



**MR. WU HONGBO**  
**UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**  
**SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL**  
**ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

**Remarks**  
**High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**  
**Presentation on the proposed global sustainable development report**  
**1 July 2014, Trusteeship Chamber**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be back at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development for this session on the Global Sustainable Development Report.

Since the inauguration of the HLPF in September 2013, my Department has developed a prototype version of a Global Sustainable Development Report based on extensive consultations, including with many entities within the UN system. This report is intended as a first consolidated contribution for discussion.

The prototype edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report is meant to illustrate potential scope and content of future Reports. It provides various possible models for engagement of scientists from around the world in future report preparation and other likely models of future reports.

I would like to focus my remarks on answering three questions about the Report: why? what? and how?

*1) Why this Global Report?*

The Report aims to make the findings of a wide range of scientific assessments available to the deliberations of the new High-level Political Forum and beyond. It does not ask participating scientists to make normative policy recommendations, but aims to make the evidence-base provided by science available to decision-makers.

To date, there exists no comprehensive and authoritative report that brings together the range of existing assessments of global sustainable development, reviews global progress and future pathways in an integrated way, taking into account the perspectives of scientific communities across the globe.

To fill the gap, member States at Rio+20 agreed on a new Global Sustainable Development Report to be produced regularly. The Report is envisaged as one instrument of the newly created High-level Political Forum for Sustainable Development that can help strengthen the science-policy interface.

In response, my Department has worked on a prototype version of such a Global Sustainable Development Report. Last year, DESA organized a series of eight expert group meetings and consultation meetings to support the preparation of draft chapters and to develop informal networks of scientific contributors.

*2) What are the key findings of the Report?*

Let me just highlight a few...

*First*, the Report provides a brief summary of global sustainable development progress from 1950 to 2013.

Among the initial SDG-relevant focus areas, progress towards over half existing goals and commitments is off-track, some show limited or mixed progress, and few show good progress or early achievement.

Despite improvements in poverty reduction, health, food security and sustainable agriculture, water and sanitation, the world is still making insufficient progress in a number of areas including reducing deforestation, providing sustainable energy for all, protecting the oceans, providing decent work for all, achieving gender equality and changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.

In addition, the Report identifies key remaining challenges: to eliminate poverty and hunger; to feed, nurture, house, educate and employ the global population; and to preserve the Earth's basic life support systems.

*Second*, the Report sketches an alternative sustainable development pathway for the future.

The global challenge before us is to achieve a sustainability transition by 2050, when more than nine billion people will live on Earth. The Report shows that, if we significantly adjust our current patterns of consumption and production, we can help build a more sustainable world by 2050.

*Third*, the Report also identifies estimates of the range of global investment needed to achieve a sustainability transition. It is clear that special efforts will be needed to meet the estimated global investment requirements.

The report also emphasizes the importance of international cooperation to develop, transfer and disseminate the environmentally sound technologies needed to put the world on a sustainable path.

*Lastly*, the Report shows measuring progress is a challenge in the absence of an agreed set of goals for sustainable development. There are numerous initiatives for measuring and monitoring progress. Some focus on sets of indicators derived from official statistics; others use aggregate measures combining different indicators into a single number. In both these approaches, data gaps remain.

A novel approach, also called ‘big data’, uses data from satellite images, cell-phones, online sites to complement and fill gaps in official statistics, potentially enabling measurement of a wide scope of sustainable development dimensions.

### *3) How about future Reports?*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, let me just highlight a few lessons learned from our end, which should be useful for our future Reports.

The preparation of the prototype Report pointed once again to the scarcity and inconsistency of data. Most nations of the world are addressing sustainable development issues and measuring their progress, but approaches vary considerably. It is thus difficult to evaluate the global impact of initiatives.

The development of flexible national assessment frameworks - similar to the Millennium Development Goals - might be a useful approach.

We hope to establish, with your guidance, a transparent process to facilitate contributions to future reports from scientists as well as relevant practitioners in all your countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are thousands of scientific assessments related to sustainable development. To best organize our thinking on the options for scope and methodology of future editions of the Report, we prepared a Secretary-General’s report. It summarizes the views from Member States and other stakeholders, and presents three options for considerations:

Option 1 follows the conventional approach for UN flagship publications. The Report would be drafted by UN staff who would also select experts for ad-hoc contributions. Inputs would be comprised of peer-reviewed literature and UN system expertise.

Option 2 goes further in terms of involving stakeholders and linking to voluntary national reviews. The Report would be drafted by a team of UN staff comprising all UN-ECESA Plus members, with contributions from scientists, government officials and stakeholders. The Report would undergo an external, multi-stakeholder peer-review process and be approved by UN senior management and/or a multi-stakeholder advisory group.

Option 3 follows an IPCC-style model in which member States nominate scientific experts to a writing team which drafts the Report to be adopted by member States.

Each option has pros and cons. I hope the prototype Report will be useful to member States as you deliberate on the scope and methodology of future Global Sustainable Development Reports.

I very much look forward to joining you in the discussions.

Thank you all.

\*\*\*\*\*