2016 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

Ensuring no one is left behind: The importance of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

SIDE EVENT REPORT

The governments of Sweden and Mexico, OECD and WRI in collaboration with a coalition of think-tanks co-hosted a side event on "*Ensuring no one is left behind: The importance of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development*" on 19 July 2016 in the context of the 2016 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). The event convened a high-level panel of government representatives from a range of countries, including the co-hosts, senior experts from think-tanks, and civil society representatives. The purpose was to share experiences on how to align national strategies, adapt institutional frameworks, shift policies and involve stakeholders for implementing the universal, integrated and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Key messages

- The 2030 Agenda provides a shared vision and direction for domestic and international policies in all areas. Implementing the SDGs requires whole-of-government approaches and whole-of-society engagement. The private sector has key role to play for transitioning towards more sustainable societies.

- The universal nature of the agenda calls for rethinking conventional approaches to policy coherence for development. New ways of working and approaches to policy-making are needed to ensure an active engagement of key stakeholders – including at the national, subnational and local levels – for developing, implementing and monitoring national strategies and plans for SDGs.

- Policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD) is fundamental to understand the extent to which policies and actions to achieve one goal or target can reinforce or undermine the achievement of another one – whether considered in an integrated manner they advance well-being not just here and now but for those living elsewhere and for future generations.

- A holistic policy coherence approach is critical for addressing the multiple dimensions of inequality - reaching people who are excluded from economic opportunities, social protection and access to natural resources. A central focus on the poorest and most marginalized is needed if the commitment to "leave no one behind" is to be met.

The event was opened by Marcos Bonturi, OECD Director of the Global Relations Secretariat. Ardalan Shekarabi, Minister for Public Administration, Ministry of Finance, Sweden, provided introductory remarks. Panellists and discussants included: Luis René Martínez, Chair of the Specialized Technical Committee for SDGs implementation at the Office of the President, Mexico; Festus Mwangi Kiunjuri, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Devolution and Planning of Kenya; Cristina Diez Saguillo, Head of ATD Fourth World New York Office; Måns Nilsson, Research Director of the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI); James Mackie, Senior Adviser European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), and Christine Hackenesch, Senior Researcher, German Development Institute (DIE). Ebba Dohlman, Head of the OECD PCD Unit, provided concluding remarks. The event was moderated by David O'Connor, Sustainable Economist, WRI.

Mr. David O'Connor (WRI) (moderator) provided an overview of the rationale and context for the side event. He underscored that the universal, integrated and transformative nature of the 2030 Agenda calls for rethinking the concept of policy coherence. He underlined that the principle of universality encompasses both shared humanity, by providing benefits for all, and shared destiny, by highlighting the interconnections between all countries and people. He noted that the purpose of the event was to broaden the conversation beyond the conventional approach of policy coherence for development (PCD) applied by developed countries in the context of development cooperation. He summarized key findings from several OECD countries – based on [case studies](#) prepared by cooperating think tanks – on early experience with SDG implementation.

In his opening remarks, ***Mr. Bonturi (OECD)*** highlighted OECD's role in supporting governments in designing, implementing and monitoring coherent policies for sustainable development. He underscored that in June OECD Ministers agreed on an OECD Action Plan to leverage existing OECD data, analytical and policy tools, as well as dialogue platforms to support members and partners in implementing the SDGs. He emphasised that while ODA continues to be of critical importance, especially for the most fragile states and least developed countries, the achievement of SDGs requires scaling up development finance from billions to trillions. Critical efforts are needed to create the global enabling conditions that allow countries to mobilise all available resources – public, private, domestic and international. He underlined that Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) has a key role to play to ensure a fairer and more transparent global tax system, improve investment policy frameworks, ensure responsible business conduct, and promote a transparent, rules-based trading system.

Mr. Bonturi emphasised that a policy coherence lens can highlight the extent to which policies and actions to achieve one goal or target can reinforce or undermine the achievement of another one – domestically, globally, or with implications for future generations. He introduced the OECD report "[Better policies for sustainable development 2016: a new framework for policy coherence](#)", and indicated that the OECD is developing a 'Coherence Monitor' to support national efforts for achieving target 17.14 on "enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development". Finally he announced the launch of the [PCSD Multi-stakeholder Partnership](#) open to all stakeholders, from developed and developing countries, from civil society and private sector.

In his introductory remarks, ***Minister Shekarabi (Sweden),*** underlined that policy coherence is both: important and promising. It is important because it provides the "how" - i.e. a means of implementation for the SDGs. Promising, because it emphasises the need to work together to trigger transformative change. Minister Shekarabi outlined Sweden's actions to ensure a coherent implementation of the SDGs. Sweden has established a multi-stakeholder National Committee to include a broad range of stakeholders in developing a comprehensive action plan, and to make sure that SDGs are implemented at all levels of society. Early involvement of multiple stakeholders, including at the local level, is essential for ensuring much stronger transformations needed at national level. The National Committee will work closely with Swedish municipalities and localities.

Sweden is applying a whole-of-government approach, i.e. all Ministers in Government are responsible for implementation. Minister Shekarabi pointed out that 86 government agencies have been tasked to identify how they can best implement the 2030 Agenda, by reviewing their own work programmes and budgets. The Minister for Public Administration is coordinating the national implementation, and the Minister for International Development Co-operation is coordinating the international implementation. The Policy for Global Development has extended the responsibility for equitable and sustainable development for all policy areas and strengthened the focus on poor people and human rights perspective. He also emphasised the critical role of businesses to foster innovation for a transition towards more sustainable societies. He also underlined that Sweden has been used a PCSD approach to identify interconnections among SDGs involving stakeholders and ensure more coherent decisions in implementation. Finally Minister Shekarabi welcomed the PCSD Partnership initiative and announced Sweden' decision to join it.

Mr. René Martínez Souvervielle (Mexico) welcomed the opportunity to discuss policy coherence as a mechanism for addressing the 2030 Agenda in a comprehensive manner. He noted that policy coherence is fundamental to understand the interconnections among economic, social and environmental challenges. He emphasised that SDG implementation requires ensuring: (i) policies that are people-centred; (ii) governments that are able to ensure services which can effectively improve people's wellbeing; (iii) strategies that cut across sectors, and (iv) resources, i.e. budgetary sufficiency. All these should culminate in efforts that leave no one behind. The experience with the MDGs in Mexico has shown that achieving international development goals effectively requires transcending the federal government. There is a need for building strategies from the local level, and strengthening capacities to close inequality gaps. It is also important to ensure that large, medium and small businesses have a role and responsibility in SDG implementation.

Mexico has established a Specialised Technical Committee to monitor SDG implementation with the support of The National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), and the National Population Council (CONAPO). SDG implementation requires policy dialogue, and for this reason, Mexico will create a high-level commission for SDG implementation headed by the President to mobilise the whole government and include key stakeholders, such as lawmakers, academia and civil society. Mexico will also promote the 2030 Agenda at the local level and ensure that the SDGs become an integral part of the management, programming and accountability models of local governments. Finally, Mr. Martínez Souvervielle underlined that Mexico will integrate SDGs into its development cooperation efforts and align the National Development Program and its budget indicators to them.

Mr. Festus Mwangi Kiunjuri (Kenya) welcomed the opportunity to share the Kenyan experience in improving policy coherence for SDG implementation. He noted that implementing the country's long-term development blueprint (Kenya Vision 2030) has provided policy direction at different levels of government and institutions. The Vision is aligned to the SDGs, and implemented though 6-years plans. Sectoral plans are prepared based on dialogue among diverse stakeholders which provides opportunities for aligning those plans with the vision and SDGs. The UN development assistance framework is fully aligned to Kenya's Vision 2030. The established intergovernmental committee provides an avenue for enhancing policy coherence in the implementation of the SDGs.

Mr. Mwangi Kiunjuri underlined that policy coherence is supported by the national constitution, which provides a mandate to ensure that relevant stakeholders are involved in planning. Kenya has identified 128 indicators for monitoring progress in implementation of the SDGs at the country level, as well as data gaps. The government has initiated data collection through an integrated household budget survey to generate information to address data gaps and monitor progress on the Vision 2030 and SDG implementation. An elaborated roadmap has been developed to implement the agenda including in county level planning and budgeting. Mr. Mwangi Kiunjuri underscored some of the challenges that the country is facing for SDG implementation, such as the need to develop human resource capacity, synchronising governmental action, using public education for raising

awareness and catalysing action towards the SDGs. He emphasised that current institutional setups need to be critically analysed.

Ms. Cristina Diez Saguillo (ATD Fourth World), offered the perspective of a 'grass roots' organisation on policy coherence. She emphasised that the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda is poverty eradication and that the most important 'coherence lens' is to examine the impact on the furthest behind. She underlined that the deliberations on indicators has highlighted the difficulty in translating global aspirations into concrete actions. She also emphasised that policy interactions among international organisations (UN, central banks, the WTO, etc.) are critical, since their agendas have a big impact. This is a challenge for global governance, but there is no institution with the mandate to oversee global policy coherence. She underscored that from the perspective of the poor, policy coherence is about dealing with violations to human rights, and should include looking at countries' compliance with existing human rights frameworks, norms and standards.

Three lead discussants – Måns Nilsson (SEI), James Mackie (ECDPM), and Christine Hackenesch (DIE) – made brief remarks immediately after the panel interventions. ***Måns Nilsson*** underlined that understanding the interactions among SDGs and targets to identify key trade-offs is the first step in enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development. He noted that SEI in collaboration with the International Council for Science (ICSU) has developed a framework for policy-makers that characterise the range of positive and negative interactions that can occur between goals and targets. Interactions will depend on the specific context of each country. He said that the second step would consist in looking at the national agenda and considering whether identified interactions could be shifted from producing negative to positive impacts. ***James Mackie*** commented on the approach of the synthesis paper for the side event in highlighting existing experiences for dealing with sectoral interactions to build coherent approaches. He emphasised that the biggest challenge is of a political nature, since the achievement of SDGs entails making difficult political choices, setting clear priorities, translating them into concrete actions at the national level, and ensuring continuity beyond political cycles. ***Christine Hackenesch*** focused on the need to address difficult political choices, particularly in aligning the domestic and external dimensions of the SDGs. In light of this, she raised a question on the kind of accountability mechanisms that would be needed at the national level in implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Ms. Ebba Dohlman (OECD) closed the meeting by highlighting some of the key messages conveyed by panellists and discussants, such as the need to focus on inclusion, strengthen bottom up approaches, provide greater opportunities for stakeholder involvement, and build capacities to deal with cross-sectoral challenges and policy impacts. She underlined that governments ultimately have to take the leading role in SDG implementation, but should work with the range of stakeholders that can help to inform policy making, and support implementation and monitoring. The PCSD Partnership initiative was designed to facilitate this process. The Partnership will provide a platform to best use the knowledge and expertise of diverse stakeholders and to share good practices on institutional design, methodologies for enhancing policy synergies and mitigating trade-offs, and ways to develop and strengthen monitoring systems for measuring progress on policy coherence.

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For additional information about Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD):

- OECD (2016), *Better Policies for Sustainable Development 2016: A New Framework for Policy Coherence,* OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264256996-en
- PCSD Partnership : https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/partnership/?p=12066