

HLPF 2018 Highlights: Friday, 13 July 2018

HLPF 2018 continued on Friday at UN Headquarters in New York, with sessions on: a review of SDG 15 (life on land); a review of SDG 17 (partnerships for the goals); “leaving no one behind – are we succeeding?”; and a wrap-up of the first week.

Review of SDG 15 Implementation

This session was chaired by ECOSOC Vice-President Jerry Matthews Matijala.

Heather Page, UN DESA, presented an overview of SDG 15, saying that while forest and biodiversity protection is on the rise, forests continue to shrink and there is an alarming decline in fauna.

Keynote speaker Simon Levin, Princeton University, sharing insights from the HLPF Expert Group Meeting on SDG 15, called for a better monitoring framework and more systemic thinking.

Moderator René Castro Salazar, Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, said insufficient progress is being made on reducing greenhouse gases and biodiversity protection.

Panelist Anne Larigauderie, Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, said the Aichi Targets on biodiversity will not be met by 2020, threatening SDG 15.

Panelist Cécile Bibiane Ndjebet, African Women’s Network for Community Management of Forests, described efforts to include women, rural communities, and Indigenous Peoples in SDG 15 implementation, particularly in the area of deforestation.

Panelist Roy Brouwer, University of Waterloo, Canada, said payments for ecosystem services schemes need better targeting and enforcement.

Panelist Martha Rojas-Urrego, Ramsar Convention, called for the integration of wetlands and biodiversity in the implementation of the SDG framework.

Lead discussant Gertrude Kabusimbi Kenyangi, Support for Women in Agriculture and Environment, Uganda, called for voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to use the monitoring and evaluation practices as used in the human rights regime.

Lead discussant Jill Blockhus, The Nature Conservancy, described “sustainable land bonds” for climate change mitigation and rural development.

Lead discussant Chiagozie Chima Udeh, Plant-for-the-Planet Foundation, linked biodiversity and forest loss to Boko Haram’s recruitment of young people in Nigeria.

In the discussion, NORWAY called for reversal of tropical forest loss. MALAYSIA, FRANCE, and ROMANIA committed to forestry, biodiversity, and ecosystem protection respectively. AUSTRALIA underlined the importance of Earth observation systems. ISRAEL described the integration of biodiversity conservation into housing planning. GERMANY noted that SDG 15 will not be achieved if current trends continue. The UN STANDING COMMITTEE ON NUTRITION underlined the importance of agro-

biodiversity for nutrition. The CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD) noted that biodiversity can support nature-based solutions to many global challenges, such as conflict prevention. FINLAND called for more women in leadership roles in biodiversity conservation. The CZECH REPUBLIC linked the fall of a government regime to public disquiet over environmental concerns. MEXICO and SWITZERLAND called for mainstreaming biodiversity. UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME said the issue of land use might be the next “big thing.”

The EU called for the same commitment and ambition for biodiversity as for climate. The PHILIPPINES asked for better recognition of interlinkages. INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE called for enhanced efforts to achieve the Aichi Targets. FARMERS called for their involvement in 2030 Agenda implementation.

SWEDEN highlighted the need to combat land degradation. RUSSIAN FEDERATION underlined the need to protect boreal forests. JAMAICA, INDONESIA, and SOUTH AFRICA described national efforts to safeguard biodiversity. INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY described the use of nuclear technology to increase agricultural production and food security. DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO underscored the importance of sustainable management of peatlands.

BENIN called for responsible land governance models. TURKEY announced aims to increase forest cover to 30% by 2023. REPUBLIC OF KOREA said land degradation neutrality promotes peace and security. SENEGAL expressed support for the “3S” approach – security, stability, and sustainability. VOLUNTEERS underscored their role in sustainable land management. UN EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION highlighted the role of traditional communities in sustainable land management and use. TOGO announced national greenhouse gas emissions reductions through reducing deforestation.

KENYA noted an increase in national forest cover from 7.2% in 2010, to 7.5% in 2017. WOMEN called for ending subsidies for industries harmful to the environment. ESTONIA underscored the need to ensure clean infrastructure for biodiversity and micro-organisms. OMAN mentioned the involvement of youth and women in its land management programmes. MOROCCO presented the Adaptation of African Agriculture initiative. CHINA highlighted the hosting of the 15th Conference of Parties to the CBD in 2020. STATE OF PALESTINE said Israeli settlements have destroyed 5000 olive groves.

Rojas-Urrego emphasized the need to localize the 2030 Agenda and biodiversity conservation. Brouwer called for joint monitoring of water and land management. Bibiane Ndjebet underlined that rural and indigenous women need to be fully engaged in SDG 15 implementation. Larigauderie highlighted the need for multi-stakeholder involvement in safeguarding biodiversity, including the private sector.

Review of SDG 17 Implementation

This session was chaired by ECOSOC Vice-President Mahmamin Mahmadaminov.

Yongyi Min, UN DESA, said net official development assistance (ODA) in 2017 decreased by 0.6% from 2016 in real terms, and aid to least developed countries stagnated in this period, growing just 1% in real terms.

Courtenay Rattray, Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the UN, called for better debt management monitoring by national and international actors, and for ODA providers to fulfil their commitments.

Moderator Gillian Tett, Financial Times, pointed to the challenges of harnessing “cash and computers” in a world “drowning in debt.”

Masud Bin Momen, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN, said economic globalization has suffered a setback with the rise of inward-looking and protectionist tendencies, and pointed to the transformative potential of technology, gender equality, and access to disaggregated data.

Panelist Robin Ogilvy, Special Representative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to the UN, pointed to the importance of researching how digitalization is impacting policy choices.

Panelist Alfred Watkins, Global Solutions Summit, said proven cost-effective technological solutions to sustainable development exist, but technology deployment measures are missing.

Panelist Steven Waygood, Aviva, pointed to US\$300 trillion invested in capital markets that can be leveraged for the SDGs. He called on the UN and civil society to support the development of rules and standards to make capital markets more sustainable and transparent.

Lead discussant Kavaljit Singh, Madhyam, highlighted the challenge of implementing partnerships for the SDGs at a time of global economic fragmentation, when poor countries could become collateral damage in a global trade war.

In the discussion, FRANCE announced plans to increase its contribution to support SDGs. BELARUS called for support for middle income countries. FINLAND welcomed diversification of financing for development, including leveraging private sector funds. AGEING, TURKEY, WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION, NORWAY and AUSTRALIA called for strong and innovative partnerships. GHANA described a fund for entrepreneurs focusing on women and youth. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC called for alternative sources of finance. VIET NAM and ASIA PACIFIC REGIONAL CSO ENGAGEMENT MECHANISM lamented declining ODA. THAILAND called for the strengthening of means of implementation. SWEDEN called for ambitious UN reform. MOROCCO offered support to other African countries. SOUTH AFRICA cautioned that some innovative sources of finance will result in further indebtedness. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES said implementation must take historic injustices into account. The EU noted that an open, rules-based trade system can strengthen the SDGs.

Leaving No One Behind: Are We Succeeding?

This session was chaired by ECOSOC President Marie Chatardová.

Keynote speaker Andrew Gilmour, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said the world is not on track with the 2030 Agenda as many are pushed further behind by the forces of globalization, with risks and burdens borne by the poorest and marginalized.

Moderator Manish Bapna, World Resources Institute, underlined the imperative to address extreme poverty, recalling President Abraham Lincoln’s belief that “if slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong.”

Rapporteur Douglas Keh, UN Development Programme, noted that some people are intentionally left behind and must be included as “agents of change.”

Rapporteur Riitta Oksanen, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland, commenting on water, sustainable consumption and production, and life on land, noted: the need to understand who is being left behind; a balanced discussion on data that also focuses on both the supply and demand for statistics, and land rights.

Rapporteur Alicia Bárcena, UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, commenting on energy, cities and means of implementation, called for more attention to critical linkages across the SDGs. She noted the importance of: land, water and access to energy in poverty and inequality; cities as the “space where everything happens;” wealth redistribution; and emerging trade wars.

In a discussion, the UN SECRETARY GENERAL’S SPECIAL ENVOY ON DISABILITIES said accessibility to physical spaces is essential for the exercise of economic, social, and cultural rights. CHILE raised the tension between the indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda and the need for governments to prioritize certain areas. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY called for a rules-based trading system and encouraged Member States to de-escalate the growing trade war. BELGIUM encouraged Member States to include youth representatives as co-authors of the VNRs.

Lead discussant Sakiko Fukuda-Parr, UN Committee on Development Policy, said only 14 VNRs presented detailed action plans to leave no one behind, and few addressed discriminations based on ethnic, religious, or racial grounds.

Lead discussant Sophie Howe, Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, outlined the vision of the Wales Future Generations Act, saying the true measure of the success of the 2030 Agenda will be whether it is able to meet the needs of future generations.

Lead discussant Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, underscored the need to obtain prior, free, and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples; and ensure they are included during data collection and disaggregation.

Lead discussant Sylvia Beales, Gray Panthers, noted that older people are facing multiple forms of exclusion and marginalization, and called for the recognition of their capacities and rights.

In a discussion, SWITZERLAND noted that water, energy, and housing are made affordable in Switzerland to ensure no one is left behind. ESTONIA said that the government granted voting rights to 16 and 17 year-olds in local elections in 2016. TOGETHER 2030 called for recognizing changing demographics and their impact on new technologies. SIERRA LEONE noted that the provision for legal representation for inmates was increased to ensure no one is left behind. EDUCATION AND ACADEMIA called for education that puts justice and solidarity at its core. WOMEN underscored the need to address gender-biased stereotypes. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES called for disability-disaggregated data to ensure no one is left behind.

Wrap-up of the First Week

Liu Zhenmin, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, encouraged all countries who have not done so to present their VNRs. Marie Chatardová, ECOSOC President noted that the use of statistics is gaining ground, helping leave no one behind, and called for a greater share of ODA to be dedicated to statistics.

In the Corridors

Participants engaged in animated discussions with a number of presenters at the close of the HLPF on Friday, after the conference room became a stage for a clash of world views on the relationship between the SDGs and the global economy. Talk of “partnerships” and “collaborations” to achieve SDG 17 were countered by experts who declared global fragmentation, not collaboration, the order of the day, with looming trade wars and threats to the multilateral system. As the discussion moved on to whether we are succeeding in “leaving no one behind,” keynote speaker Andrew Gilmour delivered the verdict: with global wealth concentrated in the hands of just 1% of the global population, a large proportion has in fact been left behind, and is being pushed back even further by the forces of economic globalization.