

SDGs Thematic Reviews: What is the role of the UN Organization's Specialized Bodies?

23rd July 2015

As part of the final round of negotiations on the Post-2015 development agenda, a meeting was held on 23th July 2015 with the aim to discussing the role of the UN organization's specialized bodies within the larger review framework of the Post-2015 agenda. The event gathered five representatives of UN bodies to brief UN delegates on already existing thematic review processes and mechanisms associated with specific targets. Further, represent ants were also invited to suggest practical ways to integrate these thematic reviews into the overall SDG global monitoring mechanism.

Moderated by Mrs. Jane Stewart, Special Representative and Director of the ILO Office for the UN, the event included presentations and comments by representatives of UNCTAD, ILO, UNDESA, UNESCO, UNEP, OHCHR, as well as the Permanent Missions of France, Indonesia and Mexico, and a representative of Beyond 2015 representing the civil society's voice.

Mrs. Chantal Line Carpentier, Chief of UNCTAD New York Office, gave an insightful presentation where she shared the variety and richness of existing UNCTAD reviews mechanisms that are relevant to the follow-up and review of the Post-2015 agenda. She pointed out the need to strengthen the sometimes weak communication and integration between these mechanisms from specialized bodies and the General Assembly. In this sense, she voiced her support for enhanced collaboration of governments with the objective of better integration with the overall SDG global review mechanism.

Representing the ILO, Mr. Vinicius Pinheiro, Deputy Director of the ILO Office in NY, gave a detailed presentation of the mandate, scope, procedures and uses of the three main ILO review mechanisms: the International Labour Conference, the ILO Governing Body and the ILO Supervisory Mechanism. He pointed out that many of the SDGs and targets are already being reviewed and have been monitored for years through these already existing mechanisms. Mr. Pinheiro also reinforced the point on integration, highlighting that it will be one of the important challenges of the review framework.

Mr. Thomas Gass, ASG for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in UN DESA, shared some remarks focusing on the importance of inclusion and integration of specialized bodies, which are already well connected, well informed, well established, and well recognized by

their value. He highlighted the need to enable the interaction between the thematic layer and the regular state led reviews.

Mr. Jorge Laguna, Secretary of Governing Bodies for UNEP, shared his organizations views and mechanisms, including a detailed presentation of the UN Environment Assembly and its potential for the reviews and monitoring of the environment-related goals and targets. He also strongly advocated for integration, coherence and strengthening as major priorities for a well-functioning review framework, where he pointed more specifically to the relation of specialized bodies with the High Level Political Forum.

Mr. Craig Mokhiber, Chief of the Development & Economic & Social Issues Branch of the OHCHR, made the case for accountability within the review framework of the Post-2015 agenda. He insisted on the strong link to be made between the paradigm shift that places people at the centre of the agenda and the need for accountability to the people. He also highlighted the important improvement that represents having an agenda where all goals have to be implemented under international law.

Finally, Mrs. Min Jeong Kim, Education Specialist of UNESCO Office in New York, presented her organization's position regarding the review mechanisms. Her overview included supervisory mechanisms attached to Education for All and the World Education Forum, as well as other mechanisms focused on specific targets. She also touched on the role of data, where UNESCO does important work through its Institute for Statistics.

Representing the Permanent Mission of France to the UN, Mrs. Fabienne Bartoli welcomed the willingness of specialized bodies to work together and integrate themselves more into the System, which has not always been the case.

Mr. Purnomo Chandra, Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Indonesia to the UN, pointed out the challenge of 'leaving no one behind', which in his opinion is highly difficult and so calls for the focus to be on peoples and not on countries. Further, he stressed the need for the UN to also be reviewed by others, including external stakeholders.

Mrs. Sara Luna, Post-2015 Expert from the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the UN, said that specialized bodies will be playing an essential role as their work is highly valuable and recognized. From her countries view, the challenge is in what the best place is for specialized bodies' reviews taking into account non duplication, efficiency, relevance, and the crosscutting nature of the agenda.

Representing the views from the civil society, Mrs. Naiara Costa, Advocacy Director at Beyond 2015, pointed out the need for the Post-2015 agenda to give clear guidance on how the UN System, including not only specialized bodies but also regional commission and the General Assembly, should adapt to support the agenda and to support governments in both the implementation and the review.