UNDP 50th Anniversary Ministerial Meeting

UN Conference Building, New York, 24 February 2016, 11.25h – 13:00h

VERSION AS OF 22 FEBRUARY 2016

SESSION OUTLINE

IV. Thematic Break-out Session
Protecting Planet, Sustaining Development

Introduction

Achieving the 2030 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires a greater focus on the environment-development nexus and a decoupling of environment degradation from 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 degradation is curtailed, poverty and instability will deepen, and growth cannot be durable.

Fundamental shifts in development models are needed to address these challenges and foster a more prosperous, inclusive and secure world, including by integrating the needs and knowledge of women and other groups traditionally facing exclusion and vulnerability into policy making and implementation at all levels. Stronger measures are needed to protect and restore ecosystems to ensure they continue to supply the services that underpin development. There are many examples of such transformative approaches across national and sector contexts. These include past and current work supported by UNDP and its public, private, and civil society partners, e.g.: efforts to reduce the ozone hole; the GloBallast Partnerships Project; the Pacific Islands Tuna Fisheries programme; and the innovative Green Commodities Programme.

Objective

This interactive session is designed to highlight successful policies and programmes that have already started to transform economies in ways that address the environment-development nexus, while

securing multiple social, environmental, and economic benefits, including, for example, greater gender equality through an expansion of women's access to environmental goods, services, and finance. In this way, insights and experiences shared during the session can inform initiatives to implement the SDGs.

Guiding Questions

- What are some of the transformative actions governments have taken to decouple environmental degradation from growth – either in a specific sector or across sectors?
- How have governments created space for and strengthened partnerships with public, private, and civil society partners in ways that advance more coherent policies within and across sectors?
- What are some of the ways to deliver such initiatives effectively within government systems, e.g., with respect to institutional structures, resources, and related incentives and reforms?
- What are some of the broader social and economic benefits that have been catalyzed by investments in environmental sustainability, and what are the implications of the SDGs?

Expected Outcome

At the end of the session, participants will have a better understanding of the importance of decoupling environmental degradation from growth, as well as some of the challenges, opportunities, and solutions needed to achieve such inclusive transformative change within the context of the 2030 Development Agenda and SDG implementation. Participants will be in a better position to leverage South-South knowledge and deepen collaboration with UNDP and partners.

These examples underscore the importance of partnerships amongst government, civil society, private sector, and multilateral development institutions, including sister UN agencies. Such partnerships are key to the transformative and integrated approach required to achieve the SDGs. They include a range of traditional and innovative partnerships that help ensure more effective, efficient, and catalytic results at community, sub-national, national, regional, and global levels.

Format

The session follows a Davos-style discussion format. A moderator will provide a brief overview of the session objectives and pose questions to each of the panellists to respond, before opening the session for interventions from the floor.