



HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Under the auspices of ECOSOC

Session 6 - The GSDR as a bridge between the SDGs and the scientific community

The Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) is a United Nations publication aiming to strengthen the science-policy interface at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), which serves as the United Nations platform providing political leadership and guidance on sustainable development issues. In outlining the functions of the Forum, the Rio+20 outcome document, the Future We Want, provides: “85. *The high-level political forum could: [...] (k) Strengthen the science-policy interface through review of documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments*”.

The scope of the report has been fleshed out in reports of the Secretary-General. Thus the synthesis report of the Secretary-General (A/69/700), entitled *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet*, when addressing thematic reviews on progress and challenges in implementing the post-2015 development, states that: “... *the United Nations would provide annual global thematic reports, aggregating available data, together with the global sustainable development report mandated by Rio+20*”.

Based on inputs from Member States and other stakeholders, the Secretary-General in his report E/2014/87 of June 2014 proposed 3 options for the GSDR: (i) Conventional UN flagship publication model; (ii) Multi-stakeholder, multi-level approach; and (iii) model of the Intergovernmental Panel on Sustainable Development. At the second meeting of the HLPF, overwhelming preference was expressed for the second option - a multi-stakeholder, multi-level approach to preparing future reports. The Ministerial Declaration of the second meeting of the HLPF called for “*a global sustainable development report that, taking into account the discussions on the options set out in the report of the Secretary-General... and building on existing assessments, could provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers to promote poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby contributing to the strengthening of ongoing capacity-building for data collection and analysis in developing countries*”.

A Prototype edition of the GSDR was prepared for the 2014 session of the HLPF. Among other things, the Prototype mapped sustainable development assessments and related processes and highlights emerging issues identified by scientists. The GSDR 2015¹ is built around two structuring dimensions: the science-policy interface – and the various ways in which it could be strengthened – and the post-2015 development agenda, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Going forward, a range of issues could be considered, including facilitating contributions from the scientific community, and developing more systematic approaches to identify science and technology issues for the attention of policy makers in the context of the HLPF.

Possible questions for discussions:

1. What are the main lessons learnt from the GSDR process so far?
2. What areas of scientific knowledge should feed into the report?
3. How should the thematic focus or themes of GSDR be determined?

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1758GSDR%202015%20Advance%20Unedited%20Version.pdf>