

Breakfast Meeting with the Private Sector
In preparation for the 2018 ECOSOC Special Meeting
“Towards sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all”

New York, 24 January 2018

Concept Note

The private sector is expected to play a significant role in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. While recent intergovernmental discussions on the role of the private sector have been mostly around how to create an enabling environment to incentivize engagement of companies 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.

The specific contribution of the private sector to the implementation of the SDGs comes in many forms – from long-term investment in sustainable and “green” infrastructure, to transfer of technological know-how, to creation of decent jobs and income-generating opportunities. The private sector represents a diverse group of actors, ranging from micro-enterprises to cooperatives to multinationals, each of which face different challenges and opportunities with regards to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

The Breakfast Meeting in preparation for the 2018 ECOSOC Special Meeting will explore the role of the private sector in support of the participatory development process for the 2030 Agenda and discuss lessons learned and ways forward to strengthen private sector engagement. The breakfast meeting will also focus on the role that the private sector can play in strengthening the participation of all groups, including women and girls, indigenous people, migrants and people with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda specifically highlights its role in this regard, encouraging the private sector to contribute to advancing gender equality through striving to ensure women’s full and productive employment and decent work, equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, and equal opportunities, as well as protecting them against discrimination and abuse in the workplace.

To support the substantive preparation in the lead up to the Preparatory Meeting (26-27 March 2018, Czech Republic) and the ECOSOC Special Meeting (23 May 2018, New York), the meeting will be held on 24 January 2018 at the Bohemian National Hall in New York, bringing together the representatives of approximately 15 private sector entities and of UN Member States (Ambassadorial level) to engage in a candid and focused discussion on the role of the private sector in fostering sustainable, resilient and inclusive societies through participation of all.

Focus Questions:

- How can investment in the 2030 Agenda be made more attractive to the private sector?
- How can the private sector – including multinational corporations (MNCs) and the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) – enhance the economic participation of women, youth, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, including through:

- Ensuring their equitable access to credit / financial / digital services and decent employment;
 - embedding the principle of gender equality and non-discrimination in global value chains, R&D and institutional capacity-building strategies (e.g. sustainability reporting); and
 - ensuring the empowerment of the youth to address youth unemployment.
- How can the private sector strengthen the participation of all groups, including women, indigenous people, migrants, persons with disabilities and others, in decision-making and high-level positions?

Format

The Breakfast Meeting will be chaired by the President of ECOSOC and moderated by Ms. Melissa Powell, Chief of Staff, UN Global Compact. It will begin with the interventions from several lead speakers (representing the government and the private sector), followed by interactive discussion with participants. Suggestions put forward in the discussions will feed into the Prague preparatory meeting as well as the ECOSOC Special Meeting.