**SIXTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN WORKING GROUP ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

9-13 December, 9:00-10:00, Trusteeship Council (Conference Building)

Co-Chair's meetings with the Major Groups and other Stakeholders

The Co-chairs and Member States of the Open Working Group continued the interaction with the stakeholders established in the third session of the group and organized five hour-long morning meetings with the Major Groups and other stakeholders during the sixth session.

During the first two days the participants addressed the first cluster of issues addressed by the Open Working Group on SDGs in its sixth session, Means of implementation (science and technology, knowledge-sharing and capacity building) and Global partnership for achieving sustainable development.

The speakers highlighted that increased support and investments into science, technology and higher education will be fundamental in achieving the SDGs. After the agricultural and industrial revolutions, humanity needs a sustainable development human-centered revolution based on knowledge and innovation.

The question who controls and who benefits from new technologies was raised by many. It was suggested that intellectual property rights reforms are needed since often a very limited number of companies own the patents and licenses to a majority of innovations. Related to this, it was also stressed that timely legislation and regulation is needed in order to make sure that new innovations, such as geoengineering, nanotechnology and genetic engineering, do not have adverse effects.

Open access to information and technologies underpins sustainable development and open data policies should be looked into. In addition to enhancing the access to knowledge and technologies, people's skills to utilize these should be also increased. The knowledge- and skills-gap between North and South needs to be eliminated. Also, when searching for solutions and innovations, a mix of indigenous, local and academic knowledge needs to be utilized.

SDGs should be seen as a partnership between policy and science. The science-policy interface should be further advanced and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Global Sustainable Development Report and the Secretary-General's Scientific Advisory Board were mentioned in this regard as good examples of recent initiatives.

On the second day the speakers addressed specifically the issue of Global partnership for sustainable development. They highlighted that the current MDG 8 on Global partnership for development has not been delivering the results required. The new human rights -centred

partnership needs to be for both people and planet, driven by governments, involving stakeholders and engaging millions of leaders worldwide, not only heads of states.

To implement the SDGs it should be thought through who is the partnership for and who are the partners. It is important to distinguish between a Global partnership for sustainable development as one form of international commitment, especially between countries, and different partnerships among multiple actors around particular projects. More in-depth analysis on how the Global partnership and multistakeholder partnerships will deliver for marginalized groups, women, girls, indigenous peoples and people with disabilities, is needed.

The private sector is an invaluable part of the Global partnership but governments, with the primary responsibility for taking care of citizens, should not rely on the private sector alone for implementing SDGs. When providing an enabling environment for economic growth, governments should especially take into consideration the needs of small and medium enterprises so that these can provide the jobs and innovations needed for sustainable development.

The new Global partnership for sustainable development needs to have a strong accountability mechanism, or mechanisms. Measuring of results, transparency, good governance and democratic decision-making at all levels should underlie the global partnership.

On the third day of the session the participants addressed the issue of needs of countries in special situations, including LDC, LLDCs, SIDS, Africa and middle-income countries. It was stated that, even though these countries face very unique challenges, at the same time similar issues such as putting sustainable development at the core of future development and leaving no one behind are faced by all. It is clear that, since the majority of Earth's population, and also the poor, reside in these countries which will also be the engines of future development, the SDGs need to take into consideration the needs of these countries in order to be successful. Speakers also highlighted the need to transform ways in which civil society organizations can meaningfully in decision-making so that people are not viewed only as beneficiaries of development but as active agents of their lives. Also the issues of gender equality, women's empowerment and the need for sexual and reproductive health rights were mentioned related to all countries.

Nearly 1 billion people live in LDCs, a number of which are also conflict-ridden, post-conflict and fragile states. Many speakers highlighted that support of the global community needs to concentrate on providing LDCs adequate development financing, technology-transfer and capacity-building and providing eased trade with duty free, quota free markets for LDC products so that the "bottom billion" won't be forgotten.

Despite significant economic growth in the African continent in the recent years, many speakers noted that inequalities remain a large problem in the countries in the region. Several mentioned the challenges related to large-scale "land-grabs" that have not brought decent work for local communities.

Land-locked developing countries, many of which are also LDCs, need to be better included in global markets. LLDCs rely on developing sustainable transport systems and development corridors. Concrete problems in this regard include the lack of harmonized border procedures, and lack of funding for building "soft infrastructure", such as service stations, parking and lodging facilities along transport routes. .

Speakers highlighted that even though climate change poses the biggest threat to the sustainable development of the SIDS, many other challenges remain. Often small in both population and geography, the SIDS countries remain vulnerable to international economic crisis and price fluctuations. Sexual and gender-based violence rates remain high and must be tackled.

It was noted that the middle-income countries should continue receiving adequate support in order to avoid the so-called middle-income trap. The majority of the world's poor live in MICs and reforms of their health, education and social security systems are needed if poverty is to be eradicated.

On the fourth day of the session on the issue of human rights and the right to development, the speakers noted that even though human rights are still a contested area in the SDG discussions, most Member States and stakeholders do agree that there is a place for them in the framework. Several speakers noted that a rights-based approach must be the starting point, especially if the "no one left behind" principle will be honoured. MDGs have not addressed inequalities in an adequate manner which hinders poor citizens' right to development. SDGs should help the transformation from economic growth-centred development to people-centred development.

Speakers stated that human rights are not hierarchical but they are interdependent and reinforce each other, and SDGs should provide rights such as access to food, water, sanitation, education, decent jobs and health care, especially sexual and reproductive health. At the same time the SDGs should promote "beyond GDP" thinking and measuring of quality of life, for example health targets should move from absence of disease to mental and physical wellbeing.

The issue of indigenous peoples' rights was raised by many, and speakers highlighted the need to question what kind of development the SDGs are supposed to foster. The rights of future generations need to be secured also so that the following generations can decide themselves their development pathways.

The need to include the rights of several marginalized groups, children and youth was raised by many and concrete goals and targets were proposed on gender equality, elimination of gender-based violence, end of early and forced marriages, end of female genital mutilation, women's access to land and land-tenure rights and women's meaningful participation in decision-making, including in the areas of peace and security.

On the issue of Global Governance, the speakers noted that globalization and growing interconnectedness and interdependency make functioning global governance even more important for achieving sustainable development. Modern spillover effects do not follow national borders, and climate change, dangerous chemicals and human-rights violations by multinational companies were mentioned in this regard. All three dimensions, and culture as the fourth, of sustainable development should be integrated in global governance structures.

Speakers highlighted that human rights and good governance at local, regional and global level are interlinked and support each other. Global governance structures should be aligned with human rights, and access to information, transparency, access to justice, accountability and inclusiveness in meaningful decision-making were raised as key issues for good governance.

Accountability is the cornerstone for implementation of the SDGs. Countries' accountability to each other, to their citizens but also accountability of other actors, international organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, must be secured. Timely, accurate and disaggregated data is a prerequisite for citizens' participation and accountability.

Many speakers called for reforms of international organizations, especially international financing and trade institutions, in order to allow fairer representation. Capacity-building and support for meaningful participation in these institutions were requested especially for LDCs and SIDS. Participation rights of citizens and civil society, especially women's and girls' groups, marginalized and vulnerable groups and indigenous peoples' groups, on all levels of governance were also highlighted.

Several speakers noted that the Declaration on the Right to Development has not been implemented and stated that countries should honour their shared responsibilities and the duty to cooperate with each other in eliminating obstacles to development.

Corporate accountability and transparency were raised as important issue for both good governance and human rights, and speakers called for the establishment of a global reporting mechanism for multinational companies.