

UN SDS Questionnaire on Scope and Methodology of a Global Sustainable Report

Reply by the Republic of Croatia

1. One of the most important outcomes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 'Rio+20' was the decision to establish the universal, intergovernmental High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. The outcome document of 'Rio+20' states that the HLPF could as one of its functions, "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" as well as to enhance evidence-based decision-making at all levels. As the assessment of the assessments, it should take into account the existing global reporting as IPCC and other reports and opinions of scientific community at the global level. In general, the future Global Sustainable Development Report in addition could be a follow-up monitoring report for the implementation of the future Sustainable Development Goals, with flexibility as to include new and emerging challenges.

The Report should have a truly global geographic coverage, with the focus on trends in LDCs, developing countries, countries in transition as well as on trends in the emerging and the developed countries, since the aim of the report is to help in science-policy interface for the implementation of a truly universal agenda.

It should encompass a sort of an easily readable and comparable executive summary as well as a detailed scientific analysis. The Report should be drawn up by international experts and deliberated by an intergovernmental group of experts.

2. The Report should cover a wide scope of issues related to all three pillars of sustainable development, and the recognized focus areas – in particular economy, gender equality, finance, trade, climate change, environment, water, oceans and seas, sustainable consumption and production, agriculture, food security, social inclusion, peace and security etc. for the evidence-based decision-making at the level of HLPF. Additionally, it could be focused on thematic focus of HLPF session.

3. The Report should keep track of emerging trends and issues that have potential impact on sustainable development. Particular focus should be given to the cross-cutting nature of certain issues as well as addressing the issues across all three dimensions of sustainable development so as to go beyond the thematic reporting, by scientists and by means of the existing assessments of international organizations as well as through crowd-sourcing platforms.

4. GSDR should report on past and future trends, on policy lessons learnt and on scientific findings indicating potential areas for policy action to enable evidence-based decision-making of the HLPF.

5. Yes, the GSDR should be a part of the monitoring and accountability framework for SDGs and Post-2015 development agenda which will serve as a basis for decision-making at the HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC and GA UN.

6. Dynamics of the reporting should provide for enough time for certain trends to be reported and monitored. In that sense, it is important to take into account the four-year cycle of HLPFs under the auspices of GA UN. It is important to take into account respective national reporting capacities if we are to consider yearly reporting. Additional reports should be drafted in case of unpredictable circumstances which have major impact on the sustainable development agenda.

7. National sustainable development strategies and reports on their implementation make important national contributions together with existing global reports like Global Environmental Outlook, Human Development Report, IPCC report and other relevant global reports. Respectable independent analyses should also be taken into account.. Global involvement is key, in geographic as well as in societal sense. Civil society, private sector, trade unions, academia, public surveys, local authorities, parliaments and relevant international organizations should be consulted. Thematic focus should be related to the HLPF topic of the session. Data collection should be made through platforms of global, regional, national and local levels. Knowledge and expertise of the international scientific platforms should be utilized.

8. Agenda 21 and internationally agreed sustainable development principles. Global sustainable development scenario-modeling whereby we would be able to minimize or resolve trade-offs across the different dimensions of sustainable development or different policy objectives. Inductive and empirical methods with a good balance of quantifiable (statistical) and qualifiable data should be used.

9. The useful forums for regional consultations on GSDR are ECOSOC's regional Economic commissions like UNECE; which can serve as five regional for a within which the consultations on all the major global issues are organized. Croatia hosted a Regional expert meeting in organization with UN DESA on Science-Policy Interface for GSDR, the outcome of which is Dubrovnik declaration – Regional perspective on science-policy interface for a sustainable future (UN GA A/C.2/68/8 of 18 November 2013), where more detailed inputs from a regional expert meeting can be seen. Indeed, the existent networks of regional and national the Focal Points could be very useful to facilitate the discussions at all the levels. The network should also include external expert participation.

10. A global, non-exhaustive pool of scientific institutions should be involved including scientists from relevant UN agencies (UNDESA, UNEP, UNDP, ILO, WHO etc), JRC, EUROSTAT etc., which could be divided into policy subgroups, but would work also beyond the policy areas towards integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. Participation of the experts and scientists from national academia and line ministries is of utmost importance for evaluating the implementation of sustainable development strategies and policies in their respective countries. The participation in this exercise should be fully transparent.

11. National sustainable development reporting should be a regular activity, for the purposes of implementation evaluation as well as for the necessary revisions of the Sustainable Development strategies. Future SDGs, together with the HLPF reviews under the auspices of ECOSOC, replacing the AMR will need to be additionally taken into account with national reporting.

12. The GSDR should contribute to improving evidence-based decision-making at all levels including through HLPF. In that sense it could contribute both to agenda setting of the HLPF, scientific analysis of the issues on the agenda as well as follow-up analysis of implementation of the decisions taken. In view of GSDR, Croatia hosted a Regional expert meeting in organization with UN DESA on Science-Policy Interface for GSDR, the outcome of which is Dubrovnik declaration – Regional perspective on science-policy interface for a sustainable future (UN GA A/C.2/68/8 of 18 November 2013).

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