Supporting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
Lessons from the MDG Achievement Fund
MDG-F strengths

• Was large in size ($840 mn)
• Empowered country offices: identification & implementation
• Encouraged whole of government approaches
• Was multi-agency; convergence of procedures
• Favoured multi-disciplinary projects
• Supported some “neglected” middle income countries
• Established thorough monitoring and evaluation
• Favoured innovation through pilots
• Established a knowledge management system
MDG-F challenges

- Based on single donor priorities & countries
- Incurred high transaction costs ("death by documents")
- Used some parallel procedures, separate reporting
- Included some projects with too many agencies
- Had short time frame (2006-2012)
- Used project not programme approaches
- UNDP dominance (33%) ("…cannot be trusted not to favour itself")
New development realities

- Development resources matter less than development management: norms matter
- ODA in relative decline, and UN within it ("UN has lost the aid effectiveness race")
- "Pure" multilateralism in decline & alternative vertical funds
- Frustration with disjointed UN
- Some (fluctuating) interest in pooling by donors and agencies
- UN less relevant for middle-income, still relevant for low-income, fragile countries
- SDGs more comprehensive as a global agenda, but still lacking some key challenges
- Within SDGs, UN needs to identify its comparative advantages
UN comparative advantages in SDG implementation

- Emphasis on its own norms, standards & conventions
- Convening power
- Extensive field network, range of expertise
- Monitoring role
UN comparative *dis*-advantages

- Many small self-standing TA projects with earmarked resources
- Rivalry, duplication, agency independence
- Cumbersome bureaucracy, which is not even common
- Separate IT platforms
The multi-partner funding initiative: two objectives

• 1. Support requesting countries in the development of SDG-compatible national strategies

• 2. Design and implement UN-wide programmes of support to each country drawing on the specific functions and expertise of the UN, stressing compliance with its norms and standards
The multi-partner funding initiative: key features

People  Overcoming multi-dimensional poverty, food security, equality, health, education

Planet  Sustainable development, climate change, natural resource management

Prosperity  Economic, social, and technological progress

Peace  Peaceful, just, and inclusive societies

Partnership  Mobilizing the resources and partners required to implement the new agenda
The multi-partner funding initiative: key features

- **Country ownership**: *define, convene, measure*
- **Governance**: *multi-partner, decentralized, streamlined*
- **Partnerships**: *donors, UN, CSO, PS*
- **Country eligibility**: *according to request, performance*
- **DaO continued**: *harmonized, multi-agency (ma non troppo)*
- **Resources**: *multi-donor, substantial, sustained*
FIGURE 12: PROPOSED STRUCTURE FOR THE MULTI-PARTNER FUNDING INITIATIVE

Window 1

*Building country strategies*

- Strategy formulation
- Convening stakeholders
- Building monitoring capacity
- Monitoring and feedback

Window 2

*Projects in support of country strategies*

- People: human development
- Planet: environmental management
- Prosperity: economics, sectors, technology
- Peace: governance, democracy, inclusion
- Partnership: mobilizing partners, resources

One UN country programmes

National strategies incorporating SDGs

Requesting countries

SDGF

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS FUND

FUTURE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM
FIGURE 13: EARMARKING PATTERNS

- **Not aligned**
  - **Country priorities**
  - **Aligned**

- **Soft earmarking**
  - New fund
  - All countries

- **Hard earmarking**
  - Sector/country projects
  - Single countries

- **MDG-F**
  - Country Reconstruction projects (Iraq, Afghanistan)

- **Geographic concentration**

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**SDGF**

**Sustainable Development Goals Fund**

**Future United Nations Development System**