



“Catalyzing Transformational Partnerships Between the UN & Business”

A Private Event - Meeting Rooms Hans Castorp & Settembrini

Waldhotel Buolstrasse 3, Davos Platz, Switzerland

Friday, 27 January 2012 10:30-12:00

Background Note

Enhancing the impact of UN-business partnerships is critical to meet twenty-first century challenges, and is a key priority of the Secretary-General's second term. Building on the recommendations outlined in the Global Compact LEAD Task Force report “Catalyzing Transformational Partnerships Between the United Nations and Business” and Government support for this agenda, this session will provide a platform for CEOs and UN Heads to co-create a Partnership Facility. The Partnership Facility will provide the kind of support needed to catalyze more transformational partnerships - addressing public and private objectives, resulting in more systemic impact across sectors and geographies.

Format/Participants

Co-chaired by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Mr. Paul Polman, Chief Executive Officer of Unilever, this moderated roundtable discussion will involve approximately 20 participants comprised of Global Compact LEAD Chief Executives and Heads of UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

Objectives of Meeting

- #1. Agree on the main objectives/functions of the **Partnership Facility**.
- #2. Agree that GC LEAD Task Force members and UN representatives will jointly develop an **Action Plan** that will culminate in the launch of the Partnership Facility at Rio +20 in June.
- #3. Identify new or existing initiatives that could become transformational UN-business partnerships and benefit from the Partnership Facility – to achieve more systemic impact.

Key challenges the Partnership Facility will help to address

Culture: Differences in organizational culture and limited capacity on both sides can result in mismatched or unfulfilled expectations. The UN and business may not always understand each other's motives.

Strategy: Development challenges do not respect geographic boundaries or the boundaries of various UN Agency mandates; Lack of coherence at the global and country levels within the UN can prevent business from effectively partnering.

Capabilities, Operations & Knowledge-sharing: Benefits of working together are not always clear; Core competencies of each partner are not always fully utilized; Seed funding is difficult to secure and Government funding is rarely flexible; Knowledge and good practices are not always transferred.

Governance & Leadership: Many partnerships lack a governance structure, the necessary flexibility to bring in appropriate partners as needed, and/or a framework for measuring outcome-based results.

Discussion Questions

Participants are asked to contribute their views and commitments to action in response to the following:

- **What should the main objectives and functions of a Partnership Facility be in order to support more impactful UN-business partnerships?**
- **Will your Organization contribute to the development of an Action Plan with the aim of launching the Facility at Rio +20 in June?**
- **Are there new or existing initiatives that could become transformational UN-business partnerships and benefit from the Partnership Facility – to achieve more systemic impact?**

Objectives and Proposed Functions of the Partnership Facility

1. Objectives:

- The Partnership Facility would be a UN-wide platform, housed within the UN Global Compact Office, offering a variety of support services and expertise to interested UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes and to businesses that have demonstrated a commitment to work with the UN to help catalyze new transformational partnerships; enhance and scale up existing initiatives; build capacity and share knowledge; and enhance accountability, integrity and UN coherence.

2. Functions:

I) Matchmaking and Incubating New Projects

- Building on existing capacity and the www.business.un.org platform, identify specific development challenges where more systemic impact could be achieved by matching the reach, competencies and needs of the UN with business capacity, needs and market opportunities/failures.
- Catalyze new, more transformational collaborations and partnerships to further UN goals.

II) Amplifying and Scaling Existing Initiatives

- Demand-driven support to help scale up existing partnerships across multiple projects, in collaboration with relevant partners. This would include, for example, identifying other potential partners with complementary capacity and expertise who could become involved.
- Provide legal, consulting and accounting expertise to help streamline processes and lower the transaction costs of building partnerships.
- Enhance UN coherence at the global and country-level by strengthening connections with UN country teams and the One UN approach.

III) Capacity-Building and Knowledge Sharing

- Provide advice, guidance and training to UN and business representatives to develop necessary partnership skills (i.e. negotiation, communication, governance design)
- Share learning and good practice examples across the UN System and among the business community.

IV) Enhancing Accountability/Integrity

- Institutionalize an outcome-based monitoring and evaluation framework and share best practices from across the UN, international development practitioners and the business community.
- Develop and manage accountability methodologies connected with partnerships and voluntary commitments made by the private sector and promote transparency around results.
- Provide support to mitigate UN reputational risk, ensuring a commitment by the private sector to embody UN values and responsible business practices.
- Develop policies and tools for brand management and partner selection and explore a unified “UN Partnership Brand”.

3. Structure & Funding:

- A platform housed within the UN Global Compact Office.
- The Secretary-General asked the Global Compact Board to reconstitute itself as a “Global Compact Partnership Board”. By Rio +20 in June, the multistakeholder Board of the UN Global Compact will be expanded to include CEOs and UN Heads with relevant partnership expertise to provide strategic guidance and direction.
- Start-up costs to be provided by the private sector with public sector support.