

Sustainable Development

Europe and Central Asia Regional Consultations in Istanbul help shape the Post-2015 Development Agenda

The Post 2015 Europe and Central Asia Regional Consultations (6-8 November) concluded with a call to end the increasing inequalities in the region.

More than 350 participants from over 40 countries, representing governments, civil society, the private sector, academia and United Nations organizations, discussed ways to tackle the most urgent global challenges of the 21st century: lifting people out of poverty in ways that respect the planet's ecological boundaries and advance social inclusion. The most urgent development challenge of the world today is to make sustainability a reality. With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) poverty has been cut in half. Now the international community must maintain the momentum and craft an equally inspiring post-2015 development agenda.

One of the main outcomes of the panel discussions was that inclusion and equality must be at the centre of sustainable development, because inequalities and exclusion persist or have risen in a number of interlinked areas including, employment, health, education, gender equality and environment. Participants agreed that the sustainable management and use of natural resources and ecosystems had not been sufficiently taken into consideration in the MDGs and needed to become a central component of the future Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The need to accelerate the shift from brown to green economy was also emphasized; as well the essential role governments play in this process.

Cevdet Yılmaz, Turkish Minister of Development, asserted that the international community has to work more to harmonize economic and social development and protecting the environment- the three main elements of sustainable development. He further argued that justice should constitute the fourth element of sustainable development because without justice a peaceful world cannot be established.

UNECE Executive Secretary Sven Alkalaj stated: "In order to address inequalities, it is necessary to create decent jobs, invest in quality health and education services, strengthen social protection, and tackle gender-based discrimination. Enhancing the voice and participation of the society as a whole is also crucial. The active role of civil society at this meeting is one example of the significant contribution it can make". Moreover: "international cooperation at all levels will be vital in moving towards more inclusive and sustainable societies. UNECE is working to further develop regional cooperation on sustainable development issues, through the exchange of policy experiences, implementation of legal instruments, and capacity-building", he added.

Kadir Topbaş, Mayor of İstanbul and Member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda declared that local governments want to take an active role in shaping the Post-2015 Development Agenda and be part of the solutions to the challenges the world faces today.

The event provided a special opportunity for youth representatives to make their voices heard by actively participating in debates and reaching out to the government officials attending the event.

The Regional Consultation is a cooperative effort organized and supported by the Turkish government and about a dozen UN entities active in the region, with the core team consisting of UNECE, UNEP, UNDP, UNICEF, ILO, WHO, UNFPA and IOM. The aim was to bring stakeholders from across Europe and Central Asia together to provide a regional perspective on priorities that should be contained in the post-2015 agenda. □



UNECE features its work at Global South-South Development Expo 2013



South-south and triangular cooperation is an important pillar of UN activities, as outlined by General Assembly Resolution 3251 (XXIX). UNECE works with low, middle and high income countries (both within and, sometimes, outside of the region) in all three areas (economic, social and environmental) of sustainable development and has a wealth of experiences to share.

The annual Global South-South Development Expo, organized by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (established by the UN General Assembly in 1978 and hosted by UNDP) brings together many UN agencies, donor organizations and development partners as well as government, civil society and private sector representatives in a forum that provides a resourceful opportunity for showcasing cooperation experiences.

The 2013 Global South-South Expo took place from 28 October to 1 November 2013 at the United Nations Office in Nairobi. UNECE organized a number of high-level activities to share its experience with interested developing countries. Highlights for UNECE included:

- 1) The organization of a plenary Solution Exchange Forum: "Action for Greener Economies: how UNECE is promoting the development of greener economies in low- and middle-income countries through regional and national action plans and public-private partnerships". This forum demonstrated how low income countries could benefit from and make use of different tools developed by UNECE to promote greener economies. During the Forum presentations were made on the Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy; the UNDA Project "Sustainable Forest Management for greener economies in the Caucasus and Central Asia"; the Action Plan for Energy-Efficient Housing in the UNECE region; and the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence, including its Specialist Centers and the UNECE work on green PPPs. Some examples of sub-regional and national best practices were also highlighted including the Lviv Forum on Forests in a Green Economy; wood energy projects in Serbia and in the Western Balkans; and the development of National Action Plans for energy efficiency measures in housing in countries with transition economies.
- 2) The South-South Cooperation Award given to UNECE's International PPP Centre.
- 3) The presentation of the UNECE case study on the National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resource Management under the EU Water Initiative during the Expo's High-level Forum for Directors-General for Development Cooperation. Representatives from several governments, including Egypt and Mexico, expressed interest in learning more about this initiative.
- 4) An exhibition stand where participants found UNECE publications and information material.

The Expo has shown that South-South and triangular cooperation is an important instrument for supporting the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals as well as for developing the Post-2015 Development Agenda and related Sustainable Development Goals. □

Further information can be found at: <http://ssc.undp.org/content/ssc.html>.

Water and Health

Let's take action on sanitation on World Toilet Day!

Currently 6 billion of the world's 7 billion people have mobile phones, but only 4.5 billion have access to toilets. 2.5 billion people don't have access to basic toilets and 1 billion have to defecate in the open.

To bring attention to this dramatic challenge, the United Nations General Assembly established 19 November as World Toilet Day. United Nations Member States are encouraged to promote behavioural changes and adopt policies to increase access to sanitation and end open defecation.

Ending open defecation will lead to a 35 per cent reduction in diarrhoea, which results in over 750,000 deaths of children under the age of five every year.

Advances in access to proper sanitation are being made, but improved sanitation cannot be taken for granted. In 2011, **67 million people in the pan-European region** lacked access to improved sanitation facilities.

The UNECE-WHO/Europe Protocol on Water and Health provides a sound framework for the translation of the human right to sanitation into practice in the pan-European region. □

For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/env/pwh>.

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