



Sustainable Development in Action

SPECIAL REPORT OF THE SD IN ACTION NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 - July 2013

**Voluntary Commitments & Partnerships
for Sustainable Development**

Executive summary

Voluntary commitments and partnerships for sustainable development are multi-stakeholder initiatives voluntarily undertaken by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups and others that aim to contribute to the implementation of intergovernmentally agreed sustainable development goals and commitments in the Rio+20 outcome document “The Future We Want”, Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 or the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The present report aims to synthesize current information on the 1,382 voluntary commitments, partnerships, initiatives and networks for sustainable development that have been registered to date with the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative (SE4All), United Nations Global Compact, Every Woman Every Child, the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative, the Sustainable Transport Action Network, and other similar initiatives.

These voluntary commitments and partnerships are compiled and available through the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform unified SD in Action registry. [1]

The outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference mandated the United Nations Secretariat, through its paragraph 283 [2], to establish and maintain a comprehensive registry of voluntary initiatives to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication. The registry should make information about commitments fully transparent and accessible to the public, and should be periodically updated. This report further responds to this mandate and aims to serve as a basis for further discussion on how voluntary initiatives complement government-led action in realizing sustainable development.

“I am encouraged by the more than 700 concrete commitments registered at the Conference from governments, business, industry, financial institutions and civil society groups, amongst others.”

Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General



“This is a great opportunity to advance the sustainable development agenda. There is so much that we need to do in concert—to accelerate action on the Millennium Development Goals, to eradicate poverty and promote prosperity, to ensure that everyone has a chance for a better life, while addressing important environmental challenges that threaten progress, such as climate change and biodiversity loss and developing a new set of sustainable development goals.”

Mr Wu Hongbo, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

283. We welcome the commitments voluntarily entered into at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and throughout 2012 by all stakeholders and their networks to implement concrete policies, plans, programmes, projects and actions to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication. We invite the Secretary-General to compile these commitments and facilitate access to other registries that have compiled commitments, in an Internet-based registry. The registry should make information about the commitments fully transparent and accessible to the public, and it should be periodically updated.



The Future We Want, Rio+20 outcome document, paragraph 283

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Introduction

The concept of voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiatives to facilitate and expedite the realization of sustainable development goals and commitments was an important innovation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Such initiatives were initially termed partnerships. The Commission on Sustainable Development defined partnerships as “specific commitments by various partners intended to contribute to and reinforce the implementation of the outcomes of the intergovernmental negotiations of the WSSD (Programme of Action and Political Declaration) and to help achieve the further implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals.”[3]

The concept and term “partnership” in fact placed emphasis on associations of stakeholders, which met specific criteria established by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its 11th session (CSD-11)[4].

The term “voluntary commitment” came into use ahead of the Rio+20 Conference and emphasized the outcomes of associations rather than the associations themselves, although behind every voluntary commitment there is usually an association or partnership.

Both terms refer to voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiatives to promote sustainable development but the term “commitment” implies a shift in emphasis to implementation and outcomes rather than the social capital of associations.

Partnerships for sustainable development were initially specifically linked to the implementation of globally agreed commitments in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation), Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21.

Partnerships and voluntary commitments are not a substitute for Government responsibilities and intergovernmentally agreed commitments; they are intended to strengthen implementation by involving those relevant stakeholders that can make a contribution to sustainable development, as stressed by the UN summit and conferences on sustainable development.



Commitments by Governments remain the cornerstone of national, regional and global efforts to pursue sustainable development.

The Commission on Sustainable Development agreed that information on partnerships for sustainable development should be made publicly available. As part of this information-sharing process, the UN Secretariat was requested to develop a partnerships website and database that would be accessible to all interested parties.

In February 2004, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat launched the Commission on Sustainable Development Partnerships for Sustainable Development website and database[5].

The web-accessible database contained information on registered partnerships based on voluntary self-reports from partnership focal points. These reports helped to keep the partnerships database up to date and formed the basis for summary reports prepared by the United Nations Secretariat. As at 1 February 2010, a total of 348 Partnerships for Sustainable Development had registered with the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development. However, a review of the partnerships ahead of the Rio+20 conference revealed that only 198 of these CSD partnerships were still active. The remaining 150 had either completed their activities or were otherwise no longer operational.

The record showed that new CSD partnerships were not being registered. For the Rio+20 conference, stakeholders felt that, while the principle of partnership was still valid and was referred to several times as a concept in the Rio+20 outcome document, an alternative, more accessible and agile mechanism was needed to capture voluntary multi-stakeholder initiatives for sustainable development. This new mechanism would be the voluntary commitment, as described in paragraph 283 of the Rio +20 outcome document, as “*commitments voluntarily entered into ... by all stakeholders and their networks to implement concrete policies, plans and programmes, projects and actions to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication.*”. The term voluntary commitment is distinguished from the negotiated commitments contained in the Rio+20 outcome document as well as other intergovernmentally agreed sustainable development outcomes.

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, was an action-oriented conference focusing on the implementation aspects of sustainable development. The importance of voluntary initiatives was re-affirmed at Rio+20, where initially over 730 commitments were announced, estimated at over US\$530 billion in advancing the implementation of sustainable development.

The outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference, the Future We Want, mandated the United Nations Secretariat, through paragraph 283, to establish and maintain a comprehensive registry of voluntary initiatives to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Many voluntary commitments announced at Rio+20 originated from a number of networks and initiatives, including the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative, the United Nations Global Compact, the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative, the SLoCaT partnership, as well voluntary commitments that were directly registered by individual stakeholders through the Rio+20 Conference website.

Following the conclusion of the Rio+20 Conference, the United Nations Secretariat compiled all registered initiatives and launched a unified SD in Action Registry at the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (SDKP)[6]. The registry contains to date 1,382 voluntary initiatives, which include voluntary commitments announced at Rio+20, a large set of green economy policies and practices, as well the full list of remaining 198 legacy partnerships for sustainable development from WSSD. As called for in paragraph 283, the registry also facilitates access to other registries that have compiled commitments, such as the Every Woman Every Child initiative.

The Rio+20 voluntary commitments seek to be SMART - Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Resource-based, and Time-bound – with great depth of information on the action plans of sustainable development implementation, which in turn has yielded a higher level of transparency and future accountability.

Different registries maintained by major groups of society, such as the “*Cloud of Commitments*” of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) [7] and the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) [8] use different terms to describe voluntary initiatives for sustainable development. The NRDC has coined the term “*PINCs*” or “*Partnerships, Initiatives, Networks, and Coalitions*” and the CGI uses the term “*commitments*”. However, all these terms, despite slight semantic variation, refer to the same class of voluntary initiatives for sustainable development.

Trends and statistics

There are a total of 1,382 voluntary initiatives available in the SD in Action registry at the United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the origin of these initiatives.

Table 1.

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)

Voluntary commitments individually registered	200
Sustainable Energy for All	120
UN Global Compact	125
Higher Education Sustainability Initiative	272
Green economy policies and practices	302
Sustainable Transport Action Network	21

World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

Partnerships for Sustainable Development	198
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Other initiatives

Every Woman Every Child	144
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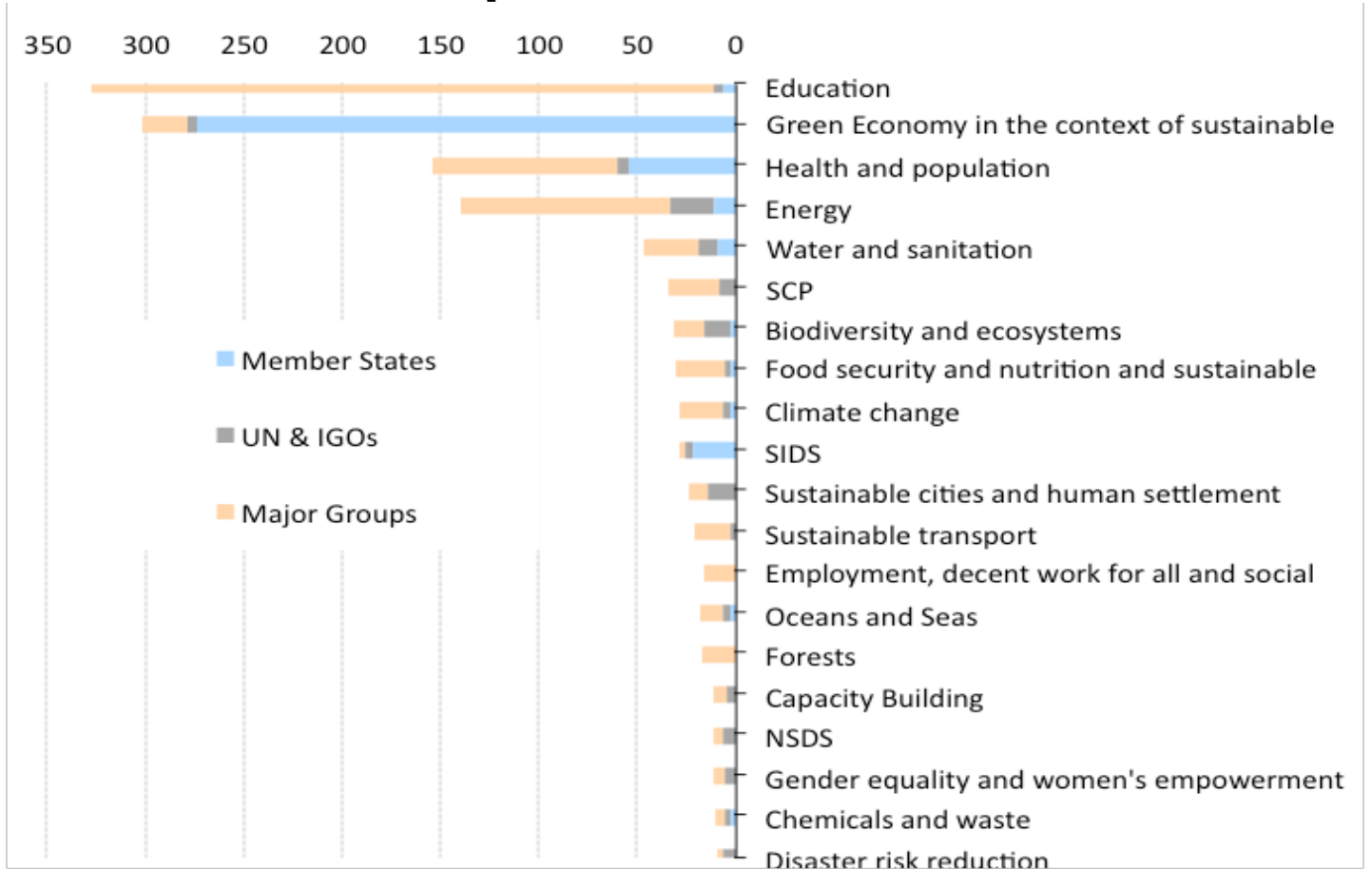
Total	1382
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Thematic coverage

All stakeholders that have registered a voluntary initiative have included the primary thematic coverage of that initiative. Table 2 illustrates the distribution of the top 20 most registered thematic areas.

Table 2. Breakdown thematic areas – Top 20



As seen from the table above, “Education” as the thematic area emerges on the top of the list, with 328 commitments. This is mainly a result of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative, with its aim to get institutions of higher education to commit to teach sustainable development concepts, encourage research on sustainable development issues, green their campuses, and support sustainability efforts in their communities. The initiative alone brought in 272 committed signatories of higher education institutions around the world, all with “Education” set as primary thematic focus.

Another thematic area, “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication”, one of the two themes of the Rio+20 Conference, also appear high on the list in the table above, with 304 commitments. The list of green economy policies and practices available in the SD in Action Registry was developed as an information resource in the lead up to the Rio+20 Conference.

The various initiatives were collected either by Secretariat staff or uploaded directly to the Rio+20 Conference website by Member States, international organizations and Major Groups, with “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” set as primary thematic focus.

“Health and population” is the third largest area with 154 commitments, reflecting the weight of the *Every Woman Every Child* initiative of the Secretary-General, discussed in greater detail below.

Energy, with 140 commitments, is the fourth largest theme, and reflects the influence of the *Sustainable Energy for All* initiative of the Secretary-General, which is covered below in greater detail (Sustainable Development Action Networks chapter).

Deliverables and resources devoted to delivery

An important aspect of maintaining a transparent registry of voluntary initiatives, and tracking progress, is the announcement of tangible deliverables for each registered voluntary commitment. The deliverables attached to the initiatives available in the SD in Action Registry covers a wide spectrum in terms of nature of the deliverable, the number of deliverables that each initiative has specified, and the years when the deliverables are targeted for.

Table 3 shows the distribution of number of deliverables for each year. The deliverables peak at 448 in 2015, possibly reflecting the orientation of many voluntary commitments to achievement of the millennium development goals.

Similarly, some 368 are concentrated the period from 2012 to 2014, possibly reflecting the impetus of the Rio+20 conference as well as orientation towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

It is expected that the approval of the new set of sustainable development goals in 2015 by the General Assembly could lead to additional voluntary commitments and deliverables for the time period after 2016.

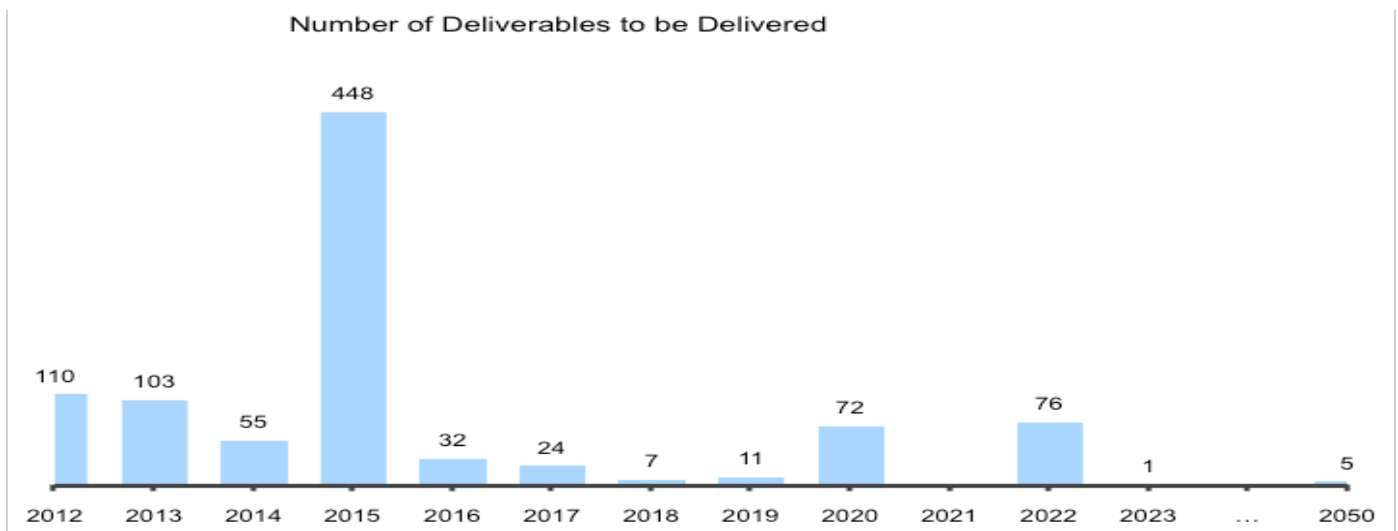


Table 3 – Distribution of deliverables of completion of initiatives by year.

The above graph is calculated based on deliverables from 2012 and onward. Some years have been omitted due to the fact that there were no deliverables announced for that year at the time when this paper was written.

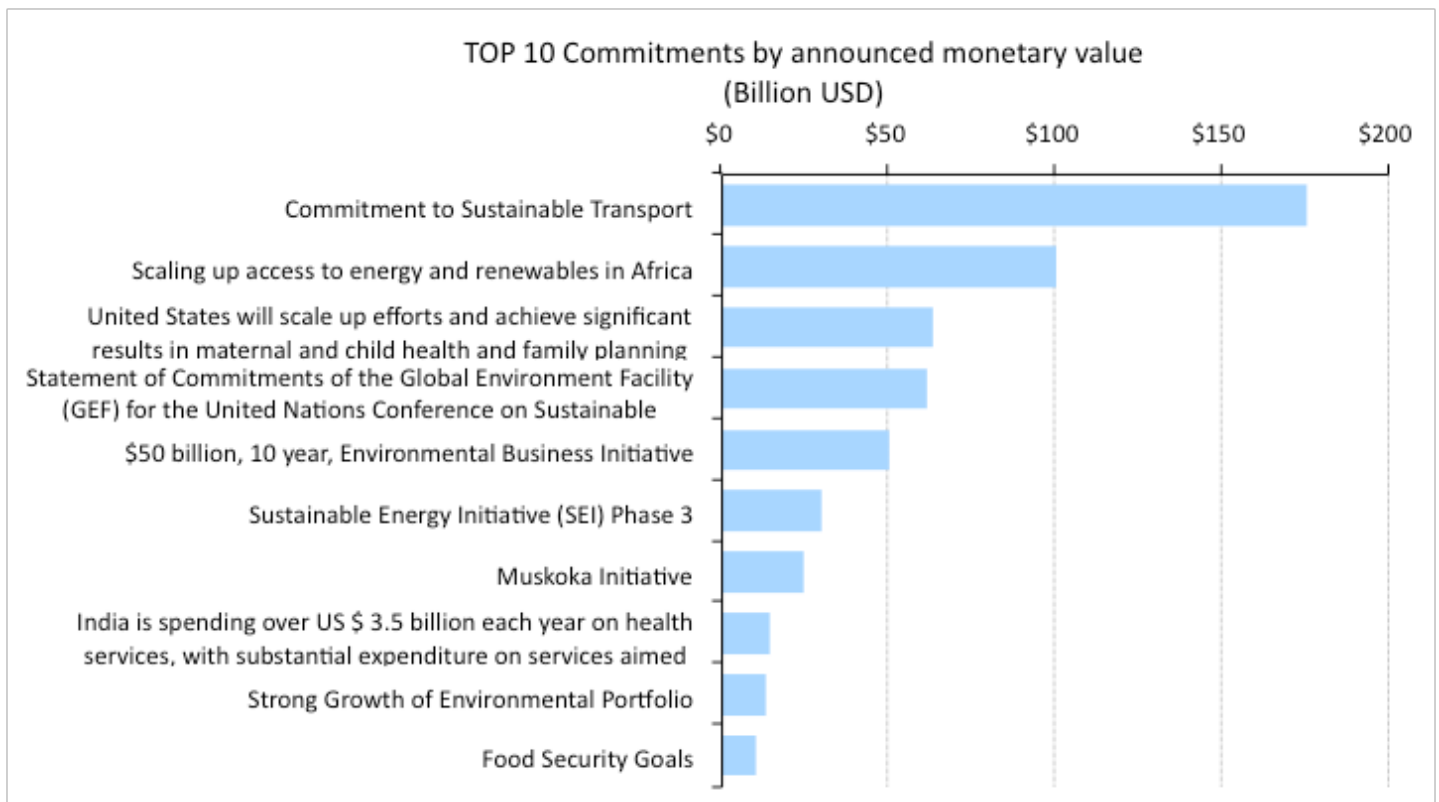
To further enrich the details of each initiative, stakeholders were able to specify details of resources that were devoted to the announced deliverables. Four types of resources are available in the registry upon registration: Financing (in US\$), Staff/Technical expertise, In-kind contribution, and other (free text choice).

The variety of the type of deliverables and resources devoted to delivery varies from project to project. All deliverables, including its resources, are publicly available through the SD in Action Registry.

As of date, a total of US\$636,982 million (more than US\$ 636 billion) has been announced for the implementation of these voluntary initiatives. It is worth noting that there are a few larger single commitments that make up for the major proportion of this amount.

Table 4 and table 5 show the distribution of the top 10 commitments in terms of announced monetary value.

Table 4 – Top 10 Commitments chart



Commitment to Sustainable Transport

Commitment by the Asian Development Bank, together with seven other multilateral development, to provide more than USD 175 billion of loans and grants for transport in developing countries over the next decade.



Table 45– Top 10 Commitments list.

Commitment	Amount (US\$)	Action Network
<p>Commitment to Sustainable Transport (US\$ 175 billion) Commitment by the Asian Development Bank, together with seven other multilateral development, to provide more than US\$ 175 billion of loans and grants for transport in developing countries over the next decade.</p>	175 billion	Sustainable Transport
<p>Scaling up access to energy and renewables in Africa Through the Sustainable Energy for All initiative, the African Development Bank has committed to invest US\$ 20 billion and to mobilize US\$ 80 billion in additional resources in providing investments and expertise African countries need to achieve their own energy goals.</p>	100 billion	SE4All
<p>United States will scale up efforts and achieve significant results in maternal and child health and family planning (US\$ 63 billion) Through the Every Woman Every Child initiative, the United States has through various initiatives, notably the President Obama's Global Health Initiative (GHI), committed to mobilize US\$ 63 billion in order to help partner countries save lives and achieve sustainable health outcomes. Through the GHI, the United States will scale up efforts and achieve significant results in maternal and child health and family planning.</p>	63 billion	Every Woman Every Child
<p>Statement of Commitments of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) The GEF's mandate initiated at Rio 1992 to act as a financial mechanism of the CBD, the UNFCCC, and the UNCCD, and as a major source of funding for other areas, including the Montreal Protocol, International Waters, the Stockholm Convention on POPs, and the strategy for SFM/REDD, together as the manager of the LDCF, the SCCF, and the Nagoya Protocol Implementation Fund, commits to sound management of world's largest public fund for environment; swift action to implement Rio directives; increased recipient country access to funds and involvement of women, indigenous peoples through the following twelve commitments.</p>	61.5 billion	Rio+20 Conference website
<p>US\$ 50 billion, 10 year, Environmental Business Initiative Bank of America has set a goal to commit US\$ 50 billion over ten years to finance Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Energy Access and other activities that advance the low-carbon economy.</p>	50 billion	SE4All
<p>Sustainable Energy Initiative (SEI) Phase 3 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has a sustainable energy financing target of US\$ 8 billion for the period 2012 to 2014 with a total investment target of US\$ 30 billion including co-financing with partners which supports SE4ALL goals.</p>	30 billion	SE4All
<p>Muskoka Initiative In June 2010 at the G8 Muskoka Summit, partners to the Muskoka Initiative for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health committed US\$ 7.3 billion in new and additional funding for MNCH by 2015. It was anticipated that, subject to respective budgetary processes, the Muskoka Initiative would eventually mobilize more than US\$10 billion. In June, G8 partners committed US\$ 5 billion in new and additional funding by 2015.</p>	24.6 billion	Every Woman Every Child
<p>India is spending over US\$ 3.5 billion each year on health services, with substantial expenditure on services aimed towards women's and children's health India is spending over US\$ 3.5 billion each year on health services, with substantial expenditure on services aimed towards women's and children's health. Currently, India is focusing on strengthening its efforts in the 264 districts that account for nearly 70% of all infant and maternal deaths. Between now and 2015, India will provide technical assistance to other countries and share its experience, and will support the creation of a platform for global knowledge management to oversee the dissemination of best practices.</p>	14 billion	Every Woman Every Child
<p>Strong Growth of Environmental Portfolio Siemens reinforces its commitment to grow its externally verified Environmental Portfolio from currently €29.9 billion to €40 billion in 2014.</p>	13 billion	SE4All
<p>Food Security Goals DuPont is setting sizeable goals to help end world hunger and ensure food security that are achievable by the end of 2020.</p>	10 billion	Global Compact

Sustainable Development Action Networks

Sustainable Development Action Networks are action-oriented initiatives with the objective of raising awareness on a specific sustainable development thematic area, as well of catalyzing and driving actions and commitments from stakeholders and their networks, to implement concrete policies, plans, programmes, projects in support of the objectives of the network. As indicated above, many of the commitments in the different thematic areas were promoted through these networks.

The Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform [9] provides comprehensive access to the action networks and their individual websites where detailed information on commitments and their progress is provided.

- **Every Woman Every Child**
- **Green economy policies and initiatives**
- **Higher Education Sustainability initiative**
- **Partnerships and Actions for Small Island Developing States**
- **Sustainable Cities**
- **Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All)**
- **Sustainable Transport, SLoCaT**
- **United Nations Global Compact**

The discussion below aims to bring out some highlights of recent findings and reports on the progress made by specific action networks towards their registered commitments.



Every Woman Every Child



EVERY WOMAN
EVERY CHILD

The *Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health (Global Strategy)* was launched by the United Nations Secretary-General at the UN Leaders' Summit for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2010 [10]. The aim of the Global Strategy is to save the lives of 16 million women and children by 2015 through increasing visibility and political support, mobilising resources and catalysing a renewed effort to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the health-related MDGs (MDGs 4, 5 and 6). Six key areas were identified as being in need of urgent action to improve women's and children's health:

1. Support for country-led health plans underpinned by increased, predictable and sustainable investment.
2. Integrated delivery of health services and lifesaving interventions to enhance access.
3. Stronger health systems, with sufficient skilled health workers at their core.
4. Innovative approaches to financing, product development and the efficient delivery of health services.
5. Improved monitoring and evaluation to ensure all actors are accountable for results.
6. Promoting human rights, equity and gender empowerment.

The *Every Woman Every Child* movement, also launched in 2010, puts into action the Global Strategy to mobilise and intensify global action to improve women's and children's health. As of September 2012, the movement has mobilized 293 financial and non-financial commitments from a range of constituency groups, including NGOs, the private sector, global partnerships, foundations, academic and research institutions, health care professional organisations, multilateral organisations, and governments [11]. The categories of commitments to the Global Strategy include policy support, financial support, innovation, research, monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, and service and product delivery.

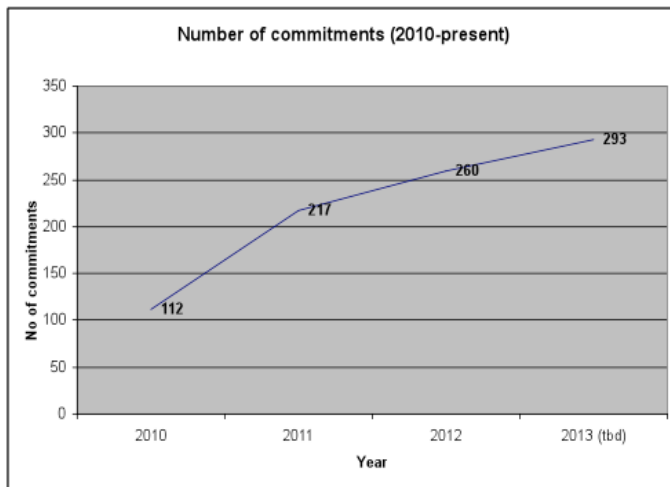


Figure 1: Between 2010 and 2012, the main focus of *Every Woman Every Child* was to ensure support at the highest levels for women's and children's health and galvanize commitments to advance the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. Between 2012 and 2013, efforts have been focused on the implementation of commitments and ensuring that progress and results can be accounted.

Partners in the *Every Woman Every Child* movement work together across three workstreams: implementation of commitments at the country and global level; ensuring accountability for resources and results at the global, regional and national levels; and mobilizing and keeping momentum across world leaders and global stakeholders.

Government drives at the national level are supported by strategic partnerships and regional efforts such as the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction in Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA), in which 32 African Heads of State and Government agreed to redouble efforts to achieve MDGs 4 and 5 [12];

Every Woman Every Child stakeholders (as of Sept 2012)

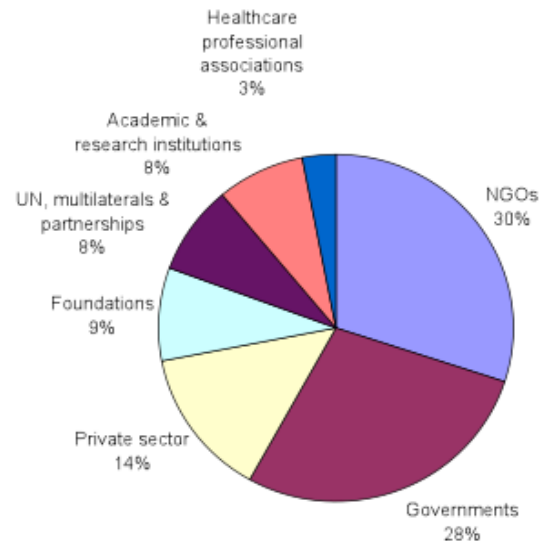


Figure 2: Low- and middle-income countries have made significant commitments, including 44 of the 49 (plus South Sudan) countries identified in the Global Strategy as priority countries.

the India Public-Private Partnership to End Child Diarrheal Deaths, which aims to prevent the deaths of 200,000 children under the age of five every year by ensuring access to life-saving medicines [13]; Nigeria's Saving One Million Lives campaign [14] which aims to scale-up access to primary health services, including for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, and commodities for Nigeria's women and children;; and Malawi's Presidential Initiative for Maternal Health and Safe Motherhood [15], to increase the availability, accessibility and utilization of maternal and newborn health care services. In addition, health ministers from 7 African countries committed to supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the UN Commission on Life-saving Commodities for Women and Children (UNCoLSC), led by the President Jonathan of Nigeria and Prime Minister Stoltenberg of Norway in collaboration with UNICEF and UNFPA. Partnerships were successful in catalyzing more focused efforts in the areas of family planning and child survival.

The implementation of commitments at the country level is also supported by the Health 4 Plus (H4+), the lead technical partners for the United Nations Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health.



Harnessing the collective power of each partner's expertise and capacities, the H4+ is a joint effort by UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, and the World Bank, which facilitates support to countries where the needs are greatest. The H4+ specifically focuses on supporting countries to assess and strengthen their human resources and service delivery for women's and children's health; to tackle the root causes impacting their health, such as gender inequality, limited access to education for girls, and child marriage; and to establish the implementation of commitments, coordinating with leaders from governments, bilateral and multilateral organizations, the private sector and civil society. The work of the H4+ also includes working with countries to document and accelerate the scaling-up of innovative approaches to maternal and newborn services, as well as to eliminate mother-to-child-transmission of HIV by ensuring linkages with HIV/AIDS programmes. These efforts result in enhanced impact of programmes and positive developments to achieve the MDGs.

Review of progress to date

The cornerstone of Every Woman Every Child is accountability, both for resources and results. For this purpose, in 2011 the Secretary-General convened a Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health (COIA) to ensure that commitment to advance the Global Strategy were measured and tracked[16]. COIA was co-chaired by President Kikwete of Tanzania and Prime Minister Harper of Canada in collaboration with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the World Health Organization (WHO). They produced "*Keeping Promises, Measuring Results*" [17] a framework for global reporting, oversight and accountability on women's and children's health [18]. An independent Expert Review Group (iERG) was set up in 2011 to report annually to the United Nations Secretary-General on the results and resources related to the Global Strategy, and on progress towards implementing the COIA recommendations. [19].

The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), a key partner in advancing the accountability process of this movement, has produced “*The PMNCH 2011 Report: Analysing Commitments to Advance the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health*” (2011 Report), the “*PMNCH 2012 Report: Analysing Progress on Commitments to the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health*” (2012 Report), and is currently developing “*The PMNCH 2013 Report: Analysing Commitments to Advance the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health*” (2013 Report) [20]. These reports track the implementation of commitments by stakeholders and inform the iERG’s reporting to the United Nations Secretary-General on progress on women’s and children’s health and the implementation of the COIA recommendations.

These reports highlight that commitments to advance the Global Strategy continue to increase, and that a portion of the funding has already been disbursed on the ground. Progress in the implementation of commitments has been made in a number of key areas. This includes:

- Advocacy and policy, particularly related to women’s and children’s financing and service delivery
- Supporting efforts to improve commodity availability and supply systems
- Public education and demand creation for health interventions
- Training and deployment of health workers
- Building new health-care facilities
- Operational and policy-related research

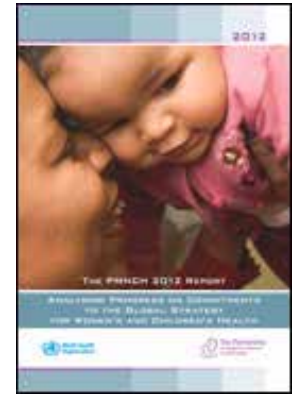
Opportunities and challenges

While there is evidence that implementation of commitments is under way, there are constraints to the full implementation of commitments to improve women’s and children’s health such as: insufficient funding and human resource constraints (including health worker shortages, unequal geographic distribution of health workers, inadequate training and skills, migration and insufficient recruitment capacity), inadequate and lack of infrastructure and socio-cultural factors. All these constraints continue to have a negative effect on the demand for, and use of, services for women’s and children’s health in many countries.

The PMNCH 2012 Report

Available at:

http://www.who.int/pmnch/topics/part_publications/2012_pmnch_report/en/index.html



Critical areas requiring greater support from commitment makers include postnatal care for mothers and newborns, antibiotics for pneumonia, and addressing the social determinants of health (improved access of safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, education, nutrition and food security).

Nevertheless, there are opportunities to advance the full implementation of the Global Strategy, such as:

- Encouraging commitments that address critical gaps in the healthcare of women and children, such as for postnatal care for mothers and newborns, antibiotics for pneumonia and vitamin A supplementation.
- Structuring commitments in a way that supports the strengthening of cross-sectoral action, such as between health, water and sanitation, education, energy, gender, nutrition and food security.
- Strengthening collaboration between public and private stakeholders.
- Encouraging stronger effective accountability mechanisms, at the regional and national levels, to ensure the meaningful participation of all key stakeholders.
- Improving coordination between the various global initiatives in support of Every Woman Every Child, and the implementation of their respective commitments, so as to enable high disease-burden countries to access resources and technical assistance more effectively and in the context of their national plans.

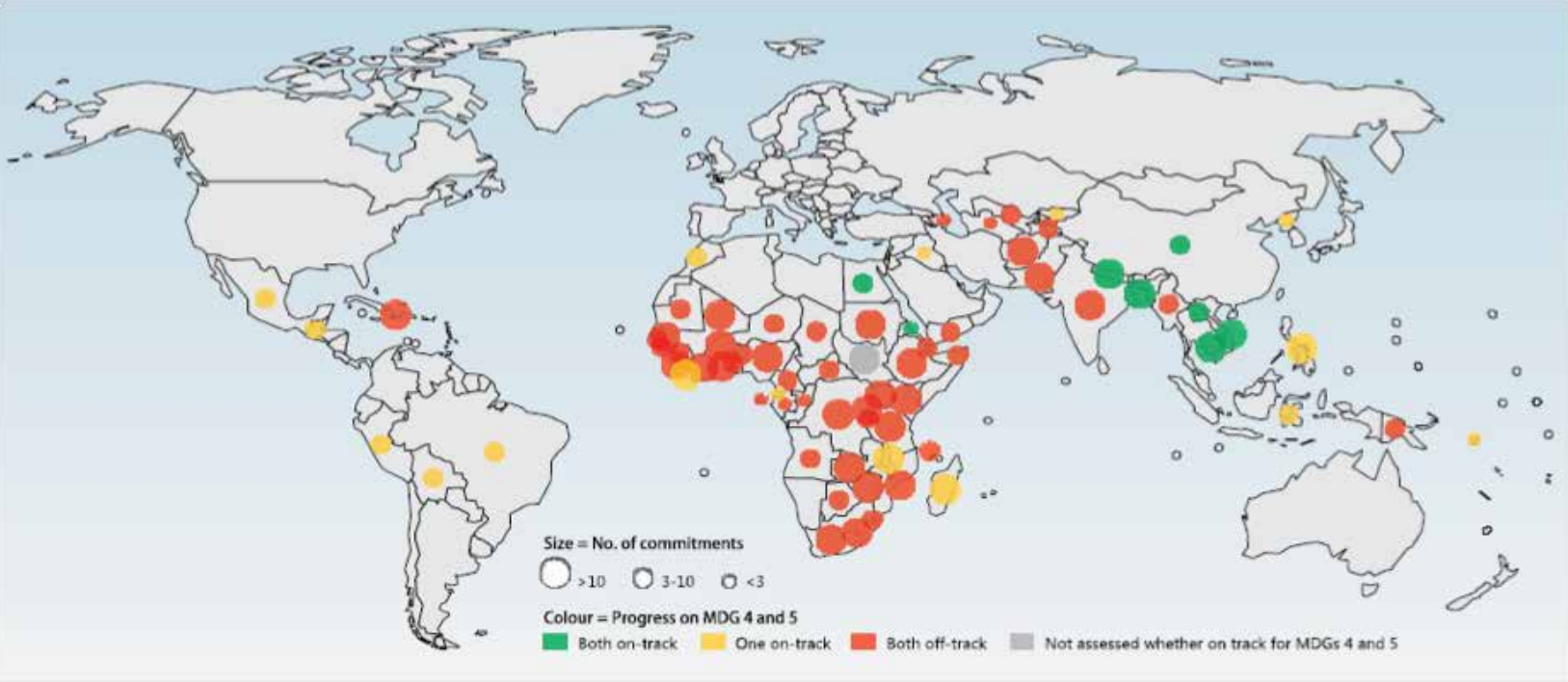


Figure 3: Geographical focus related to MDG progress in the implementation of *Global Strategy* commitments.

Next steps

In 2013, *Every Woman Every Child* will be strengthened by reinforcing strategic partnerships across key areas of work. Some priority areas for action in 2013 include:

- Continue to advocate for support for country-led health plans;
- Ensuring increased, predictable and sustainable investment for health, and capitalizing on existing investments;
- Positioning women's and children's health and the *Every Woman Every Child* partnership model as core to the future global development framework;
- Enhancing coherence among issue-specific initiatives, including the UN Commission on Life-Saving Commodities, Family Planning 2020, and A Promise Renewed, as well as thematic issues requiring extra attention, such as nutrition, newborns, education, sanitation, violence against women and girls, and adolescent girls.

More: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/ewec>



Green economy policies and initiatives

Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication was one of the two themes for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). In June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro governments agreed to frame green economy as an important tool for achieving sustainable development. The database of green economy policies and other initiatives (GEPI) under the action networks provides a searchable, interactive global database which was developed as an information resource in the lead up to Rio+20. The various initiatives were collected either by Secretariat staff or uploaded directly into the database by member states, international organizations and major groups through the online form.

Review of progress to date

The database includes at the moment a total of 305 initiatives. The GEPI database differs from other action networks in that it offers information on already existing policies and initiatives that have been successfully implemented around the world.

A series of Green Economy Guidebooks [21] for policy-makers and other stakeholders prepared by DESA provides annotated bibliographies and a comparative assessment of the rapidly growing literature on green economy, green growth and related concepts like low-carbon or low-emissions development. Four guidebooks have been produced so far covering respectively green economy definitions, principles, policies and strategies, and international platforms, partnerships, financing and capacity support mechanisms.

A review of a sample of 58 international initiatives conducted as a basis for the fourth guidebook revealed that most of the various initiatives fall into the following four sub-categories: international green economy platforms and forums; international green economy partnerships; international green economy programmes; and international green economy funds, facilities and mechanisms.



GREEN ECONOMY

Green economy platforms and forums

A total of 16 different green economy initiatives were categorised as international 'platforms' or 'forums', which primarily target information exchange and knowledge management through online platforms and databases, and by convening major forums and other activities. The platforms are being implemented by a range of different actors, including several UN organisations as well as other international organisations and partnerships. Key organisations that are supporting multiple different platforms include the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), the Renew Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN21), the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), amongst others.

While many of the platforms have been established to manage information and data to support climate change planning, a number of more recent platforms specifically target promoting a green economy, including the Green Growth Knowledge Platform (World Bank, UNEP, Global Green Growth Institute - GGGI, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD), the Green Industry Platform (UN Industrial Development Organisation - UNIDO, UNEP), the Green Growth on-line e-learning facility (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific - ESCAP), and the WIPO Green platform (World Intellectual Property Organisation - WIPO). Platforms more targeted towards climate change include the Climate Change Knowledge Portal (World Bank), Climate Information Platform (UNDP with several partners), and Reegle (REEEP and REN21).

Other platforms that were reviewed include the UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs - UNDESA),

Green economy guidebooks

Issue 1: Green Economy, Green Growth, and Low-Carbon Development - history, definitions and a guide to recent publications



Issue 2: Exploring green economy principles



Issue 3: Exploring green economy policies and international experience with national strategies



Issue 4: A guide to international green economy initiatives



which includes a component on green economy, as well as the NEXUS Water, Energy and Food Security Resource Platform. Two international forums that specifically target green growth were also reviewed: the Green Growth and Sustainable Development Forum (OECD) and the Global Green Growth Forum (GGGI).

Green economy partnerships

A total of 15 green economy initiatives reviewed were categorised as partnerships, which bring together a range of actors to support various green economy services, in particular capacity building, research and information exchange. The partnerships are being coordinated by a range of actors and include innovative structures and arrangements to bring together donors, developing country partners, UN agencies, NGOs, think tanks, consultancies and the private sector.



Several new partnerships have recently been established that specifically target green economy or green growth. These include: the GGGI established in 2010 which brings together a range of national governments, research institutes, intergovernmental organisations and private sector actors; the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) which is being led by UNEP with its partners the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNIDO, UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Millennium Institute; the Green Growth Action Alliance led by the World Economic Forum (WEF) which partners with governments, the private sector, research institutes and international organisations to address the shortfall in green infrastructure investment; and the Green Economy Coalition which provides a global network of organisations from NGOs, research institutes, the UN, business and trade unions for information exchange, awareness raising and research.

Green economy programmes

A total of 13 green economy initiatives were categorised as 'programmes', which are largely managed by a specific lead organisation in partnership with a range of donors and provide primarily green economy capacity building services, information services and some financing. Key implementing agencies for green economy programmes include UNEP, UNDP, the World Bank, UNFCCC, UNIDO, ILO, FAO and the regional multilateral development banks (MDBs). Key donors supporting these programs include Norway, the European Commission, Denmark, Australia, Germany, Spain and Sweden, amongst others.

A number of new programmes have been established within the last few years which specifically target green economy. These include the Green Economy Initiative (UNEP), the Green Economy Joint Programme (UNDP, UNEP and UNDESA), the Green Industry Initiative (UNIDO), the Green, Low-Emission Capacity Building Programme (UNDP), and the Green Jobs Programme (ILO, UNEP, the International Trade Union Confederation - ITUC, and the International Organisation of Employers - IOE).

Several longer-running programmes focus on climate change planning and have provided support services to a large number of countries and leveraged significant funding, including the UN-REDD Programme (UNDP, UNEP, FAO), the Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme (World Bank), the Clean Energy Programme (Asian Development Bank - ADB), and the Technology Needs Assessment Programme (UNEP).

Green economy funds, facilities and mechanisms

Finally, a total of 14 green economy initiatives were categorized as 'funds, facilities and mechanisms', which largely focused on green economy financing, technology and capacity building. The majority of funds associated with the green economy revolve around the global climate finance architecture, which is complex and channeled through a range of multilateral funds as well as increasingly through bilateral channels from major donors. A growing number of recipient countries have established their own national climate change funds that enable them to receive funding from multiple donor countries and enhance coordination and country ownership. The review focused on multilateral initiatives and was not exhaustive, but serves to summarize many of the larger funds currently operating.



Key actors involved are the UNFCCC along with the GEF implementing agencies, namely the World Bank and regional MDBs, UNDP, UNEP, FAO, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and UNIDO. Of the initiatives reviewed, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) coordinated by the UNFCCC has channeled the largest volume of financial resources into green economy projects (215.4 billion), followed by the GEF (US\$ 10.5 billion in grants, leveraging US\$ 51 billion in co-financing). The World Bank's Clean Technology Fund and Special Climate Fund have also channeled considerable financing amounting to approximately US\$ 7 billion of pledged funds. These resources are driving the green economy transition in over 160 countries worldwide through a variety of support services from information exchange, to capacity building, to finance and technology assistance.

Opportunities and challenges

There are a multitude of actors involved in supporting green economy initiatives worldwide, and one of the challenges in the aftermath of Rio+20 is ensuring that the various initiatives of UN agencies, international organisations, donors and other stakeholders are complementary and coordinated where possible to maximise their effectiveness and avoid duplication and redundancy.

Map of Green economy policies, practices and initiatives at the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform



Available at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1449>

More: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdination/greeneconomy>

Next steps

Clearly, a diverse range of stakeholders are involved in green economy work worldwide. Through the efforts of these organisations, partnerships and donors, progress has already been made on implementing green economy policies and projects. Many developing countries are benefiting from multiple initiatives and establishing appropriate mechanisms to enhance coordination and coherence at the national levels.

Given the large number of actors involved in green economy work, there is likely to be considerable benefit in enhancing information exchange, communication and coordination. There are a number of existing mechanisms available within the UN system and externally that could enhance this function, including initiatives such as the Green Growth Knowledge Platform which brings together some of the major international players involved in green economy work under the one roof, as well as internal coordination mechanisms within the UN (e.g. the Issues Management Group on Green Economy, the UN Development Group and the EC-ESA+ inter-agency coordination mechanism established in the lead-up to Rio+20).

Higher Education Sustainability Initiative

The Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) for Rio+20 was initiated in 2012 by a group of UN partners (the Executive Coordinator of Rio+20, UN DESA, UNEP, UNESCO, UN Global Compact, UN Global Compact's Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) and UNU) as an unprompted initiative for Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the run-up to the Rio+20 Conference. Since HEIs educate current and future decision makers, they play a key role in building more sustainable societies and creating new paradigms. As educational institutions, they have the mission to promote development through both research and teaching, disseminating new knowledge and insight to their students and building their capabilities. Given the objectives of Rio+20, HESI has a special responsibility to provide leadership on education for sustainable development. Since the inception of the HESI initiative it has been driven by all HESI partner organizations with special input from Global Compact and PRME signatory HEIs, in particular Kedge Business School (former Euromed Marseille School of Management), which has made significant contributions in the organization of this initiative.

Review of progress to date

A total of 272 organizations in 47 countries have made commitments to the HESI as of June 2013. These commitments represent organizations from a diverse range of countries including both public and private HEIs from all six UN regions. Many of these organizations are also affiliated to other UN initiatives, such as the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES) and around two-thirds of the organizations are signatories to the UN Global Compact or PRME. Commitments by the HEIs generally include a commitment to reporting in order to provide transparency to the implementation of the particular sustainable development commitment. Many institutions have also committed to plans for sustainable development in specific areas, e.g. the ESADE Foundation has committed to implement a strategic CSR plan from 2011-2014 that minimizes the carbon footprint on campus, while Cairo University has committed to include environmental studies in the curricula of undergraduate and postgraduate studies, amongst others.

Opportunities and challenges

Since HESI was established as an ad hoc initiative by several UN organizations and external stakeholders, this action network relies on a more informal organizational structure, typical of a network of stakeholders rather than a top-bottom organization. Therefore, although the organizational capacity to implement the network goals is rather limited and thus a bit challenging, it can also be seen as a strength. HESI partners are able to leverage the existing capacities in the individual partner entities. In this regard, the action network has been able to attract many commitments through their own network of partners and signatories and is able to draw on existing reporting structures for these commitments. For example, commitments made by PRME signatories can use their Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reports to the PRME initiative as a way to deliver on their commitments. Reporting systems already in place therefore ease and strengthen the accountability of the action network. This includes the input solicited from stakeholders and actors for the final report on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which UNESCO is preparing for publication in 2014. Another tangible example of progress in support of HESI commitments was the launch of a Platform for Sustainable Performance in Education on the margins of the UNEP Governing Council in February 2013. The Platform includes an array of sustainability assessment tools to support HEIs in adopting strategic approaches to implement and monitor their sustainability commitments.

Next steps

Looking ahead, the HESI partners are planning, with strong support from UNU and UN DESA's regional office in Nagoya, Japan, a follow-up meeting for the action network prior to the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, which will be taking place from 10-12 November 2014 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan. Marking the end of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, the conference will celebrate the achievements and review the initiatives that have been taking place throughout the Decade. The conference therefore offers a good occasion for HESI to review the commitments and set new goals and strategic partnerships, as required. Alignment will be sought between HESI activities and follow-up activities to the UN Decade, highlighting the key and urgent role of higher education for sustainable development.

More: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/hesi>

Partnerships and Actions for Small Island Developing States



Review of progress to date

At the Rio+20 Conference, over 30 voluntary commitments related to the progress of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) were announced [22], including over 20 related to the Barbados Declaration on Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in SIDS. The declaration, affirmed by Ministers and other Heads of Delegation of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), present at the Ministerial Conference on “Achieving Sustainable Energy for All in SIDS – Challenges, Opportunities, Commitments” in Bridgetown, Barbados 7-8 May 2012, emphasized that achieving sustainable energy for all in SIDS includes providing all households with access to modern and affordable renewable energy services, while eradicating poverty, safeguarding the environment and providing new opportunities for sustainable development and economic growth.

The Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States will be held in Apia, Samoa, 1-4 September 2014. It will focus the world’s attention on a group of countries that remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities.

Opportunities and challenges

Leaders of Small Island Developing States have stated clearly the aim to make partnerships a cornerstone of the 2014 SIDS Conference, calling for the “strengthening of collaborative partnerships between SIDS and the international community” as one of the important ways and means to address new and emerging challenges and opportunities for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

A dedicated website for the SIDS 2014 Conference has been launched (www.sids2014.org), which welcomes registrations of new partnerships and voluntary commitments in support of Small Island Developing States.

Next steps

The United Nations system is working together to compile a set of existing, modified and new multi-stakeholder partnerships for SIDS to be announced at the conference in the areas of climate change, sustainable oceans, waste management, tourism and disaster mitigation.

Sustainable Cities

Since the first Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, urban populations have increased by more than 1 billion and since 2008, more people live in cities than in rural areas. By 2050, the world's population is projected to increase from 7 billion to more than 9.6 billion people, roughly 70 percent of whom are projected to live in cities. Urbanization is accelerating because cities are the centers of social and economic activity and attract people seeking a better life. The world's top 50 metropolitan regions account for just 12 percent of the planet's population, yet generate some 46 percent of global GDP. However, cities also consume more than 75 percent of the world's natural resources, use approximately 75 percent of the world's energy, and are responsible for 75 percent of its carbon emissions. As more cities experience rapid growth, many struggle to provide adequate infrastructure, housing, water, sanitation and transportation for their residents. Since 1992, the number of slum dwellers has grown from roughly 660 million to nearly 1 billion.

Review of progress to date

Some 24 voluntary commitments for sustainable cities were announced at the Rio +20 conference and can be viewed on the SDKP. Among these was the Carbon Cities Climate Registry for Measurable, Reportable, Verifiable Local Climate Action (cCCR), operated by ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, an association of over 1200 local governments in 80 countries jointly working towards sustainability. cCCR was originally launched at the World Mayors Summit on Climate in Mexico City in 2010, alongside the Global Cities Covenant on Climate - "the Mexico City Pact". cCCR is a global online platform for local governments to report climate and energy commitments, GHG emissions inventories and mitigation and adaptation actions and action plans. As of March 2013, 302 cities from 42 countries, controlling a community GHG emissions of around 1.5 GtCO₂e annually, reported 561 energy and climate commitments at the year 2050, 578 GHG inventories and 2471 mitigation/adaptation actions/action plans at the cCCR website.

Another partnership that announced commitments at Rio +20 was the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), which works in partnership with the Clinton Climate Initiative. C40 is a network of large and engaged cities from around the world committed since 2005 to implementing meaningful and sustainable climate policies and actions locally that will help address climate change globally. 40 large cities and 18 other cities are working together to exchange ideas in order to accelerate climate actions. The C40 has developed networks of cities to work together on key areas such as energy efficiency, waste, water, transportation and adaptation and to hold workshops and seminars to exchange best practice. A biennial mayoral summit convenes member cities to discuss the implementation of new initiatives and opportunities for further collaboration. The summit allows these cities to work together on implementing meaningful climate change solutions. This cooperative approach leverages the best practices and lessons learned by cities that are taking action.

C40 cities are already taking significant climate action. A survey just before Rio +20 showed that C40 cities across the world had taken some 4,734 climate related actions. Over 80% of these actions were taken initiated after participating cities joined the C40. In addition to the 4,734 climate related actions already taken, another 1,465 actions were under consideration.

In 2013, the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP), C40 and the sustainability engineering firm AECOM prepared a progress report [23] entitled "*Wealthier, healthier cities,*" based on the responses of 110 cities around the world to a questionnaire sent to 220 cities. The survey found that climate change action by city governments can yield strong and clear advantages for their citizens and businesses beyond simply being good for the planet. The report's analysis shows that cities are realizing additional gains by acting to combat climate change in their cities—gains that are helping them create wealthier, healthier cities. The major findings of the survey are:



- Climate change action is making cities leaner and richer. One out of every two actions that cities are taking to reduce emissions in their municipal operations is focused on efficiency. Cities report nearly US\$ 40 million in savings per year from tackling climate change.
- Emissions reduction activities by cities are pro-business. 62% of actions that cities are taking to reduce GHG emissions at the city-wide level have the potential to attract new business investment and grow the economy. Furthermore, 91% of cities believe that working to combat climate change will lead to economic opportunities for their cities. Inaction could be costly—98% of cities say that climate change poses physical risks to their cities, including impacts to business.
- Reducing emissions and adapting to climate change makes for healthier citizens. More than half of reporting cities (55%) are undertaking emissions reduction actions that promote walking and cycling, which directly and indirectly lead to improved public health. And over three-quarters of cities' reported adaptation actions will protect human health from the negative effects of climate change.

Next steps

On the margins of Rio+20, C40 Cities announced that their existing actions would reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by 248 million tons by 2020; while collective actions of C40 Cities have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by over 1 billion tons by 2030. Periodic third-party reports such as the 2013 CDP-C 40-AECOM survey of 110 cities will greatly help policymakers and the public to track progress towards these commitment goals.

C40 also announced two new initiatives to continue to drive collaboration and knowledge-sharing among C40 Cities. The first was the launch of a Solid Waste Network in partnership with the World Bank and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to help cities reduce methane emissions through solid waste management. The second was a new partnership between C40 and the Joint Initiative on Urban Sustainability (JIUS) to create an online platform that will enable cities around the world to share best practices by creating a global library of case studies.

More: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/sustcities>

Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All)

The Sustainable Energy for All initiative is a multi-stakeholder partnership between governments, the private sector, and civil society. Launched by the Secretary-General in 2011, it has three interlinked objectives to be achieved by 2030:

- Ensure universal access to modern energy services.
- Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.
- Double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

The Sustainable Energy for All initiative aims to “change the game” by harnessing the global convening power of the United Nations, the ability to mobilise bold commitments and leverage large-scale investment, and a rapidly expanding knowledge network from all stakeholders.

The Secretary-General and the President of the World Bank co-chair the Advisory Board for the initiative, composed of global leaders from governments, businesses, civil society organizations and international organizations. The Secretary-General has also appointed Mr. Kandeh Yumkella as his Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All to lead this initiative, starting July 2013.

Review of progress to date

More than one hundred commitments and actions have been mobilized demonstrating powerful early momentum from governments, private sector companies and civil society organizations to achieve SE4All by 2030.

Key achievements to-date include:

- **Political momentum has grown in support of Sustainable Energy for All**

These include the declaration by the General Assembly of the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All (2012); the recently held Oslo Conference on Energy for All, the World Future Energy Summit, the Conference of Energy Ministers of Africa, the EU Sustainable Energy for All Summit, the SIDS Ministerial Conference on Achieving SE4All, the 3rd Clean Energy Ministerial, the strong support for sustainable energy for all in the Rio+20 outcome document, and the recently declared UN Decade on Sustainable Energy for All (2014-2024).

(continues next page)



2012 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
SUSTAINABLE ENERGY
FOR ALL

- Almost 80 countries have opted-in to Sustainable Energy for All**
 Stock-taking/gap analysis has been completed in over 40 countries. Several countries, such as Ghana, have already begun drafting National Energy Action Plans.
- Hundreds of actions and commitments are under way in support of Sustainable Energy for All**
 Businesses and investors committed more than US\$ 50 billion toward the initiative's three objectives. Additional billions were committed by other key stakeholders – governments, multi-lateral development banks, and international institutions – to catalyze action in support of the initiative. More than a billion people will benefit from these commitments.
- Strong leadership by Stakeholders driving key High Impact Opportunities [24]**
 These include Gas flaring reduction (Statoil, World Bank etc); Clean cooking (Global Alliance for Cook Stoves etc); Finance (Bank of America etc); Energy and Women's Health (WHO, UNF, UN-Women etc); Off-grid lighting (USDOE, UNEP etc); Sustainable bioenergy (Novozymes etc); Many more High Impact Opportunities are currently under development.
- Leveraging the Power of Civil Society**
 Civil Society Roadmap; Joint outreach and advocacy events; Rapidly expanding network of civil society actors in support of the initiative (e.g. through Practitioners' Network).
- Establishment of Global Tracking Framework to keep track of progress towards Sustainable Energy for All targets**
 A set of indicators for energy access, energy efficiency and renewable energy. Joint work of over 20 globally respected organization, led by IEA and the World Bank. Global launch in May 2013 at Vienna Energy Forum.



Opportunities and challenges

Ensuring adequate support to facilitate action across the many partner countries and thematically driven high impact opportunities, while at the same time collaborating with thousands of stakeholders over the course of the next 17 years, remain a key challenge for the initiative. Without proper follow-up and engagement, many commitment makers may not be fully engaged, which means that they would be left with little direction on how to contribute to the initiative in a tangible way.

The initiative is currently working on consolidating organizational structures to meet staffing and resource requirements within each relevant work-stream (e.g. country level action, high impact opportunities, stakeholder engagements) to support and expand engagements with all relevant stakeholders and processes.

Next steps

Turning commitments into actions in order to accelerate global momentum towards the three objectives will remain the key goal for the coming year. The initiative will seek to achieve this objective mainly through: (i) consolidating organizational structures through the establishment of the Global Facilitation Team, under the direction of the Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All/ chief executive; (ii) accelerating actions at country level; (iii) expanding thematic High-Impact Opportunities; (iv) operationalizing thematic and regional Hubs; and (v) scaling up global advocacy and stakeholder engagement.

More: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/se4all>



Sustainable Transport, SLoCaT

The Sustainable Transport Action Network (STAN) was set up in the beginning of 2013. The STAN gives a voice to sustainable land transport, especially with respect to the implementation of the Rio+20 voluntary commitments on sustainable transport. Transport was one of the smaller sectors in terms of the number of voluntary commitments but the largest sector in terms of the amount of money, with over US\$ 175 billion pledged for the coming 10 years. The STAN at the moment is mostly a virtual network with the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) Secretariat (www.slocat.net), being mainly responsible for facilitating the Action Network.

Review of progress to date

The Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport through its members and other organizations working on sustainable transport made 17 voluntary commitments at the Rio+20 conference to promote more sustainable transport. Transport was one of the smaller sectors in terms of the number of commitments, but the largest sector in financial terms, with over US\$175 billion pledged in a single commitment by the world's eight largest Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) for the coming 10 years. These investments will help to develop more sustainable transport systems. Other commitments made by the sustainable transport community focused on knowledge development, capacity building, and policy facilitation and development.

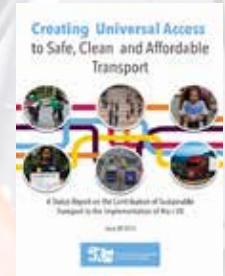
The implementation of the 17 Voluntary commitments on Sustainable Transport is well on track according to the report "*Creating Universal Access to Safe, Clean and Affordable Transport*", which was presented on June 20, 2013, the one year anniversary of Rio+20, at the Berlin High Level Dialogue on Implementing Rio+20 Decisions on Sustainable Cities and Transport.



Partnership on Sustainable
Low Carbon Transport

"Creating Universal Access to Safe, Clean and Affordable Transport"

The report outlines key challenges and opportunities on sustainable transport; reviews the implementation of the Voluntary Commitments in their first year; presents a number of additional Voluntary Commitments with a focus on measuring; and defines transport sector's role in the post-2015 development framework.



Several of the organizations implementing the voluntary commitments have made use of the past year to prepare for the full implementation of their commitment. They have done so through further knowledge activities, capacity building, development of new partnerships and piloting of new activities and also the scaling up of tested approaches.

Work under the MDB US\$175 billion voluntary commitment is on track. In 2012, more than US\$17 billion was approved for projects to support transport in developing countries. In addition, an MDB "Working Group on Sustainable Transport" was established to develop harmonized definitions, indicators and reporting mechanisms. The MDBs are working to report on progress under the voluntary commitment towards the end of 2013. It is expected that the report will provide information on the types of projects supported by the MDBs, as well as ways in which MDBs have catalyzed changes in developing countries through policy support, capacity building and knowledge transfer.



A number of organizations have been able to report tangible impacts already linked to the implementation of what are mostly 10 year voluntary commitments. This includes increases in the use of public transport; the promulgation of standards for cleaner fuels and vehicles, or for more fuel-efficient vehicles; or the rating of roads based on how safe they are for vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. In the case of one Voluntary Commitment, a detailed tracking system put into place was able to determine that implementation of the Voluntary Commitment saved 0.85 billion hours of travel time, served 4.5 billion person-trips, avoided 2.2 million tons of CO2 emissions and saved 1,062 lives.

The UN Friends of Sustainable Transport (FoST) played an important role in several of these consultations was played by. FoST is an indirect outcome of the Rio+20 conference. Prior to Rio+20 the Netherlands Mission to the UN organized, aided by SLoCaT and others, a bike ride for sustainable transport with SG Ban Ki-moon to focus attention on sustainable transport. The Netherlands, Kenya and Thailand Missions to the UN, motivated by the outcome of the Rio+20 conference and the SG's action on sustainable transport have, together with UN-DESA, initiated the "Friends on Sustainable Transport" which is raising the awareness on sustainable transport of permanent missions to the UN and its potential contribution to sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda.

A series of consultations were also organized on the integration of sustainable transport in the goal framework of the post-2015 development agenda, including a joint FoST- SLoCaT Retreat: Sustainable Transport and the Post-2015 Development Framework, 10-11 June 2013, (<http://www.slocat.net/event/929>).

Opportunities and challenges

The role of the STAN, in addition to acting as the guardian of the Rio+20 voluntary commitments on Sustainable Transport, could grow more significant if the Sustainable Development Action Networks (SDAN) could play a more distinct role in reporting on the implementation of the goal framework for the post-2015 development agenda. The SDANs can become even more important if they were to be given a voice in the discussion of such a post-2015 development agenda. Currently this discussion is limited to the parties (governments) and the nine major groups, who represent the most important non-state segments of society, e.g. women, children and youth, business, workers and trade unions, farmers, indigenous people's groups, local authorities, the scientific and technological community, and NGOs.

Next steps

The sustainable transport community is taking the call of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda for accountability in the implementation of sustainable development goals and targets seriously and has decided to add a number of additional voluntary commitments to those made at the Rio+20 conference in June of 2012. The 6 new commitments announced this week will make it possible for the transport community and other development partners to better observe and track how the sector develops and what the impact of policies and measures will be on the sustainability of the transport sector at the global, national or local level.

The STAN is expected to play an important role in the advocacy on the integration of sustainable transport in the goal framework for the post-2015 development agenda. The SLoCaT Partnership is advocating for a Sustainable Development Goal for transport: “*Universal Access to Clean, Safe and Affordable Transport for All*”. Three global targets are proposed, which could accompany this Sustainable Development Goal:

- Urban households are on average able to access jobs, goods and services within 30 minutes by quality public transport and/or quality walking and cycling infrastructure and rural households have access to paved or all-weather roads to take products to markets and reach essential services;
- Traffic related deaths are cut in half by 2030, compared to 2005, with an ultimate vision of near zero fatalities;
- Air pollution from passenger and freight transport is halved by 2030, compared to 2005, and GHG emissions from transport peak globally latest by 2020 with an ultimate vision of 40-60% reductions by 2050 compared to 2005 levels.

In the coming year more detailed proposals will be developed for these targets and a series of indicators will be developed as well. It is being considered to structure the reporting on the Rio+20 voluntary commitments from 2014 onwards according to a results framework that is inspired by the goal(s), targets and indicators on sustainable transport included in the overall goal framework proposed by the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and approved by the United Nations General Assembly.

Much attention has been given lately to the need to track developmental goals.



The 6 new commitments will make it possible for the transport community and other development partners to better observe and track how the sector develops and what the impact of policies and measures will be on the sustainability of the transport sector at the global, national or local level.

Furthermore, it is planned to strengthen the enabling global institutional framework for sustainable transport. A vibrant and engaged institutional framework at the global level is an important enabling factor for a successful integration sustainable transport in the post-2015 goal framework and its subsequent implementation. The SLoCaT Partnership is actively engaged in shaping such an enabling global institutional framework for sustainable transport. It is doing so by taking a lead role in, or contributing towards: (a) The United Nations Sustainable Transport Action Network and linked to that the strengthening of the SLoCaT partnership; (b) Convening of stakeholders on sustainable transport by Secretary-General Ban-Ki Moon; (c) the UN Friends of Sustainable Transport; and (d) Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forums.

More: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdination/susttransport>

United Nations Global Compact

The Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum was held over four days in June immediately prior to the Rio+20 Conference. Organized by the United Nations Global Compact, the Forum provided a private sector track that was the largest ever for a United Nations meeting. Nearly 3,000 representatives from all regions -- investors, academics, community activists, environmental experts and corporate leaders -- participated in 120 workshops that resulted in a wealth of ideas for innovation and collaboration with Governments and other major groups of civil society.

Review of progress to date

The Forum saw the launch of more than 200 commitments [25] covering energy, finance, climate change, water, food, anti-corruption and women's empowerment. Several of these initiatives have the potential to set new paradigms. Among them are frameworks for public-private policy collaboration on biodiversity, on food and agriculture and on access to water for people and industry. Another groundbreaking initiative brought together stock exchanges from the North and South to explore how to include sustainability factors in the listings of member businesses.

The UN Global Compact has helped develop and establish Local Networks – self-directed, self-governed participants and stakeholders operating within a specific local or other geographic context. As of today, Global Compact Local Networks can be found in 101 countries. Such Local Networks help ensure that the UN Global Compact's principles are implemented at the local level, understanding the varying economic, political, societal and cultural climates. An increasing number of these Local Networks are evolving into sustainability hubs – that is, centres of accelerating innovation, implementation and action.



Opportunities and challenges

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate sustainability reporting received strong impetus from the Rio +20 outcome document through its paragraph 47. Voluntary commitments by business and industry such as the more than 200 launched at the Corporate Sustainability Forum as well as the regular work of the Global Compact are serving to promote the intent of paragraph 47. Additional synergies are being sought with other initiatives such as the Global Reporting Initiative and national reporting efforts on CSR. The frontline for promoting CSR is certainly the national and local level, through multi-stakeholder partnerships involving the public and private sectors.

Next steps

Global Compact Local Networks hold an important key to promoting further progress in CSR through voluntary commitments and partnerships at the national and local level. By way of example, at Rio +20, local networks in Brazil, India, Indonesia, France, Uruguay, Spain, Pakistan, Italy and Japan announced significant additional commitments among the more than 200 generated by the Forum.

More: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdinaction/ungc>

Voluntary Accountability Framework

Accountability of voluntary commitments and partnerships is an integral part of ensuring long-term value to all stakeholders.

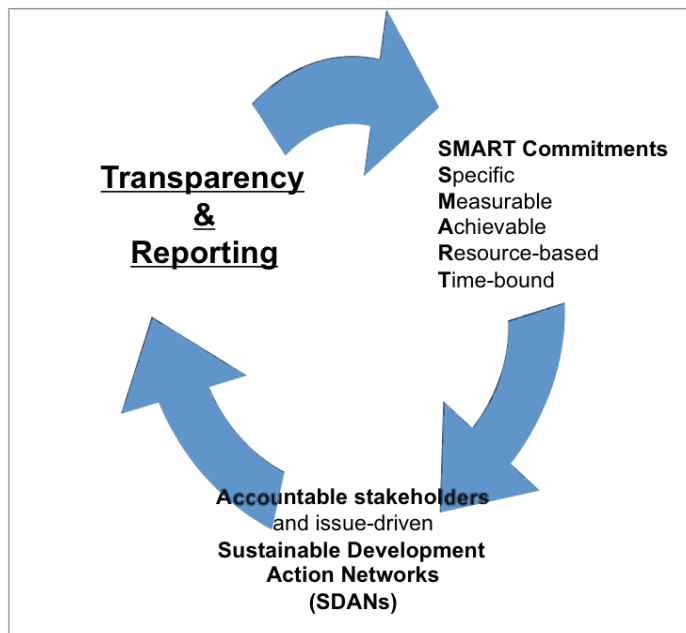
The SD in Action Registry contains voluntary initiatives from many sources, many of which already have their own follow-up processes with their constituencies. The implementation of an accountability framework for voluntary commitments and partnerships should not burden individual committers with additional reporting, but rather leverage existing reporting mechanisms of major Action Networks.

To give a few examples, the United Nations Global Compact provide for reporting back from Stakeholders through its dedicated website business.un.org; the Every Woman Every Child initiative prepares annual reports based on progress from their stakeholders; and the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative will prepare similar progress reports on a bi-annual basis.

Taking into account existing reporting mechanisms, a voluntary accountability framework could be built upon three pillars:

1. An annual special report of the SD in Action Newsletter, summarizing progress of voluntary commitments and partnerships in the SD in Action registry, including inviting the various Action Networks to summarize achievements based on their individual reporting mechanisms and extensive dialogue with their constituency.

2. Maintenance of an updated SD in Action registry – keeping information up to date, based on continuous input from stakeholders – thus keeping the SMART criteria - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-based, and Time-bound commitments and partnerships.



3. Welcoming third party independent reviews of commitments and partnerships. While the United Nations Secretariat has the responsibility to respond to paragraph 283 of the Rio+20 outcome document, the Future We Want, through further building upon and maintaining the SD in Action Registry of the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, it is important to note the work carried out by third party actors as well.

The advantage of welcoming third party independent reviews, rather than solely relying on self-reporting, has an advantage: self-reporting tends to sometimes lean focus on achievements, which can compromise public perception of the integrity of the SD in Action Registry. Third parties such as the Cloud of Commitments of Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) – that are not bound by political correctness – could enhance the public perception of accountability through bold and critical feedback of voluntary commitments and partnerships as independent reviews. Such reviews could be published alongside the SD in Action registry at the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.

SMART

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-based, and Time-bound commitments and partnerships

Given the voluntary nature of these commitments and partnerships, it is crucial to incorporate positive incentives in any accountability framework in order to continue to actively engage all stakeholders. Incentives could take form of:

1) **Possibility to influence intergovernmental process** - being forward-looking and associated with ongoing inter-governmental processes like the Sustainable Development Goals and the future High-level political forum – through side events or presentations in the plenary sessions - could greatly enhance the momentum needed for active engagement within Action Networks.

2) **Sharing of knowledge and resources among Action Networks** - The value of sharing knowledge, resources, risks, best practices, and identifying lessons learned, could lead to synergies among Action Networks and Stakeholders.

Starting in July 2013, with the launch of this first special edition, individual voluntary progress reports will be available for all stakeholders to complete in the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. These progress reports will complement reporting mechanisms from the various Action Networks, and inform future editions of the annual special report. Individual progress reports will be publicly published in the SD in Action Registry.



Conclusion

Voluntary commitments and partnerships, as called for by Rio+20, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and other intergovernmental sustainable development forums, are an integral part of the means of implementation for sustainable development. The voluntary commitments announced at Rio+20 were a game changer and have galvanized a large range of interests into action on sustainable development. The estimated value of the 1,382 voluntary commitments and partnerships in the SD in Action Registry, about US\$ 636 billion at the time of writing, although committed over a period of many years, is a sizable amount in global terms and equivalent to nearly 1% of the gross world product of about US\$ 70 trillion (2012).

At the same time, simply focusing on monetary figures is not enough, since there are many qualitative commitments with lower monetary values that have significant impact. Moreover, some of the monetary figures that have been announced are aspirational. As an example, the US\$ 63 billion Global Health Initiative includes effective government commitments of US\$ 20 billion, with the pledge to mobilize an additional US\$ 43 billion from other sources.

Thematically driven action networks have proved to be useful vehicles in order to drive commitments, inspire new partnerships, build capacity, and to align common goals in moving us towards the “*Future We Want*” to which the Rio+20 outcome document aspires.

Action networks might also add further value to the preparatory process of the post-2015 development discussions – alongside major groups and other stakeholders – and might eventually play an important role in its implementation.

In order to provide a meaningful follow-up and continuation of the announcement of voluntary commitments and partnerships in the SD in Action Registry – as a complement to intergovernmentally agreed commitments and goals – the voluntary accountability framework should be seen as a positive incentive for all stakeholders involved in the implementation of a sustainable development.

As with the action networks, a voluntary accountability framework could provide additional and valuable feedback from the front lines of sustainable development in action, and eventually also play a role in the implementation of the post-2015 development framework.

The present report, intended for Member States, the United Nations system, and all major groups of society and other stakeholders, is a first step in providing that feedback.



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