

Foreword

Sustainability science emerged as a new interdisciplinary endeavour around the year 2000. In 2012 alone, more than 40,000 authors from 2,200 cities around the world published some 150,000 articles on sustainable development - six times more than in the 10 previous years. However, to date there exists no global sustainable development report that comprehensively looks at global progress and the future outlook in a truly integrated way, taking into account the range of perspectives in different scientific communities across the world.

The Global Sustainable Development Report, requested by Governments at Rio+20, is the first and only comprehensive global report on sustainable development.

The *present prototype global sustainable development report* is the result of a collaborative effort of more than 2,000 scientists and 50 staff from 20 United Nations entities from all world regions. This prototype report illustrates a range of potential content and discusses potential overall directions for the eventual Global Sustainable Development Report.

The report maps sustainable development assessments and related processes, and identifies key remaining challenges: to eliminate poverty and hunger; to feed, nurture, house, educate and employ the global population; to ensure peace, security and freedom; and to preserve the Earth's basic life-support systems.

The report sketches an alternative sustainable development pathway for the future. It shows that, if we significantly adjust our current patterns of consumption and production, we can help build a more sustainable world by 2050.

The report also identifies a range of estimates of total global investment needs to achieve global goals and commitments. The report identifies lessons learned from national, regional and global case studies of the climate-land-energy-water-development nexus. It takes an integrated approach that looks at clusters of issues and their interlinkages rather than specific sectors or topics.

I hope, in the future, that the Global Sustainable Development Report will provide invaluable concise scientific inputs for the deliberations of the High-level Political Forum on sustainable development (HLPF). It could report on global progress towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), once they are established in 2015. It could also provide scientific evidence for linking global goals with the necessary means of achieving them. Ultimately, it will help improving the science-policy interface for sustainable development, as called for by United Nations Member States at Rio+20.



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