



Side Event to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

**What works to achieve SDG17 – Partnership Pillar?
Emerging findings and lessons from the Global SDG Synthesis Coalition**

17 July 2023, 6.30–8.00 pm EDT
Conference Room 6, UN Secretariat Building, New York

MEETING NOTES

H.E. Dr. Agnes Mary Chimbiri-Molande, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Malawi to the United Nations opens the event, introduces the panel, and encourages everybody to contribute and share insights openly.

Mr. Alan Fox, UNDP Director a.i., Independent Evaluation Office provides welcome remarks and introduces the objectives, progress, and expectations of the Global SDG Synthesis Coalition.

Mr. Thomas de Hoop, American Institutes for Research, Partnership Pillar Synthesis Team Leader, presents the preliminary lessons from the SDG 17 synthesis, including the search strategy and criteria, screening of impact, performance and process evaluations, as well as case studies from the UAE, Uzbekistan, India, Myanmar, Madagascar, Ireland and Peru. He then shares preliminary lessons of the SDG 17 synthesis around the questions *Which development initiatives are most effective in accelerating SDG 17 progress?* and *How and why are some more effective than others?*

Panelists

H.E. Ms. Pilar Cancela, Secretary of State of International Cooperation, Spain.

- The SDG 17 Synthesis is of great interest to Spain and the findings are very useful. The findings reiterate the positive effect of freeing trade and the negative impact of preferential trade agreements for sustainable development. Spain hopes the synthesis will shed further light on finance flows and multi-level



financing, as well as the role of dialogue with partners in planning and implementing of sustainable development strategies.

- The findings on trade are an example of policy coherence for sustainable development, where preferential trade agreements show no positive effect for LDC. Thus, development cooperation should leverage trade liberalization so it can transfer its positive effects to LDC.
- Policy dialogue in development cooperation planning frameworks is key to create participative and integrating multi-stakeholder partnerships. Spain, through its strategic planning, is a model of policy dialogue and participation with its development partners.
- Spain finds interesting and relevant the findings on Triangular and South South Cooperation. This cooperation modality is key for Spain's cooperation model in regions such as Latin America

H.E. Ms. Giedrė Balčytė, Chancellor of the Government, Lithuania

- Lithuania thanks for the interesting presentation that draws on what has happened before to generate lessons for the future and stresses the importance of digitalization and data-driven governance. The world has become much faster than before in all sectors (technology, innovation, pandemics, etc.). Societies expect quick government solutions in response, like they can get from the private sector. This puts a lot of demand and pressure on the governments. Decisions need to be based on real-time data, not statistics of the past. Every government will need to be well equipped to make good decisions in the right time, based on real-time evidence and data. This allows us to identify what and where the problems are, dismiss fake problems, and prioritize better.
- Lithuania transformed their statistics department into a national data department that integrates all data from all public and some private sectors. This allows Lithuania to get quicker to the essence of issues. Employment of data is also key in driving national development objectives and the 2030 Agenda forward.
- In the spirit of a true 'Coalition', we all need to work together as a community, as countries, to see how we can employ the data we have in each country and area, to be better equipped for the future. The Coalition has Lithuania's full support.



H.E. Ms. María Inés Castillo, Minister of Social Development, Panama

- SDGs can only be met through strategic partnerships and cooperation across different sectors and actors. Since the pandemic, demand for assistance has increased significantly but ODA does not respond to the current needs. To reach the investments necessary to achieve the SDGs, innovative financing mechanisms need to be developed that go beyond public financing and include private capital flow.
- Coordination of policies to help developing countries manage their debt is another crucial step, as well as territorial planning for the implementation of Agenda 2030 that includes all sectors and levels. Such coordination of cooperation and efforts is essential to achieve the SDGs.

H.E. Dr. Francis Kai-kai, Minister of Planning & Economic Development, Sierra Leone

- The Coalition has great potential to fill gaps in global process and its contribution could not be more critical. Sierra Leone agrees with the findings and the tentative conclusions on partnership, finance, technology and equity. The Coalition will be very helpful to fragile countries that have issues with their economy and independence.
- Sierra Leone faces challenges with inadequate funding for the SDGs, and for financing its integrated national financing framework INFF. This framework will leverage multiple financing options to bring together the funds for the SDGs.
- Another big challenge is technology, including digital solutions for the mobilization of domestic resources, and the resistance of large businesses to the use of automatization.
- Illicit financial flows and corruption also need to be addressed urgently. It is difficult to measure these and bring them to the attention of decision makers. Hopefully the evaluation methods of the Coalition will help throwing more light on these issues with illicit flows which are a major challenge for many LIC.
- Other issues include the limited financial opportunities for the rural economy, and limitations in energy and CT infrastructure. Solving these will help with data issues and analytics and generate resources for development.
- Sierra Leone is looking forward to the SDG Summit and the findings of the Coalition. It will help to assess how to best assist countries with less resources and fragile states and bring them onboard.



H.E. Dr. Sosten Gwengwe, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, Malawi

- The Synthesis is being conducted at the right time, when SDG implementation faces many challenges. The findings will enable countries to build innovative solutions to ensure there is collaboration between all players in the economy.
- In the past 7 years, progress towards SDG 17 has been positive and negative in Malawi. While there has been progress regarding debt sustainability, knowledge and technology sharing, promoting sustainable development, and increasing exports, there are still many remaining challenges and gaps. Financing for development is a major one and a general problem for in LIC. More assistance is needed to ensure no one is left behind.
- Malawi looks forward to adopting strategies and recommendations from the Synthesis to effectively promote reliable data and evidence that will assist Malawi in national policy commitments.
- Malawi would also like to see a mechanism for the Coalition members beyond just the Synthesis Coalition, to work together beyond the initiative.

H.E. Mr. Steven Collet, Deputy Vice Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands

- A lot is expected from the Coalition. Its findings will be fundamental and the scientific and sound evidence base on what works and what not will be very important for the upcoming summits.
- While the preliminary findings are a bit top-level, it is also important to have evidence there.
- The Netherlands itself tries to get into international financing and private capital mobilization, but there are huge areas of coherence issues. Having a good 'referee' like this Coalition is essential.
- 'Partnerships' is a specific area the Netherlands wants to learn more of, since multi-sectoral cooperation is still very new to them. It will be important to learn about the roles and accountabilities in these partnerships and how to go about them in terms of investment and length.

Dr. Adnan Khan, Chief Economist and Director for the Economics and Evaluation Directorate in the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, United Kingdom

UK offers 4 points to respond to the questions *How do we achieve the SDGs, and why are we stuck?*



- Reforming the international financial architecture is key. It will help make countries more flexible, create more longer-term investments and more sustainable resources, avoid unsustainable debt, and build resilience to shocks.
- International financial reforms need to go hand in hand with complementary reforms, most importantly on sustained inclusive economic growth. Economic growth needs to be at the heart of these conversations and will help align the incentives and achieve the SDGs.
- Domestic revenue mobilization and taxation: At the domestic level, taxation is central to building a more effective state and generate more economic growth. This will raise revenues, align incentives, build more accountable institutions, create pressure for more predictive investments, and mobilize private investment.
- Evidence and learning and other enablers. The Synthesis is important, but we need to build on it – not just in terms of coverage of the SDGs, but also regarding other enablers needed. We need to look also on the demand side of evidence and under which conditions it will be acted upon.

Q&A and reactions from the floor

Mr. Ezekwesiri David Anyaegbu, Counsellor, Second Committee, Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations

Nigeria appreciates and fully supports the good work of the Coalition. On SDGs financing and reforming the international financial architecture: Nigeria is putting a lot of effort into creating an economic environment to thrive, e.g., Nigeria recently signed an executive order on tax, is pushing for an African continental free trade agreement, and other economic initiatives. Illicit financial flows are still a major challenge. Money lost due to illicit flows in the last 15 years is equal to Nigeria's 2023 budget. All these areas are important to discuss and for the Coalition to consider and examine.

2nd speaker (??)

The debt crisis needs to be taken into consideration. As long as countries are paying off debt, resources for SDGs implementation will not be sufficient. Unequal distribution of technology is a major factor and takes away valuable resources from countries without sharing the benefits. Countries in the South need the technology to mine the resources they need.



Mr. Thomas de Hoop:

The debt crisis highlights the importance of linking SDG 17 with the other SDGs. Of course, the Coalition is interested in examining the debt crises by itself as an abstract financial issue, but it has real implication for social outcomes and creates interlinkages between the SDGs.

Closing

Mr. Alan Fox provides concluding remarks: The preliminary findings of the Partnerships Synthesis have hopefully created a flavor of how important the Coalition's findings will be and how rigorous the evidence will be that informs the exercise. The next step is the completion of the SDG 17 synthesis and presentation at the SDG Summit in September. The discussions and interventions of today's event have been helpful to move to the next step. Everybody is encouraged to work with the Coalition to gather the information and evidence needed.

H.E. Dr. Agnes Mary Chimbiri-Molande, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Malawi provides closing remarks:

- The preliminary findings demonstrate the importance of interlinkages, and of the international national, regional, and local levels, but also the gaps in localizing the SDGs. Triangular cooperation and membership in various global and regional organizations add great value to our efforts to achieve the SDGs.
- Innovation, technology, and transformation remain major challenges but the ongoing STI discussions provide a big opportunity to look at them.
- The Synthesis will provide evidence for which data is critical. However, the presentation has shown that development initiatives create insufficient data and reporting on certain SDGs continues to be challenging. There is an urgent need to transfer data to institutions – this will give us strong evidence and data for policy change.
- Other areas of importance are changes to the financial architecture, tax reforms, resource mobilization, coordination and multilateralism to ensure no one is left behind.
- Hopefully the final analysis will reflect these issues. All Member States are encouraged to support the Coalition, including the syntheses of the remaining Pillars.