

**Investment, Enterprise and Development Commission
Seventh session**

**20 April – 24 April 2015
Geneva**

**Promoting Entrepreneurship for the SDGs: A New Generation
of Entrepreneurship Policies**

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The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNCTAD.

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Geneva, 22 April 2014

Key emerging challenges

The “new normal” in the global economy, which has been established since the global financial crisis, is characterized by lower growth, weaker demand and increased uncertainty for production; in turn this puts increasing pressure on employment and livelihoods.

Technological innovation, while helping to increase productivity, can also pose a serious challenge to job creation in many sectors, particularly for developing countries in labor intensive sectors. The rapid development of automation in manufacturing is a case in point.

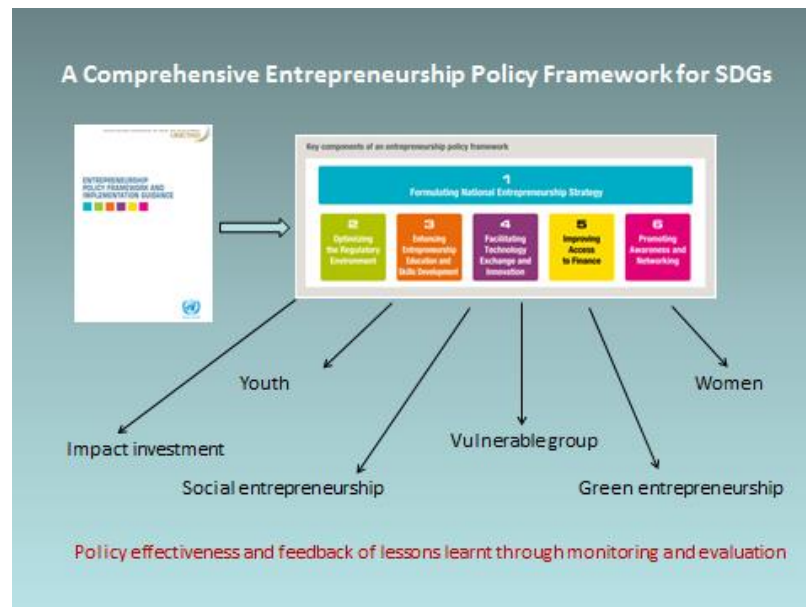
Moreover, as the world shifts to a new sustainable and inclusive development paradigm, special policy efforts are needed to effectively promote and facilitate green growth, as well as initiatives like social enterprise and impact investment, and entrepreneurship for youth, women and vulnerable groups.

The global effort to define the SDGs for the next 15 years underlines the political will and broad-based government support for economic development, including support for entrepreneurship. However, in many developing countries there is no effective entrepreneurship policy framework that could support such an endeavor.

As well as the countries themselves, international organisations, like UNCTAD, should be instrumental in developing a new generation of entrepreneurship policies that will contribute to the attainment of the SDGs.

A New Entrepreneurship Policy Framework for the SDGs

Entrepreneurship can be one of a number of important drivers for achieving the sustainable development goals. Towards this end, an entrepreneurship policy framework is a crucial enabler for entrepreneurship in general and for making a positive contribution towards achieving the SDGs.



The basis of an entrepreneurship policy framework

UNCTAD's contribution to entrepreneurship development in developing countries is based on two dimensions: one at the policy level to create a solid enabling environment for enterprise creation and support; the other at the human capacity level focused on skills and training.

At the policy level, UNCTAD's entrepreneurship policy framework (EPF) consists of 6 key components, including:

- Formulating a national entrepreneurship strategy
- Optimizing the regulatory environment
- Facilitating technology exchange and innovation

- Improving access to finance, and
- Promoting awareness and networking.

The EPF puts an emphasis on synergies and coherence between different policy areas, and coordination between different government agencies. The EPF has been endorsed by UNCTAD member States, and has been piloted in several countries, generating experience, best practices and lessons learnt. This is a sound basis for expanding our work and further increasing the impact of the framework.

At the human capacity level, UNCTAD's Empretec programme is established in 36 countries and has trained more than 350,000 potential entrepreneurs since it was created 27 years ago. Internal assessments of the effectiveness of the programme show entrepreneurs increased sales by 60 per cent after attending an Empretec workshop.

The next step in entrepreneurship policy formulation

The new direction for entrepreneurship policy is towards increased sustainability and inclusiveness, with an emphasis on efforts to boost green growth, as well as initiatives like social enterprise and impact investment, and entrepreneurship for youth, women and vulnerable groups. In this regard, future UNCTAD efforts will build on the EPF and provide policy guidance and toolkits that specifically address these target groups and sectors. In UNCTAD, we have made progress on youth entrepreneurship and are in the process of finalizing a practical guide for promoting youth entrepreneurship in developing countries. We will move on to other key dimensions in light of the SDG Summit in September 2015, and UNCTAD XIV in 2016. This will constitute our work programme on entrepreneurship development for the years to come, and will adopt a holistic approach that links entrepreneurship policy closely to the SDGs.

Strengthening institutional and implementation dimensions

In conjunction with the next phase of policy support, UNCTAD is developing effective implementation strategies for the EPF, including monitoring and assessment of policy effectiveness and impact, and the integration of feedback and lessons learnt into future policymaking and policy practice. A key challenge in this regard is collection of data for indicators.

At the local, national and regional levels there is often a lack of institutional mechanisms to support entrepreneurship in most developing countries. In order to support policy coherence at these three levels there is a need for a coordination mechanism for entrepreneurship promotion and facilitation.

Support from international organizations

UNCTAD has provided an international forum for discussion, consensus-building and exchange of good practices on the new generation of entrepreneurship policy development. This is in line with the United Nations General Assembly resolution on “Entrepreneurship for Development” (A/RES/69/210), adopted in its 69th Session in October 2014. We can also provide a support structure for monitoring the progress of entrepreneurship in the SDGs.

At the human capacity development level, UNCTAD will need to add a number of components to its existing training programme to reflect social and environmental priorities in the SDGs.

The discussion today should focus on how to design, implement and assess the new generation of entrepreneurship policies, a general framework with policy toolkits for a set of inclusive and sustainable development priorities. Questions to consider include:

- How to ensure that entrepreneurship promotion contributes to attaining the SDGs?
- What are the key challenges and good practices in developing countries for promoting entrepreneurship for sustainable development?

- What concrete initiatives can be taken by UNCTAD to follow up on proposed recommendations contained in the GA resolution on Entrepreneurship for Development?