

UN Questionnaire related to the Development of Sustainable Development Goals
Input from National Governments in Preparation for the Secretary-General's initial input to the
Open Working Group

1. Priority areas to be addressed through the SDGs to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals should include:
 - i. Sustainable food production with a focus on resource efficient methods and technology and improved access to global agricultural markets; and, expansion of local production.
 - ii. Access to safe drinking water and sustainable use of water resources including waste water management.
 - iii. Disaster Preparedness.
 - iv. Environmental sustainability: Low-carbon development; forest conservation.
 - v. Social and economic sustainability: Increased job creation linked to sustainable practices, such as, integrated land, water and waste management; and forest and biodiversity research.
 - vi. Strengthening global partnerships – developing countries should be amply supported both technically and financially to achieve the SDGs.
2. The SDGs can strive to balance the three pillars of sustainable development through reflecting the social, economic and environmental dimensions within each SDG through the associated targets. In cases where this is not possible to reflect this, it should be clear that these are dimensions which underpin the SDGs.
3. The key use of SDGs for Guyana would be:
 - i. Helping to balance economic, social and environmental pillars in policy making. This is because sustainable development is an important tenet of the country, as such, SDGs would strengthen the focus on finding the balance between the economic, social and economic in policies.
 - ii. Guiding development cooperation. The targets set in the SDGs would influence the areas for which aid would be sourced.
- 4/5. Targets associated with SDGs which are global in nature or are universally applicable should be common but differentiated depending on country characteristics and level of development. Countries can be grouped based on a combination of similarities such as their level of economic development and geography. This will not necessarily create the ideal situation but will result in targets being better focused. The reason for this argument is that countries with less economic strength tend to spend more of their resources on the social leaving less for the environmental areas. Therefore, the economic and social status can be used as determinants for setting SDG targets for countries.

6. MDG Goal 7 – Ensuring Environmental Sustainability should be incorporated into the SDG. It is recommended that this Goal and the associated Targets take the following into consideration: (a) fresh water management, and, (b) conservation of tropical rainforests and its biodiversity.
7. In order to ensure that the SDGs are integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015, the Country Programme/Strategy should be designed in a way that will link the two – SDGs and the larger UN Agenda.
8. Assessments of the progress toward the achievement of the SDGs should be done at the Country level. This information can be consolidated into a regional report (e.g. a report for the Caribbean Region) for integration into a global report.
9. The following should be noted if we are to ensure that the process of developing a proposal for SDGs is inclusive and participatory:
 - i. Information should be freely and easily accessible.
 - ii. Investments in education and awareness will be required.
 - iii. The mechanism which will ensure that the process is participatory should be able to adequately provide information as well as capture feedback (through, for example, meetings and consultations).
 - iv. Effective mechanisms that exist should be utilized but these should benefit from ample time and resources to prepare, inform, and mobilize their members.
10. The suggestions of underpinning principles for the SDGs proposed in the UN TT report are supported (reducing inequalities, promoting human rights and ensuring sustainability).
11. Global Partnership for Development should incorporate the SDGs in policies and programmes so that funds and assistance would be provided for projects that fit with these goals.
12. The SDGs should also make provision for the following:
 - i. Waste management (including hazardous waste).
 - ii. Payment for ecosystem services – this is likely to become one of the key mechanisms for conservation of biodiversity and the development of societies.
 - iii. LMOs, GMOs and Biosafety.
 - iv. Capacity Building for Sustainable Development.

**Prepared by the EPA
November 20, 2012.**

Questionnaire related to the development of Sustainable Development Goals

To 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.¹

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.

² http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTTreport.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.

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.

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.**

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).

Cognizant of the need to address the three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) of sustainable development keeping in mind the MDGs there are a number of priority areas to be addressed from a forestry or natural resource perspective.

Environmental dimensions (sustainable management)

- Enhancing sustainable utilization and management of the natural resource base of economic and social development within the forestry sector.
- Strengthening institutional capacity for designing and implementing policies and regulations
- Strengthening capacity for conservation and management of State Forest resources for development at the national and local or community level.
- Reducing environmental degradation
- Reducing the treath of climate change and the loss of biodiversity

Social dimensions (development)

- Improving social dimensions through gender equality and empowerment;
- and equal opportunity at the local and community levels within the forest secto

Economic dimension (growth)

- Improving economic dimensions within the forest sector through capacity building, training, and technical support
- Develop mechanisms for investment within the sector.
- Increase employment

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

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

The MDGs have seen great success in the achievement of its set priorities in the 8 key areas. However, it may prove to gain a greater level of achievement should specific areas of the MDGs be modified, to take into consideration the three pillars of sustainable development in a much larger framework.

- Through the integration of the MDGs, keeping in mind the three pillars it may be possible to build the necessary partnerships for coordinated implementation of sustainable development at national and local levels;
- And to eliminate fragmentation and duplication of functions among member countries
- Provide support to assist developing countries in implementing MDGs and SDGs.
- Allow for more opportunities to share experiences among countries in the area of MDGs and SDGs implementation

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

Of recent environmental issues have been seen of significant global concern and interest. Issues such as efficient management of natural resources, climate change, deforestation and degradation, pollution, and need for clean energy are becoming growing concerns.

The SDGs may function effectively should the environmental pillar be included in so doing making it possible for economic and social development to take place effectively.

- Ways in which SDGs can balance the three pillars through environmental sustainability;
- Through infrastructural planning which promotes environmental sustainability and social and economic integration simultaneously
- Supporting social and economic activities aimed at environmental goals
- Broadening the participation base of environmental planning processes

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. Addressing key pressure leading to unsustainability

Key pressures are lack of resources for sustained implementation of key activities and programmes; and unavailability of technical expertise in some areas.

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

Since the SDGs are expected to be global in nature, it is recognised that these goals must be in agreement with the member countries, and acceptable at country level. The SDGs can be identified based on common areas of concern with respect to economic social and environmental issues. However, there must e provisions to allow for country situations to be reflected in the indicators and Goals developed.

The SDGs can be used to guide and identify areas of concern (within the three dimensions) to assess the level of development required by each country to achieve these goals at the national level.

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.)

Based on the three dimensions included in Agenda 21 it is recognised that in order for SDGs to be “universally applicable” SDGs can be structured to follow the same process as the MDGs set out to be achieved. It is recommended that the SDGs be identified within a framework and the achievement of these goals by member countries be approached through approved national strategy and development plan. For example, in Guyana, these Goals are expected to be aligned with national strategies including the Low Carbon Development Strategy, the National Competitiveness Strategy and the National Forest Plan and Policy.

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

- a. common to all countries?**
- b. common but differentiated depending on country characteristics and level of development? If c., please explain how.**

Global or common goals and targets can help to set the agenda for policymakers and spell out quantifiable and measurable out comes. However, common goals should not specify the means but identify the outcomes leaving countries room to navigate. Especially developing countries, in this way, are allowed the flexibility to identify the mechanisms to be used at the

national level, taking into account each country's unique characteristics and circumstances, to address these SDGs.

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, JPOI) do you think *should* be incorporated – perhaps in updated form – in a proposal for sustainable development goals?

It is recommended that the existing MDGs be incorporated in the SDGs:

- a. Ensuring environmental sustainability
- b. Develop a global partnership for development
- c. Promoting gender equality and empowering women

Additionally, one key target identified within the Agenda 21, JPOI suggested for inclusion is as follows:

- a. To promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems by addressing and, where appropriate, *delinking economic growth and environmental degradation* through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes and reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste.

The SDGs “should be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015”. (The Future We Want, paragraph 246)

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

- a. The appointment of a committee to review and assess the areas of concern identified by member countries.
- b. Review the current issues that were not included in MDGs for possible consideration and inclusion in the SDGs

“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).

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

- a. It is recommended that there be a development of key criteria and indicators, identifying specific time lines for achieving each goal or target as agreed upon by member countries
- b. The development of a standard format to assess each criterion under the various goals or targets
- c. Indicators to assess the level of achievements for each SDGs should be sustainable and quantifiable
- d. There should be a periodic (annually or as agreed upon by the member countries) national level reporting from each country.

“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)

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?

- a. As has been the case with other vital policy decisions it is recommended that national level stakeholder consultations be conducted ensuring a wide cross section of stakeholders have the opportunity to provide their input in the process
- b. The establishment of a national level technical committee with specific requirements to guide the process towards a national position for the SDGs

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);

The principles suggested from a forestry perspective in the development of the SDGs are as recommended:

- a. Ensuring environmental sustainability
- b. Promoting equal opportunity
- c. Promoting investments mechanisms for development

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

1. Financing and dedication of resources for forests including support for SFM.
2. Integration of programme which will support the environment such as, climate change mitigation efforts and REDD+ within the context of forests
3. Recognise the role of sustainable development within the context of forest livelihoods and national and local development framework

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?

UN Questionnaire related to the Development of Sustainable Development Goals
Input from National Governments in Preparation for the Secretary-General's initial input to the
Open Working Group

1. Priority areas to be addressed through the SDGs to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals should include:
 - Establishment of priority areas requiring SD within natural resource / extractive sectors, and development of policies and actions to achieve short, medium and long term goals for each sector. This could be accomplished with the technology transfer, incentives from Government and standard operating procedures (*eg. Mining industry spent GY\$100M to integrate better equipment (incentives provided by GOG for importing equipment) to reduce environmental impacts on ecosystems in upper Region 7, Mazaruni Area from 2010-12 and turbidity reduced by 45% from samples taken by GGMC/ EPA in 2012*)
 - National Strategies should include reference to the SDGs, and also Budgetary allocations should report on the impacts to achieve SDGs (*eg. GY\$30M was allocated to public awareness activities in all secondary schools to prevent and reduce wastage of potable water, and this contributes to reduction of 5% loss of national potable water*)
2. Provision of indicators (social, economic and environmental) to achieve various targets using an inventory of baseline data available to support setting of specific targets for Regions and countries. This would guide policies and programme intervention and implementation in various countries.

Guideline to promote actions in order to achieve targets at the country level.

3. SDGs use in Guyana would be in the areas of Defining National Policies and Addressing key pressure leading to un-sustainability.

Key use of SDGs – would support the work of the Focal Point, GLSC to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) which promote SD.

UNCCD's New Strategic Objectives (2008-2018) are as follows:

Strategic objective 1: To improve the living conditions of affected populations

Strategic objective 2: To improve the condition of affected ecosystems

Strategic objective 3: To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the

Strategic objective 4: To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors

GLSC would align the National Action Programme to Combat Desertification to the UNCCD's Strategy so the use of the SDGs would assist GLSC to accomplish various objectives of the Rio Convention.

4. Universally applicable SDGs could be reflective of national objectives for Guyana. The objectives have to be structured to the country's national specificity based on data and information available, capacity and resources. Guyana has approximately 75% forest cover and other countries would have less or more forest cover in Latin America. SDGs related to forest, biodiversity and watershed conservation would be easier to fulfill due to land cover and land use ratio in Guyana compared to other countries. Countries like Guyana could indicate how the SDGs could be applied in the natural resource sector and indicate local targets and indicators to measure change.
5. Targets should be defined by each country.
6. MDG 7 & 8 specifically in the area of natural resource including land management
7. For continued integration beyond 2015, countries should sign a Voluntary Agreement or indicate to the UN that they would continue efforts to continue SDGs.
8. At the Global level, the objectives should expected impacts from sub-objectives. Countries should develop their own national objectives to achieve the global set of objectives. If the SDGs are detailed at the Regional level such as Latin America and the Caribbean, then these sub-Regional objectives would have specific expected impacts.
9. Stakeholder consultations and circulation of awareness materials would be part of the process of inclusion and participation.
10. All the SDGs proposed are relevant.
11. It should be integrated with the MDGs 7 & 8 and consideration of the UN Conventions Strategic Objectives.
12. SDGs should complement or be integrated into the MDGs and the Rio Conventions to avoid duplication of efforts and reporting.

**Prepared by GLSC
November 26, 2012.**