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)

16 June, New York

Issues Note

Session 1: Existing knowledge-sharing mechanisms for multi-stakeholder partnerships working towards sustainable development

Institutions create partnerships in order to multiply impact and accelerate change. Partnerships allow organizations to pool their resources to bring heightened and focused attention to a specific theme, goal, or objective. Simply by existing, partnerships also become an important aggregator and disseminator of knowledge about the issues on which they are focused. Yet partnerships come in all shapes, sizes, and constellations — and those differences make a difference for knowledge sharing.

Today there are numerous existing and successful knowledge-sharing mechanisms used by multi-stakeholder partnerships working towards sustainable development. These mechanisms aim mostly to share news and information related to the topic or topics the partnerships themselves are working on, and sometimes provide more in-depth reports, studies, and other analysis-related knowledge. This session aims to take stock of existing mechanisms and practices, and to identify various gaps and challenges moving in to the post-2015 era. Questions to guide the discussion may include:

- How do multi-stakeholder partnerships currently share knowledge? What patterns can be discerned in their knowledge-sharing activity?
- What trends/best practices are emerging in knowledge-sharing within and among partnerships?

Session 2: Multi-stakeholder partnerships: Sharing and building knowledge and expertise among and within SDGs

While partnerships have long been part of the implementation of sustainable development, there has been a marked emphasis during the post-2015 agenda negotiations on both the concept of partnerships generally, and the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships specifically. The July 2014 report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals states, inter alias, that "*the implementation of sustainable development goals will depend on a global partnership for sustainable development with the active engagement of governments, as well as civil society, the private sector, and the United Nations system*" (Paragraph 14).

The SDGs will be universal; they will apply to all countries and all sectors. As the world transitions into the post-2015 development arena, moving from an agenda targeted to developing countries to an ambitious and inclusive sustainability development framework for all countries, questions to guide the discussion during this session may include:

- How can multi-stakeholder partnerships break free from thematic silos and work across SDG themes and areas?
- What are the best ways for multi-stakeholder partnerships to share their institutional knowledge and expertise into the global arena?

Session 3: Designing a knowledge-sharing framework for multi-stakeholder partnerships in the post-2015 era – empowering stakeholders and improving implementation through transparency

Nowadays information on a partnership is usually shared enthusiastically at its creation, and will only sometimes get updated once the partnership has run its course. Few partnerships engage in adaptive management, and even fewer will share negative news about their work. The Internet, and specifically the traditional organizational website, is far and away the dominant technology and methodology by which partnerships disseminate information and share knowledge.

The universality of the SDGs means that the knowledge resources aggregated and managed by partnerships also need to be shared as widely as possible. This emphasis on universality will also bring a heightened focus on information transparency and the diffusion of enabling technologies. How can we design a global framework for multi-stakeholder partnerships to share their knowledge and expertise in the post-2015 development era? Questions to guide the discussion during this session may include:

- Can a knowledge framework be truly global and leave no partnership behind?
- How can a knowledge-sharing framework create value for all stakeholders, not just those within their immediate constituency, without adding too much reporting burden on partnerships?
- What is the best way for frameworks to track and assess progress in the achievement of the SDGs?

***