



UN General Assembly Creates Key Group on Rio+20 Follow-up Group to work on design of new sustainable development goals

New York, 22 January 2013 —The United Nations General Assembly today advanced action to implement a Rio+20 recommendation to develop a set sustainable development goals by establishing an “open working group” consisting of 30 countries from the various regions. The new working group will prepare a report containing a proposal for sustainable development goals “for consideration and appropriate action” by the 68th session of the General Assembly.

Countries agreed at Rio+20—the UN Conference on Sustainable Development—that a set of “action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate” goals could help drive the implementation of sustainable development and called on the General Assembly to establish a group to help develop the goals. The Rio+20 outcome document, “The Future We Want,” also calls for the goals to be integrated into the UN’s development agenda beyond 2015.

In agreeing to the development of the sustainable development goals, countries recognized that the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have been a useful tool to focus efforts on specific aspects of a broad development vision. The MDGs have been instrumental in driving down poverty rates and increasing access to education, healthcare, water and sanitation, but progress has not been uniform and the UN is currently ramping up efforts to help countries achieve the goals by the target date of 2015.

“The Future We Want’ has broadened the scope for global action for people and the planet,” says Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. “Sustainable development goals that build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals, and that apply to all countries can provide a tremendous boost to efforts to implement sustainable development and help us address issues ranging from reducing poverty and creating jobs to the pressing issues of meeting economic, social and environmental aspirations of all people.”

Participation on the 30-member working group would be facilitated by an innovative rotational procedure within the regions.

In December 2012, the General Assembly passed a resolution outlining a series of steps to implement other aspects of the Rio+20 outcome, including preparations for the establishment of a new high-level political forum; the winding down of the Commission on Sustainable Development; to advance action on the 10-year programme for promoting more sustainable patterns of consumption and production; steps toward the development of a sustainable development financing strategy and on options for a mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies.





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According to a report by the UN Secretary-General intended as an initial input to the new working group, 63 countries responded to a questionnaire about the new goals, and the overarching priority areas included poverty eradication and sustainable management of natural resources. The report said it was “noteworthy” that the key social issues addressed by the MDGs are very high on the list, “suggesting an intent to keep the MDGs at the heart of the agenda.” At the same time, the report found that the prominence of climate change, sustainable management of natural resources, and sustainable consumption and production as well as of economic issues like employment and macroeconomic stability suggests an interest in developing a more effective integration and balancing of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

For more information on the session, and Rio+20, visit <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/> and www.un.org/futurewewant.

The report of the Secretary-General as an initial input to the Open Working Group can be found at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1494sgreportsdgs.pdf>

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