

# A Review of National Sustainable Development Assessments

High-level Expert Group Meeting for the Global  
Sustainable Development Report - Engaging National  
Assessments

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# Background

- Since the Brundtland Report defined sustainable development in the 1980's, **many nations of the world have made important contributions** toward a more sustainable common future.
- However, most countries are following their own paths and **there is little coordination to truly understand the long-term impact of key sustainable development strategies**, particularly in light of increased globalization and resource use.

# Background (cont.)

- For this reason, UN DESA prepared a study to assess all of the national sustainable development strategies as reported to the United Nations as part of the UN+20 Conference.

# What do we read?

Reviewed the following types of documents:

- Rio+20 reports

- Reports of national sustainable development strategies

- Sustainable indicator profiles

- Millennium Development Goal (MDG) documents

- National white papers

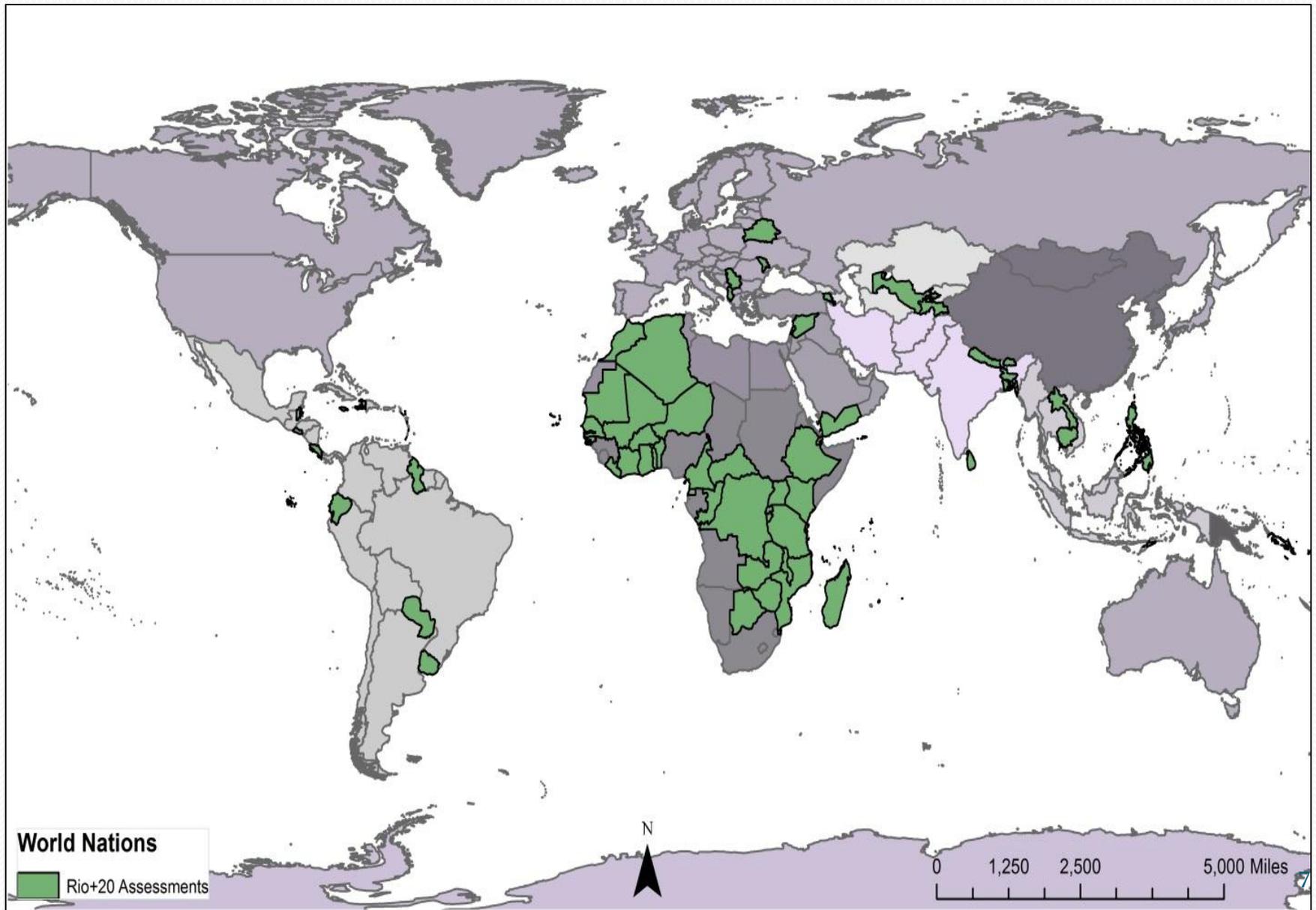
# What is our focus?

- scientific or **thematic topic(s)** addressed by the assessment
- geographical scope of the assessment
- time period covered by the assessment
- total number of editions completed
- **methodology employed** to prepare its assessment
  - peer review arrangements
  - funding arrangements
- **assessment tools and indicators**

**Table 2.1.** Summary of national sustainable development documents, by region

Regions	Number of Nations with Documents Posted to the UN					Total Number of UN Nations
	SD Indicator Profiles <sup>1</sup>	SD Strategy Profiles <sup>1</sup>	CSD National Reports <sup>1</sup>	MDG Progress Reports <sup>2</sup>	Rio+20 National Assessments <sup>3</sup>	
Developed	25	28	29	50	4	50
Northern Africa	1	1	1	5	2	5
Sub-Saharan Africa	7	6	8	47	34	47
South-Eastern Asia	1	1	1	11	4	11
Eastern Asia	2	2	3	4	0	4
Southern Asia	0	0	1	8	4	8
Western Asia	1	2	2	13	3	13
Caucasus and Central Asia	0	0	1	8	3	8
Oceania	2	2	2	13	1	13
Latin America and the Caribbean	4	5	8	34	14	34
<b>Totals</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>193</b>

# A snapshot ...



# Topics

- Africa
- Atmosphere
- Biodiversity and ecosystems
- Biotechnology
- Capacity-building
- Chemicals and waste
- Climate change
- Demographics
- Desertification, land degradation and drought
- Disaster risk reduction
- Education
- Employment, decent work for all and social protection
- Energy
- Finance
- Food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture

- Forests
- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication
- Health and population
- Indicators
- Industry
- Information for decision-making and participation
- Institutional arrangements
- Institutional framework for sustainable development
- Integrated decision-making
- International cooperation for an enabling environment
- International legal instruments and mechanisms

- Mining
- Mountains
- National sustainable development strategies
- Oceans and seas
- Poverty eradication
- Rural development
- Science
- Small Island Developing States
- Sustainable cities and human settlements
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Sustainable tourism
- Sustainable transport
- Technical cooperation
- Technology
- Trade
- Water and Sanitation

# Key findings

- Countries varied widely in their methodological approach to evaluating sustainable development and their efforts on green economy activities
- Most countries provided an evaluation of their efforts. However, there was little agreement on the approach.
- Most reported on MDGs and participation in Agenda 21 initiatives. **However, no systematic approach across the reports.**
- Most countries developed a hybrid approach that included individual programs/cases and quantitative indicators.

# Key findings (cont.)

- Most countries embraced the concept of the green economy.
- Some expressed concern over the term due to fears of exploitation of resources and new trade barriers.
- Some did not embrace the idea due to a lack of knowledge or interest.
- Data gaps
  - **High reliance on MGDs and Agenda 21 themes**
  - **Lack of regular data collection and institutions**
  - **Lack of data standardization**

# Lessons learned

- Most nations of the world are trying to work on sustainable development issues.
- Yet the approaches that are used by nations vary considerably and it is difficult to evaluate the overall impact of global sustainability initiatives mainly due to the lack of methodological consistency and data availability.
- Plus the scale of analysis (local, national, and regional) is highly inconsistent.

# Recommendations

- Better standardization of indicators. UN has 134 sustainability indicators available. MDGs are used inappropriately as a proxy for sustainable development indicators.
- The development of flexible national assessment framework similar to the Millennium Development Goals containing common indicators or measures, **such as SDGs**, will be a useful tool for evaluating national implementation of global sustainability targets.

# Potential sustainable development goals/targets that have been suggested by scientists :

- Eliminate extreme poverty worldwide by 2050
- Halve the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015, further halve it by 2030, and eradicate hunger by 2050
- Universal access to improved water source and basic sanitation by 2050
- Universal health coverage
- Universal primary education by 2020. Universal secondary education by 2030.
- Create 63 million decent new jobs per year until 2050, achieving full, productive and decent employment for all.
- Eliminate overfishing and restore fish stocks.
- Stabilize biodiversity at the 2020/2030 level (depending on region) by 2050.
- No net forest loss and no more destruction of primary forests by 2020.
- Stabilize global materials (e.g. non-renewable resource) consumption at 2015 levels.
- Achieve 0.7% ODA/GNI (OECD countries), focusing on the poorest and most vulnerable countries. Mobilize resources for a global SDG fund commensurate with estimated needs by 2018.
- GDP per capita > US\$10,000 PPP in all countries by 2050.
- Reduce the wide disparity of per capita GDP between developed countries and developing countries.
- Sustained increase in intergenerational earnings and educational mobility.
- By 2030, ensure universal access to modern energy services; double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.
- Reduce the number of slum dwellers to close to 0 by 2050.
- Hold global mean temperature increase below 2 degrees Celsius.
- Increase science and technology innovation capacity through knowledge sharing and technology transferring.



Thank you!