

Strengthening international sustainable development governance

Jan-Gustav Strandenaes
Senior policy adviser, ANPED

Governance has several objectives.


- In essence it must reflect to a large extent the political realities in which it operates.
- But governance should also contain descriptive concepts such as ‘aspirational’, ‘forward looking’, ‘operational’,
- be normative and contain democratic qualities like participation, transparency and accountability.

Governance has several objectives.

- The impacts of globalization are some of the key drivers behind demands for strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development.
- An effective and equitable framework would contribute to providing a way of ensuring adequate progress in the social, economic and environmental dimensions.

Disaster in negotiations

- “looking forward from here, we believe it is critical for us to find ways to ensure that we don’t arrive in this situation again, but to ensure that future CSD cycles will achieve a progressive outcome as is necessary for pursuing our common global goals of sustainable development. The EU remains convinced that global challenges can only be addressed through multilateral cooperation.

- 
- The CSD has a mandate to be the High Level Commission on Sustainable Development within the UN system. Sustainable development is far too important to run the risk of a failure. We must improve the way decisions are made in this forum. The very relevance of this commission is at stake. We are convinced that we can work differently and ensure much more ambitious and progressive outcomes in future CSD cycles.”

Strengthening SD Governance

- Elevate CSD from a standing committee under ECOSOC to a permanent UN Council under the General Assembly.
- Establish a high level segment within ECOSOC, for instance within the context of the Ministerial Review to reflect the Council's decisions to monitor implementation

Strengthening SD Governance

- Revitalise the Task Manager system to hold relevant UN bodies accountable for sustainable development policies and programmes reflecting decisions taken at CSD.
- Re-evaluating the role the IACSD, the Inter Agency Committee on Sustainable Development with a view to re-establish it
- Establish a joint meeting of the executive boards of WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNEP and UN Habitat

Strengthening SD Governance

- Develop and establish national councils NCSD on sustainable development to conduct national hearings where civil society and governments play active roles,
- Report back the outcome to CSD.
- Grant civil society a proper and significant position with the Council on Sustainable Development in the future is important, and the standards for civil society participation should not be lowered below the level of present CSD participation, even if the process around sustainable, development now is at Council level.

Our challenges are:

- We need quick actions but will see no quick results.
- We need quick capital and massive finance to pay for these actions, with no promise of quick and massive returns.
- We need simple understanding to complex problems.
- We need commitments to last for 30 years and more, but our fear and impatience, do not speak of maintaining a high level of commitments for as long as it takes.

Our opportunity at Rio plus 20

- If we capitalise on this opportunity, and make sure we own up to people's expectations to see measures taken to ensure the future of this world, we will be able to build a better century than the one we left behind 10 years ago. We cannot squander this opportunity.