

Side Event on the Global Sustainable Development Report 2015

During the high-level political forum on sustainable development

1 July 2015, 1:15pm- 2:30pm, Conference Room 1 at United Nations Headquarters

AGENDA

1. CONTEXT

The Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) is a United Nations publication aiming to strengthen the science-policy interface at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF), which serves as the United Nations platform providing political leadership and guidance on sustainable development issues at the international level. In outlining the functions of the Forum, the Rio+20 outcome document, the Future We Want, provides: “85. The high-level forum could: [...] (k) 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”.

The scope of the report has been fleshed out in reports of the Secretary-General. Thus the synthesis report of the Secretary-General (A/69/700), entitled *The road to dignity by 2030: ending poverty, transforming all lives and protecting the planet*, in the context of thematic reviews on progress and challenges, states that: “...the United Nations would provide annual global thematic reports, aggregating available data, together with the global sustainable development report mandated by Rio+20”.

In early 2014, based on inputs from Member States and other stakeholders, the Secretary-General in his report E/2014/87 of June 2014 proposed 3 options for the GSDR: (i) Conventional UN flagship publication model; (ii) Multi-stakeholder, multi-level approach; and (iii) Intergovernmental Panel on Sustainable Development. At the second meeting of the HLPF, overwhelming preference was expressed for the second option - a multi-stakeholder, multi-level approach to preparing future reports. The Ministerial Declaration of the second meeting of the HLPF called for “a global sustainable development report that, taking into account the discussions on the options set out in the report of the Secretary-General...and building on existing assessments, could provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers to promote poverty eradication and sustainable development, thereby contributing to the strengthening of ongoing capacity-building for data collection and analysis in developing countries”.

A Prototype edition of the GSDR was prepared for the 2014 session of the HLPF. Among other things, the Prototype mapped sustainable development assessments and related processes and highlights emerging issues identified by scientists.

The GSDR 2015 endeavored to present a range of scientific perspectives and to be policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive. It considered how the functioning of the science-policy interface could be improved at national and international levels, in the latter case through the HLPF. The report examined the Sustainable Development Goals as an interlinked system, analyzing how progress in one area depends on progress on other goals and what this implies for policy. It illustrated this through the example of oceans, marine resources and livelihoods. The report also looked at cross-cutting issues in the SDGs, using disaster risk reduction as an example. Its chapters aim to highlight emerging issues and delve into topics such as new data approaches, sustainable industrial development, consumption and production, and the challenges faced by countries in special situations. Extensive inputs have been sought for the 2015 report from the United Nations system, researchers and scientists,

government officials and stakeholders at all levels. A crowdsourcing exercise carried out in the six official United Nations languages also invited scientists and researchers around the world to submit science briefs that highlight research findings or solutions relating to sustainable development, for the attention of policy-makers.

Going forward, a range of issues could be considered, including facilitating contributions from the scientific community, and developing more systematic approaches to identify science and technology issues for the attention of policy makers in the context of the HLPF.

2. OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this side event is to facilitate a more in-depth discussion of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2015 and to discuss lessons-learnt for the way forward. Presentations will be followed by an open discussion.

3. ORGANIZERS

Department for Economic and Social Affairs/Division for Sustainable Development (DESA/DSD).

4. AGENDA

Moderator: Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director, Division for Sustainable Development, DESA

- i. Presentation of the Report:** Mr. David O'Connor, Chief of the Policy and Analysis Branch, DESA/DSD. **(10 minutes)**

Following the presentation, discussants will deliver short statements - of no more than 2 minutes each - on what they consider most useful in the GSDR 2015 and what they would like to be considered for future editions, in terms of both content and process.

- ii. Scientific discussants (2 minutes each)**
- iii. Perspectives of Member States (2 minutes each)**
- iv. UN perspectives (2 minutes each)**

Questions and open discussion