



PARTNERSHIP
ACCELERATOR
2030 AGENDA
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



UNITED NATIONS
ECLAC



Permanent Mission of Italy
UN - New York



CARPHA



United
Nations

Department of
Economic and
Social Affairs

Supporting Effective Partnerships in the Caribbean

Private Sector Partnerships

Tuesday 7 June 2022 from 10:00 AM – 11:15 AM EDT

Summary

Background

The 2030 Agenda Partnership Accelerator – a project led by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and The Partnering Initiative - , the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean² has identified a group of individuals to become the [Caribbean Partnership Accelerators](#) – with the purpose to contribute to effective partnership building in the region. The Caribbean Partnership Accelerators will receive relevant training and coaching and take part in an in-person national partnership workshop in the region to gain hands-on training experience.

This project is funded by the Government of Italy.

On Tuesday 7 June 2022 from 10:00 AM- 11:15 AM (EDT) the partners held the second of five virtual training sessions for the accelerators. This session introduced the skills, tools and benefits of partnering with the private sector for sustainable development.

Local partnerships with the private sector and UN system

Mr. Angus Maclean Rennie, UN Development Coordination Office, shared his experience working with the UN Global Compact, UN Country Teams (UNCTs), UN Resident Coordinators (RCs) and the private sector. COVID-19 reinforced the urgency of working together for the SDGs, forcing fast, effective multi-stakeholder partnerships. Crises, such as the pandemic, can act as catalysts for change and learning, showcasing the ability to collaborate quicker than previously thought.

The UN system is undergoing changes to improve the global multi-lateral system aiming to reduce the current challenges in partnering for sustainable development. [“Our Common Agenda”](#) serves as a shared vision of partnering to accelerate progress on the SDGs and strive toward achieving them by 2030. Networked multilateralism is the foundation of “Our Common Agenda”, with goals of improving existing partnerships and building new ones wherever possible. The success of “Our Common Agenda” requires the participation of the private sector in such partnerships.

The [UN Global Compact](#) and its [ten principles](#) is the values framework for how the UN expects its business partners to operate. The Global Compact and its principles give private sector organizations a roadmap for how to transform and evolve to be more responsible business and promote long-term sustainability. The COVID-19 pandemic further demonstrated the importance of a sustainable



business approach, given that businesses already prioritizing sustainability and resiliency fared better throughout the pandemic. The only way to solve the present challenges is to look to external partners and find new, creative ways to collaborate towards sustainable development.

The UN Global Compact offers a central organization that gives access to the UN at the local level, to build relationships between businesses and the UN at the local level. The Caribbean region has become increasingly involved with the Global Compact, aiming to launch a [regional chapter](#). The regional chapters serve as platforms for ongoing relationships between businesses and the UN. The Global Compact is working with RCs to create local guidance for environmental, social and governance (ESG) that is tailored to the Caribbean region.

The RC system is increasingly working with important private sector stakeholders, such as the [International Organization of Employers](#) (IOE). The IOE has been championing the necessity of local businesses aligning themselves with the SDGs for creating economic development and strengthening local economies. A [playbook](#) has been published to establish how local employers and business organizations can work together with the UN system, specifically on the [UN Cooperation Framework](#), to create long term engagement with the private sector.

Creating partnerships between the private sector and the UN can pose many challenges such as intensive labor, red-tape and bureaucracy. Coalition building is a way to circumvent some of the issues brought upon by one-to-one partnerships and create larger, multilateral partnerships. Working in larger networks can bring more strengths together and avoid getting caught up in the details of each partnership. On a coalition level, partners are able to achieve more and faster than working in smaller partnerships.

There is a generational divide in partnerships with business, with the younger generations placing more importance on sustainability than the older generations. It is becoming increasingly more important for businesses to communicate their sustainability plans to attract top talent. In this sense, it is a good idea to let the younger members of coalitions take the lead.

One challenge that can be encountered when partnering with the private sector is conflicts of interest. The UN has detailed framework for risk assessment when entering into formal partnerships with businesses. Furthermore, the UN has a clear divide between businesses it partners with and companies it does business with to avoid conflicts of interest. Partnering with the UN will not lead to procurement opportunities.

Frameworks for partnerships with the private sector

Mr. Darian Stibbe, The Partnering Initiative, further presented on partnering with the private sector for sustainable development. It is essential to think of business as a development actor in itself. Businesses are positive for societies and development when they are doing business responsibly, inclusively and sustainably. The more attractive a business environment is, the more investment there will be and the more the business is able to provide (Figure 1). Each business has its own unique sphere of influence on sustainable development and the environment created including the workplace, marketplace, supply chain, community, enabling environment and natural environment.

MORE BUSINESS PROVIDING

- Livelihoods
- Tax revenue
- Social investment
- Affordable products and services
- Stability

**MORE INVESTMENT
BY BUSINESS**



**ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT**

- Availability of healthy skilled workers
- Stable society, clear and appropriate taxation and regulation
- Strong physical infrastructure (water, energy, transport)
- Rule of law and anti-corruption measures

Figure 1- Virtuous circle of business

There is a necessary mindset shift occurring in which the private sector is being seen as a full partner in partnerships, as opposed to previous views that the private sector only funds partnerships. It is becoming clear that the private sector has the potential to provide many benefits in partnerships, beyond funding (figure 2). It is essential to systematically engage the private sector as a full partner in development. Business, government and development actors should systematically collaborate wherever interests align, in all aspects of development to create prosperous business, society and environment (figure 3).

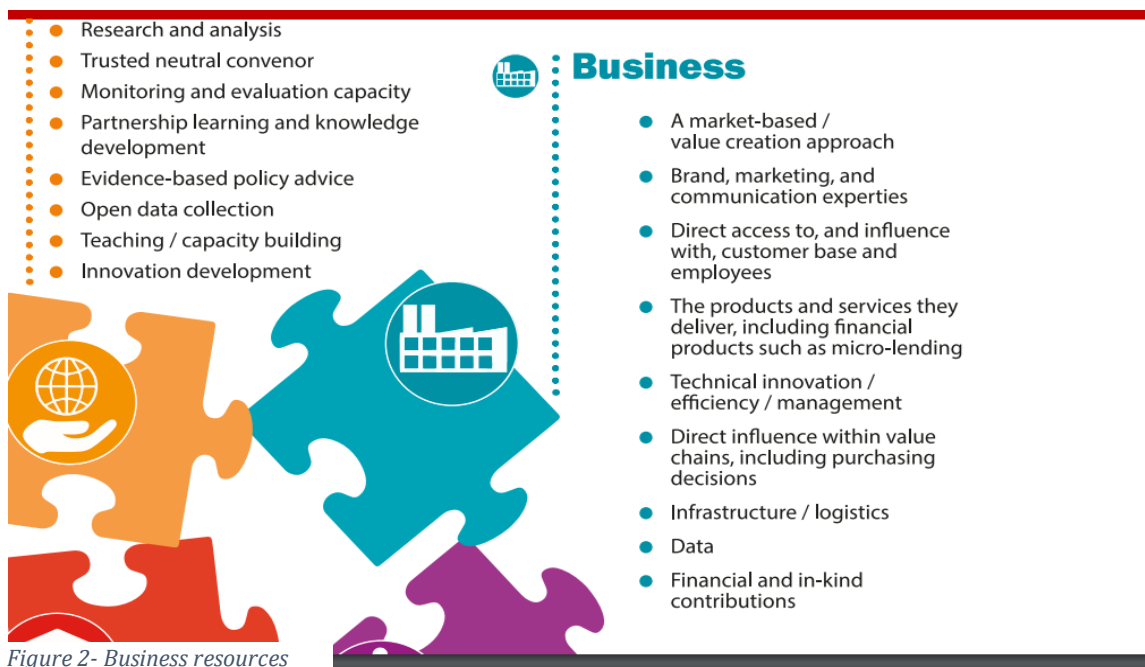


Figure 2- Business resources

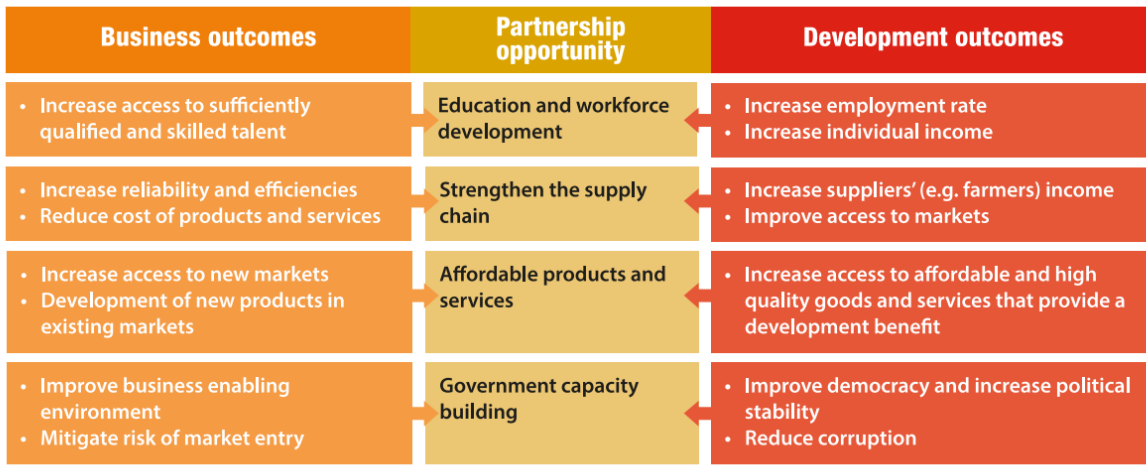


Figure 3- What business partnering looks like

There are ten different ways to partner with business to bring value to the SDGs:

1. **Business doing business**- responsibly, inclusively and sustainably;
2. **Standard setting**- collectively setting standards to raise overall sector practice;
3. **International commercial investment**- companies investing in building/developing new manufacturing/ agriculture/ extractive industry infrastructure;
4. **Inclusive business 1: People**- companies deliberately targeting the underprivileged as suppliers/ employees/ distributors;
5. **Inclusive business 2: Products**- companies/ social entrepreneurs providing pro-poor or pro-environment products and services;
6. **Value chain sustainability/ market transformation**- companies investing in making markets efficient or their value chains to be more environmental and/or socially sustainable;
7. **Strategic social/ infrastructure/ environmental investment**- business supporting business competitiveness and the fabric of the society in which it operates to ensure its own long-term sustainability/ opportunity;
8. **Philanthropy**-building reputation as a good corporate citizen;
9. **Innovative finance**- financing mechanisms to mobilize private sector capital in tackling social/ environmental problem;
10. **Investor in/ operator of public infrastructure/services**- companies make an upfront investment to deliver public infrastructure of services, to be repaid with profit over time by government or use fees (these types of partnerships are different than the others due to the regulated, contract-based nature).

There are many things to take into consideration when partnering with private sector. The economic context and types of business, such as formal vs. informal. It can be more difficult to partner with smaller businesses, and therefore it may be better to work with business organizations. It is important to consider the level of trust society places in businesses when partnering to ensure the a



positive outlook on the partnership among society and other stakeholders. Conflicts of interest should always be investigated before forming a partnership, particularly when partnering with the private sector. Lastly, no partner should gain disproportionate benefit from involvement in an initiative.

It is necessary to address informality in the private sector and aim to reduce the number of informal businesses for sustainable economic development. The Global Compact is working to offer more resources to small, micro and informal enterprises. Furthermore, the [International Trade Centre](#) (ITC) offers a number of partnerships and innovations to assist the informal sector. A system shift is required lift the informal sector up to the formal, larger private sector, including employing a graduating tax system.

Breakout Group Activity

Following the presentations, the accelerators were split into groups of three to discuss their own experiences in partnering with the private sector. The groups were asked to identify both successes and challenges they have seen in partnerships with the private sector and how this relates specifically to the Caribbean region.

Upon coming back to the main group, the smaller groups shared some of what they discussed during the breakout room. One group discussed the differences in languages when partnering with multiple sectors and the barriers to communication this may cause. To create sustainable partnerships, all partners must be comfortable with the language used and communicate effectively. Another challenge can be in the very nature of the private sector being at odds with the SDGs in some cases, causing conflicts of interest within partnerships. This issue underlines the need for trust within partnerships and society.

Companies must feel that they are part of a collective society in order to strive for partnerships towards sustainable development. The low presence of corporate social responsibility and ESG in the Caribbean poses challenges in partnering. This further emphasizes the need for such partnerships in order to shift the current mindset of the private sector.

The lack of knowledge sharing in the Caribbean further challenges partnerships with the private sector, as some don't want to share their knowledge for many reasons. Again, this underscore the need for trust between partners, the private sector and the community.

Next Steps

The next training session will be held on 14 June 2022 with a focus on stakeholder engagement in partnerships for sustainable development.
