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The role of CICPPP in supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

Conference room paper submitted by the secretariat

Introduction

The objective of this paper is to facilitate discussion of the role of the Committee in supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It summarizes the main principles underlying the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the main elements of these two agendas which refer to innovation, competitiveness and public-private partnerships, the main initiatives that have emerged so far from these two agendas at the global level, and the role envisaged for the regional level in pursuing the two agendas and the current state of thinking at UNECE on the role it might play. Based on this, the paper outlines some implications on how the Committee might, within its mandate, contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Some key principles underlying the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

1. Universality

“These are universal goals and targets which involve the entire world, developed and developing countries alike. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development.”¹

In a departure from the Millennium Development Goals, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is universal in that all countries and all stakeholders will implement it in a collective partnership. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) addresses the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development.

¹ Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, para. 5.

As such, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are highly relevant to the UNECE region as a whole, and all UNECE member States are committed to pursuing the goals set in these agendas.

2. National Ownership and Responsibility

“Targets are defined as aspirational and global, with each government setting its own national targets guided by the global level of ambition but taking into account national circumstances. Each government will also decide how these aspirational and global targets should be incorporated in national planning processes, policies and strategies.”²

Not all 17 goals set in the Agenda are equally relevant for all countries. Each country will identify its own priorities within the Global Agenda and will take a commitment to develop a national strategy to achieve the priorities it sets for itself. During the substantive segment of the 10th session of the Committee, a discussion on the role of innovation in national sustainable development strategies will be initiated. The substantive segment will also discuss options to include good governance guiding principles in people first PPPs in national sustainable development strategies.

3. Follow-up and Review

“A robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to implementation and will help countries to maximize and track progress in implementing this Agenda in order to ensure that no one is left behind.

Operating at the national, regional and global levels, it will promote accountability to our citizens, support effective international cooperation in achieving this Agenda and foster exchanges of best practices and mutual learning. It will mobilize support to overcome shared challenges and identify new and emerging issues.”³

In another departure from the Millennium Development Goals, the new Agenda calls for a dedicated process at the national, regional and global levels for monitoring progress, and for facilitating implementation through policy learning.

Among the principles guiding the follow-up and review process, the following are particularly noteworthy for the Committee’s deliberations:

“f. [Follow-up and review processes] will build on existing platforms and processes, where these exist, avoid duplication and respond to national circumstances, capacities, needs and priorities. They will evolve over time, taking into account emerging issues and the development of new methodologies, and will minimize the reporting burden on national administrations.”

g. They will be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations [...].”⁴

The follow-up and review processes are expected to draw, as far as possible, on initiatives and activities that already exist. They are expected to be based on evidence at the country level.

² Ibid para. 55.

³ Ibid paras. 72-73.

⁴ Ibid para. 74.

As such, the Committee’s existing programme of national innovation performance reviews, national PPP assessments, policy advisory missions by the PPP Business Advisory Board and the adaptation of international PPP standards and recommendations to the national context, holds the potential of becoming the basis for a significant contribution to the follow-up and review process.

4. Means of Implementation

“[A revitalized Global Partnership] will facilitate an intensive global engagement in support of implementation of all the Goals and targets, bringing together Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and other actors and mobilizing all available resources.”⁵

“The Addis Ababa Action Agenda supports, complements and helps contextualize the 2030 Agenda’s means of implementation targets. These relate to domestic public resources, domestic and international private business and finance, international development cooperation, international trade as an engine for development, debt and debt sustainability, addressing systemic issues and science, technology, innovation and capacity-building, and data, monitoring and follow-up.”⁶

The 2030 Agenda identifies means and tools through which its objectives shall be achieved and outlines how these means of implementation can be mobilized. Innovation, the mobilization of financial resources (public and private), and partnerships among all relevant stakeholders are key means to implement the sustainable development goals.

Main elements referring to innovation, competitiveness and public-private partnerships

The Declaration on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda recognizes that scientific and technological innovation has great potential to accelerate human progress, to bridge the digital divide and to develop knowledge societies. The Agenda also calls on Member States to build dynamic, sustainable, innovative and people-centred economies. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda expresses a strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development.

Sustainable Development Goals

In addition to SDG 9, which directly calls for building resilient infrastructure and for fostering innovation, the 2030 Agenda also explicitly recognizes the role of innovation in promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (SDG 8, target 8.2 and 8.3), in sustainable urban development (SDG 11)⁷, and in achieving sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12)⁸.

Means of Implementation and the Global Partnership

⁵ Ibid para. 39

⁶ Ibid para. 62

⁷ Ibid para. 34

⁸ Ibid para. 28

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda calls for the mobilization inter alia of domestic and international private business and finance to complement domestic public resources, and for addressing science, technology and innovation issues. It recognizes “that both public and private investment have key roles to play in infrastructure financing, including through development banks, development finance institutions and tools and mechanisms such as public-private partnerships.”⁹ It also commits UN Member States to undertake capacity-building activities, to develop guidelines¹⁰ and to build a knowledge base on PPPs through regional and global forums.

The 2030 Agenda acknowledges that “private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation”, and calls “on all businesses to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges.” The Agenda will also “encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships” (SDG 17, target 17.17) and “enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation” (17.6).

Given the above, there is a clear opportunity for the Committee within its current mandate to build on its existing activities and use its expertise to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Action Agenda.

Main global initiatives so far

Following a proposal in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development launched a Technology Facilitation Mechanism in order to support the sustainable development goals. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism will be based on a multi-stakeholder collaboration between Member States, civil society, private sector, scientific community, United Nations entities and other stakeholders and will be composed of: a United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs, a collaborative Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs and an on-line platform. The United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs will promote coordination, coherence, and cooperation within the UN System on STI related matters, enhancing synergy and efficiency, in particular to enhance capacity-building initiatives.

UNECE is a member of this Interagency Task Team. The first Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs will be held in New York on 6-7 June 2016. The meeting of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July will be informed by the summary of the Multi-stakeholder Forum.

The AAAA calls for the creation of a Global Infrastructure Forum to build and enhance multilateral collaborative mechanisms. The first Global Infrastructure Forum was hosted by the World Bank on 18 April 2016, and was jointly organized by key development partners in infrastructure and the mulilateral development banks. UNECE participated in the Forum as one of the key development partners in infrastructure. The next Global Infrastructure Forum will be held in Washington DC in 2017 and the UNECE has been asked by the World Bank to present its PPP work on standards and recommendations.

⁹ Addis Ababa Action Agenda para. 48.

¹⁰ The UNECE Team of Specialists on PPPs is developing guidelines, standards and recommendations in PPPs to increase national capacities within countries to deliver successful ‘value for people’ PPP projects.

The Committee may want to work with the secretariat to make its expertise available to the Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs and to the Global Infrastructure Forum.

Role envisaged for the regional level and current state of thinking at UNECE

“Follow-up and review at the regional and sub-regional levels can, as appropriate, provide useful opportunities for peer learning, including through voluntary reviews, sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets. We welcome in this respect the cooperation of regional and sub-regional commissions and organizations. Inclusive regional processes will draw on national-level reviews and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level, including at the High Level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF).”¹¹

The 2030 Agenda acknowledges the relevance of the regional level, both in terms of implementing those aspects of the agenda which require cross-border cooperation, and in terms of supporting implementation at the national level by providing opportunities for exchanging experiences and for policy learning. It invites the UN regional commissions, including UNECE, to be part of this process.

On 10 May, UNECE organized a Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to initiate discussions among member States on the possible role which UNECE may play in this regard. It became clear at this event that many countries have started reviewing their national policies, strategies and structures as a first step towards SDG implementation. There is also an increasing awareness that the new Agenda requires a much more intense inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral cooperation.

Looking at ways to track SDG progress, governments generally supported a regional review mechanism that focuses on voluntary learning among regional peers, exchange of best SDG practices and trans-boundary issues. This mechanism should be based on existing mechanisms and could act as a "docking station" to integrate various partners. It should also be anchored in national monitoring and reporting and feed into the global High-level Political Forum. In addition, significant efforts as well as UN support are required on data and SDG indicators, including in countries with UN presence.

Going forward, the Executive Committee of UNECE decided to continue consultations on the shape of a possible future regional review mechanism, taking into account the ongoing global negotiations.

The Committee may want to engage with the Executive Committee in these consultations.

Implications for the possible role of CICPPP in supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a call for action to all countries, including all member States of UNECE. Within this broad and ambitious new Agenda, each country has committed to identifying its own priorities and to develop a national strategy for achieving these priorities. The 2030 Agenda creates a new follow-up and review process to track progress with implementation and to facilitate exchanges of experience and policy learning. Within this process, the Agenda recognizes the importance of the regional level and invites the UN regional

¹¹ Ibid para. 80.

commissions to participate actively. UNECE recently held its first Regional Forum on Sustainable Development to discuss the role it may play in this process in the future. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda complements the 2030 Agenda by committing all UN Member States to provide adequate means of implementation, in particular by tackling the challenges of financing sustainable development.

The 2030 Agenda identifies building resilient infrastructure and fostering innovation, the two areas at the core of the work of this Committee, as a sustainable development goal in its own right. In addition, the Agenda, in its preamble, declaration, list of goals and targets, and sections on follow-up and review and means of implementation, makes numerous references to the importance of innovation and of partnerships, including public-private partnerships, to raise financing and mobilize private sector expertise for sustainable development. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda inter alia recognizes the role which PPPs can play in filling the infrastructure financing gap and commits to building capacity, developing guidelines and building a knowledge base on PPPs.

The 2030 Agenda emphasises the need to build on existing mechanisms and activities in the follow-up and review process.

The Committee has ample expertise in public private partnerships and in innovation policy. It has well-established existing mechanisms of exchanging international experience in these areas, identifying and disseminating good practices, and developing international standards on PPPs. It also has well-established activities on assessing national policies and providing advice on how to improve them.

The Committee is therefore well-placed to use its existing mandates, mechanisms and activities to make a contribution to the 2030 Agenda.

Among the possible contributions are:

- (1) developing good practices, standards, guidelines and recommendations on innovation and PPPs for sustainable development;
- (2) providing policy advice, capacity building and training to requesting countries on the creation and implementation of national sustainable development strategies and policies in the areas of expertise of the Committee;
- (3) working with requesting countries to review national policies and performance in light of international good practice;
- (4) participating in regional follow-up and review processes by organizing peer reviews of innovation and PPP policies for sustainable development and providing a platform for exchanges of experience and policy learning;
- (5) contributing its expertise to the Global Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development;
- (6) contributing its expertise to the Global Infrastructure Forum; and
- (7) contributing to the UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.