

United Nations Economic and Social Council, Economic Council for Europe

The Regional Ministerial Consultation on “Monitoring and Accountability for the Post-2015 development Agenda – The Regional Dimension”

15-16 September 2014, Geneva

Panel 4: Scope and Process of Regional Accountability Mechanism

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to express my sincere appreciation towards the organizers of the meeting for convening this regional consultation. It is honor for me to be here and participate in determining the mechanisms of accountability and monitoring within the fundamental reorientation of global development efforts.

For me as a lawyer it is crucially important to look at the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as at the fundamental tool for protection of human rights, so it is very important to follow up this goals in order to live in the world where the healthy and adequate environment is accessible for all human beings.

The topics we are discussing during these two days are really challenging and very hard to fulfill. as we are talking about the soft law mechanisms and the issue is very tricky as we live in a world where even hard law obligatory instruments are sometimes hardly implemented.

But we should admit that principle of sustainable development as a basic principle of international environmental law must be fulfilled no matter whether it is incorporated in obligatory instrument or not. *Pacta sunt servada* old Roman Law outlined and we, as the members of UN must realize that our common goal to live in world we want can be achieved only by fulfillment of our International obligations in good faith.

While discussing the scope of accountability and monitoring mechanisms of SDGs, it is important to underline and consider the experience gained from Millennium Development

Goals (MDGs), that makes it obvious there is a clear need for stronger and transparent accountability framework to monitor the progress of the global change.

The contribution of the regional level accountability to Post-2015 is significant. But on the other hand, we believe that the framework for sub-regional accountability would increase the quality of addressing the challenges and achieving the goals as the sub-regions share more similarities than the whole large regions. May be such mechanism will serve as a better tool and will support to underline the local issues within the regional context.

Therefore it will be beneficial to exchange the practices of the implementation of development agenda, to monitor the progress we have in order to make it more dynamic and result oriented. The regional level of accountability mechanisms can serve as a platform for sharing views and lessons learnt, and to elaborate the recommendations in order to attain the SDGs.

The quality chain is concerned with the main principles of how to plan and carry out monitoring in the best possible way. Best practice must be based on consideration of a range of practical issues relating to e.i. the monitoring of pollutants in process, emissions and in receiving environmental data. We think central points to these considerations are:

- appropriate measurement methods,
- duration of the monitoring regime (e.g. year, operating life of process),
- records of relevant process and/or environmental information.

In our opinion, to ensure the further effectiveness of the accountability, the reporting should be implemented in one review cycle and as frequently as possible. In this regard, alignment in time is also important. *Preferably, the national review should precede the regional one, while the regional review should precede the global one.* We believe, agreeing in common calendar is a time-consuming, but at the same time, worthy task. It can give us the opportunity to evaluate the progress more regularly.

In addition, the agreement should be made on the type of the country level reporting system to simplify the regional accountability framework. The system should be competitive-based, not only reviewing but also ranking countries according to the progress made towards SDGs, which can serve as an additional stimulus for high performance.

The review should be measurable. Performance indicators should be developed for each SDGs. Report should include quantitative and qualitative analysis of data rather than basic monitoring.

From the technical point of view it is important if separate web-portal is developed to compare and analyze the country performances. It would be an additional asset within the accountability framework. The data obtained must be compared regularly with the objectives over time to check that they are being met.

The evaluation system should consider the self-assessment of the SDGs implementation at the national levels.

Historically, the competent authorities were mainly responsible for carrying out monitoring programs to check on compliance and performance. However, there is a trend now for the competent authorities to rely more on "self monitoring" by private sector and transnational corporations as well. For example, business sector can be included in the assessment mechanism by means of self-monitoring that has potential advantages because it can use private sector knowledge of their processes and can be relatively cost-effective.

According to the mentioned idea it is important that national reporting mechanisms should be based on bottom-up approach as a key pillar of the accountability system. It should be transparent and participatory, involving all stakeholders, particularly: youth, as the most important driving-force for the prosperous future; women and ingenious groups, as the most vulnerable part of the public; and TNC, NGOs, as important players advocating good governance, transparency, effectiveness and accountability. The assessment should consider the voices of all.

Comment [m1]: Es ra aris ?

The UN should play a key role in the coordination of accountability at all levels. This task could be undertaken by the UN permanent team responsible for such a review. The process may be supervised by a special commission with elected members from member states. High level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development should have an important role in the overall accountability framework.

Now let me once again underline the significance of meeting the international commitments. I would like to reaffirm that the Government of Georgia acknowledges the importance of the effective accountability framework considering the recently taken commitments of my country by signing the EU Association Agreement and DCFTA as well. We are going to make amendments to the national legislation to support the implementation of the AA. First steps are already done as by the support from UNECE we started work on Strategic Environmental Assessment primary legislation as the key issue for the sustainable development. It will assist us to elaborate new programs and policies in a more sustainable way.

- A lot was said during these two days and a lot was done during these years to reach MDGs, but still there is too much left to be done and said. There is still only one reality: If we strive to build the future we want, and
- If we want to sustain our planet and preserve it for future generations a lot of effort must be made towards SDGs.

The resources our plant has got are not enough to over exploit them. About 4 or 5 times more land and natural resources would be need to allow entire planets population to live like an average American or United Arab Emirates citizen lives. *So what is the way out?*

The only way out is coordination, cooperation and assistance. The budget allocation is a crucial issue to achieve SDGs. Very sensitive task it is mainly for developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Therefore, competitive approach of accountability and monitoring, ranking countries according to their progress might be the way that will serve donors as indicator to allocate funds and create incentives. This might be serve as an additional stimulus.

Finally, at the end of my speech let me thank you for your time and consideration and hope that our common goal:

- To live in the world we want, and
- To save the environment for the future generations will be attained only by our strong will, concerted effort and the work in good faith towards the sustainable development.

Thank you