

**ECESA Plus Meeting of Principals
United Nations Headquarters New York
10 July 2017**

Agenda items

- I. Follow-up to major intergovernmental processes
- II. Briefing on the Executive Committee established by the Secretary-General
- III. Any Other Business

Introduction

The Convener welcomed participants and opened the meeting with a brief introduction on the outcomes of the G20 Summit held a few days before, including the discussion on the 2030 Agenda, climate change and multilateral trade.

I. Follow-up to major intergovernmental processes

- High-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF) and Voluntary National Reviews

The Convener thanked all ECESA Plus members for their active engagement in the preparatory process of the HLPF at all levels, and noted the valuable contributions received from several intergovernmental bodies. A total of 44 countries will present their voluntary national reviews, which is twice as more as the previous year. He highlighted that the HLPF was becoming a prominent platform for follow-up and review in the implementation of the SDGs, with strong commitment from Member States.

- The Ocean Conference

The Convener also thanked the ECESA Plus members for their support to the successful outcomes of the Ocean Conference, which concluded with the adoption of a strong “Call for Action” and almost 1,400 voluntary commitments.

- UN Technology Facilitation Mechanism

The Convener noted the success of the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI Forum) held earlier this year. He encouraged ECESA Plus members to further contribute to the work of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the STI Forum.

- Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR)

The Convener also invited ECESA Plus members to share their ideas and suggestions for the independent group of scientists working on the Global Sustainable Development Report, to be published in 2019. He indicated that the Group is expected to draw upon relevant assessments, publications and other inputs from across the ECESA Plus entities.

- Financing for Development

The Convener emphasized that the 2017 report of the Inter-agency Task Force on Financing for Development was very well received by Member States and he thanked all the ECESA Plus members for their substantive contributions to the report. He also welcomed the growing collaboration between the UN system and other stakeholders in international tax cooperation, especially through the inter-agency Platform for Collaboration on Tax, which will hold its first global conference at the UN Headquarters in New York, on 14-16 February 2018.

- Statistics

The Convener shared some key milestones in data and statistics, such as (1) the first UN World Data Forum held in South Africa last January; (2) the adoption of the global SDG indicator framework by the Statistical Commission of ECOSOC; and (3) the launch of SDG Progress Report 2017, with inputs from many ECESA Plus members.

- WESS 2017

The Convener also informed participants about the launch of the World Economic and Social Survey 2017 that reviews 70 years of policy analysis and draws on the most pertinent lessons for the pursuit of sustainable development in the years to come.

II. Briefing on the Executive Committee established by the Secretary-General

The Convener gave a short overview of the work of the Executive Committee since it was established by the Secretary-General last January. He noted that most topics of discussion in the Executive Committee fall under the pillar of peace and security. The Executive Committee has taken a total of more than 370 decisions since its very first meeting, with more than half in the peace and security areas.

Although few decisions are development focused, the Executive Committee has helped strengthen integration within and between UN entities. As far as DESA is concerned, the Department has been in the lead or co-lead for 10 decisions, most of them in collaboration with other entities.

The Convener informed participants that the Executive Office of the Secretary-General had undertaken a review of the Executive Committee mechanism, in consultation with Principals and senior officials. He shared some of the observations made by DESA during the review, particularly the need for improved information-sharing and more extensive consultations with relevant UN entities in the preparation of background papers and in the formulation of recommendations.

The Convener then opened the floor for discussions.

Discussion

WMO praised the outcomes of the Ocean Conference and the role of ECESA Plus as a unique mechanism to foster interactions among several entities in the system. WMO also welcomed DESA's recommendations to the Executive Committee for more inclusiveness and better information-sharing.

UNITAR expressed strong support for the work of ECESA Plus and highlighted two key areas for collective support to countries in difficult situations: (1) capacity building for data and statistical systems; (2) coherent planning.

UNDP welcomed the growing success of the HLPF and the increased number of VNRs. It will be important to look at the impact on the ground and to align the UN's collective support to countries. UNDP also welcomed the outcomes of the Ocean Conference.

UNOSSC briefed participants on the General Assembly's decision to convene a UN conference on south-south cooperation, which is scheduled to take place in March 2019 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. UNOSSC was requested to provide coordinated support to the Conference. In addition, UNOSSC will be working with ECESA Plus entities on the preparation of the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on south-south cooperation.

ECLAC highlighted some of the complex challenges the world is facing today and called for the UN system to rethink capitalism and multilateralism. ECLAC also called for a bold reform of the UN development system.

The Convener stressed that, as part of the UNDS reform, DESA and the regional commissions must change, work closely together and be better positioned to support the 2030 Agenda.

ECE appreciated the role of ECESA Plus as a substantive and consultative mechanism, especially to bring regional inputs to global forums. The QCPR report calls for a unified voice and stronger collaboration between DESA and the regional commissions.

The World Bank Group expressed support to the HLPF and has received positive feedback from colleagues working in the VNR countries. In the area of statistics, the achievements of the Statistical Commission and the Global Partnership for Data are very positive but the situation remains challenging in several countries. The World Bank Group voiced concerns about the lack of official assistance to LDCs and emphasized the important role of domestic resource mobilization and ODA leveraging.

UNEP called for stronger system-wide collaboration on inequalities, which is a multidimensional issue that no single UN agency can address alone.

ILO indicated that, at the last session of its governing body, Member States focused on the contribution of decent work to the achievement of the SDGs. ILO supported DESA's call for more consultations and information-sharing by the Executive Committee.

ESCAP expressed appreciation for information-sharing through the ECESA Plus mechanism and encouraged even further collaboration and coordination, including between DESA and the regional commissions.

The Convener briefed participants on the status of reform in DESA. Although DESA is not covered by the QCPR resolution, the Department has launched its own internal reform process to be more effective, efficient, transparent and accountable, as requested by Member States in a separate General Assembly resolution. This process should be synchronized with

the overall UN reform led by the Secretary-General, including the ongoing UNDS reform (through QCPR), the peace and security reform and the management reform. The Convener also highlighted that the success of the UN reform is a shared responsibility between the Organization and the Member States to ensure coherence and avoid duplications and overlap.