

Insumos para la participación de Colombia en el evento
Delivering the 2030 Agenda:
The role of the UN development system in middle-income countries
ECOSOC Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the UN development system in the
context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
26 May 2016, 8:00 pm a 10:00 am, Conference Room 4 UNHQ, New York

Context

ECOSOC Dialogues on the longer term positioning of the UN Development System

The ECOSOC Dialogues on the longer term positioning of the UN Development System are based on the mandate of paragraph 44 of ECOSOC Resolution E/RES/2014/14, in which member states decided “...to convene a transparent and inclusive dialogue involving Member States and all relevant stakeholders on the longer-term positioning of the United Nations development system, taking into account the post-2015 development agenda, including the interlinkages between the alignment of functions, funding practices, governance structures, capacity and impact of the United Nations development system, partnership approaches and organizational arrangements...”.

This is the first mandate ECOSOC has issued to carry out an intergovernmental dialogue oriented towards reform of the UN development system. The outcome of this process is expected to serve as a significant input to the negotiations of the 2016-2019 QCPR resolution¹, which will provide key mandates from member states to the UN system for adjustments and reform, as appropriate, taking into account the role the UN must play supporting countries in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Colombia has long had a strong interest in strengthening the Development Pillar of the United Nations including the UN Development System, and as a result, has engaged actively in the process and the discussions. On the one hand, strengthening the positioning of the UN, particularly the General Assembly and ECOSOC (the UN most democratic principal organs) as the main international fora for addressing the international dimensions of development, will result in benefits to Colombian interests, compared to business-as-usual. Some of the most relevant issues include setting the relevant international norms for the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development including key means of implementation.

¹ The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) is the mechanism through which the General Assembly assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact of UN operational activities for development, establishing system-wide orientations for the development cooperation and country-level modalities of the UN system. It is the primary policy instrument of the General Assembly to define the way the UN development system operates to support programme countries in their development efforts.

On the other hand, enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations Development System, both at the headquarters level and at the operational levels, will enable it to strengthen its capacities to support the national efforts of developing countries including middle-income countries and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations such as Colombia.

As a result, both the QCPR and the ECOSOC Dialogues provide key platform for advancing national interests related to the role of the UN in supporting Colombia's developmental efforts.

Cooperation with Middle Income Countries

This session is the result of the mandate established by paragraph 7 of General Assembly Resolution 70/2015, which invites the ECOSOC to consider ways in which the UN Development System could improve its support to different country context, including providing efficient, effective, better-focused and better coordinated support to middle income countries in order to strengthen their efforts to overcome the challenges they face regarding sustainable development.

"Middle income country" is a category defined by the World Bank as economies with a per capita GNI between US \$ 1.045 and US \$ 12.736 as of 2015, thus comprising 104 countries in all continents, which are the home of approximately three quarters of the world's poor people. The division between lower-middle income countries and upper-middle income countries is \$4,125, positioning Colombia in the latter group. This categorization, based exclusively on per capita national income, is used by bilateral and multilateral development partners to prioritize and allocate international cooperation flows, particularly cooperation in concessional terms. This fact, among the other recognized limitations of per capita income measures, is at the heart of mandates such as paragraph 129 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and SDG target 17.19 which call on the need for development measures beyond GDP.

In 2014, The OECD Development Assistance Committee decided to further strengthen the allocation of international cooperation to least developed countries, thus strengthening the decline of cooperation flows particularly concessional flows to middle income countries.

The heterogeneous group of middle-income countries face a wide range of varied and complex developmental challenges, including the widely recognized "middle income trap", structural gaps, intra regional and inter regional structural gaps, competitiveness bottlenecks among other issues that require international action including cooperation to be able to catch up and close the developmental gaps with developed countries. Other grouping of *countries in special situations* recognized by the UN particularly the least developed countries (LDC), landlocked developing countries (LLDC) and small island developing states (SIDS) benefit from having Actions Plans devoted to their special situations: the Istanbul Program of Action in the case on LDC, the Vienna Programme of

Action for LLDC and the SAMOA Pathway for SIDS. However, middle income countries and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, the relevant groupings for Colombia, still lack a devoted Programme of Action at the United Nations.

References to non-financial means of implementation have been strengthened in recent UN documents such as the Addis Abeba Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction among others. Key issues including tax cooperation, technological cooperation, capacity building, pro-development multilateral trade rules, and democratization of international economic and financial institutions provide an opportunity for middle income countries to reap benefits from the multilateral system and overcome their developmental obstacles.

Key messages for Panel “*Member States’ experiences and perspectives on the way forward in dealing with existing and emerging challenges: How should the UN development system reposition itself*”

- The United Nations System need to work closely with members States to establish what are the specific needs middle-income countries face in order to advance in the achievement of sustainable development. This is a complex question, since this group of countries is particularly diverse.
- Under that reality, the guiding principles should be: flexibility and national ownership to determine priorities. Each single State has its own particularities and challenges; therefore, the UN Development System must avoid the oversimplification of strategies and refrain from working on rigid schemes that only limits the capacity of adaptation. As has been permanently said, we cannot work under the logic of “one size fits all”.
- To attain this goal it is of utmost importance the coordination and dialogue between all components of the UN Development System. We have been witness of the lack of clear structures, mandates and operational capabilities of agencies on the ground. Although progress has been made with the figure of Resident Coordinator, there are multiple clashes; there are no clear structures and understanding of mandates that help agencies on the ground to work coherently.
- Even though we celebrate UN efforts to enhance coordination, particularly at the operational level, we are truly convinced that the long term-wide strategic planning, implementation and reporting in order to ensure coherent and integrated support to implementation of the new Agenda by the UN development system, as mandated by paragraph 88 of the 2030 Agenda, must be urgently implemented.
- However this system-wide planning must be based on a transformative character, as this is one of the singularities of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, it is necessary to have an accurate strategic-wide planning, where the UN System strengthens the coherence between international decision making processes and the national implementation mechanisms.

- The alignment within the programs and actions of the UN system at a national level should be a priority of the general coordination and planning of the UN, but is not the only requirement. The interagency coordination and fluent dialogue among the UN system need to be complemented by the dialogue and coordination with the national governmental priorities: thematic, territorial and budget allocation. We are aware about the urgency of strengthened the dialogue mechanisms with the UN system to determine those priorities, but at the same time it is important to avoid the establishment of new bureaucratic procedures or institutions.
- Also, it is of utmost importance that the UN accelerates its work to develop transparent measurements of progress on sustainable development indicators beyond per capita income that truly reflect the requirements and particular situations facing developing countries including MICs, as mandated in paragraph 129 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and target 17.19 of the 2030 Agenda. Poverty in all its forms and dimensions, the social, economic and environmental dimensions, and structural gaps at all levels must be taken into account. The legitimacy of the UN will allow it to carry out this endeavor in an objective and scientific manner. International cooperation should be determined by the real needs and challenges faced by the people.
- Another challenge is the mobilization of resources. As clearly mentioned in the excellent concept note prepared for this meeting: “over 70 per cent of the global poor currently live in middle-income countries with limited access to ODA”. Solve this challenge requires additional support from the UN Development System, by putting in place strategies and campaigns that help to highlight that the achievement of sustainable development goals and the principle of “leave no one behind”, requires funding and particular attention from donors to the needs of that 70 percent of the poor.
- International cooperation must have local capacity building and empowerment at its core. Only through strengthened productive and institutional capacities it is possible to generate resilience and make progress irreversible.
- The Technology Facilitation Mechanism provides the opportunity to address the gaps hindering the development, facilitation, transfer, dissemination and use of technology and related knowledge, which is a vital component of an enabling environment for developing countries including MICs. The UN system must have a leadership role in the effective operationalization of this mechanism, which should be a priority.
- Middle income countries are key for the sustainability of global public goods. Climate change adaptation, poverty reduction, sustainable use of natural resources, disease control, among others, cannot be successful without the active participation of MICs.
- South-South Cooperation will increasingly be a key instrument to deal with emerging global challenges, not only in terms of available resources to fund strategic initiatives, but particularly regarding the exchange of knowledge among MICs and LICs.

- Colombia has gathered key experiences that offer practical knowledge to overcome key development challenges. “Saber Hacer Colombia” (“Colombia’s know-how”) is our portfolio of practices, completely aligned to the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda, which can be shared with the rest of the world. (Available at www.apccolombia.gov.co.) One of our key partners in this initiative is the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation Office (UNOSSC). The UN should further incentivize these type of programs, particularly in MICs, through the creation of strong case studies that could in turn benefit development programs across MICs and LICs.
 - Meeting the SDGs has to involve a holistic approach; it cannot be done through separate, individualized efforts. This is why the Government of Colombia issued a Decree in February 2015 to establish the “Comisión Interinstitucional de Alto Nivel para el alistamiento y la efectiva implementación de la Agenda de Desarrollo Post 2015 y sus Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible –ODS” (Interinstitutional Commission for the Implementation of the SDGs). Colombia is leading this effort and doing it well. What the country needs now are key partners that can accompany and complement us, and we believe that the United Nations is one of them. However, it is important that all UN Agencies in Colombia work with us as partners, not as isolated actors with each sector of its mandate.
 - For example: Our statistics authority (DANE) is developing a methodology to measure our fulfillment of the SDGs with a battery of indicators. It is important that our partners support DANE’s work integrally, consolidating individual initiatives and relying on its leadership. Government entities have already made a commitment to do this; but we need UN agencies to do the same.
 - The UN development system should unify its efforts in order to better attend the needs of the territories, particularly in MICs where institutions are developing stronger capacities, by echoing (and complementing) national efforts aimed at the realization of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda.
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- El 18 de febrero, a través de Decreto 280 de 2015, se creó la Comisión Interinstitucional de Alto Nivel para el alistamiento y la efectiva implementación de la Agenda de Desarrollo Post 2015 y sus Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible -ODS- (Comisión), cuyo objetivo es el alistamiento y la efectiva implementación de los ODS a través de políticas públicas, planes, acciones y programas, con planificación prospectiva, y el monitoreo, seguimiento y evaluación de estos objetivos, con sus respectivas metas.
 - -Siendo una de las funciones de la Comisión establecer una política Nacional de implementación de los ODS, es de suma importancia que las Agencias del Sistema de Naciones Unidas alineen la implementación de los ODS con la agenda nacional. Esta alineación debe ser de forma transversal, priorizando metas e indicadores que aporten al desarrollo sostenible de los ejes establecidos en cada uno de los Marcos País.
 - Las Agencias del Sistema de Naciones Unidas que cuentan con Marco de Cooperación País, a la fecha han establecido sus prioridades de acuerdo a la agenda global de ODS y las líneas programáticas definidas en las Estrategias País, incluyendo el Marco de Asistencia de Naciones Unidas (UNDAF).