High-Level Political Forum´s session
"Preparing the high-level political forum for post 2015: Steering implementation of the development agenda and
reviewing progress"
(8ᵗʰ July, 19.30 – 21.00)

Panelist: **Attila Korodi, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
of Romania**

Key questions:
  1. *What would be the best way for HLPF to review implementation and progress towards future sustainable development goals?*
  2. *How can the agenda and working methods of the forum allow promoting integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions?*

COMMENTS
(1. *What would be the best way for HLPF to review implementation and progress towards future sustainable development goals?*)

- **The challenge for the HLPF** which mandate is to provide leadership on a very broad and inclusive concept like sustainable development **is one of scope and focus.**

- This is a transition year for the Forum, but it is also a **critical one**, when we must shape it to become the **robust platform we need** under the auspices of the GA and ECOSOC to advance and review progress in the implementation of the post 2015 development agenda.

- **The articulation of SDGs is the logical culmination of current attempts, to focus the sustainable development agenda,** and can serve as a motivating set of more specific purposes to guide the work and scope of the HLPF**.**

- One of the greatest achievements of the establishment of the forum lays in its "hybrid" nature, **where Major Groups of the civil society and other stakeholders can engage through solid modalities.** This important feature is one instrumental aspect in realizing the full potential of the forum in spearheading the implementation of the post – 2015 development agenda.

- We can learn from our experience with the MDGs, where some of the most significant progress made towards achieving these goals and targets, came through broad and inclusive **multi-stakeholder partnerships such as GAVI and UN AIDS**.

- The reviews of implementation which the forum will conduct as of 2016 are a tool not only to assure accountability, **but also to accelerate sustainable development progress.** They can allow governments to assess how they are organized and function as well as to learn from peers. As the post-2015 development agenda is universal, all countries, richer and poorer, must engage in the review. The forum can serve as "**a locus of accountability**" and encourage reviews and accountability in other forums.

- **We note that the first session of United Nations Environmental Assembly of UNEP - with universal membership - has delivered its outcome few days before the beginning of the Forum.**

- **We must ensure national ownership to the review**, and thus, should build on their experience and the knowledge of domestic institutions, such as parliaments and the national Courts of Audit. All actors should be held accountable. Monitoring must be forward looking. We must be ambitious in designing the reviews while learning from existing experiences including the National Voluntary Presentations.

- In our vision, **the HLPF has a huge mandate**. We must resist the temptation to multiply bureaucratic layers and duplicate what is done elsewhere. To enhance integration, the HLPF must engage Government officials and actors from the economic and financial area, such as the World Bank and the IMF, together with those from the social and environmental sphere. This also is hard to achieve, but we have to and we will connect all the different players. We must ensure that the realities of all countries – large and small – are reflected in its work and outcomes.

2. (How can the agenda and working methods of the forum allow promoting integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions?)

- *The 2013 Secretary-General's Report on Sustainable Development mainstreaming* takes stock of **how the three dimensions of sustainable development have been integrated into the work of the UN system to date**.

- While it documents a wide number of UN agency initiatives to integrate sustainable development into operations, strategic planning and programs, it concludes: "Overall, sustainable development is not only about ensuring economic, social and environmental perspectives are reflected in strategic planning process of UN organizations, **but that these perspectives together form a holistic way of a process of thinking at all levels that guides the kind of strategic planning and operational choices that follow".**

- While **the HLPF includes a broader mandate for follow up and review of implementation** of commitments, **the call for a "focused" and "action-oriented" agenda resonates with the need for a core framing vision that SDGs can provide.**

- One possible early task of the HLPF would be to decide where it fits into such processes, how it can support or build upon as opposed to duplicate or complicate mainstreaming processes already underway. There is also a need to decide whether there are lessons to be learned from other experiences of mainstreaming, such as of human rights and gender.

- **We give merit to the choice of the HLPF´s themes**, as those identified are challenging, politically attractive, and extremely actual, in particular the debate addressing an integrated and universal sustainable development agenda and how to shape the forum for the post - 2015.

- The references to the key role of SCP in the SDGs, the dialogue with the Chair of the 10YFP Board, the focused debate on SIDS and on integrated policy making - are all part of the bigger sustainable development picture, and, therefore, fit very well into the agenda of what should be HLPF for the international governance of sustainable development.

Key- lessons learned:

- What should be clear from the broad Rio+20 outcome document and agreed mandate for the HLPF is that **no single organization will emerge to define the rules and carry out the mandate of sustainable development.**

- **The leadership challenge for the HLPF** will be **to work with that complexity** while building the necessary vision and legitimacy **that will link Sustainable Development Goals more clearly and directly to the organizational, financial and other levels** that can deliver or facilitate it at different levels and in different settings.

- We would encourage discussions on lessons learned to date on international global partnership, **accountability and monitoring**, with a view to feed the process of defining the appropriate mechanisms to sit alongside the implementation of future Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendations:

- The HLPF has the potential to provide a long-term strategic policy framework, and policy direction in order to promote stable, balanced, and sustainable development; to ensure consistency between the activities and policy goals of the various international organizations dealing with economic, social and development issues, including the IFIs and the WTO.

- **HLPF would be very well placed to provide a focused and unified message to all UN organizations on sustainable development.**

- HLPF would help Member States to send a unified message to UN system organizations on the need to take an integrated approach to economic, social and environmental policies and actions.

- **This last point is highly relevant since the ultimate purpose of integration and mainstreaming is to integrate the three dimensions into decision making and policy at multiple levels, including at the national and local level.** Thus, integration also links to capacity building, sharing of best practices, and a knowledge platform for national sustainable development strategies, as point picked up in section 5 on HLPF functions, below.

- **The most pressing challenges of today such as climate change, water, energy, food security, jobs and persistent poverty can only be tackled if we integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development** and make economic growth inclusive, our societies equitable and our resource use sustainable.

- The forum should provide **a transparent accountability mechanism to monitor commitments and review implementation of the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda.**