



50
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UNDP 50th Anniversary Ministerial Meeting

Summary Report



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NEW YORK



Looking Forward: People, Planet, and Prosperity

1. More than 160 Ministers, Heads of Government and other senior officials from across the world met on 24 February 2016 in the United Nations General Assembly Hall to mark [UNDP's 50th Anniversary](#). The Ministerial Meeting was an occasion for Member States to commemorate UNDP's 50th anniversary and chart a course for the future of global development. Governments shared their vision for the 2030 Agenda and how best UNDP could contribute to their efforts in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2. United Nations Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, in his [introductory statement](#), recognized UNDP's past and present contribution towards raising standards of living and advancing human well-being across the world. He stressed UNDP's work on the frontline of human development, responding to the aspirations and empowerment of people – especially women and girls – and coordinating the UN development system. The President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, congratulated UNDP for its work addressing global poverty and exclusion throughout its fifty year history.
3. In [video messages](#), former UNDP Administrators reflected on UNDP's impact. William H. Draper III shared the work UNDP has done on women and development as well as the flagship Human Development Report. Gus Speth recounted how the concept of 'sustainable human development' came about and UNDP's focus on poverty, environment and governance. Mark Malloch-Brown stressed the importance of UNDP's work on the MDGs as part of a broader developmental transformation. Kemal Derviş highlighted UNDP's critical work to help build countries' resilience. Administrator Helen Clark stressed that UNDP has continued to stay relevant to developing country needs as they continue their development journeys. The organization has had to develop and enhance its support, and always remain open to new partnerships.
4. Helen Clark's opening address highlighted UNDP's five-decade long work of advocating for change and connecting countries to the knowledge, experience, and resources needed to help people build better lives. She underlined UNDP's commitment and readiness to work effectively with countries to advance the new, more complex, and transformational sustainable development agenda. She stressed the Ministerial Meeting as a key opportunity to engage Ministers in a discussion about how UNDP can be most helpful in support of national efforts to achieve the SDGs, better manage risks and help build resilience.

Human and Sustainable Development Stories

5. Ministers shared their countries' development journeys over the past fifty years and their evolving partnerships with UNDP. They stressed the critical role that UNDP played in helping address complex political, economic and social transitions helped by understanding of the local context. They underscored UNDP's role in peacebuilding—catalyzing resources, building capacities, enabling countries to make up for development opportunities lost during crisis, addressing inequalities and supporting implementation of the SDGs. UNDP's role in supporting the development needs of refugees, and in developing effective and efficient human and institutional capacities, were also highlighted as key contributions and as critical roles that UNDP must continue to play in partnership with national governments to realize Agenda 2030.

6. Ministers noted the need for greater cooperation, coordination, knowledge-sharing and financial support in order for the SDGs to be achieved. UNDP's support to national efforts to improve governance and public administration, and its ability to respect national perspectives and priorities and remain politically neutral was underscored. Ministers also highlighted the need to establish stronger global partnerships and commitments to ensure sustainable development, reduce vulnerabilities and build resilience. UNDP's willingness and ability to listen to the countries' needs and help implement their own priorities and agendas remains a vital quality, and ministers believe that this quality should be maintained.

Delivering on the Post-2015 Development Agenda

7. Agenda 2030 aims to transform development on the basis of a universal aspiration to environmental, social and economic progress. Governments are assessing alignment of their national development plans with the new global targets. They are putting in place structures to help coordinate multi-sectoral initiatives that cut across different ministerial mandates. Creative public awareness campaigns are engaging citizens and helping to mobilise partnerships. 19 countries have volunteered to present their national plans and progress at this year's High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

8. UNDP Associate Administrator Tegegnework Gettu presented UNDP's work with other UN Agencies to support implementation of the SDGs. He stressed that Agenda 2030 is owned by Member States. There is a call for the UN development system to provide integrated and coherent support to achieve the SDGs. UNDP is working closely with sister agencies to provide coordinated guidance and tools for UN Country Teams to support implementation. The UN Development Group has adopted a common framework for this – [Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support \(MAPS\)](#). UNDP is structuring its advisory support along the lines of its Strategic Plan. This means UNDP aims to help countries eradicate poverty, tackle inequalities and promote peaceful and inclusive societies. UNDP helps countries access resources and funds to turn their commitments into tangible progress. With a strong track record in connecting people around the world to exchange knowledge, experience and technologies, UNDP can bring diverse partners to the table to support implementation of SDGs, monitor progress and learn and apply relevant lessons.

Eradicating Poverty – Leaving No One Behind

9. Ministers acknowledged the remarkable progress in reducing poverty across the world and expressed broad optimism on eradicating extreme poverty by 2030. They discussed a number of innovative efforts

to reach those left behind, build resilience, and generate employment through inclusive and sustainable growth. To eradicate poverty, ministers underscored that all the interlinked dimensions of poverty would need to be tackled. Coming up with a new measure – that captures the multiple facets of well-being and happiness and goes beyond exclusively income and growth – would be important. Better information and statistics will be key to identify and understand barriers faced by those most likely to be left behind.

10. Inequality, several Ministers argued, is one of the greatest challenges facing developing and developed countries alike. It has threatened global growth and stability in the short and long term. Broad-based and inclusive growth will be essential. Countries cited enhancing skills, improving the productivity of small- and medium-sized enterprises and creating employment that targets the poor as critical to ensure that all can benefit from development. At the same time, well-designed social protection programmes such as conditional cash transfer and insurance schemes offer a crucial safety net for the most vulnerable. Even where great success has been achieved, certain groups in many countries are left behind. This attests to the lingering vulnerability of people around the world – in particular as a result of new challenges stemming from climate change, environmental degradation, conflict, disasters, economic downturns, disease pandemics and other shocks. Several speakers highlighted the difficulty of balancing immediate and long-term needs, particularly given the devastating impact of environmental degradation and climate change on farmers and others dependent on weather and national resources for their livelihoods.

11. Ministers reaffirmed the relevance of UNDP's core mandate of eradicating poverty and exclusion, and that UNDP's role remained critical – to facilitate effective development cooperation and help strengthen the capacities of developing countries to eradicate poverty, curb inequalities and end exclusion. UNDP's support is needed even in those countries where significant poverty eradication successes have already been made, particularly to address structural gaps and vulnerabilities. The last-mile challenge, ensuring no-one is left behind, will remain a major task going forward, as it is principally the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of the society (women, youth, indigenous peoples, etc.) who have the least political influence. Addressing this requires a strong commitment to stand for the voiceless.

Protecting Planet, Sustaining Development

12. Ministers reiterated that achieving the 2030 Agenda and SDGs requires a greater focus on the environment-development nexus, and environmentally sustainable growth. Current growth models are environmentally unsustainable with negative consequences for present and future generations, including women and men living in poverty. The livelihoods of the world's rural poor depend on ecosystem services and natural resources. Unless environmental degradation is curtailed, poverty and instability will deepen, and growth cannot be durable. Catalytic investments and stronger measures are needed to protect and restore ecosystems to ensure they continue to supply the services that underpin development.

13. To address these challenges and foster a prosperous and more inclusive, secure world, fundamental shifts in development models are needed, which will employ innovative and integrated solutions. Some of the transformative actions governments are taking include national cross-sectoral initiatives in energy efficiency, renewables, water resources management, biodiversity conservation, food security and agriculture, sustainable land management, and sustainable consumption and production. Ministers highlighted examples of the reform, policies and institutional structures for inter-ministerial coordination

to advance sustainable development at the national level covering green jobs; budgeting for environment mainstreaming; innovative financing schemes such as payment for ecosystem services; phasing out subsidies on fuel, water, and electricity; and taxation policy in line with the Addis tax initiative.

14. Partnerships among governments, civil society, private sector, and multilateral development agencies are key at all levels, and can be scaled up to achieve the SDGs through initiatives for corporate social responsibility, business and human rights, and community-based planning. Planning should better integrate the needs and knowledge of women and other vulnerable groups into policy making, and expand women's access to environmental goods, services, and finance. Discussion of Sustaining Development highlighted the importance of ensuring a development trajectory within the Earth's planetary boundaries, as well as some of the challenges and solutions needed to achieve inclusive, transformative change in the context of the 2030 Development Agenda and SDG implementation. Investing in and integrating environmental concerns into long-term development planning can help transform economies, while securing multiple social, environment, and economic benefits. There is a need to better leverage South-South knowledge and deepen collaboration with UNDP and partners at global, regional and country levels.

Preventing Violent Conflict, Building Peaceful Societies

15. Ministers recalled peaceful, just and inclusive societies as one of the goals of Agenda 2030. They called for greater attention to rule of law, addressing violence, insecurity, and corruption, promoting participation in decision-making, and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions. There was a recognition that the world has changed and the traditional dichotomy between stable countries and countries in conflict does not hold anymore. Experience has shown that geographic distance does not guarantee distance from problems and challenges; countries and societies are affected by conflicts and crises elsewhere (e.g. refugee crises involving 60 million refugees globally and millions displaced internally). Effective response requires multi-level and cross-border coordination and collaboration. New challenges and actors are emerging and indicate how closely the development and security agendas are interlinked.

16. Ministers shared their experiences that investment in development, education, inclusive peace and reconciliation pays off. While international assistance is important, a lasting solution must involve all actors and promote national ownership and leadership. The positive leadership of governments and good governance are essential to provide strategic direction and planning to prevent conflict and manage transitions and guarantee long-term gains. The engagement of communities (civil society, religious leaders, youth, women, etc.) and local leaders is critical in planning, monitoring and evaluation, accountability, and to track progress. Trust-building measures are particularly key to ensure buy-in in violence prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding processes. Internal cohesion and commitment underlined as critical in surmounting and recovering from crises, internal or external.

17. While coordination of partners is critical for impact and better use of scarce financial resources, some Ministers voiced concerns about the declining funding particularly for protracted crises and early recovery. Prioritizing resilience, peace and reconciliation is essential to build peaceful societies. Specific support by the international community is needed to ensure that vulnerable countries are supported to overcome fragility. Communication and social media should be part of the solution and lessons and success stories should be shared. New actors, including youth, empowered in order to counter and prevent violent

extremism. Ministers also acknowledged that UNDP's support throughout the years has been critical in promoting inclusive societies and supporting transitions, including its commitment to bring partners together to bridge the humanitarian-development divide.

Managing Risk, Building Resilience

18. Ministers discussed challenges and opportunities, including how in practice to deliver risk-informed development in the context of the 2030 Agenda. Tropical Cyclone Winston, which struck the Pacific, especially Fiji and Tonga, in the days leading up to the Ministerial Meeting, served as a poignant reminder of the unique vulnerability of Small Island States and the rising cost of disasters. Countries face a diverse range of risks and their geography and economy affect the scale of impact of a disaster. Storms, seismic activity, droughts and flooding can devastate vital infrastructure, food systems, water security and livelihoods. Indeed, from 2005 to 2014, disasters caused an estimated US\$1.4 trillion in damages, killing 700,000 people, displacing more than 250 million and affecting a further 1.7 billion. This can also have ripple effects on migration, conflict and security and vulnerable populations such as women and youth.

19. Ministers highlighted the need to develop effective institutional mechanisms to address the multiple challenges of climate change and disaster risks, and to adopt an integrated approach to achieve Agenda 2030. Lack of institutional mechanisms, governance systems, capacities and resources, both technical and human, impede progress towards achieving sustainable development and resilience. Ministers agreed that financing is a key lever to manage risk and build resilience. Addressing proactively and preparing for, responding to and recovering from disasters can save lives and preserve valuable regional, national and sub-regional assets. Funding decisions must ensure that development and risk are taken into account and leveraged to attract further public and private finance. It was emphasized that, while international public assistance is a valuable part of the equation, national resources and the private sector must play a role. Some countries suggested that grants should be blended with loans and equity. The insurance industry was suggested to provide further products and research to assist countries to respond to disasters.

20. Ministers mentioned the importance of the potential for regional coordination and South-South cooperation being better harnessed to complement international support. The universal and cross-boundary nature of challenges faced by countries and communities calls for developing shared regional and sub-regional strategies. UNDP's continued support at the regional, national and sub-national levels was welcomed by participating ministers, including for policy, institutional and capacity building support to manage risks and build resilience. Ministers also emphasized that UNDP, given its broad scope and track record of partnering with countries, can be a mechanism for enhanced learning across regions to share experiences.

Financing the Sustainable Development Goals

21. Ministers reaffirmed the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, recognizing the primacy of using all sources of finance for development – domestic and international, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, as well as alternative sources of finance – in a complementary and coherent manner. They shared the progress that their countries are making to boost domestic tax and resource mobilization capacities. Several countries referenced financing of their development priorities through UNDP. Ministers underscored the crucial role

ODA still plays particularly in least-developed countries and other vulnerable countries, including through leveraging and attracting new and additional resources. Ministers from small island developing states highlighted the special circumstances of countries of middle income status that are not able to access concessional finance and maintain preferential trade agreements.

22. Improving governance, rule of law and women's empowerment were cited as key, both to attract and manage development finance and to allow growth of a dynamic private sector. Improving the efficiency, integrity and yield of tax collection fosters economic growth and expands fiscal space to finance the SDGs. Accountability and transparency were critical to attract increased financing, as well as innovative solutions such as Islamic finance. In addition to calling for fulfillment of commitments to the 0.7% ODA/GNI target, Ministers highlighted the need for progress in global tax reform and cooperation to close loopholes in multi-national and other taxes and to free up significant resources for development. Ministers expressed their expectation of UNDP in helping increase domestic resource mobilization capacity. A critical role was also highlighted in assisting countries to gain access and manage resources, including from international sources – vertical funds, international financial institutions, and others.

UNDP Towards 2030

23. Implementation of the SDGs will shape UNDP's work and engagement with partners in the next fifteen years. Drawing on MDGs' experience, Ministers identified areas where UNDP's knowledge and expertise can add value for countries to advance Agenda 2030: leading advocacy and communication; integrating priorities; accelerating progress; data gathering at national and local levels; developing and monitoring indicators; facilitating South-South and triangular cooperation; and coordinating the UN development system.

24. Given the projected concentration of poor people in fragile and conflict- or disaster-affected countries, UNDP's work to build the resilience of people, communities, and countries to withstand and prosper amid shocks of all kinds should be a priority. Some Ministers called on UNDP to support their efforts to develop productive capacities and to move up the value-addition ladder in the global economy.

25. Looking to the future, many Ministers expressed their desire and expectation to attain middle- income and/or upper-middle-income country status. This means UNDP needs to articulate tailored responses to the unique set of challenges that many middle-income countries face, including overcoming the so-called 'middle-income trap' and the 'last-mile challenge'. Many countries highlighted their concerns about sustaining the gains they have made over the last decade. UNDP should work to integrate risk management into its country support and programming, following the call at Sendai to mainstream disaster risk reduction. Countries expressed the urgency of addressing inequality in all its forms, and called on UNDP to help forge partnerships which include the most vulnerable and marginalized people.

26. For UNDP to succeed in helping countries deliver on Agenda 2030, Ministers said it must continue to invest in skills and capacity of national partners and play an effective role in leading the UN development system at country level. UNDP should play a lead role in strengthening the UN development system to help bring the means and resources needed to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment and desire to see a stable and predictable financial foundation for UNDP to sustain its multilateral character and partnerships, and to lead the UN development system.

Closing

27. In her [closing statement](#) Helen Clark expressed appreciation for the high-level presence, leadership, generosity in thought, action and commitment to a shared agenda, and the confidence in UNDP shown by all participating Ministers and head of governments. She assured member states that their views on how UNDP can best support countries' efforts to successfully implement the 2030 Agenda fits closely with the vision expressed in the Strategic Plan. She stated that the Ministerial Meeting showed there is a shared understanding of the road ahead for development and for UNDP as a 'trusted and strategic' partner.

For more highlights from the Ministerial meeting, including a [summary video](#) of the day's proceedings and the written statements of delegations that were made available, please visit the [Ministerial Meeting page](#) of the UNDP 50th Anniversary website.