

ECOSOC Partnership Forum
Session 1: What it takes to Build Effective Country-Level Partnership
Platforms
11 April 2019 (11:30am – 1:00pm)
Trusteeship Council Chamber

Panelists:

H.E. Ms. Lois M. Young, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations

Mr. Hongjoo Hahm, Deputy Executive Secretary, UNESCAP

Ms. Josephine Satyono, Executive Director, Indonesia Global Compact Network

Moderator:

Ms. Simona Marinescu, UN Resident Coordinator for Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa & Tokelau

Discussant:

Representative of OCP Group

Objective:

In view of the fact that partnerships are increasingly claiming space in planning processes from global to country level and recognizing the need to support national demands for inclusive alliances in the implementation of the SDGs, Session I will aim to present good examples of country-level multi-stakeholder partnership platforms and identify common enablers for building more inclusive and effective country-level partnership platforms.

Run of the Show:

The President of the ECOSOC will open the Session and give the floor to moderator. The moderator will introduce the speakers and make brief opening remarks. The **panel discussion** (11:30 am to 12 noon) will be followed by **interactive discussion** (12 noon – 1:00 pm), with the priority given to the Member States.

Statement:

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. A very good morning to you all. Let me begin by thanking the organizers for providing me with this opportunity to share some experiences of country-level partnership platforms in Belize, and to also highlight some of the challenges that Small Island Developing States face in establishing and maintaining successful partnerships.
2. For SIDS, which have limited capacity for resource mobilization but face exponential costs to sustain development gains and secure the future of our people, international cooperation and partnerships are paramount. We have as a consequence, leveraged the successive outcomes of the international conferences on SIDS - Barbados, Mauritius and Samoa - to identify the critical and growing areas where we need the support of the international community. However, it was not until Samoa that we established a Partnership Framework specifically geared to monitor and mobilize what was a central call in the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States *for genuine and durable partnerships*".
3. The SIDS Accelerated Modalities for Action (in short, the SAMOA Pathway) makes the case for SIDS specific partnerships. The SIDS Partnership Framework is a first-of-its-kind global partnership framework linked to the achievement of a sustainable development agenda of a particular group of countries. Since its establishment, a Steering Committee was established, a web-based monitoring platform developed, and an assessment conducted. Together with Ireland, Belize

as Co-Chair of that Committee, proposed a set of criteria for SIDS partnerships based on the results of regional dialogues. That criteria was adopted in Apia last year during our Inter-regional Meeting. Currently, we are overseeing the development of a partnership toolbox and will aim to host partnership webinars around central themes of the SAMOA Pathway leading up to the Global Multi-stakeholder SIDS Partnership Dialogue in July.

4. The SIDS agenda model of identifying partnerships as a stand-alone goal is also mirrored in SDG 17 of the 2030 Agenda.
5. The essence of genuine and durable partnerships is matching needs to the necessary and most appropriate means of implementation with a focus on follow through to results, transparency and accountability. By establishing the Partnership Framework, we endeavor to create the platform through which we can match the needs to support and so support optimal results for SIDS.
6. That being said, the SIDS Partnership Framework only functions if those needs are readily identifiable, and if partners can tailor support to those needs. To this end, national development planning processes and frameworks are a useful avenue for assessing national priorities and needs.
7. The long-term development strategy of Belize is captured in Horizon 2030, in tandem with the medium-term Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy (GSDS) promoting a holistic and comprehensive approach to address imminent and prospective national development priorities.

The need for Integrated planning

8. Today, I will speak to the rationale for the approach taken in the development of the GSDS, its implementation and monitoring framework, which can be a useful tool for guiding partnerships. In late 2013, Belize volunteered to act as a “pilot country” within the UN system, to help demonstrate how national development planning could work in harmony with the emerging “Post-2015 Development Agenda”.
9. The GSDS, while focused principally on the development vision for Belize as articulated in Horizon 2030, has intrinsic links to the 2030 Agenda and the SAMOA Pathway, and are accounted for through appropriate alignment. Our GSDS recognizes what all SIDS recognise, sustainable development entails poverty eradication; promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production; and, protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development.
10. The GSDS adopts an integrated, systemic approach based on these principles of sustainable development, and the drivers that are common to successful developing countries, namely: a proactive role for the state, tapping into global markets, sustained use and the robust management of natural and environmental resources, and innovative social policy. The GSDS was designed in consultation with all government ministries, and was built from the bottom-up, ensuring that the sectorally different priorities were reflected in the framework, and gave each ministry a stake in its success. Implementation also became the responsibility of

each Ministry. It outlines four critical success factors and subsidiary goals that also provide an organizing framework for the underlying objectives and actions.

11. Thus, it strives to bring economic, social, and environmental policies into synergistic balance, so that policies work well together to produce optimal outcomes.

12. The result is that the GSDS supports the country in coping with resource constraints; and helps to increase its resilience in the face of a volatile global economy and a changing global climate.

13. [Weak institutional mechanisms for implementation of national plans and for effective development planning in general, is often a major inhibiting factor to the achievement of better development results. There is a need for better integrated planning across many countries. National plans often require actions and initiatives across different ministries or agencies in pursuit of common, high-level goals whose achievement requires cross-functional collaboration.]

Monitoring and Review

14. Also, as the needs and priorities may evolve over time, the GSDS takes into account the need to monitor, review and adapt initiatives to ensure that they are still relevant, and effective. A comprehensive list of indicators were developed for monitoring outcomes, and the ongoing activities and processes are revised and amended as needed in order to reflect ongoing challenges and ensure consistency with international processes.

15. The institutional mechanism for the monitoring and review by the GSDS was designed through a two-tier approach. Technical officers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of their individual sector targets and indicators, while the Chief Executive Officers monitor the achievement of goals and alignment with the budgetary process. Routine meetings promote cross sector integration and holistic accountability.

Relevance of GSDS to Partnerships

16. In this context, it is clear that if utilized properly, the GSDS would be instrumental for generating pragmatic partnerships, especially where public resources may be inadequate to cater to the development priorities in the medium, and long-term.

17. A key characteristic of successful partnerships is the mutual alignment of priorities in the formulation and operationalization of the initiative, ensuring that the deliverables cater accurately and adequately to the needs and requirements of stakeholders. The GSDS is a blueprint which provides guidance where new partnerships could be established in alignment with the national development priorities of Belize.

18. To this end, GSDS also factors in the evolution of needs through a framework for systemic monitoring and review, providing direction on how existing partnerships can synonymously adapt to continue to deliver efficiently.

19. Nevertheless, one of the biggest challenges that SIDS currently face is the monitoring and reviewing of these existing partnerships. For voluntary initiatives

which do not emerge from a formal public-private enterprise, institutional arrangements are not normally in place to facilitate this.

20. The SIDS Partnership Framework is currently undertaking efforts to establish an online system to determine globally which SIDS related partnerships are active, and also to monitor the progress being made in the active ones. The establishment of national or regional mechanisms for monitoring partnerships and reporting, could greatly facilitate these endeavors, and provide a more accurate picture of the gaps and shortfalls.

21. The most ideal partnerships should also be formulated in a manner which delivers durable and sustainable results. While the mantra of the 2030 Agenda is leaving no one behind, SIDS still have a long way to go in terms of acquiring the necessary means of implementation and overcoming systemic issues in furthering our development priorities.

22. This has become even more evident as we prepare for the Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway this year. While the international community has supported SIDS through specific projects or initiatives, these have been relatively small strides in a long journey ahead. Recognizing that the development agenda that we have is quite extensive, our aim in this review is to identify priority areas, where we can advance more durable and sustainable partnerships.

23. Through the ongoing activities under the SIDS Partnership Framework, we also hope to identify the gaps where further partnerships are required, and utilize platforms such as this one, to highlight where there is further scope for collaboration, across the entire development Agenda.

24.To facilitate successful partnerships, the “SMART” criteria was developed, meaning that genuine and durable partnerships should be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-based and Time-based. This criteria has been endorsed by all SIDS at the interregional preparatory meeting for the High-Level Midterm Review of the SAMOA Pathway, which was held in Samoa last year, and this sets out the benchmarks for the partnerships designed to support SIDS.

25.It is evident that success in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the SAMOA Pathway is contingent on collective actions and collaborative partnerships from countries, and all stakeholders. The nature and scope of partnerships have significantly evolved over the years, providing a trove of valuable lessons for forging more ambitious and innovative partnerships, particularly in areas which remain to be explored.

Questions:

What constitutes effective multi-stakeholder partnership platforms at country level? How can such platforms facilitate and harness the contributions of different stakeholders to enhance mutual accountability and synergy?

-Effective multi-stakeholder partnership platforms would help identify and align national interests and development priorities with the potential opportunities for collaboration from the private sector both at a national and international level.

-Therefore it should be linked not only to country level networks, but also regional and global networks which would provide broader prospects for partnerships, which cater to the specific priorities.

-It should help provide an evaluation of what partnerships worked, where the challenges lie, and provide guidance on how future partnerships can be strengthened and be more sustainable.

-It should also help identify where there are deficiencies in partnerships, and enable stakeholders to explore new and innovative ways to collaborate and address these gaps.

-In order to achieve this, the platform must have a mechanism for periodic monitoring and review, which not only assesses the operational aspects of the partnerships, but also takes into account the evolving needs of the country. This would entail regular consultations with relevant stakeholders at all levels as well.

What are some ways to meaningfully link the learning mechanisms of partnerships at country, regional, inter-regional and global levels to facilitate more coherent knowledge-sharing and management? Global South Solution Database

-As mentioned before, each country has specific needs, and there are also specific challenges in successfully implementing partnerships at the country level. However drawing from experiences and best practices there is a potential to provide direction in enhancing and improving partnerships generally.

-In addition to having broader networks and global platforms for sharing this information, it is also important to ensure that these forums are easily accessible, and there is sufficient awareness about how these knowledge-sharing platforms can contribute.

-Online information sharing which enables access to information on specific areas of partnerships, coupled with awareness raising in the private sector regarding the mutual benefits of partnerships for SDGs is one way to address this.

-The framing of partnerships should not exclusively from a development point of view, but also a business point of view, as it has been demonstrated in practice that these partnerships can indeed be profitable if delivered efficiently.