

SDG-F Steering Committee Meeting Minutes – 5 December 2017

Welcome and Introductions

The Co-chairs, Secretary of State Fernando Garcia Casas and ASG Michael O'Neill welcomed the members of the Steering Committee (SC). Spain expressed its wish to wind down the SDG-F and prepare for its transition to the new Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda (Joint Fund), noting Spain's commitment to do this in line with relevant UN regulations and also in view of the UNDS reform. UNDP and Spain emphasized the importance of ensuring coherence of the various inter-agency pooled funding mechanisms in support of the achievements of the SDGs. They also noted the need to capture lessons of the SDG-F to inform the work of the Joint Fund. MPTF-O, as the administrative agent for both funds, recognized the good work of the SDG-F. A short [video](#) featuring the results of the SDG-F was shared.

Expansion of the Steering Committee

The Secretary of State of Spain explained that the Administrative Agreement between UNDP and Spain governing the SDG Fund, provided for the approval of Terms of Reference for the SDG Fund. In order to comply with those provisions, as well as other MPTF-O and UNDG rules, and although the Fund was going to initiate its last phase it was important to have participating agencies on board to ensure a smooth transition and winding down process. Thus, UNDP and Spain welcomed the representatives of FAO, ITC and UNICEF as the new members of the SC and noted the SC's oversight role in the process of winding down. FAO, ITC and UNICEF expressed readiness to collaborate on aligning the SDG-F to the new Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda. They noted that they had also signed on to be part of the new Joint Fund. SC Members approved the Terms of Reference.

Decision:

- SC ToRs were approved, with the new membership of FAO, ITC and UNICEF to be included.

SDG Fund Progress

Joint Programmes (JP): UNDP provided a progress update on the JPs, which have an overall financial implementation rate of 75.3% and have benefited 3.5m people in 22 countries to date. Six JPs have had final evaluations. MPTF-O noted the need to ensure the closing dates are formally approved by the SC and recorded in the MPTF-O Gateway for all JPs with no-cost extensions. Subject to that verification, the proposed time tables in the relevant document on JPs completion and evaluation dates were agreed. Hence, all JPs are expected to close operationally by July 2018 at the latest, with final evaluation reports ideally completed by end-Dec.

JPs with Private Sector: The SDG-F Secretariat explained that it has worked with UNCTs on developing proposals for JPs with the private sector. Spain expressed the need to avoid embarking on any new JPs with the private sector in light of the decision to wind down the SDG-F. The Secretariat explained that the Food Africa project has already received matching funds and that work has already begun, with ITC and FAO expressing the importance of meeting the expectations which have already been raised, including with the governments and other stakeholders/partners, and that we should aim to be credible by pursuing this project.

Subject to the assessment of the agencies (UNCT) of the feasibility of an accelerated plan to be decided before January 31, the SC proposed in principle to allocate up to a maximum of \$1 M to the Food Africa project, on the basis of an accelerated, high-impact 2018 implementation plan of the first phase, and also provided that a mid-term evaluation could also be completed by end-2018.

Global Programmes and Partnerships: Spain accepted the information provided in the report on the status on UN partnerships and awaits final reporting to ascertain reimbursements.

Spain expressed its wish to provide a \$1M budget to the Colombia Trust Fund from the currently available balance, in addition to the 0.5M agreed in February 2017. MPTF-O indicated that the reporting could be accelerated to avoid disrupting the transition to the Joint Fund.

UNDP explained that Global Programmes refer to the activities developed by the SDG-F Secretariat under the Action Plan for Advocacy, Knowledge Management, Communications, Monitoring and Evaluation and SC support. The SDG-F has established contacts with the private sector, universities, think tanks and the UN as described in the SDG-F Progress Report. Spain indicated its wish to ensure that no new activities are being promoted in view of the transiting of the SDG Fund to the Joint Fund. SC members suggested to inform the partners of the SDG-F about winding-down.

It was agreed that no new initiatives should be developed or launched, and that the SDG-F Secretariat would prepare by end-Jan 2018 a work plan with clear deliverables, timetable and budget.

Staff and Operations: UNDP gave an overview of the Secretariat structure and contractual situation. Both Co-Chairs thanked the team for their work. The SC agreed to honor existing staff contracts.

MPTF-O Update on Finances: MPTF-O advised that the three other direct donors should be informed of the decision to wind down the SDG-F and given the option of being reimbursed or having their contributions implemented in early 2018.

Decisions:

- SC endorsed the new dates of the JPs with no-cost extensions as reflected in the Secretariat's report. MPTF-O will update MPTF-O Gateway with closing dates of JPs with no-cost extensions.
- Any future no-cost extensions for ongoing JPs should be reviewed and agreed by the SC, which can be done electronically.
- Transfer unearmarked \$1M to Colombia Post-Conflict Trust Fund. MPTF-O will follow-up with the Colombia Post-Conflict TF Secretariat to accelerate financial reporting for existing and future contributions to ensure the \$1.5M total is recorded as spent by end-2018.
- Subject to the assessment of the UNCT, the SC agreed in principle to allocate up to \$1M for the Food Africa project in Nigeria for activities & mid-term evaluation ending in 2018. The proposal has to be submitted by 19 January 2018, for 1 week e-review and agreement by the SC.
- Global Programmes and Partnerships: (1) No new activities/agreements should be initiated; (2) Reduce, wind down and close existing activities; (3) Secretariat to submit a revised work plan to wind down this area of work for SC e-review and agreement by the end of January 2018.
- Honor contracts of current staff; no issuance of new contracts, unless specific expertise is required and approved by the SC as part of the winding down process.
- Remaining MDG-F balance to be transferred to the Joint Fund (marked as SDG-F contribution).

- MPTF-O to inform other three donors to the SDG-F (Monaco (\$22,308) and 2 actors from the private sector (\$132,874)) of SC decision, and present option for either a full refund of their contribution or a full utilization of their contribution, focusing on potential activities that can be fully implemented in early 2018 to avoid return of their funds. Ideally, if the second option is chosen, Secretariat to agree with Monaco, Sahara Group and Ebro on activities for utilization of contribution, and inform the SC.
- SDG -F Secretariat to communicate with respective UNCTs and urge them for accelerated implementation, completion of ongoing activities/projects.

Inter-Agency Audit

UNDP provided an overview of the progress on the Inter-Agency Audit, noting the seven critical recommendations in relation to the joint audit of the governance arrangements. UNDP and the MPTF-O explained that two of the three audit components – ie the audits of the administrative agent and the JPs -- have been published, both with satisfactory ratings, while the governance audit has just been shared and will be made public in January 2018.

Decision:

- The audit reports will be shared with the SC as soon as they become available.

Transition

Spain expressed the importance of knowing the amount of the remaining funds available to transfer as a new contribution to the Joint Fund for the 2030 Agenda, so that the information can be shared soonest. MPTF-O confirmed that \$10M can be safely committed from the SDG-F to the Joint Fund. UNICEF emphasized the need to transfer lessons learned from the SDG-F to the Joint Fund, and noted that the new contribution and alignment between the two funds should be raised at a Joint Fund Board meeting in the near future (Note: UNICEF is also member of the Joint Fund Board).

MPTF-O outlined the timeline for fund closure, with operational closure and final evaluations of all JPs to be completed by the end-2018, and all final narrative reports to be completed by early 2019. MPTF-O suggested at least two more SC meetings in mid-2018 and mid-2019 to review the annual and final narrative reports, progress in closing and make decisions on other fund balances. The final certified Source and Use of Fund statement on the SDG-F is expected to be completed by 31 May 2022, pending final financial reporting by the Participating UN Organizations.

MPTF-O advised that Secretariat could be gradually scaled down. The staff functions needed in 2019 will likely be limited only to M&E and admin/finance, with one or two staff.

Decisions:

- Co-Chairs' letter on the decision to wind down the SDG-F will be sent to all partners/RCS by 15 December 2017. Message will note that all existing JPs are to be implemented and included as planned, with UN partners to ensure timely operational and financial closure of JPs in line with UNDG policies and procedures.
- Spain will announce the \$10M allocation to the Joint Fund in January 2018, following the letter to be sent to partners, in consultation with the Joint Fund Board. UNICEF and MPTF-O will ensure this issue is tabled during the 7 December Joint Fund Board meeting.
- SDG-F Secretariat to submit detailed workplan with deliverables, timeline, and budget for 2018 for SC e-review and agreement by end-January 2018, for SC approval on a no-objection basis.
- Since the SC will oversee the transition period, at least two more SC meetings will be held; next meeting could take place in July 2018, in the margins of HLPF, to benefit from the presence of the Spanish member.

The SC thanked the SDG-F Secretariat staff, particularly the Director, for their efforts and commitment.

Annex 1: List of Participants of the SDG-F Steering Committee meeting

Spain

- H.E. Mr. Fernando García Casas, Secretary of State for International Cooperation and Iberoamérica
- H.E. Román Oyarzun Marchesi, Permanent Representative of Spain to the UN
- Ms. Cristina Pérez Gutiérrez, Director-General of Sustainable Development Policies, Secretariat of State for International Cooperation and Iberoamérica
- Mr. Ignacio Diaz, Minister Counsellor, Spain Mission to the UN
- Mr. Carlos López, Embassy Secretary
- Mr. Fernando Latorre García, Chief of Section, Multilateral Development Organisms, Spanish Cooperation, MOFA

UNDP

- Mr. Michael O'Neill, Director of the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy
- Ms. Gülden Türköz-Cosslett, Deputy Director of the Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy
- Ms. Darah Aljoudar, Special Assistant to the Deputy Director
- Ms. Eugena Song, Special Assistant to the Director

FAO

- Ms. Carla Mucavi, Director, FAO Liaison Office to the UN, New York
- Ms. Mariann Kovacs, Senior Liaison Officer, FAO Liaison Office to the UN, New York

UNICEF

- Ms. Mandeep O'Brien, Associate Director of UNICEF's Public Partnerships Division
- Ms. Solome Zemene, Public Partnerships Specialist, UNICEF

ITC

- Ms. Riefqah Jappie, ITC Representative to the United Nations, New York

MPTF-O

- Ms. Jennifer Topping, Executive Coordinator (via phone)
- Ms. Henriette Keijzers, Deputy Executive Coordinator
- Ms. Mari Matsumoto, Senior Fund Portfolio Manager

SDG Fund Secretariat

- Ms. Paloma Durán, Director
- Ms. Catherine Wong, Programme Specialist
- Mr. Raul de Mora, Communications Specialist
- Ms. Ekaterina Dorodnykh, Knowledge Management and UN Relations
- Ms. Teresa Burelli, Programme and Private Sector Analyst
- Ms. Deborah Quintana, Operations Associate