

**MOVING FROM MDGs TO SDGs IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA:
UNTANGLING COMPLEXITY, TAKING ACTION**

**DIALOGUE WITH MEMBER STATES
11 November 2016
New York, UN Headquarters (Conference Room 11)**



The Dialogue with Member States was opened by Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, Chair, Regional UNDG for Europe and Central Asia. In her opening remarks, Ms. Sultanoglu stressed the importance of the results of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the Europe and Central Asia region and the challenges that the states are facing. She emphasized that the global framework for sustainable development adopted in 2015 (the Climate Agreement, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development) came as a response and aspiration of the Member States to keep the gains of the MDGs and move beyond these gains.

Mr. Christian Friis Bach, Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), in his introduction, underlined the importance of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its universal and all-encompassing nature. The key to successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be a comprehensive approach and coordinated support from the regional UN system (as per the [Joint positioning by the regional UN system in Europe and Central Asia](#)).

PRESENTATIONS ON THE ACTIONS AT COUNTRY AND REGIONAL LEVELS

Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, Chair, Regional UNDG for Europe and Central Asia

Results achieved during the implementation of the MDGs were important for the region. [Many lessons were learned through the process of MDGs implementation](#): the important role of the government leadership; a need for coherent strategies and inter-linked policies; the opportunities for localization and targeting that can be done based on disaggregated data.

Ms. Sultanoglu outlined many risks and challenges that not only present an obstacle to sustaining the gains of the MDGs but also limit the implementation of the SDGs: uncertain economic outlook; inequalities; conflicts and natural disasters; massive displacement of people. Additional efforts will be

needed to ensure sufficient financing; availability of knowledge, technologies and expertise; strengthening of statistical capacities and monitoring systems.

At the national level, the UN Country Teams work together with national partners through UNDAFs (United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks). All current UNDAFs in the region reflect the countries aspirations towards Sustainable Development Goals. Results Groups at the national level and Issue-Based Coalitions at the regional level provide a more targeted support on specific high priority thematic areas.



Mr. Christian Friis Bach, Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM)

The 2030 Agenda is relevant for all countries. Although significant progress has been achieved in a number of areas in the region (economic growth, investments in renewable energy, steps to promote gender equality), much remains to be done. A chart [presented by Mr. Friis Bach](#) illustrates a number of SDGs where the countries lack data and capacities to roll-out fast and efficient implementation strategies throughout the region (SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 13 and SDG 17).

Mr. Friis Bach emphasized that additional efforts are needed beyond those undertaken currently. Strengthening national statistical capacities is important. Conference of European Statisticians is a platform that unites national statistical bodies, international organizations and the UN family to work together on the region specific indicators and their use in monitoring of the SDGs implementation.

Mr. Magdy Martinez-Soliman, Co-Chair of the UNDG Working Group on Sustainable Development

The [UN is supporting Member States through MAPS](#) (mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support) framework. The first year of SDGs implementation already indicates a higher level of government ownership and awareness in the broadest parts of the society. Programme countries are building on their experience with the MDGs and integrating the SDGs into their national policies and programmes; non-programme countries are undertaking assessments of the gaps and steps that will be needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda goals.

DISCUSSION



Member States raised a number of important questions and concerns that relate to the role of the United Nations system in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the importance of the UN that is “fit for purpose”.

The following questions and issues were raised by the participants of the Dialogue:

- How is gender inequality from the economic (not only the rights) perspective mainstreamed in UNDAFs; what is the mechanism for ensuring that programmes on women economic and political empowerment are part of the development agenda?
- What support can the UN provide to the pressing challenges and needs of data disaggregation: are there resources available into which countries can tap?
- How are the commitments on the use of private investment commitments taken into account by governments and the UN?

- The HLPF has defined a number of topics (and respective SDGs) for the next three years. Does the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development has a similar approach: what is the topic of the Regional Forum to be held in Geneva in April 2017?
- To what extent the SDGs “dominate” the national priorities? Have the MDGs been auxiliary to the achievement of national goals? What are the MDGs lessons in this respect for the implementation of the SDGs?

In their responses, the Chairs of the R-UNDG and the RCM and the Co-Chair of the UNDG Working Group on Sustainable Development highlighted that gender is a cross-cutting theme that is mainstreamed not only into UNDAFs but also into other strategic documents of the UN agencies. They also emphasized that the role of the private funding and partnerships with the private sector will be crucial for the implementation of the SDGs, and the UN is working on defining the principles that will help countries in creating an enabling environment for public-private partnerships. In Europe, the Conference of European Statisticians is working with the statistical offices of Member States on data requirements. Proper reporting will depend on the availability of disaggregated data and technical assistance from the UN system in strengthening respective national capacities will be needed. MDGs were influential in steering social protection as part of the development agenda in the right protection, MDGs were less successful in the areas of sustainability or peace and good governance. SDGs offer a new inter-sectoral framework to fill in these gaps and protect the achievements and gains of the MDGs in the long run.

CLOSING REMARKS

The Chairs of the R-UNDG and the RCM thanked the representatives of Permanent Missions for their remarks and expressed their commitment to maintain a regular dialogue and work together to support Member States on their path of the SDGs implementation.