

**ECESA Plus Meeting of Principals
CR3 (CB), United Nations Headquarters
New York
8 July 2014**

Conclusions and action

- **Principals were of the view that ECESA Plus could serve as an effective mechanism for supporting the implementation of the Outcome of the Third International Conference on SIDS**
- **Principals were informed that at the HLPF Session held during the first week of July, most speakers identified the multi-stakeholder, multi-scale and multi-level approach with links to national processes as the preferred option for the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). Therefore, all Member States may want to consider their own national sustainable development report as part of the global conversation.**
- **Principals were informed that a key message of the event of the General Assembly held by the President last month was that countries must put in place a robust accountability framework – backed by reliable and comparable data. The role of regional institutions was also stressed and the Secretary-General asked the regional commissions of the UN to support regional consultations on accountability on the post-2015.**

For Action:

- **Principals of ECESA Plus were requested to consider the secondment of their staff for the preparation of future editions of the global sustainable development report, in order to ensure a broad and constructive engagement in this endeavour.**

Summary of Discussions

Agenda I. Update on the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States to be held in Apia, Samoa, from 1-4 September, 2014

The Convener shared a quick overview of the extensive support received from the UN system

a. Analysis of the preparatory process and Draft Outcome.

Pre-Conference activities: The conference will be preceded by a Private Sector Forum, a Youth Forum, a Major Groups and other Stakeholders Forum and a Renewable Energy Forum. A number of UN entities have contributed to the Pre-Conference activities.

Side events: DESA had received several applications for side events. The Convener was confident that a series of well-organized side events will contribute to the success of the Conference by providing additional space for sharing ideas, experiences and lessons learned. Taking into consideration the very limited space, however, the host country may not be able to accommodate all requests for side events.

Programme of the Conference: The Bureau has recommended a programme of the Conference, which is posted on the Conference website. The PrepCom at its last meeting adopted an oral decision inviting the UN system organizations to participate in the general debate of the Conference. During the Conference, there will be a high-level side event of the CEB which will be presided over by the Secretary-General. The Prime Minister of Samoa is invited to attend the first part of the CEB meeting.

The outcome document: Negotiations are entering the final phase. Delegations have reached agreement on the majority of the text. They are now focusing on the climate change and means of implementation. There is a clear commitment of all main political groupings to bring this negotiation to a successful conclusion here in New York.

b. Engagement in the Conference and Partnership dialogues

Fifth, a significant innovation of the SIDS conference is its emphasis on partnerships. Six multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues will be held during the Conference, replacing the traditional ministerial round table. The concept notes and programmes of the dialogues will be posted on the conference website in the latter part of July.

c. Planning ahead for the implementation of the Conference outcome

Much of the emphasis has been on capacity-building support from the UN system to SIDS. To this end, SIDS have outlined specific areas where UN system support is needed. SIDS also expect the UN system to assist with the implementation and monitoring of partnerships. It is incumbent on UN entities to work together in support of the follow-up to the SIDS conference. ECESA Plus is playing an important role in this regard.

Agenda II. The Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Convener noted significant progress in the SDGs process and emphasized four key words as we near this critical phase: Ambition, Momentum, Implementation and Accountability

Ambition: The Convener stressed the need to aim for an ambitious post-2015 development agenda. While many of the SDGs and targets that are being considered in the Open Working Group (OWG) are truly transformational, sensitivities with some areas remain. They include peaceful and inclusive societies; rule of law and capable institutions; how to address climate change and Means of Implementation.

Momentum: The first phase of the agenda included a wealth of consultations. There is the need to keep up the political momentum towards the next phase in September. The negotiators must bear in mind the messages we have heard from the wider global community thus far. UNDG has also launched a second round of consultations on issues related to implementation in 50 countries. Member States have been highly appreciative of the valuable support from the UN system. It will be important not only to continue offering technical expertise but also to be prepared to offer effective and innovative solutions to Member States during this critical period.

Implementation: On implementation, the post-2015 development agenda to be actionable. The goals must be ambitious but realistic. The targets must be clear. All must be adaptable to various country situations. SDGs must reflect the different national realities, capacities and development priorities of all members of the United Nations.

Accountability: A message of the event of the General Assembly held by the President last month was that countries must put in place a robust accountability framework – backed by reliable and comparable data. The role of regional institutions was also stressed and the Secretary-General asked the regional commissions of the UN to support regional consultations on accountability on the post-2015 development agenda. The UN has the institutional architecture to review and promote implementation at international level. The high-level political forum on sustainable development will conduct reviews of implementation starting in 2016. The Charter bodies --ECOSOC and the General Assembly-- will also promote policy integration.

Agenda III. The High Level Political Forum (HLPF): Next Steps

The Convener noted that the the HLPF is part of the broader institutional architecture for sustainable development. The on-going session of the forum showed its great potential to promote and review implementation of Rio+20 and SDGs. The coming year will be important in determining how to ensure complementarity and synergies among various intergovernmental platforms such as the GA, the strengthened ECOSOC and United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) as they deliver on their mandates. The UN Regional Commissions and their first round of annual regional forums on sustainable development can continue to play a catalytic role to channel regional perspectives into the High-level Political Forum. In the coming months, the UN system should position its work vis-à-vis the High-level Political Forum. The forum will conduct regular reviews on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments as of 2016. These will also include reviews of relevant UN entities. If prepared and conducted effectively, these UN system reviews can provide important opportunities for us to reflect on how we work together to support sustainable development and to seek guidance from Member States. The forum will also need to decide on how it will conduct these reviews so that they lead to meaningful evaluations and findings. Rio+20 mandated the Secretary-General to report on progress by the UN system in mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in its work. The Convener sought the views of the members of ECESA Plus on this matter.

Agenda IV. The Global Sustainability Development Report (GSDR)

On the Global Sustainability Development Report, the Convener thanked all ECESA Plus members for their contributions and support to both the SG's report on the "options for the scope and methodology for a global sustainable development report" and the prototype GSDR report in the past year. He then highlighted key messages emerging from the HLPF session held prior to the ECESA Plus meeting. Interventions during the meeting underlined the importance attached to the GSDR as an instrument of the High-level Political Forum to strengthen the science-policy-society interface. The recommendations of the Report of the SG on "the options for scope and methodology of a global sustainable development" were also discussed. Most speakers identified the multi-stakeholder, multi-scale and multi-level approach with links to national processes as the preferred option. Therefore, all Member States may want to consider their own national sustainable development report as part of the global conversation. The Global Sustainable Development Report offers an opportunity to bring together scientific communities, analytical teams of the UN system, decision-makers, and civil society for transformative changes at both global and local levels. A number of concrete suggestions were made on the way forward, including the creation of an intergovernmental committee of experts, a network of national focal points, as well as inputs from the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Science and Technology, the Future Earth Programme, the Academies of Science, and from regional and national research initiatives (for example, EU's Joint Research Centre).

With this, the Convener requested ECESA Plus members to consider secondment of their staff for the preparation of future editions of the global sustainable development report, in order to ensure a broad and constructive engagement in this endeavour.

Agenda Item V: Any Other Business: Third international conference on financing for development on 13-16 July 2015

The UN General Assembly decided to convene a third international conference on financing for development on 13-16 July 2015 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The scope of the Conference is set out by General Assembly resolution 68/204. The Conference will result in an intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome, which will constitute an important contribution to the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. The reports of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing and of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the synthesis report of the Secretary-General, will serve as important inputs to the preparation of the Conference. The preparatory process will include substantive thematic sessions and informal hearings with civil society and the business sector during the period September 2014 - March 2015. In addition, informal consultations and drafting sessions on the outcome document will be held in January, April and June 2015.

As for Monterrey and Doha, DESA will coordinate the preparatory process of the Conference and the Conference itself, under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly. Following Monterrey and Doha modalities, the Conference and its preparatory process will be open for participation by all States and all observers in the General Assembly, as well as all other relevant stakeholders, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and private sector entities. International financial institutions will have a special role to play in all aspects of the Conference. UN regional commissions, with the support of regional development banks, are invited to hold regional consultations in preparation for the Conference.

The Convener then opened the floor for discussions.

OHRLLS: Agenda Item I: OHRLLS noted strong buy-in and strong response from a diverse group of international stakeholders, including international financial organizations and regional development banks for the Third International Conference on SIDS. As an example, OHRLLS cited a pre-conference event which it is organizing jointly with the Government of Samoa and the Samoa Chamber of Commerce. The Private Sector Partnerships Forum for Advancing Sustainable Development in SIDS will take place on 30-31 August and will provide a platform upon which 'effective, innovative and concrete partnerships' could be developed, strengthened and announced to support the implementation efforts of SIDS sustainable development priorities. On the implementation of the outcome document of SIDS, OHRLLS expected ECESA to play a key role.

Agenda Item II: OHRLLS stated that HLPF should address ongoing and new challenges, faced by SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner.

Agenda Item III: OHRLLS preferred option 2 for the GSDR as that option would facilitate the involvement of national actors. OHRLLS stressed that buy in by the national and international communities would be critical. Especially, since countries would look into policy options based on scientific analysis and buy-in from national actors would be necessary, particularly those that lack the capacity for implementation.

OSAA: Agenda Item II: African countries view the post 2015 development agenda as part of an ongoing transformative agenda in the African context. African countries will negotiate on the post-2015 development agenda based on the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (CAP) that reflects African aspirations for post-2015. This will help ensure that African concerns are fully

reflected. African countries will look at post-2015 and beyond. Through CAP, Africa has emphasized a people-centered development approach that both addresses the important unfinished business of the MDGs and advocates for moving towards a broader, more transformative sustainable development agenda. Discussions in the AU Malabo Summit on the forthcoming African Union's Agenda 2063, which will be adopted in 2015 and sets out the next set of objectives that African countries will pursue beyond 2015, have emphasized the importance of poverty eradication, infrastructure development and regional integration, industrialization and youth employment as among the core aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063. He explained that in addition to the post-2015 process, Africa will pursue the AU Agenda 2063 as a global transformative agenda for the Continent. OSAA noted that it is encouraging that these core priorities have figured prominently in the zero draft of the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. He underscored the paramount importance of ensuring coherence and promoting synergies between the AU Agenda 2063 and the post-2015 development agenda so as to make the Continent's strategic development vision and the global development framework mutually reinforcing.

Agenda Item III: OSAA mentioned that the UN General Assembly, by its resolution 66/293, established the UN monitoring mechanism to review the implementation of the commitments made towards Africa's development by both Africa and its development partners. OSAA hoped that this mechanism would contribute to the HLPF. OSAA also underscored the importance of drawing on the national and regional monitoring and accountability mechanisms. As an example, OSAA noted that the forthcoming AU Agenda 2063 is expected to feature a robust accountability framework.

Agenda Item IV: OSAA expressed its support for option 2 for the GSDR. Hoped that in preparation of the GSDR, concerns of African countries would be adequately reflected and they would be fully consulted. In this regard, OSAA noted that of the 830 authors of the Fifth Assessment Report of the IPCC, only 8% were from Africa, compared with 28% from North America and 34% from Europe.

The Convener noted that the African continent placed industrialization as a top priority as well as the eradication of poverty. He believed that these issues also deserve special attention. He hoped that the SDGs and targets proposed by the Open Working Group (OWG) would fully address African concerns. He also noted the suggestions on GSDR and assured that they would be taken into consideration when the drafting team was set up.

UNESCO: Agenda Item I: UNESCO was fully on board with the preparations for the SIDS conference. UNESCO mentioned in particular, the launch of the SIDS Youth network in February 2014 and highlighted side events that would be organized by UNESCO at the SIDS conference.

Agenda Item II: UNESCO mentioned that per mandate, there were other intergovernmental processes on education in particular that were also identifying various targets. She sought suggestions on how the work of various processes, frameworks and networks of discussion may converge. On the science-policy interface inter-face, UNESCO stressed the importance of the role of science on the post-2015 development agenda and its implementation as well as the SDGs.

UNFPA: Agenda Item I: UNFPA said that more emphasis should be placed on young people, since 60 per cent of SIDS are young people. UNFPA asked if issues related to environment and climate change would be discussed in the context of SIDS. UNFPA noted that there is an emphasis on non-communicable diseases, but communicable diseases should not be ignored.

Agenda Item II: UNFPA raised the issue of maternal of maternal mortality and the unfinished business of MDGs. UNFPA thanked DESA for its able stewardship for the post-2015 development agenda process.

However, issues raised in the ICPD Programme of Action have been omitted from the SDGs. In 2004 as well as in 2007 universal access to reproductive health services were added. These have been omitted.

The Convener pointed out that under Goal 5, there is general reference to sexual and reproductive health rights and ECESA Plus has to wait the decision of Member States.

ECLAC (and in its role as coordinator for the Regional Commissions) Mentioned side events being organized by regional commissions at the SIDS Conference, including proposals for partnerships in disaster resilience, youth employment through the creation of industries. ECLAC stressed the need for more ambition, in the the post-2015 development agenda and highlighted the importance of implementation. ECLAC stressed the critical role of regional solutions in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. On HLPF, ECLAC noted that that while regional consultations will be held, however, there is the need for a joint report on accountability. On the GSDR, ECLAC would like to see the regional dimension adequately reflected.

UNCTAD: Agenda Item I: UNCTAD stressed the need to increase the ambition of commitments for SIDS. UNCTAD was also heavily engaged in the OWG and had launched the World Investment Report. The World Investment Report 2014 focuses on how corporations can contribute to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals through additional and innovative financing, investment and responsible business practices.

Agenda item II: On financing the SDGs, UNCTAD pointed out that we should move away from saying “financing the SDGs” and highlight that investing in the SDGs is a sustainable enterprise.

Agenda item IV: UNCTAD acknowledged the GSDR as work in progress and recommended centralizing the monitoring of the SDGs in one instrument.

OHCHR: Agenda Item II: While the zero draft does not include a stand-alone goal on human rights - which we have always discouraged because human rights standards and principles relate to all development goals - the draft integrates key human rights elements across all goals. OHCHR was however concerned that various other pertinent elements of the rule of law could be missed over the push back against a notion of rule of law that prioritizes ‘law and order’ and supports private sector development without ensuring private sector accountability at the same time. A people-centered concept of governance, including access to justice and public participation seems to enjoy broad support. Fostering this consensus will be a critical task over the coming weeks and beyond.

ITC: Agenda Item I: ITC is engaged and extends its full support to DESA in its preparations towards the SIDS conference. ITC is organizing a side event along with the private sector.

Agenda Item II: On the zero draft of the OWG, ITC noted that while trade issues were well captured, we need to be careful about what exactly the Goal will try to capture. For example, if increasing the share of exports from developing countries is the objective, that will occur when commodity prices rise and vice versa. The key is to ensure that developing countries are able to diversify their exports and add value. The international community must ensure that sufficient support is extended to those countries that need such help. ITC also proposed combining goals 17 and 8.

Agenda Item IV: On the requested contributions from the organizations. ITC would be happy to help in any way possible.

UN Women Agenda Item I: UNWomen mentioned that gender equality and youth issues have been well captured in the draft outcome document of the SIDS conference and referred to the organization of a side event on Beijing.

Agenda item II: UNWomen shared the comments made by UNFPA. It added that ensuring an ambitious agenda was very important at this stage of the post-2015 and SDG process.

WFP: Agenda item II: WFP also referred to the need for an ambitious post-2015 development agenda and mentioned, in particular, the importance of food security, nutrition and agriculture. Equally important would be to include issues related to peaceful societies and rule of law.

Agenda item III: WFP noted that together with IFAD and FAO, the WFP could support the accountability framework with robust data and helping countries translate targets into indicators. On HLPF and review of UN entities, WFP mentioned that it would be essential to agree on what would be covered in these reviews. Equally important would be to see how progress is defined and the particular means of monitoring it. WFP also recommended a multi-tier system of reviews, which would take into account experience of agencies. Evaluation should be the final tier, previous tiers could be actions implemented or not, final or interim output, among others

Agenda item IV: WFP noted its preference for option 2. It also mentioned the importance of practitioner and peer reviews in preparing the GSDR. The report should be pragmatic and accessible to larger audience and should identify integrated and scalable solutions.

OCHA expressed concerns about internally displaced persons have dropped off from the zero draft of the OWG. OCHA stressed lingering displacement is a concern and needs nationally owned solutions and need to be integrated in national development strategies. OCHA pointed out that the development community should discuss solutions to this challenge.

UNHABITAT Agenda Item I: UNHabitat informed ECESA Plus that initially there was no language related to human settlements in the draft outcome document. But, recently, some language was introduced. UNHABITAT is involved in the preparation of the SIDS Conference and hope to be involved in the implementation of the outcome document.

On SDGs, UNHABITAT mentioned that there is an urban goal and that they are following the process closely. However, it will be important to look at how the governance system can include governance at the local level. ECOSOC's integration segment has demonstrated how the three dimensions of sustainable urbanization development could be integrated at the city level and promoted dialogue between governance at different levels. It would be important need to include issues related to governance at the local level as well. And it would be important to take these issues into consideration during the process of elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in 2016 will be the first global conference after the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda in 2015. It would be important to ensure coherence between the two.

CEB Secretariat Agenda I: CEB Secretariat informed participants that the preparations for the CEB high-level side event in Apia, Samoa were progressing well. The CEB has endorsed a statement to the SIDS conference and Fifteen Principals will be participating along with the Secretary-General.

UNHCR asked how issues related to countries that are ridden by conflict and internal displacement countries can be included in the post 2015 development agenda.

IOM: Agenda item I, IOM referred to the partnership for disaster risk reduction and noted the importance of mobility for SIDS. IOM thanked the co-chairs of UNTT for the successful interagency-collaboration.

CBD Secretariat: Agenda item III: The CBD Secretariat discussed the Twelfth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (Republic of Korea, 6 – 17 October 2014). It highlighted the importance of biodiversity for poverty eradication.

The Convener thanked ECESA Plus members for their active participation and then adjourned the meeting.