



## ***High-level UN forum on development cooperation paves way for 'leaving no one behind'***

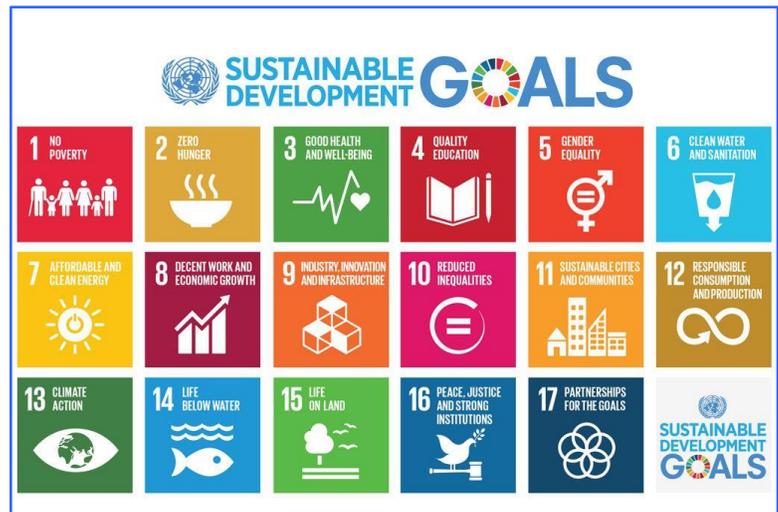
The United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) High-level Symposium officially opened in Brussels, Belgium, with senior UN officials urging delegations to ensure cooperation is 'a better fit' for implementing the 2030 Agenda, including for vulnerable countries.

The DCF is a core function of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and in his remarks, the body's President, Oh Joon, underscored: "Now is the time for all countries to translate the global goals that we agreed upon through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda into concrete national strategies and actions."

Under the title 'Rethinking development cooperation for the Sustainable Development Goals: country-level perspectives and lessons,' the Symposium is focusing the range of actors on how development cooperation can be made a better fit for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly in least developed countries and other vulnerable contexts.

Further, the forum looks at how best to adapt development cooperation institutions to the recently adopted 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Oh said that the "biggest challenge facing developing countries in realizing the new Agenda lies in capacity gaps" and highlighted the need to develop tailored national SDGs, integrate policies, mobilize resources, and operationalize the commitments on the ground. The bold vision of "leaving no one behind" means bigger expectation for international development cooperation to help bridge these gaps, in particular in least developed countries (LDCs) and other vulnerable contexts, he noted, adding that at a Special Meeting of ECOSOC on the issue of Inequality he had convened in New York, delegations had very productive discussions on how to reduce inequality among and within countries to achieve sustainable development.



He said development cooperation can help tap the potential of all development actors by: localizing the SDGs and building institutional and human resources capacities; spurring innovation, technology development and knowledge sharing; and promoting private sector engagement for sustainable development impact; as well as strengthening multi-stakeholder approaches, including citizen-based monitoring.

In his remarks, Wu Hongbo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs said the 2030 Agenda demands new ways of working and a change of mind-set from all development cooperation actors. "It inspires us to look closely at the inter-linkages between sectors. It requires us to break down the silos that stop us from working together."

The new UN sustainability framework also compels actors to understand better specific national and local situations, and tailor our actions accordingly. And, it emboldens actors to work through much broader partnerships that embrace all stakeholders – including the world's most vulnerable people, he stressed. "A renewed approach to development cooperation is key to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It can be a powerful lever for integrated and effective approaches to SDG implementation at all levels," said Mr. Wu.

Against the backdrop of the current global challenges and the recent terrorist attacks, participants underscored the distinctive role of international development cooperation. Mr. Wu made it clear that: "We are here – and we stand with you – in the wake of the heinous terrorists attacks against Brussels. We will not let terror win over humanity, solidarity and peace.

Development cooperation is such a vital way we work together, to secure the foundations for peaceful, prosperous and inclusive societies. Our work must go on. Indeed, we must lift it to the next level.”

Alongside high-level UN officials, Her Majesty, Queen Mathilda of Belgium, who was appointed by the UN Secretary-General as one of the SDG Advocates, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium, Alexander De Croo, addressed the multi-stakeholder forum, which brought together representatives of national and local governments, parliamentarians, civil society, international organizations and the private sector.

The high-level meeting of the DCF will convened at UN Headquarters in New York on 21-22 July 2016.

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