

Response to the Global Sustainable Development Report Survey

1. Scope of the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), including focus areas, geographical coverage, time frame and scientific evidence etc.

The Report should include four sections: landscape, review of progress, opportunities and challenges, and policy recommendations, focusing on the priority areas identified in the Rio+20 outcome document. The Report should mainly focus on the progress at the international level, while recognizing and elaborating differences between developed and developing countries in terms of national circumstances and means of implementation. Given the broad range of topics covered, and the various standards of measurement, the Report should not adopt strict time frame. The Report should underscore the importance of science, and establish an assessment framework that is scientific, coherent and robust.

2. Priority areas of the Report at national, regional and international levels.

Poverty eradication should be the overarching priority of the Report. The Report should balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions and reflect progress made in the following areas: poverty eradication, sanitation and health, employment, education, sustainable consumption and production, inclusive growth, science and innovation, energy, water, ecosystem preservation etc. The Report should take into account different challenges faced by countries and regions. Special attention should be given to African countries and LDCs, in light of the difficulties they are facing and their lack of capacity in advancing sustainable development.

3. Emerging issues and challenges to be addressed.

The Report should address new and emerging issues, including energy, agriculture and food security, water, and climate change, through forward-looking projections and assessments, taking into account ongoing discussions in other relevant UN fora.

4. To support future policy formulation, should the Report include lessons learned and trends?
Should the Report include relevant scientific findings?

In addition to reviewing current status, the Report should analyze and summarize global trends in sustainable development for more effective assessments, alerts and prevention. Scientific findings are useful for policy-making, but they must be based on evidence.

5. Should the Report be part of the accountability framework for the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda?

The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development provides political leadership and monitors progress of implementation on sustainable development at the global level, although its operating is yet to be fully laid out. The intergovernmental processes leading up to the SDGs and post-2015 development agenda are Member States driven processes under the General Assembly. The Report could be considered and used by the two processes, but it should not be a part of the framework of monitoring.

6. Frequency of the Report

In line with the cycle of the HLPF at the level of Heads of State and Government, the Report should be published every four years.

7. Organization of report-drafting. How to decide the themes of the Report, the authors and the way of participation in drafting?

The Report should consolidate inputs from all stakeholders and reflect their views in a balanced way. The topics of the Report could be based on the priority areas identified in the outcome document of Rio+20 and integrate new and emerging challenges. All Member States should be entitled to participate in the drafting of the Report, providing comments and suggestions. Civil society could be consulted if necessary.

8. Principles and methodologies

The Report should follow the principle of common but differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR), respect the right of each country to decide on their own development pathways, and focus on the theme of sustainable development. It should be based on scientific assessments, fully taking into account different national circumstances and stages of development, avoiding one-size-fits-all approach, and avoiding imposing development status upon countries.

9. Best method of organizing national and regional participation. Is it necessary to establish contact groups in order to facilitate regular consultation?

The Report could be drafted by experts to be nominated by governments. The drafting process could be supported by regional workshops and meetings. Coordination at the global level through a focal point could be considered.

10. Concrete recommendations regarding the participation of national and regional experts in the drafting of the Report. Which agencies, groups and network should be mobilized? Is it necessary to establish expert groups?

The United Nations could consider establish a working group of experts nominated by governments. Considering the potential number of recommendations and the fact that the working group should be limited in size, the United Nations could follow the practice of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, fully taking into account geographical balance and representation. The UN system agencies and other international organizations could provide inputs to the draft. The working group of experts could arrange meetings to interact with stakeholders on a regular basis.

11. Necessity and feasibility for national reports.

Countries should prepare national reports on a voluntary basis. National experience on sustainable development could be incorporated in the Global Sustainable Development Report as case studies.

12. How should the Report be integrated in relevant processes, including agenda-setting at the HLPF, scientific analysis of relevant topics, and relevant analytical work in the follow-up to internationally agreed outcomes.

The Report could be integrated in the relevant deliberations of the HLPF as a crucial element in enhancing science-policy interface in sustainable development. The method of integration should be discussed at the ministerial segment of the HLPF.