

**General Assembly**

Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
8 December 2005

Original: English

Second Committee**Summary record of the 31st meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 16 November 2005, at 10 a.m.

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05-60587 (E)

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In the absence of Mr. Wali (Nigeria), Mr. Koudelka (Czech Republic), (Vice-Chairman), took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 59: Towards global partnerships
(A/60/111 and A/60/214)

1. **Mr. Kell** (Executive Head, Global Compact) introduced the Secretary-General's report on enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector (A/60/214), noting that it took stock of partnerships between United Nations bodies and non-State actors, reviewed experiences across United Nations organizations and provided an overview of the most important partnership trends. Partnerships had progressed well across many United Nations agencies and bodies, including the Financing for Development Office, the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force, the regional commissions and relevant agencies in the field such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

2. The report stressed the importance of local ownership and recognized that strong management was necessary for partnerships to be effective. It contained specific recommendations on how to enhance partnerships, including building institutional capacity in United Nations country offices, enhancing training of United Nations staff at all levels, a clearer partner selection process and sharing experiences across United Nations organizations through enhanced transparency. The Organization was learning how to work with the private sector and must find ways to more fully utilize the opportunities that partnerships afforded, especially in the context of United Nations reform.

3. The idea for the Global Compact had grown out of a speech delivered by the Secretary-General at the Davos World Economic Forum. It was a voluntary initiative that currently involved over 2,400 affiliated businesses and civil society organizations from more than 80 countries, which worked together to promote partnerships on the ground. Global Compact members were small and large corporations from developed and developing countries. More than half of the current participants were from the developing world.

4. The Compact's concrete initiatives included the establishment of sustainable businesses in least developed countries, a project currently being run by UNDP, and cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on environmental projects. In two weeks, the Global Compact would meet in Shanghai, China, to take stock of developments and trends in its various partnerships. The role of his Office, which worked closely with a wide range of United Nations organizations at the headquarters level and in the field, was in essence to identify, facilitate and share good practices.

5. **Ms. Schmidt** (Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), speaking on behalf of the High Representative, said that the private sector could contribute to development by sharing capacities, knowledge and technology, which were especially lacking in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Private businesses could partner with the United Nations to expand local markets by providing access and bridging gaps. Such partnerships were key to achieving sustainable economic development and eradicating poverty, particularly for the weakest segment of the international community. The Brussels, Almaty and Mauritius Programmes of Action in favour of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged countries envisaged partnerships with both domestic and international civil society as an integral part of the development process.

6. The involvement of domestic civil society and business promoted national ownership of development projects and programmes and helped to mobilize all possible resources — human, financial and material — in the achievement of development goals. The Brussels Programme of Action was "A Framework for Partnership" not only between the least developed countries and their development partners, but also with other non-governmental actors. Civil society and private sector representatives had also been involved in the formulation of the Mauritius Strategy and the Almaty and Brussels programmes.

7. It was critical for landlocked developing countries to promote State-to-State as well as State-to-private sector and business partnerships in their regions in the area of trade facilitation and transport. The international community would benefit greatly from increased attention to partnerships among all

development partners, including civil society and the private sector.

8. **Mr. O'Neill** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia and Turkey; the countries of the stabilization and association process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and, in addition, Iceland, Norway, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the international community placed increasing value on global partnerships, while the United Nations had increasingly recognized the need to engage fully with the private sector and civil society. It had initiated a significant number of partnerships throughout its funds and programmes, particularly those with field operations, and several of those initiatives were becoming catalysts for positive change in managing international development throughout the United Nations system. Partnerships ranged from small-scale development projects with a limited number of local actors to global initiatives with large numbers of major participants. The European Union was pleased that such partnerships formed an integral element of United Nations business.

9. The Millennium Summit Outcome had reaffirmed the commitment to global partnerships for development and underlined the value of building linkages throughout the United Nations system in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Global partnerships should focus on strategic priorities and share best practices where appropriate. The United Nations had a particular role to play, together with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization (WTO), in developing partnership practices in pursuit of development and poverty eradication. The Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved without the active participation of all stakeholders — official, private sector and non-governmental alike.

10. The European Union welcomed the efforts of the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships to mainstream partnership activity across United Nations business and was grateful to the private individuals and companies that had contributed to the implementation of many projects worldwide. More than 200 partnerships had been launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and were currently playing an important supportive role in advancing the

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In that regard, information and communication technology could facilitate and enhance partnership initiatives. The United Nations Information and Communication Technology Task Force was a valuable example of private-public-civil society cooperation. The development of further partnerships in that sector would provide benefits across the United Nations system and the European Union therefore looked forward to a successful conclusion of the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society.

11. The European Union welcomed the ongoing international debate on corporate social responsibility, business ethics, accountability and transparency. Governments could play a key role in creating an enabling environment for responsible business practices and in promoting corporate citizenship through initiatives such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the International Labour Organization's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and the Global Compact. The European Union supported the OECD Guidelines as the only comprehensive, Government-backed instrument in the field of corporate social responsibility and welcomed ongoing efforts to raise public awareness of how the Guidelines could be used by Governments, companies and stakeholders. It welcomed the increased participation in the Global Compact by companies from developing countries and the establishment of national Global Compact networks in a number of developing countries.

12. **Mr. Wang Qi** (China) noted that the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved without trade and cooperation among countries and mutual support among development partners. The importance of partnerships for development had been stressed in the 2005 Summit Outcome. The international community should, on the basis of that consensus, tap the full potential of partnerships and vigorously urge their further development. Of more than 200 partnership initiatives registered at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, only a few were funded by the private sector, demonstrating the need to expand them further. Moreover, practical results were more important than form in partnerships, which should be flexible and reflect needs and conditions in the field.

13. Partnership management should ensure quality. Currently, there was a plethora of partnership

initiatives, but no common benchmarks or criteria, and the international community needed to provide guidance and regulation. All partnerships should establish clear benchmarks and time-bound targets against which they could be evaluated. His Government, which attached importance to the role of partnerships in the area of development, engaged in bilateral and multilateral cooperation with a number of countries and international organizations. At the national level, it involved the whole population in efforts such as poverty reduction and environmental protection. China would continue to explore and develop diverse and pragmatic partnerships within the framework of the consensus reached at relevant international conferences so as to reinvigorate international development cooperation.

14. **Mr. Gass** (Switzerland) welcomed the recent trend towards partnerships between United Nations system entities and civil society and private sector actors. The 2005 World Summit Outcome contained a clear commitment in favour of such global partnerships, which were necessary for implementing the very ambitious development agenda, as well as the agendas for peace and collective security and human rights and the rule of law.

15. He agreed with the Secretary-General on the need to build institutional capacity in country offices, promote training of staff at all levels and streamline guidelines for partnerships. Because of its voluntary nature, the Global Compact could only supplement and not replace national laws and international norms. It should, however, promote much greater participation by the corporate world and civil society in managing that network and accelerate progress towards improving the living conditions of an ever greater number of people throughout the world. Local and national networks were an important aspect of the Compact, since they could make it easier for small and medium-sized enterprises and their partners to become good corporate citizens.

16. He welcomed the impetus given by the Secretary-General to the Compact through the Global Compact Office and the role that the Office played in promoting responsible business practices. He also hailed the role played by the six main Global Compact partner agencies — UNDP, UNEP, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization

(UNIDO) — in the establishment of new local networks in developing countries and welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General of a new Special Advisor on the Global Compact. Lastly, his delegation supported the conclusion that Governments played a crucial role in emerging partnerships.

17. **Ms. Hughes** (United States of America) stressed that the private sector was an important partner in efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals. Each country assumed primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, but a strong private sector and international trade had a vital role to play. The notion of competitive, private markets as fundamental to well-functioning economies had been highlighted at the 2005 World Summit.

18. The United States Government recognized and supported good corporate citizenship through various awards and programmes. It saw merit in the Global Compact as one of several voluntary corporate responsibility initiatives and was keenly interested in the plans to establish an advisory board and tighten the reporting system. Nevertheless, many corporate responsibility initiatives currently came directly from industry. Corporate leaders realized that economic incentives accrued from being a good corporate citizen.

19. It was also important to place corporate responsibility in its proper context. A company's principal responsibilities were towards those with whom it had formal contractual relationships. When companies pursued their private interests by investing, transferring knowledge and employing people, there were public benefits. But the principal function of business was to produce and transfer goods and services in markets, while Governments were the principal instruments of political and social agendas. Where there was a need for corporate standards and regulatory enforcement, it was the responsibility of the particular Governments to act. They should not shift their responsibility in that area to the private sector.

20. **Mr. Kau** (Fiji) said that global partnerships were at the heart of the Millennium Development Goals and the work of the United Nations. There were many approaches to developing partnerships; but Fiji supported the idea that there were measures which the United Nations could take to build partnerships with all partners, including the private sector. It also called for appropriate support to developing countries in their quest to enhance local capacities and engender ownership and strong management of partnerships.

21. The United Nations agencies, particularly UNDP already had considerable experience in establishing partnerships in the Pacific island countries and numerous UNDP-funded strategic initiatives had been implemented. For example, Fiji was working closely with UNDP to find alternative uses for sugar, to compensate for the economic losses that would ensue when the preferential price set by the European Union expired in 2006.

22. The Commonwealth Private Investment Initiative had established a private investment fund for the Pacific islands to support and promote commercially viable small and medium-sized enterprises, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific had established two new initiatives for increasing cooperation with the private sector.

23. Fiji itself had developed a Public-Private Partnership Programme for the delivery of public infrastructure and public services by the private sector that would otherwise have been provided through traditional public sector procurement.

24. **Mr. Neil** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that partnerships with non-State actors represented an emerging area, which was still experimental, where a variety of engagement mechanisms were being developed.

25. The initiative had positive elements, but two main areas of concern needed to be addressed. The first related to the principles on which the initiative was based. The overarching principle should be national ownership and leadership of the development process. Consequently, any arrangements within the partnerships should respect that principle as well as arrangements established at the national level. The new form of cooperation should bring additional resources to developing countries. The Secretary-General's report noted that it had not produced significant new funding streams (para. 12); nevertheless, resources also included networks, experience and skills, all of which should be channelled towards helping the development process. No single model could be applied to all developing countries and any engagement mechanism must take into account local conditions and priorities.

26. The second area of concern related to management of the partnerships. To date the process had been Secretariat-driven; however, there should be increased inter-governmental management and guidance, particularly in the early stages of the initiative. The relationship of the United Nations, as an

association of Member States, with non-governmental organizations and the private sector needed to be monitored carefully to ensure that certain basic principles relating to United Nations activity were not compromised.

27. The report referred to steps taken by United Nations agencies to create the necessary structures and capabilities at headquarters and in their country offices to develop and manage partnerships (paras. 25 and 26). That was a very practical way to advance the process; however, common strategy and a global management system were needed to monitor and control implementation of the initiative.

28. **Mr. Kell** (Executive Head, Global Compact) agreed that the purpose of partnerships was to implement initiatives that were in line with Government goals. That basic recognition was deeply embedded in partnership arrangements. Partnerships provided a complementary method of implementation, and gave greater relevance to United Nations efforts in that area. All voluntary initiatives and partnerships were seen as complementary to and supportive of Government decisions.

29. The United Nations agencies had different mandates, strengths and competences; the variety of approaches was a sign of the strength of the system. The issue of consistency with United Nations goals was taken very seriously. The Secretary-General himself had instructed that guidelines should be established and agencies had adopted their own operational guidelines, which were constantly being reviewed. Enabling and facilitating learning allowed an agency to improve its own effectiveness in that area.

Agenda item 50: Macroeconomic policy questions (continued)

(a) International trade and development (continued) (A/C.2/60/L.36)

Draft resolution on unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries

30. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.36 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said the draft resolution dealt with an issue of particular concern to the Group and merited the urgent attention of the international community. The

General Assembly should categorically reject such measures, which were contrary to international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. The draft resolution was submitted with a view to keeping the matter under review in the hope that it could be resolved promptly.

Agenda item 52: Sustainable development (*continued*)

(g) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
(*continued*) (A/C.2/60/L.34 and L.35)

Draft resolution on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006

31. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.34 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the International Year of Deserts and Desertification should raise awareness of the issue of desertification and the role of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, leading to the increased international attention that the issue deserved.

Draft resolution on implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

32. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.35 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that, although it was based on the resolution adopted the previous year, it had been updated to take into account the work of the recent seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. The draft resolution emphasized the need for serious political and financial commitment to implementation of the Convention.

Agenda item 55: Groups of countries in special situations (*continued*)

(b) Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (*continued*) (A/C.2/60/L.33)

Draft resolution on specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

33. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), introducing draft resolution A/C.2/60/L.33 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text drew attention to some important areas where action had to be taken by the international community in support of the landlocked developing countries and in implementation of the Almaty Declaration.

The meeting rose at 11.25 a.m.