



## MEETING REPORT

### Development and Integration Partners' Forum "Albania in its way to EU accession and SDGs"

4 July 2017

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Center for Openness & Dialogue (COD), Prime Minister's Office



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## Executive Summary

The forum brought together more than 100 participants from the Government, the UN, development partners including the EU Delegation, EU member States, Institute of Statistics, civil society organizations, *inter alia*, involved in the SDG nationalization. The scope of the full day forum—which was organized in two parts, focusing on both strategic and technical issues—discussed the Government’s and other actors’ efforts on SDG mainstreaming, in search of common ground between the SDGs and EU integration, and assessing forward looking approaches.

High-level representatives from the Government, including the Prime Minister’s Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of European Integration and the Ministry of Finance, highlighted critical steps that have been undertaken to push the *Agenda 2030* forward. This includes *inter alia* the establishment of national coordination mechanisms (namely the Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs and the Inter-Ministerial Working Group on SDGs), and the completion of the Rapid Integrated Assessment, as well as of the Baseline Report on SDGs (which will be further consulted with stakeholders), as well as drafting of a national action plan with key directions for SDG mainstreaming over the next two years.

These efforts are seen as being strategically linked with the EU accession agenda of the country. In this context, major reforms in such areas as the rule of law, public administration, administrative territorial reform, anti-corruption, fight against crime, and the protection of human rights, require integrated approaches and support by all actors. These reforms will require a strong focus on governance but also social inclusion/leave no one behind aspects, which are also critical dimensions of the Agenda 2030.

EU integration was viewed as an accelerator that can have a multiplicative effect across many goals at the same time. In this regard, it is important to identify and ensure cross-sectoral collaboration; to identify priority areas that require stronger efforts to address shortcomings, which in turn can provide multiple benefits; and to adopt innovative solutions that avoid overlaps and guarantee sustainable progress.

This requires technical and financial support from the development partners, in order to strengthen national capacities at both the central and local levels to respond to the requirements of the EU accession process, which at the same time are seen as mutually reinforcing to SDG processes. Development partners, mainly representatives of the EU Delegation, EU member states (such as Germany, Sweden, Italy and Switzerland) expressed

strong commitment to support reform continuity. In this regard, the Government's ownership over the reform processes and a clear strategic planning framework are needed to guide integrated efforts to meet national priorities.

The effective use of domestic and international financial resources was considered as critical to support the achievement of the national development agenda. The EU and other international institutions, such as World Bank, will certainly help the Government to pursue effective reforms. Nonetheless, better decision making and strengthened public financial management around the limited resources, as well as leveraging new approaches, remain key.

The Government expressed its interest to voluntarily report on SDGs to the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in 2018. Furthermore, the exchange of national experiences at the sub-regional level was considered favourably as a prospective element for the dissemination of good practices. In this regard, the possibility of organizing a sub-regional Ministerial meeting in Tirana in the fall of 2017 will be considered.

The forum was organized by the Department for Development, and Foreign Aid, which is the main coordinating authority for SDG mainstreaming at the central government level, in partnership with line Ministries, the United Nations, the Delegation of the European Union to Albania, Development and Integration Partners, and INSTAT. In the context of UN support, the meeting was linked to the pre-MAPS missions that were organized by UNDP's Istanbul Regional Hub during June-July in the Western Balkan countries, with the aim to preparing subsequent missions focusing on SDG 'Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support' (MAPS) missions. The possible fielding of a MAPS mission to Albania was supported by forum participants, to engage UN technical expertise in strengthening policy coherence along the EU acquis and sustainable development dimensions.

The agenda of the meeting was structured around five key sessions. A summary of the sessions is given below.

## PART I

### Session 1: Country SDG context

This session focused on presenting Albania's SDG country context, with presentations delivered by high level representatives from the Government and development partners, namely the EU and the UN.



In her opening remarks, Ms. Dhuka, Deputy Secretary General, Director of the Department for Development and Foreign Aid of the Prime Minister's Office welcomed participants to the DIP Forum. The main purpose of the forum is to ensure a sustainable dialogue amongst Albanian Government and Development Partners and social partners, in order to synergize and create catalytic efforts for achieving the SDGs.

In Albania's case, Agenda 2030 is shaped by many voices that consider this agenda and the SDGs as an opportunity for furthering the country's development prospects. Efforts to achieve this ambitious agenda will not only bring Albania one step closer to EU membership, but also promote the emergence of a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable Albanian society by 2030.

Ms. Odeta Barbullushi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, noted that this forum is timely in light of Albania's efforts and progress in the EU integration process, approaching opportunities for the opening of the accession negotiations, and the Trieste meeting<sup>1</sup>. The Government's vision for the achievement of the Agenda 2030 is in line with the National Strategy for Development and Cooperation 2015-2020, as well as with the EU integration goal. The Government remains strongly committed to the achievement of this Agenda, by engaging all layers of society. A stronger focus will be placed in engaging the local level, and on ensuring stronger synergies and complementarities between Agenda 2030, the National Strategy for Development and Integration and the EU integration goal, and on improving data connectivity at the national (central and local) and regional levels. In 2018, Albania will report to the HLPF on the progress towards Agenda 2030. Meanwhile, at the regional level, Albania is coordinating with the WB6 for the organization of a meeting focused specifically on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

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<sup>1</sup> The Trieste meeting was organized on 12 July as part of the Berlin Process initiative for European integration of the Western Balkans states.

Mr. Brian J. Williams, UN Resident Coordinator, highlighted that Agenda 2030's objective is to bring together social, economic and environment dimensions under a single framework devoted to "leaving no one behind". The achievement of Agenda 2030 will require reaching out to the most vulnerable, based on an agreed set of goals by every nation in the world in the pursuit of the universality principle. This will require robust efforts towards improved data, research and governance. In his remarks, Mr. Williams quoted the UN Deputy Secretary General "We don't want SDG plans, we want national vision that is sustained by the Sustainable Development framework".

In this regard, the SDG framework can be used to inform Albania's EU vision and provide lenses to record progress as well as gaps and challenges. While the establishment of high level national coordination structures is highly praised, it is important to make use of existing national governance and coordination structures (i.e. Integrated Policy Management Groups, the National Council for Civil Society), which can be tasked to look into the data and allocation and use of resources on SDG achievement. Partnerships are also considered to be critical, in particular with the private sector, as well as with development partners and international organisations (locally, regionally and globally), both for financial resources, strategic expertise and data to measure the achievement of the totality of actions in the country.

Mr. Williams emphasized that the new Government of Albania and United Nations Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021 mainstreams the SDGs into its four pillars. The UN is working closely with DDFA to reposition the UN Coherence Fund into the UN SDG Acceleration Fund, that will enable stronger partnership with partners to support SDGs mainstreaming in the country. More specifically, the UN is keen to support Government efforts to strengthen national (both at central and local level) systems for the provision of valuable granular data.

Mr. Yngve Engstrom, Head of Operations, EU Delegation, highlighted that Albania is in a good way towards European Union expecting the negotiation process to initiate soon. Accession is a long and cumbersome process full of technicalities that require strong efforts and dedication. The Agenda 2030 in its universal principle is applicable to all EU member states.

In Albania, both the EU integration process and SDG achievement are complementary to each other, as both require common national vision and reforms. The national strategic framework, including the National Strategy for Development and Integration II, serves as a key instrument for guiding the achievement of the EU *acquis* and the SDGs. The UN in Albania can add value to these processes by bringing in competencies and experience from other countries.

## Session 2: SDG acceleration - how can EU integration best serve as an accelerator?

This session focused on defining the importance of EU integration and its critical use as a key accelerator with catalytic and multiplicative effects across many goals at the same time.



Mr. Ferit Hoxha, General Director for Political and Strategic Issues, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the chair of the session, highlighted the strong links between this session's objective and Albania's progress in delivering on several key reforms, whose completion is important for the country's EU accession talks, as well as to the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2030.

Ms. Eralda Cani, Deputy Minister of Integration, stressed Albania's commitment to EU integration and the achievement of Agenda 2030, highlighting the synergy and complementary features between both processes, which serve to advance a common national vision - Albania's enhanced development. Stronger partnerships and coordination between governance structures at all levels (inter-ministerial SDG Committee, inter-institutional SDG Working Group, IPMGs, and others) including the private sector, academia and civil society, were emphasized as a cornerstone for the achievement of both these processes.

Regarding the EU integration process, Ms. Cani called attention to the positive recommendation received by Albania on 9 November 2016 from the European Commission for the conditional opening of accession talks with the European Union. This recommendation was based on the 2016 Annual Report for Albania assessing progress against five key priorities: public administration reform, judicial reform, reduction of corruption, improved efforts against organised crime, and improved protection of human rights. In this regard, Ms. Cani highlighted Albania's progress in several key reform areas (justice, elections, social, administrative, financial, etc.), and highlighted benefits of the EU integration process to the country, including the approximation of key legislation, and the adoption of the annual national plan for EU integration that guides government institutions towards results that have been advanced in close consultation with international partners in the country. Participants were informed about the Government's closer engagement with the EU Commission this year on assessing progress regarding Chapters 23 and 24 as well as the Government's commitment and intensification of efforts towards completing the judicial reform.

The financial support provided by development partners in the country was mentioned as highly relevant to Albania's sustainable development and the achievement of Agenda 2030.

Additionally, the joint Government – UN Outcome Group meetings’ fora, under the framework of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021, was accentuated as a good forum to discuss the 2018-2020 plan for EU integration as well as Government plans and priorities for the year and the future.

The session followed with presentations by three high level representatives from EU Member States- Germany, Sweden, and Italy.

Ms. Anke Holstein, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, presented Germany’s way on implementing Agenda 2030. She highlighted the fact that the G20, whose presidency is currently held by Germany, should be at the forefront in fulfilling Agenda 2030 and advocating for a “peer learning mechanism” for the achievement of this agenda.

Regarding the German Government support for the SDGs, a three-dimensional approach was mentioned: (i) putting SDGs on multilateral agendas and supporting international organizations in their reform processes; (ii) supporting partner countries and non-governmental stakeholders in implementing the SDGs; (iii) following a very ambitious national implementation plan.

Ms. Holstein highlighted the importance of having adequate country provisions for the achievement of the SDGs, including a solid national development strategy, a reliable measuring system (targets and indicators), and a concrete action plan. Implementation should be managed at the highest level, sharing responsibilities with regional and local entities and actively including non-governmental actors. In this regard, Germany’s current sustainability strategy was adopted in January 2017, structured along the 17 SDGs and 63 national indicators, associated with quantified targets. The Federal Statistical Office’s Indicator Report, published every two years (next in 2018), measures Government progress vis-a-vis the targets. A sustainability management system (Action Plan) is in place (“Programme of sustainability measures – translating sustainability into concrete administrative actions”) and a monitoring report has been published every year since 2014. The Federal Chancellery is responsible for implementing the sustainability strategy, sharing responsibilities with regional and local entities (Länder and municipalities) and actively including non-governmental actors. Other important institutions are the Parliamentary Advisory Committee on Sustainable Development (composed of 15 members of the Bundestag) and the German Council for Sustainable Development consisting of 15 individuals from academia, civil society and the business community. The “Science platform sustainability 2030” is set up, for academia to give advice on how to best implement the ambitious goals. The “German Sustainability Code” was developed by the Sustainability Council and in the meantime, more than 200 companies have decided to report publicly on their sustainability measures.



Germany has been supporting Albania with more than Euro 1 billion since 1988. Among others, Germany's expertise has been offered to Albania for sustainable urban mobility concepts (Tirana mostly) and in developing the NDC action plan. Germany is committed to continuing the partnership for the achievement of Agenda 2030 overall, and specifically in reaching a higher score on SDGs 5 and 6. According to Germany's experience to date with the SDGs, Ms. Holstein emphasized that it would be helpful for Albania to start the voluntary reporting to the HLPF, as



this exercise will help the country to identify where it needs to step up actions further.

In her intervention, Ms. Birgitta Jansson, Deputy Head of Mission & Head of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden, focused on Swedish reflections from the first 1.5 years of implementation of the Agenda 2030 and potential cooperation with Albania on SDGs. At the global level, Sweden's efforts to contribute to Agenda 2030 have focused mostly on: gender equality, women's rights and the feminist foreign policy; international climate support; the UN ocean conference; the Global Deal initiative; and the initiative against antibiotic resistance.

In mid-June 2017, the Swedish Government released the first report on the country's contributions to Agenda 2030, to be presented at the HLPF in New York during the second week of July. The report is based on a study performed by *Statistics Sweden*, and indicates initially that Sweden has at this point reached the targets of 20% of the global SDG-indicators.

The ownership of the agenda is broad, including ministries, the Parliament, Governmental authorities, municipalities, county councils, civil society organizations, the business sector, and the trade unions and universities.

- *Parliament* - The Swedish Parliament's Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and on Finance ("Riksdagen") discussed Agenda 2030-related issues on a general level.
- *Government* - The Minister for Public Administration is responsible for coordinating and promoting the implementation of the Agenda nationally. The Minister for International Development Cooperation and Climate leads the work with Sweden's contributions to international implementation. There are also two coordination groups: one made up by state secretaries from four key ministries and the other one with key staff from all ministries.
- *Statistical Office* - *Statistics Sweden* is responsible for defining the Swedish national indicators for the SDGs.
- *Municipalities and county councils* - 290 municipalities and 20 county councils have a central role in the work with sustainable development in Sweden. Examples were given

from municipalities' efforts, such as adopting guidelines for human rights and diversity connected to the municipalities' operational plan, indicating relevant goals and key performance indicators, setting priorities on how to become more energy-efficient and fossil-fuel-free, and setting up a marine education center (SDG 14).

- *Business sector*, which has been asked to contribute and to use their innovation capacity. The SIDA-initiated project “Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development”, integrating 30 Swedish private companies, is one example of cooperation between the public and the private sector.
- *Trade unions and civil society organizations* - many CSO organizations (for example the National Council of Swedish Youth Organizations) appoint UN representatives who focus their job on the SDGs. The Swedish Disability Rights Federation is active in working groups within the disability rights movement at European and global levels, focusing on Agenda 2030.

Sweden will contribute to the achievement of the Agenda 2030 in Albania under the framework of Sweden's Strategy for Reform Cooperation with countries in the Western Balkan region, whose 2017 Medium Term Review concluded that it is in line with EU integration and the SDGs. Potential contribution areas include: market development (SDG 8), good governance, RoL, human rights and gender equality (SDGs 5, 10, 16), environment and climate change (SDG 13, etc.). In addition, during the upcoming years, Sweden will explore new types of partnerships, for example collaboration between municipalities in Sweden and in Albania.

The 2017 Western Balkans Summit in Trieste, Italy, is the upcoming fourth annual summit within the Berlin Process initiative for European integration of Western Balkans states. Previous summits took place in Berlin in 2014, Vienna in 2015, and in Paris in 2016. One of the main deliverables of the 2017 Summit will be the signing of the Transport Community Treaty, a fundamental tool to foster regional cooperation in transport and to harmonize relevant regional legislation, in line with the *acquis communautaire*.

Ms. Nicoletta Piccirillo, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Italy, informed that Italy will stress regional economic integration—a new area of cooperation that is complementary to the accession process as it will facilitate integration in the EU. In this regard, the Summit will mark the approval of a multiannual Joint Plan based on four pillars: Trade, Investments, Mobility, and a Common Digital Agenda. Moreover, Italy intends to introduce a new focus on small and medium size enterprises. To this end, Italy will organize a Business Forum devoted to SMEs, with a plenary Panel dedicated to financial and other instruments aimed at facilitating economic development and integration in the region. The Summit will also have a series of side

events, including a Forum dedicated to Youth and a Civil Society Forum. Italy will continue the work in the youth dimension through the newly established Regional Youth Cooperation Office of the Western Balkans.

The Trieste Summit underlines that the European Union and Western Balkans are interdependent and that sustainability cannot fully be achieved unilaterally, which is also the core message, in wider geographical scope, of the SDGs. Moreover, the Western Balkans process represents an accelerator for both agendas as it ensures political and financial commitments for implementing and promoting SDGs in the region, by providing policy makers with information on the key drivers and bottlenecks for achieving sustainable economic and social growth, ultimately to leave no-one behind.

Ms. Picirillo informed that future cooperation with Albania, would be focused on the development of the coastal and maritime areas, supported by a significant financial package that will be ensured over the next years by the Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation, especially in the promotion of SDG 14.

Mr. Christoph Graf, the Swiss Ambassador, noted the importance of the all-inclusive and prosperous combined national, EU and SDG agendas. He congratulated the Government for steering concretely the achievement of Agenda 2030 and highlighted two key challenges that need attention for Agenda's achievement: 1. leadership of Government is key, and that should be clearly stated; and 2. The SDG process should be kept simple and well-coordinated. As regards national efforts in Switzerland, the Swiss Government has assigned a special envoy from the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency to coordinate the domestic efforts amongst line institutions on the achievement of Agenda2030.

### Session 3: SDG approaches in the sub-region, steps in Albania, and data & the role of Civil Society in the achievement of the SDGs in Albania



This session focused on the inclusive principle of Agenda 2030, which requires close collaboration and coordination of all interested parties and mutual learning. Discussion focused on the experience shared from other MIC countries in the region on SDG mainstreaming; on the role of multiple players in pushing the SDG process forward, and on the role of data in measuring and

monitoring.

Ms. Delina Ibrahimaj, General Director of INSTAT, as the chair of the session provided a panorama of the work INSTAT is carrying out on the monitoring of SDGs. The importance on sharing knowledge on SDGs, support needed to strengthen building statistical capacity for SDG indicator monitoring and reporting was also pointed out.

Mr. Ben Slay, Senior Advisor of UNDP for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, presented key elements of the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy support (MAPS) process for the SDGs, and its specifics in the European middle-income country context. During his presentation, Mr. Slay highlighted the coherence between EU 2020 and Agenda 2030 by focusing on the key principles of the SDGs (universality, integration and “leave no one behind”) and their key elements (targets and indicators). A detailed explanation of the SDGs’ three-tier indicator framework was also provided. Mr. Slay also mentioned the expected support to be provided by the EU Member States, EUROSTAT’s role in monitoring the SDG indicators, and the first EU-wide SDG monitoring report, which is expected in November 2017. Other elements of his presentation included the emerging challenges for SDG implementation, such as SDG disaggregation, capturing the promise of the “data revolution”, institutional capacity for SDG monitoring and evaluation, as well as how to align national policy frameworks with the SDGs.



In her presentation, Ms. Oriana Arapi, Director of the Strategic Planning Unit and Head of the SDG Committee Secretariat, Department of Development and Foreign Aid, highlighted the current achievements of the Government of Albania, such as the preparation of the rapid integrated assessment and the SDG baseline report, and setting up a monitoring system for country’s strategies, to name a few. As regards national mechanisms, these include: establishment of the SDG Inter-ministerial Committee and the SDG inter-ministerial Working Group, as well as the integration of the SDGs into the working agenda of the Integrated Policy Management groups (IPMGs).

Ms. Elda Bagaviki, National Programme Officer, Decentralization and Local Governance, Embassy of Switzerland gave a short presentation regarding the localizing of the SDGs, the importance of strengthening implementation at the subnational level, and the role of municipal data in achieving the SDGs. Ms. Bagaviki emphasized the role that development partners can play in this process, supporting the 2018 SDG reporting, strengthening of capacities at the local government level, and raising awareness of local government regarding commitments taken at the national level. Challenges include limited data availability, scarce analytical capacities, and scarce financial resources and mandate. New initiatives that will be undertaken by Switzerland, such as the “partnership of Swiss Federal Statistics with INSTAT” and “Strong Municipalities –

*Bashki të Forta*” (inception phase July 2017 – June 2018, to be followed by a four-year main phase 2018-2022) will help address some of the challenges.

In her intervention, Ms. Iris Luarasi, representative of the National Council for Civil Society, highlighted the importance of a strong civil society and its role in the framework of the SDGs. The National Council of Civil Society does not function properly due to the lack of the Deputy Head, still to be appointed. Nonetheless, key achieved milestones include the establishment of two consultative fora, the National Council of Civil Society and the National Committee of European Integration; the adoption of the Roadmap on an enabling environment for civil society; a new legal framework on the right of information, and the adoption of civil society card. Other aspects to be considered in the future include:

- Public financing: the number of civil society organizations benefitting from public procurement is limited, especially for NGOs that offer social services; lack of VAT reimbursement when implementing donor projects/ grants;
- Need to address the legal constrains for paying social insurance to employees when the organizations do not have funds; or the need to amend the legal framework of the Agency for Supporting Civil Society and aspects of related allocation of funds.

## Session IV: Innovative finance - leveraging & new approaches to sourcing SDG achievement



This session was focused on the importance of clear planning for the mobilization of domestic and international resources in order to achieve national priorities, both for EU accession and the SDGs.

Mr. Erjon Luçi, Deputy Minister of Finance chaired the panel. Mr. Luçi made a short presentation of country’s financing landscape and public financing perspective of SDGs.

Mr. Yngve Engström, Head of Operations, European Union Delegation in Albania presented various EU national and regional instruments and their linkages to the achievement of Agenda 2030. For Albania, the EU remains the biggest aid contributor, but still EU should be considered as a partner rather than a donor. In terms of engaging the resources to fill the SDG financing gap, funding scarcity and the need for smart use of available resources must be kept in mind. As far as the EU is concerned, there is a “big catalogue of actions” which can be divided in soft support (for example support on knowledge sharing, expertise etc.) and hard support (for example budget support). The EU considers co-financing from the Government at both levels as a way to promote investment in sustainable and inclusive growth. It is important to have one

coherent process – as EU accession and achievement of the SDGs are complementary processes. Concerning regional connectivity, EU regional programs, including funds provided by the Western Balkans Investment Fund (WBIF), cooperation with banking institutions, as well with the UN and the CoE, were mentioned. Mr. Engström underlined that while EU support is mainly focused on EU Integration, it will also help to achieve the SDGs.

Ms. Oriana Arapi, Director of the Strategic Planning Unit, provided an overview of the National Single Project Pipeline (NSPP) as a strategic tool to prioritize investment projects. The NSPP has been also a requirement set from the EU in order for Albania to apply for regional projects under the umbrella of the WBIF. Mrs. Arapi highlighted that the Government is using three main criteria for prioritizing NSPP projects: (1) Horizontal – within the sectors; (2) – Vertical - ranking of cross-sectorial projects; and (3) Mega projects. The NSPP list for 2016-2017, approved by the Strategic Planning Committee in May 2017, is used not only for the WBIF calls, but also for the overall planning purposes. NSPP 2016-2017 includes 143 prioritized projects in 5 sectors with a total package of investments at €13,7 billion. These include 41 projects of regional relevance and 102 projects of national and regional relevance. In 2016, the sectors of NSPP have been extended also with the business infrastructure sector, which includes also the digital agenda (broadband infrastructure). The 2016-2017 NSPP includes projects with cross-border features which are really important for the connectivity agenda. The NSPP list will be discussed with partners, especially on projects that require financing support.

Ms. Adela Xhemali, Director of the Program Financing Unit at the Department of Development and Foreign Aid, highlighted the importance of funding and planning instruments to support SDG implementation. The Government of Albania has taken several steps for effective use of the existing tools, and in this vein a dedicated SDG acceleration fund would be of a crucial importance. For this purpose, the UN Coherence Fund of the Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021 will be rebranded as the SDG Accelerator Fund, in order to encourage the mobilization of domestic resources as well as strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve the SDGs. Development partners were invited to contribute to the Fund.

Ms. Evis Sulko, Acting Country Manager, World Bank, made a presentation about the international financial instruments and its use by the World Bank. There is a natural connection between the SDGs and the work of the World Bank. The World Bank has been involved in the development of 17 SDGs and related indicator processes; its activities link closely with SDG 1 (end extreme poverty). For this purpose, the World Bank is the biggest funder, making more than USD 20 billion in loans annually to its member countries to eradicate poverty. Using its twin goals of reducing poverty and increasing shared prosperity, the World Bank uses its financial resources, its highly trained staff, and its extensive knowledge base to help each

developing country onto a path of stable, sustainable, and equitable growth. Through its activities in the capital markets, the World Bank is able to fund projects in member countries in areas such as health, education, and essential infrastructure. It also works with countries on important cross cutting priorities such as job creation, gender equality, environmental protection and climate change activities.

For Albania, World Bank support is in line with country's objective, by following the NSDI Agenda as well as the integration process. For this purpose, it is necessary to increase national capacities to absorb financial resources that are mobilized. For example, the World Bank has helped mobilize USD 600 million for Albania—some of which have not been tapped, which calls for strengthened public administration and public financial management.

## Part II

### Session V: SDG data monitoring and reporting—national processes

The last session was dedicated to the technical experts and focal points on SDGs from the line Ministries, UN Output Co-Chairs, and the Ministry of European sectorial policies directorate. In the opening of session, Ms. Oriana Arapi summarized the discussions taking place during the Part 1 deliberations, while also mentioning that she considers this session a kick-off meeting for the Inter-Ministerial Working Group for Achieving the SDG objectives and Agenda 2030.

Later, Ms. Evis Qaja, Director of the Strategic Planning Directorate in the Department of Development and Foreign Aid, presented the specific role and functions of the Inter-Ministerial Technical Working Group to achieve the SDGs. As regards the SDG National Action Plan and the SDG baseline report, it was noted that further consultations will be organized in order to finalize the documents within 2017.

Mr. Ben Slay, in his intervention, provided additional information on the various SDG mainstreaming tools in the region, e.g., in Moldova, which has had good experiences with SDG nationalization. This included the role of Official Development Assistance (ODA), National Budget and Alternative Funding Approaches, accompanied by various examples.

The last presentation of the session was of delivered by Mr. Ilir Ciko, Advisor for the preparation of the SDG Baseline Report. The main elements of his presentation were related to the SDGs' alignment with the NSDI and the degree of alignment of SDGs, goals, targets and indicators with the strategic national framework. An assessment of the national strategies and policy documents, under and outside the NSDI II 2015 – 2020 umbrella, identifies 134 SDG

targets, or 79% of the total, directly linked to the national strategic policy framework surrounding the NSDI II. As far as the indicators, this assessment shows that 33% of the indicators from the global indicators framework are available in Albania, 24% is either available with efforts or partially available, 43% are currently not available, and 7% are not applicable to Albania. Most indicators for SDGs 1, 5, and 17 are available in Albania; while SDGs 6, 11, 12, 14, and 16 are the SDGs with the lowest number of indicators from the global framework, with data available from the country.

The SDG Baseline Report is still in its draft version and shall undergo final consultations on specific indicators with some state institutions.

## Annex A: Agenda

### Meeting Context and Objectives:

In September 2015, the United Nations adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the heart of this Agenda are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets. Albania, along with the other Western Balkan 6, have committed to achieve the Goals in synergy with their pursuit of EU integration.

The Government of Albania has taken recently several steps to organize their pursuit of the Goals and development objectives more broadly. This includes the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs with an inclusive vision, the undertaking of a baseline report on SDGs, and the outline of an Action Plan. At the same time, development priority instruments – such as the functioning of the Integrated Policy Management Groups (IPMGs) and the establishment of a National Single Project Pipeline have been further developed as mechanisms to enable better programming of all available financing resources and accelerate funding of infrastructure projects. The DIP forum will allow for presentation of the Government's approach to Agenda2030, discussion of steps to take for its mainstreaming at country level and identify synergies between the EU integration, other development planning processes in Albania and SDG achievement. It will also benefit from explanation of other efforts in the sub-region.

The DIP forum will take place on 4 July 2017, at the Prime Minister's premises, and is organized by the Department for Development, and Foreign Aid - main coordinating authority for the SDG mainstreaming at central level - in partnership with line Ministries, United Nations, Delegation of the European Union to Albania, Development and Integration Partners, and INSTAT.

The DIP forum is organized in two parts. The first part until lunch time (as detailed in the agenda) is devoted to the discussion with high-level representatives from DDFA, line Ministries, INSTAT, EU Delegation, EU Member States and UN. Those indicated to be observers to the



Inter-Ministerial Committee on SDGs<sup>2</sup> are invited to participate as well. The first part will also see participation of members of National Council of Civil Society.

The first part of the DIP forum is envisaged to cover the following dimensions: national development priorities and related strategic frameworks and coordination structures; synergies between EU integration and SDGs; financing; and data perspective in the SDG mainstreaming.

The second part will involve technical discussions on role and functions of the SDG Inter-Ministerial Working Group, discussion of the draft SDG baseline report with SDG IMWG members from line ministries, officials from MEI sectorial policies directorate, as well as UN Output Co-Chairs and EUD IPA staff.

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<sup>2</sup> See the Prime Minister's Order No.63, dated 12 May 2017.

## PART I

### **Session 1:**

**09:00-09:40**                    **Opening Remarks**

**Host of the session:**    **Ms. Majlinda Dhuka, Deputy Secretary General, Prime Minister's Office**

**Government Chair:**    **Ms. Odeta Barbullushi, Deputy Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Objective:**                    **Present country context on SDGs**

<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Presentation</b>
09:00-09:05 Ms. Odeta Barbullushi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs	Vision for the Agenda 2030 in Albania
09:10-09:20 Mr. Brian J. Williams, UN Resident Coordinator	Programme of Cooperation for Sustainable Development 2017-2021 and Agenda 2030
09:20-09:30 Mr. Yngve Engström, Head of Operations, EU Delegation	Albania's path towards EU integration and synergies with Sustainable Development Goals

### **Session 2:**

**09:30-10:45**                    **SDG acceleration- how EU integration will best serve as an accelerator?**

Background: Accelerators are considered as cornerstone in the Agenda2030 implementation, with potential catalytic and multiplying effects across many goals at the same time. Accelerator needs to cover as many SDGs as possible, which is an intervention or a set of policy interventions to be used as a priority along the wide range of SDGs. EU integration, in its context towards reaching EU accession targets, will serve as an “ accelerator” to measure progress, identify gaps, as well as prioritize solutions.

**Government Chair:**    **Mr. Ferit Hoxha, Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Objective:**                    **Identify entry points for the EU Accession Agenda to act as accelerator for the SDG achievement**

Speaker	Presentation
09:30-09:45 Ms Eralda (Methasani) Çani Deputy Minister, Ministry of European Integration	Agenda 2030 and EU Accession negotiations in Albania- entry points
09:45-10:00 Ms Anke Holstein Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany	Approaches to achieving SDGs by EU Member States - German perspective/approach
10:00-10:15 Ms Birgitta Jansson Deputy Head of Mission & Head of Development Cooperation Embassy of Sweden	Approaches to achieving SDGs by EU Member States - Sweden's approach to the implementation of the SDGs.
10:15-10:30 Ms Nicoletta Piccirillo Deputy Head of Mission Embassy of Italy	Trieste meeting and Italian cooperation in context of SDG acceleration
10:30-10:45 Moderated discussion	

**10:45-11:00**

***Coffee Break***

***Session 3:***

**11:00-12:30**

**SDG approaches in the sub-region, steps in Albania, and data**

**& Role of Civil Society in the achievement of the SDGs in Albania**

**Background:**

Implementation of Agenda 2030 in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region requires close collaboration and coordination of all interested parties and mutual learning. Europe and Central Asia region is very diverse, consisting of countries with different size, economic and social development profiles, and environmental conditions. This diversity, taken from the Middle-Income Country (MIC) perspective represents both challenges and opportunities. Addressing particular country conditions in nationalization and implementation of SDGs calls for prioritizing national adequacy and close collaboration and coordination of all interested parties. The role of data in measuring and monitoring of SDG mainstreaming both at central and local level is critical. In addition, national

governments cannot fulfill these ambitious goals on their own. Collective and individual efforts at the local, national and international levels are necessary.

Given the scope and ambition of the SDGs, it is clear that government cannot achieve the Agenda 2030 being alone. Achieving Agenda 2030 will require the broad involvement of other stakeholders, such as civil society organisations (CSOs) and the private sector. The inclusion of CSOs in this process is imperative, for these actors play crucial roles in society as agents of accountability.

**Government Chair:** **Delina Ibrahimaj, General Director of INSTAT**

**Objective:** **Share working knowledge on the SDG implementation approached in the ECA region- success stories in MICs, and**

**Discuss the role of CSOs in the achievement of SDGs both at central and local level**

<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Presentation</b>
11:00-11:15 Mr. Ben Slay, Senior Advisor, UNDP Eastern Europe and Central Asia	What are the key elements of the process Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support for SDGs? (MAPS) What are the process specifics in the European/MIC context? Best practices/references from other countries. Regional overview- Role of CSOs in SDG achievement
11:15-11:30 Ms Oriana Arapi, Director Strategic Planning Unit & Head of the SDG Committee Secretariat, Department for Development and Foreign Aid	SDG mainstreaming - key milestones and moving forward
11:30-11:45 Ms Delina Ibrahimaj, INSTAT Director	Importance of SDG data monitoring for development- lessons learnt and bottlenecks
11:45-12:00 Ms Elda Bagaviki, National Programme Officer, Decentralisation and Local Governance, Embassy of Switzerland	Localizing the SDGs- Role of municipal data
<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Presentation</b>
12:00-12:10 Ms Iris Luarasi, National Council for Civil Society	National Council for Civil Society - driver to push the Agenda2030 forward and EU Integration
12:10-12:20 Ms Aleka Papa, Policy Researcher, National Council for Civil Society	An enabling environment for civil society and implementation of the Agenda 2030

12:20-12:30 Moderated discussion	
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**Session 4:**

**12:30-13:30 Innovative finance - leveraging & new approaches to sourcing the SDG achievement**

**Background:** Achieving Agenda 2030 will require a clear planning and clearly prioritized mobilization and allocation of available domestic and international resources. How can an analysis of development priorities – including achievement of SDGs – assist in the decision-making processes around resource mobilization and allocation?

**Government Chair:** **Mr. Erjon Luci, Deputy Minister of Finance**

**Objective:** **To discuss and identify potential financial instruments to tap to for financing the SDGs.**

Speaker	Presentation
12:30-12:45 Mr Erjon Luçi, Deputy Minister of Finance	Country's financing landscape and public financing perspectives of SDGs
12:30-12:45 Mr Yngve Engström, Head of Operations, EU Delegation	EU instruments, National and Regional Instruments and Agenda 2030
12:45-13:00 Ms Adela Xhemali, Director, Program Financing Unit, Department for Development and Foreign Aid	Funding and planning instruments to support SDGs
13:00-13:15 Ms Evis Sulko, Acting Country Manager, World Bank	International Financial Instruments and its use
13:15-13:30 Moderated discussion	

**Closing remarks Part I - Ms. Oriana Arapi, Director Strategic Planning Unit & Head of the SDG Committee Secretariat, Department for Development and Foreign Aid**

13:30-14:30 Buffet lunch

## PART II

### Session 5

Is dedicated to the members of the Inter-ministerial working group on SDGs from line ministries, MEI sectorial policies directorate, as well as UN Output Co-Chairs and EUD IPA sector staff

#### Session 5:

**14:30-16:30** SDG data monitoring and reporting - National processes and its linkage to EU Indicative Country Strategy Paper 2014-2020

Background: Improving the data situation and building capacities on SDG monitoring remains a challenge. In this context, the SDG draft baseline report is prepared with focus to analyze the readiness and prioritization of Albania to implement the SDGs by considering the strategic and institutional frameworks and assess implications of the SDGs on the key policy areas in Albania.

**Government Chair:** Ms. Evis Qaja, Director, Strategic Planning Directorate, Department for Development and Foreign Aid

**Objective:** To discuss the key findings of the SDG draft baseline report, data monitoring and reporting needs, and set the stage for setting targets for SDG.

Speaker	Presentation
14:30-14:45 Ms Evis Qaja, Director, Strategic Planning Directorate, Department for Development and Foreign Aid	Role and functions of the Inter-Ministerial technical Working Group to achieve the SDGs
14:45-15:30 Mr Ben Slay, Senior Advisor, UNDP Eastern Europe and Central Asia	Types of instruments and tools used for SDGs implementation in the Region. Best practices/references from other countries and regional overview
15:30-16:00 Mr Ilir Ciko, Senior Advisor	SDG draft baseline report key findings
16:00-16:30 Moderated discussion	

## Annex B

### List of participants



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIË  
KRYEMINISTRIA

Participation List

Meeting at the Prime Ministry

Theme: Albania in its way to EU accession and SDGs

4<sup>th</sup> of July, 9.00 a.m.

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REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIE  
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Participation List

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Theme: Albania in its way to EU accession and SDGs

4<sup>th</sup> of July, 9.00 a.m.

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3	Ermete Sani	Dep. Dir. of Integration			
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5	Ulrike Helstein	German Emb.			
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