

## **REGIONAL UN SYSTEM MEETING FOR EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**

19-20 October 2017 – UNESCO, Venice

### ***Note for Record and Conclusions***

The participants were welcomed by Ms. Ana Luiza Thompson-Flores, UNESCO Director of the Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, host of the meeting. The meeting was opened by Ms. Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary/RCM Chair, and Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the CIS/ R-UNDG Chair.

#### **Item 1: SDG MAPS missions – Progress, Trends, Key Challenges**

The R-UNDG Chair provided an overview of the MAPS missions in the region in 2017, with a focus on the inter-agency character of the missions.

UNDP, ILO, UNFPA and UNICEF shared their experiences and lessons learned during the 2017 MAPS and pre-MAPS missions:

- Inter-agency character of the MAPS missions requires longer preparatory time and the need to agree on actionable report and follow-up.
- Nationalization of the goals and the targets is preferred by the host governments, but there is a need to ensure their international comparability.
- The areas of environment and financing are underrepresented in the missions.
- MAPS missions produce SDG roadmaps with suggested follow-up actions. In the future MAPS missions, it is important to ensure that (1) roadmaps are dynamic; (2) roadmaps can be spilled into UNDAFs and other work at the country level, in view of no additional financing for the SDGs; and (3) PSG can support work on the implementation of the follow-up recommendations.
- The need to ensure high level of UN representation to correspond to the level of deputy head of office/deputy director to align with the level of the government representation.
- The need to involve wider actors (ex. employers' organisations) in the missions.
- Youth could be included as the accelerator of the SDGs in the region; special focus should be on the M&E and indicator dashboard – beneficial for the statistics office at the national level.
- Special focus on the links with the EU accession process needs to be ensured in the countries, where relevant.
- The need for stronger coordination and full engagement of UNCTs in the mission, including the link to the work of the PSG and the Issue-Based Coalitions (IBCs)
- The need to further define key SDG accelerators in the region: leave no one behind; data, etc. This requires a stronger pressure for the focus of the MAPS missions on certain population groups (Roma, children, IDPs, refugees, and people leaving with disabilities).
- MAPS missions follow-up needs additional clarification on the SDG monitoring process, including how the follow up actions contribute to the broader development agenda.

UNFPA as a Co-Chair of the Peer Support Group (PSG) also briefed about the outcomes of the PSG annual meeting that took place on 18 October, with three main avenues for the SDG implementation support discussed: (1) relying on IBCs to provide integrated policy advice rather than agency-specific advice; (2) PSG as a connector between the IBCs and MAPS; 3) need to define the links and connections between the MAPS missions follow-up and the country programming processes.

The following key points were raised during the discussion:

- Regional UN system agencies confirmed their commitment to contribute to the MAPS missions, when possible and feasible through different avenues and sources.
- Advance planning is crucial to allow for the participation of non-resident agencies in the mission.
- Importance of applying the lessons learned in the ECA region and comparing it with the other regions was emphasized.
- Exploring the connection and link to the humanitarian dimension of the UN work as well as to the process of preparing Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) was suggested.
- The need to link to the PSG as a connector between the expertise of the IBCs and the MAPS missions, including in the country programming and implementation of the MAPS follow-up actions was stressed.
- Support to the MAPS missions to Turkey and Uzbekistan was expressed.

#### **DECISIONS AND AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

- Regional Directors will communicate more on MAPS missions to their representatives in UNCTs. This will ensure better access to regional level expertise as demanded by country level work.
- More emphasis will be placed on follow-up to MAPS missions, with a specific link to the support available through the Issue-Based Coalitions (IBCs) and the Peer Support Group (PSG).
- The PSG will review and revise its Terms of Reference to reflect (1) its communicator/ connector role in linking country demands with expertise available through IBCs, and (2) support in quality assurance in linking MAPS missions' recommendations and programming at country level (UNDAFs, Joint Work Plans).
- In order to avoid representational composition of MAPS missions and rather focus on country level needs, participation on behalf of IBCs (and not on behalf of an agency) should be facilitated.
- Feasibility of sending SDG follow-up missions (especially by IBCs on SDG Monitoring, and Gender, but can be considered by others as needed) to complement the MAPS missions will be explored.

#### **Item 2: Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD)**

UNECE provided information on the status of preparations of the next Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region, which will be held in Geneva on 1 and/or 2 March 2018. It was one of the lessons of the 2017 Regional Forum that there should be an even stronger focus on peer learning among governments and other stakeholders. To this end, the 2018 Regional Forum will be held in the International Conference Centre Geneva (CICG), in which smaller rooms for interactive round tables are available. Support is provided by Switzerland, which will chair the 2018 Regional Forum. First suggestions for round table themes were collected within UNECE and are now being discussed with member States and UN partners (see [background note](#)).

With the Regional Forum being a platform for SDG follow-up and review for the entire regional UN system, suggestions, inputs and engagement of the UN entities in the Regional Forum are highly welcome, and also encouraged by member States. The 2018 Regional Forum will also be open to the participation of

stakeholders, in particular civil society, the private sector and academia. Funding will likely be a constraint in this regard.

The following key points emerged in the discussion:

- Agencies are ready to engage in the Regional Forum on a number of issues, including disaster risk reduction (UNISDR); pollution (UN Environment); water and health (WHO); water and risk management (UNESCO); urbanization (UN-Habitat); resilience against economic and social shocks, humanitarian-development nexus and migration (WFP); and data (UNICEF, UNFPA).
- It is important to reach out to civil society organizations at the country level. Youth and youth groups should also be involved. The UN SG's Envoy on Youth should be invited to the Regional Forum.
- Experiences and case studies available from agencies, IBCs, MAPS missions and other sources should be shared in the run-up to the Regional Forum.
- Specific needs and experiences of VNR countries should be considered.
- There is a need to coordinate with regional SDG events that are planned in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Albania and Montenegro.

#### **DECISIONS AND AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

- Agencies will provide their ideas and comments on the background note for the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, including the suggested round table themes, to UNECE by 27 October 2017. These will be consolidated and discussed at the November informal consultations with member States.
- Some key points/ topics to be considered: the Regional Advocacy Paper should be used as an input by the Regional UN system; voluntary national reports by countries to be linked to the RFSD; IBCs to consider side events, especially on gender, youth, data.
- Agencies will send the documents available for sharing (IBC produced documents, MAPS missions findings, etc.) to UNECE to be compiled into a collection of case studies for the RFSD.
- UNECE will inform the regional UN system of the plans and arrangements, including financial support, for the participation of wider stakeholder groups: civil society organizations, youth groups, academia, and the private sector.
- UNECE, after consultations with UN DESA, will inform the regional UN system of the arrangements (workshops, financial support) for the countries preparing Voluntary National Reviews for the 2018 High-Level Political Forum.

#### **Item 3: Gender as a key SDG accelerator**

The R-UNDG Chair informed the regional UN system members of the delays with the submission by the Issue-Based Coalitions of the 2017 reports and 2018 work plans. The deadline for submitting the 2017 reports and 2018 work plans – to allow for finishing up the ongoing activities – was proposed to be moved to 15 November 2017.

UNFPA and UN Women as co-chairs of the IBC on Gender [presented](#) an overview of:

- Recent trends in the region (weak political representation; limited economic empowerment; rising conservatism regarding women's rights; persistent gender based violence);

- Results of the gender analysis of 18 UNDAFs (with the improvements in the number of gender-responsive indicators, disaggregated baseline targets and values by sex and additional categories, etc.)
- Gender as SDG accelerator: many SDGs (14 out of the 17) include specific targets on economic, social, political and cultural conditions that address gender inequality. 26.6%. (45 out of 169) of total targets pertain to gender.
- Key findings of the Moldova MAPS mission with regard to gender as the SDG accelerator.
- Key areas of collaboration at the regional and country level.

The discussion after the presentation included the following key points:

- Inter-agency guidance on SDG and Gender developed by the IBC on Gender shall be shared and used widely.
- Inter-connected areas, such as women and migration, women and human rights, women and environment, women and production patterns should be on the radar screen of the UN work in the region (including in the 2018 work plan of the IBC on Gender).
- Among key challenges for improvement of the situation is the lack of data and its disaggregation.
- IBC on Gender should focus on making a systematic contribution to the MAPS missions recommendations and follow-up actions.

#### **DECISIONS AND AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

- IOM, UNIDO and UNIDSR will join the Issue-Based Coalition on Gender.
- Agencies will share with the Co-Chairs (UNFPA and UN Women) information about the ongoing initiatives and available resources on gender mainstreaming (gender and migration, gender and environment, gender and disaster risk reduction, etc.). The IBC on Gender to review and further develop linkages with the other IBCs.
- IBC on Gender will include and reflect the recommendations provided during the regional UN system meeting into the 2018 work plan.
- Wherever feasible within MAPS missions, “on-behalf” (i.e. a representative of the IBC) participation of the IBC on Gender should be integrated to ensure a systematic approach to gender mainstreaming.
- All other IBCs are expected to submit their 2017 reports and 2018 workplans by 15 November 2017.

#### **Item 4: Dialogue on UNDS Reform**

The UNDG Chair, via Skype, provided the regional UN system members with an update on the ongoing UNDS reforms:

- The overall reform package includes several streams: reform of the UN development system; management reform; reform of the peace and security architecture.
- Reform of the UN development system is supported by the studies undertaken by Dalberg (regional review) and McKinsey (UNCT configurations and strengthening of the RC system) and will culminate in the SG report in December.
- All reform streams are interconnected, with the need to ensure coherence of the whole system.

- Ongoing reforms aim to respond to the demands of the Member States (including through the QCPR) and reflect a need for a strong and effective organisation to be able to respond to the global challenges.
- UNDP is working on its new Strategic Plan, which will aim to provide “an offer for the next generation”.

The discussion included the following key points:

- The reform agenda is led by the Secretary-General, with the mandate from Member States. However, the whole system should be behind it – within the current environment, the failure to change the UNDS will be the failure of the whole system.
- The current stage of the reform – reviews by Dalberg and McKinsey – with their findings will be further analysed and reviewed; multiplicity of voices is valuable, however, not all voices and requests will be included in the SG report.
- UN presence at the country level needs to be based on neutrality and well-defined rationale.
- Decentralisation of the UN system will facilitate greater effectiveness and accountability.

The Co-Chairs of the QCPR Coordinating Group stressed the key features of the UNDS reform process. Some of the issues currently discussed with Member States include reviewing various reporting lines and governance structures, sharpening the division of labour among agencies, creating a funding compact, and using common administrative structures. The good practice of inter-agency cooperation in Europe and Central Asia was recognized. In terms of the timeline, the next draft SG report will be finalized in December, and intergovernmental considerations will start in ECOSOC February 2018. There is also a separate process of DESA reform to increase its efficiency.

The ensuing discussion stressed some salient points:

- The ECA region is specific in terms of inter-agency cooperation and existence of a range of other regional organizations
- It is important to further improve access of Resident Coordinators to tools and expertise of non-resident agencies
- UNDS reform is connected to management reform and strengthening the peace/security and development link, as well as humanitarian-development nexus.

#### **DECISIONS AND AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

- Agencies will continue to advocate for and promote the model of the regional cooperation in Europe and Central Asia throughout all stages of the UNDS reform.

#### **Item 5: SDG Monitoring in the region**

UNICEF as the Chair of the Issue-Based Coalition on SDG Monitoring [presented](#) the objective and rationale for the creation of the IBC, ongoing mapping of the work by different UN agencies and approaches to establishing the IBC.

There is a lack of reliable and disaggregated data to properly monitor and report on the progress of SDG achievement. Country Teams are continuously asking for support, information and guidance on the use of data at the country level and for assistance from the regional level. The regional level has an important

part to play in knowledge exchange and capacity-building for SDG data and monitoring. In particular, the regional IBC on SDG Data and Monitoring could:

- Extend support when country-level presence is limited
- Engage with other data partners, in particular EuroStat and the World Bank
- Avoid duplication, combine expertise and foster innovative solutions
- Use and/or develop common tools, e.g. SDG dashboards and other products

The discussion reflected broad support for the establishment of an IBC on SDG Monitoring. It was stressed that the group should be linked and avoid duplications with existing data processes, such as the global UN Statistical Commission, the regional Conference of European Statisticians and other UNECE statistical work, MAPS missions, review frameworks for Sendai, ICPD and others. In view of differences in regional definitions among the agencies, also the geographic coverage of the IBC should be carefully considered.

#### **DECISIONS AND AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

- For those Agencies that have not already done so, nomination of focal points for the IBC on SDG Monitoring will be sent to UNICEF by 1 November, prior to a conference call of the IBC that is planned to take place later in November.
- Based on the discussion, the IBC on SDG Monitoring will finalize its workplan for 2018 and will share with the team through RCM and R-UNDG Secretariats.

#### **Item 6: Albania: SDGs Implementation at Country Level**

UN RC in Albania provided [an overview of the current development challenges and achievements in Albania](#). Special emphasis was placed on:

- The change of the institutional set-up of the Cabinet of Ministers and the efforts of the United Nations in Albania to ensure that its respective mandates are covered by the newly created institutional structure.
- Strengthening national ownership in the implementation of the development assistance framework through the work of the Results Groups, co-chaired by the UN head of agency and a respective minister.
- The need to build on the synergies between the SDG implementation and the EU accession process to avoid the risk of the 2030 Agenda being viewed as the “UN agenda” only, while the government focuses on the EU accession reforms.
- UN support for the preparation of the Voluntary National Review for 2018 High-Level Political Forum in New York.
- UNCT strategic retreat is planned for November 2017 and wide participation is welcome.

The following key points were made during the discussion:

- The UN in Albania should work on the advocacy of the 2030 Agenda as a wider global development agenda, which is to be implemented by all Member States, including the EU.
- The UN Team in Brussels works together to advocate and promote complementarities and synergies of the 2030 Agenda, the Climate Agreement, the Sendai framework with the European development and accession processes, including through a number of joint UN-EU events.

- The EU accession process and the geopolitical position of Albania require additional focus on the issues of migration, asylum, labour, health, disaster risk reduction, etc.

#### **DECISIONS AND AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

- The regional UN system will support and promote the synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the EU accession processes.
- The UNCT in Albania will work in close cooperation with the regional UN system agencies to support the host government in their national development priorities and aspirations to the EU accession, with a focus on the SDG implementation support.

#### **Item 7: AFINUA - Action Framework for the Implementation of the New Urban Agenda**

UN-Habitat introduced the New Urban Agenda (NUA), adopted at the Habitat III Conference in 2016, in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Key elements of the NUA are urban planning and design; municipal finance; rules and regulations; national urban policy; and local implementation. The NUA and its action framework can serve as an implementation mechanism for the urban dimension of the SDGs. Also in the ECA region, urban issues need to be properly addressed. An important question is how to collectively organize the work on urban issues in the region among the different UN agencies concerned.

In the discussion, Regional Directors agreed on the importance of the urban agenda for achieving the SDGs. Many issues are closely related to cities, including resilience, migration, the situation of children, pollution, refugees, and internally displaced persons. In view of the cross-cutting nature of cities, the urban dimension is relevant to all existing IBCs in the region.

#### **DECISIONS AND AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

- UN Habitat will explore how to feed its expertise and current processes into the work of the existing IBCs.

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

##### 1) Update on regional discussion on migration

UNECE provided an update on the global and regional consultation on migration and the preparation for the regional discussion at the UNECE Executive Committee on 6 November 2017, focusing on migration statistics, including exchanging experience on the methods and techniques used for the collection, processing, use and dissemination of data related to international migration statistics. The paper shared with member States solicited their needs and priorities regarding data for migration management.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- Governments are often not aware of the process of the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
- The Global Compact is to be adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference in New York in September 2018. The deadline for national consultations to feed into the global process is 1 November 2017.

- The Global Migration Group (GMG) from January 2018 will be co-chaired by FAO and IOM to support the process of the development of the Global Compact.

#### **DECISIONS AND AGREED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS**

- UNECE will provide an update on the results of the regional discussion.
- Information for UNCTs on the regional consultations for the preparation of the Global Compact will be sent to the R-UNDG Secretariat to be shared with the UNCTs in the region.

#### 2) Next meeting

The date for the next Regional UN System Meeting will be set at a later stage (around April-May 2018). The meeting will be held in Geneva and will be hosted by UNECE.

## AGENDA

19 OCTOBER 2017		
9:00-9:30	<i>Welcome Coffee</i>	
9:30-9:45	<p><b>WELCOME BY HOST</b>  <i>Ms. Ana Luiza Thompson-Flores, UNESCO, Director of the Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe</i></p> <p><b>OPENING</b>  <i>Ms. Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary/ Chair RCM</i>  <i>Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the CIS/ Chair R-UNDG</i></p>	
9:45-10:45	<p><b>Item 1: SDG MAPS MISSIONS – PROGRESS, TRENDS, KEY CHALLENGES</b>  <i>(focus: MAPS missions undertaken in 2016-2017; plans for 2018; joint UN policy advice; key challenges identified; accelerators to focus the UN support on)</i></p> <p><i>UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, ILO</i></p>	
10:45-11:45	<p><b>Item 2: REGIONAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT</b>  <i>(focus: preparations for the RFSD; discussions/ consultations with Member States; engagement by the Regional UN System)</i></p> <p><i>Ms. Monika Linn, UNECE</i></p>	<p><a href="#">Note on status of preparations for Regional Forum 2018</a></p>
11:45-12:00	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
12:00-13:00	<p><b>Item 3: GENDER AS A KEY SDG ACCELERATOR</b>  <i>(focus: Gender IBC to lead on this substantive discussion; present latest trends, key regional and country challenges, implications on the SDG implementation; desired outcome: 2-3 key areas for collaborative inter-agency approaches or programming)</i></p> <p><i>Gender IBC co-Chairs: Ms. Alanna Armitage, UNFPA, and Ms. Alia El-Yassir, UN-Women</i></p>	<p><a href="#">SDG and Gender – Interagency Guidance Note (by IBC on Gender)</a></p>
13:00-13:30	<p><b>Item 4: DIALOGUE ON UNDS REFORM</b>  <i>(TBC) Mr. Achim Steiner, Chair UNDG</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">SG Report on repositioning the UNDS to deliver on the 2030 Agenda – Ensuring a Better Future for All</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Review of UNDS Regional Functions, Policy, and Data Management Capacities (Inception Note by Dalberg)</a></li> </ul>
13:30-15:00	<i>Lunch Break</i>	
15:00-16:00	<p><b>Item 4 (ctd): DIALOGUE ON UNDS REFORM</b>  <i>Mr. John Hendra and Mr. Navid Hanif, co-Chairs, QCPR Coordinating Team</i></p>	
16:00-16:30	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
16:30-17:30	<p><b>Item 5: SDG MONITORING IN THE REGION</b>  <i>(focus: inter-agency cooperation on SDG data and monitoring in the region; establishment of the Issue-Based Coalition for regional support on SDG monitoring)</i></p> <p><i>Ms. Afshan Khan, UNICEF</i></p>	
18:00	<i>Group Dinner</i>	

**20 OCTOBER 2017**

09:00-09:30	<i>Welcome Coffee</i>	
09:30-11:00	<p><b><a href="#">Item 6: ALBANIA: SDGs IMPLEMENTATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL</a></b>  <i>(focus: country context – latest developments; interplay of EU and SDG agendas at country level; good practices and challenges in making them work; reporting to HLPF in 2018; role of the UNDAF and what can be strengthened; role of RC and UNCT; support required from Regional Directors)</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Brian Williams, UN Resident Coordinator, and UNCT Members</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Background note</a></li> </ul>
11:00-11:45	<p><b><a href="#">Item 7: AFINUA - ACTION FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW URBAN AGENDA</a></b></p> <p><i>Mr. Paulius Kulikauskas, Chief, UN-Habitat Office for Europe and European Institutions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Global Goals and the New Urban Agenda</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Concept Note - Role of UN-Habitat in implementing SDGs and NUA in Europe and Central Asia</a></li> </ul>
11:45-12:15	<p><b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Update on regional discussion on migration (Ms. Monika Linn, UNECE)</i></li> <li>- <i>Next meeting</i></li> </ul>	
12:15-12:30	<p><b>AGREEMENT ON NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING REMARKS</b></p> <p><i>Ms. Cihan Sultanoglu, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the CIS/ Chair R-UNDG</i>  <i>Ms. Olga Algayerova, UNECE Executive Secretary/ Chair RCM</i></p>	

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
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	Ms. Olga Algayerova	Chair, RCM / Executive Secretary, UNECE
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UNESCO	Ms. Ana Luiza Thompson-Flores	Director, Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe
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	Ms. Fumie Nakamura	Strategic Planning and Coordination Specialist
ILO	Mr. Heinz Koller	Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia
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IAEA	Mr. Martin Krause	Regional Director
FAO	Ms. Yuriko Shoji	Acting Deputy Regional Representative/FAO Sub-Regional Coordinator for Central Asia
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