

Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development 2017

Agenda item 2(b) Regional perspectives on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: an assessment of the progress in implementation of SDGs at regional level

In-depth review of the cluster of goals

Wednesday 29 March 2017, 13:15 to 18:30 hrs

United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok

The APFSD will take a close look at the cluster of sustainable development goals that will be the focus of the 2017 session of the APFSD. In line with the GA resolution on follow up and review (A/70/299), the set of goals and their interlinkages, including if appropriate, with other goals shall be reviewed in-depth. For 2017 the goals to be reviewed in-depth are: **Goal 1.** End poverty in all its forms everywhere; **Goal 2.** End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture; **Goal 3.** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages; **Goal 5.** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls; **Goal 9.** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; **Goal 14.** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and; **Goal 17.** Partnership for the goals (Means of implementation).

The APFSD will provide recommendations on six of these goals (Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 14) through **six parallel roundtables**, convened in break out rooms from 13:15 to 15:30 pm. After a brief break, the conclusions of each roundtable will then be shared in the plenary of the APFSD in Conference room 2, from 17:00 to 18:30.

The objective of the session will be to develop a shared understanding of the outlook for the achievement of the goal and to develop recommendations on (a) addressing **systemic challenges** that are barriers to further progress (b) priorities for strengthening **policy coherence** in implementation efforts – including through attention to key leverage points; (c) promising **innovations** (policy, social, institutional, technological or other) at the national level; (d) areas for **regional cooperation** to address the transboundary dimensions of these goals and challenges.

Roundtable 1 - SDG 1: No Poverty

The Asia-Pacific region has seen a spectacular fall in poverty rates over the past two decades. Yet more than 931 million people remain impoverished across the region when considering multidimensional poverty. Deprivations in health and living standards are among the most striking challenges, and women remain more vulnerable to multidimensional poverty due to obstacles that they encounter when seeking decent jobs, credit, health care and education. The round table on Goal 1 will focus attention on two main questions:

- What are the challenges are member States encountering in terms of policy coherence to reach Goal 1 and how can these be overcome?
- What are the most important systemic challenges (e.g. that countries need to address to achieve Goal 1, and how should they be addressed)?

Roundtable 2 – SDG 2: Zero Hunger and Sustainable Agriculture

There is a challenging road ahead to achieve SDG 2. Despite significant progress in the reduction of hunger and malnutrition, improvements vary across sub regions and countries and disproportionately affect the nutritional status, food security and livelihoods of vulnerable groups. In many places, undernourishment and obesity co-exist; and agriculture continues to pose an unsustainable burden on the planet’s carrying capacity. Climate change will have a significant impact on crop yields and harvest, disproportionately affecting the nutritional status and livelihoods of impoverished households.

The round table on SDG 2 will share the outlook of the SDG 2 and come up with recommendations to achieve cluster of targets: 1) targets on food security and malnutrition, 2) targets on agricultural productivity and sustainable food production systems, and 3) targets on means of implementation for SDG 2 including trade, investment and food commodity markets. Recommendations will focus on the following 4 facets: 1) overcoming systemic challenges, 2) policy coherence, 3) regional cooperation, and 4) innovation.

Roundtable 3 – SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

The Asia-Pacific region has made significant strides in expanding access to health services and universal health care coverage. In some countries, rates of maternal and child mortality are persistently high, and such diseases as HIV and tuberculosis continue to disproportionately impact marginalized groups of people. Access to affordable quality health care and medicines is constrained and unequal in many countries. The region also faces increasing incidence of non-communicable diseases, accompanied by population ageing, cross-border epidemics, antimicrobial resistance, natural disasters and environmental pollution. These emerging trends are likely to place considerable financial and capacity constraints on health care systems.

At the same time, in many countries, attention will need to be given to the unfinished agenda of ending preventable maternal, new-born and child mortality and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. As countries are implementing the SDGs, a stronger focus on monitoring progress and results towards Goal 3 will be critical to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages by 2030, and to leave no-one behind.

The round table on Goal 3 will focus attention on four main topics: 1) Unfinished MDGs agenda, 2) Emerging priorities, with a focus on NCDs, 3) Universal Health Coverage, 4) Monitoring progress and results.

Roundtable 4 - SDG 5: Gender Equality

The roundtable on SDG 5 aims to review the progress of the implementation and monitoring of SDG 5 targets at the country level in the region in order to; Enable a shared understanding of regional progress and where we stand, including levels of optimism around the achievement of SDG 5; Enable exchange of experiences and south-south cooperation by identifying key challenges, good practices and opportunities for follow-up; and Identify regional multi-stakeholder recommendations on each target under SDG 5.

Roundtable 5 - 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Asian developing countries have outperformed industrialized countries as well as developing countries in other regions in terms of their share of manufacturing employment in total employment. Asian developing countries' manufacturing employment share grew 73% between 1970 and 2013, reaching a 15.7% share in 2010–2013. This progress, however, has been uneven. Gaps are widening in some areas, such as manufacturing value-added (MVA) per capita. MVA per capita in landlocked developing countries and least developed countries increased from \$180 to \$235 and \$28 to \$112, respectively, between 1990 and 2015. In high-income countries of the region, it increased from \$4,890 to \$7,214 over the same period.

At the same time, industrial development has also added to the sustainable development challenges facing the region, in particular as regards pollution, greenhouse gases, and access to clean water.

Simultaneously, millions of people in the region are shut out from transformative digital opportunities due to a lack of broadband connectivity. In 2015, less than 2% of the population had adopted fixed broadband in as many as 20 countries in Asia and the Pacific, widening the digital divide between high-income and low-income countries at an alarming speed. Resilient ICT infrastructure is essential to narrow the digital divide, and thus realize the digital economy and sustainable development in the region.

Concerted efforts are thus needed to keep developing countries, in particular landlocked and least developed countries, from missing out on the New Industrial Revolution. Stronger efforts are also required to move this industrial development towards a more innovative and low carbon pathway. The round table on Goal 9 will focus attention on two main questions:

- What are the challenges are member States encountering in terms of policy coherence to reach Goal 9 and how can these be overcome?
- What are the most important systemic challenges (e.g. that countries need to address to achieve Goal 9, and how should they be addressed?

Roundtable 6 – SDG 14: Life below Water

The oceans and seas of Asia-Pacific are of vast social, economic and environmental importance as the region becomes the global growth engine with heavy reliance on marine and coastal resources. This is more so for the Pacific SIDS where the vast ocean space has greatly influenced their culture in addition to the significant socioeconomic contribution. Humans, however, have put the ocean at risk of irreversible damage by unregulated exploration and coastal development, increasing pollution, climate change and ocean acidification.

To achieve the SDG 14: conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development”, collective efforts are required from all stakeholders at all geopolitical levels and sectors to promote effective ocean governance, adopt ecosystem-based management approaches, apply innovative science and technology, encourage partnerships and support advocacy. In supporting the implementation of SDG 14 at national and regional level, the round table on Goal 14 will focus on:

- Sharing perspectives on the SDG 14 implementation at national, regional and global level;
- Informing APFSD & the High-level Political Forum on priority challenges and recommendations for SDG 14 implementation in the region.