



17 July 2017, 10.15 AM – 6.00 PM, General Assembly Hall, UNHQ, New York

Informal summary

In support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the work of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), including the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP), organized for the second time a *Partnership Exchange special event*, held 17 July 2017 the occasion of the 2017 HLPF.

The event focused on reviewing the work of multi-stakeholder partnerships and other voluntary initiatives in driving implementation of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 14 and 17, which were under in-depth review at the 2017 HLPF.

Approximately 1,000 representatives from civil society, governments, private sector, and major groups and other stakeholders gathered at the United Nations General Assembly Hall for the full day special event.

Seventeen multi-stakeholder partnerships and other voluntary initiatives and their contribution to the SDGs were under review at the event. The initiatives were selected based on rigorous criteria set forth by the organizers, which included the need to adhere to the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-based, with Time-based deliverables) criteria; relevance to the SDGs under review at the 2017 HLPF; effectiveness, long-term transformative impact; and internal governance of the initiative.

The Partnership Special Exchange included a high-level opening segment, four interrelated thematic/SDG sessions, and a dialogue on accountability and monitoring of partnerships.

Opening segment

At the opening of the meeting H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the 71st session of the General Assembly, made a keynote address. The President recalled the excellent partnership between Fiji and Sweden in co-hosting the recently held Ocean Conference, which led to unprecedented action by private companies, the scientific community, governments, civil society and international organizations in the form of nearly 1,400 voluntary commitments to advance the implementation of SDG 14.

The President stressed that, whatever their form, successful partnerships must build and foster trust, require accountability and transparency, and adhere to accepted standards of good governance, ethics and financial practices.

The President also highlighted three items where a more capable UN in regards to partnerships could reap significant dividends for SDG implementation: public and private financing, technology and innovation, and wide global awareness of the 2030 Agenda.

The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Wu Hongbo, in his opening remarks, reminded the audience of UN's long history of fostering and promoting the work of collaborative arrangements with the participation of all parts of society. As recalled by Mr. Wu, a mere three years ago, at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Samoa, member States recognized multi-stakeholder partnerships as an important vehicle for driving sustainable development in SIDS. Today, the SIDS Partnership Framework, the follow-up mechanism to SIDS partnerships mandated by member States in the SAMOA Pathway, is firmly grounded in the United Nations, providing a place for a dialogue among SIDS, partnership practitioners and beneficiaries. In addition, at the recently held Ocean Conference, the international community came together and announced close to 1,400 voluntary commitments among all stakeholders to advance implementation of SDG 14.

In a special keynote address (video message), Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General, stressed that the 2030 Agenda has affirmed the need for effective institutions, adequate financing, and partnerships. Forging effective and impactful multi-stakeholder partnerships is a crucial aspect of ongoing efforts to help countries deliver on the 2030 Agenda and climate commitments. While tracking performance, and getting feedback from beneficiaries, we can become more rigorous in measuring impact.

Presentation

Following the opening segment, Mr. Ola Goransson, Partnerships Coordinator at UN DESA Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), provided participants with an overview of how partnerships and voluntary commitments have historically been supporting sustainable development. As witnessed in the *Partnership for SDGs online platform*, managed by the Division for Sustainable Development of UN DESA, since the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 with the purpose of sharing knowledge both among registered partnerships, as well as about these partnerships in general, major international conferences have been key catalysts for spurring action for sustainable development. Today the platform includes over 3,600 initiatives registered by governments, UN agencies, civil society, IGOs, and the private sector, covering all 17 SDGs at the regional, national, and global level.

To provide a better framework for reviewing and comparing the work undertaken by partnerships and other initiatives, UN DESA and Global Compact have developed and are actively promoting the Partnership Data for SDGs framework, which is based on the notion that partnerships should follow the SMART Criteria –that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-based, with Time-bound deliverables.

Partnership Exchange – Goals 1 and 2 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere & End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture)

Guiding questions for the session:

- How does your partnership help to sustainably strengthen the livelihoods and incomes of those in extreme poverty or otherwise at risk of being left behind?
- Social protection systems are seen as key to addressing issues of persistent poverty. What does your partnership do to address this issue, and what do you see as the advantage of your coordinated action on this topic?
- As we face a warming climate, sustainable food production systems and resilient agricultural practices will be essential to combating hunger. What gaps do you see your partnership filling to help promote more sustainable and resilient agricultural practices?
- Several countries taking part in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) this year have mentioned, in their reports submitted to the HLPF Secretariat, the challenge of developing a coordinated SDG strategy at multiple levels of government. What sorts of challenges have you encountered in aligning local, regional, and national strategies on SDGs 1 and 2, and how have you overcome these challenges?
- What kind of guidance and resources are required to strengthen your partnership to deliver on actions for the implementation of SDGs 1 and 2?

Permanent Representative of Peru to the UN, Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra spoke about the great progress Peru has made in reducing poverty, which can be partially attributed to a booming gastronomic industry. Still, almost 22% of the population lives below poverty the line, with limited access to healthy food. Peru has launched a national strategy to reduce anemia, and is working with the World Food Programme on the Zero Hunger initiative.

Guy Rider, the Director-General of the International Labor Organization (ILO) spoke about the ILO's efforts under the UN Social Protection Floor Initiative (SPF-I) for SDG 1.3. ILO leads the SDG Alliance 8.7, which works to achieve SDG target 8.7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms. The Alliance includes governments, workers' and employers' organizations, UN agencies, regional organizations, partners for development, the private sector, civil society organizations, academia, experts, the media and other actors supporting SDG 8.7, and focuses on achieving SDG 8.7 in the Asian and Pacific regions. The ILO is also working together with OECD and WHO to follow-up on the High-level commission on health employment and economic growth. Finally, they are working with the wider UN system on the challenges of youth employment through the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. Currently, 55% of the world's population lives without social protection, and a number of different important partnerships to improve social protection exist with governments, academia, civil society, and the private sector, such as those highlighted by ILO.

Growing Together, a partnership in Bangladesh between Syngenta and VSO, was presented by Juan Gonzalez-Valero of Syngenta. Growing Together works on youth engagement, developing a financial security net, inclusion of women in value chains, crop diversification, climate resilience, and access to finance to ensure smallholder communities have access to markets and manage land in more sustainable

ways. Their farm-center business model reaches 10,000 farmers in Bangladesh, and has been replicated with revisions. The model builds links to markets and guarantees social standards, and can be scaled.

The Platform for Agricultural Risk Management (PARM) led by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was presented by Jesus Anton. PARM is a partnership between the EU, Cooperation Agencies of Italy and France, KFW and BMZ, the African Union's NEPAD Agency and is led by IFAD in Rome. PARM empowers farmers and communities to be resilient and absorb and adapt to new shocks, and create the policy environment to support sustainable investments.

The Peru Zero Hunger Initiative was presented by Carmen Burbano, the WFP Country Director for Peru. The initiative was created to address food insecurity and obesity issues in Peru. It works to promote better multi-sectoral coordination between ministries, the private sector, academia, and civil society. A key foundational element is educating the Peruvian consumers. The Zero Hunger Initiative has created a television show to increase awareness and education about healthy food. 19 State Ministries of Peru support the initiative, working with 5 private-sector companies, 5 UN agencies, and civil society to support the making of the show and its dissemination.

The Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) was presented by Katherine Richards, Head of Hunger and Nutrition, Save the Children UK and Vice-chair of the SUN Civil Society Network. The SUN's mission is to end malnutrition in all its forms. Governments of 59 countries, civil society, the UN, donors, researchers, and businesses are all involved. They work to better coordinate strategies to end malnutrition among community groups, governments, civil society organizations, the international community, etc. The Civil Society Network coordinates civil society's work towards ending malnutrition.

Issues raised during the Q&A Session:

- Funding often remains the key barrier to scaling up initiatives.
- Focusing on increasing engagement in existing countries is recommended, rather than trying to expand to more countries.
- Recommendation to promote private-sector participation, in partnerships as well making sure that those in the most remote and vulnerable areas also have access to the initiative.
- To ensure impact, focus on co-creation of a program right from the beginning, starting with the needs from the ground, on impact and Key Performance Indicators. Also, match expertise of volunteers with local challenges from the ground. Partnerships can extend reach of projects, and bring in expertise and know-how to make the initiative more sustainable and inclusive.

Partnership Exchange - Goals 9 and 17 (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation & Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development)

Guiding questions for the session:

- What methodology and tools does your partnership use to monitor and evaluate its impact and contribution to the achievement of the SDGs? Does your partnership engage with national or local authorities to build capacity to better monitor and evaluate progress on the SDGs?
- One of the most common challenges mentioned in this year's voluntary national reviews is the difficulty in developing a coordinated national and local SDG monitoring strategy, and lack of access to disaggregated data. What are some ways that your partnership is helping to address these challenges?
- In what ways has your partnership been particularly innovative?
- Which tools and platforms have you found most effective to share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?
- How do you address trade-offs in achieving implementation of SDGs in your partnership?
- How do you measure success in your partnership?

The Batumi Initiative on the Green Economy (BIG-E) was presented by Olga Speranskaya. The BIG-E was developed under the leadership of Switzerland, and includes international organizations, NGOs, and governments and is supported by UNEP and UNECE. It provides an incentive to voluntarily develop, commit to and deliver on concrete actions for the green economy. It works under the Pan-European Strategic Framework for Greening the Economy and its mission is to enhance economic progress, reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities, and improve human well-being and social equity.

Mario Para DaSilva, of UN Global Compact Network Portugal presented the SDG Alliance Portugal. The Alliance presents the SDGs as an opportunity to create wealth, development, etc. The Alliance is about raising awareness and developing projects, and includes a number of high-profile personalities from Portugal, and around 70 companies are also involved. After 10 years of working with consumers, workers, academia, etc., the Alliance has united with the central and local administrations and others to support the government in the implementation of the SDGs. The Alliance includes two partnerships in the field: one for education and one for sustainable fish consumption.

Chantal-Line Carpentier of UNCTAD presented the UN Sustainable Stock Exchange Initiative. The initiative has been developed by UNCTAD, UNEP, PRI, Global Compact and it was launched by former UNSG Ban Ki-Moon. The objective of the initiative is to advance the alignment of financing of the SDGs, and currently includes $\frac{2}{3}$ of all stock exchanges and more than 70% of market capitalization. The Initiative works to align stock exchanges with SDGs 17, 13, 12, 8, and 5 through consensus building alongside capital market stakeholders and facilitating peer to peer learning. Part of the initiative includes voluntary reporting for stock exchanges and their listed companies in terms of sustainability.

Claire Melamed, the Executive Director of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data spoke about the Partnership which came out of the realization of Member States and UN agencies that huge amounts of data would be needed to achieve the SDGs. Data is necessary to monitor progress, and countries now need more data than ever before, especially if they will now run UHC systems, education systems, etc. These tasks require huge amounts of data to plan and achieve. The Partnership includes

more than 250 partners and works with Member States, and seeks to improve the data that will lead to the policies that improve people's lives.

Colin Allen, of the International Disability Alliance (IDA), spoke about IDA's partnership with the International Disability and Development Consortium to promote the rights of persons with disabilities, and work to implement the 2030 Agenda inclusively of persons with disabilities. The partnership works to build the capacities of organizations working with persons with disabilities, especially in the Global South. It also assists with monitoring and data collection. The partnership has been engaging in the VNRs to create coordinated messages and ensure everyone is included at a variety of levels, ensuring wider civil society consultations.

Henry Gogi, of the International Civil Aviation Organization presented the Aviation Partnerships for Sustainable Development, a multi-stakeholder partnership developed by ICAO. The Partnership raises awareness of the links between aviation and sustainable development, and fosters the prioritization of the aviation sector in development plans. Safe, secure, and sustainable air transport can be a catalyst for sustainable development, and is critical for jobs, trade, tourism, delivery of humanitarian relief, etc. The Partnership includes a wide range of actors from DESA, to the World Bank, OHRLLS, etc., and supports 15 of the 17 SDGs.

Oh Yoon Sundusuran, Chair at the Global Water Partnership spoke about their work promoting water security and good water governance. Engaging everyone, especially in the water sector, is very important, and the Partnership is working at the country level to advance integrated water resource management and the implementation of water-related SDGs. It is also establishing a monitoring framework for SDG 6. Seed money and capacity building will help their Partnership to grow and extend its reach.

Key Points from session:

- Partnerships in a wide range of areas are being established in the context of 2030 Agenda implementation, including partnerships around education, fish consumption, sustainable stock exchanges, data, persons with disabilities, aviation, water, and other topics.
- Data is key for assessing the effectiveness of partnerships as vehicles for implementing and monitoring progress of the 2030 Agenda.
- Even though data gaps do exist, the existing data can provide trajectories of partnership progress and what generally needs to be done to address pressing challenges.
- Partnerships can contribute to the implementation of the SDGs since partners can fill each other's knowledge gaps, complement one another's work, and magnify their impact.
- Although PPPs are important to the success of the 2030 Agenda, and profit is a central aspect of enticing private sector engagement, the private sector needs to follow guidelines when entering into PPPs.

Partnership Exchange - Goal 3 and 5 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages & Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)

Guiding questions for the session:

- How does your partnership help connect to those who may be harder to reach and therefore realize the aspiration of 'leave no one behind'?
- What originally motivated the formation of your partnership, and how has the 2030 Agenda catalyzed your work in the themes of ensuring healthy lives and achieving empowerment of women and girls and gender equality?
- Several countries taking part in the VNRs this year have mentioned, in their reports submitted to the HLPF Secretariat, empowerment of women and girls and gender inequality as a major national challenge. How has your partnership been innovative in addressing issues of gender inequality?
- What are some of the challenges you have faced in working with different sectors, and how have you overcome any communication barriers?
- In which ways has your partnership strengthened the work of all organizations involved?

A representative of the Czech Republic noted that achieving SDG5 is one of the country's biggest challenges, with low representation of women in business leadership, and a 22% gender pay gap. The government is taking various initiatives to address this challenge, including launching a National HeForShe campaign. But the private sector must be a partner in improving the reconciliation between work and private life. Data collection on the different effects of policies on men and women is crucial as well.

A representative from Denmark noted that dialogue, mutual trust, pragmatism, and community action are ingredients for successful partnerships. In Denmark health promotion and disease prevention involves many local community actors, such as local hospitals, work places, sports clubs, and the physical environment of communities. A representative of Novo Nordisk, a pharmaceutical company, joined the Danish statement by pointing out that diabetes affects 450 million worldwide, and that type 1 diabetes affects about 500,000 children worldwide. However, there is a lack of awareness of this diabetes epidemic. The company is working with the government and other actors in addressing this public health challenge in Denmark and in developing countries.

Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Chief Strategic Planning and Membership Department, ITU, presented EQUALS, a Global Partnership for Gender Equality in the Digital Age. She noted that close to 260 million fewer women than men have access to the internet, and internet access is lower for women than men in every region of the world. Several VNRs highlighted the importance of closing this gap. Connectivity alone will not be enough; women and girls need training to enable them to become Tech creators.

Ton Coenen, Chair of EuroNGOs and Executive Director of Rutgers, spoke about Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). He noted that in view of the growing opposition to SRHR, forming partnerships to defend SRHR would be crucial. Globally, 214 million women have no access to contraceptives they want and need. SRHR have a very high return on investment, according to a study by The Economist.

Hayley Gleeson, ACT!2030 Project Coordinator, spoke about The PACT for Social Transformation in the AIDS Response. Young people are still being left behind in the HIV response, and continued advocacy for SRHR is important. A key element of the success of The PACT is that its activities are community focused and participative.

Judith A. Hermanson, PhD, President and CEO, IHC Global, spoke about a partnership that uses Data to Support Women's Rights regarding property markets and housing rights. Women's property rights are promoted by providing transparency. Property is the corner stone of wealth-building in many societies, but women are not always allowed to hold property in the same way as men. This partnership developed a property scorecard to understand women's roles in property markets in Uganda. This can be scaled up and applied in other countries, to understand barriers and help women acquire wealth and assets.

"Nana" Kuo, Senior Manager at Every Woman Every Child Health Team, Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General, outlined what in her experience is needed to create a successful partnership: A common language and shattering of silos across sectors; strong political commitment; facilitate multi-stakeholder action based on trust and shared values; create synergies and not duplicate partnership efforts; and accountability.

Shambhu Acharya, Director, Department of Country Cooperation with the UN System, Office of the Director-General, World Health Organization, presented the Working for Health programme: A Five-Year Action Plan for Health Employment and Inclusive Economic Growth (2017 - 2021). He noted the importance of more sustainable investments into the health workforce, not only for SDG 3 but for success across the entire 2030 Agenda. Governments, employers, and workers need to engage in a dialogue and work together.

Fire side chat - Accountability and monitoring of partnerships

This session featured an informal conversation between a moderator and a guest, with the objective of creating an informal and frank dialogue.

- Interviewer: Mariarosa Cutillo, Chief of Strategic Partnerships, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Guest: Helga Fogstad, Executive Director of the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)

Q: What monitoring mechanisms and performance measures does your partnership use to ensure accountability?

Helga Fogstad responded by speaking about the unified accountability program which consists of monitoring, review and action, and which is important at the global, regional and country levels. It consists of a broad range of constituencies, and includes members from the private sector, multilateral NGOs, healthcare associations, civil society groups, youth and adolescent organizations, and global financing facilities. She noted the importance of coming together and agreeing on an accountability mechanism and which indicators need to be measured, not only at the end of each performance, but also along the way to track progress and indicators to celebrate each success.

Q: What are your major challenges in ensuring accountability in partnerships, and how do you work to address these challenges?

Fogstad stated that the major challenge is that the review of partnerships is only as good as the available data, and in many areas good data is lacking. She emphasized the need for more investments in data, and agreements on what to measure. She also suggested:

- Having a sustainable mechanism in place to strengthen surveys and information systems.
- Agreeing when and where indicators are going to be reviewed and pinpointing opportunities.

Finally, another challenge is that people are reluctant to be bold and straight-forward in holding one and other accountable, and this needs to change.

Q: What are some best practices for engaging various stakeholders in monitoring and accountability?

Fogstad mentioned that some best practices include agreeing on performance indicators, and that political and social accountability is also important – social accountability being where you involve communities, and dialogue with local administrations or service delivery points. She emphasized the importance of dialogue and financial accountability, through budget watch and ODA tracking. Finally, she said that power in accountability is developed by having multiple accountability streams occurring simultaneously, so that everyone is being held accountable.

Q: What is your governance structure? How do you think it could be improved?

Fogstad highlighted Every Woman Every Child's high level steering group, and the partnership for maternal newborn child health which has 850 member organizations. There are multiple partners in multiple sectors which enables the joining of forces and stock-taking of health outcomes and the health system, enabling outcomes in relation to the healthcare workforce and key elements within the health system. Every Woman Every Child also analyzes commitments, and how they compare to other commitments within the network. There are several political challenges of the high level steering group and getting full commitment, because they do not yet have enough visibility in some areas.

Q: With such a genuine multi stakeholder architecture for this governance, what are the challenges that you face in your day by day, in your opinion what are the things that can be approved?

Fogstad spoke about the need to partner with other sectors to help monitor progress, because of the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder nature of the SDGs. She noted as a major challenge the difficulty of monitoring and accountability in fragile settings with humanitarian crises, and the importance of determining how to monitor human rights. Another area which she noted could be improved is increasing focus on early childhood development, adolescence, humanitarian and fragile settings and empowerment of communities and women and girls. Finally, monitoring on a global scale of their initiative is a major challenge.

Partnership Exchange - Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development)

This session focused on partnerships and voluntary commitments that aim to contribute to the implementation of SDG 14, with a focus on the recently held UN Ocean Conference where nearly 1,400 voluntary commitments for Goal 14 were announced by all stakeholders.

Guiding questions for the session:

- How can we ensure voluntary commitments are delivered on as committed?
- How can The Ocean Conference Commitment Registry of Voluntary Commitments be further developed to support the implementation and acceleration of SDG 14?
- How can we facilitate a network of practitioners working on similar issues?
- How can we ensure coordination with commitment stemming from other processes, such as the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development?
- How can we help match available funding with those who need it?
- What actions and mechanisms can we use to keep these voluntary commitments flowing to the platform to maintain the tremendous momentum that was generated by the ocean conference in June?
- How can we better engage some of the stakeholder groups that may not have participated so actively so far in the voluntary commitments process such as certain subnational actors?
- Based on the initial review of these voluntary commitments, where do we see gaps, where do we see challenges, and where do we see opportunities for partnerships?
- Could this voluntary commitments platform still unique to SDG 14 in the conference, could it serve as an example or template that other SDGs might seek to emulate to also aim to catalyze progress on their respective goals and targets?

Presentation: An overview of SDG 14 Partnerships and Ocean Conference Voluntary Commitments by Marjo Vierros, Director, Coastal Policy and Humanities Research and Senior Associate, Global Ocean Forum

Marjo Vierros spoke about the primary analysis of the voluntary commitments from the Ocean Conference. 1,395 voluntary commitments had been registered that covered all targets, all ocean basins, and were made by a variety of entities:

- 666 by governments (roughly 43%)
- 285 by NGOs
- 116 made by UN entities
- 84 by civil society
- 81 by private sector
- 60 by IGOs
- 50 by partnerships
- 46 by academic institutions

- 23 by scientific community
- 18 by philanthropic organizations
- 16 by other
- North Atlantic: 444 (31%)
- South Pacific: 307 (21%)
- Indian: 237 (16%)
- North Pacific: 225 (15%)
- South Atlantic: 146 (10%)
- Artic: 45 (3%)
- Southern 49 (93%)

All of the SDG 14 targets were covered. Most of the commitments were related to more than one target, which speaks to how interrelated and interconnected the SDG 14 targets are, and how a series of activities can achieve multiple targets.

Overview of measures:

- Addressing marine pollution (14.1)
 - Marine litter and plastics
 - Nutrient management
 - Pollution from shipping
- Sustainable management and protection of marine ecosystems (14.2)
 - Ecosystem based management, ICM, marine spatial planning, LME approach, community-based management
 - Climate adaptation
 - Restoration
- Addressing ocean acidifications (14.3)
 - Scientific research and research collaboration
 - Building resilience against impacts of acidification
 - Mitigation and carbon sequestration

Most commitments place important emphasis on:

- **SDG 14.4:** effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices
- **SDG 14.5:** conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas
- **SDG 14.6:** By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing

Overview of measures:

- Increasing economic benefits to SIDS and LDCs (14.7)

- Blue economy & blue growth
- Sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, shipping, tourism
- Renewable energy
- Increasing scientific knowledge, capacity and tech transfer (14.a)
- Provide access to artisanal fisheries to resources and markets (14.b)
- Empowerment of communities in management of marine resources
- Improving access to coastal fishing grounds
- Improving human and institutional capacity
- Access to markets: improving traceability, certifications, and eco-labelling
- Implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS (14.c)
- Precautionary approach in seabed mining

Financial commitments:

- 573 commitments include the provision of monetary resources
- Almost all commitments include in-kind funding and staff and technical expertise
- Some commitments not new to the Ocean Conference, but may include new elements
- Majority of funding committed to a specific purpose/recipient
- Total amount approximated \$25.4 billion to be spread over several years
- Some errors in financial data-needs to be verified
- Some are loans, others grant funding
- The majority of funding committed to projects in SIDS, followed by Asia, Europe, Africa, South and Central America and others
- The commitments mention linkages to other targets and SDG's; 37 of the voluntary commitments mention poverty; 81 mentioned food security; 22 mentioned gender

Panel discussion: Best practices for effective follow-up and review of voluntary commitments

Kate Brown, Executive Director of the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) - New Zealand spoke about their work. GLISPA was founded 10 years ago, with the idea of mobilizing political commitments for action around the sustainability of island nations. GLISPA focuses on implementation, not policies, and encourage the registration of voluntary commitments. They also work to promote the SDGs, especially SDG 14. They have had commitments launched across 36 islands both independent and subnational and mobilization of \$150 million for island sustainability. Their partnership has an online dashboard which states what they are accountable for, and has information such as financial resources and political commitments which have been mobilized. Hawaii has an online dashboard with a set of goals and indicators, and the Micronesian challenge has spent 10 years working on measuring commitments. The challenge is to take what Micronesia has learned and share it with other islands to accelerate progress on monitoring. GLISPA is also working to determine a common set of indicators that can measure the impact of their partnership in terms of implementation.

Biliana Cicin-Sain, President, Global Ocean Forum, Professor of Marine Policy, University of Delaware mentioned how the sustainable use of the ocean has gained political support in the last 25 years, and people are more aware of the social and economic value of oceans. Although there are many new commitments, there is still a large need to track existing commitments and measure progress. She emphasized the importance of having a baseline on the status of all the SDG 14 targets from a global perspective, as well as a baseline on the current status of voluntary commitments; she stated that a systemic process for tracking voluntary commitments must be developed now. Sweden, one of the co-hosts of The Ocean Conference, highlighted some of the voluntary commitments they made during the Ocean conference, regarding the fight against illegal sustainable fisheries, the protection of marine ecosystems in developing countries, and the extension of marine protected areas in Sweden. They highlighted the need to work in partnership to ensure effective implementation of the commitments they have registered: some of Sweden's 26 voluntary commitments will be implemented nationally, and some in partnership with other stakeholders and countries. Sweden highlighted one commitment which connects Goal 14 with Goals 1 and 2, in which Sweden will devote 5.7 million USD to support sustainable fisheries. Sweden also supported the offer by Kenya and Portugal to host a follow up Ocean conference to review progress of SDG 14.

Key Points from session:

- The European Union highlighted the upcoming Malta ocean conference, and how stakeholders will be given speaking times to showcase their actions.
- Coral Vida addressed the need to support young people in developing countries to encourage and integrate entrepreneurship and startups to help achieve the SDGs. Coral Vida plans to create classes for high school students around the world.
- The German Institute on International and Security Affairs discussed the usefulness of the Partnerships for SDGs database's "traffic light system" to track reporting on voluntary commitments. When commitments have sent in their annual reports, the voluntary commitment receives a "green light", if there has not been any follow-up for a year, they receive a "yellow light", and if there has been no reporting for more than a year, the voluntary commitment receives a "red light". They mentioned that in their German sustainability strategy they use a similar system to track commitments, with a sun, clouds, or thunderstorms depending on how much follow-up and review the commitment has demonstrated. The institute suggested further exploring these ideas to put pressure on voluntary commitments to have up-to-date reporting.

Announcement: Winner of Ocean Conference Voluntary Commitments Data Visualization Competition

In the lead-up to the Partnership Exchange, UNDESA as the Secretariat of the HLPF and The Ocean Conference had launched a competition, offering a unique opportunity to data visualization specialists to showcase their skills by analyzing and visualizing data from all the voluntary commitments that were announced as part of The Ocean Conference. Participants in this competition were required to use their imagination to produce visualizations that highlight insights from all voluntary commitments available in

the ocean conference registry. The winner of the competition was iTech Mission with their innovative visualization of The Ocean Conference Voluntary Commitments. Their visualization can be viewed at: <http://www.sdgdatalabs.org/iTM/sdg14/>
