

PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS:

A legacy review towards realizing the 2030 Agenda



UNITED NATIONS

Contents

Introduction	2
Partnership mandates and history at the United Nations	3
Definitions, criteria, guidelines	12
General Assembly.....	12
ECOSOC	13
Partnership platforms for sustainable development	14
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)	14
High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development	14
Partnerships for SDGs online platform – sharing knowledge and measuring progress of partnership initiatives	15
Conclusion	15

Introduction

Ever since its inception, the United Nations has relied and worked with partners through informal, formal and consultative relationships. Article 71 of the United Nations Charter, which established the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), states the following:

The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with nongovernmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned. - United Nations Charter, Chapter X, Article 71

With the turn of the century, member States declared a set of time-bound Millennium Development Goals, launched the United Nations Global Compact as the world largest corporate sustainability initiative, included global partnerships as a standing agenda item at the General Assembly, and recognized voluntary multi-stakeholder partnerships as important contributors to achieving inter-governmentally agreed development goals at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

In the post-2015 development era with 17 inter-linked and universal Sustainable Development Goals at its core, multi-stakeholder partnerships are expected to play an increasingly important role in its implementation. Sustainable Development Goal 17 - *“Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”* - recognizes multi-stakeholder partnerships as important vehicles for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technologies and financial resources to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries.

The effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships, while dependent on many factors, will increasingly be tied to their ability to manage and share knowledge and expertise about the issues, processes, and solutions that they are promoting. The Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are truly universal in nature – they apply to all countries, and all sectors. This universality will require, inter alia, that the knowledge and expertise managed and possessed by multi-stakeholder partnerships need to be shared as widely as possible in order for it to reach beyond immediate constituencies and communities and to have an impact on a global scale.

The Sustainable Development Goals and targets will come into effect on 1 January 2016 and will guide decisions member States take over the next fifteen years. Reviewing its progress is crucial as it will ensure it remains relevant and ambitious. The review will be centralized through the High-level Political Forum, which will hold its first session since adoption of the 2030 Agenda in July 2016.

The present report reviews mandates given to United Nations in the context of partnerships, with the objective to inform member States as they prepare for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and deliberate the modalities for its review.

Partnership mandates and history at the United Nations

The below provides a historic overview of mandates from United Nations legislative documents related to partnerships.

1996

ECOSOC resolution governing NGO relations

The first avenue by which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) took a role in formal United Nations deliberations was through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Consultative relations between NGOs and ECOSOC are governed by ECOSOC resolution 1996/31.

An organization in consultative status with ECOSOC may participate in ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies and functional commissions. It may also participate in various international UN conferences and other intergovernmental processes. Consultative status with ECOSOC also provides physical access of NGOs to United Nations premises.

Contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the work of the United Nations is one of the main purposes of granting consultative status to NGOs. ECOSOC monitors the contribution made by NGOs in consultative status through the requirement of the NGO submitting – every four years – a brief progress report on the activities of the organization, in particular highlighting its contribution to the work of the United Nations, the MDGs and other internationally agreed goals.

1998

United Nations Fund for International Partnerships

United Nations Fund for International Partnerships was established on 1 March 1998 by the Secretary-General pursuant to the agreement between the United Nations and the United Nations Foundation, Inc., as an autonomous trust fund. Reference: A/53/700

2000

Millennium Development Goal 8 – Global Partnership for Development

The General Assembly, by its resolution 53/202 of 17 December 1998, decided to designate the 55th session of the General Assembly “The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations”, and to convene, as an integral part of the Millennium Assembly, a Millennium Summit of the United Nations. The world leaders who gathered at the Summit committed their nations to a new *global partnership* to reduce extreme poverty, and set out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015, which have become known as the eight Millennium Development Goals. Goal 8 “*Develop a Global Partnership for Development*” aimed to increased Official Development Assistance, develop an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system, address the special needs, including debt problems, of least developed, land locked, and small island developing states countries, and make better available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies.

United Nations Global Compact

In his address to the World Economic Forum on January 31, 1999, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on global business leaders to embrace nine shared values and principles in the areas of human rights, labour standards, and environmental practices.

The proposal catalysed the formation of the Global Compact Network in 2000 - consisting of several hundred companies, dozens of NGOs, major international labour federations, and several UN agencies seeking to collaboratively contribute to a more stable, equitable, and inclusive global economy by making its *nine principles* an integral part of business activities everywhere.

Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Community

The Secretary-General also released the *Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Community* with the purpose to facilitate the formulation and implementation of cooperation between the United Nations and the business community in a manner that ensures the integrity and independence of the Organization.

The tenth principle against corruption was adopted in 2004 and commits UN Global Compact participants not only to avoid bribery, extortion and other forms of corruption, but also to proactively develop policies and concrete programmes to address corruption internally and within their supply chains.

Towards global partnerships - item and resolution of the General Assembly

In August 2000, the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations requested the General Assembly to include in the agenda of its 55th session a supplementary item entitled "*Towards global partnership*".

2001

General Assembly item and resolution – Towards global partnerships

The first General Assembly item, and subsequent resolution, on "*Towards global partnerships*" was included in the agenda of the General Assembly 2nd Committee, and adopted, in 2001, as contained in document A/RES/55/215.

The resolution stressed the need for Member States further to discuss partnerships and consider, in appropriate intergovernmental consultations, ways and means to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, inter alia, from the developing countries, to give them greater opportunities to contribute to the realization of the goals and programmes of the Organization.

The resolution also *decided* to include in the agenda of its 56th session the item entitled "*Towards global partnerships*", after which the item was included, and the resolution negotiated, every two years during 58th, 60th, 62nd, 64th, 66th, 68th, and - in 2015 - the 70th session of the General Assembly.

2002

World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation

Voluntary, multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development were an important complementary outcome of the *World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)*. More than 200 partnerships were launched during the Summit process. These partnerships have a special character in that they are specifically linked to implementation of globally agreed commitments in the

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, Agenda 21 and/or the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. However, as stressed at the Summit, these partnerships are not a substitute for government responsibilities and commitments, and are intended to strengthen implementation by involving all those who can make a contribution to sustainable development.

2003

Criteria and guidelines by Commission on Sustainable Development

As a follow up to the *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* – the outcome of the *World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)* held in 2002 - the Commission on Sustainable Development at its 11th session took note of the preliminary work undertaken on partnerships during the preparatory process of WSSD, including the Bali guiding principles, and General Assembly resolution 56/76, and *stressed* that partnerships that promote sustainable development, as voluntary multi-stakeholder initiatives, contribute to the implementation of intergovernmental commitments in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and should be developed and implemented in accordance with a set of *criteria and guidelines*, as stipulated in E/CN.17/2003/6 (paragraph 21-24).

2004

Report of the Secretary-General on Partnerships for Sustainable Development

The first report of the Secretary-General on *Partnerships for Sustainable Development* was prepared in 2004 as an input to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, providing a general summary of information on the partnerships for sustainable development that were registered with the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The report was thereafter prepared every two years (2006, 2008, 2010), serving as a basis for the discussions of the Commission on Sustainable Development during its review sessions, on the contribution of partnerships to the implementation of the inter-governmentally agreed sustainable development goals and objectives.

2005

United Nations Democracy Fund

The Secretary-General announced the establishment of the United Nations Democracy Fund in July 2005. On 24 October 2005, the General Assembly welcomed the establishment of a Democracy Fund at the United Nations. The Fund supports democratization processes, based on the principle that there is no single model of democracy, through a competitive grant-making facility to civil society organizations engaged in promoting democratic values.

2006

United Nations Office for Partnerships

In 2006, the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP) was created in order to strengthen system-wide coherence in the establishment of operational relationships with global partners of the United Nations; to provide support for the United Nations Democracy Fund; and to support partnership initiatives from non-State actors or United Nations entities in the light of General Assembly resolutions on the importance of engaging public and private sector stakeholders in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, as well as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Office provides advice and support on building partnerships for achieving

development goals, including those laid out in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, and serves as a gateway for enquiries from Governments, the private sector, foundations and civil society with a view to facilitating innovative partnerships and alliances with the United Nations system. Reference: ST/SGB/2009/14

2007

MDG Gap Task Force

The MDG Gap Task Force was created by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in May 2007 to improve monitoring of the global commitments contained in MDG 8, the Global Partnership for Development. The main purpose of the Task Force is to systematically track existing international commitments and to identify gaps and obstacles in their fulfilment at the international, regional and country level in the areas of official development assistance, market access (trade), debt sustainability, and access to essential medicines and new technologies. The Task Force integrates more than 30 United Nations and other international agencies. An annual report of the MDG Gap Task Force is published in September.

2008

ECOSOC improves reporting requirements for NGOs in consultative status

In 2008, ECOSOC produced a resolution with the objective to improve the reporting procedures involving NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC. The resolution, *2008/4 - Measures to improve the quadrennial reporting procedures*, placed stricter reporting requirements on those NGOs required to report every four years on their activities to ECOSOC, and decided to *suspend*, and ultimately, *withdraw* consultative status to those NGOs that fail to produce the required report.

2009

Revised Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector by UN Global Compact

Initially developed in 2000 as a common framework for UN-Business collaboration, the Guidelines were further updated in 2009, and should apply to the UN Secretariat as well as separately administered organs, Funds and Programmes. As an important component of the Secretary-General's efforts to modernise the Organization, the Guidelines were intended to help UN staff develop more effective partnerships between the UN and the business sector while ensuring the integrity and independence of the United Nations.

2012

Rio+20 – the Future We Want

The Rio+20 outcome document, the *Future We Want*, asked the Secretary-General, through *paragraph 283*, to establish an internet-based registry of voluntary commitments from all stakeholders and their networks that implement concrete policies, plans, programmes, projects and actions to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication. The registry was to make information about the commitments fully transparent and accessible to the public, and it should be periodically updated.

The outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference, the *Future We Want*, also made many *references* to partnerships.

Paragraph 46 recognized that the active participation of the private sector can contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including through the important tool of public-private *partnerships*.

Paragraph 64 acknowledged that involvement of all stakeholders and their *partnerships*, networking and experience-sharing at all levels could help countries to learn from one another in identifying appropriate sustainable development policies, including green economy policies.

Paragraph 71 encouraged existing and new *partnerships*, including public-private *partnerships*, to mobilize public financing complemented by the private sector, taking into account the interests of local and indigenous communities when appropriate.

Paragraph 76 h called for enhancing the participation and effective engagement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the relevant international forums and in this regard promote transparency and broad public participation and *partnerships* to implement sustainable development;

In regards to *Sustainable cities and human settlements*, it was recognized, through *paragraph 137*, that *partnerships* among cities and communities play an important role in promoting sustainable development.

In regards to *Health and population*, the private sector was encouraged, through *paragraph 154*, to contribute to decent work for all and job creation for both women and men, and particularly for young people, including through *partnerships* with small and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives.

In regards to *Biodiversity*, it was agreed, through *paragraph 202*, to promote international cooperation and *partnerships*, as appropriate, and information exchange, and in this context the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, 2011-2020, was welcomed for the purpose of encouraging active involvement of all stakeholders in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as access to and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, with the vision of living in harmony with nature.

In regards to *Desertification, land degradation and drought*, *partnerships* were also recognized, through *paragraph 207*, as important initiatives for the safeguarding of land resources.

In regards to *Chemical and waste*, *paragraph 215* recognized that additional efforts are needed to enhance work towards strengthening capacities, including through *partnerships*, technical assistance and improved governance structures. *Paragraph 217* also commended existing public-private *partnerships* and call for continued, new and innovative public-private partnerships among industry, governments, academia and other non-governmental stakeholders aiming to enhance capacity and technology for environmentally sound chemicals and waste management, including for waste prevention.

In regards to *Education*, *paragraph 232* encouraged international educational exchanges and *partnerships*, including the creation of fellowships and scholarships to help achieve global education goals.

In regards to *Finance*, *paragraph 253* recognized that new *partnerships* and innovative sources of financing can play a role in complementing sources of financing for sustainable development.

Paragraph 280d invited all relevant agencies of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations to support developing countries and, in particular, the least developed

countries in capacity-building for developing resource-efficient and inclusive economies, including through promoting public-private *partnerships*.

2013

Lessons learned from Commission on Sustainable Development

In the report of the Secretary-General on “*Lessons learned from the Commission on Sustainable Development*” (A/67/757) - prepared in 2013 as input to the last session of the Commission on Sustainable Development - several references were made to how the Commission had dealt with, and could improve, its engagement with *partnerships for sustainable development*.

Paragraph 19 stated that the Commission had provided for multi-stakeholder participation and interactive dialogue, including at the ministerial level - and had recognized through its work the importance and value of voluntary, multi-stakeholder partnerships, for sustainable development.

Paragraph 60 mentions the *Partnership Fairs*, which were held as part of all sessions of the Commission to showcase the role of partnerships as important mechanisms for implementation and engagement. Unfortunately, the timing of the fairs had overlapped with the sessions of the Commission, which hindered the review of the contributions of partnerships and reduced the opportunities for the Commission to provide guidance. Furthermore, while the reports of the Secretary-General provided summary reports based on voluntary self-reporting from registered partnerships, obtaining current information on partnerships was difficult. The report ends with recognizing that the *CSD partnership database* never became a well-resourced and modern platform.

2014

SAMOA Pathway - Multi-stakeholder partnerships for Small Island Developing States

At the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS Conference), which had the overarching theme “*The sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnerships*”, member States recognized that international cooperation and *partnerships* of various kinds and across a wide variety of stakeholders are critical for the implementation of the sustainable development of small island developing States.

The outcome document of the SIDS Conference, the *SAMOA Pathway*, further recognized that genuine and durable *partnerships* will play an important role in advancing sustainable development by harnessing the full potential of engagement between governments at all levels, businesses, civil society and a wide range of other stakeholders. It was stated that *partnerships* should be based on the principles of national ownership, mutual trust, transparency and accountability, and were recognized as effective instruments for mobilizing human and financial resources, expertise, technology and knowledge and can be powerful drivers for change, innovation and welfare.

The SAMOA Pathway, called for, through its *paragraph 101*, the establishment of *partnership framework* to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for Small Island developing States.

The *framework* should ensure that partnerships focus on the priorities of Small Island developing States, identify new opportunities to advance their sustainable development of and ensure the full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the SAMOA Pathway.

The SAMOA Pathway further requested, through *paragraph 124a*, the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council on the progress achieved in implementing the priorities, commitments, *partnerships* and other activities of the small island developing States.

Paragraph 124b requested the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) to continue to maintain a *partnerships platform* focused on the small island developing States.

2015

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030

The *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030* was adopted at the Third UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan, on March 18, 2015. The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the *Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*.

Paragraph 37 of the Sendai Framework recognizes, with reference to General Assembly resolution 68/211, that *voluntary commitments by relevant stakeholders* are important in order to identify modalities of cooperation and to implement the framework. Commitments should be specific and time-bound in order to support the development of partnerships at local, national, regional and global levels and the implementation of local and national disaster risk reduction strategies and plans. The framework encourages all stakeholders to publicize their commitments and their fulfilment in support of the implementation of the framework, or of the national and local disaster risk management plans, through the website of the *United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction*.

Guidelines on a Principle-based Approach to the Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector

The *Guidelines on a Principle-based Approach to the Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector*, developed in 2000 and revised in 2009, were further improved in 2015. The updated guidelines provide a framework on a common and systemic approach to partnerships between the United Nations and the business sector, placing greater emphasis on transparency, coherence, impact, accountability, and due diligence.

Addis Ababa Action Agenda

The outcome document of the *Third International Conference on Financing and Development*, the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda*, makes many *references* to partnerships.

Paragraph 10 recognize that multi-stakeholder *partnerships* and the resources, knowledge and ingenuity of the private sector, civil society, the scientific community, academia, philanthropy and foundations, parliaments, local authorities, volunteers and other stakeholders will be important to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, complement the efforts of Governments and support the achievement of the sustainable development goals, in particular in developing countries.

Paragraph 42 welcomes philanthropic donors' flexibility and capacity for innovation and taking risks and their ability to leverage additional funds through multi-stakeholder *partnerships*.

Paragraph 46 encourages the use of innovative mechanisms and *partnerships* to encourage greater international private financial participation in economies of least developed countries.

Paragraph 76 recognizes that genuine, effective and durable *multi-stakeholder partnerships* can play an important role in advancing sustainable development, and encourages the promotion of such partnerships to support country-driven priorities and strategies, building on lessons learned and available expertise. In addition, partnerships are recognized as effective instruments for mobilizing human and financial resources, expertise, technology and knowledge.

Paragraph 77 recognizes the impact *multi-stakeholder partnerships*, such as the *Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI)* and the *Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria* have in achieving results in the field of health, and encourages a better alignment between such initiatives.

Paragraph 78 outlines the scaling up of investments and international cooperation to allow all children to complete free, equitable, inclusive and quality early childhood, primary and secondary education, including through scaling up and strengthening initiatives, such as the *Global Partnership for Education*.

Paragraph 115 calls for enhanced international support and establishment of *multi stakeholder partnerships* for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, African countries and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations, to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals.

Lastly, *paragraph 11* encourage knowledge-sharing and the promotion of cooperation and partnerships between stakeholders, including between Governments, firms, academia and civil society, in sectors contributing to the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development Goal 17, *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*, of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, outcome of the *United Nations Sustainable Development Summit*, address the issues of finance, technology, capacity-building, trade, including systemic issues such as policy and institutional coherence, data, monitoring and accountability, and *multi-stakeholder partnerships*.

In *target 17.16*, *multi-stakeholder partnerships* are recognized as important vehicles for mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to enhance the global partnership and support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

Target 17.17 calls for the encouragement and promotion of effective public, public-private and civil society *partnerships*, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of *partnerships*.

Under the header *Means of implementation and the Global Partnership*, the launch a *Technology Facilitation Mechanism* which was established by the *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* in order to support the sustainable development goals, was announced. The *Technology Facilitation Mechanism* will be based on a multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, private sector, scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders, and will be composed of: 1) a United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, 2) a collaborative Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, and 3) an on-line platform.

The *Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science Technology and Innovation for the SDGs* will provide a venue for facilitating interaction, matchmaking and the establishment of networks between relevant

stakeholders and *multi-stakeholder partnerships* in order to identify and examine technology needs and gaps, including on scientific cooperation, innovation and capacity building, and also in order to help facilitate development, transfer and dissemination of relevant technologies for the SDGs.

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development – a platform for partnerships

As outlined in *paragraph 82* of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) will have a central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level, working coherently with the General Assembly, ECOSOC and other relevant organs and forums, in accordance with existing mandates.

Paragraph 84 mandates HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, to carry out *regular reviews*, in line with General Assembly resolution 67/290. Reviews will be voluntary, while encouraging reporting, and include developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. They shall be state-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants. They shall provide *a platform for partnerships*, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders

In addition, *paragraph 85* outlines that *thematic reviews* of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, will also take place at the HLPF. These will be supported by reviews by the ECOSOC functional commissions and other inter-governmental bodies and forums which should reflect the integrated nature of the goals as well as the interlinkages between them. They will engage *all relevant stakeholders* and, where possible, feed into, and be aligned with, the cycle of the HLPF.

Paragraph 89 supports the participation in follow-up and review processes by the major groups and other relevant stakeholders, in line with Resolution 67/290, and call on these actors to report on their contribution to the implementation of the Agenda.

Establishment of the Small Island Developing Partnership Framework

As a follow-up to SAMOA Pathway, on 4 December 2015, the General Assembly Second Committee adopted resolution A/C.2/70/L.47 which decided to establish the *Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework* to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for small island developing States, in order to promote the effective and efficient follow-up to the existing partnerships, in particular new partnerships launched at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, and to encourage new, genuine and durable partnerships for the sustainable development of small island developing States.

The framework consists of several action points:

- Forming of a *Steering Committee on partnerships for small island developing States* that shall be open to all States Members of the United Nations or members of the specialized agencies
- Organization, on an annual basis, of a *global multi stakeholder small island developing States partnership dialogue*, for reviewing progress made by existing partnerships, sharing of good practices, lessons learned and challenges and solutions from small island developing States partnerships, and encourage the launch of new partnerships for small island developing States
- Finalizing a *standardized partnership reporting template and process*
- Encouraging the organization of *regional and national multi-stakeholder small island developing States partnership dialogues*

Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners

The ninth resolution on “Towards global partnerships” was adopted in December 2015, titled *“Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners”*.

The resolution welcomes the contribution of all relevant partners, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations, philanthropic organizations, academia and civil society, to the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations conferences and summits and their reviews in the economic, social, environmental and related fields, as well as the realization of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

The resolution requested the ECOSOC partnership forum to convene in its current session (scheduled for spring 2016) a discussion on the best practices and ways to improve, inter alia, transparency, accountability and sharing of experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships, and on review and monitoring of these partnerships, inter alia the role of Member States in review and monitoring.

The resolution also invited the academic, research and scientific communities to contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in this regard, recognized the important role of the United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI), among other initiatives, and encourages the UNAI to play an important and growing role in fostering global citizenship, filling knowledge gaps and facilitating better understanding of the core principles and activities of the United Nations.

Definitions, criteria, guidelines

The following definitions, criteria, and guidelines for partnerships are drawn from United Nations legislative documents. In some cases, text has been extracted from its containing paragraph. It is therefore recommended to refer to the original reference for a complete understanding of its context. All official documents from the United Nations can be accessed through ods.un.org by using its document symbol as search parameter.

General Assembly

[A/RES/69/15 - SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action \(SAMOA\) Pathway](#)

- Partnerships should be based on the principles of national ownership, mutual trust, transparency and accountability.

[Towards global partnerships: GA Resolution 68/234, 66/223, 64/223, 62/211, 60/215, 58/129, 56/76](#)

- Partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits
- Partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits
- Partnerships should be designed and implemented in a transparent and accountable manner, and in that regard calls upon partners to provide to and exchange relevant information with Governments,

other stakeholders and the relevant United Nations agencies and bodies and other international organizations in which they engage, in an appropriate way, including through reports, with particular attention to the importance of sharing among partnerships information on their practical experience

- Partnerships should be consistent with national laws and national development strategies and plans, as well as the priorities of countries where they are implemented, bearing in mind the relevant guidance provided by Governments
- Partnerships should also foster the elimination of all forms of discrimination, including on gender grounds, in respect of employment and occupation;
- Partnerships should focus on the achievement of concrete result
- Principles and approaches that govern such partnerships and arrangements should be built on the firm foundation of United Nations purposes and principles, as set out in the Charter
- Partnerships and arrangements should be built on the firm foundation of United Nations purposes and principles, as set out in the Charter

ECOSOC

E/CN.17/2003/6 - Commission on Sustainable Development – Report on the 11th session

- Partnerships are voluntary initiatives undertaken by Governments and relevant stakeholders, such as major groups and institutional stakeholders;
- Partnerships should contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and should not divert resources from the commitments contained in those agreements;
- Partnerships are not intended to substitute commitments made by Governments but to supplement the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;
- Partnerships should add concrete value to the implementation process and should be new, that is, they should not merely reflect existing arrangements;
- Partnerships should bear in mind the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their design and implementation;
- Partnerships should be based on predictable and sustained resources for their implementation, should include the mobilization of new resources and, where relevant, should result in the transfer of technology to, and capacity-building in developing countries;
- It is desirable that partnerships have a sectoral and geographical balance;
- Partnerships should be designed and implemented in a transparent and accountable manner. In that regard, they should exchange relevant information with Governments and other relevant stakeholders;
- Partnerships should be consistent with national laws and national strategies for the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as well as the priorities of countries where their implementation takes place;
- The involvement of international institutions and United Nations funds, programmes and agencies in partnerships should conform to inter-governmentally agreed mandates and should not lead to the diversion to partnerships of resources otherwise allocated for their mandated programmes;

Partnership platforms for sustainable development

Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

ECOSOC, one of the six main organs of the United Nations established by the UN Charter in 1946, is the principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on economic, social and environmental issues, as well as for implementation of the internationally agreed development goals.

ECOSOC engages a wide variety of stakeholders – policymakers, parliamentarians, academics, major groups, foundations, business sector representatives, and 4,300+ non-governmental organizations – in a productive dialogue on sustainable development through a programmatic cycle of meetings. The work of the Council is guided by an issue-based approach, and there is an annual theme that accompanies each programmatic cycle, ensuring a sustained and focused discussion among multiple stakeholders.

Member states of the General Assembly have broad oversight over partnerships linked to the United Nations through the agenda item, *“Towards Global Partnerships”*. In its resolution *Towards global partnerships: a principle - based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners*, negotiated during the 70th session of the General Assembly, member States requested the ECOSOC Partnership Forum to convene a discussion, during its current session (March 2016), on the best practices and ways to improve, inter alia, transparency, accountability and sharing of experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships, and on review and monitoring of these partnerships, inter alia the role of Member States in review and monitoring.

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which was created at the Rio+20 Conference in order to elevate consideration of sustainable development, is the main United Nations platform dealing with sustainable development.

As mandated in the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, HLPF is the central platform for the follow-up and review of the Agenda, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

The HLPF session in 2016 – its first after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda - will carry out voluntary state-led reviews on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation. The reviews, which replaces the national voluntary presentations previously held in the context of the annual ministerial level substantive reviews of ECOSOC, will include developed and developing countries, as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector.

The reviews shall also provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders.

Thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues, will also take place at the HLPF. These will be supported by reviews by the ECOSOC functional commissions and other inter-governmental bodies and forums which should reflect the integrated

nature of the goals as well as the interlinkages between them. They will engage all relevant stakeholders and, where possible, feed into, and be aligned with, the cycle of the HLPF.

Partnerships for SDGs online platform – sharing knowledge and measuring progress of partnership initiatives

The *Partnerships for SDGs online platform*, available at sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnerships, was launched as a beta/draft version in the lead-up to the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, with the objective of functioning as a tool for multi-stakeholder partnerships to mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, in order to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, and with the purpose of linking progress of partnership initiatives as a way of supporting the global review which will be undertaken by the High-level Political Forum starting in 2016.

For the state-led reviews of HLPF, the *Partnerships for SDGs online platform* could be a vehicle for informing countries participating in the reviews of progress of multi-stakeholder partnerships in their country. In turn, partnership initiatives could, through this process, become better informed of national realities, strategies and priorities and possibly align their deliverables, and launch new initiatives, in line with those priorities. A similar process could be done for the thematic reviews.

The Platform, originally developed following a mandate from the Rio+20 Conference, has been aligned with the 17 SDGs and provides access to a range of partnerships initiatives in all goal areas, including commitments and initiatives stemming from Every Woman Every Child, the Sustainable Energy for All, Global Compact, Partnerships for Small Island Developing States, the Rio+20 Conference, among others.

A *full version* of the platform is expected to be launched in *January 2016*, when the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda will come into effect. In *March 2016*, the platform will also be linked to the global indicators.

Conclusion

The concept of partnerships as a vehicle for supporting government-led actions in realizing development goals has evolved over the decades. Ever since the international community laid out and adopted the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, partnerships as a means of implementation has been increasingly recognized through United Nations summits, conferences and outcomes, starting with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in 2002, through the Future We Want in 2012, the SAMOA Pathway in 2014, to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015.

Sustainable Development Goal 17 of the 2030 Agenda - *Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development* - is crucial as a means to deliver on all SDGs. It is the goal that will mobilize efforts within the international community to work together, share their expertise and knowledge, further exchange of technological advances, mobilize financial

resources for developing countries from multiple sources, and enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries.

Partnerships as a mean of implementation have never before in the history of international cooperation been more important. A revitalized Global Partnership to deliver on all the Sustainable Development Goals will facilitate an intensive global engagement, bringing together Governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other actors, and mobilizing and utilizing all available resources, to transform the world for the better by 2030.

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