

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Australian Statement

Agenda Item 4. Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication

Thank you Co-Chair

The term “green economy” is receiving growing political attention by both developed and developing countries. Our discussion in the lead up to Rio +20 comes at an opportune time.

What is your understanding of the concept of “green economy”? How does the concept of “green economy” contribute to achieving the overarching objective of sustainable development, including poverty eradication?

“Green economy” is an omnibus term. Like national ESD strategies (which Australia has), integrated policy and planning, sustainable livelihood and poverty alleviation, sustainable urban management, and sustainable consumption and production (SCP), the green economy is just one element that aims to enhance convergence between the different pillars of sustainable development.

Whilst it is important what nomenclature we choose to use – Australia believes that what you actually do is the most important factor. In this context we note and support the call in the Secretary General’s report in the lead up to Rio +20:

- To develop clearer links between green economy and sustainable development activities at national and international levels.

Can this theme underpin a move towards a sustainable development paradigm?

From Australia’s perspective – an effectively operating green economy, underpinning movement toward sustainable development, will have features that include:

- Good economic, social and environmental governance at the national level to enhance implementation of sustainable development and foster investment by the private sector.
- The recognition of the many values of natural systems whilst at the same time acknowledging that appropriate pricing of natural resources and appreciation of the potential role of markets is an important tool for protection of the environment. In some situations, market-based instruments (e.g. water trading, carbon trading, salinity trading) provide an efficient and effective approach for sustainably managing resources and mitigating environmental impacts.

- Flexibility to determine the sustainability of our policy settings, having regard to the unique combination of environmental, social and economic factors relevant to each of our countries.

What are the challenges that countries may face in transitioning to the Green Economy? How can these countries develop a tangible yet comprehensive framework of action, touching upon issues regarding policy decisions and possible reform, investment, and natural resources management?

There are a number of key challenges to moving toward a greener economy, including:

- supporting and enhancing the mechanisms of communication and cooperation at all levels;
- ensuring that all of the pillars of sustainable development, particularly the social pillar, are in the forefront of our mind as we move forward;
- improving community understanding, education and capacity building around the key elements of sustainable development; and
- addressing ecosystems holistically, looking at impacts over the long-term from social, economic and environmental perspectives.

A further challenge relates to ensuring that we understand and cooperate with the many relevant activities that are taking place in other fora. Avoiding duplication of effort is critical.

Like other speakers we believe that the Conference on Sustainable Development is a critical opportunity with the potential to increase the pace of actions to move us more quickly toward achieving sustainable development.

Thank you Mr Co-Chair

Australian Delegation