

Expert group meeting on the theme of the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review

“Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains for the future”

New York, 20-21 January 2014
United Nations Secretariat Building, room S-2723

Objective of the meeting:

At its plenary session in 2013, the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) decided to undertake work on the theme of the 2014 Annual Ministerial Review, “Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustaining development gains for the future.” The Committee agreed to analyse how current international rules and global governance structure promote (or hinder) effective responses to international problems and generate (or not) fair distribution of development opportunities among countries. It also agreed to consider the effectiveness of existing mechanism for monitoring global governance.

Based on the agreement the subgroup members of the CDP on the 2014 theme of the AMR, led by Professor Diane Elson and assisted by the Secretariat, drafted an outline proposal for the CDP report on this subject. Contributions by several CDP members have been received and are being consolidated into a draft report.

The objective of this expert group meeting (EGM) is to prepare a report (based on the draft being prepared) to the CDP plenary in March. The report will form the base for both the chapter of CDP report on the 2014 theme of the AMR (some 2000-2500 words) as well as a CDP Policy note (some 12000 words) which will be issued as a sales publication in 2014. In this regard, the EGM will be (i) reviewing the draft report, (ii) identifying gaps in its arguments and remedying them, and; (iii) coming up suggestions to the 2014 CDP plenary with regard to concrete recommendations that the ECOSOC should act upon on the AMR theme, and indicate one or two development matters that should be brought to its attention in relation to the theme (please refer to chapter I of the 2013 CDP Report).

Background

In the 2013 CDP Report to the ECOSOC, the Committee expressed its view that “the development model underlying the Millennium Development Goals has not worked as intended ...”¹ There is, thus, need for development models that promote stable and equitable economic growth that is socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable, in general, and that tackle the ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the MGDs in 2015, in particular. In search of such models, the Committee decided to identify challenges emanating from the current development model, with focus on global governance.

Global governance has been addressed in the MDGs under goal 8, “developing a global partnership for development”. As currently formulated, this goal is generally considered to be the weakest among the 8 Goals. It is incomplete and contains only a

¹ Committee for Development Policy (2103), *Report of the fifteenth session (18-22 March 2013)*, (E/2013/33), para. 49.

few specific targets or indicators to monitor progress. The CDP recognized the importance of global partnership and development cooperation in reaching inclusive and sustainable development, envisaged in the MDGs. Member States of the UN have called for action on broadening and strengthening the participation of developing countries in international decision making and norm setting for the promotion of development of developing countries already in the 2003 Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development.

Challenges emanating from the current development model are numerous. Global governance affects global development through many channels – e.g., trade, finance, migration, and technology and intellectual property. It does so to each country with different degrees of impact, depending on the extent to which it has been integrated into the global economy. Accordingly, the types of the challenges each country faces are different and its experience with globalization is unique.

Among the challenges, the four problems are acute for many (if not all) developing countries and particularly so for the least developed countries (LDCs);

- Environmental degradation and destabilizing climate change; despite some advance, the international community is far from reducing environmental damage and threats to the social and economic gains. The main challenge in this area is to build a new consensus for a sustainable economy, which has to be built upon environmental protection as an integral part of the development process.
- High and, in many cases, increasing inequalities in income and wealth within countries and between countries; wage shares in national income have been declining or are stagnant at best in many countries in the world while the average income per capita in developed countries is still more than 50 times higher than the average income per capita in LDCs. Inequalities and lack of representation in decision-making processes have also been persisting. Failures in addressing these imbalances have prevented poor and vulnerable countries from influencing policy choices and rule making and have significantly affected the lives of their populations and their overall socio-economic development. Such disparities have led to a polarization of positions between “winners” and “losers” of globalization and hinder progress towards a more just and fair system of governance at the global level (and the national level).
- New patterns of global poverty, with the majority of absolute poor now living in middle-income countries; with the MDGs in place, the current pattern of aid distribution has shifted towards low-income countries but this does not necessarily match the new patterns of global poverty. This mismatch between aid and poverty distribution mounts a new challenge for international aid. Should the MDG’s recommendation to target aid to low-income countries continue, or should money be distributed to where the impoverished actually live?
- Emergence of multipolar world; along with the traditional powers, new global power has recently emerged from the developing world, where the main

growth pole now exists. While the diffusion of global power provides the global community with an opportunity for building more inclusive and democratic global governance, it could also slow the process towards building such governance structure. Lack of progress in this area could delay the further progress in sustainable development.

Without an enabling global governance structure, development efforts at the national level will lead only to marginal improvements, effective responses to international problems cannot be expected and a fair distribution of development opportunities among countries will not be materialized. Current trends of diminishing policy space of developing country's Governments will likely continue, with the consequences of their inability to address development issues and to distribute opportunities fairly among their populations. At the international level, decision-makings in many global institutions will not be made in a democratic and transparent manner or necessarily take into account the needs of the most vulnerable nations. The required coherence among different types of global rules in trade, finance, migration, and technology and intellectual property will not be established. Most of all, monitoring progress will not be adequately enforced.

In this context, the EGM could discuss three issues that will be emphasized in the draft report. First, it could take stock of the deficiencies in global governance, including trade rules, (lack of) financial rules, including code of conduct of transnational corporations, intellectual property rights and rules of technology transfers, and (lack of) international migration regulation. It could also include problems associated with environmental processes since the Rio conference in 1992. At the same time, the meeting could identify important elements of the deficiencies that are missing from the draft report.

Second, it could summarize how these deficiencies can be remedied, based on the draft report, the contributed inputs by the CDP sub-group members and the other contributors, and the discussion in the meeting. Given the scope of the report and the 2014 theme of the AMR, it would be reasonable to restrict the examination at the general level. It could make some general remarks on the way forward to advance global governance for the sake of development of developing countries.

A final issue would be to discuss what the ECOSOC can and should do to make global governance more democratic, equitable and transparent in general, and recommend specifically how ECOSOC should act in this regard to make a difference in achieving the MDGs in 2015 and beyond. It would be desirable if the recommendation to the ECOSOC is specific and action-oriented.

Participants

CDP Sub-group on the theme of the 2014 AMR
CDP Secretariat
Other international agencies, as appropriate

Outcome

The meeting report of the EGM, which will be based on the consolidated report mentioned above, will be submitted to the 2014 CDP Plenary session