



**United Nations System
Private Sector Focal Points Meeting 2006**

DRAFT AGENDA

“Towards Impact, Scale and Local Ownership: New tools and mechanisms for effective partnership management”

**Paris, France
1-2 June, 2006**

co-hosted by:
UN Global Compact Office
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UN System Staff College
UN Fund for International Partnerships

Objectives of the Meeting

The Annual UN Private Sector Focal Points Meetings seek to accomplish the following objectives:

1. **Enhancing Communication:** Basic information sharing and dissemination about partnership related activities across the United Nations system including at the country level.
2. **Strengthening Learning:** Support the educating and training of Private Sector Focal Points and other important players in the UN system; utilizing the Private Sector Focal Points and others as multipliers to inform and educate staff in country/regional UN offices.
3. **Advancing Coordination:** Effective networking with staff from across the UN system working on partnership issues.
4. **Improving Collaboration:** Contribute to community-building, sense of ownership among UN staff working in partnership with business.

Given the specific requests made by the General Assembly in 2005 (Resolution A/RES/60/215 “Towards Global Partnerships”), this year’s meeting will focus on two key aspects of effective partnership management in the context of the evolving UN/Business partnership agenda:

- **Impact assessment of partnerships:** Last year’s survey of the UN’s involvement in partnerships with business has shown that many partnerships lack effective review processes and impact assessment mechanisms.¹ In order to scale-up successful activities to achieve even broader societal impact, the UN needs to develop a selectivity mechanism to provide the basis for such decisions. Under which conditions can a successful partnership be scaled-up and when should the UN scale-down partnerships that are not delivering?
- **Local ownership in partnerships:** Many UN organizations, agencies and programmes have started to devolve their partnership work to the country level. This process generates many challenges, including the training of local staff, engaging local groups (local government, business, and NGOs), or allocating the necessary resources to get such work off-the-ground.

¹ See Jan Martin Witte and Wolfgang Reinicke (2005), *Business UNusual: Facilitating United Nations Reform through Partnerships* (United Nations: New York).

United Nations System Private Sector Focal Points Meeting 2006

DAY 1: Thursday, 1 June

8:30 - 9:00 **Registration**

9:00 - 9:30 **1. Opening Plenary and Welcoming Remarks**

Meeting Facilitator: Jane Nelson, Director, Corporate Responsibility Initiative, Harvard University, and International Business Leaders Forum

- **Georg Kell, Executive Head, UN Global Compact Office**
- **Ahmed Sayyad, Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Cooperation, UNESCO**
- **Staffan de Mistura, Director, UN System Staff College**
- **Amir Dossal, Executive Director, UNFIP**

9:30 -10:30 **2. Plenary Session and Discussion**
“Reviewing UN-Business Relationships”

Opening Keynote addresses:

- Senior-level UN representative
- Senior-level business representative

10:30-11:00 **Coffee break**

11:00-12:30 **3. Plenary Session**
“Policies and Procedures for Effective Partnerships: A Review of the UN/Business Guidelines”

Lead Discussant:

Maria Vicien-Milburn, Director, General Legal Division, Office of Legal Affairs (tbc)

Partnerships can only succeed if useful policies and procedures are in place. This session will provide participants with the opportunity to explore the UN/Business Guidelines and their implications in practice. Participants will also showcase examples of UN agency guidelines that have been developed to complement the UN’s guidelines.

- *How well do existing guidelines work and how could they be improved?*
- *Is there a need to revise these Guidelines in order to place a greater emphasis on the facilitation of partnerships?*
- *Is there scope to clarify legal requirements and simplify the partnership creation process without jeopardizing the UN’s credibility and brand?*

Potential Panelists:

- UNEP - UNDP - UNESCO - UNICEF

12:30-13:30 Lunch (Participants are required to cover their own expenses)

13:30- 15:00 4. Working Groups Session #1:

Participants will participate in one of three simultaneous working groups. Each group will be led by UN representatives and experts. These groups will be designed to facilitate lessons learned and the sharing of good practice on the following themes:

- A) Partnership Impact Assessment and Review Mechanisms**
- B) Impacting Systems: Partnership Learning in Action**
- C) Partnerships in Bilateral Development Cooperation: Lessons Learned and Scope for Collaboration**

A. Partnership Impact Assessment and Review Mechanisms

Moderated by: Søren Petersen, Policy Advisor Business Partnerships, UNDP Nordic Office and IFC (tbc)

Multi-stakeholder partnerships in international development are rising in number– but not all of them produce impact or are sustainable. Whether or not a partnership succeeds or fails depends on numerous factors, many of which are beyond the control of UN partnership practitioners. However, much would be gained if UN Focal Points had access to an assessment tool that could increase their understanding of the expected outcomes of a partnership, *prior* to embarking on such a project. An assessment tool designed to evaluate the risks and opportunities of partnerships upfront could help UN Focal Points make more informed choices about which partnerships to develop - before partners make significant investments.

Such an impact assessment tool would not only help UN Focal Points make more informed decisions about whether or not to proceed with new partnerships. It could also be used to monitor and benchmark the progress of initiatives and identify opportunities that may augment the partnership’s broad development benefits. Although assessing impact beforehand cannot replace political judgments about priorities, creative solutions or common sense - it can raise fundamental questions that enable a more-informed decision regarding the potential impact of a partnership.

- *How do UN focal points currently assess whether or not to embark on a partnership project and how do they determine the likelihood that such projects will contribute to UN objectives (i.e. development)?*
- *Could UN focal points benefit from a simple tool that would provide a forward-looking assessment and assist them in making more informed decisions regarding the partnerships that would be more/less likely to deliver on its objectives?*
- *What kind of indicators might be useful in order to develop target measurements or benchmarks for partnerships?*

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) has developed a “Framework for Measuring Sustainability”, which includes indicators for ‘high impact’ transactions that demonstrate significant expected positive environmental, social or corporate governance impact. This

working group will examine this and other such frameworks with a view to exploring the possibility of developing a simple, easy-to-use assessment tool that could be used by UN colleagues across the system.

B. Impacting Systems: Partnership Learning in Action

Moderated by: David F. Murphy (UNSSC) and Ros Tennyson (The Partnering Initiative)

The UN System Staff College (UNSSC) and The Partnering Initiative launched a new phase of the *Partners in Action* programme in September 2005. The programme is designed to offer UN agencies new opportunities to develop the partnering skills and competencies of their staff and to strengthen strategic partnership thinking and procedures across the UN system.

This workshop will explore the growing partnership learning experiences of UN staff based on the delivery of the *Partnering Skills for Strategic Engagement* course in Vienna, Geneva and Paris, and related UN training in Eastern and Central Europe. Building on this experience, we will explore key lessons learned and identify additional staff learning needs and partnering priorities within the UN system.

- *What are the core partnering skills and competencies that are needed within the UN system to facilitate and strengthen UN-business partnerships?*
- *What impact on partnering practice has the course had to date?*
- *What are some of the practical challenges of developing appropriate partnering courses for UN staff?*
- *How can individuals and agencies build further capacity system-wide, particularly at the country and regional levels?*

Partnering with non-state actors is not yet fully internalized within the UN system and external actors still find partnering with the UN difficult. This workshop will seek to foster a greater understanding of the key issues and to articulate new activities that will address these challenges.

C. Partnerships in Bilateral Development Cooperation: Lessons Learned and Scope for Collaboration

In parallel to the work of the United Nations system, many bilateral development agencies have also developed extensive “partnership” programmes in recent years. For example, the German Technical Development Agency (GTZ) launched its PPP program six years ago and has recently started to mainstream its activities - screening all new project proposals in the organization for potential partnership opportunities. Similarly, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) established the Global Development Alliance in 2001 and within five years the Alliance forged more than 290 initiatives. The Department for International Development (DFID), the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) among others have similar programmes in place.

While there are many differences between partnership programmes developed by bilateral and multilateral organizations (primarily because bilateral development agencies are able to support partnership work with financial commitments), they all face common challenges:

- *How can successful partnership initiatives be developed in organizations traditionally geared at donor-focused project work?*
- *What does it take to mainstream partnership work, or is mainstreaming really always the best way to go?*
- *How can new partners from business and civil society be recruited for the development cause?*

This workshop will facilitate a frank exchange of lessons learned and best practice. In addition, this session will provide a forum for exploring potential collaborative work on partnerships between bilateral development agencies and the UN.

15:00-15:30 Coffee break

15:30-17:00 5. Working Groups Session #2: Experiences from the country level - Implementing partnerships on-the-ground

This session will provide participants with the opportunity to exchange lessons learned in working with business at the country-level. Each group will be led by a UN staff member involved in country level implementation.

- *What works well and what does not?*
- *How can innovative initiatives be scaled-up to achieve even greater impact (i.e. performance indicators)?*

A) The Growing Sustainable Business Initiative at the country-level (UNDP)

- What are the experiences of the GSB Brokers at the country level?
- How does the GSB engage local business?
- What is the role of the national government?

B) Business Partnerships with SMEs (UNIDO)

- How is the UNIDO Automotive Business Partnership Program evolving?
- How to manage the exit of a MNC and have local business take over?

C) A UN Country/Regional Approach to Partnerships (UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre, Europe and the CIS; UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok)

- How can the UN mainstream partnership work at the country-level/in a regional office?
- How can learning and capacity-building be organized at the regional/country level?
- What has worked well in terms of training at the country-level? How could it be replicated?

D) The Role of Business in Humanitarian/Disaster Relief (Office of the Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/ United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs /WFP/ FAO)

- How can we engage the private sector successfully at country level in humanitarian relief efforts (i.e. disaster relief, refugee protection, famines etc.)
- What are special problems and concerns (standards + principles, insurance, etc.)
- The Office of the Special Envoy will publish a report focused on the role of businesses in the tsunami relief and reconstruction effort. It will feed into a broader Tsunami 'Clinton principles'/lessons learned report currently being prepared this session will provide focal points with the opportunity to share examples of partnerships with business and any specific lessons learned in the context of the tsunami.

17:00-18:00 6. Plenary Session: Working Group Report-Backs

One representative from each of the working groups will report-back to the plenary and highlight the main conclusions of the discussion and next steps for the group.

18:30-20:00 *Cocktail Reception*

DAY 2: Friday 2 June, 2005

9:00 - 10:30 7. Working Groups Session #3: Capacity Building

Participant-led action groups have been designed to build the capacity of UN focal points around the following themes:

A) Outreach: Who is my audience, how can I recruit new business partners?

B) Measuring and Communicating Partnership Success

C) Change Management at Home: How can I bring colleagues and senior management on board?

D) Enhancing UN Communication Platforms: Collaborating to Update the UN/Business website

10:30-11:00 Coffee break

11:00–12.30 8. Plenary Session: Perspectives from Civil Society and Business

This session will provide business partners with an opportunity to offer a candid critique of their partnership relations with the UN. It will also highlight the insights of civil society representatives, based on their organizations' relationships with business. The objective of this session is to provide lessons learned that could enable the UN to improve relationships with business.

12:30 -13:00 9. Concluding Plenary Session: Common Priorities and Next Steps

How can the UN private sector focal points network be further strengthened?
What are the common priorities and next steps?