



Office of the Chief Executive

Executive Committee on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

SDGs Coordination Unit

The Executive Committee on SDGs meeting minutes

Meeting #: 11

6 February 2018

NO	Agenda	Duration
1	Opening remarks by honorable Co-Chairs and adoption of the previous meeting minutes	10 Minutes
2	UNDP presentation on funding mobilization for SDGs program	10 Minutes
3	ACBAR presentation on CSOs role in SDGs implementation	10 Minutes
4	Central Statistics Organization(SCO) professional presentation on SDGs targets and indicators	10 Minutes
5	Updates by MoEc on WGs activities about mapping and alignment of the SDGs with national programs and projects	20 Minutes
6	(AOB)	10 Minutes

The 11th meeting of the Executive Committee on SDGs took place at 10:00 am, Tuesday, 6 January, 2018, at Sapidar Palace, Kabul, Afghanistan. It was Co-Chaired by H.E. Mr. Mustafa Mastoor, Minister of Economy, the honorable Nasrullah Arsalai, Director General of Council of Ministers and Mr. Jocelyn Mason, Country Director of UNDP in Afghanistan. The meeting was attended by the government officials, International Organizations, civil society and private sector representatives.

Welcoming the attendees, H.E Mastoor extended his sincere sympathies to the families who lost their member(s) at the latest suicide attacks in Kabul which claimed dozens people life and prayed for the loses to rest in peace. He then, noted that the security alerts aftermath of the incidents were the main reasons of delay the Committee's meeting. However, he urged the organizers to go ahead with the scheduled timetable of the Committee meetings with the judgment that highly significance of the SDGs agenda for the country should not be disrupted by the current problems the country faces. Pointing to the current status of activities on SDGs, he said: "The targets and indicators were supposed to be aligned till the beginning of 2018, which have not been completed yet, therefore the secretariat and Ministry of Economic (MoEc) are responsible to accelerate their measures in this regard". He said. In order to complete the alignment process, Minister Mastoor informed the audience that Central Statistics Organization (CSO) will deliver presentation highlighting the ongoing issues with the selected targets and indicators and ways to tackle them. Minister Mastoor also directed the Working Groups (WGs) to do their utmost to solve the issues before the next meeting of the Committee. Pointing to part of the issue, he said

that those indicators which have no baselines yet, ought to be included in the of the current year's national survey program of the Central Statistics Organization.

H.E Nasrullah Arsalai welcomed the participants. He then expressed his condolence to victims' families of the last week's security incidents in Kabul and other provinces of the country. He then, briefed the participants on the bellow-listed issues that the SDGs secretariat had suggested him:

- Cramped meeting hall has been one of the factors that all members of the committee cannot participate in SDGs Executive Committee Meetings. However, as the new building for the Council of Ministers has been launched few days ago. The honorable Arsalayee directed the protocol team of the Council to arrange a proper hall for the next meetings of the committee. With regards to the issue of low-level- participation of WGs members, he noted that this is a serious issue as some members do not participate and others send their representatives who are too novices for the agendas of the meetings. To handle the luck of some of representative's familiarity with the content of SDGs, he asked to conduct an awareness programs for the Committee, WGs as well as public. The honorable Arsalayai also regretted from lack of interest on SDGs agenda at the leadership of some governmental entities and promised to deal with the problem through the Council of Ministers.
- Establishment of a separate unit for SDGs in the governmental entities with aim to better coordinate the SDGs related work, was another highlighted point by the honorable Arsalayee.

Mr. Jocelyn Mason also welcomed the participants and shared his sympathy and thoughts with the families of the recent weeks' suicides attacks in Kabul. He once again reiterated on the strong support of UN family for attainment of SDGs in Afghanistan till its conclusion in 2030. Mr. Mason stated that the alignment of SDGS with other national documents such as ANPDF and NPP are very crucial for successful implementation of the program.

At the end of introductory remarks, H.E Mastoor referred to the minutes of the previous meeting and briefly reminded the fulfilment of the actions supposed to be met in the meeting minutes. Commenting on the minutes, Mrs, Humaira Saqeb, representative of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working Group said that the group's name was not mentioned in the meeting minutes. In response, H.E Mastoor directed the secretariat to add in the group's name. Then, the minutes was approved by the board.

In the next phase of the meeting, Mrs. Claire Van Loveren, an Officer at the governance section of the UNDP made a presentation entitled: Mobilizing resources for the SDGs in Afghanistan. The presentation was divided on the following major agendas:

Alignment

- Best practices of other countries on the SDGS alignment with their national plan.

Resources mobilization

- Possible financial resources for the SDGS implementation;
- Financing/ Resources mobilization initiatives for the SDGs- existing practices;
- Potential financing partners for SDGs implementation in Afghanistan.

Technology tool for monitoring and evaluation

Regarding to the alignment policies, she briefed the meeting on a number of selected cases like Indonesia, Mongolia and Georgia and proposed a set of recommendations in this regard in two major level- assessment and actions. For the assessment part, she suggested for each entity to identify projects and activities which are related to A-SGDs targets and indicators. Then, identify NPP, sectorial plans and strategies to be aligned to achieve respective A-SDGs targets and indicators. For the action part, Mrs.

Claire suggested to bring the SDGs on the board of development councils as well as consider the program while drafting NPPs.

With regard to the mobilization of resources, she stated the domestic resources as the stable sources of funding for the SDGs. Mrs. Claire shed lights on the donors funding and their requirements. On the matter, she elaborated on the important role of private sector. Talking about financing, Mrs. Clair shared the example of Tanzania where the private sector has been an effective contributor of the implementation of the SDGs. Additionally, she referred to the case of Indonesia where Islamic financing (Zakat) has played a good role of funding for the SDG. Mrs. Clair concluded her presentation with a number of recommendations with respect to the financing of SDGs as following:

- Strengthening domestic funding sources;
- Mapping assistance of existing implementation partners;
- Working with existing partners in a capacity development.

H.E Mastoor thanked Mrs. Claire for the presentation and reminded that working on SDGs is at the alignment stage, hence, there is still time to get the private sector and CSOs involved in the process. Minister Mastoor again asked to work on the national prioritized indicators and well align them with the other national developmental documents such as ANPDF and NPP. He further stated that as the alignment process is at the edge of its completion, the budgeting and cost estimation process ought to be done thoroughly. On the budgeting process, he suggested to prepare “off budget” for parts of the SDGS Agenda, because finding sources will be difficult for all parts. Minister Mastoor noted that 25% of the budget will be arranged by the government. However, to manage the budget for all parts, he asked for the joint efforts by all stakeholders and stated that nor the government neither private sector or international donors partner are able to pay the cost of the program individually.

H.E Abdul Rahman Shekib, Senior Economic and Development Advisor to the Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan asked UNDP representatives to shed lights on the specific role and contribution of UNDP in implementation of SDGs in Afghanistan. Mr. Haseeballah Moahed, The Deputy of the Afghanistan Central Statistics Organization asked Mrs. Claire if counting majorly on the domestic sources for the SDGs is limited to the developed countries or the same procedure applies to less-developed countries like Afghanistan too. Mr. Mohammad Ismael Rahimi, Deputy Minister of Policy and Planning of MoEc, by appreciating the content of the presentation, brought into the audience attention that some projects have been already designed. He then expressed his eagerness to know how to redesign them based on the requirements of the donors and prepare a decent proposal for them.

In response to the question on the role of international donors for the SDGs, Mr. Jocelyn said that at the present time, it is less likely to arrange an international conference, like the one held in Brussels, to collect money only for the SDG, but urged to use the same funds promised in the Brussels conference by international community for the SDG purposes as well. He also argued that it is very important to well align SDG with ANPDF, because the funding for some part of the agenda is available till 2021, but for the rest it arranged through both “on and Off Budget” procedures.

The honorable Arsalayee also commented on the presentation. He said that active contribution and well-coordination among the main stakeholders of SDGs is very crucial for the successful implementation of SDG, particularly among the governmental entities, private sector, SCOs and international development partners. According to his statement, lack of common understanding among the different stakeholders on SDGs is the main underlying factor behind the challenges and ambiguities ahead of SDGs program in Afghanistan. The best way to find a common ground is to work on awareness program because well

awareness on SDGs pave the way for creation of common understanding. Mr. Arsalayee agreed with the point on Miss Claire presentation that provision of acceptable proposal for the international donors, yet he argued that it is difficult without arrangement of common understanding and consensus on SDGs to prepare such proposal. With regards to the awareness program, he stated that it is a technical work and asked UNDP to help on the matter. He also argued that Afghanistan has chances to get the support of international community, but how to get such supports is the main problem. He also reiterated to the point that it is very important to have support of UNDP and other international partners for preparation of satisfactory proposal and consider the role of private sector in the proposal. Commenting on the recommendation to accumulating the SDGs budget through “Zakat”, Mr. Arsalai said that it is a complicated task and need a transparent and specific policies. About the limited role of UNDP in facilitating the funds of the SDGs, he said that if UNDP is not able to fully respond to the funding-related request of Afghan government for the SDGs, it get sense to involve other international partners in the program who are not the Committee member yet. To realize the suggestion, he proposed to establish specific committee with the mere membership of international partners who support developmental programs and projects in Afghanistan due to convince them support the SDGs agenda as well.

Mrs. Humaira Saqeb, Head of Civil Society Working Groups, supporting the creation of common understanding on SDGs, proposed to the MoEc to jointly work with the SCOs achieving the aim.

Mr. Ismael Rahimi said that UNDP funding capacity on Awareness is partial and it is not possible to initiate a comprehensive awareness program with such budget and proposed to seek for other sources too. On the matter, the honorable Arsalayee asked UNDP representatives to specify their exact capacity and the level of their support so that the program on awareness set based on the available sources and facilities. Mr. Rahimi highlighted that MoEc has drafted the strategic plan for the awareness and the work going on to develop the action plan for it, hoping to complete it within a week time. With preparation of the action plan and its approval by the Committee, Mr. Rahimi said that will start working on the cost estimation of Awareness program. In response to the highlights regarding the action plan, the honorable Arsalayee asked MoEc to share its draft with the WGs first and then present the approved version in the next meeting of the executive committee on SDGs. On the matter of funding the awareness program, Mr. Jocelyn, said that it is UNDP duty to find the funding for the awareness program on SDGs.

Pointing to the role of Private Sector, Mr. Rahimullah Samander, CEO of the Afghan Chamber of Commerce indicated that the sector has strong potential to effectively contribute in attainment of the SDG. Yet, the sector has number challenges. One of the challenges is that the private sector pay taxes to the government but in return, they do not get necessary facilities or support from the government. For instance, the government does not buy the product of private sector. Plus, the manufacturing industry have difficulties in arranging suitable place for their production as well as electricity and water services. But the most important issue of the industry according to him is the illegal extraction of mines in the country. Supporting the important role of private sector on SDGs, Mr. Shafiqullah Attayee, Deputy Head of the Afghan Chamber of Commerce stated that focus should be on the infrastructure projects; the projects which have the capacity for further investment and are valuable for the country ought to be identified. Accepting the raised challenges of the private sector, the honorable Arsalayee said that the government has not received any recommendation or suggestion for the private sector yet, but stated that the government is ready to cooperate with private sector in tackling their challenges as well is joint cooperation on SDGs.

Mr. Douglas Armour, the head of governance from UNDP responded to the comments on UNDP role on SDGs in Afghanistan. He informed that UNDP work in a close collaboration with MoEc to arrange for better

coordination and communication and the agency will play its specific role on SDGs implementation in Afghanistan.

H.E Abdul Rahman Shekib, Senior Economic and Development Advisor to the Chief Executive of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, stated that UNDP efforts on public awareness program ought to be coordinated with the related programs of CSOs institutions and private sector.

Following the meeting agenda, Mr. Haseeballah Moahed, made his presentation. His presentation majorly focused on precise definition and characteristics of indicator; critical review of the nationalization process of the targets and indicators, including the issues with the selected indicators for A-SDGS; set of recommendations to solve the problems the indicators and central Statistics contribution in finding solution to the problem. Elaborating the points, he stated that some international indicators, which seem necessary for the country, have been omitted from the nationalized version of the program, albeit accepted the fact that it is necessary to tune the international indicators with the national cultural and social norms of the country. Mr. Moahed also pointed to the poor quality of the translation of indicators from English into local languages. Pointing on the other problem, Mr. Moahed said that some indicators has no baseline at all, but hoped to solve the problem via the findings of the recently conducted nationwide survey by the Central Statistics Organization.

Mr. Rahimi, appreciated the support of Central Statistics organization in general and Mr. Moahed in particular on progress of SDGs program in the country. He raised a number of comments on some topics of the presentation: first about the view of Mr. Moahed about the nationalization process. Mr. Rahimi argued that in principle, nationalization of SDGs does not prohibit changes or omission of international indicators, rather, the process allow each country to adjust-omit or change- the indicators based on their national context. In addition, he said that some indicators are omitted or changed by the sectorial implementing entities and MoEc did not and/or couldn't meddle. Because MoEc does not want to impose its views on the planning process of other ministries. In his final feedback, Mr. Rahimi suggested the central statistics organization to think also for cheaper and modern methods of survey such as online, sampling and so forth, to provide the baselines for the selected indicators. He also promised that all the selected indicators and targets will be jointly reviewed by MoEc, MoWA and Central Statistics Organization and presented the review's result in the next meeting of the Executive Committee on SDGs.

Mrs. Spozhmai Wordak, Deputy Minister of MoWA disapproved the Central Statistics organization comments on the selected indicators and targets. She argued that representatives of the organization were present at the meetings of WGs over the course of development of the targets and indicators. Hence, now it gives no sense for the organization to criticize about the activities of the WGs. In response to the feedbacks on the presentation, Mr. Moahed said that all the points raised in the presentation is consultative in nature and the agency does not want to impose them. The executive committee has full authority to consider or ignore it.

H.E Abdul Rahman Shekib, thanked Mr. Moahed for his presentation, but noted that "PriSec" had similar problems. But they requested help from the World Bank to solve their problem. The World Bank conducted a set of seminars for PriSec which helped the unit to overcome their problems. He asked UNDP to take similar initiative for the SDGs.

The honorable Arsalayee, asked all the stakeholders to seriously think about initiation of public awareness program with the help of UNDP. Pointing to the topic of discussion in the committee meetings, he suggested to discuss the technical issues at the WGs meetings and present the result in the committee's

meetings. On the matter of issue that WGs cannot solve them alone, he suggested to report such types of issues at the committee level. In case the committee cannot find solution, they will be reported through the Economic committee of the council of ministers to the council of minister.

Mr. Reza Haidari, Acting Deputy of Ministry of Water and Energy argued that some ministries have a wrong perception of the indicators and targets. He also stated that working on indicators are highly technical tasks, but it are not considered seriously. Therefore, suggested the involved ministries and entities to have strong commitment on SDGs and asked UNDP to technically support the program.

Summary of the decisions and next steps:

1. MoEc, MoWA and Central Statistics Organization(SCO) to review and finalize all the targets and indicators prior to the next meeting the Executive Committee on SDGs;
2. The translated version of “Meta Data” of the indicators into the local languages need to be sent to the Executive Committee members on SDGs by MoEc;
3. A meeting to be set with participation of all WGs members and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to deliver a presentation focusing on the status of Less Developed Countries (LDC-ALDC) with regards to implementation of 2030 agenda. The Coordination Unit to support arranging the meeting;
4. UNDP along with MoEc and Central Statistics Organization(CSO) to hold a technical meeting for the WGs to finalize the indicators and baselines;
5. The Secretariat need to prepare the minutes of the meetings and list of participants of WGs and submit it to Directorate General of Council of Ministers for further decision in terms of absence of members.
6. UNDP need to hold an awareness workshop on the SDGs agenda for the WGs;
7. Technical discussions ought to be made in the WGs meetings, agreement and disagreement issues need to be reported in the Executive Committee for further decision making;
8. Ministry of Economy need to conduct a technical and consultancy meeting with all of social society and private sector separately to obtain their point of views and proposals. SDGs Secretariat need to cooperate in this regard;
9. MoEc need to prepare the Strategic Plan and Action plan for the public awareness on SDGs and after presenting them to the WGs, it should be presented in the next meeting of Executive committee on SDGs;
10. The next meeting of the committee will be held at the same time and venue on 20 February 2018.

Jocelyn Mason,
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Nasrullah Arsalai,
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Mustafa Mastoor,
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