

## **HLPF 2016**

### **1. General messages**

As Member States and all stakeholders now focus on SDG implementation, there is a need for a holistic approach. Sight should not be lost that the SDGs and 2030 agenda require a new mindset. The economy needs to be reoriented so that it supports people, planet, and prosperity. All stakeholders, governments, businesses, and civil society have a role to play. It is an agenda for all, and therefore all should contribute. Political leadership by Heads of States and Heads of Government drives implementation.

There is a need for integrated approaches to implementing the Agenda. Inter-linkages among SDGs are crucial, as is coherence in action. The SDGs will be delivered only if implementation builds on inherent synergies. Yet, this will not happen automatically; dialogue will have to occur. Coherence between the implementation of Agenda 2030 and other agendas, including the Paris agreement on climate change and the Sendai framework on disaster risk reduction, will be critical.

Institutions will matter tremendously for success. Many Member States have put in place high level commissions or coordinating bodies for the 2030 Agenda. Efforts will be needed to further engage local governments. At the level of the UN, the institutional framework has to be made to fully support all the SDGs. Multi-stakeholder partnerships will be a pillar of institutional arrangements for the implementation of the SDGs. 'Ensuring that no one is left behind' implies a strategic shift as for this to happen institutions need to become more inclusive and transparent. We must focus on analyzing the obstacles for the most vulnerable. Significant progress must be made in LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations where institutions are usually not very strong.

Social inclusion and participation underpin sustainable development. It requires participation in decision-making and in finding solutions. It requires data disaggregation and the visibility of typically excluded groups in national statistics. Vulnerable and under-represented groups must be involved as partners and rights-holders and as a source of knowledge. Policies and institutions are needed to support the different dimensions of inclusion. New and pressing challenges, some of which will be unforeseen, will present significant challenges to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to leaving no one behind. Swift and coherent international action will be necessary to ensure effective response to these challenges in an integrated manner.

The experience gained from this HLPF will be invaluable in the development of subsequent sessions and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. As such, it is time to strengthen political commitment by Member States and to empower the HLPF in fulfilling its mandates. There must be incentives for countries to participate in the HLPF, including the sharing of experiences and the possibility of getting support from the international community. The next session of the HLPF under the auspices of the General assembly in 2019 should be a milestone. By then, significant progress should have been achieved in all countries and especially in countries in special situations.

### **2. Where do we stand at year one?**

The Forum considered the mandated annual progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals prepared by the Secretary-General in cooperation with the United Nations system. The report aims to provide the first account of the current global situation relative to the 17 SDGs. The report provides an overview of the significant progress that has been made in many areas, building on the successes of the MDGs, and also presents many challenges we face as we begin implementation of the Agenda. With regard to the theme of the HLPF, "ensuring that no one is left behind," the first report

demonstrates that the benefits of development are not equally shared by all. Severe income inequality is one of the biggest challenges.

It was mentioned that in addition to the current content of the SDG Progress Report, there is a need to report on questions such as universality, integration, and transformation. Calls were made for future editions of the SDG Progress Report to report separately on countries in special situation. With respect to the theme of the HLPF, it will be important to look at vulnerability and marginalisation both across countries and within countries, focusing on those who are the further behind.

The broader global environment is not conducive for the SDGs: current economic growth rates are low; inequality is increasing; new technologies may lead to unemployment; developing countries are at end of the commodity cycle; and safety and security are in decline in many regions.

Globalization has not benefited all equally. In particular, the situation of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS remains concerning. Despite efforts of these countries to improve productive capacity, the global environment and limited global support are not sufficiently conducive to these countries' development. Within countries, while progress has been made in reducing extreme poverty, this trend was often undermined by broadening inequality. In many countries, the outlook for specific vulnerable groups is less positive than the overall picture.

### **3. Ensuring that no one is left behind**

#### *Envisioning an inclusive world in 2030*

The imperative to leave no one behind is core the message of the 2030 Agenda. This challenge must be addressed to build inclusive and sustainable societies. Our collective performance should be assessed on the wellbeing of the most vulnerable groups and individuals.

Inclusion and inequality remain challenges for both developed and developing countries. There is a need to address multiple forms of discrimination, including against women, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, persons with disabilities, and many other groups. In order to leave no one behind, globalization must work for everyone. Economic growth is not enough to ensure inclusive societies. Investing in peace and building resilience are essential. Policies need to be designed to benefit all and economic actors must respond to the need of vulnerable groups.

Institutions at national, regional, and global levels must support social inclusion. Policies are needed to support all dimensions of equality and inclusion and support participation of all, including women, children and youth, older people, and persons with disabilities. Partnership is essential to achieve inclusion. We should strive to involve all citizens in the realization of the Agenda. Better data and information will be a critical element of enhancing inclusion of all. Disaggregated data is fundamental in this process, as are civil registration processes that work for all citizens.

#### *Lifting people out of poverty and addressing basic needs*

There is a need to change the way we approach development and participation. We have to strive to reach the hardest to reach first, and put the most marginalized at the top of the agenda. Transparent institutions are most relevant to eradicating extreme poverty. Those furthest behind need equal access to political participation and decision making.

Poverty is a complex condition. An approach focusing on basic needs will not be sufficient to meet the SDGs. The challenge is to lift up people who are currently poor, and prevent them from falling

back into poverty. This will require investments in education and capacity, health and nutrition, livelihoods and in resilience to shocks. Efforts to increase financial inclusion, especially among the marginalized groups and communities, are a critical element of economic and social empowerment. Use of new technologies has proven to benefit such efforts. Addressing equity challenges in schools is paramount, including focusing on gender disparities in the education system. Access to services and implementation requires a human rights-based approach, and when appropriate, service provision has to be delinked from ability to pay. Migrants are often in a position of vulnerability and appropriate policies in this regard have to be put in place. This will require enhanced international cooperation.

In fighting discrimination and stigmatization, we have to recognize the obstacle posed by the existence of power structures that work against the wellbeing of the poor and that ensure that the poorest remain consistently the most disadvantaged. No progress will be achieved without a change in mentality toward the disenfranchised and vulnerable. Several countries have been very successful in fighting poverty. Factors of success of these experiences have included: focus on inclusive growth; investments in health and nutrition and provision of education; phasing in social protection networks and increasing health coverage; fostering income generating activities; facilitating access to assets, markets and value chains; enhancing financial inclusion for all marginalized groups; and support to entrepreneurship.

#### *Fostering economic growth, prosperity, and sustainability*

Prosperity goes beyond economic growth, as determinants of well-being include social and psychological factors such as the meaningful participation in society, and our ability to flourish as human beings. Economic growth is fundamental to achieve the SDGs. In the poorest countries, the focus should be on sustained economic growth and those left behind. We need to ensure the implementation of target 8.1 that calls for at least 7% annual GDP growth in LDCs. Developed countries need to sustain their international engagement to support developing countries.

Only a few countries were able to transcend the division between rich and poor countries in past decades. Usually, transformation happens through the impact of technological change. Decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation while ensuring social equity lies at the basis of sustainable development. Respecting planetary boundaries through increasing global resource efficiency is crucial. Further efforts should be made to make consumption patterns in developed countries more sustainable.

There is a critical role for policy and institutions. Beyond providing access to all basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation, three types of policy that matters for making growth inclusive are innovation policies, labour market policies, and social protection policies. Investing in infrastructure will be critical to support the implementation of the Agenda. It is critical to adapt existing and create new policies involving the private sector in a dialogue to shape the economy toward sustainability. In this way, the private sector can set its own targets within a framework in line with internationally agreed goals. The private sector should be brought on board through specific mechanisms to promote sustainability, including standards and voluntary measures.

#### *Food security and sustainable agriculture, climate action, sustainable oceans and terrestrial ecosystems – adopting a nexus approach*

The focus on interlinkages and the nexus approach for food security and sustainable agriculture, climate action, sustainable oceans and terrestrial ecosystems are important, because neither single SDGs nor the SDGs as a whole will be successfully implemented in silos. Any action with the nexus

approach needs to take into account the interrelatedness of the goals. While there is much discussion on biodiversity in oceans and the need to reduce pressures on fisheries, the expected reduction in the ability of terrestrial systems to produce food in the future implies that more of the food may have to come from oceans, pointing to the need to rethink the ocean's contribution to food security. Similarly, the pathway to dealing with the challenges of climate change must involve oceans in meaningful ways. An example of achieving solutions outside the silo approach was the process that led to the voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security.<sup>1</sup>

In order to devise strategies that maximize the food that humanity can take from the ocean while sustaining biodiversity, there is a need for dialogue between communities, especially local governments and stakeholders (for example, smallholders, indigenous communities, rural communities and large companies). Several innovative solutions used by local and regional governments were mentioned in this regard. There is also a need to integrate planning in terms of forests and terrestrial ecosystems into national and local planning.

Food security in developing countries should continue to be a key priority for policy coherence. It was suggested that food security considerations should systematically be included in national and international decision-making, especially in relation to climate, agriculture, food security and trade.

#### *Creating peaceful and more inclusive societies and empowering women and girls*

Women and girls constitute half of humanity, and we must tap into their potential by empowering them. The targets under SDG 5 should be implemented in conjunction with the other SDGs that have gender-sensitive targets, including SDG 16. It is important to build synergies between policies for gender equality and economic development. Implementing SDG 5 requires the systematic mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all aspects of the agenda including in data, statistics, means of implementation and follow-up and review, as well as increases in investment and support to gender equality institutions at all levels.

Inclusion of women requires active roles of all stakeholders, governments, parliaments, civil society, women's organisations, faith-based organisations, and the private sector. Building momentum is critical in order to transform social norms and is a fundamental building block of women leadership. Education systems should be enhanced to better support women and girls, including by promoting women entrepreneurship. Increased transformative investment towards gender equality will be needed, including in the context of ODA.

There is a need for a gender data revolution. Gender disaggregated data is critical for analysis, planning and management. In particular, the 15 indicators under SDG 5 should be taken forward and should form the basis for evidence-based implementation, monitoring and accountability building. Beyond official statistics, using more women-generated data can play a role in monitoring SDGs and in assessing whether policies have an impact.

SDG 16 is a milestone in the history of the UN. Its implementation will be challenging. In carrying it out, there has to be a recognition that conflict itself has changed. Conflict today is localized, pluralistic, involves religion, ethnic conflicts and calls for different strategies to augment state-to-state conflict resolution strategies. In this context, the UN should continue to be a strong voice for civil

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<sup>1</sup> Food and Agriculture organization of the United Nations, Rome, 2012, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/i2801e/i2801e.pdf>.

society, democracy and human rights. Conflict resolution can benefit from collaboration between state and civic capacities. Involving women leaders and women groups in conflict resolution is often very efficient. Strengthening gender approaches is key to building peaceful and inclusive societies.

#### **4. Means of implementation**

Achieving our ambitious Agenda requires a revitalized and enhanced global partnership that brings all stakeholders and mobilizes all available resources. This requires building a fair and just economic system. Resource allocation will have to be mindful of all the goals, as well as the linkages among them. There is a need to improve global governance to strengthen coordination of macroeconomic policy and address the imbalances of the global trading system. Linkages between systemic issues, finance and trade issues need to be made stronger.

International development cooperation has to respond to the transformative nature of the Agenda, while drawing on lessons learned from the implementation of the MDGs. Meeting the commitments included in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda will be critical. In particular, ODA commitments should be met. International cooperation should help address issues such as tax evasion and control and repatriation of illicit capital flows as well as tax base erosion.

It is important that the means of implementation at the global level are not divorced from the interrelatedness that exists between SDGs. Financing and other actions have to recognize this interrelatedness and utilize potential synergies. Coherence should be found among existing international financing instruments. Interventions during the HLPF showed a high awareness of the importance of considering the impacts of national actions on other countries. Some countries and groups are elaborating unified action plans and strategies for implementing the 2030 Agenda.

Financing is a key challenge for many countries, including countries in special situations. Efforts to enhance domestic resource mobilization will be critical and will require further efforts to build capacity. The private sector has to support the SDGs, including by reaching the most vulnerable. Efforts to enhance good governance and the rule of law are needed to foster economic growth.

Science, technology and innovation (STI) have to be mobilized in support of the Agenda. There needs to be a focus on STI capacity and building of STI literacy to create innovative knowledge societies. The development of national STI roadmaps, as components of national sustainable development strategies, need to address this reality. STI policies need to be assessed based on economic, social and environmental impacts and outcomes. Funding STI will require government support and ODA is important in this regard. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism (TFM), its annual multistakeholder forum and online platform hold important potential to support implementation of the SDGs.

Coordination and coherence within the UN system should be enhanced in order to avoid silos in implementation, to provide integrated policy advice and to better support countries in special situations. It was pointed out that some SDGs do not have clear institutional “homes” in the UN system. The UN can continue to be a crucial platform for advocacy and for mobilizing partnerships.

#### **5. Science-policy interface**

Science is needed more than ever to provide a complete picture and inform the implementation of the new Agenda. In turn, science needs to be responsive to the questions that the new Agenda puts forward. There is a need for dialogue, and the HLPF should remain a central platform for such dialogue. It was suggested that a core area of focus for the science-policy interface at the HLPF should be the inter-linkages across the SDGs. Science can provide insights that go beyond what is

revealed by indicators, on the causes of ongoing trends, the effectiveness of policies and development interventions, as well as on likely threats and opportunities. The HLPF should continue to seek the inputs of scientific communities worldwide.

ICT tools, forums, and platforms could be used to encourage citizen-driven science and serve as platforms for socialising other technologies. Science can also help with the cultural dimension, for example to better understand the factors of adoption of technologies. The science-policy interface should become a backbone of joint learning and joint designing of policy options. This should happen at different levels, from the local to sub-national to national to global. It is important to create space for exchange of practices among the multiplicity of existing initiatives on science. The identification of new and emerging issues is also a critical function of the science-policy interface. It is also one of the functions of the HLPF.

In order to keep the conversation between scientists and policy-makers alive, concrete suggestions were made, which included: maintaining open calls for science-policy briefs on a continuous basis; having annual updates on new and emerging issues at the HLPF; convening intersessional science meetings; and relying on voluntary efforts by the scientific community to produce science-based thematic reviews for the HLPF.

The Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2016 was presented at the Forum. The report addresses the theme of the HLPF, including through the lenses of technology and institutions. The next GSDR will be issued in 2019. It was mentioned that the GSDR 2019 should be relevant for policy makers, and address emerging issues as well as key bottlenecks for implementation from a scientific perspective and help inform policy makers in that matter. Calls were made for the GSDR to have dedicated content on groups of countries in special situations. In operationalizing the mechanism agreed by Member States for the GSDR, it will be important to mobilize the broadest possible range of scientific inputs from multiple disciplines.

## **6. Creating ownership at the national level**

Awareness of the 2030 Agenda at the global level needs to be translated into action at the national level. Creating ownership of the SDGs and their interlinkages will require building on national and local contexts, values and cultures, avoiding the use of blueprints. SDGs will have to be taken to the grass-root level, with special focus on vulnerable groups. Awareness of the SDGs can also be raised through the media. Education for sustainable development will be needed to train the next generation on the SDGs. Some countries reported that they are including the SDGs as part of school curricula.

While Governments have to take the lead and assume overall responsibility, all segments of society will need to be included in implementation, moving from government only approaches to approaches that will include the whole of society. . Establishing clear engagement mechanisms for implementation, including for women and indigenous people, is important. The design of national strategies should be inclusive and allow for participation of all groups in society. In many countries, civil society networks in relation to the SDGs have been established. Some countries have national and local committees and councils for sustainable development.

The SDGs formulation process was very participatory, and this needs to be carried over to national level reviews. Participatory monitoring will be important, both to track progress and foster ownership of the Agenda. Transparency and accountability are fundamental for the implementation of the SDGs. States must ensure access to public information. Many countries have established institutional mechanisms for participatory monitoring and follow-up of sustainable development.

## **7. Mainstreaming SDGs into national policies, plans and strategies and integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development**

Strong commitment and leadership is required to incorporate the SDGs and their interlinkages into policies, programmes and institutions at the different levels of government. All available governance tools should be used, including legal instruments, market instruments, or network solutions (partnerships). Many countries reported on changes made to their legal framework to provide for the implementation of sustainable development, including the SDGs.

An increasing number of governments are integrating the SDGs in national visions, sustainable development strategies, plans and roadmaps. Many countries reported that they have “nationalized” targets for the SDGs agenda in their national strategies and plans, including financing strategies. Several countries have undertaken mappings of the linkages among goals and targets as well as between SDG targets and national objectives.

Many countries have established institutional mechanisms for implementing the SDGs, including national sustainable development councils, dedicated ministries for SDG coordination, inter-ministerial committees, commissions or committees at different geographical levels and other coordination mechanisms, as well as national councils for development cooperation. Many national parliaments are also engaged. Many countries have also worked on principles and standards to guide ministries in the implementation of the SDGs, including for taking interlinkages into account.

Enhancing policy coherence across sectors will be paramount. Dialogue will have to occur among line ministries, among scientists and experts, among civil society, and most importantly with the people on the ground. Breaking up institutions can present risk and may result in loss of accountability. Rather, it was suggested that existing institutions have to “learn to dance”. Attention has to be paid to avoiding creating unnecessary new layers of institutions for sustainable development.

## **8. Vertical cooperation –local authorities and national governments working together for implementation of the 2030 Agenda**

Local and sub-national level governments will be critical to the success of the SDGs. They are at the forefront of implementation, and have a leading role to play in securing the safety, wellbeing and livelihoods of communities, including by providing basic services. They are also at the forefront for action in support of poor and vulnerable segments of the population.

Local and sub-national governments are developing roadmaps and guiding principles for multi-level coordination and monitoring and SDGs at the local level. Multi-stakeholder partnerships engage diverse actors to create local ownership and mobilize stakeholders to contribute to the SDGs. Many cities engage citizens in planning and decision-making processes (for example, citizens’ committees on air quality) and in local sustainability initiatives. In some countries, local authorities voluntarily monitor and report on sustainable development matters. Citizen involvement in the implementation of the SDGs at the local level should be promoted.

Despite being at the centre of SDG implementation, local and sub-national authorities are often not well taken into account in policy development at the national level. There are cases of conflict between national strategies and local initiatives. A balance needs to be struck between the need for coordination and coherence of local initiatives to achieve the SDGs and meaningful localization of the Agenda. Political as well as technical processes will have to recognize and value the role of local leadership and encourage local leaders to take ownership of the SDGs. Data are an essential bridge for

linking the different levels of governments. Establishing close partnerships with grassroots organizations can help develop data collection capacity.

## **9. Multi-stakeholder engagement for implementation**

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda will require participation of all citizens and stakeholders. Multi-stakeholder partnerships will be a pillar of institutional arrangements for the implementation of the SDGs. Efforts are required to enhance the voice of all stakeholders in decision making, by engaging in active outreach and providing adequate resources for their participation in relevant fora. It is critical to ensure that public information is accessible. Participation was pointed to as being a basic need. Civil society has a critical role in pushing and delivering the Agenda. It has already mobilized and created platforms to monitor it, including by creating their own indicators as necessary.

Inclusiveness means that all people can participate as partners, rights-holders and full citizens, not as subjects or mere beneficiaries. Relevant international instruments often exist, such as the Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disabilities, but are not always respected. Many countries have created mechanisms for social dialogue among stakeholders to follow implementation and review the 2030 Agenda, such as multi-stakeholder platforms and multi-stakeholder committees. Such institutions foster regular dialogue with civil society, as well as exchange of information and knowledge.

The HLPF has continued to build inclusiveness and transparency, engaging major groups and other stakeholders in its discussions and considering reports on their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This should continue to be an integral part of HLPF's deliberations in the future.

## **10. Follow-up and review**

Monitoring and measuring progress is important and benefits all. A global effort to improve data quality and availability is needed to provide an accurate picture of progress and make informed decisions. Trust in the data produced is very important for citizen's engagement. Many countries have put monitoring processes in place. Civil society can act as collectors and producers of data.

Many countries reported that they have built or are building indicators based on national priorities, sometimes based on "nationalized" global indicators. National statistical offices have a central role in national follow-up and review processes, including for the development of national indicators. Data are currently lacking for monitoring many SDGs, including at the global level. In many countries, data are missing on basic indicators such as maternal health. Enhanced support from the international community to build capacity of national statistical offices is critical and urgent. Existing partnerships between countries and international agencies in terms of statistics were mentioned.

In order to review progress on the Agenda, enhancing efforts to collect disaggregated data will be critical. Available data should be made more accessible. Establishing platforms for sharing available data relevant to progress on the SDGs were mentioned as an example of low-hanging fruit. Further efforts will be needed to turn big data into useful data. Regulatory frameworks and ethical standards will need to be developed in order to appropriately manage the implications of big data.

The HLPF's role as the central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs is extremely important. All countries must take advantage of the forum and find new ways to report on progress. The Forum's reviews must be robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent, and integrated with other follow-up and review activities. Increasing the reporting burden of countries should be avoided, making full use of existing reporting mechanisms, including those under international conventions and treaties. Follow-up and review needs to be fed back to national



implementation. Sustained political attention is critical, and in this regard the annual SDG progress report will make a welcome contribution.

## **11. National Voluntary Reviews at HLPF**

Twenty-two countries presented national voluntary reviews. Reflecting the voluntary nature of the reviews, volunteering countries used various ways to structure their presentations. Substantive elements included in the reviews are presented under the relevant thematic sections of the Summary.

As a whole, the national reviews showed impressive ownership of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs by presenting countries. Less than one year after the adoption of the Agenda, these countries have devoted considerable time and resources in analysing the implications of the 2030 Agenda and the relation between the sustainable development goals and targets and their national priorities; in putting in place consultation and coordination processes around the SDGs; in integrating the SDGs in their national strategies, plans and budget processes; and in setting up monitoring and evaluation systems. While the set of reviews presented showed many similarities in terms of visions, goals and priorities, it also reflected differences in priority areas stemming from varying national contexts.

In preparing their voluntary reviews for the HLPF, many countries used broad consultation mechanisms, ranging from inter-ministerial coordination to wider inclusion of civil society and public consultations. Several volunteering countries acknowledged the support provided by the UN system for the preparation of their HLPF reviews. For many countries, the reviews were the occasion to take stock of their institutional framework in support of sustainable development. All countries included a description of the institutional framework for sustainable development in their presentations.

All reviews focused on national processes that are ongoing to ‘nationalize’ the SDGs and integrate them with national priorities and in national strategies and plans. The reviews highlighted a broad range of priority issues. The imperative to leave no one behind was mentioned in all reviews as a critical dimension in this process. All reviews mentioned means of implementation in general and SDG 17 in particular as a critical aspect of the implementation of the Agenda. Many countries described how they are setting up monitoring and evaluation systems at the national level, including revising or creating sets of national indicators. The need for support from the UN system to enhance data collection capacity was mentioned in many reviews.

Lessons learned will need to be fed back to the national level. At the global level, it will be important to reflect on what has been achieved through these reviews as well as where gaps remain. Discussions in other sessions of the forum highlighted that national reviews for the HLPF should: be inclusive and participatory; reflect bottom-up evaluation processes and be open to inputs produced at the sub-national level; and include disaggregated data.

## **12. Making the 2030 Agenda deliver for SIDS, building on the SAMOA Pathway**

The SAMOA Pathway and Agenda 2030 are well aligned in terms of content. They should be perceived as mutually supportive. Specific clusters of goals, for example the nexus among food security, oceans and climate change, have special relevance for the SIDS and must be considered together. Climate change is a central concern for SIDS. Building the SIDS’ resilience to climate change and natural disasters is critical. More support and resources need to be devoted by the international community to climate change adaptation in SIDS.

The high vulnerability of SIDS to natural disasters as well as financing and resource mobilization remain a challenge in SIDS. SIDS are perceived as risky by international financial investors and

attracting foreign direct investment remains a challenge. Genuine partnerships are needed to achieve Agenda 2030 and the SAMOA Pathway. SIDS face special challenges for monitoring the Agenda and the SAMOA pathway. Building statistical capacity in SIDS is important and should be a priority.

### **13. Countries in special situations**

Countries in special situations are largely those countries that have been left behind. Many countries are not able to overcome their structural challenges due to limited support. Going forward, it will be important to address the root causes of vulnerability and marginalisation for these countries. Diversifying economies, improving agricultural productivity will be crucial for many of these countries, and so will be manufacturing, tourism and natural resource-based industries. Investments in infrastructure will be needed to support economic growth and improve productivity.

Synergies will be needed between Agenda 2030, programmes of actions specific to groups of countries, such as the Istanbul Programme of Action, the Vienna Programme of Action, the SAMOA Pathway and other strategies such as Africa 2063. Several countries reported that resource limitation has led them to prioritize among the various goals, while taking account of the need to ensure a balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development. Beyond enhancing domestic resource mobilization, their success will largely depend on a strengthened global partnership, including capacity building, technology transfer, technical and financial support, trade facilitation, and international cooperation. Commitments in terms of ODA for these countries need to be met.

Data availability is severely limited in many countries in special situations, linked with limited capacities of national statistical offices, lack of basic data, lack of data systems at the national level, and lack of access to technology and data infrastructure. The capacity of national statistical offices needs to be strengthened. Efforts should be made by these countries to develop primary data systems and embrace the data revolution, including promoting citizen-led monitoring of the SDGs. Early support from the UN system in this regard is critical.

Middle-income countries (MICs) are a diverse group of countries. The definition based on national income hides high disparities within these countries, sometimes with thriving middle classes as well as significant groups living in poverty. Several interventions during the forum requested the establishment of a dedicated UN interagency mechanism on middle-income countries in order to provide enhanced analysis of the challenges and needs of these countries.

### **14. Regional experiences**

Some of the issues raised by the SDGs can best be addressed at the regional level. Regional organizations and initiatives provide important platforms for addressing regional priorities and challenges, mobilizing collective action, and addressing transboundary issues. They are critical for ensuring coherence and integration of the 2030 Agenda with regional agendas and visions, for integrating the SDGs into national development plans and for strengthening the capacity of governments to implement the 2030 Agenda. Building capacity in regard to data, and in particular data disaggregation, is an area where regional organizations can contribute, and are already doing so.

Regional forums on sustainable development have been constituted in all the five regions of the Regional Commissions and are already active in mobilizing member states of each region, together, in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. These forums will be a key part of follow-up and review of implementation of the 2030 Agenda, establishing a link between national and global processes.

