



Expert Group Meeting

*Ensuring That No One Is Left Behind:
The Cooperative Sector as a Partner in the Implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

16-17 November 2016
Conference room S-2723
United Nations Headquarters
New York

Aide-Memoire

Background

In September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda that set out the road map for a future of shared prosperity and environmental sustainability. Cooperatives have contributed to the process that defined the content of this global policy framework, resulting in acknowledgement of the significant role of cooperatives in delivering development results for all. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes the contributions of cooperatives and calls on them to work together with the international community in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by acknowledging “the role of the diverse private sector, ranging from micro-enterprises to *cooperatives* to multinationals, and that of civil society organizations and philanthropic organizations in the implementation of the new Agenda.”¹

The 2030 Agenda has 17 SDGs that are the focus of development efforts in all Member States of the United Nations. It is the major development framework that will drive development efforts until 2030. With an integrative perspective, the 2030 Agenda aims to promote a harmonious approach to economic, social and environment development with solidarity as a major component. The SDGs are focused on the overarching issues of poverty, inequality, peace, and the protection of the natural environment.

The 2030 Agenda calls for ensuring that no one is left behind. Inclusiveness is a cornerstone of the SDGs. Everyone is supposed to have equal access to opportunities regardless to race, religion, gender, age, or place of residence. Cooperatives have a long history of inclusive practices.

The successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda demands urgent action and a move away from business as usual. The focus now has turned to the implementation of the SDGs in which cooperatives have a special role to play. The cooperative enterprise model has much in common with the 2030 Agenda. Synergies between cooperatives and the 2030 Agenda must clearly be identified and leveraged effectively. This Expert Group Meeting (EGM) will contribute to the process of cooperatives aligning themselves with the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda.

¹ “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld/publication>

Overview

The Division for Social Policy and Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs organizes this EGM as an important part of the process of reporting to the UN General Assembly about the role of cooperatives in promoting “*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*”. The event will be held from 16–17 November, at the United Nations Headquarters, New York.

This EGM is an opportunity for the exchange of ideas on the role of cooperatives in helping to achieve the United Nations SDGs. The results will serve to raise awareness on the challenges faced by the cooperative enterprise model to make greater contributions to sustainable development.

This meeting will be organized within the context of the follow-up to the United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/128.

Objectives of the Expert Group Meeting

The EGM will aim to deepen the understanding of the relationships between the cooperative enterprise model and the SDGs. It will also strengthen follow-up and implementation of the 2030 agenda by identifying effective ways to leverage the contribution of cooperatives.

The experts in the EGM will strive to answer the following main questions:

1. What are the economic, social, and environmental contributions, potential and achievements of coops in relation to the SDGs?
2. What strengths do cooperatives bring to the partnerships for implementing the SDGs? What are the resources of the cooperative sector at various levels that can help in achieving the SDGs at the national level, especially in the least developed countries?
3. What are the challenges facing cooperatives in implementing the SDGs and how to overcome them?

Outcomes

The EGM and Workshop will aim for the following outcomes:

1. Papers prepared by experts
2. A final report of the meeting
3. Recommendations to further develop cooperatives to effectively contribute to achieving the SDGs

Organization and Administration

The event will take place at UN Headquarters in New York, 16 – 17 November 2016.

The event will take the form of interactive dialogues focused on the sharing of data, good practices and lessons learned, as well as on cultivating a relevant knowledge base for working in and/or with the cooperative model of enterprise, in the context of the new global development framework found in the 2030 Agenda.

Each EGM session will include presentations by lead experts who will present papers on the topics of the sessions, which will be followed by in-depth discussions.

At the end of the meeting, participants will outline the major conclusions and recommendations of the meeting.

All inputs to the meeting will be made available as a resource guide on the website of DSPD <http://social.un.org/> as well as a summary of discussions.

The event will cater to approximately 16 participants from cooperatives, governments, United Nations organizations, academia and civil society. Presenters will be drawn from across various regions of the world.

Documentation and the Language of the meeting

The documentation of the meeting will comprise of relevant publications and documents related to the topics of the sessions, and a 5-10 page paper from each expert participant. Experts will be invited to provide their contributions in advance (to be submitted by 1 November 2016). All documentation will be made available on the website of DSPD: <http://social.un.org/cooperatives>.

The working language of the meeting will be English. Documentation for the meeting will be provided in English.

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