



2016 PARTNERSHIP FORUM

Breaking the Silos: Cross-sectoral partnerships for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

31 March 2016

Dialogue One (10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)

ECOSOC CHAMBER, UN Headquarters, New York

ISSUES NOTE

Background

In 2000, world leaders adopted 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which committed nations to a global partnership to reduce extreme poverty by 2015. The implementation of the MDGs have led to progress in areas such as income poverty, access to improved sources of water, primary school enrollment, and child mortality. However, poverty remains a reality for many. One of the pitfall of the MDGs has been the lack of integration across sectors. The MDGs identified sectoral goals – and targets under them – yet, little attention was given to the impact efforts to attain a goal in one sector could have in another sector¹. Moreover, a review of global multi-stakeholder partnerships under the MDG agenda pointed out to the fact that these partnerships reinforced a siloed (sectoral) and ‘projectized’ approach to development problems and solutions. This sectoral approach thereby undermined the potential to address the drivers of systemic change and for scaling impact through a more programmatic approach².

Last September, world leaders adopted the 2030 agenda for sustainable development along with its 17 goals and 169 targets. A key feature of the 2030 agenda is the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and the interlinkages existing within and across the goals (See Annex 1). The SDGs build on the key lesson from the MDGs that sustained systemic change cannot be achieved through single-sector goals and approaches. Therefore, implementing the 2030 agenda will entail breaking down traditional silos for more cross-sectoral decision-making and

¹ Nina Weitz, Måns Nilsson, Marion Davis, SAIS Review of International Affairs, Volume 34, Number 2, Summer-Fall. 2014, pp. 37-50 (Article)

² Peter Hazlewood, Global Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships: Scaling up public-private collective impact for the SDGs, World Resources Institute, Back ground paper no 4, 2015.

solutions³. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development presents a unique opportunity for multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development to leverage cross-sectoral approaches to enhance their effectiveness and impact. To successfully seize this opportunity, a number of actions should be taken to strengthen accountability, transparency, coherence, monitoring, reporting, as well as knowledge sharing through cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder partnerships, as elaborated below.

The “cross-sectoral, integrated or nexus” approach to multi-stakeholder partnerships

The “cross-sectoral, integrated, or nexus” approach to multi-stakeholder partnerships under the SDGs era differ from the “sectoral or silo” approach to multi-stakeholder partnerships under the MDGs era. An analysis of the SDGs as a system has shown that some thematic areas covered by the SDGs are well connected among one another.⁴ This analysis also demonstrates the existing link between targets and several SDGs. There are various nexuses, clusters, or links among sectors that are identified through the SDGs such as: the education, gender and health nexus, the water, energy, and food nexus, the energy, food security, and poverty eradication nexus⁵, as well as the climate, land, energy, and water nexus. A description of two nexuses is presented below for an illustrative purpose.

The gender-education-health nexus

A nexus approach to gender-education-health is critical for the empowerment of women and girls and gender equality, which has a multiplier effect on development. Educating women and girls contribute to their economic, social and political empowerment. Early marriage, early pregnancy and child labour, however, can force some girls to drop out of school. Educated women are more likely to have access to paid jobs and enjoy better health, while their families are more likely to receive better health care and nutrition. Educated women are also more likely to delay and space out pregnancies, and have better access to health care services. At the same time, the promotion of health of girls and young women can help keep them in school and successfully transition to the employment. One example of such a nexus approach is the Joint Programme on “Empowering Adolescent Girls and Young Women through Education” by UNESCO, UN-Women and UNFPA. The Joint Programme aims “to keep girls and young women in education by creating an enabling environment, to empower them with relevant knowledge and skills, to ensure they are healthy and make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, to support them to make successful and healthy transitions into adulthood and the labour market, and to fully participate in society”⁶.

The climate-land-energy-water nexus

The world’s resources of water, land and energy have become scarce owing to increasing global demand; the use of each has an impact on the demand for the others; and the use of all these resources has consequences on the climate. These linkages demonstrate that policies based on the analysis of only one of the above mentioned world’s resources could have an opposed unexpected impact on the

³ Source: <http://www.wri.org/blog/2015/09/sustainable-development-goals-setting-new-course-people-and-planet> consulted on 30 November 2015.

⁴ David Le Blanc, “Towards integration at last? The sustainable development goals as a network of targets”, DESA Working Paper, No. 141 (ST/ESA/2015/DWP/141).

⁵ Energy: Sustainable Development Goals. <http://www.fao.org/post-2015-mdg/14-themes/energy/en/> consulted on 30 November 2015

⁶ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002319/231944e.pdf>

others. While there are interdependencies between sectors related to climate (SDG 13), land (SDG 15), energy (SDG 7), and water (SDG 6), decision and policy making for each sector generally take place separately. One of the downside of this “silo” approach is ineffective resource allocations and counter-productive policies that could make development unsustainable in the long term. If multistakeholder partnerships were to adopt a climate-land-energy-water (CLEW) integrated approach, it could lead to several benefits, include better policy assessments, policy integration and harmonization and better resource allocation.⁷ FAO’s multi-partner programme “Energy-Smart Food for People and Climate” addresses the climate-land-energy-water nexus. The programme aims to help countries promote energy-smart agrifood systems through the identification, planning and implementation of appropriate energy (SDG 7), water (SDG 6), food security (SDG 2) and climate-smart strategies (target 13.2) that spur agricultural growth and rural development (SDG 2) and reduce overall demand on land (SDG 15).⁸

Cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder partnerships – A new trend

Integrated partnership models have been slowly emerging over the past few years. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda can be a catalyst for a renewed effort to promote integrated development. New partnerships that are now being designed to accelerate the implementation of the SDGs should look closely at how targets under one goal may affect targets under other goals or how individual targets could serve multiple goals. Existing partnership initiatives, at the review stage, could also be encouraged to incorporate other targets from other goals so as to enable greater integration and synergies across as many goals as possible. This will often require a monitoring and review process that looks at multiple goals at the same time.

The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) has clearly articulated its intention to use cross-sectoral approaches in its “MAPS”⁹ common approach for effectively and coherently supporting Member States in implementing the 2030 Agenda.¹⁰ Examples of UN-led multi-stakeholder partnerships leveraging cross-sectoral approaches include the Green Industry Platform which provides a forum for catalyzing, mobilizing and mainstreaming action on green industry around the world. The Green Industry platform proposes a concrete pathway to long term economic growth (SDG 3) and sustainable development. It encourages the more efficient use of energy (SDG7) and raw materials. It promotes more environmentally sound modes of consumption and production (SDG 12). It also contributes both to cleaner and more competitive industrial development (SDG 9), that does not lead to adverse human health outcomes (SDG 3) and which helps reduce pollution (target 11.6) as well as reliance on unsustainable use of natural resources (target 12.2). In its Women in Green Industry Chapter, the green industry platform recognizes the importance of the gender-environment nexus and seeks to address the issues surrounding women’s empowerment and gender equality (SDG 5) in green industrial development (SDG 9).¹¹ Partners of the green industry platform include the United Nations Industrial

⁷ Source: IAEA, Seeking Sustainable Climate, Land, Energy and Water (CLEW) Strategies. In Nuclear Technology Review 2009 (Vienna, International Atomic Energy Agency, 2009). Available from: www.iaea.org/publications/reports consulted on 20 November 2015

⁸ FAO Energy-smart Food for People and Climate (ESF) Programme. <http://www.fao.org/energy/81350/en/> consulted on 24 November 2015.

⁹ MAPS stands for Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support.

¹⁰ UNDG, 2015, Mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Interim reference guide to UN country teams. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/sustainable-development-goals/mainstreaming-the-2030-agenda-for-sustainable-development/> consulted on 1st December 2015.

¹¹The Women in Green Industry Chapter. <http://www.greenindustryplatform.org/?p=2242> consulted on 1st December 2015.

Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and the United Nations Global Compact. The Global Compact Business Partnership Hub¹² could be utilized to promote a nexus approach to partnerships at local and global levels.

The 2030 Water Resources Group (WRG) is another multi-stakeholder partnership leveraging cross-sectoral approaches to find solutions to the water security issue. The WRG helps planners and politicians assess with business and civil society how best to manage the integrated nexus of water (SDG 6)-related issues [such as energy (SDG 7), agriculture (SDG 2), industrialization (SDG 9), and urbanization (SDG 9)] in the context of planning for economic growth (SDG 3) and creating economic resilience to future climatic variability (SDG 13). Partners of the 2030 WRG include the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Economic Forum (WEF), multilateral and bilateral agencies (Swiss Development Corporation), private sector companies (Nestlé, PepsiCo, The Coca-Cola Company), and other organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).¹³

Challenges

Although such models have the potential to significantly increase partnership impact, they are much more complex and require more management skill and resources than conventional sectoral (silo) partnerships. Furthermore, taking into consideration cross-sectoral linkages across various goals and targets, financing of these partnerships will be challenging as investments made to achieve a given goal influence the approach, resourcing and effectiveness of the delivery of others. It would require strong coordination between key funders, including co-financing of partnership initiatives, joint fiduciary frameworks and joint progress reporting.

Key Questions for Discussion

The ECOSOC dialogue could focus on the following questions:

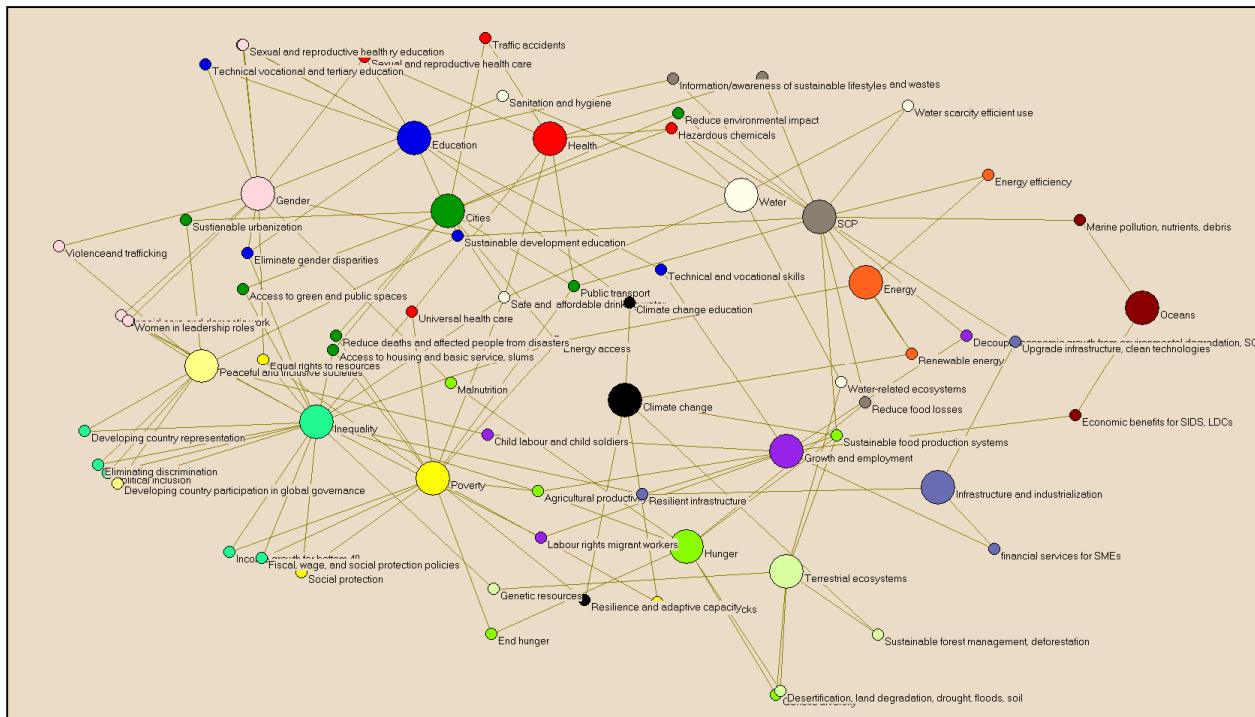
- What does it take to galvanize new cross-sectoral partnerships? What are possible incentives that would promote and encourage existing partnerships to utilize cross-sectoral approaches?
- What are the elements of an enabling environment for cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder partnerships?
- What institutional arrangements are needed for the United Nations to fully and efficiently support Member States in cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder partnerships?

¹² The UN Global Compact Business Partnership Hub is an interactive, online platform designed to connect businesses with potential partners in support of UN goals and issues. Companies and other organizations can find new partners for their projects, or join existing projects, in the areas of anti-corruption, climate and energy, social enterprise and water. Companies can also connect with potential partners in the UN system through the UN-Business Partnership Hub. <https://businesspartnershiphub.org/about/>. Accessed on 23 February 2016.

¹³ The 2030 Water Resources Group. <http://www.weforum.org/reports/water-resources-group-background-impact-and-way-forward>. Accessed on 3rd December 2015.

- What are the lessons learned from multi-stakeholder partnerships that have successfully leveraged (or who are committed to leveraging) cross-sectoral approaches to achieve the SDGs?
- How can we design cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder partnerships to effectively leverage integrated or nexus approaches to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?
- What type of monitoring, reporting, and evaluation mechanisms could be used for cross-sectoral multi-stakeholder partnerships?

Annex 1. SDGs as interlinked system



Source: David Le Blanc (2015), "Towards Integration at Last? The SDGs as a Network of Targets", DESA Working Paper No. 141.

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