

WORKSHOP ON GOVERNANCE FOR WSSD IMPLEMENTATION IN COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Overview

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The World Summit on Sustainable Development which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 26 August to 4 September 2002 reaffirmed sustainable development as a central element of the international agenda and gave new impetus to global action to fight poverty and protect the environment. The understanding of sustainable development was broadened and strengthened as a result of the Summit, particularly the important linkages between poverty, the environment and the use of natural resources.

Governments agreed to and reaffirmed a wide range of concrete commitments, in particular the Millennium Development Goals as well as targets for action to achieve more effective implementation of sustainable development objectives. The views of civil society were given prominence in recognition of its key role in implementing the outcomes and in promoting partnership initiatives.

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Member States must ensure that their policies carefully balance short-term economic benefits with medium- and long-term objectives for economic and social development, and environmental protection. Public administration has a role to play in achieving this goal through integrating the issues of sustainable development in governmental policy making in all fields and at all levels: local, national, regional, and global. UN General Assembly Resolution 50/225 of 1 May 1996 has stated that there is a critical need for improved efficiency and effective public institutions, administrative procedures and sound financial management to harness the global challenges in support of sustainable development in all countries. Creating and strengthening institutional frameworks for sustainable development in countries with economies in transition was emphasized in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development .

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The countries in transition face the challenge of making their public institutions fully equipped to achieve the goal of sustainable development. For that purpose, it is necessary to overcome sector-based approaches and to proceed with an integrated economic, social and environmental approach in order to have a long-term frame of reference, which can serve as a guide to development actions and policies for the interventions in the field of all stakeholders. This integrated approach has to take into account both macro-economic factors and the need for short-term structural adjustments, allow the possibility to address many vital problems (health, education, nutrition, water, sanitation, air quality, employment), take into consideration the development of each sector and promote sustainable development at all levels.

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Prior to the Johannesburg World Summit, the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration (now Division for Public Administration and Development Management) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) convened a capacity-building Workshop on public administration and governance for sustainable development, from 29 to 31 July 2002 in Thessaloniki, Greece, to which all countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia participated. Each Member State was represented by a senior government official and an NGO leader. The report of the Thessaloniki Workshop will be made available to the participants as a background document.

The present workshop will be held in Istanbul from 16 to 18 September 2003, and is organized jointly by the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) and the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) of UNDESA in collaboration with the Government of Turkey.

2. Objectives

The Workshop will be conducted as a follow-up activity to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The objectives of the Workshop are as follows:

- a) Report on the status of implementation of WSSD outcomes
- b) Explore means of implementing WSSD outcomes through options for institutional adjustments, governance reform and public administration re-structuring, national strategies for sustainable development, capacity building, and promoting the role of civil society in decision making
- c) Promote intra-regional cooperation through exchange of national experience in implementation of Agenda 21 and discuss expediting progress in implementation of WSSD outcomes at national and regional level
- d) Identify national-level priorities for implementing WSSD outcomes.

3. Themes

The workshop discussion will be structured around the following main themes:

I. Institutional arrangements for implementing sustainable development at national and regional levels, with links to global levels:

- i) National strategies for sustainable development and establishment/enhancement of sustainable development councils and/or coordinating structures at national/local level.

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- ii) Involvement of civil society and business in promoting and implementing sustainable development

II. Role of governance and public administration in the achievement and implementation of sustainable development with particular attention to mobilization of financial resources, human development and capacity building.

III. Role of regional commissions and other regional organizations on the role they can play in promoting good governance for implementation of WSSD outcomes

4. Expected Outcome

The output of the Workshop will be a summary report embodying the outcomes of the deliberations among all the participants. It will endeavour to identify major national and regional problems and put forward recommendations with a view to guiding the efforts of the countries in the region to achieve sustainable development with the assistance of the international community.

The report will advance proposals on how to make such assistance more productive of results. The report will also provide guidance on how to deal with concerns of public management and governance to implement the recommendations of WSSD, in particular the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. It will facilitate the development of national policies and strategies for sustainable development and intraregional cooperation. The report will be presented to the session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the meeting of the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on Public Administration in 2004.

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5. Participants

Two participants (one senior government official and one major group representative) from the following countries with economies in transition, are invited: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

In addition delegations from: Turkey, as host country, and Greece, as host of the Thessaloniki Workshop, will also participate.

The senior Government officials are expected to be selected from the Ministries of Regional Development/Economy/Planning/Finance, or similar, having expertise in the area of sustainable development, particularly as it relates to national activities for the implementation of the outcomes of WSSD.

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The major group representatives will be selected through the major group networks based on their national/sub-regional activities for the implementation of WSSD outcomes.

6. Workshop Structure

6.1. Conduct of meetings

It is suggested that the meetings of the workshop are conducted in plenary sessions/ panel discussions and break-up groups.

6.2. Agenda outline

The workshop will be held over three days.

Day 1: AM - opening session, panel discussion on the national-level experiences (based on written contribution by participants);

PM – panel discussion on theme I.i).

Day 2: AM – panel discussion and interactive dialogue on theme I.ii);

panel discussion on theme II.

PM – continuation and conclusion of the panel discussion on theme II;

Panel discussion on theme III.

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Day 3: AM – consideration of the draft report of the workshop, closing plenary session, press conference;

PM – a possibility for a field visit/study tour to a local model sustainable development site will be explored

6.3. Chairpersons/Moderator:

The workshop will be chaired by two co-chairpersons: from Turkey (host country) and Greece (host to the Thessaloniki workshop).

The workshop discussion will be facilitated by an experienced independent moderator, with a knowledge of the problems of the region and excellent facilitating skills.

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6.4. Presenters/Panellists

The panels will be composed of:

National Representatives (2 government representatives + 2 major group representatives);

Senior Staff from UNDESA and other UN agencies.

The possibility of inviting, as panelists, senior experts from international and regional organizations (e.g. the Bretton Woods Institutions, The European Union, OECD) is currently being explored.

6.5. Observers:

The Workshop will be open to observers from other interested Member States as well as all organizations of the United Nations System and other regional IGOs and NGOs.

6.6.Languages:

The workshop will be conducted in English with a simultaneous interpretation into Russian.

7. Documentation:

7.1.Written Contributions by Participants:

Participants are expected to provide written contributions of maximum 5 pages as outlined in the attached guidelines.

7.2. Background papers/documents to the Workshop:

As appropriate, relevant background papers/documentation on sustainable development are attached and /or will be provided to participants e.g. WSSD Plan of Implementation; Guidelines for establishing NSDS; the report of the Thessaloniki workshop; the report of the 11th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development; the report of the 4th meeting of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration.

Please note, however, that the emphasis of the workshop is for participants to contribute their views on issues and actions for implementation of the outcomes of WSSD in countries in transition, rather than reacting to existing documents.