

Multi-stakeholder Partnerships in the post-2015 development era: Sharing knowledge and expertise to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Expert Group Meeting Organized by Division for Sustainable Development, United Nations
Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA/DSD)

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Introduction

The United Nations is in the process of defining a post-2015 development agenda, to be launched at a Summit in September 2015. The agenda is currently being elaborated through informal consultations of the United Nations General Assembly. Member States have agreed that the open working group¹ proposal on sustainable development goals should be the main basis for the post-2015 intergovernmental process.

The proposed sustainable development goal 17, “*Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development*”, recognize multi-stakeholder partnerships as important vehicles for sharing knowledge and expertise to support the achievement of sustainable development goals in all countries, particularly developing countries.

It is against this backdrop the expert group meeting (EGM) on “*Multi-stakeholder partnerships in the post-2015 development era – sharing knowledge and expertise to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals*” is being organized by Division for Sustainable Development, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA/DSD) in collaboration with United Nations Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD).

The EGM will build on one of the core functions of the UN-DESA/DSD in managing knowledge on, and supporting multi-stakeholder partnerships for, sustainable development, and UNOSD’s focus areas of knowledge exchange, and sharing of resources, expertise, and capital from all stakeholders through sustainable partnerships.

Background

The importance of engaging stakeholders at all levels has repeatedly been recognized at past and recent international conferences on sustainable development, as well during the ongoing global conversations in preparations for the post-2015 development agenda.

The Rio+20 Conference highlighted the relevance of recognizing the constructive role of non-state actors in shaping and implementing the international agenda for a sustainable future. It created unprecedented momentum in parallel to the intergovernmental process, which led to the announcements of more than 700 concrete multi-stakeholder partnerships and voluntary commitments for the implementation of sustainable development. The intergovernmental process duly acknowledged the complementary nature of these voluntary initiatives by deciding to establish a comprehensive online registry to compile these voluntary commitments, keeping it fully transparent, accessible to the public and to keep it periodically updated.

¹ The Rio+20 outcome document, *The Future We Want*, set out a mandate to establish an Open Working Group to develop a set of sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action by the General Assembly.

The SD in Action Registry was launched shortly after Rio+20 by the United Nations Secretariat as mandated by the Conference. It contains detailed descriptions of all commitments voluntarily entered into by multi-stakeholder partnerships since Rio+20 in various priority areas of sustainable development. It also facilitates access to other registries and multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as the commitments from the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative, Every Woman Every Child, United Nations Global Compact's voluntary corporate sustainability initiative, and the Higher Education on Sustainability Initiative.

More recently, at the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS Conference), multi-stakeholder partnerships gained an even more central role to the process when Member States decided to organize six multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues (SIDS Partnership Dialogues) as part of the official conference programme.

The SIDS Partnership Dialogues resulted in the recognition and/or launch of over 300 multi-stakeholder partnerships working towards sustainable development. The role of multi-stakeholder partnerships was further emphasized in the outcome of the Conference, the Samoa Pathway, where the Secretary-General was requested to present recommendations for a "*partnership framework*" to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for SIDS. In addition, the outcome requested UN-DESA to continue to maintain the "partnerships platform" – an online registry with detailed information on the 300 partnerships discussed during the conference.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships and initiatives possess extensive knowledge and expertise on the implementation of sustainable development commitments, including on best practices, governance structures, and implementation methodologies, among others.

Ease of access to this vast knowledge will be crucial in creating synergies among stakeholders when building, managing, and leveraging successful and sustainable multi-stakeholder partnerships for achieving the sustainable development goals.

Objective

The expert group meeting will look at the following issues:

1. **Existing practices and knowledge sharing mechanisms** among relevant multi-stakeholder partnerships and communities of practices
2. **Trends and best practices in knowledge sharing mechanisms** for multi-stakeholder partnerships working towards sustainable development
3. **What can be improved in the post-2015 period**, in order to most effectively share knowledge and expertise within and across the different areas of the SDGs, and to measure the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships in support the achievement of the SDGs

The meeting will conclude with a set of *recommendations for a knowledge-sharing framework* for multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development.

Participants

The meeting will include relevant experts from governments, UN system and major groups and other civil society stakeholders.
