

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

REPORT

**Technical Meeting of
The Shared Learning and Review of the NSSD of the Republic of Korea**

Seoul, Republic of Korea

19-20 December 2006

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

1. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002 recommended all countries to adopt sustainable development as a basic direction for national development strategies in the 21st century. In this context, the WSSD states that all countries should take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) and begin their implementation by 2005. Most recently, at the 2005 UN World Summit, world leaders confirmed their commitment to development and stressed that “the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized in the achievement of sustainable development.”

2. The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) within the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) works to support the efforts of governments to develop implement and review NSSD. In 2001, DSD convened an International Forum on NSSD in Ghana which adapted a set of recommendations on which basis a Guidance Document outlining key characteristics of a sound NSSD was prepared.

3. The Government of the Republic of Korea in collaboration with the United Nations DSD, is organizing a Shared Learning and Review of the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) of the Republic of Korea. The Shared Learning and Review involves the participation in a Technical Meeting, which take place from 19 - 20 December 2006, as well as a Shared Learning and Review Workshop, which is tentatively scheduled for 12 - 16 March 2007. The Technical Meeting take place at the International Cooperation Training Center (ICTC) in Seoul. Government experts from China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam have been invited to participate, as well as a number of international organizations, of particular relevance to this process. The outcome of the Shared Learning and Review is expected to be a set of recommendations to the Government of the Republic of Korea, concerning its NSSD. These recommendations are in turn expected to feed into future revisions of the NSSD as well as influence, as appropriate, the further implementation and monitoring of the current Strategy.

B. Objectives

4. The objectives of the Technical Meeting were as follows:

- a. Familiarize all participants in the NSSD Shared Learning and Review with the methodology to be followed, including the process, time line, required preparations and expectations to participants;

- b. Facilitate the sharing of some initial NSSD information among participating countries;
- c. Facilitate the sharing of information on NSSD work of relevant international organizations in the area of NSSD reviews.

C. Participants

5. A list of participants is attached as an Annex to the report.

II. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

A. Opening Statements & Addresses

6. Ms. Kathleen Abdalla, DSD, started the meeting with welcoming statement and a basic review of the history of sustainable development initiatives, followed by a review of its principles and characteristics, including the concepts of integration, coordination, participation, capacity development, initiative, timeframe, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation. The upcoming sessions were put into perspective by her statement on the value of shared learning and review, as well as a description of the schedule for the future.

B. Tour de table on progress with developing or implementing National Strategies for Sustainable Development in the participating countries

7. Mr. Chong-Chun Kim, the Republic of Korea, welcomed all participants foreign and Korean and proceeded to provide an overview of the Republic of Korea's plans regarding NSSD. Much emphasis was placed upon the 48 tasks for implementation, reportedly prepared after much intra-governmental agency consultations. It was noted that the implementation of Korea's NSSD is proceeding not only on the level of the national government but also local governments as well as the public level. Legislation to bolster such a process is under process of enactment. The Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development, the host for the meeting, was introduced as an advisory committee under the Office of the President and it is the highest level committee in the area of national sustainable development in Korea. Main functions and activities of the PCSD relating to the NSSD include the establishment of the vision and strategies for sustainable development at the ministerial level, policy formation concerning sectoral issues, preliminary review of National Mid and Long-term Plans to ensure the sustainability of national policies, formulation of implementation strategies on sustainable development for Agenda 21 and other international agreement and the development of a conflict management and prevention system.

8. Looking back upon the Republic of Korea's foray into its NSSD, the following evaluation was given. In terms of its successes, securing leadership initiative from the President and ensuing commitment from government agencies was mentioned, followed by the record of carrying out dialogue with non-state actors, inviting the participation of both public and private sectors, policy coordination among 22 government departments, and the success in consensus-building among potentially conflicting interests. As for issues to address for the future, the grand task of integrating the three pillars of economic, environmental, and social sectors were mentioned as areas for continuous improvement. In addition, the need to further adapt the NSSD to specific national situations was mentioned, alongside the relative lack of involvement by the business sector of Korea. Nevertheless, with the many years of development behind the NSSD, the institutional basis for sustainable development in Korea is now greatly strengthened, with the enactment of a Basic Sustainable Development Law on its way to ensure a smooth and continuous evolution of the NSSD for the future. Soon, the PCSD will be consolidating a Sustainable Development Indicator System for monitoring and evaluation at the national and local levels in Korea, after which it will be better able to share its vision with other members of the international community.

9. Mr. Ryosuke Oka, Japan, introduced 'Japan: Outline of the Basic Environment Plan.' Japan's environmental policy has evolved somewhat over the years. In the past, it was primarily based upon the two sectors of pollution prevention and conservation of its natural environment. However, with the Basic Environment Plan (BEP) of 1993, the issue takes a turn with the same document serving as Japan's own national strategy for sustainable development. What the BEP has done was to add global environmental concerns to Japan's own environmental policy while introducing the issue of sound material cycle as well, for the purpose of creating a sustainable society. The BEP has been progressing in separate stages of development, of which it is now in the third phase. The first phase of BEP started in 1994 and concentrated on developing environmentally sound material cycles, harmonious coexistence with nature, and Japan's participation in international activities. From the efforts during this period a list of much more comprehensive environmental policies was developed. The second phase of BEP, which started in 2000, saw the solidifying of strategic programs while monitoring to ensure its effectiveness. The key concepts during this phase were: polluter pays principle, eco-efficiency and precautionary approach to environmental policy, and management of environmental risks.

10. The end result was an incorporation of environmental considerations into nearly a much wider scope of policy. The third phase of BEP just started in 2006 aims to integrate the sectors of environment, economy, and society. Through such an effort, the objectives are to achieve sustainability for Japan's land and nature, strengthening of research and development for uncertain sectors, define new roles for the national and local governments as well as its citizens, strengthening of Japan's ties to international strategies on sustainable development, and development of a long term vision for the year 2050. The specific issue areas to be addressed during the third phase are anti-global warming, sound material cycle, urban air and water cycles, chemical substances' environmental risks and biodiversity. The programs to combat these issues include

market-based environmental values, human resource management, long-term infrastructure building, and contributions to international frameworks and rules, development of numerical indicators to monitor progress of programs, and clear communication to the Japanese citizens and companies regarding these programs.

11. Mr. Che Azemi Bin Haron, Malaysia, introduced 'Planning for Sustainability: Development Directions in Malaysia'. The context within which Malaysia pursues sustainable development are multi-racial federation that is basically an open market-based but mixed system economy. The notion of the mixed economic system can be described as follows. The private sector operates within a free enterprise atmosphere yet the government sets direction and provides support for the economy to ensure that socio-economic goals are met. The history of Malaysia's economic planning was detailed, starting with the New Economic Policy period of 1971-90. During this period, concentration was placed upon economic growth with equity, national unity, and poverty eradication. During the National Development Policy phase of 1991-2000, core objectives evolved into those of balanced development in the sectors of not only distribution of wealth but between material and spiritual values, regional disparity, intra-sector equity, as well as in the environment and ecology. Now, as Malaysia finds itself in midst of its third phase National Vision Policy (2001-2010), the major theme is to achieve national unity to become a resilient and competitive nation. The objectives of the New Economic Policy and National Development Policy are maintained. The national Vision 2020's environmental component was then explained as the conservation of natural resources; sustainable land, air, forest, and water; and not letting the environment fall victim to economic advancement. So far, results show that poverty eradication has been successful as the quality of life is improving. Further analysis reveals that these improvements have been much more incremental rather than having sudden leaps, qualitative than quantitative in nature, and based upon targeted intervention and good foundations.

12. Mr. Balganjav Khuldorj, Mongolia, introduced 'Sharing Experience of Sustainable Development Strategy in Mongolia.' Mongolia's National Council for Sustainable Development established in 1994, with its Action Programme for the 21st Century in progress since 1996. Mongolia's methodology of developing its sustainable development strategy was described to be a bottom-up approach. In 1998, a Local version of the Agenda21 (MAP21) was developed and approved by local parliaments, and had among its core objectives the integration of policy documents, development of plans and programs, as well as provisions to hold seminars and conferences that involve stakeholders. Mongolia's sustainable development strategy is among the key strategic development documents, and contains 17 social goals, 13 environmental goals, 15 economic goals, and 14 implementing means goals. The most recent evaluation took place in July 2006 for the period of 1998-2006, and found that the central and local governments are enmeshing MAP21 into their development plans. In conclusion, Mongolia has been implementing sustainable development by establishing a permanent working for its case early on, while updating its policies in accordance with the world's contemporary development and changing modern development approaches. It also supports and strengthens cooperation with foreign bodies on sustainable development, and is willing to jointly develop, through regional cooperation, pilot projects on

sustainable development issues

13. Ms. Magarita Roque Sangco, Philippines, introduced 'Processes in the Formulation and Implementation of National Sustainable Development Strategies: The Philippine Agenda 21 Experience'. The Philippine Council for Sustainable Development states as its mandate the attaining of a mechanism for attaining principles of sustainable development and assurance of integration into national plans and programs. Its function is to monitor and facilitate implementation of Earth Summit commitments in the Philippines, put into operation sustainable development principles coordinate with the UNCSD, while mobilizing international assistance and cooperation. After a detailed explanation of the development of legal mechanisms instituted in the Philippines for sustainable development, the Philippine Agenda21 (PA21) was explained. The PA21 arose out of the Philippines' commitment to the 1992 Earth Summit, and features provisions for multi-stakeholder consultations, reviews, workshops, and confidence-building activities. Thus far, it has been successful in terms of establishing itself as a localized version of sustainable development initiatives abroad; establishing a Presidential Council on Sustainable Development; integrating environmental as well as socio-economic concerns; making it a multi-stakeholder process; creating increased awareness and understanding of sustainable development, and enhanced disaster management. The challenges for the future include the further placing of sustainable development into actual operations, and the need to continuously mobilize the commitment of non-involved actors.

14. Ms. Asdaporn Krairapanond, Thailand, introduced 'Thailand's National Strategy for Sustainable Development'. Thailand presented its sustainable development process as different from other countries yet honoring United Nations guidelines as much as possible. The three pillars of economy, environment and society are now integrated into the NESDP with the 1975 Environmental Act. Since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Thai government's commitment to the issue is evidenced by the Prime Minister's chairing of its National Council for Sustainable Development. Currently, the NESDB is the national focal point for sustainable development at the national policy level, with Ad hoc Committees composed of representatives from different stakeholders serving as the working body. A The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and Agenda21 have been localized into the Thai language for wider dissemination. As for reviewing measures, surveys and interviews with stakeholders, including government agencies, is the most prevalent form. National sustainable development indicators, which are currently being developed by the NESDP will aid the task of reviews. The NESDP's tenth phase (2007-2011) will focus on the concept of sufficiency economy, which incidentally had been adopted for the past 20 years with support from His Majesty the King. This approach of having more balanced, holistic, and sustainable development is now set to become the driver of the Thai economy. Sufficiency economy also stresses the principles of moderation, reason, and compatibility, while emphasizing responsible consumption and production and acknowledges interdependency among people as well as between humanity and nature.

C. Work of international organizations in the area of NSSD shared learning and reviews

15. Mr. Rae Kwon Chung, UNESCAP, presented 'Green Growth & Eco-efficiency: National Strategy for SD in Asia Pacific'. The Asia Pacific is region where the challenge of sustainable development is most serious, due to large population and small land mass. The region is already living beyond its ecological carrying capacity, which is much worse in comparison to other regions of the world. Yet, 2/3 of the world's poor population live in the Asia Pacific region, thus there can't be any denying that economic growth must be met as an objective. Hence, much needed is the need to improve ecological efficiency. Eco-efficiency is not so much an environmental idea but an economic idea, thus the micro definition of it given by the World Business Council on Sustainable Development should be expanded to become a more national economy-wide concept. Among the measures to improve eco-efficiency are the imbedding of ecological costs into market prices; promoting synergy between the environment and economy; and focusing on the eco-efficiency pattern of growth (EPG) where the relationship between an economic system and lifestyle of its inhabitants must be factored in. EPG itself can be changed through adjusting both the production and consumption patterns. From the production side, pollution control is an area that is easy to target and perhaps because of this some progress is already observable. However, on the consumption side, it is very difficult to change one's lifestyle, especially as eco-efficiency deteriorates as result of a rise in one's income level.

16. Eco-efficiency can be made more persuasive to Asians if presented not as a Western idea but in relation to deep-rooted Asian cultural values such as harmony and respect for nature. Simultaneously, it needs to be presented as not only an environmental issue but an economic idea that is mandatory for long-term economic growth (the keyword being "growth"). One specific way of achieving high eco-efficiency in Asia is to implement "green tax reforms" where the basis for taxation is shifted from income made to the pollution emitted. Furthermore, market prices of commodities have to reflect environmental costs, while the demand side of the production/consumption cycle needs to be managed. Public transportation, water recycling, renewable energy, and promotion of green business are all infrastructures that are sustainable and serve as opportunities for economic gain rather than a burden.

D. Methodology for NSSD shared learning and review

17. Ms. Brigitte Alvarez-Rivero, DSD, presented 'Shared Learning and Review: Methodology'. The guiding factors for the shared learning and review of sustainable development were mentioned as the needs to be cost-effective, simple and replicable, with a short time horizon, non-judgmental, non-standardized, and based upon the United Nations principles for national sustainable development strategies. Further, it is recommended that such strategies be adaptable or tailored to different country needs and circumstances. The purpose or utility of a peer review will vary according to the stage of sustainable development the host country is in as well as what point it stands within the national sustainable development strategy cycle (i.e., analysis, development,

implementation, or review). The steps for review were outlined during the presentation using the French example.

18. Mr. Young-Keun Chung, UN Consultant, presented ‘Status of Preparation for NSSD Shared Learning and Review in the Republic of Korea’. The economic growth of the Republic of Korea has been extremely rapid and development-oriented, thus it has been unbalanced and weak in terms of sustainability. It’s large population relative to its land mass, high consumption of energy and resources has made it vulnerable to pollution problems amidst national conflicts between development and preservation. As a result, the need to integrate Korea’s economy, environment, and social sectors necessitates a national strategy for sustainable development. The process by which Korea has pursued such a goal started with its 1996 National Action Plan for Agenda21, followed by the establishment of the Presidential Council on Sustainable Development in 2000. More recently, the President declared a National Vision for Sustainable Development (NVSD) in June of 2005, which later became the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD). The NVSD had at its core the integration of environment and development; balanced development of economy, society, and environment; measures for future generations’ prosperity, as well as the joint development of both the capitol and rural regions.

19. The PCSD itself has for itself 48 strategic tasks, for which they coordinate meetings with and between relevant government departments. The impetus for Korea’s pursuit of shared learning of its NSSD comes from the fact that many Asia Pacific countries are having problems establishing its own NSSD. In the meanwhile, the United Nations befittingly initiated a process of shared learning and cooperation between countries to promote NSSD, and Korea was suggested as an appropriate country to organize an NSSD review. The background report for the peer review workshop is organized into three parts: i) analysis of the strategy process, ii) understanding of stakeholder meetings, and iii) presentation of results of interviews in regard to Korea’s NSSD. The questionnaire used was based upon the French NSSD, while documents from the 72 stakeholder meetings between 2004-06 were analyzed according to the four areas of processes & contents, outcomes, monitoring, and challenges & issues.

20. Among the national councils for sustainable development formed in some countries in the past, some have sustained but others have simply disappeared. Herein, lays the importance of the “sustainability” of such organizations. Different countries have different strategies, thus it would also be interesting to compare the extent to which some are top-down processes, bottom-up, or a combination of the two. Ultimately, the initiatives must be approved by the national government of each country, and those who have familiarity with the process of government approval know this is a very painful process, thus discussion on this aspect will be useful.

E. Reviewing the process

21. Mr. Jin-Seok Choi, Korea Environment Institute, presented ‘Participation of Civil Society in the Process of Korea’s NSSD.’ Korea’s environmental policy sprung from the

dual pressures of civil society participating in government policy as a result of democratization and international pressure to address environmental concerns. The policy that started from such influences was yet isolated during the initial stages but given more momentum in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis. In recent years, the concept of sustainable development had become consolidated through the cooperation between government, business, and society, with due respect given to the bottom-up policy making. For the future, there are new trends to consider that may require a new development paradigm: increased demand for quality of life upgrades, aging population, and widening gaps between the rich and poor. The participation of civil society members at the PCSD have generally risen over successive terms, having organized civic groups to voice opinions on the government's infrastructure plans, criticized government development plans, and opposed nuclear energy plans, yet also positively proposing changes in the development planning system, balancing inter-sector sustainability, and emphasizing government responsibility in many areas. Civil society members have been a compliment to the policy experts in terms of their abundance of field experience and ability to exercise persuasion toward the public after dialogue and cooperation with expert groups. Civil society has often been the initiator of alternative policies to the government, helping enforce and monitor new policies in the field as well.

22. There is the question of whether an NSSD could be useful without a strong government push. Yet optimism must also be tempered by the hard lessons learned in various national governance examples. Engaging civil society, while being an admirable process, is not nearly as easy as it seems when it comes to consensus-building.

23. Ms. Kumju Hwang, UN Consultant, presented 'The Korean NSSD Background Report: Reviewing the Process.' The beginnings of the Republic of Korea's NSSD can be traced back to the Rio Agenda21 in 1992, as a National Action Plan to implement Agenda21 was established afterwards as an environmental vision for the new millennium. This later led to the most significant turning point of creating the Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development (PCSD). The PCSD is an advisory committee directly reporting to the President of Korea and is the highest level committee in the area of national sustainable development in Korea. All functions and activities of the PCSD are fulfilled through multi-stakeholder participation uniting government, people and business. This democratic and participatory feature of PCSD was made possible by both the top government leadership, especially the President's political will to create the Commission and active involvement and participation of non-state actors in the creation and the operation of the PCSD. The organizational structure of the PCSD had been detailed alongside the background of its establishment, as well as its functions and activities. Among the more noticeable features of the PCSD in Korea are that more than half of ministers in government participate in the PCSD; it is composed of government officials, industrial circles, and NGOs; the Chair of the PCSD is designated from an NGO committee; and currently the PCSD is upgraded as one of the national administration committees. Overall, it is apparent that the PCSD had rendered great services to the cause of developing an NSSD. There has been an extensive NSSD development process involving series of public deliberation with state and non-state actors. PCSD has organized numerous consultation meetings to collect

opinions from broadest possible actors and complemented the NSSD integrating their comments and recommendations. Without constant support and monitoring of broad public participation, in particular, civil society organizations in the development process, it would have been impossible to develop and implement the current NSSD. In short, the current Korean NSSD is a fruit of long-term concerted efforts from government, people, civil society and business. However, some concerns remain in that there is much difficulty coordinating between 22 government departments or multiple stakeholders, especially when there are time constraints. These problems sometimes lead to top-down decision-making structures.

24. There is a question of whether every country really needs a sustainable development strategy, especially when many already have woven it into their indigenous government institutions and those countries are working to comply with the internationally specified standards already. Since individual countries have different cultures and lifestyles, this question is relevant. Perhaps more usefulness may be a debate on how individual countries follow up with the targets set by international agreements. Other interesting questions are: management of different expectations from different stakeholders (e.g., what to do when civil society's demands are not politically wise for the government to adopt); improving processes for better consensus-building; adjusting expectations from different sectors of society; and fostering better information collecting and communication.

F. Reviewing the Content

25. Ms. Kumju Hwang, UN Consultant, presented 'The Korean NSSD Background Report: Reviewing the Content'. When discussing the dimensions of sustainable development, once again the three pillars of economy, environment, and social concerns must be revisited. In particular, prioritization and balancing of local history, ethno-cultural backgrounds, and political economic contexts are important to consider when writing NSSD content. Korea does not have ethnicity problems yet because of its geopolitical situation of having to face North Korea politics and ideology are strong factors to consider. Ideology plus rapid change in many social dimensions have increased the risk of social conflict, especially since the financial crisis of 1997. Regarding sustainable development, Korea has internal struggles between the development sector and environmental sectors. All this has made the country less able to integrate the social sector pillar with the other two. By no means is such a problem limited to only Korea, for the French and British also have had it. The dimensions of sustainable development need a context-dependent approach rather than a content-dependent one. The PCSD recognized such problems and tried to resolve them through a common guideline developed by a series of expert researches, which was then followed by each government department in the formulation of the NSSD, as well as dynamic interactions and consultations among various stakeholders.. .

26. As for the scope of Korea's NSSD, its main contents cover the following: i) sustainable management of natural resources, ii) social integration and national health promotion, iii) coping with climate change and maintenance of the global environment,

and v) monitoring systems for implementing and evaluating sustainable development performance. Most interviewees regarded current NSSD as significant driver for the government. Yet they also mention that the NSSD lacks balanced integration of strategies and implementation plans at the macro and micro level, resulting in NSSD contents not properly representing a unified national strategy. Other key issues in the content of Korea's NSSD are coordination and consensus-building among the involved stakeholders, the concept of "balancing," and the continued development of NSSD contents by revision for the next NSSD cycle.

27. Clarity in the language of sustainable development content is important, for it must speak to future generations in addition to meeting immediate shorter-term objectives. The content should also address deep-rooted or specialized social issues since issues such as Korea's foreign migrant worker issue may be swept aside by rhetoric that only speak of sustainable development in general terms. Another key issue in sustainable development is education. Perhaps programs and textbooks could help introduce definitions and issues to otherwise unsuspecting people, helping them become more aware and attuned to issues of sustainable development around them. Also needed is the differentiation between "strategy" and "program." Regarding local governments, more clarification on the extent of their involvement in NSSD would be useful: specific explanations on how budgets are allocated within their separate departments and what responsibilities they have.

G. Reviewing Monitoring and Indicators

28. Mr. Matthias Bruckner, DSD, presented 'Monitoring Sustainable Development Strategies and the Role of Indicators.' The monitoring of sustainable development is important because it moves National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) beyond a mere list of good intentions, while encouraging the policy makers to set measurable and specific targets. It also gives a chance to intervene periodically and correct problems, and such a feedback mechanism would promote a culture of learning and accountability, not to mention the resulting public interest and information. The areas to be monitored include actions and activities planned in the NSDS, the impact of them, as well as progress. Monitoring the overall progress typically covers a wider range of issues, while monitoring of NSDS impact is more directly geared towards strategy actions. Here indicators are useful. Good indicators would follow the SMART principles of being specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound. Such indicators for sustainable development are made available by the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-isd). More specific criteria for indicators to monitor NSDS effects are as follows. They have to be primarily national in scope, relevant to assessing sustainable development progress, limited in number but open-ended and adaptable, clearly understandable, conceptually sound, representative of international consensus, within the capacity of national governments to develop, and dependent upon cost-effective data of known quality. The common types of data needed for indicators include national accounts, censuses, household surveys, administrative records, and estimations based upon agreed standards. These types of information can be found at statistical offices, ministries and government agencies, reports to international bodies, as

well as regional and international organizations.

29. The institutional arrangement on who should monitor the progress is also important. While there is no definite blueprint for an optimal institutional arrangement, there are criteria that need to be considered: who should be responsible for the monitoring; and should the three areas of i) NSDS actions, ii) NSDS effects, and iii) over progress of sustainable development be monitored separately or in an integrated manner. Typically, monitoring bodies are either the institution in charge of coordinating NSDS, actors implementing the NSDS, government accounting and statistical offices, or non-governmental research institutions. The length, detail, and style of monitoring reports would differ according to the arrangements for the monitoring, but in all cases preferable to have something written in a local language. Finally, good evaluation would address effectiveness and efficiency of the NSDS while including both process and impact evaluations. They would take place periodically at the end of the NSDS cycle, uses good indicators, and requires assessment of alternative policy interventions.

30. Mr. Young-Keun Chung, UN Consultant, presented 'The Korean NSSD Background Report: Reviewing the Monitoring Indicators.' The sustainable development indicators (SDI) for the Republic of Korea were designed to evaluate the sustainability or the sustainable development performance of a country, while providing an early warning in time to prevent social, environmental, or social damage. The 1992 Earth Summit produced helpful SDIs in past while the UNCSD offers 132 indicators and methodology. Coming up with Korea's SDIs was no easy task, as complex interdependencies were present, and sorting out several representative indicators was difficult. In addition, consideration of the next generation also posed as a challenge. Currently, Korea's SDIs are based upon the UNCSD framework and serve as useful feedback mechanisms. The monitoring system is essentially three levels of i) performance indicators by department, governance performance evaluation by the Office for Government Policy Coordination under the Prime Minister, and National Sustainable Development Indicators (NSDI) by PCSD. Currently, Korea has 77 NSDIs, which are essentially the diagnosis of the domestic level of sustainable development using objective indicators. Korea's NSDIs were selected and developed through defined criteria, such as objectivity, international comparison, availability of data and statistics and national characteristics and situations. They are also results of comprehensive comparison and study of the UNCSD and EU guidelines for sustainable development indicators as well as the OECD indicator system, and the incorporation of opinions collected through consultations with relevant departments and public discussions. This indicator system will be fully used to assess national sustainability after a pilot application of indicators in 2007. These indicators will be improved continuously according to international trends and changes in domestic conditions.

31. The monitoring of NSSD performance evaluations on NSDI and sustainability are compiled into white papers and reported to the cabinet and then later to the public. The progress of Korea's NSSD is also regularly introduced to the international community. Some interviewees have expressed that the monitoring system is limiting the range of NSSD, and that the government departments associated with sustainable development are focusing on short-term performance evaluations only. This is understandable since

ministries or governmental departments do not wish to take risks and prefer to select practically achievable tasks only, while discard or missing some essential implementation tasks. The PCSD serves the function of linking the NSSD to NSDIs, enabling the current NSSD to evolve, integrate, and balance interests between the departments. As for the timing of evaluations, interviewees point out that five year terms are preferable to annual evaluations.

32. Clarification on government departments' performance and equilibrium would be useful. Regarding the utility of indicators, the discussion thus far has mostly described "output" and not enough on "outcomes." The latter is in much need since "outcome" has stronger long-term implications, even as measuring such might be difficult. Limiting the monitoring process to "output" only would have individual stakeholders such as government departments concentrate on meeting numerical figures or only short-term achievements at the cost of attaining wider objectives.

H. Reviewing implementation and outcomes

33. Ms. Kumju Hwang, UN Consultant, presented 'The Korean NSSD Background Report: Reviewing Implementation and Outcomes.' The time is yet too early to discuss outcomes of Korea's NSSD considering its short implementation period. Perhaps the overarching significant outcome is the establishment of the PCSD as a key actor in implementing NSSD. One outcome is the attaining of political commitment by the government, as evidenced by the significance of the President's declaration of political commitment. Such a commitment was matched by the mobilization of media and environmental organizations in following the progress of Korea's NSSD. An outgrowth of such commitment is the establishment of a legal framework for pursuing NSSD. Following the Presidential decree for PCSD Article 2, a basic law for NSSD was introduced. A second outcome, a most important one, is in the securing of government budget for implementation. Interviewees reported that once an implementation plan was produced, relevant departments needed to secure budget to fulfill their related tasks. Next is the understanding of sustainable development among various government departments. In spite of sustainable development being a relatively new concept, and the difficulties in moving forward, most government departments have integrated some of the concept into its activities. Some governmental departments have proactively chosen to take upon certain tasks, choosing to directly report its plans to the President. Needless to say, governmental leadership and commitment is crucial to this process. The other outcome is the local self-governing bodies' sustainable development pact. Thus far, eight have concluded a pact for sustainable development, while Korea shows the world's highest rate of Local Agenda21 participation (230 out of 250). It is said that the local residents' participation in these initiatives was rather poor but the Local Agenda21 campaigns have supposedly increased their awareness of sustainable development.

34. The key issues in Korea regarding sustainable development are not related to outcomes but overall performance of NSSD. Thus far, the concept of sustainable development has been firmly established among the general public, government departments, and the business sector. However, some interviewees say that the public

are not yet aware of themselves as key actors in the process. Regarding the institutionalization of sustainable development, interviewees felt that the actualization of the issue would require a more concrete framework at the National Assembly Standing Committee level rather than at PCSD and NGO level. Local participation in the process is also a key issue addressed, as the PCSD has been making substantial efforts to set up local sustainable development roadmaps. The interviewees have reported that often local government bodies lack concern for the issue, thus have called for the need to raise their awareness and understanding of the concept of sustainable development. They also said that the local level bodies should concentrate on actions plans rather than the development of strategies because often the manpower is neither available nor appropriate for such an endeavor. Regarding the production and consumption issue, the NSSD does reflect upon this issue. As an appropriate strategy, the interviewees say giving incentives to change are preferable to merely regulating producers. On consumption, education is hailed as an important tool for influence. The final key issue is the participation of civil society. While clearly being a key actor in the NSSD process, their idealism and low practicality can become cause for social conflicts in society.

35. Defining the parameters of “outcomes” need to be addressed, in particular, in countries where the implementation of NSSD is relatively young. Perhaps setting the “expected outcome” at the outset of implementation would be a good way to address this problem. Regarding implementation, it is important that worthwhile goals be accompanied by descriptions of how to achieve them or, in other words, the methods and tools necessary for the tasks. Finally, the issue of nomenclature needs to be clarified (e.g., NSSD or NSDS) for the sake of communicating to non-experts on sustainable development.

I. Preparations for the shared learning and review workshop (12-16 March)

36. The date for the review workshop is set as March 12-16. There will be an Asian sustainability strategy workshop in Thailand earlier, co-hosted by the OECD, ESCAP, and DESA. All peers present will be invited, and expected to attend. Civil society members will be invited, and the peers are to suggest early on what non-state actors would be appropriate. The Background Document will be made available to the participants two weeks prior to the meeting. The participation of China, Vietnam, and India (those not present during the January meeting) will be sought.

37. As for the agenda for the March meeting, the agreed upon format is as follows:

Day One: The morning session will consist of the opening, where high level participation is expected: the Director of the Division for Sustainable Development will be there alongside other ministerial level participation. The availability of Secretary-General Ban will also be checked.

Early Afternoon: the group will be broken into two parts: i) The Global Context for Sustainable Development; and ii) Process session.

Later at 400 pm, a separate session will take place where only peer countries can attend to discuss the main findings of earlier sessions.

Day Two: The entire day will be devoted to “contents.” The focus will not be on the substance of content but the NSSD itself with regard to the content.

Each peer would pick an area within contents to focus on and lead off with a question. The questions will be submitted by the peers prior to the meeting and used as group discussion facilitators during this day.

At the end of the day, another session just for peers will commence to start working on peer recommendations to the Republic of Korea.

Day Three: The morning session will be devoted to “monitoring” (indicators can be discussed here), followed by a full afternoon session devoted to “outcomes.”

Day Four: The large part of the fourth day will be attended only by peers, devoted to the purpose of working on suggestions and recommendations for the Republic of Korea.

Towards the end of the day, the peers will give preview of their recommendations developed to the PCSD.

Day Five: The formal presentation of peer recommendations to Republic of Korea will take place, followed by the closing session in the afternoon.

It has been suggested that the following presentations should be included during the Workshop i) the current status of NSSD in Korea or ii) general presentations by countries not present in January such as China, Vietnam, and India take place.

ANNEX: PARTICIPANTS

INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Japan

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Mr. Ryosuke Oka
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Malaysia

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Mongolia

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Secretary, Mongolian National Council for Sustainable Development (MNCSD)

Philippines

Ms. Magarita Roque Songco
Deputy Director General
National Economic and Development Authority

Thailand

Ms. Asdaporn Krairapanond
Director, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

HOST COUNTRY

Presidential Commission on Sustainable Development (PCSD)

Ms. Kim, Eun-Kyung
Secretary to President for Sustainable Development

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(Member of the Head Committee of the PCSD)

Mr. Hwang, Hee-Yun
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(Member of the Head Committee of the PCSD)

Mr. Kim, Chong-Chun
Director General for National Task
PCSD

Mr. Kim, Jong-Hwan
Chief of SD Strategic Planning
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Government departments

Mr. Kim, Chang-Mo
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Civil society, experts and academia

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