



WORLD BANK GROUP

Economic and Social Council
Dialogue on the longer-term positioning of the
UN Development System in the context of the 2030 Agenda
Phase 2

**Panel: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
How will it impact the UN development cooperation vision?**

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GOOD MORNING (Buenos días),

Firstly, I want to express my gratitude to Vice President Alejandro Palma Cerna for his kind invitation to join this forward-looking panel at the United Nations today. I am glad to join him along with Minister Simón Gaviria Muñoz, Mr. David Nabarro, and Ms. Sarah Cliffe for this timely and relevant conversation.

- I will begin my participation with a quote from former World Bank Group President, Eugene Meyer at the first Annual Meetings of the World Bank in 1946.

“Prosperity, like peace, must be viewed as indivisible. And even from the narrowest considerations of self-interest, each of us must be concerned with the economic development of the world as a whole. For we shall prosper individually only as we prosper collectively. But there are even larger considerations than material welfare which dictate our recognition of the world’s essential unity. Economic distress is a prime breeder of war; it makes for a desperation from which aggression seems the only avenue of escape. A better standard of living, therefore, is an indispensable condition of peace.”

- The SDGs, generally speaking, mesh well with the WBG’s twin goals of ending extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity within a sustainable framework.
- In taking a look at which part of SDG implementation overlaps with the WBG’s mandate and expertise, we have strongly advocated that three areas in particular are critical for the WBG’s contribution to the attainment of the SDGs: finance, data, and implementation.
- In each of these three areas, new and stronger partnerships are needed. The 2030 agenda rightly calls for a revitalization of global partnerships.
 - The CEB exercise serves as a great example of the significant impact that UN system collaboration and cohesion can have. The CEB initiative on coordinated support to MDG acceleration brought together the broadest possible spectrum of agencies. Carrying out this initiative at the highest possible level of the UN system sent a strong signal of the Principals’ commitment towards a shared objective throughout each organization, and facilitated a dialogue and collaboration among entities on the ground.
 - 17 countries have been discussed across our regions and across almost all MDGs. The process has improved coordination between the WBG and UN country teams and has also become a high level accountability mechanism to monitor progress of agreed actions at the CEB.
 - While only a limited number of countries were accommodated at each Review, these helped illustrate bottlenecks and constraints that are more widely prevalent, as well as solutions that offered the potential for wider collaboration and replication across countries. Taken together, the initiative encouraged additional action and commitments including more coherent policy formulation, and better alignment with national plans and strategies.

- A great body of knowledge across MDGs and country typologies were accumulated over the course of the five CEB MDG Acceleration Reviews. This knowledge should inform UN system preparations for the transition to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- The Reviews itself have been useful in identifying recurrent bottlenecks which continued to impede progress toward the MDGs such as low public spending on social services, insufficient and poor quality data, poor quality services and inadequate demand for services, lack of coordination, lack of political commitment, poor implementation capacity, entrenched exclusion, conflict, natural disasters and disregard for human rights.
- On finance, we jointly prepared with the IMF and the regional development banks, the narrative on financing for development, which highlights the need to leverage the “billions” of grant and ODA funds to mobilize the “trillions” needed to implement the SDGs.
 - The MDBs and the IMF can work together more closely to support implementation of the SDGs. The MDBs already coordinate with each other through many working groups that tackle practical issues across the development landscape, and they support and engage in partnerships and platforms for South-South and broader cooperation across multilateral, regional, national, and bilateral development institutions and civil society organizations.
 - The MDBs and the IMF commit to continue to improve coordination and to strengthen working relationships with each other, particularly in providing financial and non-financial support at the regional, country, and subnational levels.
 - Continued joint work on infrastructure project preparation and financing, where the needs are vast, can benefit from even greater coordination and information exchange to improve design and reduce the burden on countries.
 - Joint efforts to support the data agenda, mobilize technical and financial support, and foster coherent methodologies and data management are also being enhanced.
 - Financing for Development Forum (in April follow-up to Addis): We will continue to be engaged as a partners on the financing for development forum and uphold our commitments to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, while continuing to support countries’ implementation of it.
- On data we have quite a few new partnerships emerging. The challenge will be to make them effective. Data informs policymakers and development professionals about the impact of their decisions on development progress. It sheds light on the effectiveness of development policies, helps provide clarity on the nature of problems, and provides indicators to monitor and evaluate progress.

- One of the most pressing challenges facing many developing countries is simply a lack of data, even in priority areas. The problem is acute. A fundamental method of collecting data is through household surveys, which are useful for analyzing many dimensions of the wellbeing of individuals, including their income and consumption levels, their health, and their education. However, many countries conduct very few surveys, resulting in data gaps and inconsistent estimates.
- Another important data source is in administrative records. In many countries, the registration of vital events provides a useful source of statistics on demographic changes and trends. But many countries have weak vital registration systems. In fact, one of the SDG targets is to provide legal identity for all --including birth registration – by 2030.
- It was for these reasons that the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened an Independent Expert Advisory Group to make recommendations on how to create a “data revolution” to support sustainable development.
 - The Group proposed “improvements in how data is produced and used; closing data gaps to prevent discrimination; building capacity and data literacy in “small data” and big data analytics; modernizing systems of data collection; [and] liberating data to promote transparency and accountability”. The World Bank is pursuing these objectives in several key areas:
 - Since the adoption of the MDGs, the WBG has made a concerted effort to improve the production and dissemination of statistics in its member countries. Over 80 WBG countries have benefited from WBG technical and financial support to improve production of key statistics.
 - According to the WBG’s statistical capacity building indicator, we have seen steady results. In 1999, the average for World Bank borrowing countries was 54 out of a possible 100 points. In 2014, the average was 68. Other indicators corroborate this improvement: the national population censuses conducted between 2005 and 2014 counted 93 percent of the world’s people, a big improvement over the previous round.
 - More recently, initiatives to provide free and open access to data have led to improved use of datasets. 43 countries and agencies have now released over a million datasets. More specifically, the WBG has established programs to preserve and disseminate micro data from household surveys in over 70 countries.
 - We are an anchor partner of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data that was launched in September. This is bringing a wide range of stakeholders together, including technology companies, governments, UN agencies, private foundations, and civil society. We will work with UN DESA and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data to implement the World Data Forum planned for 2016, which should have an ambitious goal to bring the widest range of partners together to work on the most pressing data needs of the SDGs.

- The WBG is working with the Global Partnership to launch a \$100m trust fund to support both innovations in technology and innovations in how we work to trigger lasting changes in data production, accessibility, and use. This concept is being well received by many donor partners. Again, to kick-start this initiative, we will devote \$500k to test, pilot, and scale a number of innovative approaches in the coming year.
 - Ensuring availability of Household Budget Surveys in Poorest Countries. Poverty-fighting efforts have long been constrained by a lack of data in many countries. The World Bank has identified 29 countries that had no poverty data from 2002 to 2011. Another 28 had just one survey that collected poverty data during that time. These gaps prevented analysts from identifying trends in how countries were making progress toward their goals, and posed a barrier to improving the lives of poor people.
 - The WBG estimates the total cost of the initiative to be \$300 million every three years, in addition to what countries are already spending on core data collection. These costs would be expected to be borne by a mix of countries' own resources, donor funding and World Bank Group financing. The major expansion of household-level data collection will be discussed and coordinated with countries and partners in the months ahead.
- On implementation, we have to make sure that the relationship at the country level between our country directors and the UN resident coordinators strengthens as it has been done under the MDG acceleration effort under the auspices of this body.
 - Individual countries face the challenge of translating the ambitions of the SDGs into feasible strategies, with clear targets and specific policies based on country circumstances and initial conditions and national priorities. A major issue has been managing financing and service delivery gaps at the country level. Thus, identifying specific service delivery and financing solutions to close attainment gaps is crucial to meeting our development goals.
 - In 2013, discussions around the Post-2015 Agenda began taking shape. A High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons (HLP) was established by the UN Secretary General. In addition to producing a report on how to eradicate poverty and transform economies through sustainable development, it engaged on how to best tackle the world's most pressing challenges.
 - In this context, I was involved in several meetings with leaders and members of the HLP. Two of these were of direct relevance to this work. The first was with H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia, and Ms. Amina Mohammed, then Special Adviser to the UN Secretary General on Post-2015 development planning. The second meeting was with H.E. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, then Coordinating Minister for the Economy and the Minister of Finance of Nigeria.
 - These meetings focused on overcoming the financing and service delivery challenges that the SDGs pose. Later discussions with H.E. Maria Kiwanuka, then Minister of Finance of Uganda, confirmed this priority. Conversations with these distinguished

leaders and many other policymakers highlighted the demand for a tool to address these challenges of service delivery and financing gaps, which featured so prominently in countries' experience with the MDGs.

- Meanwhile, a team of prominent experts at the WBG was working on approaches and models to analyze progress on the MDGs. I asked the team to assist with the development of a framework to assess the ability of countries to achieve the new goals. After deliberations and technical discussions, the decision was made to proceed with a practical approach to the questions at hand using case studies of a representative group of countries.
- The role of the WBG and other partners in response to humanitarian needs is to use knowledge, financial assistance, convening power, and partnerships to help smooth this path, reducing the short-term costs and helping to capture the long-term gains.
- The WBG has been working on approaches to address these issues on all fronts, through policies and preparedness, as well as financing. Partnering together is important to break silos amongst the humanitarian and development actors, without compromising our institutions' comparative advantages.
 - For example the joint WBG-UNHCR report on Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon was highly received and is an excellent example of our ongoing partnership.
 - The fact that the scale of the refugee problem and the likely duration of refugee status has increased significantly with the current crisis, the realization has set in that a different engagement model is needed in the Middle East. The WBG has developed a new strategy for its engagement in MENA, aimed at promoting economic and social inclusion as means to contribute to peace and stability and development in the region.
 - With a specific emphasis on Policies and preparedness: Let me highlight four key elements that underpin the new MENA strategy:
 - renewing the social contract between citizens and the state to address the underlying causes of violence;
 - promoting regional cooperation to build economic interdependence and trust among countries of the region;
 - strengthening the resilience of communities to foster their capacity to host refugees and internal displaced persons and maintain and strengthen their development achievements;
 - mobilizing recovery and reconstruction efforts to rebuild societies impacted by conflict and unrest.

- The WBG, in close partnership with the United Nations, and the Islamic Development Bank Group, is seeking to mobilize the international community through two distinct financing facilities:
 - Support for refugees, internal displaced persons and hosting communities. It is proposed that supporting donor countries provide grants that would be combined with lending from multilateral development banks, bringing down the effective interest rate on loans to middle-income countries to concessional terms.
 - These countries currently borrow at IBRD/market based rates, and given the scope of the challenge and the fact that they are providing a global public good, the proposal aims to provide these countries with a more concessional level of financing to support refugees, internal displaced persons, and hosting communities.
 - Support for reconstruction and recovery efforts. It is proposed that guarantees be leveraged from supporting countries to issue bonds that would provide the large volumes of financing needed for reconstruction and economic recovery.
- Ahead of the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016, the challenge for us all will be to use this momentum to build bridges between the humanitarian and development communities, ensuring a longer-term vision to deal with fragile situations and forced displacement and provide regular updates on what we are doing in the field.