

Statement by Australia

*Second Preparatory Meeting UNCSA
7 March 2011*

SESSION 2: GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION

Question 7 – on decisions UNCSA could take to support a green economy.

A critical decision that UNCSA could embrace would be the recognition that a green economy approach is at its most powerful when it acts as a vehicle to support integration across the pillars of sustainable development.

A decision to give greater emphasis to broader measures of progress is a key element of better integration.

We strongly support the point made by the representative from India that we need to think practically about how we move forward to action at Rio next year.

In this context Australia would like to see discussion of the green economy move beyond questions of precise definition and instead consider key practical issues which will bear strongly on how countries will consider the costs and benefits of different approaches that cut across the pillars.

Consideration of trade issues in a green economy context is important. From our perspective we must include the benefits of reducing/eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers on environmental goods and services that may contribute to a green economy, and the need to avoid trade and market distorting measures.

Another practical issue arises from the observation that the capacity needs, costs to transition and implementation of green economy strategies will differ between developed, emerging and least developed countries. Every country, province, village has special circumstances – All decisions will need to embrace this diversity.

Another key decision will be to enhance efforts to value natural capital including ecosystem services and to measure change over time. Any cost/benefit analysis that does not recognise the value of the environment will be little better than a guess — we cannot afford to be playing the lottery with the future.

Not everything requires new decisions – we are learning from examples where green or blue economy approaches are already delivering outcomes across the three pillars of sustainable development whilst making real steps toward poverty alleviation and job creation, in particular for the youth of today and tomorrow.

The Coral Triangle Initiative, in our region, seeks to protect and enhance the livelihoods of the many millions of people who depend on coastal marine resources for food and livelihoods by recognising, at a local level, the need to build the resilience of productive

coastal ecosystems to the impacts of climate change through reducing over-fishing, maintaining habitats and addressing destructive fishing practices.

To the extent that green economy is a vehicle then we need to get it on the road and start the journey

Australian Delegation