

# Private Sector Investment in People- Centered Infrastructure Across the UN Global Pact for the Future

June 26, 2024

Kindly hosted by Bechtel at the Victory Building, Washington, DC

## Multistakeholder Roundtable



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where can business investment in and deployment of human-centered infrastructure advance progress across all five chapters of the Global Pact for the Future?
- What has worked well, what can be improved, and how to tackle unintended barriers when engaging and collaborating with the UN and across the multilateral system?
- What could a Business "Pact" for the Future include with respect to enhancing implementation and partnerships with the private sector in infrastructure investment?

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

Business seeks to engage at the UN with respect for the core role of governments, and it is in that spirit this project will be pursued, with strong support for the outcomes of the Summit of the Future.

The need for scaled up investment from public and private sources in people-centered infrastructure is urgent, given gaps in SDG implementation, pressing societal challenges, and often the long-term nature of infrastructure, once it is put in place. The draft Global Pact for the Future includes numerous references to infrastructure-related needs and actions across all its chapters.

What is meant by infrastructure must be considered in a holistic and dynamic manner. The more traditional forms of infrastructure, such as water services, transportation, and energy, needs to be broadened to encompass internet connectivity, healthcare and food services and education.

While the agenda of the SOTF and of subsequent meetings in 2025 will be wide ranging, this project can help target and prioritize the opportunities for the UN to benefit from business involvement in infrastructure, whether with financial entities and MDBs or working with employer federations.

## ROUNDTABLE OBJECTIVES

- Underscore private sector interest and stake in a strengthened, effective, resilient, inclusive multilateral system, of which the UN is the center of gravity and purpose.
- Encourage diverse perspectives, open communication and problem-solving.
- Identify opportunities for collaboration between business and the UN relating to infrastructure and private sector investment and partnership.
- Explore new pathways for collaboration with business focused on infrastructure investment that is sustainable and resilient where infrastructure is viewed not only in terms of quantities of funding mobilized, but also the SDG impact of that investment.

## SPEAKER INSIGHTS

- Investment should be understood not only in a quantitative financial sense, but also encompassing co-benefits and values, and the overall impact for people and communities.
- Praise was expressed for Initiatives like the OECD Blue Dot initiative that certifies projects against commonly accepted standards of good and responsible practice vs “corrosive capital.”
- Business brings diverse experiences as investor, designer, implementer and user of infrastructure. The very idea of investment must reach beyond transfer of funds, and encompass time in designing, deployment of expertise and capacity building, and the staying power of private sector actors to ensure that the resulting infrastructure functions effectively.
- Beyond financing, business can play a substantive role in areas such as responsible business conduct, innovation, capacity building and scaling of action, informing the deployment of sustainable and resilient forms of infrastructure, especially from the perspective of access to the internet, which in turn enables other social infrastructure, such as education, access to information.
- Risk in investments was highlighted. Similarly, the erosion of trust in some investing entities can slow positive resource mobilization. Fundamental conditions for domestic resource mobilization and FDI are as important as ever.

## Q&A DISCUSSION

Business speakers proposed focus areas to upgrade private sector investment in people-centered infrastructure as a resource for governments and the UN system:

- Co-create integrated solutions to multi-dimensional infrastructure needs (for example, sustainable energy access + healthcare or reskilling for adaptation and resilience).
- Develop new kinds of infrastructure partnerships involving “up stream” and “down stream” private sector entities, working with communities not just to bridge the “finance gap” but to prioritize responding to the “finance-quality” gap.

- Break down “silos” of data that would be informative to private sector investors, as well as to UN and government action – for example, with respect to climate change adaptation.
- Identify business accessible pathways and connection points for business experts wishing to inform or partner with the UN on infrastructure solutions and approaches and their deployment, engaging “upstream” and “downstream” private sector entities.

## A BUSINESS “PACT” FOR THE FUTURE (BPF) ELEMENTS, CONSULTATION, AND VALUE ADDED

The development of a private sector declaration known by the working title, BPF, would be:

- Relevant to issues under discussion in the UN, and in support of the GBF and other inter-governmental outcomes.
- Action and solutions-focused.
- Synergistic with, non-repetitive and non-competitive to other existing business statements and frameworks, such as the UN Global Compact, Kampala Principles, etc.
- Developed in a transparent, consultative and voluntary manner, representing the support of any business entity that wishes to align with it.

It would not include pledges, recognizing how many existing initiatives and pledges already exist.

The BPF’s purpose would be to:

- State business support for and stake in a strong and effective UN system.
- Express commitment to co-creating priority solutions to challenges identified in the SOTF and subsequent meetings in 2025.
- Recommend avenues for better and more impactful UN-business dialogue and partnership, not only for larger organizations and enterprises but also inclusive for SMEs and business groups from the global south.

## A BUSINESS "PACT" FOR THE FUTURE (BPF) ELEMENTS, CONSULTATION, AND VALUE ADDED (CONT'D)

The BPF will be elaborated in 3 steps, capturing key issues and opportunities at the SOTF, the 4th FFD Conference and the UN Social Summit.

It will be formulated to capture inputs from USCIB Foundation/USCIB MTN convenings and roundtables and reflect suggestions from other business entities that wish to help shape and align with it.

## TAKEAWAYS

These roundtables will conclude with a 3rd event on "Tackling Climate Change Across the Global Pact for the Future" on July 17 in NYC, kindly hosted by Microsoft.

We plan to present a first version of a BPF on September 20, highlight first proposals and recommendations in the 3 inter-linked areas covered in the roundtables: Innovation, Investment in People-Centered Infrastructure, and Tackling Climate Change. Our understanding will be that in each of the 3 areas, practical dialogue has been launched that will need to be deepened, engaging with a wider circle of practitioners, policymakers, and stakeholders. The BPF will be elaborated and include key issues to be addressed at the 4th Finance for Development Conference (June 30 in Spain) and the 2nd UN Social Summit in Doha at the end of 2025.

Over the year ahead, and into 2025, the initiative will:

- elaborate discussed suggestions related to infrastructure, and as an element of a BFP, and
- consider ways to improve trust and understanding of business action, expertise and dialogue in the multilateral system.