

# Sustainable Innovation Expo

23-25 May 2016

UNEP

Nairobi, Kenya



UNEA

United Nations Environment Assembly  
of the United Nations Environment Programme  
Delivering on the 2030 Agenda



## Acknowledgments

The Sustainable Innovation Expo 2016 was a collaborative effort among UNEP Divisions, Offices, UNEP's Secretariat of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders, and a number of external partners.

The Expo was made possible thanks to financial assistance from:

- The Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark and DANIDA.
- The Zayed International Foundation for the Environment of Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The team that organized the Sustainable Innovation Expo 2016, which included nine thematic events and a Business Dialogue for Environmental Sustainability, was led by Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of the Governing Bodies and Stakeholders (UNEP-SGBS), with overall coordination carried out by Kamar Yousuf and Mia Turner (UNEP-SGBS).

We would also like to recognize the participants for their intellectual contributions to the panel discussions in the Expo and UNEP staff who organized the specific events. They are:

- Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through Innovative South-South Cooperation (RSO: Munyaradzi Chenje, Chris Ambala, and Qian Jia)
- Big Data and Innovation: Delivering Information for the SDGs Delivery (DEWA: Simone Targettiferri and Jacqueline McGlade)
- National and City Action to Achieve

Health Benefits from Improving Air Quality (DTIE: Rob de Jong, George Mwaniki, Vered Ehsani and George Maina)

- Sustainable Energy and Technology - (DTIE/ROA: Meseret Zemedkun, Djaheezah Subratty and Mark Radka)
- Empowering Women Entrepreneurs for SDGs' Delivery - (DTIE: Nora Steurer and Rahel Steinbach)
- Less Waste, Better Environment, Healthy People - (IETC: Mahesh Pradhan, SGBS: Damdin Davgadorj)
- Investing in the Global Commons: Physical Capital Depreciates, but Natural Capital Appreciates if We Manage It Well - (OfO: Brennan van Dyke and Stephanie van der Poel)
- Urban World 2030 - (DTIE: Martina Otto)
- Healthy Oceans for Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economies - (DEPI: Ole Vestergaard)
- Business Dialogue for Environmental Sustainability - (SGBS: Kamar Yousuf, Mia Turner; DTIE: Elisa Tonda; and OfO: Stephanie van der Poel).

We would like to acknowledge and thank the team of Henley Media/Climate Action for their collaboration in organizing the Sustainable Innovation Expo. We also would like to acknowledge and thank our UNV colleagues, Nicola Brennan and Isaac Okurut, who helped the drafting of this report. Finally, we would like to thank all the reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

## Preface

The second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly provided a global platform for reviewing progress on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, particularly their environmental dimensions.

On the margins of the Assembly, the private sector was engaged in a landmark Sustainable Innovation Expo 2016, which brought together policymakers, civil society and the business community for the first time in nine thematic and moderated panel discussions which culminated in a high-profile Business Dialogue for Environmental Sustainability.

Underpinning the discussions that took place in the Expo were the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda, which has defined a way forward to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Global partnerships among governments, the private sector and civil society are essential to achieving the aspirations of this new global Agenda.

The Expo and its nearly 600 participants built on the UN Environment's existing partnerships with the private sector and created new ones. Ultimately, the Expo was not just about what the private sector could do for sustainable development, but what sustainable development could do for the private sector.

"Science and policy can direct our efforts, but only by integrating the efforts of the private sector can we scale up the impact to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals," said former UNEP Executive Director Mr. Achim Steiner, who completed a decade at the helm of UNEP on 14 June 2016

The UN Environment Assembly, the highest-level decision-making body of the UN on the environment, is the ideal platform for convening stakeholders to engage, share experiences and build these important partnerships that will ensure healthy thriving economies and societies and the sustainably-managed natural resources of our planet.

"The Expo has planted the seeds for the UN Environment's full engagement with the private sector in the preparations now underway for third session of the UN Environment Assembly in December 2017," said UNEP's new Executive Director Mr. Erik Solheim.

# Sustainable Innovation Expo 2016

## The UN Environment Assembly's Platform for Public-Private Cooperation

UN Member States recognized at the UN Conference for Sustainable Development in 2012 that economic or social progress at the expense of the environment, or environmental protection at the expense of people and people's livelihoods, are no longer viable propositions. The outcome of this Conference has resulted in the creation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which have given the global community an unprecedented opportunity to change the way it pursues development.

It has also become increasingly apparent that today's environmental challenges are far too large to be addressed by any single entity, but rather require the concerted and integrated efforts of all sectors of our increasingly interconnected world.

For the new Agenda to be implemented, and be transformational, it will be necessary to put into place strong global partnerships that engage all

relevant groups and stakeholders at all levels: global, regional and national. This is a call for a new culture of 'shared responsibility'.

Clearly, it is only through the involvement of all stakeholders that holistic and green solutions can be found for today's environmental problems. UN Environment has successful examples of such partnerships, but there is an urgent need to build on these and mobilize new partnerships that can accelerate the global transition to sustainable development.

Over the years, there has been growing recognition of the important role played by partnerships in addressing global challenges and finding global solutions. The benefits of forging these partnerships are manifold. Partnerships offer a mechanism to foster joint action and give an opportunity to non-traditional actors to become involved in the work of the United Nations and to contribute towards the international environmental agenda. Partnerships encourage sharing which fosters equity, a central aspect of sustainable development. Partnerships also allow different people and organizations to work collaboratively towards a common goal while exchanging views and understanding each other's needs. In this way, partnerships can find solutions to complex problems in a way that meets the needs of all in society and at the same time fosters cooperation and innovation.

The UN Environment Assembly is an ideal platform for bringing together different stakeholders from government, civil society and the private sector, all of which need to work together to tackle the shared and unprecedented environmental challenges the world is facing

"Now is the time to mobilize the global business community as never before. The case is clear. Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals will improve the environment for doing business and building markets." UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-moon, UN Headquarters, 26 September 2015

and deliver on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development. While governments are pivotal in strengthening the policies and regulatory frameworks to create an investment climate that limits risks and ensures returns to realize the 2030 Agenda, the private sector has a critical role to play in fostering and funding sustainable solutions.

At the second session of the UN Environment Assembly (23-27 May 2016) in UN Headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, the private sector was engaged as never before in the Sustainable Innovation Expo 2016, which was facilitated by UN Environment's Secretariat of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders and took place in parallel with the Assembly.

By engaging the private sector in the Expo, UN Environment has encouraged the business community to take greater responsibility for its environmental footprint and that of their partners.

The Expo brought together policymakers, civil society and the business community in nine thematic panel discussions over three days. Panelists focused on some of the most critical and prevalent issues in today's world, such as: sustainable energy; healthy oceans; air quality; rapid urbanization; big data and innovation; natural capital; and waste management.

The nearly 600 participants to the Expo included chief executive officers of major companies, institutional investors, foundations, banks, insurance companies, civil society representatives and thought leaders from non-governmental organizations, and think tanks. The outcomes and key messages of these panel discussions fed into a three-hour high-profile Business Dialogue for Environmental Sustainability.

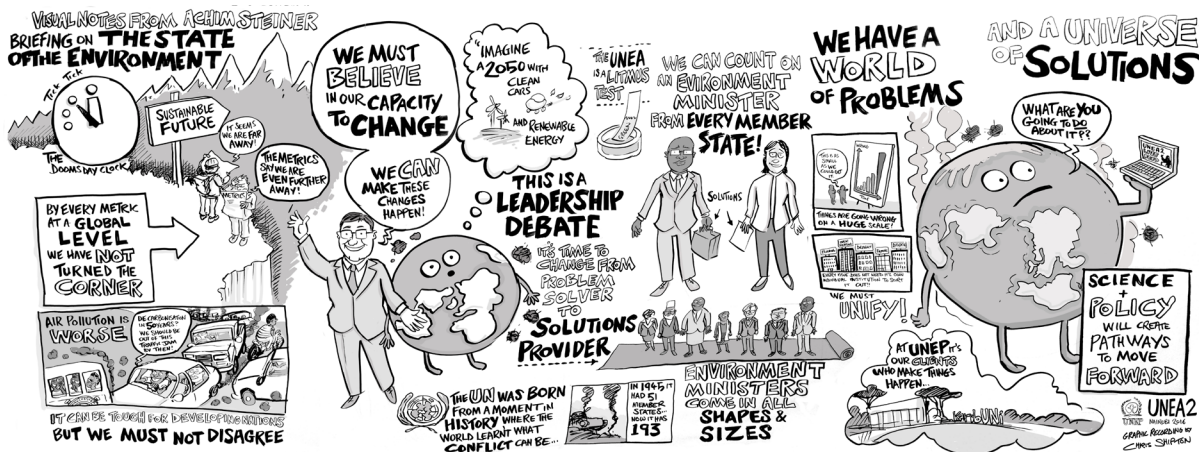
The Expo also fostered networking opportunities among the participants, some of which are now resulting in collaboration. Asian financial investors in the Expo have already expressed interest to collaborate with Uganda's Kiira Motors, which produced the prototype of Africa's first solar-powered bus.

With strong financial support from UN Member States, such as Denmark, the Sustainable Innovation Expo 2016 built on UN Environment's existing strategic partnerships in the private sector and created new ones.

The conclusions of the Expo have planted the seeds for UN Environment's growing engagement with the private sector, particularly in view of the new partnerships that will develop between UN agencies, governments, the private sector and the international community, amongst others, as a result of the ideas and experiences shared. Moreover, it is this outcome and these partnerships that are nurturing the preparations now underway for the third session of the UN Environment Assembly that will take place in December 2017.



Former UNEP Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner, opening the Sustainable Innovation Expo 2016.



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1. Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through Innovative South-South Cooperation
  2. Big Data and Innovation: Delivering Information for the SDGs' Delivery
  3. National and City Action to Achieve Benefits from Improving Air Quality
  4. Sustainable Energy and Technology
  5. Empowering Women Entrepreneurs for SDG Delivery
  6. Less Waste, Better Environment, Healthy People
  7. Investing in the Global Commons: Physical Capital Depreciates, but Natural Capital Appreciates if We Manage It Well
  8. Urban World 2030
  9. Healthy Oceans for Sustainable and Inclusive Blue Economies
  10. Business Dialogue for Environmental Sustainability

# 1. Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through Innovative South-South Cooperation

## Background

- There is growing evidence that developing countries are taking leadership positions with regard to building more sustainable development pathways.
- To date, over US\$5 trillion reserves are now held by developing economies, which also account for 47% of global trade, with South-South flows making up about half of this total.
- By 2020, Brazil, China and India are expected to account for more world output than Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States combined.

South-South Cooperation is a framework for collaboration among developing countries on sharing best practices in all areas and in all sectors. From investment in infrastructure to the sharing of technological advances, this Cooperation is now widely recognized as a key mechanism for bringing development to the 'global South'. As a result, the developing world is growing richer in individual financial strength, and its collective impact on the global economy has also increased exponentially.

A clear global mandate to support South-South Cooperation has emerged over the years as its scope has expanded beyond government-to-government exchanges to include businesses as well as civil society, academia, financial institutions and research centers, on a broad range of economic, social, environmental, health and cultural issues. Indeed, thanks to these

exchanges several countries of the 'global South' have become economic powerhouses with significant influence in their respective regions and beyond. These developing countries are now taking charge of their development, identifying problems and finding and/or adapting solutions. New political and economic alliances also reflect the dynamism and increasing influence of countries with emerging economies in the areas of industrial growth, trade, investment, and technology.

Panelists in the Expo event on South-South Cooperation highlighted the importance of partnerships through cooperation and the exchange of best practices for achieving the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda.

## Key Insights

- Given the increasing complexity of the challenges faced by the global community, cooperation and collaboration has to evolve.
- The UN should take the lead to promote the South-South partnerships among Member States;
- The private sector, scientific institutions, international organizations and civil society should be encouraged to participate and contribute in building South-South partnerships.
- South-South Cooperation, which started as an expression of solidarity, has evolved



over the years into fruitful cooperation across all regions.

- South-South Cooperation remains complementary to, rather than a substitute of, the traditional North-South Cooperation.
- There needs to be a closer examination on how South-South Cooperation and

important elements of South-South Cooperation partnerships.

- South-South Cooperation should be in the context of the global community's collective effort and not unique to specific countries.
- Having long-term strategic objectives developed through a collaborative two-

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