



**Sustainable  
Development  
Knowledge  
Partnership**

# **Sustainable Development Knowledge Partnership (SDKP)**

A global partnership to organize  
and prepare knowledge for CSD

Multistakeholder Dialogue on Implementing Sustainable Development,

1 February 2010

Tariq Banuri, UN-DESA

# Background and objectives

- A significant body of knowledge now exists on the concept and practice of SD, BUT
  - this information is fragmented
  - often not available in a convenient form for policy makers and practitioners.
- Purpose / mission statement: To organize the knowledge on sustainable development in order to make it more useful for practitioners and policy makers.

# Ongoing and contemplated activities

- Publications:
  - “sustainable development insight” Briefs
  - SD Book series with major Publisher
- Communication and coherence:
  - SD timeline
  - SD web portal
- Sustainable development assessment (SDA), which could contribute to preparation for UNCSA
- Annual conference / series of workshops on SD
- Capacity-building of developing country institutions

# Organization

- Open partnership to bring together individuals, institutions, and networks engaged in the production and dissemination of knowledge on SD
- Multi-centered network organized around working groups and activities
- Steering Committee of Founding Members
  - Annual review and assessment of the work of the Partnership
  - Guidance on how to achieve the Partnership's stated goals
  - Promote the Partnership's achievements to broader SD community
- Secretariat temporarily assigned to UN-DSD
  - Once the Partnership takes root, secretariat functions can rotate
  - Some proposals for regional centers
- Funding currently being sought from member countries to support SDA, web development, and capacity building

# SDKP Members

- More than 30 confirmed members
- Government of Italy
- Institutions include:
  - Boston University – [Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future](#)
  - International Institute for Environment and Development ([IIED](#))
  - IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy ([CEESP](#))
  - Stockholm Environment Institute ([SEI](#))
  - International Sustainable Development Research Network (ISDR)
- Individuals

# Activities: Publications

- Policy Briefs Series  
*"Sustainable Development Insights"* launched on behalf of SDKP with support from the Pardee Center.
  - Series Editors: Prof. Adil Najam, Director Pardee Center, and David Le Blanc
  - Managed and hosted by the Pardee Center as contribution to SDKP



## Pushing "Reset" on Sustainable Development

**Alan AtKisson**  
 In Fall 2008, when the scale and magnitude of the world's economic meltdown began to settle in, I posted the following update to Twitter (which was automatically copied to my Facebook page):

The collapse, went the implied thinking, would make it more evident that a massive overhaul was necessary in our use of energy and materials, our treatment of the world's poor, the perverse incentives in our economic models, etc. Everywhere one looked, sor on bet off! fu, tut. Tra sh up tra dil.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**  
 Alan AtKisson is president of the AtKisson Group, a global sustainability consultancy and co-president of the International Network of Resource Information Centers, aka "The Balaban Group." He has worked at the leading edge of sustainability innovation and practice since 1988. His firm's clients include global companies, governments, cities, and other organizations committed to sustainability leadership. His most recent book is *The ISIS Agreement: How unustainability can improve*.

*Alan AtKisson is wondering how to continue articulating sustainable development in an era of financial collapse.*  
 Responses posted to my Facebook wall (apologies to readers who do not know that I am referring to those text messages published on popular social networking websites) and by email were uniformly optimistic. Corporate sustainability champions, university leaders, and other consultants all said the same thing: "This is the best opportunity for advancing sustainability that we've ever had."

[www.un.org/esa/dsd](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd) <http://tinyurl.com>

## Rio + 20: Another World Summit?

**Miguel Muller and Adil Najam**  
 The year 2012 will mark the 20th anniversary of the landmark 1992 Rio Earth Summit – officially called the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). It is more than likely that the

especially important not only because the Rio Earth Summit was, in fact, a particularly significant event, but also because Rio itself marked the 20th anniversary of an equally significant

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**  
 Miguel Muller is the Executive Director of the Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future, specializes in climate change, renewable energy and sustainable development. He has participated as an observer in nearly 50 international environmental negotiations settings.

Prof. Adil Najam is the Frederick S. Pardee Professor of Global Public Policy at Boston University and Director of the Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future. He has served as the United Nations High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) lead on Sustainable Development and has worked with launching the global environmental governance (GEG) system, including the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

However, other "anniversary" celebrations have been far less memorable or meaningful. One example, for example, was that was a "Biodiversity 20" as well as a

international community will desire to commemorate the anniversary in some fashion, possibly by holding a follow-up summit, to do a great deal. And if so, what might such a summit focus on as a worthwhile agenda?

Of course, there is nothing magical about 20th anniversaries except that – like any anniversary – they present a convenient opportunity to re-examine and reflect upon issues in a way that brings new awareness and focus to them. The opportunity provided by this particular anniversary may be

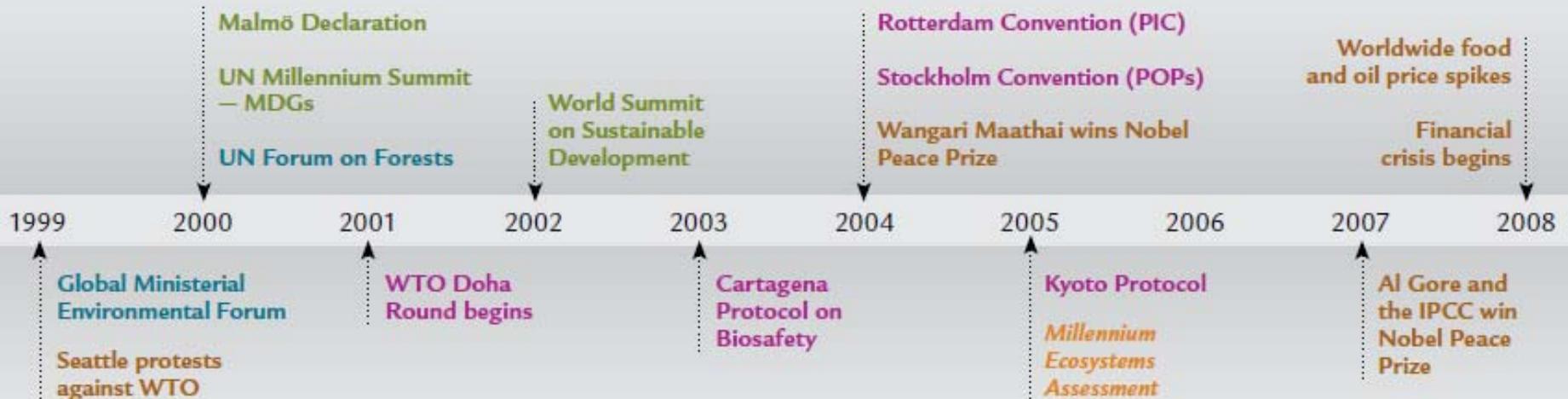
renewed, the UN's United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCED) held in Stockholm and marked with launching the global environmental governance (GEG) system, including the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

**Sustainable Development begins a series of three policy papers supporting the Sustainable Development Knowledge Partnership (SDKP) and edited by Boston University's Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future. The series seeks to provide a broad interdisciplinary dialogue on how to accelerate sustainable development in all levels.**

[www.un.org/esa/dsd](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd) <http://tinyurl.com> [www.un.org/esa/dsd](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd)

# SD timeline

- Non-comprehensive timeline of key events with global impact since 1944
- Communication support to raise awareness on evolution of SD.



# SD web portal

- Goal: to improve web content on SD
  - Comprehensive, “living” multimedia encyclopedia on SD, organized with a “mind map”
  - Content: encyclopedia-type articles, bibliographies, weblinks, podcasts, videos, images, datasets, case studies, biographies, organizations, events, places, etc.
- Project concept developed by Boston University, for implementation as a branded, stand-alone destination in the Encyclopedia of Earth (<http://www.eoearth.org/>)
  - Benefit from synergies, economies of scale in development, existing audience, readership and publishing agreements
  - Open access nature of EoE; govern-by-consensus approach of the EoE community commensurate with SDKP principles
- Milestones:
  - Start early 2010, public release of a “beta” public site, late 2010.
  - Full development by June 2012 for the UNCSD meeting.

# Sustainable development assessment (SDA)

- **Goal:** A dynamic stocktaking of Sustainable Development over the past two decades, as a possible contribution to UNCSD
  - Take stock of achievements and contributions
  - Identify gaps and shortcomings
  - Assess impact of emerging challenges
  - Identify possible roadmaps for the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- Initial suggestion for draft outline discussed among SDKP members in August 2009.
- Continued discussions in SDKP and with external institutions.

# Annual conference / series of workshops on SD

- SDKP will organize an annual conference at CSD sessions
- For 2010 and 2011, a series of small-size workshops is contemplated to provide input for UNCSO
  - First small-size workshop on the theme “The challenge of sustainability” to be held in May 2010
  - Organized by UN-Division for Sustainable Development with Prof. Steve Marglin, Harvard University
- Partnership being explored with other networks for larger conferences in New York 2011 and Brazil 2012.

Partnership webpage:

[http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd\\_aofw\\_sdkp/sdkp\\_index.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_sdkp/sdkp_index.shtml)



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