

## **“SDGs Thematic Reviews: What is the role of the UN Organization’s Specialized Bodies?” 23 July 2015**

On 23 July 2015, an official side event of the ongoing Post-2015 Development Agenda negotiations entitled “*SDGs Thematic Reviews: What is the role of the UN Organization's Specialized Bodies?*” took place, which UNCTAD had agreed to host jointly with the ILO. With outreach, OHCHR, UNEP and UNESCO also joined this important event ahead of the “Follow-up and review Mechanism” item to be considered by Member States on July 24<sup>th</sup>. Chantal Line Carpentier, Chief of UNCTAD New York Office, elaborated on UNCTAD’s Post-2015 Policy Brief #4 and thereby set the stage for the event moderated by Special Representative and Director of the International Labour Organization's office to the United Nations, Janet Stewart.

The event drew Member States’ attention to Para 67 of the Post-2015 Development agenda’s zero draft, which so far lacks reference to the thematic review already done by the UN specialized agencies and bodies, and therefore bears the potential for a duplication of efforts.

*Para 67: “Thematic reviews of progress may also take place at the HLPF. These will be supported by reviews by the ECOSOC functional commissions and other inter-governmental forums which will engage relevant stakeholders and, where possible, feed into and be aligned with the cycle of the HLPF. “*

With more than 100 participants in attendance, including about 20 Member States, the panellists and discussants examined existing thematic review processes and mechanism associated with specific SDGs and discussed the need to include them in practical ways into the thematic reviews of the post-2015 development agenda, in order to avoid duplication.

Representatives of UNCTAD, ILO, UNEP, DESA, OHCHR and UNESCO underlined the important role that UN agencies should play in the review process of the post-2015 development agenda. Especially due to the universality of the SDGs, the interface between the SDGs and the different UN specialized bodies should be strengthened, with a view to efficiently support the HLPF as the post-2015 agenda’s apex body for follow-up and review.

Member States actively involved in the follow-up and review mechanism were present at the event (Mexico, Switzerland, and Denmark), following invitation by the organizers. They thanked the agencies for their leadership in working together and bringing this issue to their attention. Also, they acknowledged the need to outline clear language on the involvement of the UN specialized bodies in the review and follow-up processes.

They were keen to introduce language that takes into account the thematic reviews already taking place in governing bodies and regular conferences convened mostly by the UN specialized agencies (health, agriculture, labour, trade and investment, etc.). In order to minimize reporting costs for Member States and to stimulate synergies and complementarities between the already existing bodies, it is suggested that the on-going reviews are integrated into the overall global review mechanism.

Key highlights of the discussion are as follows:

### ***UN DESA (Thomas Gass, ASG for Economic Development)***

- Role of UN agencies in follow-up is even more important as HLPF will remain a small body

- The crucial role of UN agencies is to strengthen the link between rights-holders and duty-bearers

***ILO (Jane Stewart, Special Representative and Director of ILO Office in New York)***

- Most of the SDG targets related to decent work are already reviewed by the ILO
- The ILO Supervisory Mechanism (*reporting by ILO Member States*) is at the center of ILO reporting (*reports every 2-5 years on the implementation of ILO conventions*)
- Those reports are examined by the ILO Committee of Experts
- Inclusion into the SDG review process: For instance, the ***International Labor Conference*** could set up a special committee to review and report on SDG 8

***UNCTAD (Chantal Line Carpentier, Chief of New York Office)***

- Global partnership is at the basis of UNCTAD' follow-up scheme
- Duplication has to be avoided: there must be a clear division of labor between different UN agencies
- UNCTAD's various review mechanisms will be useful in the context of the post-2015 review process and should contribute to the SDG review process
- We need to ask ourselves how each of our governing bodies needs to restructure and reorganize in order to feed directly and efficiently into the follow-up and review process (see slide).

***UNEP (Jorge Laguna, Secretary of Governing Bodies)***

- Impact of review on implementation needs to be strengthened
- System needs to remain flexible and respond to new challenges
- UNEP stands ready to support HLPF as the apex of the review system
- UNEA already gave mandate to review environmental area

***OHCHR (Craig Mokhiber, Chief, Development & Economic & Social Issues Branch)***

- Paradigm shift towards accountability to the people (*the rights-holders*)
- There is a wealth of information available that has to be fed into the SDG review process
- Interface with SDG process could be the Human Rights Council or other bodies
- There has been remarkable institution-building that will be useful in this regard

***UNESCO (Min Jeon Kim, Education Specialist, UNESCO Office in New York)***

- Many SDGs are relevant to the UNESCO mandate (*i.e. 6, 9, 11, 14, 16 and 17*)
- Many existing UNESCO reports already cover the substance of these goals

***Mexico***

- Welcomed the effort and said it was refreshing to see UN agencies working together
- Work on thematic reviews has to be aligned with ECOSOC
- Discussion on follow-up will be easier after post-2015 adoption, when substance is clear

***France***

- Welcomed the effort and said it was refreshing to see UN agencies working together
- Need to avoid duplication

***Indonesia***

- The goal to leave no one behind seems almost impossible
- How can we do this?

***Beyond 2015 (Naiara Costa, Advocacy Director)***

- Need to break silo approach in UN
- Post-2015 agenda misses clear instruction on how UN System is to guide the post-2015 development agenda
- Review process must be as inclusive as the rest of the agenda