

2018 ECOSOC PARTNERSHIP FORUM

“Partnering for resilient and inclusive societies: contributions of the private sector”

4 April 2018

Concept Note

Background

The private sector is expected to play a significant role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. While recent inter-governmental discussion on the role of the partnerships have been largely around how to create an enabling environment to incentivize the engagement of the private sector in development efforts, there is a growing attention accorded to the quality and result of their engagement -- towards promoting more inclusive economic growth and building more resilient and equitable societies. This is a crosscutting endeavour, essential to the achievement of all SDGs.

The imperative for universal inclusion is at the core of the 2030 Agenda, with its bold pledge to leave no one behind. A number of targets across the 17 SDGs reflect the commitment to foster inclusive and resilient societies through participation of all. For example, Target 1.4 seeks to ensure, by 2030, that all men and women, in particular, the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources. Target 4.5 strives to eliminate gender disparities in education by 2030 and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations. Targets for Goal 5 specifically recognize gender equality and women’s empowerment as both means and objective of all sustainable development challenges. Target 9.C identifies access to information and communications technology as important for the achievement of SDG9. The inequality targets for SDG10 focus on various social, economic and political aspects of inclusion. Inclusion also underpins the target 11.b for SDG11. Additionally, target 17.18, points to ways that we can better monitor progress towards inclusion and participation of invisible and marginalized populations with its recognition of the need for high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, among others.

While the main responsibility for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda lies with national governments, multi-stakeholder partnerships that harness the contribution of the private sector, can help find innovative solutions to fast track the implementation of 2030 Agenda as a complementary means of implementation. It is critical for the private sector to be inclusive of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations and respect the ten principles of the Global Compact (e.g. human rights, labour rights, the environment and anti-corruption), which articulate the core principles of the 2030 Agenda that are most relevant for businesses. Today’s private sector is being called on to maximize its positive impact throughout their supply chains and within each community where they operate.

The specific contributions of the private sector for the achievement of the SDGs can come in many forms – from making more long-term investment in sustainable infrastructure, to spurring innovation, to transferring technological know-hows, to creating decent jobs and income-generating opportunities, to designing more sustainable and inclusive value chains. According to the recent research¹, sustainable business models could open economic opportunities worth up to USD 12 trillion and increase employment by up to 380 million jobs by 2030. The more diverse and inclusive economies are, the better it is for businesses and societies as a whole – as it generates greater wellbeing, productivity and social cohesion.

One area where the private sector can also play a bigger role is in utilizing its “big data infrastructure” for public good. Most of the high-quality big data is produced by the private sector and generally not accessible by the public, but treated as an internal intellectual property – the means to enhance corporate revenues. This presents an opportunity for the public and private sectors to collaborate for more informed public policy-making. The private sector could also contribute through formulating more inclusive business modes based on the outcome of clientele analytics.

Objectives

The Forum has the following objectives:

1. Provide a platform to bring together multi-stakeholder partners to evaluate progress in promoting inclusion and participation of women, youth and vulnerable groups, including indigenous people and persons with disabilities.
2. Showcase the best practices and innovative partnerships in promoting inclusion and participation of women, youth and vulnerable groups, including indigenous people and persons with disabilities.
3. Identify ways to unblock obstacles and create an enabling environment to accelerate progress in reaching the targets identified in the SDGs that promote inclusion and participation. In this context, consider how big data can be leveraged to promote inclusion and participation.

Format and Participation

The ECOSOC Partnership Forum will be a one-day meeting, which will be convened and chaired by the ECOSOC President. It will commence with a half-hour opening session which will include addresses by the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary General and a keynote address by an eminent personality. Leading the interactive dialogues will be “Empowerment Champions” of innovative and new approaches to social inclusion and participation. They will be joined by policy makers, experts from the private sector, foundations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the UN system, academia and research institutions, local governments and parliamentarians.

The morning session aims to present innovative business strategies aimed at promoting inclusion and participation of vulnerable populations. Internal and external enabling factors will be discussed by

¹ For more information, please see: <http://businesscommission.org/news/release-sustainable-business-can-unlock-at-least-us-12-trillion-in-new-market-value-and-repair-economic-system>

multi-stakeholder panel and participants. The afternoon session aims to explore the potential role of the private sector in using their big data to build inclusion and participation, key to promoting more resilient and inclusive societies. Multi-stakeholder perspectives on the new generation of public-private partnerships (PPPs), the “public-private data partnership for sustainable development” will be discussed.

Outcome

The outcome of the discussion will a summary which will help shape the dialogue in the Special Meeting of the President of ECOSOC on “**Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all**” to be held in May 2018 and will also contribute to the high-level segment of the Council (16-19 July, 2018) and the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) convened under the auspices of the ECOSOC (9-13 and 16-19 July, 2018).