

11 February 2013

Fifth Meeting of the Global Partnership Steering Committee

13-14 February 2014, Abuja, Nigeria

Private Sector Comments

The private sector welcomes the opportunity to provide written comments to the fifth meeting of the Global Partnership Steering Committee.

1. Agenda for the High-Level Meeting

For the Mexico meeting to attract the top business executives, it will need to be made very clear that the meeting, and the Global Partnership as a whole, is a key complement to the **Post-2015 process**. This means that the relevant UN fora (e.g. The Open Working Group on the SDGs, the Intergovernmental Committee on Development Finance, the UN High Level Political Forum) should explicitly recognise the contribution of the Global Partnership.

On a separate point, time is now becoming extremely short in order to attract top level business executives to the High-Level Meeting in Mexico City on 15-16 April 2014. We would like to receive clarity on:

- **The confirmed agenda**
- **Opportunities for senior executives to meet with Ministers (both in plenary sessions and bilaterally)**
- **Registration process**

Lastly, it will also be important to already provide public information about **Global Partnership activities post-Mexico**. This will be important in order to assure participating organisations and companies that the Global Partnership is a long-term process and not simply a one-off event in Mexico.

2. High-Level Meeting preparations: Communiqué

While still waiting to receive and review the draft communiqué, we support the need for such a document and stand ready to provide our comments and feedback. The communiqué should be explicit about the contributions of the Global Partnership to the Post-2015 process.

3. Working arrangements of the Global Partnership

While we note that there are many valid challenges raised in Background Document 3 on Pages 2 and 3, relating mainly to membership of the Steering Committee, we have two fundamental concerns about the overall effectiveness of the Steering Committee.

The first is a concern about **efficiency**:

- The Abuja meeting is the fifth meeting to take place in a little over one year and in five different countries around the world. This means it has taken five senior-level meetings, combined with significant travel and expense, to prepare one high-level meeting in April 2014. This process is untenable in the longer-term and is not conducive to maintaining business interest. It is for this reason that the business participation in the Steering Committee meetings has been changing regularly. We strongly encourage the Steering Committee and Joint Support Team to consider ways to render the process as efficient as possible – both in terms of time and cost to participants.
- Options to comment on Steering Committee papers and issues between meetings via written comments, or via conference calls, should be considered.

The second concern is **governance**:

- It is not clear how decisions are made in the Steering Committee. For example, we, the private sector organisations that participate in the Steering Committee, have expressed that we wish to be able to select one or more of the private sector speakers to participate in the plenary session on the private sector in the High-Level Meeting in Mexico City. This is with the ultimate objective to ensure a well-balanced and representative private sector voice in the plenary. Yet it is still not clear how the private sector speakers will be decided and only a couple of months remain until the High-Level Meeting. Trying to ensure business participation at the C-level is by now extremely difficult.
- In short, the absence of a clear decision-making mechanism in the Steering Committee has given rise to a general feeling of uncertainty. This is not conducive to strengthening business interest in the Global Partnership, where companies have great difficulty in navigating these international fora.

International business organisations have been making a strong effort to represent companies' interests in the Steering Committee, in order to lay the ground and create opportunities for company participation (of all sizes and sectors) in relevant events and activities. International business organisations have moreover been promoting the Global Partnership to their constituencies. Nevertheless, the shortcomings in efficiency and governance, as described above, continue to fuel uncertainty and dissuade widespread business interest.

4. Special session on the private sector

(Thomas de Man, Chair of the BIAC Development Task Force, to provide inputs in panel speaking role).

5. High-Level Meeting: side events, expo and overall logistics

With respect to rules for sponsoring travel of participants from developing countries, we agree that funding will be required in order to ensure participation of key private sector representatives from developing countries.

6. High-Level Meeting: Main Sessions

As described above under Item 3, we believe there is still uncertainty about the decision on moderators and panellists for the plenary session on the private sector. The private sector organisations represented in the Steering Committee would wish, as a minimum, to be able to select the private sector speakers to this session.