

The General Assembly and ECOSOC Joint Thematic Debate/Forum on Partnerships

**Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations Headquarters
9 and 10 April 2014**



**“The Role of Partnerships in the Implementation of the
Post-2015 Development Agenda”**

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION



The General Assembly, in conjunction with the Economic and Social Council, hosted a two day thematic debate/forum on partnerships, bringing together public and private sector leaders, philanthropists, prominent civil society actors and academia representatives from across the globe to generate ideas and action-oriented solutions on ways in which multi-stakeholder partnerships can contribute to the implementation of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Five interactive, multi-stakeholder panel discussions took place focusing on ways in which partnerships can accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and support the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The event opened with welcoming remarks from H.E. Mr. John Ashe, President of the General Assembly; H.E. Mr. Martin Sajdik, President of ECOSOC; and Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. A keynote address was delivered by Mr. Tony Elumelu, Chairman, Heirs Holdings, Founder, Tony Elumelu Foundation and a civil society address was made by Ms. Alessandra Cabral dos Santos Nilo, Co-Founder and Executive Director, GESTOS. The following presents a summary of the overall themes and key messages arising from the panel discussions.

Realizing the MDGs: Building on Key Partnership Opportunities

Since the introduction of the Millennium Development Goals, the lack of tangible objectives within the MDG 8 framework, a global partnership for development, has hindered the international community's ability to achieve its full potential in delivering sustainable solutions to the world's most complex and pressing development challenges at hand, such as the socio-economic impacts of the recent financial crisis. However, multi-stakeholder partnerships have vastly expanded, leading to an increase in access to new public and private resources in the areas of **research, technology, innovation, finance and human capacity** to advance



sustainable solutions to cross-cutting development issues. In 2013, the Outcome Document of the Special Event to Follow-Up Efforts to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals underscored the fundamental **importance of advancing cross-sector partnerships between governments, the United Nations, civil society, the private sector and other key stakeholders** in order to further strengthen the **integration of the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development**. The immense value of multi-stakeholder partnerships is further reinforced in many expert reports, including by the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the UN Development Group, as well as reflected within the Secretary-General's report – A Life of Dignity for All (A/68/202). Revitalizing the global partnership of development is thus crucial to **accelerating progress towards achieving the MDGs and advancing the UN Post-2015 development agenda**.

As we approach 2015, the urgency to achieve the MDGs has reinforced the need to enhance channels of communication between various stakeholders in order to further galvanize the collective action of the international community. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council can serve as a platform to strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development through **creating new avenues to foster collaboration amongst various stakeholders**. The Council's Development Cooperation Forum serves to review trends and progress in international development cooperation to promote greater coherence among the development activities of different development partners and further facilitate dialogue on the possible features of a renewed global partnership for development. These mechanisms for engaging with key stakeholders are essential for harnessing varying levels of expertise in order to bolster the balanced integration of the three pillars of sustainable development.



In order for global partnerships to serve as a catalyst for the international community to devise a more robust and transformative sustainable development agenda, it is critical to examine **the lessons learned from the MDG experience and identify new opportunities where partnerships can be scaled up in the Post-2015 era**. The wide range of multi-stakeholder partnerships emerging in the **area of food and nutrition security and marine resources** provides examples of how to successfully optimize various forms of engagement to provide solutions to cross-cutting issues within the agriculture sector, while concurrently generating momentum to achieve the MDGs. Approximately 1/8 of the world's population are considered hungry and suffering from lack of proper nutrition. Insufficient levels of food

production to feed a growing population is substantially impacted by widening gaps in food security and the increasing negative effects of climate change. The International Panel on Climate Change has confirmed that all aspects of food security are affected by climate change, including food access, utilization and price stability, further exacerbating the lack of proper nutrition around the world. The large scale of these challenges requires the collaboration of all actors at the local, national, and international level to generate a large-scale response. Over the past 10 years, varying forms of partnerships ranging from one-on-one partnerships between public and private entities to partnerships involving **various combinations of public, private and multilateral actors have produced impressive gains in promoting sustainability in the agriculture sector.**

Many forms of multi-stakeholder partnerships have emerged across the local, national and intergovernmental levels to foster innovative solutions to the three-dimensional challenges of sustainable development within the agricultural sector. At the grassroots level, Blue Ventures, a science-led social enterprise specializing in sustainable aquaculture, has partnered with the government of Madagascar to effectively adopt innovative models to protect local fish stocks



in the country's isolated coastal communities, which has impacted over 100,000 people. At the national level, the governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana signed a memorandum of understanding in 2013 to create a facility to help both countries achieve greater levels of food security, reduce costs of importing food and create opportunities for employment. Finally at the

international level, the Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge and Scale Up Nutrition initiatives have encouraged the participation of a wide range of organizations, social movements, and individuals, to promote effective strategies in an effort to eliminate hunger and promote proper nutritional values. The Global Salmon Initiative, a partnership involving the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), has promoted a sustainable salmon aquaculture model that can be replicated and adapted to promote the sustainability of other varieties of fish.

These examples of many forms of multi-stakeholder partnerships in the agriculture sector, indicate that the **opportunities for cross-sector engagement are evolving and increasing their inherent value to achieve development goals.** The need for collaboration between different actors, beyond governments and across all sectors of society, is crucial for addressing the existing gaps in integrating the three dimensions of development. Drawing upon the lessons learned from the MDG experience should be further mainstreamed in the

Post-2015 development agenda in order to meet the global needs and future challenges beyond 2015.

Collaborating with Big Business, Foundations, Civil Society and Other Actors in Support of the Post-2015 Development Agenda

Multi-stakeholder partnerships are a key driver in successfully formulating a more holistic development framework that will produce more sustainable and transformative outcomes in the Post-2015 era. Harnessing the **full commitment** of various actors, particularly engaging with civil society, private sector, and Member States is crucial in advancing the deliverability of resources and **for increasing the effectiveness** of existing and new development programs. Expanding the role of the various actors engaging in partnerships is pivotal to promote the **exchange of ideas, technical expertise, and financial resources** necessary for the overall success of the Post-2015 development agenda.

Member states play a pivotal role in **enabling an environment conducive for engagement** with civil society organizations and the private sector in order to drive the implementation of development programs which are aligned with national priorities. Member states should consider **creating spaces, platforms, and road maps for individuals, organizations, and companies** to engage easily in a range of partnerships. Governments should recognize the **strategic benefits** of partnering with civil society organizations, engaging the local community and increasing individual participation to better evaluate the community's needs and better monitor progress of development programs. **Civil society organizations have played a key role** in monitoring existing commitments, mobilizing programmes, and providing input to bolster progress on attaining the internationally agreed upon development goals. The World We Want 2015 campaign is an example in which partnering with individuals at the grassroots level has helped to bring the priorities of people to the forefront of the Post-2015 processes and have further strengthened the unified vision for the new development agenda. **Gauging the knowledge and expertise of civil society organizations should be mainstreamed within the Post-2015 development framework.**



Member States should also introduce incentives for the private sector to contribute to development priorities. In many instances, the private sector has acted as a contributor to



achieve development objects through mobilizing resources to support national sustainable programs, fostering inclusive economic growth, creating opportunities for employment, and serving as a **driver for transferring technology and innovation**. Creating incentives to attract the private sector to partner with other actors, will allow for governments to benefit from an increase of entrepreneurial enterprises in turn mobilizing more technology and resources to generate innovative solutions to critical development issues.

Policymakers will need to think creatively about how to appropriately incentivize partnerships and ultimately investors to put money into sustainable development. The environment must be stimulating and this can only be achievable through good governance, transparent public institutions and the rule of law. Government investment in development **can further help to stimulate private sector financing**, generating incentives to fund projects. For instance, the Ministry of Food Production in Trinidad and Tobago and the private sector have partnered to undertake the development of large commercial farms. The government allowed investors in the projects to be given 30-year renewable leases on state agricultural land and provided responsibility in developing, financing and operating the farms. The Temasek Foundation, when partnering with the Singapore government as well as several Asian countries, also encourages a sense of co-ownership in order to achieve development goals more efficiently.

However, some Member States remain reluctant to partner with the private sector because of the profit driven nature of big businesses and fear that development objectives are **at risk for being compromised** in pursuit of financial gains. Yet there is also the view that the private sector does not always act from a purely business perspective. Companies are increasingly mainstreaming **sustainability** within their core business processes, becoming aware of the **social and environmental risks** of certain business practices. Growing evidence suggests that businesses that take sustainability seriously will outperform their counterparts. Beyond philanthropy and corporate social responsibility, businesses and industry can promote sustainable development directly by shifting to **more sustainable production processes, less intensive use of natural resources, and better social protection** of workers. Governments could also strengthen existing instruments, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, for corporations to ensure business practices enforce accountability and protect people against human rights abuses. Human rights frameworks and codes of conduct for corporations are effective mechanisms that can enhance **accountability** of public-private partnerships.

There are many examples of successful public-private partnerships that have effectively mobilized resources to invest in sustainable solutions for cross-cutting development challenges. Novo Nordisk, a leading healthcare company, has partnered with the Malaysian

Ministry of Health, to fund innovative and preventative solutions to diabetes. The Canadian government has created “Grand Challenges Canada,” an initiative to cooperate with the private sector and local entrepreneurs to scale-up innovation in the global health sector. The UN Global Compact is another prime example of developing partnerships among businesses and civil society at the global level to enable enterprises to report their social, environmental and economic impacts to capture their contributions to development. Overall, in order to fully optimize the significant value of multi-stakeholder partnerships in the Post-2015 era, the international community must **incorporate a common set of principles around conflict of interest, accountability and transparency in the Post-2015 development framework.**

Key Challenges: Accountability and Transparency Mechanisms

The lack of an effective framework to monitor the implementation of the internationally agreed upon development goals is often seen as one of the explanatory factors for the existing gaps in integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. The lack of oversight and a cohesive transparency and accountability mechanism within the global partnership for development could negatively impact the Post-2015 development framework in the long-term. For example, a study by an external consultancy group concluded that the lack of formal regulation of the private sector specifically in countries emerging from conflict, has caused only 23% of companies to define their business strategy based on what is important to their stakeholders. **Creating a more robust monitoring and accountability mechanism will be critical for the successful implementation of the Post-2015 Development agenda.**

General Assembly resolution A/RES/67/290 on the High Level Political Forum called for **the establishment of a mechanism for periodic accountability review and progress reporting on the achievements of the**

MDGs. The international community has learned from the MDGs that **identifying clear and quantifiable targets** are crucial for monitoring the effects of development programs. To have clear and quantifiable targets means that progress can be measured, creating innovative means in assessing



concrete improvements. There is an urgent need to promote the formulation of new accountability mechanisms as well as refine and improve the existing accountability frameworks to **enforce responsibility and ownership.** These mechanisms can help ensure

that shared values, goals and resources are upheld and that stakeholders, including governments, commit to an **inclusive sustainable development agenda**.

The UN must ensure that multi-stakeholder partnerships in the Post-2015 context will be held accountable for delivering development results that are **equitable and rights-based**, aligned to national and local needs, and do not hinder the right to development in developing countries. The Post-2015 agenda must find a way to incorporate the three dimensions of accountability, **answerability, enforcement, and clear delineation of responsibility**, to hold partnerships and partners accountable, particularly on sensitive issues such as child labour, pollution, and access to education for girls. A clear delineation of responsibilities across all sectors is fundamental for measuring results and verifying success. Governments both at the national and global levels can contribute to devising accountability mechanisms to provide policy frameworks and oversight and **ensure monitoring, accountability and transparency** of public-private partnerships. Member States can incorporate the guiding principles within the Busan Declaration to serve as a basis for fostering local ownership and local political will to further monitor and mobilize partnerships.

At the same time, partnerships themselves must have **built-in governance mechanisms** for accountability, monitoring, transparency and reporting. **Sustainable and equitable development is a co-shared responsibility; the willingness of partners to be held accountable and monitored will build trust and strengthen partnerships**. Utilizing existing accountability mechanisms can prevent duplication of efforts and identify best practices. The “Every Woman Every Child” initiative is an example of a global partnership with a built-in accountability and transparency mechanism for reporting. The core functions



of the framework are to assess whether the commitments are adequate to achieve set goals, check whether committed resources are properly delivered, and ensure the timeliness and efficiency in implementation on the local level. The Commission on Information and Accountability for Women’s and Children’s Health also

devised a framework for global reporting which includes a system to track resource flows at the global and country levels and whether the desired results are achieved. The UN Global Compact also requires members to report on progress in order to identify good strategies, clear targets, and effective responsibility frameworks. The Pacific Islands Forum compact, whose framework has incorporated voluntarily reporting mechanisms, has greatly improved the integrity and relevance of existing partnerships.

The post-2015 agenda must also be accompanied by a **data revolution**, especially at the country and local levels, ensuring that people are at the frontlines to report progress and ensure accountability. **Data availability and transparency is crucial to complement the accountability mechanisms.** Collecting data provides the international community with the ability to track global commitments and ensure the achieving of established goals. Designing clear and quantifiable targets means that progress can be measured, creating innovative ways of accessing concrete improvements. According to the OECD, aid effectiveness has improved due to the availability of data in countries. Engaging the local community, particularly in identifying needs and formulating strategies is crucial **for fostering local ownership and accountability.** Save the Earth Cambodia has developed a risk-assessment framework based on the needs of the local community, ensuring that the people on the ground are at the frontlines of documenting whether goals are reached. Overall greater accountability mechanisms and methods of collecting data to improve transparency will result in the acceleration of development progress and generate more opportunities to engage with various stakeholders.

Funding for Partnerships: Official Development Assistance and the Private Sector

Financing for development in the Post-2015 agenda **requires partnering to promote innovative financing solutions to be adopted to advance global sustainability.** For an effective development agenda, a robust framework for sustainable finance will be required, including private and public funding sources. Substantial progress has been made in identifying a **multiplicity of sources and types ranging from official development assistance (ODA) to domestic and innovative sources.** However, numerous challenges remain in identifying efficient and effective channels of financial resources to fund development projects. ODA will continue to play an important role, especially for least developed and other vulnerable countries. **Leveraging private capital through public-private partnerships is increasingly important** for Member states to increase its allocation of resources that are more efficient and deliverable within the necessary development programs. Some 75% of global income is generated by business and industry. Partnering with companies and big businesses provides new opportunities to attain funding for development projects. Introducing innovative measures to engage with the private sector can attract investors to fund large-scale development projects. Much needed **private resource mobilization should be accepted only when accountable and transparent.**



Challenges of allocating funding to finance development programs are particularly evident in the fields of sustainable infrastructure and energy. Sustainable infrastructure, including infrastructure

for access to modern energy services, reliable and affordable transport systems, information and communication services, water supply systems, is an enabler and multiplier of sustainable development, particularly in the most vulnerable countries. Allocating resources to fund the development of sustainable infrastructure is vital, in particular to least developed countries (LDCs), small island developing states (SIDS), and landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) where there are limited financial resources to support infrastructure development needs. For instance, the government of Zambia, a country with one of the fastest growing populations in Africa, has placed significant priority in the development of infrastructure. However, being a developing country, funding remains an issue causing an infrastructure deficit. This has led to an urgent need to heavily invest, and for devising partnerships to attract public and private investment. Zambia has implemented budget initiatives and established a special tax on consumption from which funds are directed towards road maintenance. **Multi-stakeholder partnerships connecting donors, development agencies and the local community can assist in mobilizing resources to fund sustainable infrastructure.**

The Secretary General underlined, at the Rio+20 conference, that sustainable energy was the thread to integrate all sectors of sustainable development. The energy sector requires long-term investment and large sums of capital to fund sustainable projects: currently \$US9 billion per year is available for funding sustainable energy yet \$US50 billion is needed per year, exclusively to ensure universal access of sustainable energy. Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL), calls for partnering to enable universal energy access, a higher share of renewable energy and energy efficiency. In order to achieve these outcomes, it will require large-scale financing and technology cooperation, which can be attained through multi-stakeholder partnerships. SE4ALL has successfully managed to bring together many development banks and private sources of capital to promote ideas on green financing, and cross-sectoral collaboration on renewable energy resources. The Sustainable Low Carbon Transportation Partnership (SLoCaT) is a multi-stakeholder partnership of over 80 organizations to promote the integration of sustainable transport into global policies on sustainable development and climate change. Through voluntary commitments, the initiative is able to convene the 8 largest development banks, granting a total of \$US 175 billion for more sustainable transport. The World Trade Organization (WTO) has also generated more revenue flows through coordinating multilateral institutions, regional development banks, and national development agencies. **These strategic partnerships have ensured that funding for large-scale development projects is readily made available.**



There is a need for all partners to scale up support in line with their evolving capacities, to increase public financing, including contributions through ODA, multilateral development banks and other official financing channels, including the United Nations. Private financing, philanthropic contributions as well as expertise and in-kind contributions from businesses and civil society, can serve to complement existing ODA frameworks to mobilize resources to finance sustainable development programmes. Establishing proper accountability mechanisms will further enhance transparency in the distribution and allocation of funds. Overall, strengthening the global partnership for development is crucial to realize the MDGs and advance the Post-2015 development agenda to truly deliver the future we want.

The Way Forward: Key Recommendations and Conclusions

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships, engaging Member States, the UN system, civil society organizations, the private sector and other actors can help strengthen the integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;
- Renewal of the global partnership for development requires the full commitment and participation of all actors in order to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs and advance the Post-2015 development agenda;
- The United Nations must ensure that multi-stakeholder partnerships in the post-2015 context will be held accountable for delivering development results that are equitable and rights-based, aligned to national and local needs, and do not constrain the right to development for developing countries;
- Governments need to create a stimulating environment for multi-stakeholder partnerships through good governance, transparent public institutions and the rule of law.
- The Post-2015 development agenda should contain clear and concise targets that are to be specific, measurable, and accountable;
- Partnerships should be carefully screened against criteria to determine fitness of purpose in pursuit of post-2015 goals. Such criteria should consider human rights record, capacity to deliver, acts of corruption, financial transparency and other conflicts of interest antithetical to universal norms and principles;
- It is important to establish an open and transparent mechanism for monitoring and reviewing partnerships. The High Level Political Forum could become the body to undertake this mandate;
- The Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement should be extended beyond 2015. The SloCaT partnership should be given a clear role in the institutional framework for the Post-2015 development agenda;
- Measures should be put in place to utilize a virtual platform to revolutionize communication technology and share information on recommendations to create partnerships in the post-2015 world.