

National Workshop on Shared Environmental Information Systems (SEIS) and Environmental Statistics for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

*Hyatt Regency Dushanbe
26/1 Ismoil Somoni Avenue
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Statement by Dr. Pratibha Mehta, UN Resident Coordinator in Tajikistan/UNDP Resident Representative

Honorable Director of the Agency for Statistics, Ms. Gulnora Hasanzoda,

Deputy Chairperson of the Committee for Environmental Protection, Ms. Oikhon Sharipova

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all at this event timed to the 25 years of partnership of United Nations with the Government of Tajikistan and aimed at improving data sharing processes to report on the environmental dimension of the SDGs.

As you know, in September 2015 the UN Member States, including Tajikistan, adopted the Agenda 2030 with 17 SDGs in New York. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development creates a unique opportunity for Central Asian countries for shaping a common vision for SDGs achievement by strengthening policy coordination and engagement on relevant environment SDGs, respecting the need to reflect on the pressing issue and that Agenda 2030 is for ‘people and planet’.

Given the level of ambition of SDGs, Government alone will not be able to achieve the goals by 2030, active participation and partnership with CSOs and private sector will be needed, in addition to mobilizing resources in innovative manner. The Government of Tajikistan is preparing a comprehensive roadmap to implement SDGs and we hope that it will help roll out the implementation and monitoring process in a systematic way. The UN Country Team in Tajikistan is committed to working together with the development partners in supporting the Government and people of Tajikistan in achieving the SDG agenda in the spirit of its core principle to leave no one, no woman no man and no child, behind.

Agenda 2030 and the SDGs urge countries to reassess their policies, take new actions, measures, and tools in an integrated manner to monitor and report progress towards SDGs. And while all five countries in Central Asia - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - have committed to the SDGs as part of their national development agendas, unavailability of frequently collected and monitored environmental data does not provide necessary inputs for earmarked budget planning and other environment-related fiscal activities. Lack of reliable and continual disaggregated data is impeding enactment of environmental policies and limiting public awareness of environmental issues.

Despite continuous efforts of donor community and the governments in the region, presently there is no consistently integrated and interconnected regional monitoring system of environment SDGs in

Central Asia, enabling countries to undertake a more integrated approach in policy stewardship of the countries. A systemic and integrated data is essential in ensuring credible and solid grounds for policy endorsements and SDGs progress monitoring. In this regard, adopting international practices, such as System of Environmental-Economic Accounts (SEEA) and principles of Shared Environmental Information Systems (SEIS) provides a timely and reliable data backed up with a non-sporadic monitoring system.

Since adoption of the Agenda 2030, UNDP in Tajikistan has supported the Agency for Statistics under the President of Tajikistan in implementation of various frameworks for reporting on nationalized SDGs. In particular, countrywide system for assessing the natural resources and the impact of economic activities on environment has been introduced through adoption of Law “On Environmental Impact Assessment” (EIA), the SEEA has been introduced in the water and forestry sectors, and SEIS is the next step to advancing the country reporting on environmental SDGs.

Within the past couple years, Tajikistan has vastly improved its Environmental Performance Index (EPI) score with a 53.2-percent improvement, ranking from 154 in 2014 to 72 in 2015 (see the screenshot below). This achievement was possible through “One UN approach” that improved the socio-economic situation in Tajikistan while ensuring environmental sustainability, that resulted in country’s decision to undertake the robust, integrated and long-term water resources management, biodiversity and habitat preservation and climate change measures. Moreover, the newly drafted National Development Strategy (NDS) for the period of 2016-2030 speaks to nation’s will and readiness to secure and leverage its natural resources and key elements of environmental health within that time horizon. As this process unfolds and progresses, Tajikistan may gradually develop the great authority and capacity to protect the environment and human health, and become region’s leading environmental performer.

I would like to emphasize that momentum is building for effective application of environmental data sharing principles by relevant national agencies in Tajikistan, and the region, to improve capacity for production of environmental statistics for monitoring progress on the implementation of the SDGs.

Let me also highlight that the groundworks for “localizing the SDGs” and mainstreaming environmental objectives in Central Asia implemented through UNDP-UN Environment Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI), and the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) approach supported by the UN Development Group for taking the SDGs down to the national level, provide a conducive foundation for sound assessment of capacities, country needs and interventions.

That having said, I would like to confirm that the United Nations Development Programme will continue its joint efforts to contribute to implementation of the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through support for integration of environment SDGs in regional and sectoral development polices, improved environmental data monitoring, and promotion of transboundary knowledge and information exchange among Central Asian countries.

We stand ready to continue our collaboration between the United Nations and the Government of Tajikistan to address the national development priorities through strengthening of the national legislation, promotion of the public administration reforms and supporting implementation of the National Development Strategy in line with the global development agenda.