



2013 COORDINATION SEGMENT Panel I

Partnerships for productive capacity and decent work

Friday, 5 July 2013, 3.00 – 6:00 p.m.

ISSUES NOTE

Background¹

The Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Economic and Social Council in 2012 provided further impetus for greater efforts at all levels to enhance productive capacity, combat unemployment and advance decent work to eradicate poverty to form the foundations of a people-centered, internationally agreed upon development strategy within the Post-2015 framework. The UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda has identified the inadequate incorporation of employment and decent work, as one of the weaknesses of the current Millennium Development Goals, as reaching the target of full and productive employment and decent work for all remains a significant challenge.² In this regard, a more integrative approach, harnessing the efforts of all stakeholders, is essential to address current development gaps and the uneven application of sustainable initiatives.

Over the last two decades, partnerships with the private sector, foundations, the civil society and non-governmental organizations, have increasingly become an integral part of many United Nations organizations' work, including in promoting productive capacity and decent work. These partnerships have not only complemented the efforts of the United Nations system to achieve its objectives but also contributed to its renewal by introducing new methods of work.³ While these partnerships can not be a substitute for government responsibilities and commitments, they continue to be instrumental in the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits. This also includes the realization of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The Council, in preparation for its 2012 Annual Ministerial Review, held a Partnerships Forum on "Breaking new ground: partnerships for more and better jobs for young people" which was organized in close collaboration with ILO. The Forum brought together over two hundred senior

¹ See the report of the Secretary General on the role of the United Nations system in promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the MDGs (E/2013/...)

² UN (2012). *Realizing the Future We Want*. Report of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

³ United Nations (2003). Report of the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector (A/58/227), p. 1.

representatives from the private sector and philanthropic community to discuss with Member States ways in which partnerships could be strengthened in support of promoting youth employment and decent work. Recommendations from two panel discussions on “Innovations for promoting youth employment” and “Building new business models for youth employment” were reported back to the Council’s high-level segment in July 2012.

The report of the Secretary-General at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the United Nations Office for Partnerships identified that the development and integration of public-private partnerships is fundamental to the establishment and management of global and regional networks to further advance the global development agenda as a framework for action.⁴ Enhancing multilateral partnerships to strengthen capacity building, alleviate unemployment and encourage decent work in poverty reduction is thus critical to the construction and achievement of the internationally agreed upon development goals.

While promoting employment and decent work has proven to be a valuable and effective basis for UN system-wide coordination because of its cross-cutting policy domains and adaptability to national, local and sectoral circumstances, promoting productive capacity has been a major area of collaboration for the United Nations system. The International Labour Organization’s Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work⁵, adopted in 2007, has been instrumental in the United Nations system working together on employment and decent work. It has also served as a reference for multilateral actors to determine whether their governing policies are consistent with the international standards that reinforce the global commitment of providing employment and decent work for all at the global, regional, national and local levels. Guidelines for creation and enterprise development, social protection, standards and rights at work, governance and social dialogue within the manual indicates the need for cross sector engagement to successfully mainstream employment and decent work in international development frameworks.

Examples of good practice collaboration and multi-stakeholder partnerships for productive capacity, employment and decent work include:

- International organizations, bilateral institutions, as well as international NGOs committed to collaborate better at national, regional and global levels to support countries in developing and implementing nationally defined strategies that ensure a minimum level of access to essential services and income security for all. The Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B), co-chaired jointly by the ILO and World Bank, was created in 2012 and made significant progress in gathering partnerships within and beyond the UN system. Participating agencies⁶ committed to join forces on social protection data harmonization, knowledge sharing and capacity building, global coordination, research and advocacy and international cooperation in country demand-driven actions by developing common assessment tools.
- FAO, IFAD and ILO have strengthened coordination among international and national actors for unleashing rural development through employment and decent work. With FAO and IFAD, UNIDO has launched the Accelerated Agribusiness and Agro-industries Development

⁴ General Assembly (2012) United Nations Office for Partnerships Report of the Secretary-General A/67/165

⁵ ILO (2007), Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work

⁶ SPIAC-B meetings were attended by 16 international organizations, 11 bilateral institutions and 5 international NGOs.

Initiative aimed at enhancing the productivity and profitability of agribusinesses, especially in Africa. FAO and ILO are also actively collaborating on preventing child labour in agriculture within the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture. In addition to global activities, this partnership is supporting collaboration between labour and agricultural stakeholders at national level initially in Mali, Malawi and Cambodia, and is expanding its support to other countries, such as Kenya and Tanzania, based on request.

- UNICEF and ILO are partnering together to support workers with family responsibilities, through connecting child development and the decent work agenda. In this regard, they have developed a package of recommendations and guidelines for policymakers to address the challenges faced by parents, children, caregivers and teachers through critical stages of the life cycle in their programmes for family-focused, employment-centred growth. Technical assistance programmes will be offered to support the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national policies.
- Through the Inter-Agency Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), ILO, UNESCO, regional organizations and development banks are working to improve the coherence of policy advice and technical assistance provided to developing countries. Recommendations developed by the IAG-TVET working group summarize the types of labour market and skills development policies necessary to maximize the job-creation potential of sustainable growth while minimizing labour market adjustment costs.
- WTO's global initiative on Aid-for-Trade is, amongst other goals, geared towards helping countries build their productive capacities. Its main objective is to enhance the supply-side capacity of developing countries to allow them to take advantage of the market access opportunities. It is implemented in close cooperation with a number of global and regional UN organizations⁷ and has important pledges by countries, including G-20 members. WTO's Third Global Review of Aid-for-Trade showed that Aid for Trade is working and contributing to grassroots-level development and poverty alleviation. The upcoming Fourth Global Review of Aid-for-Trade (July 2013) will examine strategies to connect developing country and LDC firms to global and regional value chains, assess how they can be helped in moving up the value chain, and discuss the associated development benefits in the context of the debate about the post-2015 development agenda.
- The Work4Youth Project of ILO and the MasterCard Foundation is a five-year partnership, with a budget of US\$14.6 million, aimed at promoting decent work opportunities for young men and women through knowledge and action. The project aims to produce more and better labour market information specific to youth in 28 developing countries, with a particular focus on youth's transition to the labour market.
- UNESCO, in collaboration with the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (CHNDM), hosted a Partnerships Clinic on "*Innovation and Technology: Innovative Design*

⁷ These include UNCTAD, UNDP, UNCA, UNIDO, World Bank, IMF, WCO, OECD, ITC, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, IMF, Inter-American Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, amongst others.

Solutions to Address Extreme Poverty,” at the 2013 ECOSOC Partnership Event⁸ to explore how innovative industrial design, that combines science and creativity, can effectively contribute to addressing the needs of impoverished rural communities. The clinic highlighted the importance of creating regional alliances and collaborative networks, addressing management innovation through evaluation and convening a group dialogue to formulate a pilot project for job creation to address the growing needs of populations living in extreme poverty.

Objective and proposed focus of the panel

The panel during the 2013 Coordination Segment of the Economic and Social Council will examine ways in which collaboration and coordination within the United Nation system, as well as partnerships with civil society, the private sector and other actors can be strengthened and better harmonized. The discussion will focus on how collaboration and partnerships to promote productive capacity, employment and decent work can be better utilized, examine good practice examples, and discuss the remaining challenges, lessons learned and the way forward to increase their effectiveness and impact on development. It will also examine how partnerships support and bring additionality to the regular activities of the United Nations development system.

Questions for discussion

1. How can the Economic and Social Council effectively contribute to strengthening the collaboration within the United Nations system and partnerships with outside stakeholders?
 - ◆ What role can the Economic and Social Council play to promote an evidence-based approach to evaluate the effectiveness of partnerships in productive capacity, employment and decent work?
2. Given the current economic climate and financial constraints, what special measures can be taken to maximize synergies and ensure impact of partnerships?
 - ◆ What are some enabling factors in successful partnerships that promote productive capacity, employment and decent work?
 - ◆ How can successful partnerships be scaled up?
 - ◆ How can stakeholders identify, disseminate and replicate successful partnership models in the area of employment and decent work?

⁸ ECOSOC (2013), Partnership Event: Partnering for innovative solutions for sustainable development, New York.