



**Peer Talk LIVE: “One year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda”  
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As you know, in September we celebrated the 2030 Agenda’s first anniversary.

You will be familiar, by now, with the contents of the Agenda and with the unprecedentedly interactive process that led to it, engaging the governments, the UN system, civil society, and other stakeholders long before September of 2015. In fact, some countries, such as Colombia, started national implementation of the Agenda even before it was formally adopted.

You will also know that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda is framed by other landmark international agendas and agreements concluded in 2015: the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (adopted in March 2015), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (adopted at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July 2015), and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, signed at COP 21 in December 2015 and just recently ratified by a sufficient number of countries that together correspond to the minimum threshold in terms of emissions, to ensure its early entry into force, on November 4. All of these have to move forward together.

What have we achieved during this first year?

- ⇒ First, there have been unprecedented efforts to **raise awareness** about the SDGs at all levels, from international to national to local, responding to the clear realization that the Agenda can only be achieved with broad ownership by all stakeholders.
- ⇒ At the national level, efforts have been made to disseminate the SDGs through the use of the internet and social media, radio and television as well as through national events, workshops and consultations. Some countries have plans for the inclusion of the SDGs/2030 Agenda in school curricula. There have also been targeted efforts directed at key players. For example, in Sierra Leone, the government made efforts to ensure that parliamentarians, who would have to approve the budget and enact legislative changes, were knowledgeable about the SDGs.
- ⇒ The SDGs have become the reference frame for international organizations, from the United Nations and specialized Agencies, funds and programmes, to the World Bank and other multilateral development agencies, to bilateral donors, to the G20. This sends a strong signal that the international community will put its full weight behind the SDGs.
- ⇒ The issue of awareness raising has been one of the stated priorities of the President of the General Assembly



**Second, efforts to implement the new Agenda have already started across the globe, in countries at all levels of development.** Regarding national implementation, the first round of voluntary national reviews at the **High-Level Political Forum, in which twenty-two countries** participated, give us unique insight into efforts so far.

- ⇒ You will remember that, in negotiating the content of the Agenda, Member States emphasized the uniqueness of each of their circumstances and priorities. This means that while we are working together towards common goals and targets, and under a spirit of global solidarity, there is no one-size-fits-all solution for implementation. A significant part of the early stage of implementation of the Agenda has in fact been for countries – that is, governments, in consultation with civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders – to work out what implementation implies in each particular context, what their priorities are, what resources are needed and how they will be mobilized, how the Agenda ties into their other international and regional commitments, what they need from the international community, and how they are going to help other countries achieve the collective goals.
- ⇒ Implementation strategies have been or are being elaborated and integrated into national development plans. Beyond the 22 reviews, this was something also reported, by a much larger group of countries during the General Debate of the General Assembly this year.
- ⇒ Institutional mechanisms have been created or adapted in response to one of the fundamental characteristics of this Agenda and of the concept of sustainable development: that its integrated and comprehensive nature requires a much higher level of interaction, coordination, and coherence between different areas of government, different line ministries; between national, subnational and local governments; and between state and non-state actors.
- ⇒ Non-state actors, including civil society, the private sector, and others have been engaged both in elaborating implementation strategies and as key actors in implementation.
- ⇒ Significant efforts are being made to assess the availability of data and suitability of indicators to monitor progress at national and subnational level, as well as to put in place the capacity-building efforts that will be necessary to improve data production and analysis. We know that there are deficiencies particularly in regard to remote regions and to disaggregated data, which are necessary to assess the situation of vulnerable groups, beyond national averages (a key differentiating factor of the new Agenda, that pledges to “leave no one behind”).

- ⇒ Countries at all levels of development are working to mobilize resources for the 2030 Agenda through fiscal measures, combating tax evasion and illicit activities, and ensuring links to the SDGs in national budgets.
- ⇒ At the same time, countries are looking beyond their borders:
  - Germany, for example, has approached the SDGs through a three-pronged strategy whereby, in addition to national actions for national benefit, it assesses the impacts of national action on global public goods and of actions directly in third countries.
  - China, Egypt and others are looking at south-south cooperation.
  - Sierra Leone brought up at the voluntary national reviews the risks of crossborder threats like Ebola and hence the need for countries to advance together.
  - Commitments to meeting ODA targets have been reaffirmed. While there is a general recognition that ODA will not solve financing requirements in any country and that national resource mobilization is critical everywhere, it has also been stressed that implementation of the 2030 Agenda cannot do without ODA and that commitments must be fulfilled.

**Within the United Nations System, the SDGs have become a central pillar of our work**, across departmental and agency boundaries, and beyond the development pillar, and support to the Agenda is being delivered at the national, regional and global levels.

- ⇒ The SDGs have been at the core of the work of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council.
- ⇒ The High-Level Political Forum has started to fulfil its central role in follow-up and review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism, contained in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and launched through the 2030 Agenda, is being implemented and in June the first Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals was held. A third issue of the Global Sustainable Development Report was published, exploring the science-policy interface to the benefit of the SDGs and the pledge to leave no one behind.
- ⇒ The Secretary-General issued the first progress report on the SDGs in July, and the UN continues to support the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, which will hold its fourth meeting in Addis Ababa next week.
- ⇒ UN System organizations have started to frame their work in terms of the SDGs and Agenda 2030. They have started mapping their projects, programmes and initiatives in relation to SDG targets. This is very important, as it will allow for greater coherence and complementarity.

- ⇒ To give just a few examples, in addition to the work of the Secretariat, the UNCTAD conference in July focused on “moving from decision to action and delivering on the 2030 Agenda”; the United Nations Environment Assembly took place under the overarching theme of “Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”; and ILO’s End to Poverty Initiative was established as a strategy to direct the ILO’s work to the SDGs.
- ⇒ Moreover, many parts of the UN system have undertaken to systematically explore the interdependence between the targets under their main area of work and other goals and targets. For example, this has been done for water (SDG 6) by UN-Water, and for education. The latest Global Education Monitoring report is entirely devoted to the relationships between SDG4 and other SDGs (UNESCO, 2016). This effort to better understand these interrelationships and their implications for policy are not limited to the UN system proper. For example, the International Resource Panel has explored the links between natural resources and SDG targets (UNEP, 2015).
- ⇒ UN Country Teams are assisting with various aspects of implementation – from assisting with inclusive consultation processes to capacity-building for monitoring.
- ⇒ The Regional Commissions are providing technical support, policy advice and capacity-building and promoting regional collaboration in support of the SDGs, as well as convening the Regional Sustainable Development Forums.

### **How do those efforts fare?**

- ⇒ If we compare with the MDGs, we can safely say that we – governments, the UN System and stakeholders – have achieved a much greater level of ownership, awareness, and action on the SDGs than we had at one year of the MDGs. Non-state actors are much more involved, and we have the benefit not only of the experience with the MDGs but of a significantly transformed technological atmosphere, in particular in terms of information and communication technologies, enabling us to share, communicate, collaborate and reach out to people in much more effective ways.
- ⇒ But we also have a much more ambitious agenda, which requires genuine transformation and not just scaling up. We need game changers – changes in the way we think, in the incentives we built into our institutions, in our price signals, and in the way we view financing solutions. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the goals on means of implementation in the 2030 Agenda provide us with a range of solutions but the political economy behind the actual implementation of many of them is not simple. We need skilful and committed leadership to take bold steps forward, in developed and developing countries.

- ⇒ Moreover, we need to work against a background of national, regional and global challenges, including the precarious state of peace in many parts of the globe. Without peace, there cannot be sustainable development, as was recognized in Principle 25 of the Rio Declaration already 24 years ago. Other challenges include an unprecedented migrant and refugee crisis, the increasingly tangible effects of climate change, and the continuing setbacks to development caused by natural disasters. Regarding the latter, Hurricane Matthew, like too many other disasters in recent years, painfully and poignantly illustrates the vicious cycle between vulnerability and underdevelopment.
- ⇒ During the voluntary national reviews, countries reminded us of other concrete challenges that face them in their path to achieving the SDGs. These include severe capacity and resource constraints, poverty combined with high rates of population growth which make it difficult to expand basic services, economies that are highly dependent on natural resource exports and thus vulnerable to falling, or fluctuating, commodity prices, trade barriers or geographical isolation from markets, fragile political stability and the ravaging effects epidemics such as Ebola.
- ⇒ Of course, these are as much challenges to meeting the SDGs as they are reasons to pursue their achievement.
- ⇒ For change to happen, the benefits of the 2030 Agenda need to be clear to all. Currently, many, maybe even most, of us in the international development practitioner community are familiar with the SDGs, but we cannot say the same for the average person on the street or the average CEO or small business owner. This is very important, because without citizens and entrepreneurs in developed and developing countries buying into the 2030 Agenda, we will not have the political support we need for the difficult changes that are required, we will not enable citizens and civil society to play their role in contributing to implementation and ensuring accountability, and we will not enable the private sector to meaningfully explore new, sustainable business models.
- ⇒ At the UN, we have come a long way but there is still much to be done in terms of ensuring maximum efficiency, coherence and coordination. The Chief Executives Board and ECESA+ are working in that direction and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review will be a critical instrument to provide more cohesive support to member States. We need to ensure that our work promotes and supports transformative change, and reflects the interdependence among the goals and more broadly among the development, humanitarian, human rights, and peace and security pillars.
- ⇒ I am confident that the incoming Secretary-General will ensure that the momentum for all of that is maintained and strengthened.