

**HLPF SIDE EVENT “MOVING TO ACTION FOR ALL:
THE TRANSITION FROM MDGS TO SDGS IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA”
20 July, UN Headquarters, New York**



The HLPF side event¹ was opened by Mr. Christian Friis Bach, Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM)/UNECE Executive Secretary. In his opening remarks, Mr. Friis Bach emphasized that the statements of the Member States during the HLPF demonstrate the initial implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Discussions at the HLPF indicate how the UN system can support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on the ground. Mr. Friis Bach also emphasized the role of strong partnerships that are crucial to achieve the transformative 2030 Agenda.

Presentations by governments “First Steps on SDG Achievement”

H.E. Mr. Teimuraz Murgulia, First Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia

- Georgia achieved a number of important MDG results in the areas of poverty reduction, preschool education, human rights and women’s empowerment, reduction of child and maternal mortality, and environmental sustainability. Partnerships played an important role in this period and resulted in the signature of the Georgia-EU Association Agreement.
- The Government of Georgia initiated re-consideration of the development path and developed a National Sustainable Development Strategy, which is properly reflected in respective government plans and budgetary documents and is a main driver for SDG implementation in Georgia.
- Georgia started the process of SDG nationalization with the development of a plan and set up of a dedicated Unit under the Prime Minister of Georgia to ensure coordination of the work on the SDGs.
- Georgia is grateful for the support provided by the UN system, in particular to UNDP and UNECE. Together with the UN in the country, a joint Technical Working Group was established, which will analyze thematic aspects of SDGs. A step-by-step implementation strategy was suggested (some goals and targets were prioritized over the short-term period).
- Participation of civil society is valued and welcome.

¹ The Programme is presented in Annex I.

Ms. Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany

- Germany started its first steps on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), first developed in 2002, is the essential framework for this work. It is currently undergoing revision and will be finalized by October 2016. Civil society, academia, and the private sector are involved. The NSDS will be aligned with the SDGs; a national set of targets and indicators will be modified to match the context.
- Germany is looking into specific measures to improve the environmental situation, foster economic growth and human health through the implementation of the SDGs. In this respect, the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy, developed at the recent Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Batumi with the support of UNECE and UNEP is considered a useful framework.
- Currently available mechanisms and platforms can play an important role by fostering knowledge and learning processes. For instance, all conventions can contribute directly to the implementation of one or more global goals. Capacity building efforts are needed. There are many tools that are available already and should be used for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Ms. Jelena Knezevic, Head of Department for Sustainable Development and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro

- Montenegro is working on harmonizing the approach to the SDGs implementation and the EU accession process and transitioning from 8 goals under the MDGs to 17 goals and 169 targets under the SDGs.
- Challenges with the implementation relate to the need for policies to absorb all goals and insert all indicators into the existing statistical monitoring system. 42% of indicators are already inserted and will be monitored in the next 3 years; this will grow to 75% of indicators by 2024.
- Implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires changes in the work of 25 institutions, with aspects related to data and statistics led by the national statistical office. It is important to upgrade existing capacities and allow for an institutional set up on the horizontal level.
- Montenegro with the support of UNDP established a Centre for Sustainable Development, which among other things will look at how capacity and delivery of the results under the SDG framework can be boosted. Another aspect is how to increase resource mobilization and diversify sources for SDGs support. UN system support will be important in this area, as well as consistency and a coordinated approach to work.

Presentation of a view from civil society

Dr. Nurgul Djanaeva, President of the Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, Organizing Partner of the Women's Major Group

- Adaptation of the SDG indicators is not possible without civil society. Objective data is extremely important for the review process. Objective data cannot only come from the data holders. Civil society can and is ready to help with the data verification process.
- Everyone (governments, the UN, civil society, academia) is new to the implementation process. Space for the participation of civil society should be created. While some MS shared good examples of involving civil society at all levels in the development of the agenda and first steps of implementation, more efforts are needed in this regard.

- Civil society is interested in developing at the regional level a mechanism for civil society engagement. There is a need for national and regional support from the UN for the engagement of civil society in the process of SDG implementation.

A broader perspective from the regional UN system

Mr. Christian Friis Bach, Chair, Regional Coordination Mechanism/ UNECE Executive Secretary

- The [transition report “Looking Back, Leaping Forward: Moving from MDGs to SDGs in Europe and Central Asia”](#) presents the unfinished agenda on MDGs (poverty, gender gaps, health issues, development aid). These gaps must be tackled as part of the SDGs.
- Lessons learned during MDG implementation include: goals have to be part of an integrated agenda and addressed in an integrated manner; national adaptation is critical, but also raises comparability issues; a special policy focus on disadvantaged areas and populations is needed.
- Implementation gaps should be closed. Data challenges were and remain significant; statistical capacities need to be improved; there is a need to move beyond indicators – a wider discussion on factors driving change and the influence of policies is required; human-rights based policies are key.
- A UNECE and R-UNDG Survey was conducted among 56 UNECE countries, including 18 countries with UN presence: 38 countries in the region responded to the survey providing an overview of the first steps on SDG implementation, including:
 - A focus on building on existing frameworks; review of policies and strategies; inter-ministerial coordination structures in view of an integrated agenda.
 - Whole-of-government approaches are most often led at highest political level. Definition of national priorities (no cherry-picking); adaptation of SDGs to national and local realities; need for advocacy and awareness raising; involvement of stakeholders at all levels.
 - Looking into the future: statistical recommendations and capacity; translating goals into norms, standards and conventions; facilitating the exchange of experiences; building stronger partnerships.

Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, Chair, Regional UNDG for Europe and Central Asia Team/ UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the CIS

- The regional UN system in Europe and Central Asia enjoys a strong cooperation at the regional level and on the ground. The regional UN system came together to assess MDG areas lagging behind, define ways for their integration within the 2030 Agenda, and consolidate [regional UN support](#) to all countries of the region.
- Advocacy is important for national ownership of SDGs: initiatives such as a Belarus SDG express and Centre for Sustainable Development in Montenegro can play a strong role.
- Participation of civil society, as well as other partners, is crucial for successful SDG implementation. A proposal for the creation of a platform to allow for greater civil society participation at the regional level is important. Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, which took place in May 2016 in Geneva, proved to be a good platform to share



experiences from the civil society. The regional UN system also works with all partners to make sure their views and contribution to the implementation of SDGs are reflected in UNDAFs. At the national level there are Results Based Groups and at the regional level the Issue-Based Coalitions are being established in a number of important areas: they are meant to be open to civil society participation and other stakeholders.

- Facilitating synergies between policies and implementation is another important aspect, but it is necessary to make sure that pillars of the UN work are integrated into relevant policies: human rights, humanitarian, peace and security agendas.
- The UN adopted a MAPS (Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support) approach to support the Member States with the 2030 Agenda implementation. The 2030 Agenda is very ambitious and complex. It is not only the whole-of-government and the whole-of-society approaches that are needed, but also the whole-of-the-UN approach.

Discussion from the floor

H.E. Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary/Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations:

- The presented report can serve as a guide for n the implementation of the SDGs in view of the gaps remaining after the MDG implementation.
- Demand and expectations are high on all sides. Lessons learned during the MDG implementation need to be taken into account. Governments, parliaments, and other stakeholders need to understand their primary role in the implementation of the SDGs.
- SDGs are fashionable and everyone wants to incorporate the 2030 Agenda into their efforts. It is important to avoid overlap and doubling of the efforts.

Closing remarks

The side event was closed by Ms. Sultanoglu, who emphasized that the implementation of the SDG Agenda in the region will require joint work and cooperation of many actors. There is a need to maintain a regular dialogue and ensure wide engagement of stakeholders in the SDG implementation. The regional UN system stands ready to support the Member States on the road of the 2030 Agenda implementation through coordinated and coherent work.

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The Transition from MDGs to SDGs in Europe and Central Asia”**

20 July, 6:15-7:30 pm, UN Headquarters NY, Room 12

Programme

Welcoming remarks and introduction of speakers

- *Mr. Christian Friis Bach, Chair, Regional Coordination Mechanism/ UNECE Executive Secretary*

First steps by governments to embark on SDG achievement

- *H.E. Mr. Teimuraz Murgulia, First Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection, Georgia*
- *Ms. Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Germany*
- *Ms. Jelena Knezevic, Head of Department for Sustainable Development and Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Montenegro*

A view from civil society

- *Dr. Nurgul Djanaeva, President of the Forum of Women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, Organizing Partner of the Women's Major Group*

A broader perspective from the regional UN system

- *Mr. Christian Friis Bach, Chair, Regional Coordination Mechanism/ UNECE Executive Secretary*
- *Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, Chair, Regional UNDG for Europe and Central Asia Team/ UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the CIS*

Discussion from the floor

- *Moderated by Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu. Chair, Regional UNDG for Europe and Central Asia Team/ UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the CIS*

Closing remarks

- *Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, Chair, Regional UNDG for Europe and Central Asia Team/ UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the CIS*