

Joint SDG Fund: Annual Stakeholder Meeting

Date and time: 20 May 2019 | 01:30 – 3:00 pm; **Location:** United Nations, New York

Attendance: United Nations: ILO (chair), UNFPA, WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, DCO, MPTF-O. Development Partners: Sweden, Norway, Spain, The Netherlands, Denmark, EU, Germany, Luxembourg, Jamaica, Bangladesh, Jordan, UK.

Brief Summary:

- As per the Terms of Reference of the Joint SDG Fund, the Annual Stakeholder Meeting is convened by the Operational Steering Committee (OSC) to update all partners on the Joint SDG Fund's focus areas and results. It provides an opportunity for the OSC and Development Partners to discuss operationalization of the fund, including technical details, progress and next steps;
- On 20 May, the OSC briefed participants on progress since the Fund's launch in 2018, specifically the launch of the Fund's first call for concept notes on *Leaving No One Behind* with a focus on Social Protection and efforts to date in the area of strategic financing that will inform the launch of a call for concepts on SDG financing in Q4;
- Development Partners reiterated their support to the Fund, appreciated the transparency provided, including by publishing of all operational guidance and TOR details and the plan to publish information on the entire project cycle of individual projects receiving support on the MPTF-F web site. They also appreciated the launch of the first call for concept notes. They stressed the importance of the *Leave No One Behind* agenda and reiterated the importance of the Fund as a critical part of the reform of the United Nations development system.
- Development Partners also noted the work done to date in the area of strategic financing, as they see it as a crucial piece to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. They welcomed the proposed series of conversations with private sector entities, including those operating in the Global South, to shape the call in Q4. It was also suggested to look into ways of using the Joint Fund to strengthen collaboration with the IFIs, in particular the World Bank. Development Partners requested to be further consulted before the structure and scope of the next call is decided upon.
- In view of the fact that the Annual Stakeholder Meeting is the formal meeting point between the OSC and donors, based on their agreements with the MPTF-O, the meeting will next year be held after the annual reports are available and focus on results.

Detailed Minutes:

- Vinicius Pinheiro (ILO, Chair, on behalf of the Chair of the Operational Steering Committee, Mar Abdoulaye, UNDP) opened the first Annual Stakeholder Meeting of the Joint SDG Fund, welcomed participants and invited them to introduce themselves.
- The Chair stressed the momentum that the Joint SDG Fund has built and the success of the resource mobilization effort. The Chair thanked participants for the support given to the Fund, highlighting that the United Nations Development System is working to ensure that the resources mobilized are translated to real impact on the ground. As articulated in the Fund's Terms of Reference, during the Annual Stakeholder Meeting participants will review progress made by the Fund to date and discuss the Fund's next steps. Under the leadership of the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary-General, the Joint SDG Fund is the "muscle" for a new generation of Resident Coordinators and United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs). The Joint SDG Fund will draw from existing expertise across the United Nations development system and a broad range of partners to take informed risks and strategically invest in SDG acceleration.
- The Chair then invited Jennifer Topping, Executive Director of the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF-O), to provide a funding status update. Jennifer Topping provided an overview of the resources mobilized, transferred and committed to the Fund to date, and presented tools available online for development partners to check the financial progress made by the Fund. Jennifer Topping stressed the transparency of the tools available (i.e. the Fund's TORs, Operational Guidance and annual reports are and will regularly be uploaded on the MPTF-O website).
- The Chair opened the floor for comments. Development partners reiterated the need for the Joint SDG Fund to be fully transparent and asked for more information regarding the criteria for selecting members of the Strategic Advisory Group, in particular donor representation in case of a broadened donor base. They also asked for more information on the composition and tasks of the Private Sector, Foundations and Civil Society reference group. They also asked for clarifications on how the Private Sector will play a role in the Fund, and regarding the expenses already incurred by the Fund.
- Jennifer Topping stressed that the cost structure of the Joint SDG Fund is in line with standard UNDG legal arrangements. The MPTF-O plays the role of Administrative Agent. To date, the Fund incurred direct cost of a total amount of 1,061,409\$ that covers the cost of the Fund's Secretariat. The value is below the 3% maximum size threshold for the Secretariat of a medium sized pooled fund. Richard Bailey (DCO, funding and financing specialist) highlighted that the composition of the Strategic Advisory Group is in line with the Terms of Reference (the eight largest contributors to the Fund, along with seven programme countries). With regard to the reference group, as it has not yet been formed, the OSC will liaise with development partners in the next months to identify and invite members to join the reference group.
- The Chair handed over to Rosemary Kalapurakal (DCO, Head of Policy and Programming branch) to update participants on the progress made in the integrated policy area. Rosemary Kalapurakal

stressed the importance of the Annual Stakeholder Meeting as a platform for development partners to be informed on, and influence, the Fund's next steps. It is key that all development partners approve the direction taken by the Fund. Rosemary Kalapurakal informed participants that the Joint SDG Fund launched its first Call for Concept Notes on 28 March focused on identifying and activating policy accelerators that spark rapid progress across the SDGs and Leave No One Behind through Social Protection. This focus was identified by the OSC, given its centrality to the 2030 Agenda in supporting countries roll out social protection policies that can effectively – and sustainably – address inequality and blockages to social inclusion. Rosemary Kalapurakal highlighted that the first Call seeks to inspire change makers to design transformative programmes that are context-relevant, nationally led, and address complex issues in an integrated way in order to accelerate SDG progress. Concept Notes will be assessed by a team of internal and external experts based on technical criteria explained in the description of the call. UNCTs that have authored successful Concept Notes will be invited to develop their proposal into full joint programmes. The funding envelope for this call is US\$60 million. The maximum amount allotted to each joint programme will be US\$2 million.

- The Chair opened the floor for comments. Participants inquired about the Call's funding envelope and the maximum amount allotted to each joint programme. Development partners also asked about the distribution of received concept notes according to country categories, including fragile context. They further stressed the need for the UN to work collaboratively to achieve results on the ground. Rosemary Kalapurakal highlighted the linkages between the work of the Joint SDG Fund and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, exactly to make sure that the interventions funded through the Fund are in line with Country priorities (the Concept Notes received through this first call are accompanied by endorsement letters of the Government). With regards to the funding envelope, the Fund will support country teams with a maximum of US\$2 million. The Fund is looking to support catalytic interventions that trigger SDG progress. Finally, once the technical review of the concept notes is finalized, the Operational Steering Committee will adopt a portfolio approach that will ensure regional diversity, and diversity of country categories, of the concept notes selected for funding.
- The Chair gave the floor to Richard Bailey, to provide an update on the Joint SDG Fund's work in the area of Strategic Financing. Richard Bailey mentioned that, as per the Fund's TORs, the Joint SDG Fund will perform the following: a) Identify and activate SDG accelerators; b) Reinforce the SDG Finance architecture and ecosystem; c) Catalyze strategic programming and investments. The Joint SDG Fund's aim for the second call, planned for Q4 of this year, is to focus on SDG Financing and Catalytic Investments. The Fund is conscious that there are other important actors and it will build strategic partnerships with IFIs. To help develop the Call, the Fund has articulated a consultative process with the private sector. Andrea Armeni, Founder and Director of Transform Finance, a not for profit working in the impact investing space, took the floor and summarized the outcomes of the consultative process to date, highlighting the role of the role of the UN and particularly the Joint SDG Fund in increasing SDG aligned investments. Development Partners noted the proposed approach and asked the Joint SDG Fund to be consulted before the content of the call that will be launched in Q4 will be decided. It was underscored that UN has to act on its comparative advantage. It was suggested

to look into possibilities of using the Joint Fund to partner with the World Bank, as a follow up of the high level MoU signed between the UN and the World Bank.

- The Chair gave the floor to Lisa Kurbiel (Head of the Joint SDG Fund Secretariat) that informed participants about the Fund's vision going forward, and next steps in terms of events/meetings the Fund will organize until the end of the year. Development Partners stressed the importance of receiving invitations to high-level meetings as early as possible.
- The Chair thanked the participants and closed the meeting.