



Office of the Chief Executive

Executive Committee on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDGs Coordination Unit

The Executive Committee on SDGs meeting minutes

Meeting #: 5

May 27, 2018

The Executive Committee on SDGs convened its 5th meeting at 12:00 noon, on Tuesday, 27 May, 2018, at Sapidar Palace, Kabul, Afghanistan with participation of H.E Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. It was co-chaired by H.E. Mustafa Mastoor, Minister of Economy, H.E Abdul Rahman Shekib, Development and Economic Advisor to Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Mr. Napoleon Navarro, Deputy Country director of UNDP in Afghanistan. The meeting was attended by officials from several governmental entities, representatives of International development partners, Civil Society Institutions and private sector.

At the beginning, H.E Dr. Abdulla Abdullah, the Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, welcomed the board and appreciated the efforts of the SDGs stakeholders on A-SDG, specifically UNDP. Mentioning few instances of UNDP's efforts, he considered the Agency's conduction of recent workshop entitled: Monitoring and Evaluation and Result Based Management, for the staffs of SDGs Secretariat and MoEc is a clear indication of UNDP's efforts on SDG in Afghanistan. H.E the Chief Executive also pointed out to UNDP's arrangement of its SDGs experts visits in Afghanistan. H.E the Chief Executive, also greeted Mr. Sultan Aziz, the National Consultant of UNDP on SDGs, who have been newly appointed for the post by UNDP. In his final appreciation statements to the UNDP, H.E Dr. Abdulla Abdullah acknowledged the agency decision to technically and logistically assist the SDGs Secretariat. Raising the necessity for high level participation of governmental entities into the Committee meetings, He directed to prepare him a list of the ministries who do not attend the meetings at a regular basis so that raise the issue in the meetings of the Council of Ministers.

H.E Minister of Economy, greeted H.E the Chief Executive and other participants to the meeting. Briefing about the last two weeks' activities on SDGs, he raised the following major points:

- Presence of H.E the Chief Executive in the committee meetings led to improvement in the quality of the Committee meetings;
- Works to complete the alignment part of the SDGs is a well manner;
- After meeting with the minister of education and explaining the SDGs and its importance, he promised to fully support the fulfilment of the Agenda;
- Ministries of Higher Education, Justice and Migration organized their technical and consultation meetings to complete the SDGs alignment;
- Have plan to meet all the minsters to get their support for speeding up the works on the SDGs Alignment;
- MoEc and the Secretariat is ready to technically support the involving entities in completing their Alignment Table;

- Mr. Sultan Aziz, the newly hired National Consultant on SDGs by UNDP, due to his long term professional experiences with different departments of Afghan government as well as international organizations, can provide a great impetus for improving SDGs implementation in Afghanistan;
- In a meeting with UNESCAP, the organization was requested to support SDG attainment in Afghanistan.

Following the Minister's statements, Mr. Napoleon Navarro, deputy country director of UNDP started his remarks with greeting message to H.E the Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. He, then praised the hard works of SDGs stakeholders in Afghanistan in holding meetings and working on Alignment phase of the SDGs. Speaking about his meeting with H.E the Minister of Economy, he considered it a very productive one and reflected his happiness to hear that the SDG alignment will be completed soon.

Later on, H.E Abdul Rahman Shekib shared his remarks starting with welcoming messages to H.E the Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the meeting. He noted that attendance of H.E the Chief Executive has provided extra impetus for works on SDGs. Afterwards, he submitted the list of major activities and attainments on SDGs to H.E the Chief Executive which had been prepared by MoEc and the Secretariat.

In Next part, H.E the Minister of Economy reviewed the minutes of previous meeting and asked the Secretariat to report about the status of meeting the actions decided to be taken in the minutes. With the update by the Secretariat, the minutes was approved by the meeting members.

Commenting on the next week activities on SDGs, Mr. Navarro noted the UNDP plan to have a quick assessment of coordination status among SDGs stakeholders with regards to aligning their programs with SDGs and identify the challenges each involving party faces in this respect. Based on his remarks, the assessment aims at identifying the works that the Afghan government need to do to go faster with actions on SDGs. Giving more details, he highlighted that the Assessment will be limited in scope with particular objective to provide knowledge for Afghan government about the current status of the A-SDGs and recommendations to take the Agenda ahead. Mr. Navarro further noted that meeting the SDG goals is not the sole responsibility of government, rather, the whole society is responsible for it. Promising to support the A-SDGs by UN families was his concluding remarks.

Next, Mr. Sultan Aziz, national Consultant to UNDP made his presentation which covered the bellow-mentioned topics:

- System Approach For System Change;
- Seeing the whole system together;
- From Responding to Customer to Listening to the Ecosystem;
- From Executive Solution to providing a Context for Learning;
- From Controlling process to empowering Organizations ;
- System Mapping Application for SDG Integration ;
- Moldova 2030 National Development Strategy.

For better works on SDGs, Mr. Aziz proposed the following set of suggestion and recommendations:

- Agreement to adopt systems approach;
- System thinking capacity building ;
- Convening a team in the Executive Committee to begin a system;
- Piloting a system approach with the four working group;
- Reporting back to the Executive Committee for review.

H.E the Chief Executive, thanked Mr. Aziz for the presentation. He stated the attainment of SDG goals need a structural, organized and joint efforts. Therefore, Ministries need to find a common ground for such efforts and better coordination on SDGs. Pointing on importance of Civil Society and private sector role on SDGs, H.E the Chief Executive noted that these institutions roles and responsibilities are equal to those of governmental ones, thus there should be well coordination between these institutions and government. On the matter, he highlighted about the insufficient role of Civil Society and private sector in the Ex-Com which need to be rapidly dealt with. In his other Remarks, H.E the Chief Executive, urged the SDGs stakeholders, mainly the Committee members and MoEc to take the 2030 Agenda ahead with consensus and unanimity.

Mr. Haseeballah Moahed, deputy head of Afghanistan Central Statistics Agency, commenting on the presentation, stated that systemic work is crucial in meeting the Agenda goals. In order to succeed, he raised the necessity of preparing a five-year plan accompanied with clear roadmap as a starting phase for the Agenda's implementation. The plan and road map ought to be well aligned with national developmental strategies such as ANPDF and NPP. Based on his claim, without such a plan and roadmap it is difficult to meet the SDGs goals. Pointing on Afghan experience of MDGs, Mr. Moahed noted that one of the main underlying factors behind failure of MDGs in Afghanistan was lack of clear and long-term economic and social planning and policies. Raising supportive hints to the statements of Mr. Moahed, H.E the Chief Executive said that like ANPDF (which is the bases of all developmental program till 2020) and NPP, from now on, the SDG to be considered as the base of developmental agendas in Afghanistan. Suggestion for efficient method of communication, H.E Dr. Abdullah Abdullah suggested the SDGs involving parties to use new and effective methods of contacts (email and phone calls, meeting in person), instead of traditional ones (contact through letters), to avoid waste of time. Related to the importance of effective communication among SDGs stakeholders, he stated the one of the major goals of the presentation was to expose the significance of well communication in attaining the SDGs goals. H.E the Chief Executive directed the Committee to work on how to pass from the current stage of the SDGs into the next one as its immediate future task. Arranging advocacy of A-SDGs at the international level, H.E the Chief Executive, said that the Agenda to be raised in those international conferences that are about the Afghanistan development.

H.E the Minister of Economy asked Mr. Sultan Aziz to review all the developed documents on SDGS in Afghanistan, identify the gaps in them, arrange a roadmap for SDGs implementation and present it in the upcoming meetings of the Committee.

Mr. Hasan Sroosh, from MoFa, alsom made a terse comment on the presentation. He argued that cooperation within and among ministries a key to the success of SDGs implementation in Afghanistan. In addition, UN country teams also have key role in this regard. Therefore, they need to further clarify their roles.

Mr. Abdul Qadeer Bahman, head of Afghanistan International Chamber of Commerce appreciated the presentation as well as the fact that Private Sector is member to all WGs. Yet, he stated that despite important role of private sector on SDGs, it was not very highlighted in the presentation. Mr. Bahman also updated the board on the International Chamber of Commerce decision to hold an international conference in New York in due course. Based on his updates, representative of Afghan Private Sector is planned to attend the conference. He asked to the potential attendees of the conference to raise the priorities of SDGs in Afghanistan as well as the prioritized indicators. Giving details about the conference, Mr. Bahman said that in the Conference entitled: SDGS-Business Forum, around 20 representatives from

Afghanistan will attend. Updating about initial efforts with regards to selection process of candidates for the Forum, he reported that the Afghan Chamber of international Commerce has already held a meeting with the representatives of private sector in office of Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

Responding to the comments raised by Mr. Bahman, H.E Abdul Rahman Shekib argued that the nature of SDGs requires a unitary and joint decision for implementation of 2030 Agenda, not focusing on certain goals or part of it. "Afghan government cannot prioritize to implement part of the SDGs within 3 or 4 years, while putting the remaining parts on hold. With such approach, I suppose the Agenda cannot have achieved even in 50 years' time." He said. Talking about the SDGs indicators related to the Environment, H.E Shekib urged the Afghan government to set its environmental and ecosystem policies and actions based on the SDGs.

Being intrigued with the case of Moldova, raised in the presentation, H.E Minister of Economy noted that the system applied in Moldova is an interesting one for Afghanistan. In addition, experiences of other regional countries such as Tajikistan and Bangladesh also help Afghanistan in planning its SDG related programs and policies. Commenting on the causes of MDGs complications in Afghanistan, he argued that lack of Afghanistan International development partners to MDGs in Afghanistan was a notable challenge of the Agenda in Afghanistan, while in SDGs, it is not the case and international community has special attention and will to attain the SDGs in the world including Afghanistan.

Before leaving the meeting, H.E the Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan directed the SDGs stakeholders to include also institutions and groups who can play role in achievements of SDG goals. He also directed the Afghanistan Bank to take part in the WGs meetings.

Following the meeting Agenda, Mr. Sultan Ali Jawed, the planning and policy director at the ministry of migration and repatriation, delivered his presentation about the status of the ministry's efforts in aligning its programs with SDGs indicators belongs to migration and displacement. The presentation encompassed following topics:

1. The nationalized goal belongs to the ministry;
2. Facilitation of legal migration, secure repatriation, settlements with consideration of returnees and displaced dignity;
3. Ministry's plan to reduce the cost of the businesses done with the money sent to the country by migrants;
4. The suggested indicators for the ministry and its supportive parties;
5. Government agreements on Migrations and Refugees,
6. Estimated budget in the "DREC" (Displacement and Returnees) Policy framework;

Elaborating the above-mentioned topics, Mr. Jawed reported:

"The ministry is a member of WG-3 and the Executive Committee on SDGs. It focuses in management of the affairs related to migration, refugees and displaced. The ministry works jointly with 17 other ministries and five independent institutions. The ministry supports other institutions activities on Refugees and migration based on the agreement it had dealt with them. UNHCR and IOM is the ministry's international partners. Reacting to the presentation made by Mr. Jawed, H.E the Minister of Economy said that it was more appropriate if the presentation were only focused on alignment parts of the ministry activities.

Thereafter, Mr. Reza Kateb, the general policy director from MoI, updated the board about the last two weeks' activities of the WG-1. He reported that the MoI had plan to deliver a presentation about the Group activities on SDGs alignment today, yet, due to some issues, it could not make it. He furthered updated that Alignment Table belongs to MoI is almost completed. Only the indicator number 16-3-3,

which is about the number of people with access to legal assistance, has remained without a baseline. He said that the baseline for the indicator is in number, while it should be set based on percentage. To solve the issue, he asked the Committee to find a solution for it. According to his report, some of the Group's member absentees in its meetings loom the group's activities and progress, particularly the MoI activities on the baselines and alignment. Giving a name, Mr. Kateb said that despite contacts by the co-chairs members of the Group with the Afghanistan Bank to participate in the groups meetings, the bank is one of the most absent members the Group meetings. The same issue is with the Civil Registration Authority, though the institution is responsible party for one of the indicators.

Pointing on the issues of MoI with regards to the SDGs, Mr. Kateb, said that the leadership of the ministry do not seem very interested in the Agenda. He noted that without of Committee to officially discuss the minister of interior on the SDGs, the issue might not get solved.

Relating to the report of Mr. Kateb, H.E Minister of Economy vowed to speak with the Minister of Interior about the issues of MoI. In addition, he directed the co-chairs members of the WG-1 to hold its next meeting in MoEc under his chairmanship so that decide about the existing problems of the Group. Moreover, Minister Mastoor asked MoJ to prepare its presentation for the next meeting of the Committee. He suggested the MoJ to focus its presentation on the experiences of MoJ in nationalization, drawing baseline, alignment and other policy actions done by the ministry about SDGs.

In the next part of the meeting, Mr. Essa Qudrat, an Advisor to MRRD, updated the meeting about the activities and attainments of WG-2. Based on his updates, the WG is working on the SDG alignment. Yet, the recent change in the format of Alignment Table loomed the progress on the alignment table. Despite such problems, he reported that the WG members seriously work to align their program with the SDG and expected to complete it within 15 days' time. Mr. Qudrat reported that Minister of MRRD had officially signed the Alignment Table and submitted it to the ministry's supportive parties and asked them to complete it within the scheduled timeline. Accepting the delay due to change in the format of the Alignment Table, H.E Minister of Economy argued that the new format is more comprehensive and complete than the previous one which help the policy makers of SDGs in making effective policies and strategies for the Agenda. With regards to prioritization part of the Table, Mr. Muqadar Hashimi, director of Policy and Planning of MoEc elaborated that that the aim with prioritization is to identify the areas with the most needs in certain areas at the provincial and local levels.

Following the meeting Agenda, Mr. Abdul Qadeer, General Director of Policy and Planning from MoPH updated the meeting about the last two weeks' activities and achievements of WG-3 consisting in: "the activities go on to complete the Alignment table with the support of MoEC and the Secretariat. During the work, some member parties demanded to think more about financial source and political support of the Agenda. The WG-3 members wants more political support for the agenda. Lack of some of the WG members' participation and interest in the agenda are two major problems of the WG which need the support of the Committee to tackle them."

H.E Minister of Economy, appreciating the updates, directed to hold the next meeting of the WG-3 in MoEc. He vowed to participate in the meeting so that find a solution for the above-mentioned issues of the Group.

In next part of the meeting, Mr. Hasan Sroosh, Head of Regional Cooperation Department of MoFa discussed the South-South Cooperation(SSC) and possibility to us the cooperation platform for the SDGs ends. He stated that SSC is similar to Vienna and Istanbul program of Actions. Afghanistan is member of

SSC and notable part of its goals are in line with those of 2030 Agenda. MoFa is responsible for achieving SSC objectives and goals in Afghanistan. The ministry will present its activities and attainments in SSC conference scheduled to be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. MoFa wants to the Executive Committee on SDGs to support the ministry in making coordination among involving parties and preparation of the report for the SSC. In addition, the Committee can use SSC platform for its own purposes. H.E Minister of Economy, asked the meeting members about Mr. Sroosh suggestion. The members all agreed with it. Minister Mastoor asked MoFa further clarify it suggestion and present it in the next meeting of the Committee.

Summary of the discussion and actions to be carried out

1. H.E the Chief Executive directed the Committee's Co-chairs members to well consider the suggestions of the Committee members and the Secretariat to make sure they are well incorporated;
2. H.E Minister of Economy and the Secretariat make sure to include issues related to the SDGs in the talking point of H.E the Chief Executive for the meetings of the Council of Ministers;
3. The Committee agree in principle by application of the System entitled: System Approach to Change Systems, that has been introduced in Moldova, for attainment of A-SDG. MoEc and the Secretariat are responsible to pave the way for it;
4. Additional SDGs stakeholders ought to be identified and be invited to the general meetings of the Committee and WGs. UNDP, MoEc and the Secretariat is responsible for the task;
5. UNDP to share both short (2020) and long term (2030) successful experiences of regional countries such as Tajikistan and Bangladesh in implementation of SDG;
6. The result of Ministries technical meetings be presented in WGs meetings and their important points and results be shared in the Committee meetings too;
7. The upcoming meetings of WG-1 and 3 be held in MoEc under chairmanship of H.E Minister of Economy;
8. The Committee agree in principle with the approach to employ the capacities and facilities of South-South initiative Conferences with under leadership of MoFa;
9. MoFa, to present the plan to use the facilities and capacities of the Ex-Com for reporting to the Conferences of HLPF in one of the Committee Meetings;
10. The MoJ to deliver its presentation in the next meeting of the Committee;
11. MoEc to deliver presentation updating about the attendance of ministry's delegations to the meetings of UNESCAP and ECOSOC;
12. The next meeting of the Committee will be held at 12:00 noon, June 12, 2018 at the same place.

- **Mustafa Mastoor, Minister of Economy**
- **Abdul Rahman Shekib, Economic and Development Advisor to the Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,**
- **Jocelyn Mason, Country Director of UNDP,**