



Remarks

by

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at the interactive Panel session on

**“Institutional and governance frameworks for territorial cohesion and
SDGs localization”**

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Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Agenda 2030, together with the SDGs, call for leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first.

The LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS comprise 91 of the most vulnerable countries, with a combined population in excess of 1 billion people. For many of them, key socio-economic indicators have exhibited only slow improvement over time. In 2015, an assessment at the conclusion of the MDGs found that, despite headway on some of the goals, the gap between these countries and the rest of the world had widened. These countries have the greatest amount of “unfinished business” of the MDGs. Their marginalization is also reflected in their minuscule shares in world trade, global FDI flows, and contributions to new technological innovations.

Critical issues for the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS include their vulnerability, remoteness, urban and rural disparities, weaknesses in transport networks internet connectivity, as well as basic infrastructure.

The 2030 Agenda is broader in scope than the MDGs, and goes further, with ambitions to address inequalities, economic growth, decent jobs, cities and human settlements, industrialization, oceans, ecosystems, energy, climate change, sustainable consumption and production, peace and justice.

The range of actors that need to be engaged in order to achieve a specific SDG will depend on specific national contexts, the governance arrangements in place, the degree of subsidiarity on decision-making, and the respective roles played by national and sub-national governments, as well as private sector and other stakeholders.

For example, while a country’s overall energy strategy is articulated at the national level, energy policy on specific areas may be devolved, with autonomy granted to the sub-national level for decision-making on supply, distribution and even pricing.

Successful implementation of the SDGs will require putting in place **effective institutional mechanisms** to work across levels of decision-making.

The complexity of the SDGs – individually and together – call for innovative approaches and institutional arrangements that ensure that the positive synergies between the different SDGs are leveraged, for example through horizontal and vertical sectoral integration.

Localization of the SDGs will require developing tools that can be adapted for specific use by local actors, whether at the level of territory, city or community.

Multi-level governance requires vertical policy coherence and collaboration mechanisms between local, national and international layers of governance.

Decision-making needs to be coordinated and consistent across these levels.

Fostering ownership at the local level is essential for securing engagement. There are a number of good examples of this. Bangladesh has taken up a bottom up approach to prepare a clear roadmap for localization of the 2030 Agenda through extensive consultation with local

government institutions. Botswana established a National Steering Committee to drive the policy agenda, including membership from Government, the private sector, development partners, youth groups, the National Assembly, the Ntlo ya Dikgosi (formerly House of Chiefs), civil society organizations, trade unions and other non-state actors.

As state and local governments are called upon to play a greater role in implementation of the SDG, there is a need to ensure that **the financial resources necessary to fulfill those functions are available**. Concurrently, there is a need to **strengthen local governments' capacities to manage larger budgets**, including for budget formulation, data collection, accounting and audit. Sierra Leone reported, in its Voluntary National Review, that late disbursement of funds from central government to local councils hindered implementation during the MDGs phase; this was noted as a major factor to overcome to ensure successful implementation of the SDGs. Nepal has highlighted that a major challenge will be to cascade national efforts to sub-national levels to mainstreaming the SDGs agenda into the provincial and local level planning and budgeting once these new levels of government are established. In 2018, 7 Provinces will be set up. Provincial committees and new district coordination committees, together with municipalities, will take the lead in coordination to achieve the SDGs at the local level. As one of the key conclusions of its Voluntary National Review, Nepal has identified the need to establish institutional mechanisms at provincial and local municipal levels for monitoring and evaluating progress.

Almost all countries have stressed the importance of ensuring that the necessary systems are in place to allow for **collection of data** disaggregated by geographical criteria and segments of society. This is to enable decision-makers to allocate resources based on needs, track progress and promote accountability. Data gaps are currently a significant obstacle. For instance, the Maldives reported that the lack of technical expertise, particularly in terms of data collection and management, remained a major hurdle for the implementation of SDGs, which was compounded by the lack of trained staff and necessary equipment for data collection and management. Securing funding to address these needs is a challenge especially for the poorer and most vulnerable countries, where there are competing claims for the limited resources available.

As a final point, I would like to emphasize the need to **build human resource capacities** at the local level. This is strongly backed up with experience to date with Voluntary National Reviews. Nepal has reported that consultations, workshops and trainings are needed to incorporate the SDGs into provincial and local plans, with finance a major constraint. The Ugandan Government, with support from UNDP, has trained sectors and local governments on SDGs and provided technical backstopping to local governments for quality assurance of development plans. But Uganda has noted that more work needed to be done to develop detailed frameworks that sectors and local governments can use to integrate SDGs.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges ahead are enormous. But there is universal recognition that the litmus test of success in implementing the SDGs lies in the extent to which we succeed in empowering local level actors – through the right institutions, coordination mechanisms, awareness raising, disaggregated data collection, capacity building and training, and financial resources.

Thank you.