

Developing Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals in support of the reviews of the High-level Political Forum - Asia and Pacific

28 November 2016, Meeting Room F of the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) at UN-ESCAP

Opening remarks

Kaveh Zahedi, Deputy Executive Secretary for Sustainable Development, UN-ESCAP

- Welcome to the Expert Group Meeting on “*Developing Partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals in support of the reviews of the High-level Political Forum - Asia and Pacific*”, organized by the UN Division for Sustainable Development (UN-DESA) in collaboration with ESCAP and the United Nations Office for Partnerships
- This meeting is taking place on the first day of ESCAP’s SDG Week - a full week of Expert Group Meetings, workshops and events devoted to supporting the region’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The SDG week offers a unique opportunity to bring together stakeholders from government, academia, the international community, civil society and the private sector to: (1) share their hands on technical knowledge on the different aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and; (2) to provide feedback on the support required from ESCAP and other development partners as they implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development at the national level.
- Our member states have already signaled that delivering on the 2030 Agenda is not only the responsibility of governments. That is why they have stressed delivering the 2030 Agenda “**Together**”.
- Only together, working in true partnership with governments, UN entities, IGOs, academia, civil society, businesses and other stakeholders, can we deliver on the promise of the 2030 Agenda, ensuring that no one is left behind.
- Partnerships for sustainable development are crucial initiatives undertaken by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups and others stakeholders, whose efforts greatly contribute to the implementation of inter-governmentally agreed development goals and commitments
- Partnerships are an integral part of the 2030 Agenda. The Sustainable Development Goal 17, which reads “*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. Goal 17 further seeks to encourage and

promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

- Partnerships have been very important to ESCAP. Through our work with a wide range of actors such as governments, UN agencies, research institutes, civil society and other stakeholders, we have built important partnerships for sustainable development.
 - For example, our partnership with **civil society** has enabled the establishment of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development as a platform that is supported by both governments and by civil society. This is unique in the region and the trust built with civil society has been important in building this platform. We have also engaged stakeholders in campaigns that support the 2030 Agenda implementation – such as for “Making the Right Real” for the differently-abled, and “Get everyone in the picture” for Civil Registration and Vital Statistics as critical for making the data available for ensuring that we leave no one behind.
 - Partnership with **UN agencies and development banks** is also critical to mainstream our efforts and complement strengths. The Asia Pacific Regional Coordination Mechanism and its seven thematic working groups have been fully realigned for cooperation in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. Similarly ESCAP’s the Asian Development Bank and UNDP have renewed their partnership to advance the region’s implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. One of the knowledge products under this partnership will be annual thematic reports of SDG, which will support multi-stakeholder discussions at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, which feeds the region’s perspective to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development every year.
 - Partnerships with **businesses through the EBAC** and other mechanisms on transport, energy, trade and so on.

Dear colleagues,

- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals provide a blueprint of enormous opportunity for working across all sectors of the economy in collaboration with all parts of the society.
- Developing strong, effective and transparent Partnerships to support the SDGs, will determine **how we equip ourselves to best capture these multi-sectoral opportunities of collaboration.**
- With these thoughts in mind our event will try to answer a number of important questions: What makes one partnership succeed and another fall behind? How can partnerships address the need for an integrated approach on implementing the SDGs? What are the enabling environments in the region for fostering partnerships that deliver on the ground? What really constitutes at the end an effective partnership for the 2030 Agenda?
- To answer these questions our event today is structured around four interrelated sessions:

- Innovative approaches of partnerships in tackling the SDGS
- Governance models of partnerships, accountability and stakeholder engagement
- National enabling environments for fostering effective partnerships
- Partnership engagement with 2030 Agenda follow-up and review processes
- Through these sessions, we will also look at existing sustainable development partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region and draw lessons that can be used to strengthen implementation of the 2030 Agenda. At the same time we hope that this and the other events of the SDG Week will provide opportunities for more interaction between partners and ideas for more collaboration under existing or new partnerships.
- I am impressed to see such a lineup of many innovative partnerships, government officials and experts at this event today. With your collective expertise, I am certain we will be able to formulate how to develop partnerships in Asia and Pacific to best tackle the SDGs. The outcome of this event will be captured in a summary of our proceedings, as well in an online capacity building learning module, which will be broadly shared and available for all stakeholders to take part in.
- I wish you all a fruitful exchange and insightful dialogue.
