

**Expert Group Meeting on the science-policy interface:  
Feedback and inputs on chapter 1 of the Global Sustainable Development Report 2015  
Zagreb, Croatia, 2-4 March 2015**

**Concept note**

***Background***

A major outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20) was the decision to establish a universal, intergovernmental high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF)<sup>1</sup>. Among the functions of the forum, Rio+20 decided that the forum will strengthen the science-policy interface including in the form of a global sustainable development report. This was former reconfirmed in a UN General Assembly Decision, as well as in the Ministerial Declaration agreed at the second session of the HLPF.

A prototype Global Sustainable Development Report was produced by the UN Division for Sustainable Development and discussed at the second meeting of the HLPF in July 2014. The Report illustrated a range of potential content, alternative approaches, and various ways of participation, in order to support Member States' deliberation on the scope and methodology of future editions for the Report. It maps sustainable development assessments and related processes and highlights emerging issues identified by scientists; reviews sustainable development progress versus goals suggested by science; outlines future pathways toward sustainable development; outlines investment needs; and identifies lessons learnt from national, regional and global case studies of the climate-land-energy-water-development nexus.

In the future, it is envisioned that in-depth GSDR reports will be published every four years, coinciding with the sessions of the HLPF held under the auspices of the General Assembly. Shorter reports eventually feeding into the larger quadrennial reports will be prepared each year for the forum's sessions held under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. Topics addressed by these annual reports will change from one year to another and reflect a rotation among the main topics addressed by the GSDR, as well as changing emerging issues and clusters or "nexuses" of sectors.

The general approach to the GSDR report, as per the mandate in the Rio+20 outcome document, will be that of an assessment of assessments, documenting and describing the landscape of information and scientific knowledge on specific issues and/or clusters of inter-related issues. The report will be global in coverage, while taking into account regional perspectives. Extensive inputs will be sought from scientists, government officials, the UN system, as well as stakeholders at all levels, including representatives of academies of sciences and of key international assessments.

The 2015 edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report will include a chapter on science-policy interface. Within the context of the forum's mandate to strengthen the science-policy interface, the chapter will address three main topics:

- (i) identifying concrete ways in which the forum could discharge this mandate, and elicit the views of scientists on what priorities they would suggest for the forum in this regard;

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/66/288

- (ii) the chapter will assess the coverage of SDG areas (as proposed by the Open Working Group in its proposal) by existing international assessments; and
- (iii) the chapter will explore linkages between the international and national levels of SPI.

### ***Objective of the meeting***

The main objective of the expert group meeting is to collect feedback and additional inputs from a group of committed scientists and policy makers on the draft chapter of the report, in order to make it most relevant for the discussion of science-policy interface in the 20015 high-HLPF.

The main outcomes of the meeting are expected to be a strengthened chapter on science-policy interface for the report, through feedback and additional inputs provided by experts, as well as ideas of important topics that the GSDR could address in coming years.

### ***Programme of the EGM and approach***

The EGM will last for three days. The meeting will be a hands-on, working-level meeting. Formal presentations will be the exception and most of the time will be allocated to the discussion of the draft chapter. The text will be sent to participants in advance in order to maximize the interaction time during the meeting. On day three, there will be a whole day discussions with a smaller group of participants on the development of training modules for diplomats based on the prototype GSDR and the GSDR 2015.

### ***Venue and date***

Zagreb, Croatia, 2-4 March 2015

### ***Participants***

In order to ensure that the meeting can be most efficient and stay focused on improving the content of the chapter, the number of participants will be limited to around 15. Participants will be a mix of contributors to the 2014 and 2015 GSDR, science-policy experts, and other experts, taking into account regional and gender balance.