Note No. 243/2012

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary General of the United Nations and in particular the Office of the Director, Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and has the honour to refer to the latter’s Note, ref. no. DSD/2012/583 dated 5 November, 2012.

The Permanent Mission wishes to forward herewith Zambia’s responses to the questionnaire.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Zambia to the United Nations takes this opportunity to renew to the Secretary General of the United Nations the assurances of its highest consideration.

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ZAMBIA’S RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

1. Please list a limited number, preferably, between five and ten, of the important priority areas that must be addressed through the SDGs to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
   (i) Infrastructure Development: Transport (road, rail and air); energy (new and renewable)
   (ii) Social investment and Human Development: Health, Education and Skills Development, Water and Sanitation, Youth Development
   (iii) Environment (including climate change and disaster risk management)
   (iv) Employment creation (with emphasis on youth and women employment)
   (v) Agriculture, Nutrition and food security
   (vi) Rural Development
   (vii) Trade and Industry
   (viii) Natural Resources
   (ix) Information, Technology and Communication
   (x) Manufacturing

Key to the attainment of the above is mainstreaming of gender, environment and HIV and AIDS and other cross cutting issues that affect development.

2. How might the SDGs strive to balance the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development?
   a. Reflect social, economic and environmental dimensions within each SDG possibly through the associated targets
   b. Integrate the MDGs, suitably modified/updated for the post-2015, into a larger sustainable development framework
   c. Expand MDG 7 ('environmental sustainability') into a number of goals with a natural/environmental resource dimension (water, food, energy, etc.). The question of reducing the number of goals will be defeated if this goal is disaggregated into a number of goals. It is therefore proposed that rather than come up with more goals these could be addressed through targets. The fact is that all the 3 pillars of sustainable development are interlinked and dependent and therefore would prefer (a) and (b) as they are more encompassing and leave out (c) as it is already taken care of by (a) and (b).
   d. Other (please describe) N/A
3. Based on your experience with MDGs or other existing goals, what would be the key use of SDGs for your country (select at most two)?
   a. Defining national policies
   b. Influencing national budget allocations (X)
   c. Reviewing the impact of national policies
   d. Addressing key pressure leading to unsustainability
   e. Helping to balance economic, social and environmental pillars in policy making (X)
   f. Guiding development cooperation
   g. Other (please describe)

   Zambia would prefer (e) as priority 1 and (b) as priority 2

   Please explain your choices if you would like:

   Item (e) and (b) have been selected because when policies, based on the balanced economic, social and environmental pillars, are made, they will to a larger extent include all the other itemised issues above and other developmental issues that will have impact on inclusive and sustainable development.

4. How can "universally applicable" SDGs be made practically relevant for countries at different levels of Development? (Please refer to your country's situation as appropriate.)

   SDGs should be general in nature so as to allow countries to fit in according to the level of development and the ability to develop depending on the prevailing situation of a given country. Zambia which has just entered the lower middle income bracket has the challenge of sustaining its economic growth in the face of high poverty levels. The issue is to also address issues of inequality so that everyone benefits from the growth that is being experienced.

5. The SDGs are supposed to be "global in nature". Should targets associated with those goals be:
   a. Common to all countries?
   b. Defined by each country? or
c. Common but differentiated depending on country characteristics and level of development? If c., please explain how.

Proposed answer is (b) to allow a country come up with targets that are appropriate and relevant to it in line with the “Future We Want” though the Goals should be common. This is a “how to achieve issue” and therefore countries will have different strategies to achieve the common goal.

6. Which existing goals and targets (e.g., MDGs, goals/targets in Agenda 21, JPOI) do you think should be incorporated- perhaps in updated form- in a proposal for sustainable development goals.

All development initiatives somehow need to be incorporated as they are related and interlinked. It will be a question of harmonising those that are similar so that there is a reduction in the number of Development Goals. If the Development Goals are precise and specific, but diverse in nature they will provide room for countries to respond appropriately to issues that are relevant and affect them. The following development initiatives should be incorporated:

- MDGs because there is still unfinished business - there are some goals which will not be met, but are still relevant and therefore should be carried over and updated to take into account the emerging issues;
- Istanbul Programme of Action which targets Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Almaty Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and the Mauritius Strategy for Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Issues in these documents may also be relevant to other countries, though countries may be affected at different levels e.g. Multiple Crises and other emerging challenges such as the financial and economic crisis indicates that sustainable development will be a big challenge unless such issues are also addressed;
- Implementation of Agenda 21 whose issues are closely related to the issues identified above;
- Sustainable Energy for all Initiative;
- Monterrey consensus on Financing for Development; and
- Doha Development Round of Trade negotiations.

7. What specific steps can be taken to ensure that the SDGs are coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015? Take into account all the development related initiatives that are currently being implemented. Check for the commonalities and differences and in a systematic and coherent manner have them harmonised.
8. How should assessments of progress toward the achievement of SDGs be carried out at the global level? There is need for a simple, but yet effective standard assessment mechanism or strategy to be put in place. Member countries should be reporting progress periodically (period should be agreed upon whether annually or any other time frame). Then independent assessments should be made based on reports as a way of verifying and also as a tool for sharing good practices.

9. What measures should be taken to make the process of developing a proposal for SDGs inclusive and participatory? How should civil society and other relevant stakeholders be engaged? A consultative process at different levels should be done to get as many views as possible which can then be analysed and processed to get the general view on the matter and put them in their perspective. Thereafter, consensus should be built around identified key areas by involving all key players, namely: member states; civil society and private entities; and other relevant stakeholders.

10. What principles should underpin the development of the SDGs? (the UN TT report, for example, recommended adding (i) reducing inequalities and (ii) promoting human rights (iii) ensuring sustainability);

- Promoting good governance which is essential to the country’s development process.
- Promoting the green economy
- Promoting gender equality and equity

11. How should a new Global Partnership for Development be constructed within or around the SDGs? The new Global Partnership for Development should be in such a manner as to achieve a win-win situation for all. For example, easing of regional and global trade barriers through common agreements will be key to a more robust and open trading regime that spurs balanced growth.

12. Do you have any other observations, ideas or inputs you would like to offer to inform the initial work of the open working group on sustainable development goals?

While it is appreciated that sustainable development goals would be key in guiding countries’ development agendas, it must be appreciated that though countries are unique and diverse, they may be facing similar problems and therefore, careful considerations must be made to ensure that there is diversity within the goals that will allow effective implementation within a country’s ability. Standard indicators are also important for purposes of monitoring, comparison as well as learning and sharing good
practices. There should be a standard monitoring and evaluation mechanism which should allow room for flexibility and not rigidity. Reliable statistics should also play an important role in developing the sustainable development agenda as this will help in giving a realistic picture. The absence of statistics may lead to under reporting where what is obtaining on the ground is different from what is being reported on, due to non-availability of important and necessary data. Overall, the Sustainable Development Goals should be gender responsive, socially inclusive and environmentally friendly.