

Meeting of ECESA Plus Deputies
Monday, 31 October 2011
8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. (EST)
Room No. 2330, Two UN Plaza (DC2)
New York

Conclusions and decisions

1. Advancing the UN development agenda beyond 2015

a. Update on the intergovernmental process and arrangements by the Secretary-General for system-wide preparations

- Deputies noted the urgency to launch a more formal process of consultations and initiate the next phase of analytical work, given the presumed deadline of mid-2013 for completion of the analytical work and consultations on a post-2015 UN development agenda.
- Deputies underscored the need for inclusive consultations, engaging all relevant stakeholders, including Governments, institutional stakeholders, civil society organizations, private sector, and local authorities.
- Deputies noted the action by the Secretary-General to organize the system's work on a post-2015 UN development agenda, including the request to Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General of DESA, and Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP, to establish a UN System Task Team. Mr. Sha informed the Deputies that Assistant Secretary-General Jomo Kwame Sundaram of DESA and Assistant Secretary-General Olav Kjørven of UNDP would serve as the Co-Chairs of the Task Team.
- Deputies noted the change in the timetable set out by the Secretary-General, with the announcement of the High-level Panel to advise him on the post-2015 UN development agenda to take place after Rio+20 concludes, in early June 2012.
- DESA and UNDP Co-Chairs will communicate in the course of November with all ECESA Plus entities about the formation of the Task Team, to be established by January 2012.

b. Tour de table on relevant activities of ECESA Plus entities

- In order to facilitate information sharing and coordination of UN system-wide preparations, ECESA Plus entities will complete the questionnaire on their activities relevant to the formation of a post-2015 UN development agenda, covering the types of activities, substantive focus, relevant dates and stakeholders involved. Completed questionnaires should be sent to the ECESA Secretariat by Monday, 7 November.
- The ECESA Secretariat will compile and circulate the information to all entities.
- ESCWA will share the concept note on the study by the UN Regional Commissions on pursuing the UN development agenda beyond 2015.

Summary of discussions

1. Update on the intergovernmental process and arrangements by the Secretary-General for system-wide preparations

Mr. Stelzer welcomed all participants and thanked them for their attendance. He informed that ESCAP had to regret participation, due to the worsening flooding in Bangkok and sent best wishes for the safety of ESCAP colleagues and the speedy recovery of the city. He continued with reference to the first agenda item and the related Report of the Secretary-General, *Accelerating Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals: options for sustained and inclusive growth and issues for advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015* (A/66/126). He thanked all participants for their input into the draft report, which was discussed in the last ECESA Plus meeting. He noted that since then a number of developments had taken place regarding post-2015. Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General of DESA and ECESA Convener was giving priority attention to the issue of post-2015 and would provide an update.

Mr. Sha noted that ECESA Plus had already played a major role in the initial thinking on a post-2015 UN development agenda, through the consultations on the report of the Secretary-General. The Report responded to the request at the 2010 MDG Summit for the Secretary-General to make recommendations on further steps to advance the UN development agenda beyond 2015. It also responded to the Assembly's request to the Secretary-General to include, in his annual reports, analysis and recommendations on sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth for accelerating poverty eradication and achievement of the MDGs. DESA released had the Report in August and the General Assembly would consider the Report later in November. This would provide Member States with their first occasion for formal deliberations on the post-2015 issue.

Mr. Sha summarized the main parts of the Report. First, the report included a brief summary of global MDG progress. This was consistent with the MDG Report 2011 launched by the Secretary-General in July. Key messages included the following: (i) even though important progress had been made towards most MDG targets, vulnerable populations were still missing out in many dimensions; (ii) the global economic crisis slowed progress; and (iii) MDG achievement required stable and inclusive growth.

The second part of the report argued that MDG achievement required inclusive growth, with employment creation and equal opportunities for all, including women and vulnerable groups. There were many paths to stimulate growth and development, depending on country context and initial conditions. But key elements for sustainable and inclusive growth included: a development oriented macro-economic framework; sustainable use of natural resources; inclusive social policies; and the protection of human rights and good governance.

Mr. Sha turned to the third part of the Report, dealing with post-2015. He emphasized that rather than a post-MDG agenda the General Assembly had clearly requested recommendations on a post-2015 *development* agenda. The Report had four main messages on this issue. First, the discussion on post-2015 should be grounded in an evaluation of the MDGs as a framework, to assess what has worked and what needs improvement. Second, any post-2015 development agenda should have sustainable development at its centre. Third, there were new development challenges that needed further reflection: issues such as inequality, climate change, food and energy security, environmental degradation, demographic trends, peace and security, respect for human rights and good governance. Fourth, The new challenges could be addressed by more fully operationalizing the values and principles contained in the Millennium Declaration, which remained as relevant as ever.

Mr. Sha highlighted the Report's recommendation to initiate an inclusive, open and transparent process of consultations towards the definition of a post-2015 development framework, with participation by multiple stakeholders. It also identified some upcoming international events which would provide opportunities to think about the post-2015 agenda, such as Rio+20. Member States had already called for a special event to be held in 2013, during the 68th Session, to follow-up on the 2010 MDG Summit. The Report pointed to the 2013 special event as the occasion to take decisions on a post-2015 agenda. In effect, this meant that the analytical work and consultations would need to be concluded by mid-2013. There was therefore a sense of urgency to launch a more formal process of consultations and initiate the next phase of analytical work.

Mr. Sha informed participants that on the President of the General Assembly would convene an informal meeting on "advancing the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015" on 4 November 2011 (new date). The purpose was to prepare delegations for the formal deliberations on the new SG Report, with a focus on the post-2015 issue. The President had invited Mr. Sha to brief on the key issues and recommendations in the Report. He would then moderate an interactive discussion with delegations.

Mr. Sha further informed that, in anticipation of the Assembly deliberations, the Secretary-General had initiated action to organize the system's work on a post-2015 UN development agenda. The Secretary-General had requested Mr. Sha and Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP, "to establish a core group of dedicated senior technical experts to coordinate system-wide preparations on on-going efforts and propose a unified vision and road map for the definition of a UN development agenda post-2015, in consultation with all stakeholders" (see SG memorandum dated 19 September 2011, circulated in advance of the meeting). The terms of reference for the Task Team included: an assessment of on-going efforts within the UN system; an assessment of initiatives taken by external stakeholders including the international financial institutions, civil society, academia and the private sector; and the development of a system-wide vision and road map for the post-2015 agenda. The DESA-UNDP-led Task Team should be in place from January 2012, and was to be

supported by the full UN system. In addition, Mr. Sha affirmed that Ms. Clark and he were in touch on this and both determined to ensure that the UN system preparations on this critical issue were inclusive, strategic and effective. The Secretary-General had also indicated his intention to appoint a High-Level Panel to advise him on the post-2015 UN development agenda. The UN System Task Team would prepare a report early next year (tentatively by March 2012) that should serve as input to the work of the Panel.

Mr. Sha drew attention to a change in the timetable set out by the Secretary-General. Given the growing attention to the links between Rio+20 and post-2015 processes, and at Mr. Sha's suggestion, the announcement of the High-Level Panel would take place after the conclusion of Rio+20, in early June 2012. Mr. Sha stressed the need for the Rio+20 process to feed into the discussions on post-2015. In this context, he also mentioned the idea of 'sustainable development goals' as proposed by the Governments of Colombia and Guatemala.

Mr. Sha reminded participants that the work ahead would be challenging. The UN System Task Team would have a very tight timeframe to elaborate the contours of the post-2015 framework, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. He expressed confidence, however, that the UN system could do this and was looking forward to the collaboration. He announced that he had appointed Assistant Secretary-General Jomo Kwame Sundaram as Co-Chair of the UN System Task Team, while Assistant Secretary-General Olav Kjørven would have that role from the UNDP side. DESA and UNDP would be in close touch with ECESA Plus entities on the plans for formation of the UN System Task Team in the coming weeks.

UN Women requested clarification regarding the composition of the Task Team and its terms of reference, as well as whether the change of date for the establishment of the Panel would have any impact on the rest of the timeline.

Mr. Sha underscored the Secretary-General's request that the Task Team should be supported by the full UN system and engage all relevant stakeholders. He reaffirmed that DESA and UNDP were committed to having a fully inclusive process. He clarified that the change in the timeline was in the timing of the announcement of High-level Panel; the work of the Task Team would still need to proceed apace.

UNDP (Mr. Kjørven) indicated that it was looking forward to working with DESA in co-chairing the UN System Task Team. UNDP stressed that post-2015 was an enormous opportunity for the United Nations to take the lead in the global conversation. The conversation was already beginning to pick up, particularly in Northern-based think tanks, academic institutions and donor capitals. It was important to ensure a broad based and inclusive discussion. UNDG could contribute through its operational platforms at the country level to enabling the United Nations to gather opinions of civil society organizations, the private sector and citizens. The consultations on post-2015 also had to include young and female voices.

WFP expressed its intention to fully participate in the Task Team. WFP proposed that the United Nations should build on the success of the MDGs and strengthen the link between the MDGs and sustainable development. In this regards, WFP also suggested engaging the system at the level of the UN Chief Executives Board (CEB), which had been working on Rio +20 and could continue working on sustainability in the light of post-2015. WFP would address the post-2015 issue in their NGO consultation to receive feedback from NGOs on ways of bringing forward the current goals and looking beyond them.

OHCHR emphasized that the United Nations had to learn lessons from this year when looking beyond 2015, in terms of addressing issues of inclusion and equality and human rights in a broader sense. The High Commissioner had made a statement that, while the MDGs had made remarkable progress, they had to be assessed critically. The MDGs were too narrow and had not ensured that people's expectations at a very basic level were met. OHCHR welcomed an inclusive process and stressed the need to integrate in the post-2015 discussions the views of people and voices of civil society, especially from the South.

UN Women asked how the MDGs could be strengthened and how the Task Team would link MDGs with sustainable development goals.

[Mr. Sha and Mr. Stelzer had to leave the meeting; Mr. Rob Vos, Director, Development Policy and Analysis Division, DESA assumed the role of the chair.]

The Chair pointed to Mr. Sha's remarks on the SG Report, which highlighted the need to ground the work on post-2015 in an evaluation of the MDGs framework, and assured that the UN System Task Team would consider how to address this.

UNDP added that the process had been started with very wide parameters and that it had been wise not to narrow it down to either sustainable development goals or an 'MDG+' agenda. UNDP stressed that there could only be one UN development agenda in 2015 and it had to be ensured that the two streams, MDGs and sustainable development, were reflected in the agenda, as well as aspects such as human dignity.

ILO underscored Mr. Sha's point that post-2015 is not about an MDG agenda but about a development agenda. ILO was in full agreement with a broad assessment of the question, making sure that sustainable development and all the new challenges reflected in the SG Report were included.

UNISDR noted that most ECESA Plus members had networks and consultative processes that could feed into the post-2015 discussions. The question was how to use them in a coordinated fashion within the given timeline; in this regard, more specific direction from the UN System Task Team would be helpful.

UN-Habitat stressed the importance of local authorities as stakeholders and key actors in development. UN-Habitat also cautioned against creating expectations that

Rio +20 would answer all questions in relation to post-2015, given that it was approaching some issues from a particular perspective that may not be broad enough to capture all the dimensions involved. Sustainable cities, for example, were a priority of Rio +20, but the discussions were tending to concentrate on the negative aspects of the city, without addressing the city as an opportunity. IOM shared UN-Habitat's view on Rio+20, which was addressing the issue of migration, but mainly in a negative sense in terms of disaster migration. Issues of mobility of persons had not been adequately captured in the MDGs and would have to be a more prominent feature of a post-2015 development agenda. IOM would focus its World Migration Report in 2013 on development and migration, and it was planning to organize a number of stakeholder forums to discuss the role of migration in the post-2015 development agenda.

DESA recalled that the current work on Rio+20 was serving to prepare a particular legislative process; a specific legislative process would likewise take shape on the formulation of a post-2015 agenda. Yet, Rio +20 and other relevant processes engaging governments would feed into the post-2015 discussions at various stages. As for Rio+20, the expectation was that it would help to define some of the issues relevant for post-2015, and not that it would bring closure on the issue of sustainable development or a specific set of sustainable development goals. What was important was that the various tracks should come together in due course and that post-2015, there should be only one UN development agenda.

The Chair, in concluding the item, reiterated that DESA and UNDP Co-Chairs would communicate in the coming weeks with all ECESA Plus entities about the formation of the Task Team to be established by January 2012.

2. Tour de table on relevant activities of ECESA Plus entities

The Chair referred to the questionnaire that had been circulated in advance and underscored how this exchange of information – on entities' analytical work, publications, conferences, consultations and other events – would be critical to ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive approach by the UN system. He thanked OHCHR, UNCTAD and WFP, which had already sent in their completed questionnaires and encouraged all other entities to do the same. A compilation would then be prepared and circulated amongst all entities.

UNISDR briefed participants on their work focusing on putting risk at the centre of discussions on post-2015 to ensure that a realistic agenda could be obtained. UNEP would release a special report on extreme events in early 2012 that would support the arguments for including risk in the agenda. UNISDR's next global assessment would analyse risk and financial consequences, particularly focusing on the private sector and risk sharing.

UN Women briefed participants on a number of activities aimed to ensure that MDG3 was continued and reinforced, with value added to all the other inter-linked

issues of importance to women. UN Women noted that the recent meeting of CEB had identified gender equality and empowerment of women as one of the UN system's 10 priorities for Rio +20. UN Women underscored the need for a broader development framework, noting how Governments always referred to the MDGs in conjunction with the other internationally agreed development goals. UN Women was working with rural women in preparation for Rio +20. It was also a member of the inter-agency group working to develop gender indicators and targets which would be of relevance to various aspects of a post-2015 agenda.

ESCWA, as the current Coordinator of the five UN Regional Commissions provided an update on their joint report, tentatively titled *Beyond 2015: The future development agenda*. The report aimed to identify key issues and questions in each of the five regions and was planned for release in 2014. It would be developed in a participatory manner including the UN and other partners, as well as non-governmental stakeholders. ESCWA proposed to share the concept note of the report with ECESA Plus entities.

ITU indicated that 2015 would also mark the ten-year review of the Tunis Declaration and Plan of Action. ITU would hold a High-Level Meeting on information technology as a catalyst for the achievement of the MDGs or sustainable development goals. In cooperation with UNESCO, ITU WFP would hold a meeting next year focusing on the same issues, which could feed into the post-2015 process. ITU also noted how the events that took place in the Arab region this year showed how the use of ICTs for public expression was creating 'tests' for freedom of expression and suggested that such developments could have an impact on the post-2015 agenda in all regions.

UN-Habitat referred to the issue of slums, which was already highlighted at the 2010 MDG Summit. It was working with governments and local authorities to set up national targets and outline programmes for achieving these goals by 2020. UN-Habitat stressed the importance of forming a new urban development agenda that responded to an increasing rural-urban migration and approached the city in a positive manner as an opportunity for development. UN-Habitat would support local authorities to bring their voices to the table in the discussions on post-2015.

WIPO informed participants of its permanent committee that deals with the development agenda and meets twice annually. It also had several clusters focusing on issues such as constraints on free trade, transfer of technology, traditional knowledge and technical assistance. WIPO wanted to contribute its knowledge to the post-2015 and Rio +20 processes, particularly in the areas of green economy and renewable energy.

UNDP expressed appreciation for the many important perspectives brought up in the meeting and referred to the crucial networks that would enable the UN to cast its nets widely to ensure that the post-2015 UN development agenda would be built on a truly global inclusive process. UNDP agreed with WFP that the MDGs had been an incredible success that moved governments to give more money and efforts to the most vulnerable people over the past 10 years. But UNDP also recalled that the

MDGs themselves were just goals or checks on whether strategies and efforts were working; they were not strategies in themselves. The challenge was to come up with powerful checks to ensure and assess progress beyond 2015. In this sense, the goals themselves should remain focused on people, not strategies and concepts. While acknowledging that the work ahead would be difficult, UNDP was hopeful that the agreement could be reached on an improved and more sustainable people-centred framework.

UNFPA informed of a number of relevant events related to the 20-year review of the programme of action from the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). A global survey and national consultations would take place, in close collaboration with the Population Division/DESA and the Regional Commissions. Regional meetings would be organized by the Regional Commissions in 2013 to present the first report in the review process, which would form the basis of the SG Report to the Special Session of the General Assembly in 2014. Lastly, there would be an event in the context of the Commission on Population and Development in April 2014 that would address a lot of the issues spanning the thematic aspects of post-2015, including migration, gender, sustainable development, and reproductive health. In the review process, UNFPA was trying to ensure that one UN picture was presented at country level.

UNCTAD proposed to give more attention to growing inequality and ways of addressing it in a future development agenda, as well as ways of integrating climate change. UNCTAD also underscored the importance of assessing the current framework, which it believed would show the need for a slight rebalance of ODA from social development to rebuilding productive capacities to enable sustainable outcomes. The UNCTAD XIII Conference would take place in Doha in April 2012; this, as well as the work of the Trade and Development Board should feed into the consultation process on the post-2015 UN development agenda. Another platform for providing inputs on post-2015 would be the annual multi-stakeholder public symposium UNCTAD had introduced in 2009, bringing together member states, academia, CSOs and the private sector.

UNESCO shared the view that the post-2015 agenda had to emerge from an inclusive, open consultation process with an array of stakeholders. UNESCO stressed that people should remain at the centre of any development agenda and that education beyond primary level needed to be a priority as well as literacy. Special attention also needed to be paid to closing the gender gap in education and literacy. UNESCO has launched a Global Partnership for Girl's and Women's Education in May 2011 which will focus mainly on secondary education and adult literacy, especially in Africa and Asia. A High-Level Panel was established, which will complement these efforts by stepping up global advocacy.

IMF expressed concern that a sustainable development agenda should address not only developing countries but also developed countries. In addition, IMF noted that the issues mentioned by UNCTAD were also important to a broader sphere of

countries than just developing ones; the United Nations needed to be careful that the focus of post-2015 UN development agenda was not too narrowly defined.

The Chair observed that the point of IMF was well taken and had indeed been underscored by many of the participants. There appeared to be broad support to ensure a global development agenda post-2015, yet the task ahead would be no less challenging.

The Chair outlined DESA's work on post-2015, in addition to the preparations for the work of the UN System Wide Task Team and supporting the Rio+20 process. DESA was thinking of organizing an expert meeting in early 2013 on the post-2015 development agenda. The Committee for Development Policy that DESA supported was working on a book project assessing strategies that have helped in achieving the current development agenda and drawing out the implications for post-2015.

UNDP reiterated that the UNDG had a project ready to get started, focused on engaging at country level, reaching out to governments, civil society and local stakeholders. UNDP indicated that it currently had some funding available and was trying to source additional funding. It stressed that the project was very much a system-wide UNDG effort, not just a UNDP effort.

The Chair closed the meeting by reminding participants to send the completed questionnaires, which would be compiled and circulated to all entities.

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