Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development
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15th Meeting of the National Focal Points for Policy Coherence
CC18, OECD Headquarters, Paris, 14 November 2018

MEETING SUMMARY

Welcome and introductory remarks

Ebba Dohlman, Head of the OECD's Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD Unit), opened the meeting by welcoming all participants to the 15th Meeting of National Focal Points for Policy Coherence. The informal meeting takes place twice annually and alternates between meetings open to government officials only and those open to wider stakeholders. This meeting was open to all interested stakeholders. She highlighted the urgency to implement the 2030 Agenda and the various ways that the OECD, the Directorate for Public Governance, and the PCSD Unit can support countries in this endeavour. Drawing on resources and expertise across the Organisation, the PCSD approach helps to connect the dots across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and to identify tools to promote policy coherence and effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Marcos Bonturi, *Director of the OECD Public Governance Directorate OECD*, welcomed the integration of the PCSD Unit in the Public Governance Directorate (GOV) in July 2018. He stressed the importance of PCSD for effective SDG implementation, and underlined synergies with GOV's work related to e.g. (i) the Centres of Government and their coordination and convening role in relation with and between line ministries; (ii) the importance of tools such as budgeting and regulatory impact assessments; (iii) efforts to promote integrity of the civil service and fight against corruption; and (iv) strategic thinking about the main challenges governments face in SDG implementation.

Session 1. Building capacities for enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development

Enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development has been identified as one of the most difficult challenges in SDG implementation, according to the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) presented to the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) thus far. This session responds to the growing demand for peer-learning opportunities, innovative PCSD tools and guidance on policy coherence tailored to diverse national contexts. The presentations and discussion will inform the development of the online training and toolkit on PCSD, which currently being developed in collaboration with Focal Points and the PCSD Partnership. The secretariat expressed thanks to Luxembourg for the voluntary contribution that is being provided to take this project forward in the coming biennium

Marguy Kohnen of the *Ministry for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure of Luxembourg* kicked-off the sharing of country experiences in applying tools for SDG implementation with her presentation on how Luxembourg's government structure and revised draft strategy for sustainable development can tackle policy challenges identified in the country's 2017 mapping report and VNR. To identify common priorities and actions, the government collaborates with partners from civil society and the private sector in the framework of a co-working process. Luxembourg strives to broaden its tools and mechanisms for PCSD by (i) creating an Agenda 2030 platform to improve top-

down and bottom-up communication; (ii) evaluating impacts on sustainable development of legislative proposals; (iii) mapping SDG-related initiatives at the local level; (iv) identifying and adapting indicators for measuring progress on sustainable development; (v) raising awareness of the 2030 Agenda; (vi) ensuring that public finances contribute to SDG implementation; and (vii) by supporting research and scientific tools for sustainable development.

Inge Herman Rydland of the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway* described the 2030 Agenda as a road map for humanity and policy coherence. He stressed that a cross-sectoral PCSD approach will be critical for achieving the SDGs. In the past, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has issued annual, relatively non-critical reports on policy coherence with limited impact on domestic policies. To address this, Norway is now seeking to carry out a national policy coherence reform led by a newly established Policy Coherence Forum comprised of representatives of the government, the private sector, NGOs and Academia. The Forum is set to propose changes to the Norwegian structure to better implement the SDGs, as opposed to 'shoehorning' the SDGs to fit into existing national structures unable to deliver coherent policies.

Mikael Långström of the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland* presented the Finnish Government's approach to SDG implementation, following the framework of the eight PCSD Building Blocks identified by the OECD. All Agenda 2030 efforts are led by the Finnish Prime Minister to ensure *Political Commitment* at the highest level. Government Implementation plans, requirements to include the principles and objectives of sustainable development in future projects and foresight planning, as well as SDG-budgeting form the basis for achieving *Policy Integration*. Finland's 25 year-old Multi-stakeholder National Commission has been able to embed policies in an *Intergenerational Timeframe* that goes beyond election cycles. To foster *Policy Coordination*, the National 2030 Agenda Coordination Secretariat was moved from the Ministry of Environment to the Prime Minister's Office, enabling better coordination between all government ministries. *Stakeholder Participation* through the Multi-stakeholder Commission is broad, and a Society's Commitment to Sustainable Development ensures the active engagement of civil society. To improve *Monitoring & Evaluation,* Finland has updated its indicators and developed an interactive online follow-up mechanism to enable discussions on gaps and future developments. Challenges persist in terms of *Policy Effects* and *Local Involvement* due to a lack of data and improvable collaboration with municipalities. An external independent evaluation of Finland's implementation efforts was launched to identify gaps and suggest improvements. Its results will be published in February 2019.

Ileana Luminita Balalau of the *Department of Sustainable Development of Romania* presented Romania's efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. In 2017, the Government established a Department of Sustainable Development within the Prime Minister's Office that coordinates the revision process and adaptation of Romania's Sustainable Development Strategy to the SDGs. This will require a new institutional framework, including an Interdepartmental Committee headed by the Prime Minister, a Sustainable Development Network of trained experts, and a Consultative Council for broad stakeholder participation. The Government is currently developing an action plan, a communication plan, new indicators, capacity building and standardised administrative interaction procedures for the generation and use of sustainable development data. The first progress report is expected to be presented in 2021.

Nina Weitz of the *Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)* opened the panel of PCSD Partners with her presentation on the need for a more systemic view to SDG implementation. The SEI's work in this area seeks to support governments with limited resources to (i) identify priorities based on an understanding of the dynamics between the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda; (ii) guide cross-sectoral collaboration by clarifying shared interests and dependencies; (iii) increase transparency and ownership by building a common language; (iv) enabling policy-relevant contextual assessments; and (v) advancing network theory. The SEI classifies policy interlinkages according to a seven-point scale ranging from 'cancelling' SDG targets to 'indivisible' SDG targets, and has identified target clusters to provide input on ripple effects to support better inter-ministerial and inter-sectoral co-operation. The tools are presented on the SEI Website.

Niels Keijzer of the **German Development Institute (DIE)** held a [presentation](#) on the [NDC-SDG Connections website](#), a joint endeavour between the DIE and the Stockholm Environment Institute. The website is based on a detailed database constructed to link actions of countries' National Determined Contributions (NDCs) for the Paris Agreement to their contributions to furthering the Sustainable Development Goals. Among other possibilities, the website allows for various forms of visualisations that help the user to compare actions across country groupings and regions, as well as explore potential synergies and trade-offs within the various NDCs.

Apollonia Miola of the **Joint Research Centre of the European Commission** gave a [presentation](#) on interactions between scientific work and policy activities, as well as the JRC's project to mainstream SDGs into EU policies, identify interlinkages and break down policy silos. The Centre analysed 1789 EU policy actions to identify SDG-related policy nodes and extract key words for the classification of more documents. Based on the results, the JRC developed an algorithm to extract information from all policy actions and is building a common database for interactions between the targets of the 2030 Agenda and policy actions. The stocktaking exercise, along with the internal Community of Practice on SDGs, was crucial to increase awareness and foster co-operation between different departments of the European Commission. The next step is to develop an SDG impact assessment and key indicators for new policies. SDG-related information on EU policy is available through the [EU Portal on the Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Ondřej Horký-Hlucháň of the **Institute of International Relations in Prague (IIR)** argued in his [presentation](#) that the complex nature of PCSD could lead to a similar lack of conceptual clarity and results, as observed by academic literature for policy coherence for development (PCD). PCSD adds several dimensions to the traditional PCD approach: (i) implementation at the domestic level; (ii) a common approach for countries from the global North and South; (iii) consideration of the three dimensions of sustainable development; (iv) a long-term perspective; (v) an array of new actors involved in policy making and shaping; as well as (vi) a greater emphasis on vertical coherence between the local, regional, national and global level. He emphasised several dilemmas for PCSD, which can be classified along processes on the one hand and results on the other. For example, while a successful policy coherence approach needs to be sensitive to local and national administrative culture, this very sensitivity hampers replicability to other countries. In a similar vein, a win-win approach meets less institutional resistance than a do-no-harm approach (which requires naming-and-shaming), but its potential impacts are likely to be more limited.

Buğra Avci of **Habitat Turkey** [presented](#) the Youth-Friendly Cities Index. Habitat Turkey works on Sustainable Development since 1997. It currently has five programs on governance, information and communication technologies, financial awareness, rural development and entrepreneurship. Mostly working on localisation of the SDGs, capacity building and peer to peer learning the organisation reaches over one million people from youth, children, entrepreneurs, cooperative structures, local CSOs, farmers, people living in disadvantaged areas. The project involves the training of SDG ambassadors and volunteers for organising workshops and conducting surveys at the local level, as well as policy advocacy and the development of policy papers that are presented to mayors.

Joachim Monkelbaan presented the Sustainability Leadership Lab. The project aims to build competencies and skills for coherence at government level across policy, polity and politics. The World Economic Forum identified critical thinking, inspiration for action, collaboration and systems thinking as 21st century skills that are needed to tackle the complex global challenges of this century. To foster the skills the Sustainability Leadership Lab provides training on these skills and tries to induce cultural change in administration to combine substance and experiential action and break down the barriers to transformational action, as called for by the 2030 Agenda.

Carina Lindberg, OECD PCSD Unit, provided an [update](#) on the activities of the Multi-stakeholder Partnership for Enhancing Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development ([‘the PCSD Partnership’](#)). The Partnership, which works to enhance PCSD through knowledge sharing, capacity building and the development of tools, now counts 43 Partners from over 25 countries. They include CSOs,

academia, private sector, and the Government of Sweden. Together they have launched more than 100 initiatives, including several key events during the two most recent HLPFs, analytical tools, country pilots, and inputs to the annual OECD publication Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development.

Session 2. Advancing work to track progress on PCSD

Tracking progress on PCSD requires consideration of at least three inter-related elements of the policy making process: institutional mechanisms, policy interactions, and policy effects. New methodologies and indicators are needed to assess the extent to which institutional arrangements are facilitating improvements in policy coherence; illustrate for policy-makers and stakeholders the linkages and trade-offs between economic, social and environmental values; assess long- term implications of current decisions and behaviours; and take into account the economic, environmental and social externalities imposed beyond national borders. Building on the discussions at the last Focal Points meeting in May, the objective of this session was to advance methodological work in these areas further.

Michal Shinwell, OECD Statistics and Data Directorate, presented an update of ongoing work to measure transboundary effects within the SDGs, which builds on the OECD Statistics and Data Directorate's *Study on Measuring Distance to SDG Targets*. While transboundary effects can be considered as any impact (intended or not) by a country on any other country, the scope has been limited to consider for each SDG target whether country A's actions to achieve an SDG target impact directly on other countries or on a global good. This approach identified over half of the 169 targets as having transboundary aspects, but that there is limited data coverage of them (less than one third). Each identified target is then cross-checked against the UN Global List of indicators or the OECD Measuring Distance Study to see if any indicator captures this impact. A working paper presenting this analysis and considering an expanded approach for measurement will be published by the end of this year.

Ernesto Soria Morales, OECD PCSD Unit, presented a proposal for developing process indicators for PCSD institutional mechanisms, as a follow-up to the 2018 Survey. The purpose of this work stream is three-fold. It aims to (i) provide a basis for countries to self-assess and monitor progress in achieving SDG target 17.14 at the national level; (ii) provide input for the methodology being developed by UN Environment for the global indicator on SDG target 17.14; and (iii) inform the work for updating the 2010 Recommendation of the Council on PCD. The voluntary nature of this exercise was also underlined.

The eight building blocks are already in place in many countries. One important observation from the Survey conducted is that there are different levels of implementation in countries in terms of commitment, policy integration, coordination, regional and local involvement, stakeholder engagement, and monitoring and reporting across countries. This is why, for each building block, we are proposing two indicators: one to capture the existence of the building block in question and the conditions in place (who does what?), i.e. the 'baseline'; and one to assess the level of implementation (how the building block should operate for enhancing coherence?). The indicators, which might be used as a self-assessment tool, could help countries to identify institutional gaps, as well as to collect information on good institutional practices and examples of concrete measures applied to enhance policy coherence. A traffic light baseline (scale), similar to the one established for the OECD water governance indicators, could be used to visualise progress. It is proposed to further develop these indicators through dedicated sessions in subsequent national focal points meetings, and in close consultation with key stakeholders. The next step would be to undertake country pilots to test the indicators.

Mr. Soria's presentation was followed by interventions from countries on their experiences in tracking progress on PCSD.

Martine Rutten of the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Netherlands* confirmed the difficulty in assessing progress on PCSD and noted that The Netherlands is taking a results-oriented approach to this end. Three key tools are supporting these efforts: (i) The National Action Plan, together with annual reporting, (ii) the SDG Assessment tool, which is being aligned with SDGs through quality requirements and guidelines on the effects on developing countries, and scheduled to be published in late 2018 or early 2019; and (iii) the Statistics Office Monitoring Report, which looks at broader well-being impacts "here and now", "elsewhere" and "later".

Eva del Hoyo Barbolla of the *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain* outlined three phases in Spain's approach to policy coherence: (i) during 1990-2015, a Focal Points network was established and ownership of the PCD agenda was strengthened in all ministries, together with a legal mandate on PCD; (ii) Spanish development co-operation and external action started moving from PCD to PCSD and an Action Plan on the 2030 Agenda was presented; and (iii) since June 2018, a number of steps have been taken to improve policy coordination, including the creation of a High Commissioner and special office for the 2030 Agenda, the establishment of a Sustainable Development Council as a consultation body, and the development of an online platform to share information, promote multidirectional communication and mobilise all stakeholders and citizens in SDG implementation. She also noted Spain's application of the Eight PCSD Building Blocks and encouraged countries not to forget about the 'international dimension' of SDG implementation (e.g. work on global public goods and multilateral co-operation).

Javier Perez of *Centro de Investigación y Estudios sobre Coherencia y Desarrollo (CIECODE)* presented Parlamento2030, which is a tool designed to assist governments, parliaments, CSOs and other stakeholders to address the challenges posed by the cross-cutting nature of the SDGs. He highlighted the main added-value of this tool, it: (i) builds a database covering thousands of documents published by National Parliaments (draft legislations, amendments, debates, etc.); (ii) labels automatically each political initiative with related SDGs and targets through a process of 'massive tagging'; and (iii) offers all the information through an open, user-friendly and free-access online search engine. Parlamento2030 then maps the interactions of laws with SDGs and targets; detects unforeseen connections and uncoordinated political choices; and then generates a set of automatic metrics and visualisations to answer difficult questions related to the SDGs and parliaments. The tool is easily adapted and available to other countries.

Caitlin McKee of the *Center for Global Development* gave a presentation about the Commitment to Development Index (CDI), which aims to track and compare developed countries' policy effort to improve policies in seven areas that matter for development: aid, finance, technology, environment, trade, security, and migration. She noted that the Index should be taken seriously but not literally, and that country rankings and scoring are useful for attracting public attention. Country briefings are prepared on demand. As a tool, the CDI is widely used to brief politicians and ministries, to track performance against other countries, and to identify areas for (politically feasible) progress. The CDI, which has been published for 15 years, will now undergo a two-year fundamental review on value and content, including on issues how to include large emerging economies.

Session 3. Towards a methodology for measuring SDG 17.14.1

SDG target 17.14 calls on all countries to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development. Progress on this target at the global level will be assessed against TIER III indicator 17.14.1 "Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development". UN Environment, the custodian agency for indicator 17.14.1, is currently leading an international Expert Group to develop a methodology for monitoring progress on SDG 17.14.1. Building on the discussions at the last Focal Points meeting and progress made to date on the methodology, this session provided an opportunity to consider how the OECD and its Members' experiences with SDG 17.14 can best inform and support the work underway by UN Environment.

Lowri Angharad Rees of UN Environment gave an [update](#) of their work to develop a methodology for the global SDG indicator 17.14.1 "Number of countries with mechanisms in place to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development". Specifically, the proposed approach for the methodology is not restricted to policy coherence in the implementation of Agenda 2030, but intended to cover policy coherence in policy, planning and regulation for sustainable development more broadly. A composite indicator framework covering the different types of policy coherence mechanisms is foreseen and will be complemented by a guidance document with detailed information on each mechanism, including a description and examples from member states of how the mechanism has been established and implemented. The methodology will allow governments to identify which policy coherence mechanisms they already have in place, and explore which additional mechanisms might be useful to establish.

The current proposal consists of 10 mechanisms for PCSD, but this may change following discussion with the Expert Group: (i) institutionalised political commitment; (ii) long-term considerations underpinning decision-making on sustainable development; (iii) inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral coordination; (iv) participatory processes (Major Groups and Stakeholders); (v) integration of international standards and priorities; (vi) integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development and assessment of policy effects and cross-sectoral linkages; (vii) consultation and coordination at various government levels (including alignment of policy processes and cycles); (viii) monitoring and evaluation for policy coherence; (ix) harmonised information and reporting; and (x) adequate financial resources and financing tools. Ms. Angharad Rees invited feedback on the overall indicator framework, and also welcomed future collaboration on capacity development and peer-to-peer learning.

Session 4. Updating the 2010 Council Recommendation on PCD

It was agreed to update the 2010 Recommendation of the Council on Promoting Good Institutional Practices for Policy Coherence for Development [C(2010)41] in light of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the context of the OECD-wide standard setting review [DCD/DAC(2017)8/FINAL]. The purpose of this session was to discuss the scope and content of the draft [concept note](#) for the update, which builds on the experience and lessons learned from OECD countries over the past 10 years in promoting PCD.

Ernesto Soria Morales [presented](#) the rationale, context and objectives of an updated Recommendation. Specifically, the Recommendation needs to reflect ambitious new agreements at the international level, notably the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The objectives of an updated Recommendation are to provide guidance and strengthen capacity of governments at all levels to design, implement and monitor coherent policies in pursuing the SDGs at home and abroad, in line with SDG target 17.14. It would focus on institutional mechanisms, building on the Eight Building Blocks for PCSD, as well as on other OECD work related to e.g. development co-operation, green growth, public governance, and territorial and urban development.

A revised Recommendation is expected to support Adherents in their efforts to make the necessary institutional and policy transformations, ensure greater impacts on sustainable development, and accelerate progress on the SDGs. In particular, the Recommendation needs to respond to the growing demand by Members and Partners to deal with the "how" of SDG implementation.

Focal points welcomed the draft and the focus on the eight building blocks, and suggested to clarify and strengthen recommendations on (i) transboundary impacts, particularly on developing countries; (ii) allocation of responsibilities for PCSD in capitals; (iii) implications for the DAC Peer Reviews; (iv) need for effective and efficient policy making; (v) use of strategic foresight; (vi) local – national alignment of policies; and (vii) application to the OECD. It was also suggested that the next version should be discussed in a face-to-face format while remaining realistic on what could be achieved.

Session 5. Dialogue on other SDG related initiatives

Sigita Strumskyte, ***OECD Public Governance Directorate***, informed about the [Global Hub on the Governance of the SDGs](#) that the OECD is developing in partnership with the UN System and national governments, and which is to be launched at the 2019 HLPF. The Hub will bring together expertise and mobilise much-needed support to countries for putting the SDGs into practice by strengthening public governance practices for effective SDG implementation. It will be based on a number of key governance pillars, including:

- Institutional coordination mechanisms and the promotion of *policy coherence*.
- Integrating the SDGs into the *budget process* and aligning resources in support of SDG goals.
- Designing and implementing effective *regulatory frameworks* to support SDG goals.
- Building inclusive policies that promote gender equality.
- Enabling a culture of integrity and *fighting corruption*.
- Fostering *open government*, including open data.
- Strengthening people-focused justice delivery to ensure *equal access to justice* for all.

The Global Hub will facilitate targeted support for countries worldwide in these critical governance areas. The support will be tailored to national priorities and circumstances, and engage public authorities and other key stakeholders directly in a dialogue to build capacity for the effective use of governance tools.