



2016 ECOSOC Partnership Forum

From Commitments to Results Leveraging multi-stakeholder partnerships for the 2030 Agenda

***31 March 2016, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and 3:00 – 6.00 p.m., ECOSOC Chamber
United Nations Headquarters, New York***

Draft concept note

Background

ECOSOC's Partnership Forum has served as a platform for discussion on partnerships since 2008, bringing together stakeholders, particularly from business and foundations, to discuss with governments ways in which to engage in support of the internationally agreed development goals. With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, the role of multi-stakeholder partnerships looms even larger. There is general consensus that partnerships will play a crucial role in promoting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to which all countries aspire.

The 2016 Partnership Forum will consider concrete ways in which multi-stakeholder partnerships can support the Council's overall 2016 theme of "Implementing the 2030 Agenda: Moving from commitments to results". Towards that end, the Forum will provide a platform for high-level discussion and policy dialogue by a range of stakeholders on the role that partnerships can play for scaling up efforts through a cross-sectoral approach. In addition, resolution A/C.2/70/L.24/Rev1, as recommended by the Second Committee to be adopted by the General Assembly, "requests ECOSOC to hold during its partnership forum to be held in 2016 a discussion on the best practices and ways to improve, inter alia, transparency, accountability and sharing of experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships...".

This Forum will build on previous work of the Council as it continues to grapple with the question of how to support the development of more transformational partnerships, which have greater potential for scale and impact. It is clear that the MDG framework with its "silo" goals and targets encouraged "silo" policies, mindsets and the launch of issue-based partnerships from development partners, including the private sector, foundations, NGOs and other stakeholders. As a result, many partnerships did not consider how efforts to achieve the goals in one sector could impact or be impacted by achieving the goals and targets in another sector.

It is expected that the scale, universality and ambition of the 2030 Agenda will catalyze an even larger number of new partnerships as stakeholders begin to reflect on how to achieve its targets and goals. In this context, further fragmentation by using silo approaches is a risk. The new Agenda explicitly recognizes the complex interlinkages among the various goals. Indeed, many of the targets cut across and support multiple SDGs¹ which may facilitate policy integration and synergies across different sectors. Examples of integrated network of goals and targets include the links or nexus between the education, gender and health goals and targets and between those of energy, water, land and climate change, among others.

¹ David Le Blanc, "Towards integration at last? The sustainable development goals as a network of targets", DESA Working Paper, No. 141 (ST/ESA/2015/DWP/141).

Multistakeholder Partnerships could leverage cross-sectoral approaches to provide cost-effective and efficient solutions to advance the achievement of the SDGs.

Objectives

The 2016 Partnership Forum will:

- Provide a platform for bringing together stakeholders (private sector, philanthropy, NGOs, Academia and others) to engage in a strategic refocussing on ways that partnerships can deliver on the 2030 Agenda utilizing an integrated (nexus) approach to sustainable development;
- Identify key policy enablers that might be needed to accelerate cross-sectoral partnerships that address targets across multiple goals;
- Provide an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of multi-stakeholder partnerships with a view to promoting increased transparency and accountability;
- Provide an overview of best practices in review and monitoring of partnerships, including a possible role for member states in this regard.

Format

The Forum, to be held on Thursday, 31 March 2016, will commence with a half-hour opening plenary. The ECOSOC President's welcoming address will be followed by remarks by the Secretary-General and a keynote address by an eminent personality.

Morning session:

The session will examine and consider the types of integrated cross-sectoral solutions which multi-stakeholder partnerships can adopt to help advance the achievement of the SDGs. It will also look at ways to encourage the wider use of cross-sectoral approaches by existing and new multistakeholder partnerships with a view to achieving synergetic outcomes through this type of nexus approach and make progress on multiple fronts at once.

Afternoon session

As called for in GA resolution A/RES/70/224, this session will explore best practices in monitoring and review of multistakeholder partnerships associated with the United Nations to enhance transparency and accountability. It will focus on ways to promote alignment with the 2030 Agenda and contribute to its implementation while ensuring that the UN's values and mandates are preserved.

Participants

Participants will include representatives of Member States, regional and other intergovernmental organizations, senior officials of the United Nations system, and leaders from the private sector, philanthropy as well as representatives from civil society and the scientific community and academia.

Outcome

The Forum will result in a greater understanding of cross-sectoral solutions and the key success factors in bringing high-potential development solutions to scale, through multi-stakeholder partnerships. The views of member states and experts on ways to enhance accountability and transparency of multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of the 2030 Agenda will be shared.

A President's Summary will be prepared capturing the key messages from the day's discussions. A more extensive summary of the event's deliberations will be prepared which will serve as a basis for ECOSOC's contribution to HLPF and the high-level segment of the Council.