On 25 January 2019, IDeA Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations will hold a joint event at the UN Headquarters in New York.

Representatives of the UN Member States, the UN system, leading philanthropists and impact investors, civil society, diaspora organizations representatives and other relevant stakeholders are invited to attend an interactive panel discussion intended to explore how to accelerate business solutions and innovations contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals summarize the ambitious agenda set by the United Nations Member States to transform the world by 2030. The goals call for new approaches and innovative solutions for social change, beyond traditional mainstream development cooperation. Financing for sustainable development requires action by diverse actors – national governments promoting enabling environments for financing and investment, the private sector mobilizing for long-term investment, and champions of innovation co-creating and developing new solutions for the SDGs.

IDeA Foundation is successfully bringing together many stakeholders in raising the partnerships profile, supporting good governance and exceptional leadership and promoting sustainable development efforts in Armenia and the SDGs. While recognizing the potential of the United Nations can make in providing efficient, expertise to partners in many critical areas of development and management, IDeA stands ready to complement the work and existing responsibilities of the government and civil society organizations, the UN and other development partners. IDeA’s development priorities address the inextricably linked principles of Prosperity and Identity, and stem from several strategic global factors specific to Armenia and similar developing countries.
The panel will focus on the following questions:

- What role can IDeA play as a development partner joining efforts with the UN and UNDP to accelerate and scale up business solutions/innovations contributing to the achievement of SDGs in Armenia?
  - How does IDeA operate today and how can they transform its local experiences into a global movement, with focus on complex cross-sectoral solutions and use of technology for SDGs?
  - How does UNDP promote private sector engagement and multi-stakeholder dialogue at country, regional and global levels? What role does SDG Accelerator/Innovation Labs play in Armenia and globally?

- What is the role of diaspora in creating effective development cooperation that contributes to SDG Acceleration, underpinned by country ownership, inclusive partnerships and transparency and mutual accountability in many transitional democracies?
  - How does IDeA leverage diaspora financing/expertise today? How can this be scaled up in Armenia? What are the challenges and opportunities?
  - How can UN/UNDP help Armenia attract the diaspora financing and/or expertise to focus on SDGs achievement?

Opening remarks by:

- H.E. Mher Margaryan, Permanent Representative of Armenia to the UN
- H.E. Inga Rhonda King, President of ECOSOC

Panelists:

- Dr. Noubar Afeyan, founder and CEO of Flagship Pioneering, board member of IDeA Foundation, co-founder of Aurora Humanitarian Initiative
- Mr. Ruben Vardanyan, philanthropist, social entrepreneur, co-founder of IDeA Foundation and Aurora Humanitarian Initiative
- Mr. Paolo Galli, Senior Regional Adviser at the Regional Bureau of Europe and the CIS of the UNDP
Noubar Afeyan is the IDeA Foundation Board Member, the founder and CEO of Flagship Pioneering - a unique enterprise that systematically makes breakthrough, life-science innovations which improve human health and sustainability. During his 30-year career as inventor, entrepreneur and CEO, Dr. Afeyan co-founded and helped build over 40 successful start-ups. He is currently a Lecturer at Harvard Business School and was a Senior Lecturer at MIT. Noubar received a Technology Pioneer 2012 award from the World Economic Forum (WEF). Dr. Afeyan is a member of the Corporation (Board of Trustees) of MIT and a member of the Board of the IDeA Foundation and the UWC Dilijan International School. In 2015, he co-founded the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

Ruben Vardanyan is the co-founder of IDeA Foundation, a philanthropist and social entrepreneur, he serves on the advisory boards of the IFC (World Bank Group) and Fundação Dom Cabral business school in Brazil, board member at Ameriabank (a major Armenian bank), SOLLERS (Russia’s auto major), NGOs, public and professional organizations. A prominent financier, he is known both for his commercial projects (investment companies Troika Dialog and Vardanyan, Broitman and Partners) as well as his deep reaching philanthropic programs, such as the first UWC college in Eastern Europe (Dilijan, Armenia) and the Tatev Revival Project. In 2015, Ruben Vardanyan co-founded another global project, the Aurora Humanitarian Initiative.

Paolo Galli is the Senior Regional Adviser at the Regional Bureau of Europe and the CIS of the UN Development Programme. Paolo Galli brings 30 year experience with the UN system holding various senior positions including as the Director of the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, Director of UN and multilateral affairs in UNDP’s Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy, Deputy Director of UNDP’s Washington Liaison Office; Acting Director of the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General/Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General handling development, peace building, political and related matters, Senior Policy Advisor in the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Cluster Chief for the Western Balkans in UNDP’s Bureau for Europe and the CIS, Senior Program Officer for Private Sector Development in the UNDP’s Bureau for Development Policy, Special Assistant of the Executive Director of the UN Office for Project Services, UNDP’s Assistant Resident Representative in Afghanistan; and Country-Officer for West Africa, United Nations Capital Development Fund. Prior to joining the United Nations Paolo worked in the financial sector in London.