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Innovation and Entrepreneurship for sustainable development

Report of the FEMUN Secretary-General

Summary

The report summarizes the actions of the international, regional and national levels in the sphere of entrepreneurship development, empowering enterprises and providing them with an access to innovative technologies. Entrepreneurship is tightly connected to sustainable development being one of the most important facilitators of economic growth that galvanizes the progress for market economy and impacts the increase of job places. In order to achieve the empowerment of enterprises governments need to allocate their finances to assist SMEs advisory and legally in inclusion of innovations in their activity, development of R&D area and conduct educational trainings for workers. Fruitful regional cooperation in sphere of development of national actions towards creation of efficient strategies of entrepreneurship development can be achieved through establishment of strategies' sharing mechanism between governments. Currently the issue is addressed by the actions of UN GA, UN ECOSOC, UNCTAD, UNDP, ILO, and etc.

UN GA has numerously stated the necessity of enterprises empowerment in its resolutions. By the resolution 71/L.20 governments are to ensure their citizens, especially youth have an access to become entrepreneurs. Resolution 70/1 recognizes entrepreneurship as one of the dimensions of sustainable development. The topic of innovations for entrepreneurship development is included into SDGs that aim at fostering innovations and entrepreneurship, providing access of small and medium enterprises to financial services, increasing the number of R&D workers.

Nevertheless, despite numerous frameworks covering the issue there is still a lack national approach towards achievement of development of innovations in the sphere of entrepreneurship and, therefore, the international community performed by the UN should proceed its work on the issue.

I. Past international actions

1. The agenda of innovations and entrepreneurship for sustainable development still remains new and up-to-date. It is impossible to make progress for market economy without empowered enterprises. The opportunity to set up business increases the income of each state, improves trade relations, and provides working conditions to everyone. These aims seem to be attainable, however, they can be accomplished only by means of applying new solutions, in particular innovations. This Report will illustrate the main challenges enterprises experience as well as will give a background on the international actions towards it.

2. In order to find the core roles entrepreneurship possesses, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its Emperetec Showcase of 2005 identified 3 functions of entrepreneurship that are risk-seeking, innovativeness and opportunity-seeking.¹

3. There are numerous definitions on what entrepreneurship is, proposed by different scholars of economics and management. However, the United Nations (UN) is guided by the meanings listed in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Statistics Working Paper of 2008 “*Defining Entrepreneurial Activity: Definitions Supporting Frameworks for Data Collection*”.

4. The main definitions are the following: a) entrepreneurs are those persons (business owners) who seek to generate value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets; b) entrepreneurial activity is the enterprising human action in pursuit of the generation of value, through the creation or expansion of economic activity, by identifying and exploiting new products, processes or markets; c) entrepreneurship is the phenomena associated with entrepreneurial activity.²

5. OECD also stressed that enterprises are classified by several parameters, but the most important factor is number of employees. Micro enterprises – are enterprises with less than 10 employees. Small – from 10 to 49 people, Medium – 50- 249, Large – more than 250 employees. According to the report of the International Finance Corporation of 2013 “*Closing the Credit Gap for Formal and Informal Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises*” (MSME) informal

¹ UNCTAD Entrepreneurship and Economic Development: the Emperetec Showcase, http://unctad.org/en/Docs/webiteteb20043_en.pdf, accessed 1 March, 2017.

² Defining Entrepreneurial Activity: Definitions Supporting Frameworks for Data Collection, OECD Working Paper [http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?doclanguage=en&cote=std/doc\(2008\)1](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?doclanguage=en&cote=std/doc(2008)1), accessed 1 March, 2017.

enterprises are occupying 74 percent of the total number of MSME, which represents a crucial obstacle of ensuring sustainability for all businesses due to the fact that they are not registered as firms.³

6. It was recognized by the international community, that the number of large enterprises is little worldwide, while Small and Medium Sized-Enterprises (SMSE) which do not possess such a huge power large enterprises have are widespread on the market. The actions of all stakeholders should include the expansion of the enterprise and growth of large enterprises.

7. The role innovations always played in strengthening capacities of enterprises is invaluable as far as almost all changes in companies happen because of the appearance of new idea/technology/mechanism. In 2005, OECD jointly with the European Commission (Eurostat) elaborated *Oslo Manual – Guidelines* for collecting and interpreting innovation data. This Manual defined innovation as “*the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations*”. This document separated innovations in four areas, particularly in areas of product, process, marketing and organizational change.

8. It is important to distinguish innovations from ordinary changes that cannot be named as innovations. Oslo Manual - Guidelines for collecting and interpreting innovation data, stated that these changes are differences caused by the transformation of prices, ceasing of a management or marketing model, changes occurred as a result of seasonal transformation and other ways of work in the company.⁴

9. The issue of innovation and entrepreneurship for sustainable development had close ties with the international financial tool of sustainable development initiatives - namely Financing for Development (FfD). The *Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development* (2002) was the first document on Financing for Development, which encouraged Member States to investigate in new public-private partnerships mechanisms as well as to enhance entrepreneurship through improving the sphere of foreign direct investments.

³ Closing the Credit Gap for Formal and Informal Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, Report of the IFC, <https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/4d6e6400416896c09494b79e78015671/Closing+the+Credit+Gap+Report-FinalLatest.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>, accessed 3 March, 2017.

⁴ Oslo Manual, OECD, <https://www.oecd.org/sti/inno/2367580.pdf>, accessed 2 March, 2017.

10. Doha Declaration on Financing for Development of 2008 continued global commitments towards FfD. It encouraged regional organizations, UN and national authorities to ensure a constant development of the private sector along with the sustainability of the external debt. The Declaration also focused the attention of the international community on an opportunity for setting up business for all and respect vulnerable groups via investments in sectors of health and education, and requested to the joint International Monetary Fund/World Bank Debt Sustainability Framework to implement relevant macroeconomic policies⁵.

11. The Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development “*The Future We Want*” adopted in 2012 introduced the foundation of the concept of sustainable development. Covering the sphere of innovations and entrepreneurship, the document underscored the necessity of entrepreneurial education including business skills trainings and vocational trainings⁶.

12. The UN General Assembly (UN GA) recognized entrepreneurship as one of the most important facilitators of economic growth that can also impact on the increase of job places. Its Resolution 67/202 “*Entrepreneurship for development*” adopted in 2012 emphasized the need to improve regulations regarding entrepreneurship opportunities, create microenterprises as well as small and medium-sized enterprises and to empower youth to establish enterprises⁷.

13. In order to facilitate the process of entrepreneurship and provide governments with an advisory assistance, UNCTAD elaborated the *Entrepreneurship Policy Framework and Implementation Guide* of 2012, which illustrated necessary measures regarding the creation or strengthening of the national entrepreneurship policy. The guideline contained a list of steps important to undertake to formulate the National Entrepreneurship Strategy (NES), develop incentives for start-ups and expand the array of educational business-courses provided⁸.

14. The UN GA Resolution A/C.2/71/L.20/Rev.1 of 2016 in turn underlined the importance of the appropriate social attitude about entrepreneurship and at the same time required governments to ensure equitable opportunities for citizens to become entrepreneurs. Furthermore, youth was considered as an engine and future of entrepreneurship, in this regard,

⁵ Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/doha/documents/Doha_Declaration_FFD.pdf, accessed 3 March, 2017.

⁶ “The Future We Want”, Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/diaeed2012d1_en.pdf, accessed 2 March, 2017

⁷ UN GA Resolution 67/202 “Entrepreneurship for development”, (A/67/202), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/67/202, accessed 5 March, 2017.

⁸ UNCTAD Entrepreneurship Policy Framework <http://unctad.org/en/pages/diae/entrepreneurship/entrepreneurship-policy-framework-and-implementation-guidance.aspx?Ne=4,3> accessed 5 March, 2017.

capacity-building and promotion of benefits of entrepreneurship among youth was highly recommended⁹.

15. According to the importance of a region-oriented approach, the concept of Entrepreneurship Education of Pacific Island Forum, recognized the need to strengthen the educational and training sphere in countries of Oceania and to provide a technical assistance for Member States; moreover, Member States were advised to develop a curriculum aimed at raising knowledge on entrepreneurial activity as well as to build or extend partnerships between states Ministries of Education and the private sector.

16. Another example of the region-based approach is the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Policy Blueprint for development of small and medium-sized enterprises, 2010-2014, which demonstrated the level of entrepreneurship and innovations development in each Member State of the Organization and gave recommendations for improvement of the situation in the region.

17. Since the previous century, the question of entrepreneurship has aroused in the actions of the global community. The constant expansion and development of business units can be achieved only by adapting to current situation and involving innovative decisions. The basis Member States should come to first is the protection of national entrepreneurship by government either by means of advisory assistance or via national incentives, legal support and promotion.

II. Recent development

18. *Entrepreneurship for development: Report of the UN Secretary-General, 2014* is one of the most comprehensive documents that illustrates the problem of low level of development global enterprises possess in developing countries, lack of foreign investments in developing states along with discoordination in consistency of national policies regarding the entrepreneurship. The report discusses abovementioned problems in global, regional and national context, paying tribute to the best practices applied. The main idea of this report is that sustainable prosperity and adaptation to the needs of the global community is more preferable rather than simple expansion of enterprises. One of the main recommendations to all involved stakeholders include the attraction of new sources of financing such as solidarity finance, venture

⁹ UN GA Resolution A/C.2/71/L.20/Rev.1 “Entrepreneurship for sustainable development” <http://undocs.org/A/C.2/71/L.20/Rev.1> accessed 7 March, 2017.

philanthropy, individual investment, quasi-equity and equity instruments, ethical or social capital markets, microcredit and micro insurance, mobile money, crowd-funding.¹⁰

19. The UN GA Resolution 69/210 “*Entrepreneurship for development*” of 2014 and its Resolution 70/213 “*Science, technology and innovation for development*” of 2015 both stress the necessity of anti-corruption system and transparency mechanisms in the governmental structure as a vital point in public-private partnerships and decent support to enterprises. Furthermore, these resolutions proclaim the fact that access to technologies should be provided to all, governments should be concentrated on disability-inclusive development as well as relevant and up-to-date data.¹¹

20. In the chain of the FfD documents, the 2015 *Addis Ababa Action Agenda* (AAAA) is the latest paper which is inseparably connected with the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030. The main idea of the AAAA is to align existing financial flows, create a multilateral international trade system, strengthen capacity-building of enterprises, result in knowledge-sharing between governments, academia and all relevant stakeholders; launch business incubators and create national sustainable development strategies.¹²

21. The Agenda 2030 that entered into force after the adoption of the UN GA Resolution 70/1 “*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” recognizes innovation and entrepreneurship as one of dimensions for sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, 8, 9, 17 are aimed at fostering innovations and entrepreneurship, with the main targets 9.3 on access of small and medium enterprises to financial services, 9.5 on increasing the number of Research and Development (R&D) workers per 1 million people, and 8.3 on growth and development of enterprises.¹³

22. The report of 2016 about the implementation of SDGs issued by the United Nations Statistics Division provides statistics concerning the percentage representation in the sphere of

¹⁰ Entrepreneurship for development: Report of the Secretary-General,

http://unctad.org/meetings/en/SessionalDocuments/a69d320_en.pdf, accessed 7 March, 2017.

¹¹ UN GA Resolution 70/213 “*Science, technology and innovation for development*”, (A/70/213), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/213, accessed 7 March, 2017.

¹² Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Third International Conference on Financing for Development, http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf, accessed 8 March, 2017.

¹³ UN GA Resolution 70/1 “*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*” (A/70/1) http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E, accessed 7 March, 2017.

R&D in 2013 that was 1.16 percent, the international community should put efforts towards assistance of developing countries.¹⁴

23. Another actor from the UN Family is the International Labor Organization (ILO) Enterprises Department, which is aimed at elaboration of enterprises development strategies, providing workers with trainings and ensuring decent level of job. In frames of the Conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises ILO defines good governance, strong economic policy, fair competition, social inclusion etc. as conditions for building sustainable enterprises. Besides, the function of governments in this process is to support development of public sector, provide a platform for R&D, coordinate and monitor growth of enterprises.

24. In order to facilitate the process of innovations involvement, the sphere of science and technology should be developed *a priori*. Under the auspices of UNCTAD, the UN Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD) is currently acting as an Advisory Body of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that reports to the General Assembly regarding the introduction of science into the sphere of business.

25. In 2015 the UN set up Global Entrepreneurs Council – a platform of the UN Foundation that is comprised of leaders in the sphere of entrepreneurship and deliberates upon partnerships between the enterprises and the UN as well as raises the capacity of public-private partnerships.

26. The ECOSOC plays an active role in the scope of this agenda item. Its resolution 2015/27 of 2015 emphasizes the role of innovations and ICTs in raising proficiency of enterprises; proposes to boost national legislation, investments, educational part of each particular state. Governments are also recommended to organize systematic research and make a dialogue between several stakeholders. In 2016 ECOSOC organized a Multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the SDGs which emphasized the importance of digital revolution for all enterprises, necessity of advisory assistance for all businesses, obligatory involvement of women in entrepreneurship, cooperation between involved entities.¹⁵

27. Introduction of innovations and investments is conducive for sustainable development. The executive summary of the UNCTAD Multi-year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development (2016)

¹⁴ The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2016, UN DESA, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2016/The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202016.pdf>, accessed 9 March, 2017.

¹⁵ UN ECOSOC Resolution 2015/27 “Science, technology and innovation for development” <http://undocs.org/E/RES/2015/27>, accessed 9 March 2017.

“Investment, innovation and entrepreneurship for productive capacity-building and sustainable development” shows examples of regional, global and national actions as well as main lessons learned during the UNCTAD work in the sphere of science, technology and innovation. In the summary, Member States are called upon to review national investment policies (taking into account the Investment Policy Framework) along with the review of states participation in international treaties or agreements. Furthermore, UNCTAD proposes to take actions on the regional level by collecting national treaties and action plans with the purpose of elaborating regional treaties. Expressing its concern about the current problem the current of the lack of cooperation in management of science, technology and innovation, UNCTAD prioritizes long-term approaches and invites governments, universities representatives as well as research entities to work on a collaborative manner.

28. The sense of innovations itself reflects in a creation of new tools and instruments. In today’s situation, there is a practice of the establishment of Innovation Labs that are considered to be a place where innovative solutions are elaborated. The United Nations Development Programme Innovation Facility 2015 Year in Review of 2016 states that there are 13 Innovation Labs worldwide, 6 of them are partially owned by governments.¹⁶

29. An allocation of finances, particularly through investments, in the development of innovations in enterprises is a way of reaching the sustainable development. The 2015 UNCTAD Investment Policy Framework for Sustainable Development comprises a set of recommendations for Member States to elaborate or revise their national investment strategies including the development of enterprises through the involvement of foreign investments, describes the issue of social entrepreneurship and looks forward businesses to expand their business models and contribute to the development of social entrepreneurship. Also fosters the essence of International Investment agreements by elaborating practical advice for Member States.

30. Example of the ongoing regional initiative is the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) *“At the Center of Africa’s Transformation”* Strategy for 2013–2022. In the context of this document, AfDB elaborated the Governance Framework for its Member States with targets at education, support of entrepreneurship and employment for all including youth.¹⁷

¹⁶ The United Nations Development Program Innovation Facility 2015 Year in Review, <http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/innovation/The%20IF%202015%20Report-%20Web%20version%20%20June.pdf>, accessed 10 March, 2017.

¹⁷ African Development Bank Group «At the Center of Africa’s Transformation» Strategy for 2013–2022, <https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy->

31. European Union Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan is also a regional endeavor. The strategy relies on pillars of entrepreneurial education, creating a prosperous environment for workers, and elaborating specific role models. In the document, special attention is paid to women, seniors and migrants.¹⁸

32. In today's fast-moving world, almost all actions of a global scope are connected with SDGs and their implementation. In order to meet realization of the Goals' targets, all stakeholders should take into consideration such issues as lack of workers' training, lack of investments, in some cases weak legislation and many other challenges that remain crucial and are impossible to resolve without proper attitude. Only by addressing to up-to-date information and analyzing the current state of affairs appropriate actions in relation to innovations and entrepreneurship for sustainable development can be undertaken.

IV. Observations and Recommendations

33. The United Nations Development Programme Innovation Facility 2015 Year in Review, 2016 supports the constant involvement of innovations and considers Innovations Labs and their further proliferation to be an important action to that extent. There is a need of governments, academia and private sector to work collaboratively towards creation of such Labs.

34. African Development Bank Group Private Sector Development Policy of the African Development Bank Group 2013-2017 in its provisions calls upon countries to ensure that enterprises have an access to innovations, know-how and ability to be represented in regional and global supply chains.

35. The Independent Evaluation Group consisting of International Finance Corporation, World Bank and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency in the year of 2013 published a World Bank Group Support for Innovation and Entrepreneurship evaluation. The evaluation states the necessity of improvement of governmental support in the field of Research and Development, provision of incentives and tax breaks for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and building of strong innovative environment within the state.

[Documents/AfDB Strategy for 2013%E2%80%932022 At the Center of Africa%E2%80%99s Transformation.pdf](#), accessed 10 March, 2017.

¹⁸ Entrepreneurship 2020, European Union Action Plan, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0795&from=EN> , accessed 9 March, 2017.

36. The Report of the United Nations Secretary-General “*Entrepreneurship for development*” of 2014 supports further actions aimed at creating regulatory environment for enterprises and calls upon Member States to adapt current regulations to the level of development of the enterprises in their countries.

37. A 2010 Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth – G20 Training, elaborates concepts of vocational and entrepreneurial trainings, promotes the idea of life-long learning, and determines core skills (communication, teamwork, problem-solving etc.) and higher-level skills (connected with professional orientation) as equally important to obtain. All relevant actors need to ensure that they possess necessary number of qualified personnel to be appointed as trainers and to grant them with access to resources in order to elaborate educational programs.

38. Taking abovementioned points into account, the growth of both national and world economy can be achieved only by improving the main units of the market - enterprises. The United Nations is mandated to assist each Member State regarding the situation with the entrepreneurship and is required to elaborate plans of actions, guidelines, recommendations for states to cover all important aspects. Moreover, the focus should be concentrated on innovations as well. Providing opportunities for R&D initiatives along with the platforms aimed at the exchange of experience will incredibly boost growth of enterprises and their equipment with modern technologies and solutions.

V. Further research

39. It is vitally important to investigate states’ national entrepreneurship strategies (if there are any) and find out actions of government regarding assistance to enterprises in order to find out the priorities of state upon innovations and entrepreneurship.

40. Recommended areas of research include public-private partnerships, the existence of vocational trainings and quality of training programmes on the national level.

41. Addressing the global level, the current result of the implementation of the Entrepreneurship Policy Framework should be identified including the previous drawbacks measures of its further implementation in a full scale.

42. The further research shall be also aimed at the state of affairs of the current implementation of relevant Sustainable Development Goals and the main obstacles in their attainment.

43. The social inclusion of vulnerable groups into business activities should be also investigated covering the participation of youth, women, people with disabilities in entrepreneurship in the countries as well as to identifying challenges that restrict this participation, if there are any.

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VII. Useful links

World Entrepreneurship Forum

<http://www.world-entrepreneurship-forum.com/>

UNESCO’s Institute for Statistics data on Science, Technology and Innovation – statistics on development of R&D

http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=SCN_DS&lang=en

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Entrepreneurship at a Glance, (2016)

<http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/download/3016021e.pdf?expires=1488878539&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=FB9C58D2F87F1CE507676A3D8640A1BD>

SDG Compass – guide for companies on matching their business with the sustainable development

<http://sdgcompass.org/sdgs/sdg-9/>

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe «Innovation Policy for Green Technologies Guide for Policymakers in the Transition Economies of Europe and Central Asia», (2013)

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/ceci/publications/GreenTechnology/ECE_CECI_20_web.pdf

Global Innovations Exchange

<https://www.globalinnovationexchange.org/>

The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on the World Summit on Innovation and Entrepreneurship (18-19 May) – Press Conference

<http://webtv.un.org/search/the-un-conference-on-trade-and-development-unctad-on-the-world-summit-on-innovation-and-entrepreneurship-18-19-may-press-conference/4899937196001?term=innovation%20and%20entrepreneurship>

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