

Joint SDG Fund: 2020 Annual Stakeholder Meeting

Date and time: 11 June 2020 | 10:00 – 11:30am.

Attendance: *Development Partners:* United Kingdom, Portugal, Denmark, Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands, The European Union, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Luxembourg, Canada, Japan, Korea, Egypt, Jordan. *United Nations:* UNDP, UNFPA, WFP, UNICEF, ILO, DCO, MPTF-O. *Resident Coordinators:* Ms. Helena Fraser (RC Uzbekistan), Mr. Fode Ndiaye (RC Rwanda), Mr. Didier Trebucq (RC Barbados and Eastern Caribbean).

- On 11 June, the Joint SDG Fund convened its Annual Stakeholder Meeting to update all partners on the Fund's focus areas and results. Led by the Chair of the Fund's Operational Steering Committee (OSC), it provided an opportunity for the OSC to discuss technical details with the Fund's key stakeholders on progress and next steps.
- The meeting opened with reflections from Resident Coordinators in Uzbekistan, Rwanda and Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean who are currently implementing joint programmes under the Fund's social protection call and are soon to be recipients of Component One SDG Financing support. They stressed the Fund's role in bringing together their UN Country Teams, notably in mobilizing expertise across the UN system, and the Fund's ability to promptly re-direct resources to Covid-19 response. The Resident Coordinators also highlighted the synergies between the Joint SDG Fund and the MPTF Covid-19 Fund, explaining how the Funds are complementary and mutually reinforcing with one focused on immediate emergency response while the Joint Fund is more foundational with transformation rooted in medium-long term policy shifts and investments and capacity strengthening.
- The Fund Secretariat provided an update on the Fund's first set of 35 joint programmes dedicated to social protection / Leave No One Behind, including the OSC's approval of the option to re-purpose 20% of existing joint programme funding towards Covid-19 responses. Intended to provide flexible but focused support to mitigating effects on vulnerable groups in alignment with existing programme strategies, a third of the portfolio added socio-economic impact assessments of COVID-19 to inform and develop novel, integrated policy solutions for the most vulnerable during the pandemic and beyond. Re-purposed funding is utilized through the existing agencies, funds or programmes in the original programmes.
- The Secretariat also updated on its first call on SDG Financing, having finalized the independent review process of 103 submissions received under Component One. The Operational Steering Committee approving funding of the top 62 proposals for a total funding envelope of \$US 59,094,265 million. The allocation will be split into two tranches with \$US 30 million to be released in June 2020 and second allocations to take place in 2021, pending replenishment of the Fund. Given funding limitations, additional proposals ranking above 70% are placed in the Fund's pipeline of strong quality initiatives to be funded once additional resources are available. The estimated funding gap for Component One remains \$US30 million, with an additional \$US15 million required to fund the Joint Programmes passing the 70% threshold.

- Component 2 of the SDG Financing call received 155 submissions from 105 countries to fund initiatives that can leverage public and private financing to advance the SDGs. A due diligence review, being undertaken by UN and external experts, is now reviewing the proposals to identify the top 25 proposals. The first allocations under this component will be made in early 2021, following the provision of technical assistance, and reliant on replenishment of the Fund. The estimated funding gap for Component 2 is \$US 110 million.
- In discussing the Fund's strategy for 2020-2023, the Fund presented key considerations given the impact of COVID-19 on its programming in the field as well as its potential funding replenishment. Firstly, the Fund will align with the Building Back Better and Greener agenda as well as the Grand Reset and Secretary-General's socio-economic frameworks, most notably with its pipeline of SDG investments. The Joint SDG Fund remains fit for purpose with its focus on the most vulnerable through social protection programming, national financing frameworks and catalytic investments. Central to the reform of the UN development system and Funding Compact, it will also ensure that today's planning and response efforts ensure linkages and alignment to continue countries on the path to the SDGs. In terms of next steps, Resident Coordinators have already flagged opportunities for scaling up existing social protection programmes through investments of an additional \$US 21 million by the end of the year. Finally, a conscious pivot towards the private sector for resource mobilization and strategic partnerships through active engagement with private foundations, academia and asset managers is ongoing to enable further expansion of the Fund despite COVID-19 economic impacts.
- Member States reiterated their support to the Fund and welcomed the Fund's progress in the SDG Financing space, as well as its flexibility in redirecting part (20%) of their resources earmarked for social protection joint programmes to activities of Covid-19 response and recovery. They reiterated the need to focus on the quality of the initiatives selected for funding and the need to maintain a bottom up approach throughout the life cycle of the Fund.
- A query regarding the results matrix in the 2019 Annual report highlighted that targets set for the Fund remain based on original funding expectations as well as the state of play of the emerging UN development system reform in 2018. The Secretariat will invite stakeholders to a seminar in Q3/4 2020 to discuss potential amendments that align with the current calls for proposals.
- Spain confirmed their pledge of 100MEUR over 5 years, while Sweden confirmed their pledge of 180MSEK for 2020. Member States welcomed the Fund's alignment with the Building Back Better agenda and stressed the need for the Joint SDG Fund to adopt a coordinated approach with the MPTFO Covid-19 Fund. The Netherlands suggested that the Fund holds an extraordinary meeting of its Strategic Advisory Group to position the Fund in the Building Back Better conversations.
- The OSC and Member States agreed on the need to support the Fund's resource mobilization efforts and on the necessity to capitalize the Fund to its annual target of \$US290 million as put forward by the Secretary-General in its General Assembly resolution on the repositioning of the United Nations development system.