



UNITED NATIONS



Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

30 January 2014
2-14/DDSAH/ds

Dear Mr. Seth,

In response to your letter dated January 17, 2014, please find attached ECLAC's response to the questionnaire on the scope and methodology of a global sustainable development report. ECLAC looks forward to cooperating with UNDESA on this matter.

Sincerely,

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Sustainable Development and Human Settlements
ECLAC

Mr.
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Director
Sustainable Development Division
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Cc:

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ECLAC Response to Questionnaire on the Scope and Methodology of a Global Sustainable Development Report

Scope

1. In your view, what should be the scope of future editions of the Global Sustainable Development Report, in terms of issue focus, geographic coverage, time horizon and scientific knowledge?

- Issue focus: a first part could contain an update on key variables, which could be the SDGs and other relevant indicators; identification of emerging issues; identification of possible policy solutions for the problems diagnosed and ways in which the HLPF could help address those problems. A second part could contain an in-depth analysis of the theme or themes chosen for the HLPF. There should be a focus on providing ways forward and answers to identified problems, rather than generally addressing a topic.
- Geographic coverage: should be global, with regional overviews in part 1 and the analysis of regional-specific aspects to the chosen topic in part 2. Regional commissions could assist in the production of these regional sections. To the extent possible, special reference should be made to SIDs, LDCs, LLDCs and other groups of countries in special situations.
- Time horizon: this issue will depend on the periodicity of the report. Assuming the report comes out every 4 years (please see question 6), the focus could be on the last 4 or 5 years, but always within the context of historical trends and, whenever possible, with reference to future scenarios.
- Scientific knowledge: attention should be given to the actual and potential contribution of science, technology and innovation to sustainable development in developing countries and to the change of consumption and production patterns in developed countries.

2. What are the key national, regional and global priority issues that you would like to see reflected in the global report?

- Barriers and disincentives to sustainable development such as poor practices in instrument evaluation and in pricing
- Progress in metrics for sustainable development
- These will have to be determined for each edition of the report based on scientific findings and policy developments. For Latin America and the Caribbean, a cross-cutting theme which will be relevant over the foreseeable future will be the environment-poverty-inequality nexus.



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3. Should the report have a role in identifying new and emerging issues? If so, how to identify these issues?

Yes. There should be consultations with the scientific community (including social science academia), government bodies and civil society, as well as monitoring of specialized literature.

4. Should it report on past and future trends, report on policy lessons learnt, and/or report on scientific findings indicating potential areas for policy action?

Yes. Please see previous answers.

5. Should the report be part of the monitoring and accountability framework for sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda?

It should be an input to the assessments and deliberations to be undertaken under, or as mandated by, the HLPF, ECOSOC and/or the General Assembly.

6. What should be the periodicity of the report? (e.g. yearly, every x years)

Every 4 years, issued in time to inform the HLPF when it meets under the auspices of the General Assembly (at the level of Heads of State).

Methodology

7. How should the preparation of the global report be organized? How should the thematic focus of a given edition be decided? What would a preparation process look like? Who should be involved and how?

A four-year periodicity would enable UNDESA/Regional Commissions to hold roundtables with experts and stakeholders, online consultations and interviews; produce and circulate drafts among relevant readers; and incorporate feedback.

The thematic focus should be chosen by the HLPF (at one high-level segment for the next). More than themes, however, the HLPF should consider asking questions on how to advance or improve on a particular issue, and the report should deliver action-oriented responses. It's highly recommendable not to start with an environmental specific issue to avoid fragmentary approaches to sustainable development.

8. Which principles and scientific methods should be employed in preparation of future editions of the global report?

- Transparency and accuracy (particularly as to sources and quality of data, estimation methods);
- Research should be replicable and verifiable;
- Hypotheses must be tested;
- Analytical work should be peer reviewed.



9. What would be the best way to organize national and regional contributions to the global report? Would a network of national and regional focal points and regular consultations with them be useful?

Yea, a network would be useful. Regional commissions are key players in facilitating regional consultations and national consultations for their region, and can provide in-depth assessments and research on the designated themes. IPCC procedures could be an example to involve national/regional scientific community.

10. What concrete steps do you propose to involve scientists from your country and region in the global report? Which institutions, communities or networks should be mobilized? Should a scientific advisory group be constituted?

There must be an initial outreach effort among key scientific and academic institutions and key scientific forums at national and regional level, followed by a sustained effort to consolidate links between these institutions and the GSDR drafting team. There should be clear incentives for the buy-in of the relevant partners/scientific community.

11. Should all countries institute a national sustainable development report process? If so, how?

This decision pertains to countries. National reports should not be required. The UN could offer assistance/workshops/funding and make efforts to induce the establishment of periodic reports. The reviews referred to in "Format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development" could eventually lead to regular reporting, if countries decide so.

12. How should the report inform the work of the High-Level Political Forum? In agenda setting? In providing scientific analysis of issues on the HLPF agenda? In follow-up analysis of implementation of decisions taken?

Especially in offering options for commitments, action, policy orientations to be supported and implemented by the Forum.