

## **Board of Directors SDGF**

### **Minutes**

**Madrid, March 19, 2014, 16:00**

#### **On behalf of Spain:**

- Gonzalo Robles, Secretary-General of Cooperation; Secretary-General of AECID
- Laura López de Cerain, Director for Horizontal and Financial Multilateral Cooperation, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, AECID
- Fernando Castillo, Head of the Multilateral Cooperation Department, Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, AECID
- Sergio Álvarez Sánchez, Chief of Staff of the Secretary-General, General Secretariat of International Development Cooperation
- Javier Hernández Peña, Assistant Director-General for Development Policies, General Secretariat of International Cooperation
- Maria Larrea, Assistant Under-Director of Development Policies, General Secretariat of International Cooperation

#### **On behalf of UNDP:**

- Rebeca Grynspan, Assistant UNDP Administrator
- Michael O'Neill, Assistant Secretary-General & Assistant Administrator, Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy
- Bruno Moro, MDGF Director
- Paloma Duran, MDGF Senior Adviser
- Vikram Singh, Partnerships Development Adviser
- Felipe Santos, MDGF Spain/Europe Communications Adviser

Ms. Rebeca Grynspan opened the meeting by thanking the Government of Spain for the establishment of the new Fund (SDGF) which will support programmes as well as other activities. Ms. Grynspan stated that due to her designation as Secretary-General of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) and her departure from UNDP, Mr. Michael O'Neill, the new Director of the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (BERA), will represent UNDP as Spain's counterpart and will report directly to UNDP's Administrator.

Ms. Grynspan emphasized on the need to use the experience and accomplished work of the MDGF. She stressed the importance of communicating and disseminating it as an example of lessons learned and unique experience in the UN and the UNDP.

She finished her intervention by thanking Mr. Robles for his support throughout the entire process of closing the MDGF and creating the SDGF.

Mr. Robles in turn thanked Ms. Grynspan for her words and highlighting her professionalism and outstanding work which have facilitated the interaction with Spain, stated that Ms. Grynspan's performance at the United Nations will surely be remembered for its results.

Likewise, Mr. Robles expressed his satisfaction for the strategic decisions made, especially the creation of the new Fund, and recalled the importance of the high-level event held in September in New York with the participation of the President of the Government of the Kingdom of Spain, Mr. Rajoy.

He also thanked Mr. Moro for his highly positive and satisfactory work in facilitating the transition of the Fund.

Mr. Robles stressed that the new Fund will play a significant role in development, a conviction of the current Spanish team, and that the Fund will also facilitate the establishment of an opinion and criteria regarding the post-2015 process. Hence, both resources and an agenda are available.

Additionally Mr. Robles welcomed Mr. O'Neill, stressing that Spain has good relations with his country as donors, partners, and "good friends".

Finally, Mr. Robles remarked that the new mechanism has funding and that this funding will increase as the economic circumstances improve in Spain. However, the Fund will be the basket used by Spain to cooperate with the United Nations System. In this regard, there will be less UN agencies but Spain looks forward to continue working in the multilateral sphere.

Mr. O'Neill stated his regret for Ms. Grynspan's departure and expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to participate in this United Nations project after working for 25 years from a donor's perspective with the United Kingdom. He thanked Spain's generosity and underscored

the need for improving the communication of all the activities undertaken by the Fund. He also recalled that the Action Plan, in the Annex, allows a certain degree of flexibility. Finally, he stated that any needed potential changes and resource and budget allocations modification that will influence Fund's activities and its Secretariat will have to be approved by the SC.

Following, the subsequent approval issues included in the scheduled agenda were discussed:

1. **Approval of the Sustainable Development Fund (SGDF) framework document.** Ms. Durán presented the framework document highlighting two relevant issues that differ between the former MDGF and the current SDGF. Firstly, the timeless nature of the new Fund, which will operate in line with the approved three-year action plans. Second, the possibility of third donors or actors to participate (collaborate) in the Fund's programmes or mechanism, in which case the SC will analyze the relevant arrangements.
2. **Approval of the SGDF Action Plan (2014/2016).** Ms. Durán confirmed the agreement regarding the schedule of activities and the themes that will be addressed by the programmes. Ms. Durán stressed that the delay in the Global Evaluation Report is due to persisting problems with the company conducting the evaluation. The goal is to have the final report by the end of May. The Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) has been increased with new members coming from the evaluation units of several agencies within the UN system. Regarding the countries, Ms. Durán explained that in their determination a study was conducted considering the priorities of the Spanish Cooperation and the MDGF's indicators (Joint Programmes' (JPS) impact, country accountability; compliance of implementation and reporting terms; compliance with assessment conditions and also communications and knowledge management conditions, among others). As a result of this process, a list of 19 countries that are present in the action plan has been drafted, these countries will be invited to make proposals and 10 out of them will be selected for the following three year framework. The Secretariat of the Fund is preparing the ToRs and the concept notes that will be shared when available. An agreement on the allocation of resources by region and country type has also been reached. Ms. Grynspan stated that the action plan is an annex to the framework document and thus it is subjected to changes upon approval of the SC. Finally, regarding the Secretariat's budget, it was agreed in the action plan that the SC will review expenses and staff based on the Fund's needs.

Spain expects, as stated by Mr. Robles, that the Fund's final financial data will be available in May, once UNDP's books have been closed. According to the previous information of the MDGF-S, the additional amount of the Fund will be around \$20M. Regarding JPs to be financed,

Mr. Robles stressed the need to select good projects where quality and impact should prevail. Spain prioritizes UNDP's leadership, but will not forego quality for interagency purposes.

In this regard, Mr. Robles proposed to stress the priority of the projects' strategic value and impact in the Action Plan. Mr. Moro pointed out that the goal of the remaining JPs is to ensure quality and impact, even if they are not the only solution to development challenges.

Mr. Robles recalled the additional contribution of 500,000 euro (as of March 31, at an exchange rate of 500,000 euro equal to US\$690,000) of Spain to UNDP, which includes a US\$400,000 allocation for the post-2015 process, as well as a contribution, US\$159,000, to the post-2015 Secretariat, specifically the work of Mr. Gabriel Ferrero. The remaining funds (US\$131,000) will be allocated in the SDGF to support its activities.

Mr. Robles also recalled Spain's interest in supporting SIDSs with a US\$200,000 contribution to the fund created by DESA for the organization of the Samoa Conference in September 2014, and the support of a regional programme that fulfills all the conditions and quality requirements.

Ms. Grynspan explained the complexities of using GDP as the country "ratings", which in many cases lacks objectivity, particularly under natural disaster situations and vulnerability to climate change. She pointed out the high participation of SIDSs impacted by the ratings, given the lack of accurate data on these countries. She also stressed the good management of the MDGF, since most funds have been executed, thus exceeding UNDP's performance rate with an average of 83% of execution.

(At this time, Ms. Grynspan departed and transferred her leadership to Mr. Michael O'Neill)

Mr. Alvarez recalled that in addition to Spain's 500,000 euro (US\$690,000) contribution to UNDP, as already indicated by Mr. Robles, there are still remains of \$477,000 not used by UNDP which are also to be allocated to the new Fund.

Regarding the question about the MDGF website, Mr. Moro said that it will be used during the three-year transition process towards post-2015. He also recalled the Mexico event jointly organized by UNDG and SDGF and the need to develop joint post-2015 working strategies.

Since there are no further issues to be discussed, Mr. Robles deemed the new Fund's framework document and Action Plan approved.

For the last issue on schedule, Mr. Robles said that the Fund's denomination as SDGF involves a clear long term commitment of Spain with development, and he reiterated the need for

considering the quality of the proposals' content and not only the inter-agency working mode in Fund's future effort.

Since there are no further issues to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned at 17:45