



Dialogue of the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions

with the UN General Assembly Second Committee

UNGA 73rd session - Friday, 26 October 2018, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. CR- 2

UN Headquarters, New York

Regional Integration and Cooperation in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda

Concept Note

Objectives

Proposed objectives of the Dialogue are:

1. To demonstrate how regional integration and cooperation contribute to advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and
2. To take stock of how Regional Commissions have evolved and aligned their programmes of work to the requirements of the 2030 Agenda with a view to better support their Member States and regional /subregional agendas.

Expected Outcomes

For Member States and other stakeholders to gain appreciation of how regional integration and cooperation are the cornerstone of a strengthened multilateral system and how Regional Commissions, by virtue of their mandates and core functions, are providing a critical bridge between the global 2030 Agenda and the advancement of national sustainable development plans.

Focus Areas

Selection of issues that each Regional Commission is invited to address from a regional integration lens, guided by the objectives outlined above:

- Transboundary issues (regional cooperation in areas such as management of natural resources, water, energy, transport, disaster risk reduction, connectivity, ICT);
- Macroeconomic policy questions, trade, regional market integration;
- Regional norms and standards;
- Data and statistics, including disaggregated data (in support of the principle of leaving no-one behind);
- South-south and triangular cooperation.

Format

The Chair of the General Assembly Second Committee will deliver opening remarks. The Executive Secretaries of the five UN regional commissions will make presentations (12-15 mins each). Interactive rounds of discussions with the floor will follow. The Coordinator (Executive Secretary ECLAC) will act as moderator.

Programme

- Welcoming remarks, Second Committee Chair, H.E. Ambassador Jorge Skinner-Klee Arenales, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the UN.
- Opening remarks, USG and Executive Secretary, ECLAC, Ms. Alicia Barcena (Coordinator).
- Presentations by:
 - USG and Executive Secretary, ECA, Ms. Vera Songwe.
 - USG and Executive Secretary, ECE, Ms. Olga Algayerova.
 - USG and Executive Secretary, ECLAC, Ms. Alicia Barcena.
 - Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCAP, Mr. Kaveh Zahedi.
 - Deputy Executive Secretary, ESCWA, Mr. Mounir Tabet.
- Rounds of interactive discussion with the floor.

Background

The 2030 Agenda recognizes the centrality of the regional dimension and the role of the regional organizations in implementation, follow-up and review of progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, strengthening regional cooperation is a key precondition for the rapid, balanced and sustained development of all Member States, whilst bearing in mind the specific needs of each region's groups of countries (LDCs, LLDCs, MICs, SIDS and countries affected by conflict).

Regional cooperation and integration has progressed in differing forms and to varying extents in recent decades. Increasing trade and investment liberalization have resulted in economic growth and helped reduce extreme poverty in several economies. However, the benefits of such policies have not been shared equally and inequalities of income and opportunities are high and rising in some countries.

The promotion of inclusive and sustainable regional and sub-regional cooperation and integration is at the core of the mandate of the Regional Commissions. The Regional Commissions have a proven track record in the development of integrated solutions to transboundary challenges, including through joint policy responses, regional positions in response to global intergovernmental mandates, and regional norms and standards (e.g., on trade, transport, energy, natural resource management, climate change adaptation and mitigation, financing for development, and disaster risk reduction). The outcomes of regional



forums and regional responses to shared challenges constitute valuable building blocks for the development of global action agendas.

Acting as regional repositories of multisectoral knowledge, data and policy solutions, the Regional Commissions facilitate cooperation between regions and promote harmonization of cross-border standards, with the provision of technical support, training and the replication of methodologies and successful regional integration models.