effective and/or have a potential in promoting sustainable development in a more integrated manner; 2) discuss how social policies and development can help effectively addressing the inter-linkages between economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development; and 3) build knowledge on innovative approaches and strategies, good practices and lessons learned at the national, regional and international levels in these areas, in order to support national efforts in transitioning from MDGs to SDGs.

3. Structure and format of the panel discussion

The panel will be comprised of five panellists. Each panellist will make a 10-15 minutes presentation.

The Chair of the Commission (Romania) will open the meeting with brief remarks and introduce the moderator, who will conduct the interactive panel discussion.

The moderator will set the stage and provide substantive underpinning for the panel.

The moderator will introduce speakers (name, title and the profile), and invite them to speak in sequence.

After each panelist's presentation, the moderator will allow only "burning questions" directly related to the presentation – 2 maximum. [Assure the audience that there will be sufficient time for interactive dialogue after the presentations, and ask them to hold their questions)

Interactive dialogue [The moderator could take 3–4 questions/ comments and invite panelists to respond, and take another 3 – 4 questions. Repeat if time allows.]

Before closing the discussion, the moderator will give the panelists time for short concluding remarks.

The moderator will wrap up the panel discussion, and give the floor back to the Chair, who will close the meeting.

4. Composition of the Panel and order of presentation

<u>Panellists</u>

1.   Mr. Gabriel Rivera Conde y Castañeda, Head of Strategic Projects Unit of the Office of the Presidency and President of the Specialized Technical Committee of the Information System of the Millennium Development Goals of Mexico

2.   Mr. Georg Fischer, Director for Analysis, Evaluation, External Relations in the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion at the European Commission

3.   Mrs. Laura Maria Craciunean, Associate Professor at Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Simion Barnutiu Faculty of Law, Romania

4.   Mr. Raymond Torres, Director, Research Department, International Labour Organization (ILO)

5.   Mr. Elliott C. Harris, Director of the New York Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Secretary of the Environment Management Group

<u>Moderator</u>

Ms. Sarah Cook, Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)

5. Guiding questions

The Commission for Social Development may wish to consider the following questions in its deliberations on the emerging issue at its fifty-third session:

a) How can social policy, poverty eradication strategies in particular, integrate environmental sustainability perspectives in the promotion of inclusive and equitable economic growth?

b) What measures can be taken to implement innovative social protection systems and programmes that mitigate risks arising from external shocks and negative effects of climate change, safeguard people from falling into poverty and enhance health and education outcomes?

c) There are existing and emerging job opportunities, including in sectors where upgrading of skills will be expected, in the transition to a green economy. How can policymakers ensure adequate investment in human capacity to develop employable skills in these areas? What good practices, both in terms of national programmes and international support, can be shared?

d) How can the international community facilitate knowledge sharing and access to new technologies and innovation, including renewable energy, sustainable use of natural resources and ecosystem services and information and communication technologies? How can they be made widely available to all members of society, including youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, other vulnerable groups and people living in poverty or in rural and remote areas?

6. Time allocation

Speaker	Suggested speaking time
Chair: Opening remarks	5 minutes
Moderator: introduction/context-setting	10 minutes
Panellists (5): Presentations	10 – 15 minutes per panellist
Burning questions and answers	10 minutes
Moderated interactive discussion with participation from the floor	Approximately 45 – 50 minutes Interventions limited to no more than three minutes each, followed by responses from the panellists
Panellists (5): Concluding remarks	2 - 3 minutes wrap up for each person, as time allows
Concluding remarks by moderator Closing by the Chair	5 minutes
	Total duration: 3 hours