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Sustainable Development

REPORT ON WORKSHOP ON INSTITUTIONALISING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Paris, 13-14 September 2006

Delegates will find attached a report on the Workshop on Institutionalising Sustainable Development held in Stockholm, Sweden on 31 August-1 September 2006.

Action: This report is for discussion under Item 12 of the AMSDE Agenda [SG/SD(2006)3/REV2].

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WORKSHOP ON INSTITUTIONALISING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Stockholm, 31 August-1 September 2006

The Swedish Ministry for Sustainable Development hosted the *Workshop on Institutionalising Sustainable Development*, the first event to be jointly organised by the OECD and the United Nations Division for Sustainable Development. The government of Canada also provided financial support to the workshop. Over 100 participants from developed and developing countries (including Argentina, Chile, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Jordan, Morocco, Nicaragua, the Philippines, St. Lucia, Serbia, Seychelles, Uganda and Tonga) discussed the governance aspects of sustainable development and advancing the implementation of national sustainable development strategies (NSDS).

The Workshop was chaired by Gun-Britt Andersson, Swedish Ambassador to the OECD, and participants were welcomed by OECD Deputy Secretary General Kiyoo Akasaka and Mary Pat Silveria, Branch Chief in the UN Division for Sustainable Development. It opened with an address by Jim MacNeill, the author of the 1987 report, *Our Common Future*, which introduced the concept of sustainable development twenty years ago. Mona Sahlin, the Swedish Minister for Sustainable Development, explained how sustainable development is being institutionalised in Sweden and the benefits of having a broad public debate to increase understanding and ownership of the underlying ideas. In addition, participants heard the perspectives of Emil Salim of Indonesia, Chair of the Preparatory Committee of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

The Workshop was structured to maximise the possibilities for discussion and debate. Each of the four sessions had an overview presentation followed by comments by discussants from different backgrounds. After an open question and answer session, participants were divided into discussion groups for more in-depth debate. Each group had a leader and a rapporteur, who reported their conclusions to the Workshop Rapporteur, David Runnalls, Director of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

The four main sessions were as follows:

- 1) The first session addressed the most effective *governance approaches for national sustainable development strategies*, including assignment of strategy responsibility, openness to stakeholders, links to sub-national levels, legislative frameworks, and budgeting aspects. It was concluded that NSDS governance needs to be adjusted to the structures in place in each country, but that the OECD and UN should continue sharing and revising NSDS best practices in conjunction with informal networks at regional and international levels.
- 2) The second session covered various *approaches to reviewing and monitoring strategies*, including indicator-based monitoring, internal reviews, external audits, parliamentary reviews, and peer reviews. It was generally agreed that countries should use any combination of approaches which best suits their situation. However, they should ensure that reporting of the NSDS review results is at a high-level, including to Parliaments, and that there is assignment of responsibility for acting upon the results of monitoring exercises.

- 3) The third session was concerned with *strategy development and implementation in developing countries* as a direct follow-up to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the OECD Environment-Development Ministerial held in April 2006 which advocated fuller integration of environmental concerns in poverty reduction. Developing countries need to better link their national development plans, NSDS, poverty reduction strategies (PRS), and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) approaches. Assistance is needed on moving from PRS to more integrated NSDS. It was also recommended that reporting requirements for developing countries on these strategies be simplified.
- 4) The last session featured OECD, UN, and EC representatives presenting *plans for follow-up in their various organisations*. The OECD is proposing further work on SD governance aspects and the adoption of a sustainable development perspective in its ongoing peer reviews (environment, economic, development assistance). The EC is now embarking on NSDS peer reviews in Member countries, starting with the Netherlands. The UN is improving its NSDS reporting system and promoting shared learning experiences on NSDS through country sessions, starting with the Republic of Korea.

Several avenues were proposed at the workshop for advancing on institutionalising sustainable development at sub-national, national and international levels:

- 1) **Follow-up workshop** – The OECD and the UN propose to organise a follow-up workshop on sustainable development strategies to be held in a developing country in Asia in March 2007.
- 2) **Guiding principles** – The OECD and UNDESA could update, harmonise and annotate their respective Guiding Principles for national sustainable development strategies and continue to identify good practices.
- 3) **DAC guidelines** – The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) could review the possibility of developing guidelines for developing countries for increasing linkages between national sustainable development strategies, poverty reduction strategies, and plans for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
- 4) **Peer reviews** – The UN, OECD and EC could develop a common framework for conducting peer reviews of national sustainable development strategies as well as compare the outcomes of the different peer reviews now planned. To the extent possible, each Peer Review should include Peers from both developed and developing countries.
- 5) **International Governance** – The major international organisations (OECD, UN, World Bank, IMF) could set up an informal dialogue on treatment of sustainable development and related governance issues within their organisations.