



**PERMANENT MISSION OF MONTENEGRO TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
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The Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Division for Sustainable Development of Department of Economic and Social Affairs and has the honour to enclose herewith responses to the questionnaire related to the development of Sustainable Development Goals provided by the Government of Montenegro.

The Permanent Mission of Montenegro to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Division for Sustainable Development of Department of Economic and Social Affairs the assurances of its highest consideration.

New York, 25 October 2012



**Division for Sustainable Development  
Department of Economic and Social Affairs  
New York**

28 September 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.<sup>1</sup>

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 68<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> At the request of the

<sup>1</sup> *The Future We Want*, Rio+20 Outcome Document, paragraphs 246-7.  
<sup>2</sup> [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post\\_2015\\_UNTTreport.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Post_2015_UNTTreport.pdf)

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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.

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The Secretariat kindly requests that Member States provide responses to the following questionnaire and submit them to DSD ([vaturi@un.org](mailto:vaturi@un.org), copied to [soltau@un.org](mailto:soltau@un.org)) before 21 October 2012.

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**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.**

- 1) Climate changes
- 2) Urban planning/smart cities/sustainable use of space as basic resource for sustainable development
- 3) Inefficient and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption
- 4) Degradation of marine eco-systems
- 5) Efficient use of resources, with emphasize on energy efficiency, renewable energy resources and sustainable management of waste
- 6) Equality (poverty, gender, regional equality)
- 7) Building inclusive society
- 8) Building capacities/skills and technology transfer (green/clean/new technologies)
- 9) Engagement of private sector in sustainable development, promoting innovation and ICT

*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).*

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

**a. Reflect social, economic and environmental dimensions within each SDG, possibly through the associated targets**

*SDGs should propose integrated, cross-cutting goals based on horizontal issues, rather than focus solely on sector policies and objectives whenever possible, for at least half of its goals. MDGs should, certainly, be used and built-upon, but primarily with respect to the experience of the member countries in the process of their implementation at the national and regional levels.*

*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. Defining national policies
- b. Influencing national budget allocations
- c. Reviewing the impact of national policies
- d. Addressing key pressure leading to unsustainability
- e. Helping to balance economic, social and environmental pillars in policy making
- f. Guiding development cooperation
- g. Other (please describe)

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**Please explain your choices if you would like:**

So far, the experience shows that as long as SDGs are not obligatory to the member states, in the existing national context, it is most realistic to expect that the Goals would primarily have the above mentioned impacts. On the other hand, with strong political commitment at the global level (which could be measured by a frequency of meetings at the highest political level, amongst other indicators), the SDGs could have a very important influence on the process of defining national politics and most importantly, on influencing the national budget allocations, which are critical for the successful implementation of the Goals.

**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.)**

Universally applicable SDGs should contain globally accepted values in order to ensure their applicability for each country. In order to be more practically relevant for all stakeholders, as a key step, each country should be allowed to define the sub-goals and target values for itself, i.e. to adjust the SDGs to its own level of development and internal characteristics, as long as these do not undermine the global values. In that context, each country should, in addition to reporting on the aggregate national statistics, monitor and report on the implementation of the goals at the level of internal regions as well (not only the statistical regions, but using the nationally defined regional borders). This is particularly important as, in most countries, there are great differences in terms of the levels of development and overall capacities between the regions.

Although it is not possible to make all the Goals equally relevant for each country, SDGs should be equally regarded as guidelines for development for those less well-off countries and, at the same time, be a reminder of global values and inequalities for all those countries who already achieved some of the goals.

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

- common to all countries?
- defined by each country? or
- common but differentiated depending on country characteristics and level of development If c., please explain how.

In order to define common but differentiated target values, joint targets for the groups of countries with similar level of development could be defined. However, for this approach to be successful in practice, it would be necessary to redefine the way of categorizing the development levels within the UN system, as well as re-discuss the criteria on which the countries are assigned to those categories. The new system should, in line with the Rio+20 conclusions, surpasses GDP as a measure of development and account for significant social, historical and other differences between the countries that are currently in same groups within the UN classification system.

Another potential proposal could be to define a mechanism (formula or function) that would allow countries to define same/similar target values, but adjust them vis-a-vis their starting conditions and situations.

*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).*

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**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?**

All the existing concepts and goals should be kept, but redefined in a way to be parts of cross-sector goals. A special emphases should be placed on the concepts such as sustainable consumption and production, human capacities (at all levels of governance), social responsibility and resource efficiency.

*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?**

To ensure their integration into the UN development agenda beyond 2015, the development of the SDGs should be as participatory as possible so as to ensure consensus of all actors who would be in charge of their implementation at both the national and regional and global level, as well as those involved in all other development processes and development cooperation projects, after 2015. With the same goal, equally important elements would also be:

- a) defining SDGs in a cross-cutting manner (moving away from sectoral goals, focusing on development rather than growth),
- b) keeping the Goals closely linked with the universally accepted and agreed up values and principles,
- c) creating an institutional structure in charge of implementation and monitoring of the Goals that would be integrated in the overall sustainable development institutional framework of the UN system (rather than creating a parallel structure).

*"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?**

In order to have an efficient monitoring process for the implementation of SDGs, an online system could be design, to which each country would directly upload the data from the national level. The system could, in turn, transform the data into easily understandable graphs and trends of development for the wide groups of users. Various options of sorting and accessing the information could be allowed for. The entire system should, in addition to the secured access to databases for a limited number of users, have an option of free access to all citizens. The statistics collected in this way could become the basis for making periodic global reports (annually). To ensure efficiency and readability of the Reports, the reports could contain a general global overview of the implementation for all the goals, with a detailed analysis for one or few of them per each Report.

**Regional meetings of national representatives in charge of monitoring the implementation of SDGs** should be organized as part of the process of preparing the global reports. The regional meetings could serve as a venue for receiving qualitative explanations of the national situation, i.e. the context for the quantitative statistics gathered via the online system. The Commission for Sustainable Development or a body superseding it, in line with the Rio+20 conclusions, could have the coordinating role in the process.

Additionally, for the overall success of the implementation of the SDGs and the commitments of member states to the Goals, it would be of utmost importance to organize regular global

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debates/meetings at the highest political level (not less than once every two years). Regional meetings dedicated to the SDGs at same political level would certainly impact the level of their implementation and would be one of the key venues to assess the progress achieved.

*"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?**

One of the ways to include the stakeholders could be to use the existing major groups that function within the Commission for Sustainable Development of the UN. The major groups could organize consultations on the substance/contents of the SDGs, but also be actively involved in the later stages of their implementation and monitoring. With the assistance of the UN Department of Social and Economic Affairs, the major groups could be the lead partners in organizing global wide stakeholder discussions on the SDGs.

In order to include stakeholders at the national level, the in-country UN offices together with countries themselves could be charged with the task to organize wide societal consultations. Conclusions from these consultations could be further discussed with the government representatives in each individual country, and subsequently, at the level of UN regions, so that the UN HQ receives consolidated regional contributions.

**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);**

In addition to the principles listed in the UN TT report, additional ones could include: a) building more inclusive society, b) stimulating knowledge-based growth and development, c) multiculturalism.

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

The new Global Partnership for Development should go beyond ODA and focus on developing mechanisms enabling easier/more accessible/more efficient and effective transfer of knowledge, skills and technologies needed for sustainable development.

**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?**

n/a