

## HLPF 2017 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY 13 JULY 2017

On Thursday morning, the 2017 meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) started with reviews of implementation of two Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure); and SDG 14 (life below water). In the afternoon, two reviews related to SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals) took place, on: investing in, and financing for, SDGs; and advancing science, technology and innovation (STI) for the SDGs.

### REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION: SDG 9

Frederick Musiiwa Makamure Shava, Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe and President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), chaired this session. Miguel Ruiz Cabañas, Vice Minister for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights, Mexico, moderated.

Panelist John Danilovich, International Chamber of Commerce, highlighted: policy coherence; trade facilitation reform; finance to enable businesses to access international markets; and harnessing the trade potential of the Internet.

Panelist Maria Kiwanuka, Special Advisor to the President of Uganda, highlighted the need for: a focus on productive sectors; optimizing benefits and reducing delays of infrastructure projects; and balancing capital-intensive and labor-intensive innovation.

Panelist Magnus Arildsson, Ericsson, noted the importance of improving knowledge systems to increase food production, and harmonizing technology standards to allow data interoperability.

Providing a global overview of progress towards SDG 9, Min Yongyi, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), highlighted: continued concentration of production in a few geographic areas; major investments in transportation and energy sectors; and a 23% increase in value addition in manufacturing between 2005 and 2016.

Discussant Patrick Ho, China Energy Fund Committee, listed infrastructure, technology, and investment as three key elements to achieve SDG 9, saying these elements should promote economic prosperity, equity, and environmental sustainability.

Discussant Arne Holte, World Blind Union, said SDG 9 is the best way to ensure “no one is left behind” if the impacts on all sections of society, including the disabled, are proactively considered during the development of technology, goods, and services.

SWITZERLAND highlighted the need for improved access to global production chains, and financing for infrastructure. CHILE emphasized that resilient infrastructure can save lives. CHINA described progress in building Internet and transport infrastructure, and integrating green standards into manufacturing. ARGENTINA stressed the need to remove trade barriers and promote digital commerce to benefit small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). BENIN called for parity for imports from developing countries. LEBANON highlighted efforts to support start-ups and SMEs. KENYA described investments in transportation infrastructure and manufacturing. AZERBAIJAN highlighted efforts to improve access to infrastructure, to ensure no one is left behind.

The EU highlighted investments in green infrastructure. The UN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION stressed the need to address resource constraints, especially in vulnerable countries. The FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UN (FAO) said the Accelerated Agriculture and Agro-Industry Development Initiative creates an enabling environment for responsible investment in the agricultural sector. Underlining that infrastructure is no longer only physical, ESTONIA highlighted an agreement with Luxembourg to establish the world’s first “data embassy” to back up data outside her country.

CHAD outlined international support, rule of law, a strong, competitive economy, and the well-being of the population as key priorities for his country. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY stressed Voluntary National Reviews as a powerful tool to open dialogue between governments and the business community.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH said net neutrality is vital to sustainable development. MALAYSIA, INDONESIA, and ETHIOPIA highlighted national investments in infrastructure. Noting that US\$120-130 trillion is available for infrastructure investment, MEXICO said the challenge is to match capital to available projects. NIGERIA called for international support for innovation-driven development.

Panelists emphasized the need for: concrete examples; local inputs to drive down costs; and a focus on farmers in “public-private-producer” partnerships. In closing, Cabañas identified a potential paradox between innovation and job creation.

### REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION: SDG 14

ECOSOC President Shava chaired this session.

Keynote speaker Peter Thomson, President of the UN General Assembly, called for: implementation of the workplan of the 2017 UN Ocean Conference; collective responsibility to restore the health of oceans; and political momentum.

Calling on donor countries to meet their special commitments to small island developing States (SIDS), keynote speaker Olof Skoog, Co-President of the Ocean Conference, said the Conference reflected an innovative North-South partnership model that could be used for other SDGs.

Keynote speaker Luke Daunivalu, Co-President of the Ocean Conference, highlighted the: high number of voluntary commitments from the Conference that cover all ten SDG 14 targets; limited capacity of SIDS to address threats to oceans; and need to follow-up on conference outcomes.

Keynote speaker Wu Hongbo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, highlighted efforts by the UN to prepare a preliminary analysis of nearly 1400 voluntary commitments, and identify synergies with existing partnerships.

Kate Brown, Global Island Partnership, moderated the discussion that followed.

Miguel de Serpa Soares, UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, said UN Oceans, an interagency collaboration mechanism, could play an important role in SDG 14 implementation if sustainable funding is assured.

Providing statistics related to SDG 14, Min Yongyi, DESA, said recent gains in marine protected areas are being jeopardized by climate change, overfishing, and marine pollution.

Panelist Jake Rice, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, noted there is sufficient knowledge to go from commitments to action, and urged “smarter” use of the oceans. Panelist Marjo Vierros, Global Ocean Forum, called for participatory and inclusive implementation of SDG 14.

Discussant Ronald Jumeau, Permanent Representative of Seychelles to the UN, called for a strong review mechanism to track progress on the Ocean Conference Call for Action and SDG 14.

Discussant Tui Shortland, Pacific Indigenous and Local Knowledge Centre of Distinction, stressed that indigenous peoples must be acknowledged as primary actors in ocean management and their roles institutionalized.

In the discussion, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, on behalf of Pacific SIDS, said that the ocean is approaching critical tipping points. The PHILIPPINES highlighted her country’s strategies for implementing SDG 14, including: a science-based policy framework; enforcement mechanisms; sustained financing; and stakeholder engagement.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES said the evaluation of development programmes should include a focus on persons with disabilities. MALDIVES, for the Alliance of Small Island States, stressed the importance of the ongoing discussions on marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. MADAGASCAR emphasized the critical role of SDG 14 for island states.

WOMEN called for prioritizing female leadership in sustainable use of oceans. UN ENVIRONMENT noted work to develop a guidance document for regional organizations for follow-up and review of SDG 14. HONDURAS stressed the role of research and scientific knowledge for decision-making on marine and coastal resources. VIET NAM called for empowerment of local communities. CROATIA identified integrated coastal zone management as a key instrument to implement SDG 14. MEXICO highlighted the importance of the legal framework provided by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, including delimitation of maritime zones.

TOGO called for regional cooperation. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO highlighted national and regional actions including measures for coastal protection and pollution

control. FAO underscored the importance of: eliminating harmful subsidies; area-based management of fisheries; and people-centric interventions.

GUATEMALA stressed the role of the UN system in coordinating efforts to support SDG 14. ITALY described a national ban on non-biodegradable and non-compostable plastic bags. INDONESIA highlighted efforts to extend its marine protected areas to 20 million hectares by 2020, and reduce 70% of marine plastic debris by 2025. FINLAND stressed the importance of the Paris Agreement, the 2030 Agenda, and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

TONGA called for partnerships, capacity building, support, and strengthened monitoring. KENYA highlighted a recent ban on plastic bags and efforts to promote marine safety and security.

### **REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION SDGS AND THEMATIC REVIEW SDG 17: INVESTING IN AND FINANCING FOR SDGS**

Nabeel Munir, ECOSOC Vice President, chaired this session.

Keynote speaker Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the UN, presented the report of the 2017 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development (FfD) (E/FFDF/2017/3).

He noted that the current global trajectory will not deliver the goal of poverty eradication by 2030; national and international action must be accelerated; and corrective action is necessary in all seven action areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA).

Presenting the key highlights of the Forum’s report, keynote speaker Jerry Matthews Matjila, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN, emphasized, *inter alia*: gender equality; resilient infrastructure; long-term oriented investments, including in social protection systems; and international efforts to cap illicit financial flows. He said the report notes the decrease in official development assistance (ODA) to least developed countries (LDCs), and reiterates the call on ODA providers to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.2% ODA/GNI to LDCs.

Manuel Montes, the South Centre, moderated the discussion that followed.

Presenting key statistics, Stefan Schweinfest, DESA, said that while ODA rose by 8.9% from 2015 to 2016, bilateral aid to LDCs fell by 3.9%.

Panelist Gebeyehu Ganga Gayito, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the UN, stressed that renewed global commitment and political determination are needed to accelerate implementation of the AAAA.

Panelist Peter Adriaens, Equarius Risk Analytics, identified opportunities to mainstream sustainable development finance, including: focusing on systemic economic development; finding the right financing mechanisms; and re-education and re-training of policymakers.

Panelist Kajsa Olofsgård, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden, stressed multilateralism and inclusiveness.

Noting that public-private partnerships (PPPs) have frequently fostered corruption, discussant Chee Yoke Ling, Third World Network, called for greater UN oversight and norm-setting.

During the discussion, SRI LANKA said that “a new and transformative agenda cannot be serviced by an old and ordinary financial system.” GHANA underscored the different financing needs of low-income and middle-income countries. ALGERIA said

South-South cooperation is important but cannot supplant North-South cooperation. The PHILIPPINES highlighted legislative efforts to ensure a simpler, fairer, and more strategic tax system.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY said the second annual SDG Business Forum is expecting over 900 attendees. ARGENTINA identified South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as the best means of implementation (MOI) for the SDGs. CHINA emphasized: adhering to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; North-South cooperation; and creating enabling environments. SOUTH AFRICA called for the political will and courage to address MOI that “has been outstanding since Agenda 21.”

DENMARK stressed its continued commitment to the 0.7% ODA/GNI target and the need for an enabling environment to involve youth. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS called for: policy coherence; strong governments; tax reform; and an end to the promotion of PPPs and harmful trade agreements. The EU highlighted policy coherence; use of ODA to leverage investments; and good governance, rule of law, and democracy.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH said the 2017 FfD Forum report mentions young people only twice, commodifies youth as inputs, and diminishes their standing as rights-holders. NGOs and WOMEN called for strong language on MOI, and human and women’s rights, in the HLPF 2017 ministerial declaration. TANZANIA highlighted improvements in domestic revenue collection through land and property taxes.

In closing, panelists called for: effective multilateralism that complements national efforts; transformative partnerships in finance; and the need for national leadership to drive policy coherence.

### **REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS AND THEMATIC REVIEW OF SDG 17: ADVANCING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR SDGS**

ECOSOC Vice President Cristián Barros Melet chaired this session, and Susil Premajayantha, Minister of Science, Technology, and Research, Sri Lanka, moderated.

Presenting the Co-Chairs’ summary of the 2017 Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) (E/HLPF/2017/4), panelist Macharia Kamau, Co-Chair of the STI Forum, said “deep dives” to explore the STI dimension of each SDG are necessary; called for more attention to low-cost, low-technology solutions in line with local realities; and urged support for the Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM) to enable its effective functioning.

Panelist Vaughan Turekian, STI Forum Co-Chair, highlighted: the importance of the Forum in discussing best practices and creating networks between government, private sector, and academia; the call for a robust science advisory mechanism for the UN Secretary-General; and the need to focus on capacity building.

Panelist Heide Hackmann, Co-Chair of the 10-Member Group of High-Level Representatives in Support of the TFM, identified three priorities: enhanced collaboration within the scientific community; new forms of engagement with policy and public action; and exploiting the potential of big data and machine learning.

Discussant Nebojša Nakićenović, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, called attention to cuts in global research funding, and the risk of the marginalization of STI in the sustainable development process.

Discussant Donovan Gutteries, Major Group for Children and Youth, said that STI should support the 2030 Agenda and not reinforce existing inequalities.

In the discussion, VIET NAM pointed to significant digital divides in the availability and affordability of technology. CHINA highlighted efforts to build “innovation demonstration zones,” and foster South-South cooperation.

The INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY said that it not only serves as a nuclear watchdog, but also delivers concrete results in development. MEXICO highlighted his country’s National Council for the 2030 Agenda. FINLAND emphasized the importance of technology education for young women and girls. CHILDREN AND YOUTH said the Hippocratic Oath to “do no harm” should apply to STI.

ARMENIA highlighted a national SDG innovation laboratory, and the potential of “crowdsourcing through citizen engagement.” The EU said its Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme is open to developing country researchers. UN ENVIRONMENT emphasized the need to ensure technology is environmentally sound. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES stressed that science and technology must be accessible for those with disabilities. The NETHERLANDS supported dialogue between stakeholders and scientists.

WOMEN noted that 250 million fewer women than men are online and called for appropriate governance of information and communication technology. SOUTH AFRICA called for the inclusion of women, youth, and people with disabilities in STI. JAPAN supported: change through innovation; solutions enabled by global data; cross-sectoral and international linkages; and fostering human resources for STI.

IRAN said genuine partnerships could lead to an environmentally-friendly transformation of the development paradigm. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS said technology should be placed at the service of people, workers, and communities, rather than corporate and private interests. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES called for recognizing the importance of traditional knowledge as complementary to science across all the SDGs.

In closing, Hackmann called for safeguarding the voice of science in times of rising populism. Turekian estimated that there are only three years left to build a system to catalyze STI for the 2030 Agenda. Kamau emphasized the need to find a “real home” for the private sector at the UN, noting “we need to get the private sector excited about what we are doing here.”

### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

The speed-reading skills of participants were severely tested on Wednesday afternoon, as they struggled to make sensible interventions on the critical issue of financing for SDGs in under a minute. This “most important” issue, part of SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals), had a short hour and a half on the HLPF agenda – causing some mirth in the room as speakers were cut off by a klaxon almost before they could begin, but mostly deep frustration.

The Financing for Development process is meant to be a central element of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Although SDG 17 is discussed every year at HLPF, this is not the first time that it has been assigned to a “small, dark corner.” “It is part of the steady erosion of ambition on means of implementation,” said a delegate. However, as she pointed out, without progress on SDG 17, “the other Goals will halt in their tracks.”

In the following session on STI, meanwhile, the Co-Chair of the STI Forum said the klaxon is a good example of technology serving as a barrier, by impeding participants from speaking freely to each other.



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