

8 November 2007



General Assembly

GA/EF/3196

Department of Public Information • News and Media Division • New York

Sixty-second General Assembly
Second Committee
25th Meeting (AM)

SECOND COMMITTEE HEARS CASE FOR UNITED NATIONS PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

AS VEHICLE WITH 'ENORMOUS' POTENTIAL FOR REALIZING DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Cooperation among countries and international organizations was not enough on its own to tackle development issues, and partnership with the private sector could provide enormous potential for boosting the ability of developing countries to realize the Millennium Development Goals, several speakers said this morning as the Second Committee (Economic and Financial) took up its agenda item titled "Towards global partnerships".

Pakistan's representative, speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, said a strengthened global partnership between developed and developing countries was critically important in efforts to address effectively the myriad challenges of growth and development. To enhance global partnerships, the Group of 77 and China hoped transnational corporations, which greatly influenced the global economy, would join efforts to achieve the United Nations development agenda and take concrete steps to assist the efforts of developing countries.

He emphasized the importance of guarding against abuse of the partnership process for personal or corporate gain, noting that such actions could undermine the reputation and integrity of the United Nations. To safeguard the process, there was a need for benchmarks and indicators to chart progress in implementing internationally agreed development goals. In addition, new initiatives and partnerships should never weaken the regulatory nature of State and intergovernmental bodies.

Israel's representative said that, while oversight and appropriate management were crucial to minimizing corruption, it was equally important to train and educate personnel in practices that would stimulate growth and achievement while protecting against human error and responsibility. New partnerships should emphasize long-term solutions and cost-effective opportunities that offered a wide enough trajectory to meet the challenges of time and resource limitations. In addition, the lack of know-how and training was the foremost challenge to incorporating private-sector language and operations into the United Nations system.

Individual United Nations agencies, funds and programmes had specific training needs, and the specificity and thematic particularity of each meant that any blanket approach would be ineffective in meeting training demands, he said. Many of the Organization's entities had still not offered any partnership-related training to their staff and those that did offer it usually focused on soft skills like partnership facilitation, process design and communication. Only a minority of United Nations entities included training on business planning, financial management or legal issues -- precisely the core areas where the United Nations-private sector partnership could be most rewarding.

Portugal's representative, speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization had a special role to play

in developing partnership practices in pursuit of common objectives. The United Nations should continue to take appropriate steps to realize the full potential of its rapidly intensifying cooperation with the private sector. Since the Global Compact's debut in 2000, more than 3,800 participants in over 100 countries had helped it become a catalyst for expanding cooperation with the private sector throughout the United Nations system.

The representative of the Dominican Republic emphasized that private-public and multi-stakeholder alliances fuelled global efforts to realize development targets because they were all interlinked. There was enormous potential for private-sector investment to attain the Millennium Development Goals in such relevant areas as increasing productivity, job creation, service delivery, actions to improve good governance, collaboration with Governments in policy design, advocacy and corporate philanthropy. Just one example of such potential was the Millennium Development Goals Awards Festival and Telecast (www.un-mdgawards.org), to be held in the General Assembly Hall on 5 June 2008, which would feature high-profile international celebrities.

Also speaking today were the representatives of Switzerland, China, Qatar and Thailand.

The Committee also heard statements from the Observer Missions of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the International Organization for Migration.

Georg Kell, Director of the United Nations Global Compact Office, introduced the Secretary-General's report on enhanced cooperation between the Organization and all relevant partners, particularly the private sector.

Speaking as the Committee concluded its consideration of the eradication of poverty and other development issues were the representatives of Eritrea, Mongolia and Cameroon.

As the meeting opened, the representative of Pakistan introduced, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, draft resolutions on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; the role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence; science and technology for development; and globalization and interdependence: preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

The Committee will reconvene at 10 a.m. on Tuesday 13 November to take up its agenda item on training and research.

Background

The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) met this morning to conclude its general debate on the eradication of poverty and other development issues and take up its agenda item titled "Towards global partnerships".

It was also expected to hear the introduction of draft resolutions on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (document A/C.2/62/L.24); the Role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence (document A/C.2/62/L.25); Science and technology for development (document A/C.2/62/L.26); and Globalization and interdependence: preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (document A/C.2/62/L.27).

Regarding "Towards global partnerships", the Committee had before it a report of the Secretary-General on Enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector (document A/62/341), which states that strategic engagement with the private sector and other stakeholders is proving to be effective in advancing the Organization's goals, particularly in development. There is a growing recognition that many of the world's most pressing problems are too complex for any one sector to face alone. There is significant room for strengthening the relationship between the United Nations and business, specifically in training,

building institutional capacity in country offices, strategic focus and local ownership, sharing best practices, the partner selection process, streamlining of guidelines and impact assessment.

The report outlines four broad categories of partnership with the private sector: advocacy (including Nothing but Nets, ninemillion.org and the Global Alliance for Information and Communications Technologies and Development); developing norms and standards (including the Sustainable Buildings and Construction Initiative, Principles for Responsible Investment, the Task Force of Environmental Requirements and Market Access and the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting); sharing and coordinating resources and expertise (including the Children's Rights Project in India and Every Drop Matters); and harnessing markets for development (including the Millennium Development Goals, the Carbon Initiative in China, the Indian Solar Loan Programme and the Public-Private Alliance Foundation).

According to the report, partnerships most frequently focus on poverty eradication and hunger, ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development. Most last up to four years and many, especially local and regional partnerships, have a budget of less than \$250,000. Partnerships initiated by Headquarters usually have medium-sized budgets of \$1 million to \$10 million and most United Nations agencies, funds and programmes allocated less than 10 per cent of their total funds to partnerships.

The report also assesses progress in building institutional capacity for effective partnering and remaining challenges, recommending that training be tailored to the needs of concerned agencies, funds and programmes while relying on more diverse sources for training. It also recommends strengthening private-sector focal points and extending recognition to partnership development, stronger strategic planning to engage the private sector, more dissemination of mechanisms for sharing lessons learned, better partner identification and selection, updating guidelines for United Nations-business partnerships and creating and disseminating impact assessment tools.

Introduction of Draft Resolutions

ASAD MAJEED KHAN (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolutions on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (document A/C.2/62/L.24); the role of the United Nations in promoting development in the context of globalization and interdependence (document A/C.2/62/L.25); science and technology for development (document A/C.2/62/L.26); and globalization and interdependence: preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of assets of illicit origin and returning such assets, in particular to the countries of origin, consistent with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (document A/C.2/62/L.27).

The Committee then resumed its general debate on the eradication of poverty and other development issues.

Statements

TESFA ALEM SEYOUM (Eritrea) cited recent reports which suggested that if current trends continued, many of the poorest countries, notably in sub-Saharan Africa, would not attain the Millennium Development Goals. That was unacceptable. The targets could be reached with renewed commitment and concerted action and all stakeholders had to comply fully with their pledges. Industrialized nations must double aid to Africa by 2010 and all Group of Eight nations must earmark 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product for official development assistance (ODA).

He said his country was committed to doing its part to achieve the Millennium Goals and had invested hundreds of millions of dollars in infrastructure to ensure food security and "make hunger history". The *2006 Millennium Development Goals Report* noted that Eritrea was on track to achieve the targets in the fields of gender equality in primary education, child health, maternal health, HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases, and access to safe water. Eritrea also looked forward to graduating from the list of least developed countries group in the next few years. Politics must not stand in the way of attaining the Millennium Goals. The world had enough resources to

make it happen and the challenge ahead was to deploy the means already available.

ENKHTSETSEG OCHIR (Mongolia) said that while the concept of poverty eradication was crystallizing, meeting that challenge depended on national Governments adopting comprehensive long-term development strategies, as agreed at the 2005 World Summit. The international community faced another critical challenge: honouring commitments for a global partnership for development. Joint action to meet that challenge had yet to be achieved, as reflected in falling levels of ODA, sustainable debt relief and equitable market access for the neediest countries.

She said her country had committed strongly to working towards attainment of the Millennium Goals. Mongolia had implemented parliamentary resolutions, allocated resources and developed strategies and initiatives to tackle health, education and access to financial resources. But without the international community, national efforts to halve poverty could remain a distant dream even beyond 2015. Mongolia strongly endorsed the Secretary-General's recommendation that United Nations system organizations, international financial institutions and donors continue to help developing countries achieve the internationally agreed development goals, particularly that of eradicating poverty.

BERTRAND DE LOOZ KARAGEORGIADES, Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, described existing extremes between the "haves" and the "have-nots" as one of the world's greatest injustices and stressed the essential importance of promoting a real partnership for development at all levels. For the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, the partnership concept, far from being new, was rooted in its past.

He said the Order's modern efforts included the Malteser International, a global network of pilot projects in Africa, South America and Asia. Its projects tackled such areas as education, health -- including addressing HIV/AIDS and diseases like leprosy -- and microcredit. The Sovereign Military Order's work coincided with the international community's development efforts, which aimed to build a bridge that would span the development gap.

LUCA DALL'OGGIO, Permanent Observer of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said there had been 195 million migrants living around the globe in 2006. A recent study by two international institutions had revealed that in the same year, migrants working in industrialized countries had sent more than \$300 billion home to their families. IOM was following up on that research with more in-depth country studies on migration and poverty alleviation in China, remittances from Serbians living in Switzerland and, most recently, migration, remittances and living standards in Tajikistan. The research indicated that while remittances were mainly private funds, they did indeed have an important impact on the financial well-being of many families and were keeping some of the most vulnerable households out of poverty. Remittances had also been shown to offer development possibilities for entire communities and countries.

The most recent IOM study, conducted in Tajikistan, showed that seasonal migration and remittances had become a strong structural feature of the Tajik economy, he said. According to the report, 86 per cent of the money sent home by an overwhelming majority of young, unqualified migrants was used in Tajikistan to meet basic family consumption needs. About 50 per cent of extremely poor households that had benefited from remittances since 1999 had now risen above the poverty line. Poverty-reduction strategies and programmes could significantly promote or restrict mobility and thus impact the eventual outcome of such policies and programmes. The purpose of including migration in poverty-reduction strategy papers was to acknowledge that while migration often occurred as a response to poverty, it could help reduce poverty, particularly at the household level.

ZOUA MARTIN LACDANNE (Cameroon) said poverty was a grave threat to peace and investing in the fight against it was really a tool for working to achieve peace. The United Nations had understood that notion, but ODA levels lagged behind targets. More efforts were needed to eradicate poverty and the situation in Africa was of particular concern. Many initiatives, such as the Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, had emerged to give rise to big hopes, but many problems remained. Most developing countries were not about to attain the Millennium Goals and the level of financial resources had dropped.

There was an urgent need to establish a concerted approach to combating poverty, which could not be accomplished without full recognition of women's rights and their full participation in development, he said. How could women participate in development if they could not bring their food from the fields because there were no roads, or if they could not access loans? Women had a central role in Cameroon's efforts to combat poverty. There would not be peace without the recognition of women.

The Committee then took up its agenda item titled "Towards global partnerships".

Introduction of Report

GEORG KELL, Director, United Nations Global Compact Office, introduced the Secretary-General's report on enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector (document A/62/341), saying that while there had been progress on cooperation, there were areas that needed further attention. They included training, increased strategic planning and improved sharing of experiences. In addition, a strengthening of the Global Compact's mandate would further help in achieving United Nations development goals.

Statements

Mr. KHAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said a strengthened and enhanced global partnership between developed and developing countries was of essential importance in effectively addressing the challenges of growth and development. National leadership and ownership of development should guide United Nations operational activities and partnerships should be framed and premised on that principle.

Partnerships should bring in additional financial and technical resources to help build United Nations capacity to advance common goals and development objectives, he said. It was to be hoped that transnational corporations, which had great influence in the global economy, would join efforts to achieve the Organization's development goals and take concrete steps to help developing countries promote development. The Group of 77 supported the sharing of best practices, which would provide much-needed transparency and clarity on partnerships. It was important to guard against abuse of the process for personal or corporate gain, which could undermine the reputation and integrity of the United Nations.

He said the Group of 77 and China was disappointed that the Secretary-General's report had given limited attention and space to the important issue of promoting impact assessment mechanisms. Future reports should carry more in-depth analysis of that question. There was also a need for benchmarks and indicators to chart progress in implementing the internationally agreed development goals. At the same time, new initiatives and partnerships should not lead to further weakening of the regulatory nature of State and intergovernmental bodies.

VANESSA GOMES (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization had a particular role to play in developing partnership practices in pursuit of common development objectives. The United Nations should continue to take appropriate steps to realize the full potential of its rapidly intensifying cooperation with the private sector.

Regarding follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, she said more than 250 partnerships had already been launched. At the national level, Governments played an important role in creating an enabling environment, while various international initiatives, including the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, were equally important. Since the Global Compact's debut in 2000, it now had more than 3,800 participants in over 100 countries. The Compact had been a catalyst in expanding United Nations system-wide cooperation with business. European Union member States sought to further encourage such partnerships and would shortly table a draft resolution titled "Towards global partnerships".

THOMAS GASS (Switzerland) highlighted the importance of tailoring training needs and relying on more diverse sources for training, strengthening private- sector focal points and extending recognition for partnership development, increasing dissemination and implementation of mechanisms for sharing lessons learned, creating and disseminating impact assessment tools, and taking appropriate steps to intensify cooperation with the private sector. A coherent strategy for the entire engagement of the United Nations with the private sector would reduce unnecessary duplication and competition between the Organization's programmes and funds.

He agreed with the Secretary-General's assessment that the Global Compact and its managing office needed a stronger mandate. The Geneva Declaration, made at the Compact's second Leaders Summit, illustrated the willingness of participants to engage in responsible advocacy on global challenges like climate change, the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of already-ratified conventions and declarations. Several far-sighted initiatives had been launched at the Summit, including the business leaders' platform for climate change, principles for responsible management education and the Chief Executive Officers' water mandate. Those initiatives demonstrated the commitment of the Compact's participants and showed that the United Nations needed to take a somewhat unconventional approach if it wished to remain relevant to the private sector.

BAI YONGJIE (China) said the private sector could play a significant complementary role in global affairs, especially in the field of development. With the internationally agreed development goals as the main target, countries must engage the private sector in advancing United Nations goals by establishing partnerships and continuing to motivate the private sector to make greater contributions through diversified voluntary initiatives. Partnerships should be flexible and well-managed.

Regarding private-sector participation in United Nations activities and meetings, she stressed the need for communication among Member States and for the relevant rules of the Organization to be observed. China favoured expanding partnerships through the promotion of training and strategic planning for interaction with the private sector, an area in which the United Nations must play a leading role. For its own part, China had developed multilateral and bilateral cooperation with international partners and, at the national level, mobilized the entire society, including the business sector, to participate in promoting sustainable development. Partnerships provided strong support for China's bid to achieve sustainable development and the Millennium Goals.

AWADH NAJA AL-HABABI (Qatar) said the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved without comprehensive international partnerships involving Government, the private sector and civil society. They must all support United Nations efforts to achieve sustainable development and international stability. Partnerships were essential to eradicating poverty, ending discrimination against women, promoting good national and international governance, providing development assistance for poor countries without conditions and eliminating poor nations' external debt. Future generations should enjoy happiness and be proud of the current generation's international efforts in working together to meet the Millennium Goals.

ARTHIT PRASARTKUL (Thailand) said cooperation and assistance among Governments, or with the United Nations system, was not sufficient. Potential support, participation and commitment from other stakeholders, including non-United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society and private entities, were vital.

He said the momentum of triangular and South-South cooperation was reaching full speed and lessons learned from decades of development cooperation were being passed on to others in need. But South-South cooperation should not replace North-South cooperation. Instead, they should complement each other. In addition, partnerships with the private sector and civil society often followed different visions, but ultimately shared the same goals. Country ownership, good governance and integration of social issues, such as gender equality, should not become forgotten development practices. Transparency and internationally competitive procurement regimes, corruption-free practices and country-led initiatives, among other things, would define the success of development cooperation.

MOSHE SERMONETA ([Israel](#)) said the foremost challenge to incorporating private-sector language and operations into the United Nations system was the lack of know-how and training. Recent experience with training programmes throughout the system indicated that individual agencies, funds and programmes had specific training needs. The specificity and thematic particularity of each department and agency meant that any blanket approach would be ineffective in meeting training demands. The sharing of best practices enabled traction and growth in scenarios and opportunities where mutual challenges existed.

Many United Nations entities had still not offered any partnership-related training to their staff, he said. Those that did offer training usually focused on soft skills, such as partnership facilitation, process design and communication. According to the report, only a minority of United Nations entities included training on business planning, financial management or legal issues -- precisely the core areas where the United Nations-private sector partnership could be most rewarding.

He said that, while oversight and appropriate management were crucial to minimizing corruption, training and educating personnel in practices that would stimulate growth and achievement while protecting against human error and responsibility was equally important. Local ownership should be considered as a possible approach to broadening the coalition of non-government stakeholders active in the United Nations system. New partnerships should emphasize long-term solutions and cost-effective opportunities that offered a wide enough trajectory to meet the challenges of time and resource limitations.

FRANCIS LORENZO ([Dominican Republic](#)) said private-public and multi-stakeholder alliances were important in global efforts to achieve development goals because they were all linked. In addition, there was enormous potential for private-sector investment to attain the Millennium Goals. It covered increasing productivity, job creation, service delivery, actions to improve good governance, collaboration with Governments in policy design, advocacy of the Millennium Goals and corporate philanthropy.

The Dominican Republic was taking bold steps to emphasize the positive role of business in driving development, he said, noting that several companies had joined the Global Compact with more to come. One step forward that had enormous potential was the Millennium Development Goals Awards Festival and Telecast (www.un-mdgawards.org). Scheduled to be held in the General Assembly Hall on 5 June 2008, it would feature high-profile international celebrities. It was important to remember that adherence to international conventions and agreements on labour, human rights, the environment and anti-corruption measures made up the core strategies for long-term economic and social development.

* * * * *

For information media • not an official record