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Item 8 (a) of the provisional agenda

Report on capacity-building

Progress report on the Standards for Sustainable Development Goals project, phase II

Submitted by the secretariat

Summary

This document presents the main activities, results and impacts related to the standards for sustainable development goals aspect of the project “Enhancing Usage and Uptake of Standards for Sustainable Development, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls” which is being carried out by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) secretariat from July 2019 to June 2022 thanks to contributions from the German Cooperation Fund through the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB).

Proposed decision:

“The Working Party takes note of the project report and thanks the Government of Germany and PTB for their generous contribution. The Working Party requests the secretariat to continue to report on the technical activities of this project”.

I. Introduction

1. The project “Enhancing Usage and Uptake of Standards for Sustainable Development, Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls” has been carried out by the ECE secretariat, since July 2019, thanks to the contributions from the German Cooperation fund through the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB).
2. The “Standards for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” project, phase II" (SDG II) is the continuation of phase I of this project which took place from July 2018 to July 2019 with the objective to enhance the usage and uptake of the standards by policymakers as a vital tool to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Standards are an essential component in policymaking and their use contributes to competitiveness, environmental sustainability and market innovation.
3. The aim of SDG II is to enhance the usage and uptake of the voluntary standards developed by ECE and other international, regional and national standards bodies by policymakers as vital tools to support the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Standards are a foundation for global resource efficiency in consumption and production; decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation; full and productive employment; and gender equality. The project was initially planned to be finalized by December 2021 but has been extended until June 2022.

II. Project activities (December 2020 – August 2021)

4. The “UNECE portal on Standards for the SDGs”¹ was launched on World Standards Day (14 October) 2019. The portal enables users to access standards-related information and provides a series of multidisciplinary instruments. The portal allows to identify standards that help to realize SDGs and targets and provides a collection of case studies of countries, cities and regions that have successfully used standards for sustainability. The portal also supports two online training materials on “Standards for the SDGs” and “Gender Responsive Standards”.
5. There are currently five SDGs mapped within the portal,² including SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production. Mapping standards against SDG 12 is of particular importance, as the sixty-ninth session of the ECE committed to stepping up efforts to promote circular economy approaches and the sustainable use of natural resources, by mainstreaming circularity and the sustainable use of natural resources in the existing relevant ECE sectoral work programmes as appropriate (Decision B (69) Circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, contained in document E/ECE/1497). There are currently 598 standards identified in support of SDG 12. In total, there are over 1,500 standards mapped from international, regional and national standards bodies (see Annex for the contributing standards development organizations).
6. The “Standards for the SDGs” portal is unique in its impartiality, depth and broad reach. Other standards bodies have linked their work to specific SDGs, but this is the first initiative to map standards of multiple organizations to the SDGs. Training material has also been updated in support of this initiative such as those on risk management, on conformity assessment and on market surveillance and will be formatted in order to be included on this portal. This training will be hosted using the formats approved by the Office of Information and Communications Technology of the United Nations.
7. The activities specific to the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative (GRSI) also under this project are reported to the thirty-first session of WP.6 in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2021/8. The update on signatories of the *Declaration for Gender-*

¹ <https://standards4sdgs.unece.org/>.

² SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation; SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy; SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities; SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production; and SDG 13: Climate Action.

Responsive Standards and Standards Development is provided in annex of this separate report.

III. Impact

8. Identification of use cases that have succeeded in achieving the targets of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development through the use of standards can help countries and standards organizations identify best practices that they can put in place. A series of use cases are available on the “Standards for the SDGs” portal, demonstrating the positive impact of standards implementation. This information is also formatted as a publication *Standards for the Sustainable Development Goals* (ECE/TRADE/444) that can be cited³; the print version is expected for the end of 2021.

9. Interest in the *Declaration for Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development* continues to grow. Many organizations had not considered the importance of this topic and get acquainted, thanks to WP.6 GRISI, with new directions that their standards development should take. As part of the declaration, these organizations are now developing and proactively implementing gender action plans for their organizations and tracking progress. These action plans will be progressively reported to WP.6 in the coming years and to its annual sessions demonstrating the impact of this initiative.

IV. 2021 Activities

10. The main activity in the coming months will aim to expand the “Standards for the SDGs” portal. Consultations between ECE and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) will take place early next year to discuss this expansion. ITU has graciously allowed ECE to utilize their SDG mapping instrument which is planned to be carried over to other standards bodies.

11. GRISI and the ECE secretariat plan to continue capacity-building activities including the development of a range of training materials and events. Further use cases that can be showcased on the “Standards for the SDGs” portal will also be sought.

12. The project was originally scheduled to finish in December 2021; it has been extended until 30 June 2022. This extension reflects the difficulty to progress the project in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though good progress has been made since the launch in July 2019, GRISI and the ECE secretariat appreciate the opportunity to continue for further six months and hopefully organize a number of in-person events to raise awareness.

³ United Nations publication, 2018. Available at <https://unece.org/info/publications/pub/2466>.

Annex

Standards bodies that have contributed to the “Standards for the SDGs” portal

1. 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP), 4C, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC), AMAGGI, amfori, American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC), ASTM International, Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS), American Water Works Association (AWWA), Better Cotton Initiative (BCI), bluesign, BRCGS, Bonsucro, Cargill, Cefetra, China Environmental United Certification Center (CEC), European Committee for Standardization (CEN), European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization (CENELEC), Certified Wildlife Friendly, CKade, Codex Alimentarius, Cotton made in Africa (CmiA), Deutsche Kommission Elektrotechnik Elektronik Informationstechnik im DIN und VDE (DKE), Donau Soja, East African Standards Committee (EASC), Ecologica Institute, Equitable Origin (EO), European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), European Ecotourism Network, European Environment Agency (EEA), Fair for Life, Fairmined, Fair Trade USA, Fairtrade International, Fair Trade Tourism, FairWild Foundation, the European Feed Manufacturers’ Federation (FEFAC), Florverde Sustainable Flowers, Food Alliance, Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Global Coffee Platform (GCP), GLOBALG.A.P., Global Standard gGmbH, Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), Gold Standard, Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA), GoodWeave, Hong Kong Green Label Scheme (HKGLS), Green Electronics Council (GEC), Green Seal, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Marine Ingredients Organization (IFFO), International Council on Mining & Materials (ICMM), International Featured Standards (IFS), International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), KRAV, Lasting Initiative for Earth (LIFE), Linking Environment and Farming (LEAF), Lodi Winegrape Commission, Louis Dreyfus Company, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), myBMP (Best Management Practices), Naturland, OEKO-TEX, Open Geospatial Consortium (OGC), Organization for Economic & Co-Operation and Development (OECD), Origin Green, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC), Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Initiative (PSCI), Protected Harvest, ProTerra Foundation, Rainforest Alliance, REDcert, Responsible Jewellery Council (RJC), Roundtable on Responsible Soy (RTRS), Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB), Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO), Safe Quality Food Initiative, Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform), Small Producers’ Symbol/ Símbolo de Pequeños Productores (SPP), Soil Association, Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC), Sustainability Assessment of Food and Assessment Systems (SAFA), Sustainable Electronics Recycling International (SERI), Sustainable Farming Assurance Programme (SFAP), Textile Exchange, Unilever, Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), UTZ, Vegaplan, Verra, World Health Organization (WHO), Worldwide Responsible Accredited Production (WRAP), World Wildlife Fund (WWF).
