The Role of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships in Implementing the 2030 Agenda
By Felix Dodds

To fully understand the role Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships (MSPs) can play in Implementing the 2030 Agenda, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets, we need to understand the origins of MSPs, the MSP experience thus far, and how it can be improved to be more effective in this new phase extending through 2030.

Understanding the Terminology
One of the many problems that has emerged in the discussion on MSPs is that they are often mixed up with other approaches such as Voluntary Initiatives (VIs) or Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). All three are important, but they need to be separated as each takes a different approach in reporting, capacity building, knowledge management and other key governance issues.

To begin, I outline the three definitions below.

> *Multi-stakeholder Partnerships* are specific sustainable development commitments and contributions, undertaken together by various partners, intended to support the implementation of transformation towards sustainable development and help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other relevant sustainable development agreements.
> *Voluntary Initiatives* are individual voluntary commitments focused on delivering concrete results for sustainable development. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) invited organizations to make these voluntary commitments.
> *Private Public Partnerships* are contractual arrangements between single or several public agencies (federal, state or local) and single or several private sector entities. Through such arrangements, the skills and assets of each sector (public and private) are shared, in delivering a service or facility for the use of the general public. Other stakeholders might be sub-contractors in a PPP.

Before going further, I want to visit a fourth term that is often misunderstood – *the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 8: Global Partnership for Development.* This is a government-to-government or government-to-industry partnership, not an MSP.

This chapter is about MSPs and how they have developed and should develop in the coming years to principally help in implementing the SDGs and their targets.

History of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development
The first part of the journey is to understand the origins of the multi-stakeholder idea, which emerged in intergovernmental forums.
- *1992: Stakeholder engagement in policy and implementation*

The idea for multi-stakeholder partnerships was first put forward by Maurice Strong – Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) – at the Conference on Environment and Development (1992), otherwise known as the Earth Summit. The main outcome document from the conference was Agenda 21. It was the first UN agreement to identify roles and responsibilities for stakeholders. It had nine chapters that broke down how the UN classified groups that are not governments, all grouped together under the general term 'non-governmental organizations,' into sectors of society that could play a significant role in helping to deliver Agenda 21 – the Blueprint for the 21st Century. The nine stakeholders were: Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous Peoples, Non-

Governmental Organizations, Local Authorities, Workers and Trade Unions, Business and Industry, Scientific and Technological Community and Farmers.

- *1996: Emergence of Stakeholder Dialogues*

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), set up in 1993 to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21, also became a place to experiment in the involvement of stakeholders in policy development and in reporting on their delivery of Agenda 21. This included initiatives such as 'Day at the Workplace,' which assessed the sustainability metrics of a particular workplace. Another session looked at Local Agenda 21, which highlighted the role of local government in delivering Agenda 21 targets at the local level.

This opening-up of the UN system to stakeholders grew considerably in the years immediately following the 1992 Conference and influenced a number of UN Conferences and Summits between 1992 and 1996. Perhaps the largest impact was observed at the 1996 the Habitat II Conference on Human Settlement, where two major developments took place. The first was the enabling of stakeholders to propose text in its informal meetings,a first at a UN conference, with the text coming to life if a government endorsed it. The second was the emergence of a very interesting approach to engage stakeholders in debate and in commitments. The conference had two intergovernmental committees, one for the negotiations of the Habitat Agenda and the other for each stakeholder group focused on the contribution of local authorities, the private sector, parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations, foundations, science and engineering, and the UN system.

This approach was endorsed by the UN General Assembly for the Rio+5 UN General Assembly session in 1997 and subsequently for meetings of the CSD. Between 1998 and 2001, the CSD dedicated two days to interactive dialogues with stakeholders, usually three or four per three-hour session. The outcome of these sessions created an ongoing dialogue on policies between the CSD and stakeholders and provided an avenue for the two to try and move policies forward together.

- *The UN Global Compact*

Industry engaged with not only the CSD in the follow up to the 1992 Conference, but also with other UN bodies. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan sought to deepen this engagement. In 1999 Secretary General Annan launched, as a challenge, the UN Global Compact as a voluntary initiative based on CEO commitments to implement universal sustainability principles and to take steps to support UN goals at the World Economic Forum. The UN Global Compact promotes ten principles and is now comprised of over 8000 companies and 4000 non-business participants. In launching the UN Global Compact, Secretary General Annan sought, in his own words, the following:

"a creative partnership between the United Nations and the private sector. I made the point that the everyday work of the United Nations -- whether in peacekeeping, setting technical standards, protecting intellectual property or providing much-needed assistance to developing countries -- helps to expand opportunities for business around the world. And I stated quite frankly that, without your know-how and your resources, many of the objectives of the United Nations would remain elusive.

The United Nations agencies -- the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) -- all stand ready to assist you, if you need help, in incorporating these agreed values and principles

into your mission statements and corporate practices. And we are ready to facilitate a dialogue between you and other social groups, to help find viable solutions to the genuine concerns that they have raised. You may find it useful to interact with us through our newly created website, www.un.org/partners, which offers a "one-stop shop" for corporations interested in the United Nations. More important, perhaps, is what we can do in the political arena, to help make the case for and maintain an environment which favours trade and open markets." (Annan, 1999)

The UN Global Compact originally had nine universal principles:

Human   ***Rights***   Businesses should: •   Principle 1: Support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed <u>human rights</u>; and   •   Principle 2: Make sure that they are not complicit in <u>human rights abuses</u>.   ***Labour***   ***Standards***   Businesses should uphold: •   Principle 3: the <u>freedom of association</u> and the effective recognition of the <u>right to collective bargaining</u>;   •   Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and <u>compulsory labour</u>;   •   Principle 5: the effective abolition of <u>child labour</u>; and   •   Principle 6: the elimination of <u>discrimination in employment</u> and occupation.   ***Environment***   Businesses should: •   Principle 7: support a <u>precautionary approach</u> to environmental challenges;   •   Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote environmental responsibility; and   •   Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.   The 10th Principle was added on the 24th of June 2004 in accordance with the UN Convention Against ***Corruption*** which had been adopted in 2003. **Anti-Corruption**   •   Principle 10: Businesses should work against <u>corruption</u> in all its forms, including <u>extortion</u> and <u>bribery</u>. (UN Global Compact, 2018)

- *2000: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*

In 2000 at the Millennium Summit, a number of suggestions on how to focus government action over the first 15 years of the millennium were identified. The following year, these were synthesized into a set of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the UN system through an interagency task force. As mentioned in the introduction of **Millennium Development Goal** 8: A Global Partnership for Development, was set of targets for government and the private sector. It was not as some have suggested an MSP process.

The UN and its Member States recognized the need to identify some broad guidelines for how to engage with the private sector. In 2000, guidelines on cooperation between the UN and the private sector were issued by the UN Secretary General to enhance the cooperation between the two. It had five general principles:

1. Advance UN goals: The objective needs to be articulated clearly and must advance UN goals as laid out in the Charter.
2. Clear delineation of responsibilities and roles: The arrangement must be based on a clear understanding of respective roles and expectations, with accountability and a clear division of responsibilities.

3. Maintain integrity and independence: Arrangements should not diminish the UN's integrity, independence and impartiality.
4. No unfair advantage: Every member of the business community should have the opportunity to propose cooperative arrangements, within the parameters of these guidelines. Cooperation should not imply endorsement or preference of a particular business entity or its products or services.
5. Transparency: Cooperation with the business community sector must be transparent. Information on the nature and scope of cooperative arrangements should be available within the Organization and to the public at large.

- *2001: First UN Global Partnership Resolution (every 2 years)*

Beginning in 2001, Member States sought to give direction on global partnership between the UN Global Compact and the private sector every two years using a standing item on the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly. The General Assembly resolution – "Towards Global Partnerships" – was included on the General Assembly Second Committee agenda, adopted in 2001 and then updated every two years.

The adopted resolution stressed the need for Member States to further discuss partnerships and consider ways and means to enhance cooperation between the UN and all relevant partners, including partners from developing countries to give them greater opportunities to contribute to the realization of the goals and programmes of the Organization.

- *2002: Bali Guidelines and World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Type 1 and Type 2*

In 2000 and 2001, stakeholders, the UN, and Member States first explored the idea of "multi-stakeholder partnerships" as a potential outcome from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). These would be a mechanism, but not the sole mechanism, to deliver political commitments. The Bali Guidelines on Partnerships included the following points:

- Objective of Partnerships
- Voluntary in Nature/Respect for fundamental Principles and Values
- Link with Globally Agreed Outcomes
- Integrated Approach to Sustainable Development
- Transparency and Accountability
- Tangible Results
- Funding Agreements
- New/Value Added Partnerships
- Local involvement and international Impact

WSSD delineated the types of government commitments as Type 1 commitments and Type 2 commitments.
Type 1: policy agreements and commitments
Type 2: commitments and action-oriented multi-stakeholder platforms focused on deliverables translating political commitments into action

- *2003: Commission on Sustainable Development/Economic and Social Council - criteria and guidelines for partnerships*

WSSD didn't agree an intergovernmental set of criteria and guidelines for partnerships. It left that to the first meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development (2003) after WSSD. The CSD decision agrees that partnerships are:

- voluntary initiatives undertaken by Governments and relevant stakeholders;
- contribute to the implementation Agena 21, JPoI;
- not intended to substitute commitments made by Governments;
- bear in mind the economic, social and environmental dimensions;
- comprised of predictable and sustained resources for their implementation, should include the mobilization of new resources, and where relevant, should result in the transfer of technology to, and capacity-building in, developing countries;
- designed and implemented in a transparent and accountable manner;
- should be consistent with national laws and national strategies;
- providing information and reporting by partnerships registered with the CSD.

The outcome from the CSD was then endorsed by the Economic and Social Council of the UN and, as I write these words (November 2018), the only real set of criteria and guidelines that the UN is instructed to use in relation to MSPs.

- *2006: United Nations Office of Partnership created*

In 2006, the United Nations Office of Partnership (UNOP) was created to strengthen system-wide coherence in the establishment of operational relationships with global partners of the United Nations. This was done "to provide support for the United Nations Democracy Fund; and to support partnership initiatives from non-State actors or United Nations entities in the light of General Assembly resolutions on the importance of engaging public and private sector stakeholders in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, as well as the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals." (UN, 2006)

- *2008: First Annual UN Partnership Forum within ECOSOC*

Many people do not realize that there was a lot of hostility to the MDGs when they were launched. This was in part because many saw the MDGs as a reduction of the 1990 UN Conference and Summit Global Programmes of Action, negotiated with enormous engagement by stakeholders, into just 8 Goals and 21 targets. By 2008, stakeholders were more accepting. The idea of developing MSPs to help deliver the MDGs had its first outing at the newly created ECOSOC 2008 Partnership Forum and was focused around the delivery of the MDGs.

- *2010: UNGA first revision of Guidelines between the UN and the Business Community*

The UNGA's first revision of guidelines between the UN and the private sector gave new instructions around the areas of impact, transparency and accountability, in particular. The revision said it:

"9. Encourages the United Nations system to continue to develop, for those partnerships in which it participates, a common and systemic approach, which places greater emphasis on impact, transparency, accountability and sustainability, without imposing undue rigidity in partnership agreements, and with due consideration being given to the following partnership principles: common purpose, transparency, bestowing no unfair advantages upon any partner of the United Nations, mutual benefit and mutual respect, accountability, respect for the modalities of the United Nations, striving for balanced representation of relevant partners from developed and developing

countries and countries with economies in transition, sectoral and geographic balance, and not compromising the independence and neutrality of the United Nations;" (UN, 2009)

The lack of more clear instructions did not change the way that partnerships were being approached by the UN. There was no new due diligence and no real attempt to delist MSPs that were not reporting or delivering against their stated aims and objectives.

- *2012: Rio+20 Voluntary Initiatives/Commitments*

The academic reviews of partnerships showed that up to 70% of the partnerships registered on the UN website were either dormant or had ceased to be trying to achieve their stated aims.

Rio+20 focused more on Voluntary Initiatives/Commitments; some 700 of these were announced during the conference, while only 207 MSPs were announced.

"283. We welcome the commitments voluntarily entered into at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and throughout 2012 by all stakeholders and their networks to implement concrete policies, plans, programmes, projects and actions to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication. We invite the Secretary-General to compile these commitments and facilitate access to other registries that have compiled commitments, in an Internet-based registry. The registry should make information about the commitments fully transparent and accessible to the public, and it should be periodically updated." (UN, 2012)

The Voluntary Initiatives/Commitments at Rio+20 were issued by governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups and others to contribute to the implementation of the inter-governmentally agreed SDGs and commitments in the Rio+20 outcome document, "The Future We Want." Within a year of Rio+20, the UN registry has grown to 1,382 pledges with committed resources estimated at more than $636 billion.

"I am encouraged by the more than 700 concrete commitments registered at the Conference, from governments, business, industry, financial institutions and civil society groups, amongst others," said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, stressed that "voluntary commitments and partnerships are important contributions that are strengthening the implementation of sustainable development everywhere by allowing people from all parts of society to contribute." He also added that "partnerships and voluntary commitments complement but do not substitute for government responsibilities and inter-governmentally agreed commitments." (UN, 2013)

- *2014: SAMOA Pathway*

SAMOA Pathway -The SIDS Action Platform emerged to support the follow up to the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS Conference), including through a partnerships platform, a partnerships framework, and a UN Implementation Matrix.

It came about to "request [that] the Department of Economic and Social Affairs … finalize a standardized partnership reporting template and process, in consultation with the Steering Committee, which takes into account existing reporting mechanisms and the need to minimize the reporting burden and ensures reporting coherence.

It also stated the following:

101. In this regard, we request the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, to present recommendations, including through the use of existing intergovernmental mechanisms, for a partnership framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for small island developing States. The framework should ensure that partnerships focus on the priorities of small island developing States, identify new opportunities to advance their sustainable development of and ensure the full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the Samoa Pathway. The recommendations should be presented to the General Assembly for consideration and action at its sixty-ninth session.

124. In this regard, we are committed to supporting the efforts of small island developing States:

(a) To request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council on the progress achieved in implementing the priorities, commitments, partnerships and other activities of the small island developing States;

(b) To request the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to continue to maintain a partnerships platform focused on the small island developing States and to regularly convene the inter-agency consultative group to report on the full implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, the Mauritius Strategy and the Samoa Pathway, with adequate and timely analysis based on relevant targets and indicators relevant to the small island developing States in order to ensure accountability at all levels." (UN, 2014)

- *2015: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

The 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development identified MSPs as a mechanism to help deliver the goals and targets in the SDGs and, more broadly, the commitments in the 2030 Agenda.

The Agenda for Sustainable Development outline the following goals with respect to MSPs:

"17.16 Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented **by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals** in all countries, in particular developing countries

17.17 Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, **building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships."** (UN, 2015)

To enable the UN website to register the commitments made for MSPs and Voluntary Initiatives/Commitments, the UN over time has developed a number of ways to monitor the partnerships. It has introduced, based on the SAMOA Pathway but not upon any intergovernmental decision as of yet, two approaches. The first is the introduction of the SMART criteria when registering "specific, measurable, achievable, resource-based, with time-based deliverables." It is also in the process of introducing a traffic-lights approach to registered MSPs and Voluntary Initiatives/Commitments; this would be in relation to the annual reporting requirement. It has been suggested that if they don't report within a year, they have a yellow-light attributed to their partnership. If they haven't reported within two years, a red-light would be attributed and, after three years, would ultimately be delisted.

The High-Level Political Forum established mandate that includes a 'platform for partnerships,' which stated the following:

"84.   The HLPF, under the auspices of ECOSOC, shall carry out regular reviews, in line with Resolution 67/290. Reviews will be voluntary, while encouraging reporting, and include developed and developing countries as well as relevant UN entities and other stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. They shall be state-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants. They shall provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders." (UN, 2015)

- *2015 Towards Global Partnership Resolution*

The 2015 UNGA resolution on Global Partnerships stressed the UN system needs to develop, for those partnerships in which it participates, a "common and systemic approach which places greater emphasis on transparency, coherence, impact, accountability and due diligence, without imposing undue rigidity in partnership agreements."

It also underscored the need for the Economic and Social Council to hold, during its partnership forum in 2016, "a discussion on the best practices and ways to improve, inter alia, transparency, accountability and the sharing of experiences of multi-stakeholder partnerships and on the review and monitoring of these partnerships, including the role of Member States in review and monitoring." (UN, 2015)

- *2017: Secretary-General's Report on Re-positioning the UN Development System to Deliver on the 2030 Agenda*

As part of the UN Secretary General's reposition of the UN Development System to help it deliver the 2030 Agenda, the Secretary General recognized the role that MSPs might play. The Report said that the Development System "can only be realized with a **strong commitment to partnerships at all levels between governments, private sector, civil society and others."**

It goes on to say that "with this recognition, we must harness the **convening power of the United Nations through platforms where stakeholders** can meaningfully engage, build trust, exchange know-how and technologies, strengthen relationships and bring synergy and coherence to achieve results."

It then asserts the need to "embed **multi-stakeholder partnerships into the core business model of the UN development system**, pooling system-wide expertise across the partnership spectrum."

What did we learn from the MSPs over the last twenty years?
"A thousand flowers bloom" was how Nitin Desai, Secretary General of WSSD, described the relation between the MSPs and the worry of a lack of proper accountability and capacity building system for the follow up at the end of the Summit in 2002.

What we found was that up to 70% of inactive/useless (Pattberg et al. 2012) MSPs that did survive showed some good/improved over time (Beisheim/Liese 2014). A detailed review of 330 of WSSD partnerships was undertaken by the International Civil Society Centre (ICSC) in 2014. The study found that "thirty-eight percent of all partnerships sampled are simply not active or do not have measurable output. Twenty-six percent of all partnerships show activities … not directly related to their publicly stated goals and ambitions. An underlying problem was that many [MSPs] have vague and diffuse goals and lack appropriate monitoring and reporting mechanisms, making the causality between the output of the partnership and impact on the ground difficult to establish.

A key finding of the ICSC study was a lack of monitoring and reporting mechanisms have generally limited the effectiveness of MSPs. Improved monitoring, evaluation and reporting are tools that will help to assess progress vis-à-vis targets and goals and will no doubt enhance the credibility of the MSPs.

Beisheim (2014), in eight years of research on multi-stakeholder partnerships, have found governance structures of MSPs are 'terra incognita.' It is often difficult to find how MSPs are monitored. Some of the monitoring systems are external, but they are not public, and also not always independent. They suggest that a transparent, accountable, efficient, participatory and qualitative governance structure is a must in order to increase the effectiveness of MSPs. Two other recent key studies have served to provide more in-depth analysis of these issues and their importance for partnerships – World Vision's "Getting Intentional: Cross-sector Partnerships, Business and the Post-2015 Development Agenda" and BCG/MIT's "Joining Forces: Collaboration and Leadership for Sustainability." (ICSC, 2014)

Surprisingly, the vast majority of MSPs were not in developing countries but in OECD countries. This was not the point of the MSPs when they were originally being promoted in 2000 to 2002. There has been very little quantification of what they delivered. For instance, how many people got access to water or sanitation, two of the MDG targets under MDG7, that wouldn't have otherwise had there not been a push for MSPs?

Finally, it is clear there was very little UN funding committed to reinforcing the push on MSPs after the WSSD conference. No real attempt to build capacity and knowledge management. This is now changing, and there is much more likely that this new attempt to use the MSPs to help deliver the SDGs is likely to be more successful.

Examples of Successful Partnerships
In this paper, there are four successful examples I would highlight as successful MSPs; these include the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (the GAVI Alliance), the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) and the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

The review of these partnerships reveals that all four had solid organisational structures and were given clear objectives, a defined timeline, well organised and strong facilitators, and secure funding. Having a clear, well-defined and easily understood objective was crucial. People could easily relate to it and feel ownership because its thematic approach was clear and logical. Funders could see and understand what they contributed money to, and staff could easily grasp what their mandates and programmes and also developed ownership. With a clear and well-defined purpose, objective monitoring and evaluation became possible, was not cumbersome to execute, and could be done on a reasonable timeline. Evaluation and monitoring could lead to adjustments – when and if needed. These are points I outlined in a paper for UNDESA in 2016.

> 1. *The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI):*

Background and Objectives: Established January 2000 and has raised over $500 million; Vaccine provision and development, country level immunization programmes and health systems strengthening (HSS); special focus on low-income countries.

Lead Facilitators and Funders: WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, Gates Foundation, International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturer's Association, US AID (funders 1/3rd from bilateral donors, private donations and Gates Foundation).

Governance Structure: GAVI has a secretariat and board – one third of the board is elected on an independent basis with expertise in health; at country level, GAVI works through Interagency Coordinating Committees and Health Sector Coordinating Committees.

Outcomes and Challenges: Built on the experience of the Vaccine Initiative launched by UNICEF in 1990; generally seen as successful in increasing the numbers vaccinated but less successful influencing vaccine pricing.

Monitoring: A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and Strategy; ensures valid, reliable, useful performance measures are available and used to support organizational and stakeholder learning, management of strategy, improvement of programmes, mitigation of risk and reporting of performance; built on the experience of the children's Vaccine Initiative launched by UNICEF in 1990, has been successful but some critics have said that it can push for one approach too much.

2. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)

Background and Objectives: Launched by WHO in 1998 at the World Health Assembly with the objective to eradicate Polio by 2000; today polio has been reduced by 99% globally.

Lead Facilitators and Funders: WHO, UNICEF, the US Centre for Disease control, Rotary International, bilateral donors also included Russian Federation, Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, World Bank and African and Inter-American Development Banks.

Governance Structure: The Advisory Committee on Polio Eradication, the Global Commission for the Certification of the Eradication of Poliomyelitis and the UN Interagency Committee play vital roles with WHO regional offices, large networks of health workers, public health managers & professionals.

Outcomes and Challenges: Polio incidents have reduced by 99%, but the commitment to global polio eradication by the World Health Assembly (WHA) is not legally binding on states and therefore the enforcement mechanisms of GPEI are not strong.

Monitoring: GPEI operates within a broad framework of intergovernmental and interagency cooperation and participation; the Independent Monitoring Board assesses progress towards a polio-free world and convenes on a quarterly basis to independently evaluate progress towards each of the major milestones of the GPEI Strategic Plan; the IMB provides assessments of the risks posed by existing funding gaps.

3. Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP)

Background and Objectives: Initiated by the UK government in 2002 as a WSSD Type 2 partnership; emerged as a response to WSSD failure to agree targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency; aimed to promote collaboration to achieve a significant increase in the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency to improve energy security and provide for reliable delivery and to deal with climate change/energy issues; project implementation and policy advice at national level and advocacy at global level is its main thrust.

Lead Facilitators and Funders: Traditional bilateral donors (90 projects in over 40 countries); 60% of REEEP's activities deal with policy and regulation, and the remaining deal with project financing.

Governance Structure: REEEP has a governing board that is responsible to a 'Meeting of Partners' which is the ultimate authority of REEEP; projects are developed and proposed by the programme

committee and final selection by the International Selection Committee; a governing board is responsible to an assembly, 'a Meeting of Partners,' which is the ultimate authority of REEEP.

Outcomes and Challenges: REEEP contributed to change in renewable energy; REEEP has used a multiple approach to establish national partnerships involving small-scale private sector partners, NGOs and public partners; REEEP has also financed local projects that may not have been from the outset financially viable from a market point of view; South Africa proposed targets for of 5% of total primary energy use to come from renewable energy resources by 2010; By 2009, IAEA estimate this had reached 13.1% and has now increased to 19%.

Monitoring: Has a Governing Board responsible for the conduct of the business of the organization in accordance with the Statutes and holds office for a period of four years; it is comprised of no fewer than six members and meets at least once a year; its functions are to develop and oversee the key strategic direction of the REEEP, including targets, timeframes and funding priorities, prepare the financial rules and accounting system of the organization, consider and decide upon applications to become Partners and provide instructions to the International Secretariat.

4. **Forest Stewardship Council**

Background and Objectives: FSC Founding Assembly in 1993, the secretariat relocated in 2003 to Bonn, Germany; Main thrust from UNCED in 1992 to establish an independent and international forest certification system; The vision was to ensure the social, ecological, and economic rights and needs of the present generation were met without compromising those of future generations through promoting environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests

Lead Facilitators and Funders: Not for profit NGO with membership in over 60 countries, financed through a multitude of sources – individual and corporate grants, donations and projects; it has a strong collaborative relationship with various UN bodies and has over the years worked with UNEP and had projects financed through the GEF; governments cannot be members

Governance Structure: Board of Directors and an international secretariat with a General Assembly as the highest decision-making body

Outcomes and Challenges: Formally organised as an independent nongovernmental organisation, works outside of national regulations with its outreach; with expertise competence and project portfolio, the FSC can function as an incubator for multi-stakeholder partnerships; the FSC administers a self-elaborated third-party certification system on wood and timber products that serves to verify whether products – 8% of global forests are certified and 25% of all industrial round-wood production

Monitoring: FSC has developed 12 system indicators under four main categories – economic, social, environmental and general; the FSC Monitoring and Evaluation Program has also developed a Code of Good Practice for Assessing the Impacts of Social and Environmental Standards, works with ten credibility principles integrated in the FSC monitoring work – sustainability, improvement, relevance, rigour, engagement impartiality, transparency accessibility, truthfulness, efficiency. (Dodds, 2016)

Some Types of Partnerships
Not all MSPs are trying to do the same thing. Marianne Beisheim came up with a good classification of the different types of MSPs:

1. MSPs for sharing knowledge: this would be exchanging knowledge between various stakeholders and disseminating knowledge to help to deliver the goals and targets (e.g. GWP- Global Water Partnership);
2. MSPs for providing services to deliver the goals and targets (e.g. GAVI– the Vaccine Alliance);
3. MSPs for setting standards: this would establish standards and norms in areas where there are currently no (or no adequate) regulatory mechanisms to advance the delivery of the goals and targets (e.g. AWS - The Alliance for Water Stewardship).

This approach helps with capacity building, knowledge management and with quantifying the actual contribution that MSPs are making towards delivering the SDGs and their targets.

Due Diligence and Industry
There is, at present, no system-wide due diligence with regards to companies the UN should work with and which can be recognized on the UN website as being engaged in an MSP.

This has become an increasingly important issue due to the activities in certain UN Agencies and Programmes that did not have proper due diligence mechanisms in place. A number have started to designate the UN Global Compact as that mechanism. In the development of the PPPs for the SDGs by the UN Economic Commission for Europe and in relationship to UNEP's work both bodies are stating that companies have to be a member of the UNGC or at least be in the process of joining it.

The UNGC may have delisted over 6000 companies for not reporting or adhering to the UNGC, but it doesn't have the staff to provide effective oversight for the voluntary reports being submitted. This is why the development of two new initiatives on benchmarking is very critical. The first is the Corporate Benchmarking on Human Rights (CBHR), which is a unique collaboration led by investors and civil society organisations dedicated to creating the first open and public benchmark of corporate human rights performance. Discussing CBHR, Mark Wilson, the CEO of AVIVA, said:
"Competition is a beautiful thing when it is used to do good. For the first time, we have a public measure of companies' human rights performance which will focus attention in the boardroom on their performance versus other companies and allow investors to ask the right questions. More transparency and a desire to improve in the rankings will spark a race to the top in corporate human rights." (Wilson, 2017)

The UNGC members unfortunately did not do well in the independent review of their human rights policy and actions. Some of the examples from the 2017 Report:
Pepsi: 22%
Starbucks: 25%
Woolworth: 25%
Shell: 37%
Coca-Cola: 40%
Gap: 44%

The second is the World Benchmarking Alliance, a similar coalition of private sector and stakeholders, which is in the process of producing their first report on benchmarking companies on the SDGs. The UNGC is a member of this coalition.

If the UNGC is to become the due diligence mechanism for the UN and its relationship with the private sector, the benchmarking will provide a critical objective perspective of whether the voluntary report submitted is accurate and will need to ensure the UNGC has the ability to challenge some of the reports submitted.

The UN Joint Inspection Unit in September 2018 published its report – United Nations System: Private Sector Partnerships Arrangements in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It suggests a role for the UN in establishing rating systems for companies.

"Organizations also note there are obvious benefits stemming from external due diligence assessments, and that the United Nations system should continue to engage private sector companies that specialize in rating the sustainability of prospective United Nations partner companies based on their environmental, corporate and social performance (including on human rights)." (UN, 2018)

This could be very important if the UNGC uses the Corporate Benchmark on Human Rights and the work of the World Benchmarking Alliance to challenge voluntary reports submitted by companies.

MSP Charter
The lack of any new guidelines for MSPs since the UNGA's endorsement of the CSD 2003 Decision has been frustrating for many people who have been engaged in MSPs over the last 15 years. There is now a lot of experience on what has worked, what hasn't and that would now help new partnerships in their development but also to create some accountability. In frustration, a number of stakeholders led by the MSP Institute and the Tellus Institute have gone outside the UN system to create a MSP Charter, which is informed by an International Advisory Board of equally frustrated present or former government representatives and stakeholders. It is hoped the MSP Charter will help new partnerships at least start from a similar place. It's unclear if it will develop into a certification scheme, but it may. Its objective tois to "enable a focused discussion on such a shared vision, and synthesize key principles in a brief document. The Charter can be used to promote principles and best practices." (MSP Institute, 2018)

Principles of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development

2ⁿᵈ Draft, as of October 18, 2018

The common challenge of sustainable development requires the joint commitment of all stakeholders. Multi-stakeholder partnerships are a way of joining forces, to build on the strengths of each partner, and to complement governmental and stakeholder capacities and capabilities for the benefit of all.

We strive for true transformation towards realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in a joint effort to leave no one behind. We will do our utmost to adhere to the following principles for multi-stakeholder partnerships (MSPs) for sustainable development:

Clear Objectives - Supporting Global Goals, National and Regional Plans
- MSPs should have jointly defined specific objectives, contributing to globally agreed goals and outcomes, and consistent with relevant initial conditions, strategies and policies of the countries, regions and communities where their implementation takes place.
- MSPs should complement governmental, intergovernmental, and stakeholder activities and initiatives towards the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. They serve to mobilize and combine the capacities of different stakeholders and citizens for achieving the transformative agenda on the ground. Their ambition may reach beyond national goals and regulations.
- Each MSP should specify their implementation methodologies and dedicated resources, and set specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable and time bound targets for their achievement (SMART approach). MSPs should also clearly define when they are to conclude after reaching their objectives. All partners should explicitly commit to their well-defined role in achieving the aims and objectives of the respective MSP.
- All this should be captured in a written partnership agreement, endorsed by the leadership of each partner organisation, and made publicly available.

Respect for Fundamental Principles and Values
- MSPs for sustainable development are based on mutual respect, equity, mutual benefit, and shared responsibility of the partners involved, taking into account the Rio Declaration Principles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the values expressed in Agenda 2030 / 2030, respecting indigenous knowledge and national regulations. Potential partners need to meet minimum standards, and due diligence procedures should be in place. Business partners should consider joining the UN Global Compact. Major Groups and other stakeholder members should comply with the Istanbul Principles, and consider joining the Civic Charter.

Integrated and Systemic Approach
- MSPs for sustainable development should strive to integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their design and implementation. They should take a systemic approach, build a shared understanding of the whole system context and take this into account when devising their work program. This includes looking at all factors, their interlinkages, relevant institutions, rules and assumptions and aiming to transform all elements that need change and development in order to achieve sustainable development.

Multi-stakeholder Approach
- MSPs can be arranged among any combination of partners, including international institutions, governments, regional groups, Major Groups and other stakeholders.

- MSPs should in their initial stage undertake a stakeholder mapping and analysis. MSPs are inclusive in nature. All those that are affected by their work and all those that (can) influence the issues at hand need to be engaged. Following the 2030 Agendas "leaving no one behind" principle, MSPs should also identify and engage marginalised groups that may be affected by their work. This may include investing in building partners' capacities such as training of specific groups.
- All partners should be involved in the development of the MSP from an early stage, so that it is genuinely participatory. Yet as partnerships evolve, there should also be opportunities for additional partners to join on an equal basis if appropriate.
- Levels and kinds of engagement of partners can vary – from core partners implementing activities together, through engaging in a subset of activities to participating forums of consultation.

Form Follows Function
- MSPs are the strategy of choice when individual organisations cannot tackle an issue on their own, hence they are often set up to address intractable, complex, wicked, systems-wide challenges / opportunities.
- MSP designs and set-ups will be unique, and will always depend on their specific objectives and conditions under which they operate. MSPs need to invest significantly in their governance structures and their core organisations and secretariats.

Good Governance
- MSPs should have solid governance structures in place, including inclusive, transparent and accountable processes of preparing and making decisions, policies on actual and potential conflicts of interests, and mechanisms for resolving disputes.
- MSPs for sustainable development should address potential power differences, diverse interests and potential conflict among partners in a constructive manner so as to ensure equity and fairness in all decisions and activities concerning the partnership, and harnessing lessons learned.

Transparency and Accountability
- MSPs for sustainable development should be developed and implemented in an open and transparent manner and in good faith. All partners are equally accountable for what they do. They are accountable to each other. And MSPs are accountable to the outside world.
- An accountability map and strategy should be developed identifying the elements of accountability relevant to the specific MSP: Both internal and external stakeholders should be engaged in this, using clear communication strategies. Subsequently, MSPs should specify arrangements to monitor and review their performance against the objectives and targets they set. Reports should be made regularly and should be made accessible to the public, including financial information. Available and/or expected sources of funding and/or investment should be clearly identified.
- MSPs for sustainable development should keep relevant public institutions informed about their activities and progress in achieving their targets. Depending on the levels and topics of their work, this may include United Nations' bodies, governments at national, sub-national and/or local levels.
- MSPs should actively take part in relevant review processes, sharing lessons learned about factors of success and failure, and strategies for scaling up and out.
- Organisations and individuals can serve as promoters and brokers of MSPs by reaching out to potential partners, building relationships with stakeholders, and bringing them together to

explore collaboration. Those who convene MSPs need to adhere to the same principles in order to be legitimate conveners, champions and/or partners in MSPs.

Effective Communication and Leadership
- Effective communication is a key success factor for MSPs. High quality facilitation and joint reflection within the partnership is required.
- In successful MSPs, both formal and informal leadership roles are identified, valued and leveraged to enable the cross-sector approach.

Fostering Learning
- Participatory, collective learning is at the heart of MSPs. In the process of learning, different partners' perspectives become clear, and mutual understanding can grow so that diversity can indeed foster creativity and innovation, overcoming obstacles along the way. MSPs should organise and foster learning loops, and secure and publish the lessons learned. (MSP Institute, 2018)

Conclusion

As I write this paper, the new UNGA resolution – "Towards Global Partnerships: A Principle-Based Approach to Enhance Cooperation Between the United Nations and all Relevant Partners" has been tabled by the EU countries.

Reviewing the present version of the resolution before any negotiations have started, it should be welcomed as a move in the right direction towards expanding the general coverage to MSPs and not primarily focusing on the UN Global Compact and the private sector.

It evens takes forward a number of the key points in the guidelines from the 2003 ECOSOC decision:

"*Emphasizing* that multi-stakeholder partnerships in particular and the resources, knowledge and ingenuity of all relevant stakeholders will be important in mobilizing and sharing knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, complementing the efforts of Governments and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular in developing countries,

3. Stresses that partnerships are voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and non-public, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits;

4. Also stresses that new alliances and partnerships will be critical to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, as an effective instrument for mobilizing additional human and financial resources, expertise, technology and knowledge, while reiterating that those alliances and partnerships are a complement to, but are not intended as a substitute for, the commitment made by Governments with a view to achieving the Goals;

5. Further stresses that partnerships should be consistent with national laws and national development strategies and plans, as well as the priorities of countries where they are implemented, bearing in mind the relevant guidance provided by Governments;" (UN, 2018)

The resolution, however, fails to set out new guidelines and criteria which would help partnerships that exist or will exist. By failing to do so, a huge opportunity will once again again be missed.

Member States would do well to just start from the 2003 decision and relist it in the resolution and negotiate updates.

The second area that is missing from the draft resolution is any explanation of what due diligence would look like and what role the UN Global Compact might play in this.

The resolution makes the following points:
"15. Stresses the need for the United Nations system to continue its efforts to develop, for those partnerships in which it participates, a common and coherent approach across the United Nations system that places greater emphasis on transparency, impact, accountability, human rights, due diligence and risk management, while taking into account the specific mandates of United Nations agencies, programmes and other entities and without imposing undue rigidity in partnership agreements;

16. Acknowledges the importance of corporate sustainability reporting, encourages companies, especially publicly listed and large companies, to integrate sustainability and human rights due diligence information into their reporting cycles, encourages industry, interested Governments and relevant stakeholders, with the support of the United Nations system, as appropriate, to enhance existing models and develop new models for best practice and to facilitate action for the integration of sustainability reporting, taking into account experiences from already existing frameworks and paying particular attention to the needs of developing countries, including for capacity-building, and welcomes in this context the collaboration of the United Nations Global Compact with the Global Reporting Initiative and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development;" (UN, 2018)

The time has come to outline an effective due diligence mechanism for the private sector. This paper suggests the beginning of what this might look like, perhaps by using benchmarking to start to challenge the voluntary reports of companies that are members. This would be a beginning and something the UN Joint Inspection Unit has suggested might be worth considering.

If the UNGC is to become a due diligence mechanism for the UN and its relationship with the private sector, then it will need to have intergovernmental oversight. This is too important an issue to push under the carpet again. If Member States will not address it now, they will find that they will be forced to do so when something goes horribly wrong and there is nothing in place that could have prevented it.

I would hope that would not happen; however, if it does, there will be finger pointing to those governments – particularly those of developed countries – who failed to put more robust system in place.

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