

What does integration mean?

At its simplest, integration in development terms means pursuing the three pillars of sustainable development and the 17 SDGs simultaneously without allowing the pursuit of one goal to come at the expense of another.

ESCWA, however, has adopted a more complex approach to integration, which takes into account three key realities:

- The goals are interlinked.
- That there is no one to one correspondence between policies and goals. Any policy devised to achieve one goal is bound to have an impact, whether negative or positive, on efforts to achieve other goals.
- Development outcomes are determined not only by domestic policies, but increasingly by the regional and global environments. Intra-regional employment, for example, has a multiplier effect on gross domestic product (GDP) growth in countries that export labour, and war in one country can erode the best development efforts of its neighbours.

How can integration be achieved?

Full integration can be achieved by establishing a dynamic, comprehensive development framework that captures the interrelationships between the different sectors of the economy, the causal relationships between policies and goals, and the impact of the regional and global

environment on economic variables in a given country and its ability to achieve the SDGs. Such a framework will help countries not only to optimize policy in order to fulfil the post-2015 agenda, but also to address cross-cutting issues such as governance, women's empowerment, and social justice at the same time.

How did ESCWA develop its approach to integration?

ESCWA adopted the nexus approach, which takes into consideration trade-offs and builds on synergies between key sectors, to help member States address cross-cutting challenges.

ESCWA has developed models and analytical tools to address the **water-energy-food nexus**, which is designed to help countries deliver on resource efficiency and access to energy while safeguarding rights to water and food. We are working with member States on a **growth-employment-social protection nexus** to help them devise policies focused on employment, so as to reduce inequality and achieve social security.

ESCWA has also developed a **conflict-development nexus**. We have devised an ambitious, comprehensive national agenda for the post-conflict political, economic, social and environmental reconstruction of the Syrian Arab Republic. Similar agendas are in the pipeline for Yemen and Libya. The national agendas for conflict stricken countries are designed to contribute to building resilience, and to foster peace and development, by



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providing a platform for dialogue between the various parties and offering technical support to facilitate transition from protracted conflict to peace.

ESCWA is also working with individual member States to build integrated national development frameworks. Of particular note is a comprehensive framework ESCWA is developing to help Saudi Arabia meet its development goals.

On another level, ESCWA is working with member States and the League of Arab States to build a regional development framework that captures relationships across countries. We are using that model to help countries assess the costs and benefits of regional integration and its impact on growth, poverty reduction, employment, economic structure and wellbeing. We have also used this model to assess how events in the region affect the development of specific countries. Examples include assessing the impact of the Syrian crisis on Jordan and Lebanon, the impact of the crisis in Libya on Tunisia and Egypt, and the impact of offensives launched by Israel in Gaza on Palestinians in the Occupied West Bank and on Jordan.

That comprehensive regional model also formed the basis for simulating future scenarios for the Arab region and setting out the Arab Vision 2030. It has helped us formulate an Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development, which supports integration efforts and paves the way for a “regionalization” of the SDGs.



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Finally, ESCWA is building the capacity of national and regional institutions to achieve the integration of development goals, by transferring its expertise in modelling and facilitating knowledge sharing between countries. Saudi Arabia, for example, has offered to share knowledge acquired in the design of its integrated planning framework with other Arab countries at no cost.

In conclusion, I would say that the experience of the Regional Commissions in integrating the different pillars of sustainable development could be of tremendous value to the whole United Nations system as we prepare to support member States in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. In this area, the Regional Commissions can play a crucial role given their intersectoral and intergovernmental nature.

The most important lesson learned is that success will hinge on our ability to *think* in an integrated manner. In other words: in order to succeed, we need to think together. To deliver as one, we need to think as one.