

Response to Questionnaire related to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals by the National Planning Commission (NPC), Govt. of Nepal (Focal point for UNDESA and UNCSD).

seek input from national Governments in preparation for the Secretary-General 's initial input to the Open Working Group

Introduction

In the Rio+20 outcome document, member States agreed that sustainable development goals (SDGs) must:

1. Be based on Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
2. Fully respect all the Rio Principles.
3. Be consistent with international law.
4. Build upon commitments already made.
5. Contribute to the full implementation of the outcomes of all major summits in the economic, social and environmental fields.
6. Focus on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development, being guided by the outcome document
7. Address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages.
8. Be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.
9. Not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
10. Include active involvement of all relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, in the process.

It was further agreed that SDGs must be:

- Action-oriented
- Concise
- Easy to communicate
- Limited in number
- Aspirational
- **Global in nature**
- Universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.

The outcome document further specifies that the development of SDGs should:

- Be useful for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development
- Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- Serve as a driver for implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in the UN system as a whole
- Address and be focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development

The Rio + 20 outcome document *The Future We Want* resolved to establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process on SDGs that is open to all stakeholders with a view to developing global sustainable development goals to be agreed by the UNGA. The outcome document mandated the creation of an inter-governmental Open Working Group, that will submit a report to the 68th session of the General Assembly containing a proposal for sustainable development goals for consideration and appropriate action. The outcome document specifies that the process leading to the SDGs needs to be coordinated and coherent with the processes considering the post 2015

development agenda and that initial input to the work of the Open Working Group will be provided by

the UNSG in consultation with national governments.

Attached is the UN Task Team Report *Realizing the Future We Want For All*, which constitutes one

of the important Secretary-General's inputs to the Open Working Group.² At the request of the

1 *The Future We Want*, Rio+20 Outcome Document, paragraphs 246-7.

]http://www.un.org/mil/jenniunioaWpd[yPost 2015 UNTTrepgrt.pdf.

Secretary-General over 60 entities across the United Nations and including the World Bank, IMF and OECD worked together to produce this report, co-chaired by UNDESA and UNDP. The UN Task Team, or a subset thereof, will be the appropriate inter-agency entity or "technical support team" requested in the Rio+20 outcome document to support the Open Working Group.

Against the backdrop of the UN Task Team Report, this questionnaire is a preliminary means of conducting consultations with national Governments on SDGs. It could be considered as a contribution to UN-supported national consultations on the post-2015 development agenda. It intends

to elicit views and suggestions on some key principles and criteria for developing a proposal for SDGs. Responses will be posted on the DSD website, summarized, synthesized as part of the Secretary-General's initial input to the work of the OWG.

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The Secretariat kindly requests that Member States provide responses to the following questionnaire and submit them to DSD (vaturi@un.org, copied to soltau@un.org) before 21,October 2012.

Response to Questionnaire related to the development of the Sustainable Development Goals by the National Planning Commission (NPC), Govt. of Nepal (Focal point for UNDESA and UNCSD).

Questionnaire

The Rio outcome document states that the SDGs should be limited in number, and at the same time focus on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development.

1. Please list a limited number, preferably between five and ten, of the important priority areas that must be addressed through the SDGs to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable development (SD).

Response: We believe that poverty eradication, good environmental governance and establishment of sustainable production and consumption system should be the overarching goal of the SD. The specific goals are given below:

1. *Poverty Reduction*
2. *Food and Energy Security*
3. *Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation*
4. *Peace Building*
5. *Resilience Building to Hazards, Risks and Disasters*
6. *Social and Gender Equity*
7. *Sustainable Forest and Natural Resources Management with focused to Biodiversity Conservation through Ecological Security*
8. *Gainful Employment to Youth*
9. *Universal primary and Vocational Education*
10. *Universal Primary Health Care*

The SDGs "should address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of Sustainable Development and their interlinkages. They should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, thus contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and serving as a driver for implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in the United Nations system as a whole. The development of these goals should not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals" (The Future We Want, paragraph 246).

2. How might the SDGs strive to balance the economic, social and environmental pillars of Sustainable Development?

a. Reflect social, economic and environmental dimensions within each SDG, possibly through the associated targets

b. Integrate the MDGs, suitably modified/updated for post-2015, into a larger sustainable development framework

c. Expand MDG7 ('environmental sustainability') into a number of goals with a natural/environmental resource dimension (water, food, energy, etc.)

d. Other (please describe) Peace Building

Response: We have chosen (b) since we feel that there is no sense of having two set of goals which will create duplications, spreading the limited resources of the member countries too thin, and above all creating confusion in achieving and reporting both sets of goals. We do see problems and challenges in integrating since MDGs are for developing countries and SDGs are required to be of global in nature. Being a developing country, Nepal wishes to have a one set of

global goals – be it SDGs or MDGs at global level. In this respect perhaps MDGs after their expiry in 2015 should be graduated into SDGs or millennium sustainable development goals (MSDGs) since the MDGs are lacking the environmental sustainability aspect particularly the goals to combat climate change. SDGs can be made much broader in scope and divided into sub-goals to suit different countries according to their varying level of capacity, technologies, and resource availability and ground reality. Developed countries can have the SDGs out of which they may report having already achieved and provide lessons to developing countries. The SDGs can be made all encompassing by including new changes and challenges that have sprung up in recent years such as climate change, disaster, hunger, food and energy crisis, pandemics, unsustainable growth and a suitable operational framework proposed. Most importantly, the above mentioned three overarching goals should guide the revision of MDGs so that they truly becomes MSDGs. Expanding the MDGs by incorporating environmental and resource scarcity aspects alone will not make MDGs achieve the intent of the SDGs and ensure the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the world. The word 'sustainability' in all its intent and purpose must be incorporated in any MDGs or SDGs or better in MSDGs. In others, we prefer to peace building preventing potential causes of conflict through amicable means.

The SDGs must be "global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities " (The Future We Want, paragraph 247).

3. Based on your experience with MDGs or other existing goals, what would be the key use of SDGs for your country (select at most two)?

a. Defining national policies

b. Influencing national budget allocations

c. Reviewing the impact of national policies

d. Addressing key pressure leading to unsustainability

e. Helping to balance economic, social and environmental pillars in policy making

f. Guiding development cooperation

g. Other (please describe)

Please explain your choices if you would like:

Response: We have chosen (c) and (e) since we feel that the problem in our country is not due to lack of policies but the lack of their full and purposeful implementation. Therefore having SDGs would be useful to use them as filters for measuring the impacts as well as to strike a better balance among the three pillars of sustainable development. The goals along with the SD indicators will help us to make sure that the intended target beneficiaries of a particular policy are reached and that the development becomes sustainable.

4. How can "universally applicable" SDGs be made practically relevant for countries at different levels of development? (Please refer to your country's situation as appropriate.)

Response: Our understanding is that SDGs will be of strategic nature and as such they will lay down an aspiration and targets which suits the specific situations of each country according to

the capacity and resources availability. Although the SDGs are of global nature but each country can set the target at the level it believes it can meet the achievement. For example, my country being a least developed one as well as largely a mountainous in nature has to set the aspiration level at lower band compared to a typical developed country's aspiration. For Nepal, the main goal will be to achieve the basic needs requirement of her people such as ensuring minimum supply of food, clothing, energy, housing, health, drinking water, sanitation, primary education to all keeping the environment sustainable and ensuring social and gender equity as per the internally accepted level.

5. The SDGs are supposed to be "global in nature". Should targets associated with those goals be:

a. common to all countries?

b. defined by each country? or

c. common but differentiated depending on country characteristics and level of development? If c., please explain how.

Response: It is definitely (c). The common but differentiated approach was agreed in the Rio'92 summit itself. The subsequent MEAs, especially COP16 and COP17 agreements under the UNFCCC and most recently the Rio+20 conferences have reinforced and further solidified this notion. The methodology to be followed should be that SDGs will be set at strategic level and each country's development policy and strategy will set SDGs as targets to be achieved by certain timeline meeting common global indicators. So for example, in case of my country, given the resource constraint, capacity deficit, and lack of technology, the timeline will be of longer duration compared to some fast growing economies and development and environment parameter wider in space. However, the country will have full commitment to SDGs along with the resolve to keep a balance among the three pillars of SD. I think the spirit of the SDGs will be more to achieve the balance, coherence, and coordination among the three pillars and in setting different goal aspiration level and achieving them in a balanced manner.

The SDGs must be based on Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, fully respect all the Rio Principles, build upon commitments already made, and contribute to the implementation of the outcomes of all major summits in the economic, social and environmental fields (The Future We Want, paragraph 246).

6. Which existing goals and targets (e.g., MDGs, goals/targets in Agenda 21, JFOI) do you think *should* be incorporated - perhaps in updated form - in a proposal for sustainable development goals? The SDGs "should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond2015", (TheFuture We Want, paragraph246)

Response: MDG # 1, 2, 3, 7 and 8 must be included in any global SDGs although some elements remaining goals also may have to be considered. Similarly from the Agenda 21 and JPoI dimensions such as low carbon or green economic approaches, social equity, and environmental sustainability and good governance must be included. There are numbers of cross cutting issues that must be also included prominent among them being sustainable extraction and use of biodiversity and natural resources; sustainable development practices at national level that

complements regional and global sustainability. Health and energy for all, good institutional framework for participatory and decentralized development, and gender equity and equality are other cross cutting issues. The priority or key areas for intervention to achieve impacts at scale are: food, water, energy, and ecological security, sanitation, and sustainable use of ocean, seas, mountains, forests, dry land, health, education, and shelter.

7. What specific steps can be taken to ensure that the SDGs are coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015?

"We recognize that progress towards the achievement of the goals needs to be assessed and accompanied by targets and indicators, while taking into account different national circumstances, capacities and levels of development. " (The Future We Want, paragraph 250).

Response: The key is to have a coherent, committed and convincing policy at various levels to work toward achieve sustainable development goals. The specific steps are first to agree on taking overarching steps such as: global commitment to sustainable production and consumption, good environmental governance, poverty reduction, population management, and regional co-operation. Incentive based mechanisms such payment for ecosystem services, REDD+, global funding to build natural and environmental commons will be the economic instruments. 'Polluters Pay' principles should be implemented and enforced from global, national to local levels. Resources must be made available to least developed and land locked country to organize the capacity building, technology transfer, and means to implementation of the SDGs. Measures have to plan to surmount the challenges such as creating green jobs and pro-poor growth, social inclusion or inclusive development, building resilient communities and ecosystems, more applicable science and technological solutions, south, triangular and private-public-civil society partnerships and affordable financing mechanisms, and strengthening existing institutions and organizations for accelerating sustainable development agenda.

8. How should assessments of progress toward the achievement of the SDGs be carried out at the global level?

"The Future We Want" states that at the outset the Open Working Group will decide on its methods of work, "including developing modalities to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the United Nations system...." (para 248)

Response: As mentioned under (7) above, participatory, multi-stakeholder, public-private-civil society partnership building and networking will be the key to design, implement, monitor and assess the progress on SDGs. 'One size fit all' approach will not work and considering each country and region's peculiar conditions and local realities a menu of options must be develop do implement interventions and assess progress. As they say 'assessment is as good as planning of the interventions' and therefore each member country should develop involvement and ownership of all the stakeholders by involving them from the A to Z step of a project. Just involving g in assessment will only yield criticism and accusation.

9. What measures should be taken to make the process of developing a proposal for SDGs inclusive and participatory? How should civil society and other relevant stakeholders be engaged?

Response: Proposal development should be preceded with idea generation and achieving stakeholders' agreement. The commonly developed idea will then can be developed into a proposal by the professional as the proposal development is a technical and professional work. But once the proposal is developed, it must be shared and suitably communicated to all the concerned stakeholders. The SD agenda must be developed through a bottom-up process in that the national SD agenda must be a collection and synthesis of the SD agenda and plans at sub-district, district, province and country levels. Civil society should be involved but the criteria should be based on the relevance of the topic, Expertise and capacity of the civil society organizations to contribute and track records of the civil society in their performance. But all relevant stakeholders and potential contributors must be involved in proposal development

10. What principles should underpin the development of the SDGs? (the UN TT report, for example, recommended adding (i) reducing inequalities and (ii) promoting human rights (iii) ensuring sustainability);

Response: Nepal believes that the principles guiding the process of developing SDGs should be based on: a. holistic and participatory development of the goals, sub goals and indicators; b. inclusive in process by involving all gender, all social classes, and all stakeholders concerned; c. equitable in its coverage and aim in that those people and regions that are poor, marginalized, disadvantaged, and vulnerable should get the highest priority in terms of attention and interventions; d. universally applicable but based on the sub-principle of common but differentiated approach; and e. action, oriented, time-bound and with full financial, technical and institutional backing for their implementation with areas needing urgent and immediate attention should be given top priority.

11. How should a new Global Partnership for Development be constructed within or around the SDGs?

Response: Not only global but also regional and sub-regional (including south-south; north-south; triangular; public-private; public-private-civil society partnership should be formed based on the principles of a) lesson learning; b) sharing of best practices; d) enabling the least developed member countries to 'leap-frog' in their development efforts and e) based on the commitment to the overarching sustainable development goals of: a) poverty eradication; environmental sustainability, and sustainable consumption and production, and equitable development.

12. Do you have any other observations, ideas or inputs you would like to offer to inform the initial work of the open working group on sustainable development goals?

Response: The MDGs beyond 2015 should only continue if they enshrine sustainable development at its heart or core; it should encompass and build on lesson learned not from the experiences gathered by the member countries in implementing MDGs but also the lessons gained and good practices involved in implementing some of the sustainable development projects and programmes, climate change adaptation and mitigation measures such as NAPAs, NAMAs, and other resilience building initiatives. It should first and foremost set goals to maintain the global temperature below 1.5 degree (Country Stand in COP 15) Celsius by the end of this century and transform the unsustainable brown or fossil fuel-based economy into green economic pathways.

End

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