**Briefing for the USPC Director**

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| * **Event**: International Seminar on Development Cooperation for Inclusive Recovery and Steps Forward * **Role**: Panelist * **Date and Time**: Thursday, November 25, 2021, 10:30 - 18:00 * **Venue**: The K-Hotel in Seoul, South Korea * **External Focal Point**: Minhee Lee (02-452-3350, 2021kiepseminar@gmail.com) * **Internal Focal Point**: Minhyuk Hong, Research Consultant  (010-6263-8421, minhyuk.hong@undg.org) |

**Agenda**

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| 15:20-16:50 | **Session 2: Sustainable Future and Development Cooperation** |
| **Green and Digital Development in Support of the SDGs** | |
| Presentation | Speaker:   * **Mr. Jason Allford**, Special Representative, World Bank Group Korea Office |
| **Recent Development of Korea’s ODA Policy: Future Challenges** | |
| Presentation | Speaker:   * **Ms. Mi Kyung Yun**, Member of the Committee for International Development Cooperation |
| Panel members discussion  (45 minutes) | Panel discussion:   * **Mr. Hakseok Ryu**, Senior Specialist for External Relations and Outreach, GGGI * **Ms. Oyun Sanjaasuren**, Director of External Affairs, GCF * **Ms. Anne Juepner**, Director a.i., UNDP Seoul Policy Centre (USPC)   Moderator:   * **Mr. Je Yong Yoon**, President, Korea Environment Institute |

**Talking Points (1454 words, 11 minutes 15 seconds @ 130 wpm)**

**Guiding questions:**

*1. What are the development challenges of the post-covid era? What is the role of UNDP in this regard?*

*2. How can UNDP and the RoK cooperate going forward? What recommendations can UNDP give the RoK on its overall policy direction for (green) ODA?*

1. **Development Challenges of the Post-Covid Era**

* President Yoon, Special Representative Allford, Dr. Yun, Director Sanjaasuren, Senior Specialist Ryu, your excellencies, esteemed colleagues, honourable guests, it is a great honour to be a part of this important event today.
* **UNDP works with countries to expand people’s choices for a fairer and more sustainable future**, and to build the world envisioned by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, one with the planet and people in balance.
* **The challenge of achieving this agenda was already huge before the COVID pandemic hit**. Pre-COVID, 1.3 billion people were living in multidimensional poverty across 107 developing countries. The effects of COVID-19 have led to an additional 120 million people living in poverty - the first increase in poverty in two decades.
* Along with the COVID-19 pandemic, **a triple planetary emergency of climate change, bio-diversity loss, and pollution has changed the landscape of development**. These emerging environmental challenges have compounded the risks associated with traditional socio-economic development challenges. For instance, 132 million people may fall into poverty by 2030 because of climate change.
* In many countries, complex development issues are further aggravated by humanitarian and peace-building challenges: **Nearly** **half the global poor live in countries affected by conflict**. These conflicts have become more complex and protracted, increasingly driven by non-traditional security threats such as environmental degradation, competition for natural resources, and extreme weather events.
* Looking at rich and poor countries alike, we see that **our current approach to development is not sustainable**. **This can be affirmed by the new planetary pressure-adjusted Human Development Index** **(PHDI)** published by UNDP in 2020, which re-calculates the HDI to account for national levels of carbon emissions and material resource loss. Of the 60 countries that were able to achieve a level of “very high human development” in the 2019 HDI, only ten retained this status on the P-HDI once environmental variables were factored in.
* Due to this convergence of development, humanitarian, and peace-building challenges – each issue already complex to solve in itself – **progress towards the SDGs is not occurring fast enough to achieve the 2030 agenda.** In fact, **progress on some targets is stagnating or even reversing,** calling for more ambitious and accelerated action to deliver on the SDGs over this decade**.**

**2.** **The Role of UNDP**

* Against this backdrop, **UNDP has recently introduced its new strategic plan,** which sets out its ambition for 2022 to 2025. During the next four years, **UNDP will help** **100 million people escape persistent multidimensional poverty**, **500 million people gain access to clean energy,** and **800 million people participate in elections, while achieving other important targets.**
* To this end, **UNDP’s aims to promote** **three directions of change**, namely facilitating structural transformation, leaving no-one behind, and enhancing resilience.
* This will be done through **providing integrated solutions in** poverty and inequality, governance, resilience, environment, energy, and gender equality.
* Lastly, our approach is enhanced by **three enablers**: Strategic innovation, digitalization, and development financing.

**3. Call for partnership**

* One aspect that runs through the entirety of the strategic plan is the **aspect of “partnerships”**, which is also **at the heart of the 2030 agenda**, as embodied by SDG 17.
* Understanding the importance of working in partnership, I would like to emphasize that **UNDP’s new strategic plan overlaps with the Korean strategic vision for development cooperation. Both actors seek to advance green recovery and just transition** as well as **digital transformation in partner countries**. Given the nature of today’s panel discussion, allow me to focus on the green component of the aforementioned strategies.
* **UNDP's Nature, Climate and Energy practice spans 137 countries, with a portfolio directly benefiting 86 million people. In the area of green transition, UNDP in 2019 launched its Climate Promise**, which is the world’s largest offer of support to countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and meet the challenges of climate change. **Through this initiative, UNDP is working with 120 countries**, or 80% of all developing countries, **to revise their climate action commitments (NDCs) and support NDC implementation** through technical and financial assistance and support for mitigation and adaptation actions. Our engagement includes 39 LDCs, 28 SIDS, 14 higher-emitters, and 45 countries in fragile settings, representing 28% of global emissions.
* Related work is carried out in **ten areas**: (1) Circular economy, (2) climate finance, (3) Covid-19 recovery, (4) energy, (5) forests, land, and nature, (6) green jobs and just transition, (7) inclusion, (8) net zero pathways, (9) adaptation and resilience, and (10) urban issues.
* The comprehensiveness of this initiative reflects why UNDP implements the largest climate change portfolio in the UN system. **UNDP would like to build on its experience in this sector to explore new partnerships with the RoK and other partners to jointly contribute to our shared vision for a sustainable future.**
* As the RoK’s unique development journey has positioned it as a bridge between the Global North and South, it can **serve as a driver of new and more efficient forms of partnership in support of the SDGs**.
* **This is especially true in the area of** **climate action**. This is because RoK’s recent experience with its Green New Deal and other relevant accomplishments such as its Carbon Neutrality Act allows it to build on the influential position that it has acquired since its initial push for green growth in the early 2010s.

**4. Recommendations for the RoK’s Green ODA**

* In this context, **the RoK can further strengthen its position as a Green ODA donor by continuing to mobilize multilateral partnerships**. With experienced partners such as the GCF, GGGI, WB, and UNDP present in the country and its own technical expertise, the RoK has the potential to advance **green and just transition of development pathways of partner countries** through new initiatives, thus going beyond adding green checklists and safeguards to existing projects**.**
* USPC and its partners have already benefited from the RoK’s experience in sustainable forestry, among other topics. Building on this, **USPC is currently exploring new potential partnership opportunities with the RoK as well as other like-minded organizations** **such as those here with us today.**
* Furthermore, **the RoK could also strengthen its status as a Green ODA donor through sharpening its bilateral partnerships, which is unique in two aspects**:
  + First, **the RoK currently provides a high share of mitigation-based projects to countries with lower levels of human development**.[[1]](#footnote-2)[[2]](#footnote-3) While this is very commendable, the RoK could strengthen the adaptation component of these projects, particularly when considering [the recent decision made in COP26](https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/what-does-cop26-mean-adaptation) to double the current levels of adaptation finance by 2025 and the [UN Secretary General’s recent call to ensure parity between funding for mitigation and adaption](https://unfccc.int/news/antonio-guterres-50-of-all-climate-finance-needed-for-adaptation).
  + Second, **the RoK’s Green ODA builds on one of its comparative advantages: Its innovative private sector**. Although this approach has potential, **it will be important to ensure the RoK’s green-ODA ambitions do not conflict with its commitments on development effectiveness**, especially those pertaining to international procurement norms. In this sense, the RoK’s green ODA should prioritize country-level demand, even if it comes at the expense of promoting domestic technologies and expertise.
* Finally, **the RoK could continue to strengthen its climate ambitions through enhancing the narrative behinds its green partnerships**. While its recently updated NDC is a great achievement, **the RoK could be able to cement its status as a global climate leader by increasing its NDCs beyond the current 40%,** particularly as the RoK prepares to host the 2028 COP and contribute to other related climate conferences.
* Through enhancing its multilateral and bilateral partnerships, as well as the narratives driving them, **the RoK could join the ranks of the most active green ODA donors** such as Germany and others.
* Allow me to conclude by emphasizing once again that **UNDP’s door is always open to exploring new partnerships that can bring together solid technical expertise of domestic and international agencies** hosted by the RoK **with UNDP’s global policy network and in-country presence** across the globe.
* Thank you very much.

1. In 2018, 87% or US$158 million of South Korea’s bilateral ODA related to climate action was tagged with the adaptation marker. As the RoK is reported to have used 72% of its climate change purpose-related ODA for adaptation, against only 28% for mitigation from 2010 to 2014 ([Yim, 2017](https://www.ejidc.org/download/download_pdf?pid=jidc-2017-2-139)), their approach to Green ODA differs from other OECD donors that typically focus on mitigation objectives. However, in 2019, 79% (US$813 million) of South Korea’s bilateral ODA related to climate action was tagged with the mitigation marker, while 26% or US$268 million was marked with the adaptation marker. This is a considerable change from the previous year in terms of financing volume and focus explained by the Green New Deal that prioritized climate mitigation.  [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. According to the OECD’s Climate Development Finance Database, 25% and 74% of the RoK’s mitigation projects went to least developed and low-income countries, respectively. However, only 2% and 3% of these interventions contained an adaptation component. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)