



DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND POLICY DIVISION

Sustainable Development Outlook 2019
“Gathering Storms and Silver Linings”

Expert Group Meeting
20-21 February 2019
Conference Room 1523, UN Secretariat Building
New York, NY 10017

The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) is convened to inform the analyses of Part III of the upcoming Sustainable Development Outlook (SDO) 2019, which addresses climate change, natural disasters, conflicts and population displacement. The SDO 2019 will aim to promote greater understanding of the shifting landscape and key challenges confronting sustainable development challenges and facilitate inter-governmental deliberations on the Sustainable Development Goals at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2019.

The EGM will consider the trends in, and interlinkages among, climate change, natural disasters, conflicts and population displacement. It will discuss not only the direct implications of these processes for sustainable development outcomes, but also explain how they indirectly affect implementation of sustainable development through undermining commitment to multilateralism. The meeting provides a platform for an exchange of views among experts, members of the SDO drafting Team, and colleagues from other UN organizations.

Agenda

Wednesday, 20 February 2019

9:30 – 10:00 Participants gather (coffee and tea will be served)

Opening Session:

10:00 – 10:30 Welcome and Introduction

Welcome remarks: Mr. Elliott Harris, Assistant Secretary-General and Chief Economist, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Keynote speaker: Albert G. Milbank Prof. Michael Oppenheimer, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University

Introductory remarks on the background, objectives and outline of the Sustainable Development Outlook (SDO) 2019: Mr. Hamid Rashid, Chief, Development Research Branch, Economic Analysis and Policy Division, DESA

Self-introduction of the participants

Session 1:

10:30 – 13:00 Climate change and disasters: *sustainable development impacts, trends, interlinkages with migration and conflicts, and likely scenarios*

Co-chairs: Prof. Debarati Guha-Sapir, Director, Centre for Research on Epidemiology of Disaster (CRED), Institute of Health and Society, Catholic University of Louvain

Mr. Nazrul Islam, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Development Research Branch, DESA

Presenter: Prof. Vally Koubi, Center for Comparative and International Studies, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology

Discussants: Prof. Robert McLeman, Wilfrid Laurier University

Dr. Leiwen Jiang, Senior Associate, Population Council

Dr. Alex de Sherbinin, Associate Director for Science Applications, Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN), Earth Institute, Columbia University

Prof. Emeka E. Obioha, Walter Sisulu University

Discussion

Discussion questions:

1. How do climate change scenarios for the SDG period (2016-2030) differ now as compared to what was envisaged in 2015, when the SDGs were launched and how the changed scenarios are likely to affect the SDG implementation efforts?
2. How do changed and evolving climate change scenarios affect conflict and migration, both internal and external?
3. What can the international community do to mitigate the effects of worsened climate change on the progress towards SDGs? What are the possible scenarios in this regard?

13:00 – 14:30 Lunch break

Session 2:

14:30 – 16:30 Conflicts and violence: *sustainable development impacts, trends, interlinkages with migration, and likely scenarios*

Co-chairs: Prof. Emeritus Anthony Oliver-Smith, University of Florida

Mr. Alex Julca, Economic Affairs Officer, Development Research Branch, DESA

Presenter: Prof. Lars-Erik Cederman, Director, Center for Comparative and International Studies, Swiss Federal Institute for Technology

Discussants: Prof. Clionadh Raleigh, University of Sussex
Prof. John Mutter, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University
Prof. Solomon Hsiang, University of California at Berkeley
Prof. Colin Walch, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University
Ms. Alexandra Fong, Team Leader, Policy Planning Unit, UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs

15:30–15:45 *Coffee/tea break*

Discussion

Discussion questions:

1. How have conflict scenarios for the SDG period (2016-2030) changed compared to what was envisaged in 2015, when the SDGs were launched and how have changed scenarios affected the progress toward SDGs?
2. What has been the impact of current conflicts on population displacement, both internal and external and what are the likely scenarios?
3. What can the international community do to reduce conflicts and mitigate their damaging effects on progress toward SDGs? What are the possible scenarios in this regard?

17:00-18:00 Reception

Thursday, 21 February 2019

Session 3:

10:00 – 12:30 Population displacement, migration pressures and rising extreme nationalism: *sustainable development impacts, trends, interlinkages, and likely scenarios*

Co-chairs: Ms. Cheryl Sawyer, Senior Population Affairs Officer, Population Division, DESA

Mr. Kristinn Sv. Helgason, Senior Officer, Development Research Branch, DESA

Presenter: Prof. Ashok Swain, Uppsala University

Discussants: Prof. Michael Werz, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress

Ms. Mariam Traore Chazalnoel, Environment and Climate Specialist, New York Office, International Organization for Migration

Dr. Marc Lavergne, Senior Research Fellow, National Centre for Scientific Research, Middle East/Horn of Africa, EMAM/Laboratory, University of Tours

Prof. Bryan Jones, Baruch College

Discussion

Discussion questions:

1. How have scenarios for population displacement – internal and external – changed during the past three years since the SDGs were adopted in 2015?
2. How do changed and evolving scenarios of population displacement affect progress towards SDGs in countries of origin, transit, and destination?
3. What are the linkages between growing migration pressures and rising extreme nationalism in a number of developed countries, where migrants are increasingly victims of marginalization and xenophobia? How rising extreme nationalism undermining commitment to various multilateral processes?

12:30 –14:00 Lunch break

Session 4:

14:00 – 16:30 Multilateralism, SDG implementation and policy responses: *implications of rising extreme nationalism, and likely scenarios*

Co-chairs: Mr. Hamid Rashid, Chief, Development Research Branch, DESA
Prof. Valeria Bello, University Ramon Llull

Presenters: Prof. Vally Koubi, Prof. Ashok Swain and Prof. Lars-Erik Cederman

Discussants: Mr. Rick Towle, Deputy Director, New York Office, UNHCR
Mr. Shantanu Mukherjee, Chief, Division for SDGs
Mr. Filiep Decorte, Deputy Director, New York Office, UN-Habitat
Mr. Jamil Ahmad, Head, Intergovernmental Affairs, New York Office, UNEP

15:15 –15:30 Coffee/tea break

Discussion

Discussion questions:

1. What are the visible signs of weakening commitment to multilateral processes related to climate change, conflicts, population displacement, migration pressures etc? Can various dimensions of these weakening commitments be quantified?
2. How weakening commitment to multilateralism are likely to impact progress toward the SDGs?
3. How can the retreats from multilateralism be halted, reversed and/or counteracted? What are the possible scenarios in this regard?

16:30 – 17:15 Closing

Chair: Mr. Elliott Harris, Assistant Secretary-General, DESA

Concluding remarks on the way forward by participants

Summary of discussions: Mr. Hamid Rashid, Chief, Development Research Branch, DESA