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Questionnaire on scope and methodology of a global sustainable development report

§20 of General Assembly resolution A/RES/67/290: "Decides that the forum shall strengthen the science-policy interface by examining documentation, bringing together dispersed information and assessments, including in the form of a global sustainable development report, building on existing assessments, enhancing evidence-based decision-making at all levels and contributing to the strengthening of ongoing capacity-building for data collection and analysis in developing countries, and requests the forum to consider, in 2014, the scope and methodology of a global sustainable development report, based on a proposal of the Secretary-General reflecting the views and recommendations of Member States, and relevant United Nations entities, including the Committee for Development Policy;"

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QUESTIONS

Scope

1. In your view, what should be the scope of future editions of the Global Sustainable Development Report, in terms of issue focus, geographic coverage, time horizon, and scientific knowledge?

Its difficult to say currently, but once the SDGs are negotiated and adopted the GSDR should focus on each goal through individual report chapters (e.g., water/oceans/fisheries/sanitation, energy/climate/transportation/habitat, food/agriculture/land/soil, poverty/employment/for example, health, education, peace/security) and have a common framework for each chapter. Such a framework should include a succinct scientific/economic/sociological explanation of problems to be addressed and then lay out international, national and local policies/institutions/actions needed to address them in order to make overall progress on achievements of the SDGs. It should be a global report with regional annexes to address regional specificities. The time horizon should be 4 years coinciding with the convening of sessions of the HLPF.

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2. What are the key national, regional and global priority issues that you would like to see reflected in the global report?

The chapters/issues are to be chosen but rather fixed, i.e., one for each SDG. However, within each issue area there will be a need to focus on the relevant enablers needed to address the issue problems. These should include trade, investment, technology, human rights, gender equality, media/communications, culture, and other drivers to the extent that each has a role to play in the achievement of the SDG in question. Then for each enabler, recommendations should be made for policies/institutions/actions that can address issue related problems, challenges as well as maximizing available opportunities.

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3. Should the report have a role in identifying new and emerging issues? If so, how to identify these issues?

New and emerging sub-issues within each main issue (SDG) area, yes. However, the structure (a chapter for each SDG) and framework (explanation of problems, relevant policies and actions for each enabler) should be maintained.

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4. Should it report on past and future trends, report on policy lessons-learnt, and/or report on scientific findings indicating potential areas for policy action?

The first section of each chapter that explains the problem should present trends and projections. The second section on policies and actions should report on policy lessons-learnt and scientific findings, as well as case studies in the format of boxes, relating these to the recommended policies and actions needed to address the issue related problem(s).

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5. Should the report be part of the monitoring and accountability framework for sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda?

It may be better to have a separate accompanying report prepared on monitoring and accountability, and to summarize this second report's assessment in the GSDR.

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6. What should be the periodicity of the report? (e.g., yearly, every x years)

Every 4 years, available 6 months prior to each HLPF.

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Methodology**7. How should the preparation of the global report be organized? How should the thematic focus of a given edition be decided? What would a preparation process look like? Who should be involved and how?**

The report should be organized and prepared by DESA. DESA should invite other UN organizations/agencies and specialized NGOs (including academia) to provide inputs. The thematic focus should be fixed to the SDGs. DESA should request UN entities and NGOs to provide inputs on the first and second part of chapter that is relevant for them.

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8. Which principles and scientific methods should be employed in preparation of future editions of the global report?

Objectivity is the key principle needed. Scientific methods (including scientific, economic, and social analyses) should be widely accepted (backed by work from peer reviewed journals). But the methods used and explanations presented should be clear, simple and accessible to a non-specialist policymaker audience.

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9. What would be the best way to organize national and regional contributions to the global report? Would a network of national and regional focal points and regular consultations with them be useful?

DESA should organize bi-annual regional workshops (in year 1 and 3 of the publication cycle; year 0 being the HLPF session) to invite, attract and compile the inputs of GOs and NGOs from each region (year 1) and seek their adoption and review of the report (year 3). Both national and regional inputs can be acquired from the regional workshops.

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10. What concrete steps do you propose to involve scientists from your country and region in the global report? Which institutions, communities or networks should be mobilized? Should a scientific advisory group be constituted?

The identification and mobilization of relevant experts should be organized by the UN regional commissions.

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11. Should all countries institute a national sustainable development report process? If so, how?

No, just an SDG report process (also published every 4 years in parallel with the GSDR).

For each SDG, the national SDG reports should first report monitoring and progress. Then, following the format of the GSDR, the SDG report could provide details on national specificities of the issue area (i.e., SDG) presented in the GSDRs and present progress in implementing policies and actions recommended in the GSDR.

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12. How should the report inform the work of the High-Level Political Forum? In agenda setting? In providing scientific analysis of issues on the HLPF agenda? In follow-up analysis of implementation of decisions taken?

Difficult to say at this time.

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13. Contact information (Name and email)

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