General Assembly

Distr.: General

Original: English

**First Intersessional Meeting for the United Nations
Conference on Sustainable Development**
10-11 January 2011

Synthesis Report on Best Practices and Lessons Learned on the

Objective and Themes of the Conference

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

More than 100 member States, Major Groups' organizations, and United Nations system entities responded to the five-part questionnaire that was proposed by the first Preparatory Committee of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in May 2010, soliciting their views and requesting information pertaining to the objectives and themes of the Conference. The Synthesis Report is a reflection of these responses, examining growth in political commitment to sustainable development and evaluating progress in implementation since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit; identifying new and emerging challenges; and offering opinions and suggestions that will set the foundation for future discussions and actions on the themes of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (GESDPE) and the institutional framework for sustainable development. The results will continue to evolve as additional responses are compiled and synthesized as part of the UNCSD preparatory process.

* A/CONF.216/PC/1.

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Contents

I. Introduction

1. During the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), held in New York from 17 to 19 May 2010, the Contact Group on the Preparatory Process of UNCSD discussed pending procedural matters on the preparatory process, as per General Assembly resolution A/RES/64/236, and the PrepCom subsequently requested the UNCSD Secretariat to "seek information, inputs and contributions including through a questionnaire addressed to member States, the UN system, international financial institutions (IFIs), Major Groups and other stakeholders, on their experiences including success factors, challenges and risks with respect to the objective and themes of the Conference." They further requested the Secretariat, with the guidance of the Bureau, to prepare a synthesis of the information and contributions collected.[1]

2. Based on the request of UNCSD's first Preparatory Committee (PrepCom I), this synthesis report has been prepared by the Secretariat for consideration during the UNCSD Intersessional Meeting to be held in New York on 10-11 January 2011.

II. Overview

3. As of 15 December 2010, a total of 101 responses to the questionnaire had been received by the Secretariat. Of the 44 responses received from member States, 22 were submitted by developed countries, including one comprehensive submission from the European Union, and 22 responses were received from developing countries or countries with economies in transition. To make up for the limited number of replies from developing countries, efforts were made to review their statements presented to the Second Committee during the 65th session of the General Assembly, as recommended by the UNCSD Bureau at its eighth meeting on 19 November 2010. Responses were also received from 31 Major Groups' organizations or consolidated networks, and from 26 UN system organizations.[2] A complete list of respondents is provided in the Annex attached to this report.

4. Responses to the questionnaire are synthesized in each of the following sections of the report, which correspond to the five attachments. Due to limited space, it is not feasible to summarize the wealth of responses in a way that provides a thorough and detailed analysis. Rather, this report seeks to synthesize the main messages and summarize the overarching views in an objective, balanced and coherent manner based on the replies to the questionnaire and statements, as appropriate.

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[1] Recommendations of the Contact Group in the Preparatory Process, paragraphs 5-6. Annex I of the Co-Chairs' Summary, UNCSD PrepCom I. http://www.uncsd2012.org/files/other_pdfs/prepcom1/RecommendationsContactGroup1.pdf

[2] All responses are available in their entirety at:
http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=62&Itemid=112

5. To report on the responses more fully, the UNCSD Secretariat has also created a compendium that catalogues every response by every actor to each question in the questionnaire. For purposes of transparency and analysis for all involved in the UNCSD process, this data will be made available online prior to the Intersessional Meeting at: www.uncsd2012.org.

6. In addition, due to the limited time frame allotted to complete the questionnaire for the purposes of producing this report, the Secretariat further invites all interested parties to continue submitting responses to the questionnaire if they have not already done so. These will be included in the online compendium as they are received, with the aim to build a complete resource of responses from all member States, Major Groups, and UN system organizations involved in the UNCSD process.

III. Renewed political commitment for sustainable development

7. This part of the questionnaire sought to elicit the views of member States, Major Groups and UN system organizations on their perception of the level of political commitment to sustainable development implementation. Responses to how such commitment is measured, where it has been successful, how and where support could be strengthened, and priorities for the next ten years are potential areas for further discussion. The trade-offs among the three pillars of sustainable development could also be examined in greater detail.

Experiences

8. Respondents generally agreed that high-level "ownership" of the sustainable development agenda, as well as transparency in information sharing and decision making, are key factors positively reinforcing political commitment to sustainable development.

9. Most member States and others reported that political commitment is most successfully measured through the enactment of legislation and policy at national and regional levels, and indicators such as budgetary allocation, development of institutions, and stakeholder participation are strong indicators of the translation of political commitment into action.

10. Many member States noted that quantitative indicators (i.e. budgetary allocation and financial support) can be most effective but are not always easy to measure. Qualitative indicators (i.e. new policy reforms, public opinion and media interest), applied to key priorities for sustainable development, allow the evaluation of the sustainability framework, highlighting conflicts and trade-offs.[3] Monitoring, evaluation and reporting mechanisms are also important in this regard. Economic indicators will always be important, but others such as indicators on equity, gender mainstreaming and

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[3] EU comprehensive response.

stakeholder participation and comprehensive indicators (e.g. Human Development Index) are also valuable.[4]

11. Many Major Groups highlighted whether governments have institutionalized the participation and inclusion of civil society, the level of transparency around political commitments, and whether implementation of previously made commitments has been achieved. Respect for human rights, for example by adopting an instrument like the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, was also highly ranked.[5] Media interest is not always considered a reliable indicator by some groups due to its potential for volatility and lack of objectivity[6], yet its function as a tool for public awareness raising was also recognized as important.

12. Most UN system organizations prioritized indicators relevant to measuring peace and security, human rights, political governance and administration, economic and corporate governance and private sector development. Ratification of multilateral environmental agreements and whether a sustainable development framework takes into account the requirements of holistic, balanced and integrated development that embodies inclusiveness were also cited as important.

13. Most member States and UN system organizations reported stronger commitment to sustainable development since 1992, both at national and international levels, noting a myriad of steps and actions to mainstream sustainable development and implement Agenda 21 and various multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). New international and regional conventions have been adopted in the environmental field, leading to an estimated total of 500 international conventions and instruments since 1992, when the concept of sustainable development was formally recognized and placed at the heart of the Rio agenda, recognizing the need for a coordinated, integrated and balanced approach in promoting the operationalization of sustainable development.[7] This expansion reflects a growing awareness of the importance and urgency of sustainable development issues.[8] However, the political commitment of the international community compared to 1992 should not be measured only by the number of adopted conventions and declarations, but also by their implementation, and some acknowledged that there is a continued divergence between political commitments renewed on various occasions since 1992 and the willingness to engage in concrete actions for their implementation.[9] Raising awareness and communicating with the public is a challenge in national level decision making processes.[10] Promoting sustainable lifestyles and

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[4] Ecuador.

[5] Response from key member organizations of the Women's Major Group.

[6] ITUC, others.

[7] GA65 Second Committee, agenda Item 20, Statement by the G-77 and China.

[8] EU comprehensive response.

[9] Switzerland, others.

[10] Caribbean Regional Report for the Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5).

environmental education can help to instil personal responsibility and commitment in individuals and communities.[11]

14. The implementation of international agreements is seriously constrained in many countries by limited financial resources, commercial viability of required investments, and inadequate and inappropriate human, financial, technical and institutional capacity dedicated to implementation and evaluation.[12] Also, the priorities of national governments have tended to shift due to the emergence of new global challenges.

15. Balancing the three pillars of sustainable development remains a challenge. The balance will be different for countries at different stages of development and with different resource endowments. Social and economic development remains the highest priority for developing countries. While a number of countries have made considerable progress in this regard, for many countries – particularly in sub-Saharan Africa – the progress achieved remains insufficient to reach development goals such as the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on poverty.[13]

16. The link between development and environment could be more prominently featured in the discussion on MDGs.[14] The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have an ongoing Poverty-Environment Initiative operating in 22 countries which focuses on how improved management of environmental resources can contribute to poverty eradication. Brazil´s recent history—including an increase in basic education, a drop in unemployment, GDP growth, a boost in agricultural production and a clear decline in deforestation rates— demonstrates success in advancing the three pillars of sustainable development in a coordinated manner.[15]

17. Some Major Groups noted that a shift in the political discourse on sustainable development has taken place over the past 18 years. From focusing on sustainable development issues such as sustainable housing, employment and public transport, the discourse now focuses on climate change, CO_2 reductions, industry shifts and renewable energies. Vis-à-vis climate change, there is consensus around the need for catastrophe planning, disaster risk reduction and adaptation/mitigation strategies.[16] Because many developed member States have failed to achieve the internationally agreed target of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) for Official Development

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[11] GA65 Second Committee, Agenda Item 20: Statement by Israel.

[12] Mauritius, Caribbean SIDS Regional Synthesis Report.

[13] ECA. See Sustainable Development Report on Africa: Five-Year Review of the Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Outcomes in Africa (WSSD+5) www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/documents/SDRA.pdf.

[14] GA65 Second Committee, Agenda Item 20: Statement by Norway

[15] Brazil.

[16] Stakeholder Forum.

Assistance (ODA), and because political pledges across member States do not always lead to actual policies in place on the ground, scepticism was voiced by some respondents as to whether the level of political commitment is adequate.[17]

Success Factors

18. Political support has manifested itself at the international level through the proliferation of MEAs; at the regional and sub-regional levels through political alliances and partnerships such as the African Union and its development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Global Island Partnerships, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), and the Pacific Island Forum; at the national level through national sustainable development strategies (NSDSs), national sustainable development councils (NSDCs), and increased inter-Ministerial coordination; and at local level through Local Agendas 21 and similar community programmes, including increased support for Major Groups and their efforts to implement sustainable development.

19. Formulation and implementation of NSDSs or their equivalents, development of NSDCs, inter-ministerial and other coordinating mechanisms, and establishment of Sustainable Development Ministries, offices or focal entities in some countries reflect growing political support for sustainable development by integrating sustainable development dimensions into public policy and increasing the participation of relevant stakeholders in its creation and implementation. The transformation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) in July 2002 and the articulation of NEPAD are examples of important regional initiatives that strengthen political support for sustainable development.

20. Green workplace initiatives, green procurement, green growth, green investing,[18] green taxes,[19] eco-labelling, increased social entrepreneurship and corporate social responsibility, improved access to drinking water and sanitation, development of and investment in renewable energy technologies, including through feed-in tariffs and carbon offsets under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), carbon emissions trading, activities surrounding the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development, public campaigns related to raising awareness on climate change and recognition of indigenous rights were all cited by various respondents as manifestations of increased political and policy support for sustainable development.

21. Specific industry sectors or thematic areas where national political commitment to achieve sustainable development goals was cited as especially strong by most Member States include energy, climate change, MDGs, sustainable water management,

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[17] GA65 Second Committee, Agenda Item 20, Statements by Bangladesh, Papua New Guinea, India, Philippines.

[18] Caribbean Regional Report for the Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5).

[19] Sweden.

sustainable consumption and production, sustainable tourism,[20] forests and deforestation,[21] and natural resource and biodiversity protection. Political commitment to the development of renewable energy has been encouraging in a number of countries, including through green stimulus spending.[22] Some member States and others noted specific commitments to wind energy,[23] addressing water and air pollution,[24] waste management,[25] sustainable communities,[26] increasing opportunities for socially vulnerable people to participate in the labour market[27], education[28], and combating HIV/AIDS.[29] Several Major Groups additionally reported that, in several countries, national initiatives to respect the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities (e.g. the Indian Forest Law) have triggered a formal recognition of the territorial rights of indigenous peoples and local communities over forests and other ecosystems, and consolidation of traditional sustainable management practices.[30]

22. Many UN System organizations echoed the commitments of member States, and also mentioned support for human health, food and agriculture, sustainable urban planning/transport, forests, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). One organization noted good examples of national level or federally supported policies, programmes and laws promoting local action for biodiversity in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Spain, and South Africa.[31]

23. Support for climate change and for the MDGs are interlinked with support for sustainable development and increase its momentum. Campaigns to reduce child labour, enhance human rights and equality, combat HIV/AIDS, and respond to natural disasters are other examples relevant to sustainable development.[32] The response of the global community to short-term global crises—financial, food, energy—was cited by some as successful, but the challenge is to generate such a response to long-term crises that will determine the sustainability of growth and development.[33]

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[20] GA65 Second Committee General Debate, statement by Gabon; GA65 Second Committee, Agenda Item 20, statement by the Gambia.

[21] Caribbean Regional Report for the Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5).

[22] GA65 Second Committee, General Debate, Statement by Ethiopia.

[23] Scotland and Germany, as noted in the response from European Students' Forum.

[24] Czech Republic, Poland, ESCAP.

[25] Lithuania.

[26] Ireland, Japan, Sustainable Development Commission, UNEP

[27] Lithuania.

[28] Tanzania.

[29] Botswana, UNAIDS.

[30] Key member organizations of the Women's Major Group.

[31] UN HABITAT.

[32] Botswawa and ITUC, respectively.

[33] World Bank.

Challenges

24. The highest common priorities for accelerating progress toward sustainable development over the next ten years include achieving the MDGs and other development goals; securing a global agreement on climate change and a successful finalization of the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations; promoting a global shift to a green economy, including increased energy efficiency and use of renewable energy; protecting biodiversity, including fisheries; increasing policy coherence; promoting good environmental governance; and mainstreaming education for sustainable development to ensure that future generations will be better equipped to implement its principles. Human rights, decent work, and social protection were also mentioned. International cooperation and UNCSD outcomes could strengthen support for these by exchanging knowledge and experience, creating awareness, ensuring coordination, and possibly enacting legally binding agreements.

25. Most member States generally hope to accelerate progress towards sustainable development through developing and implementing policy and strategic frameworks necessary to address their country's specific needs. UN Organizations outlined their priorities based on their specific mandates[34], and the majority of Major Groups prioritized creating awareness and promoting sustainable development education, empowering youth and women, protecting indigenous rights, ensuring a just transition to a sustainable economy, achieving decent work for all, and securing a global climate deal.

26. A number of Major Groups stressed a focus on policy coherence[35] and establishing mutually reinforcing commitments, including a clear post-2015 framework for the MDGs that has sustainable development and links to environment and climate change at its core;[36] research regarding combating the effects of climate change on aquatic ecosystems;[37] and ensuring support for communities in implementing Local Agenda 21 Sustainability Plans and for every country in making a rapid transition to full sustainability.[38]

27. Responses highlighted agreement that international cooperation surrounding preparations for UNCSD should strengthen support for sustainable development by, *inter alia*: renewing political commitment, reforming institutional responses, supporting national priorities through technical and financial assistance, providing a platform for exchanging best practices and lessons learned, and coordinating resources. Intensifying

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[34] UNDP noted that the 2011 HDR will focus on sustainability and vulnerability.

[35] ITUC, European Trade Union Confederation, WWF.

[36] WWF, Global EcoVillage Network.

[37] World Aquarium and Conservation for the Oceans Foundation.

[38] Global EcoVillage Network.

cooperation among regions through comprehensive, multi-level and multi-stakeholder processes was also mentioned.[39]

Risks

28. Most acknowledge that there can be difficult trade-offs among the three pillars of sustainable development, and yet they can also be strongly complementary. However, responses indicated that the degree to which they are complementary varies, depending inter alia on the developmental context. The risk is that, especially in countries with relatively short-run planning and policy horizons, the near-term trade-offs and costs of policies to promote greener investments and sectors may be perceived to dominate the longer-term benefits. Some Major Groups noted that the most prominent arguments against environmental regulation and initiatives state that there is little or no economic benefit, or that the economic costs are too high, yet these arguments rarely account for the costs of externalities or future costs. Such a tendency effectively devalues the environmental pillar and the welfare of future generations.[40]

IV. Assessing progress and remaining gaps in implementation

29. Since the 1992 Earth Summit, much effort has been made by the international community to implement Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action, as well as other major international agreements that followed it. In preparation for the UNCSD and its 20 year review of progress and remaining gaps in implementation, this section of the questionnaire sought to elicit views and information on how progress is being measured, what has worked to strengthen it, barriers that inhibit it, and the risks posed by poor integration of the three sustainable development pillars. A wealth of data and information has been provided by respondents, and there is much scope for discussion on the nature of progress made and how to evaluate its various aspects in an ever-changing global context.

Experiences

30. Economic indicators were ranked as most useful for assessing gaps and progress towards sustainable development by many member States, Major Groups and UN System organizations, followed closely by comprehensive, poverty, environment and social indicators (Figure 1). Outcome indicators were ranked as the most useful indicators of integrated goals and strategies (Figure 2). One member State highlighted a useful informal indicator used by the OECD based on the benchmark that a nation should expect to spend 1.5%-2% of GDP to achieve a clean and green economy.[41]

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[39] EU comprehensive response.
[40] Children and Youth Major Group through UNCSD Youth Caucus.
[41]USA.

Figure 1

What indicators or information on sustainable development have proven to be most useful for assessing gaps and progress towards sustainable development?

Figure 2

What indicators of integrated goals and strategies have been most useful?
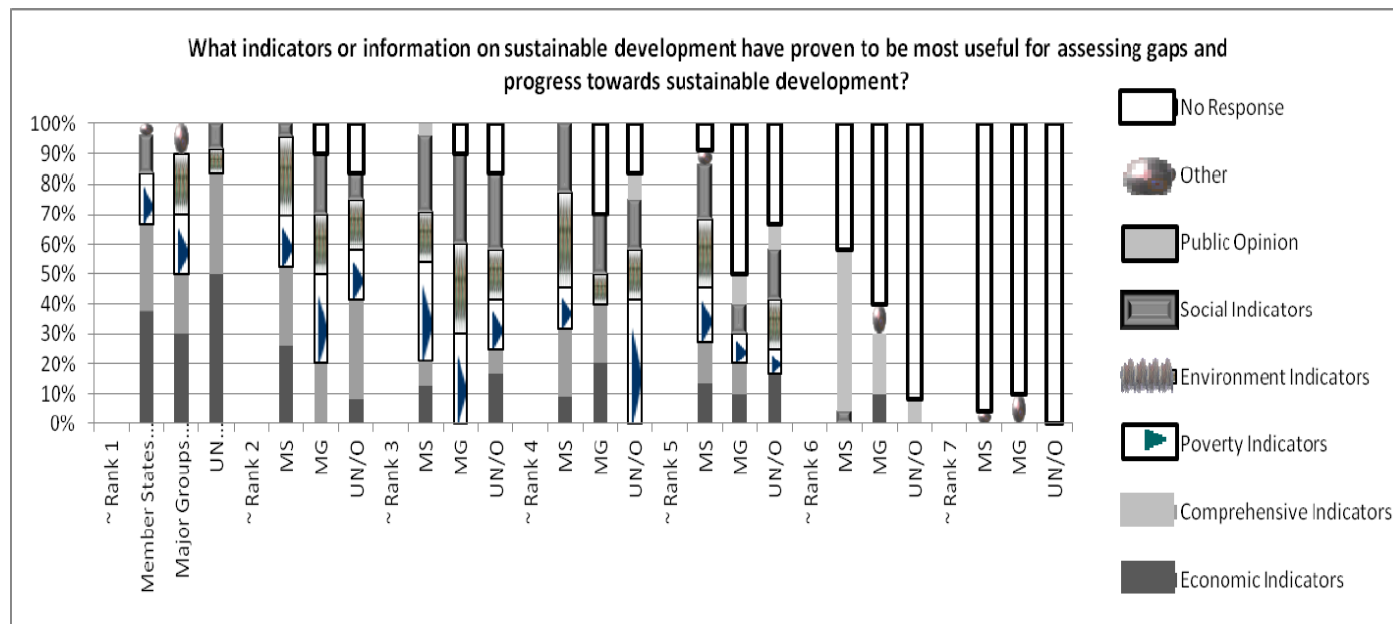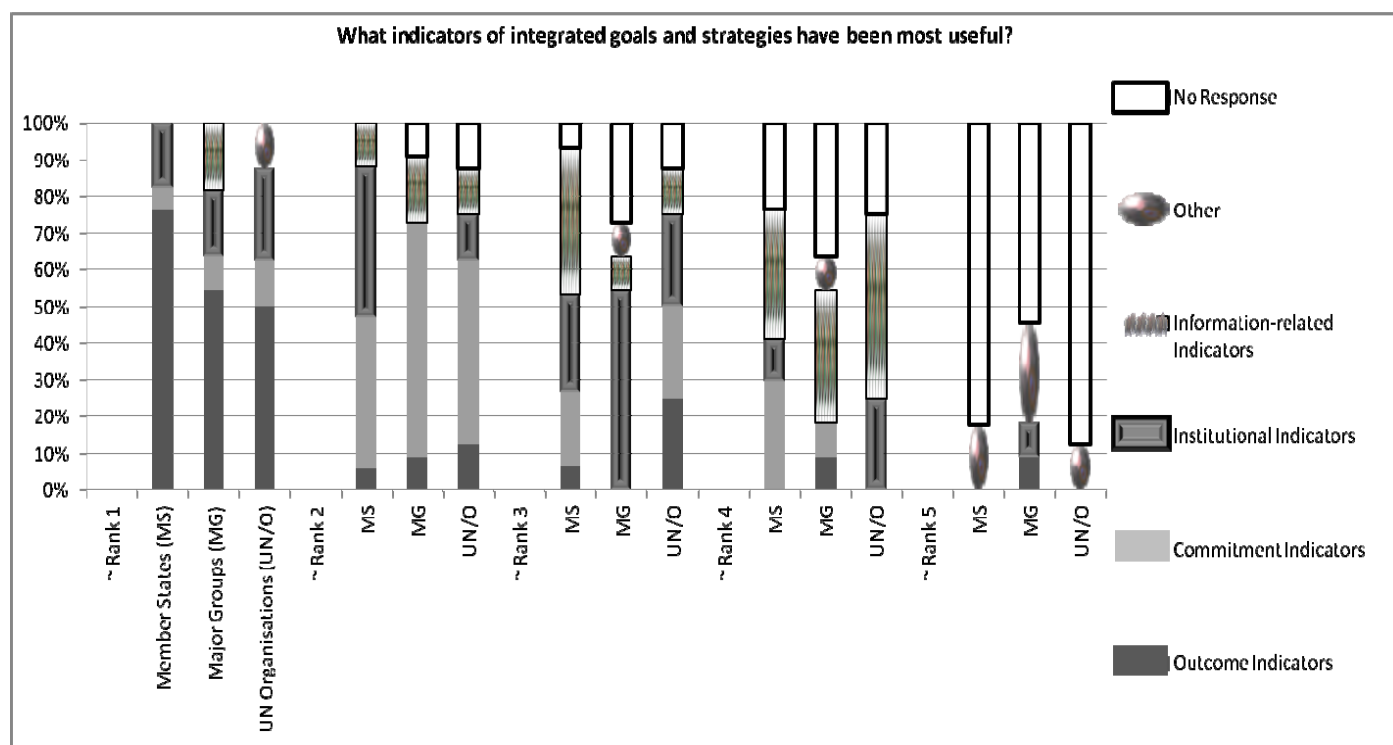
31. Based in part on such indicators, progress in the last 18 years has been recorded in the overall integration of sustainable development principles into economic and social policy development, the development of renewable energy technologies and infrastructure,[42] and the inclusion and protection of the rights of vulnerable groups such as women and indigenous peoples. Comprehensive assessments and studies based on development of core indicators were provided by many respondents.[43] Member States most often cited studies measuring progress toward implementation of NSDS and specific policies and measures at the national level, while most UN System organizations including the regional commissions catalogued studies on progress through global efforts to achieve the MDGs; monitor progress in energy, agriculture, and biodiversity; assess the state of the global environment, such as UNEP's Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) Reports,[44] or implement regional programmes such as NEPAD[45] and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center.[46]

32. Only modest progress was cited by some in poverty reduction,[47] but India is one notable case, where the percentage of the population below the national poverty line has fallen from 36 percent in 1993-94 to 27.5 percent in 2004-05 and 25 percent in 2009, with micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) providing employment to about 60 million persons and contributing to about 8 percent of the country's GDP. The largest flagship programme is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MG-NREGS), which provides employment security for people in rural areas by guaranteeing one hundred days of wage-employment in a financial year.[48]

33. The UN MDG Summit held in September 2010 concluded that developing countries have made significant efforts towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and have had major successes in realizing some of the targets, including *inter alia* combating extreme poverty, improving school enrolment and child health, and expanding access to clean water. Yet, progress has been uneven among regions and between and within countries. Hunger and malnutrition rose again from 2007 through 2009, partially reversing prior gains. There has been slow progress in reaching full and productive employment and decent work for all, advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women, achieving environmental sustainability and providing basic sanitation.[49]

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[42] USA; GA65 General Debate, statements by Ethiopia, Kenya and Peru; GA65 Second Committee, Agenda Item 20, statement by UAE.

[43] All studies are referenced in the online annex of responses at www.uncsd2012.org.

[44] UNEP, http://www.unep.org/geo/GEO_Meetings.asp.

[45] The ECA and ECLAC responses include multiple sources of reports on progress in these regions.

[46] Caribbean Regional Report for the Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5). .

[47] ITUC.

[48] India.

[49] MDG Summit 2010 Outcome Document, A/65/L.1.
http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/pdf/mdg%20outcome%20document.pdf.

34. The recent Nagoya 10th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity concluded that the global biodiversity target—to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth—has not been met in full, despite progress in some countries in protecting habitat important for biodiversity conservation. The Nagoya Conference of the Parties (COP) did result in a number of important initiatives which reflect a renewed political commitment to strengthening biodiversity protection, including the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, a Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, 2011-2020, and activities and indicators for the implementation of the Strategy for Resource Mobilization. The COP also established clear steps to increase cooperation among the Rio Conventions leading up to the UNCSD in 2012.

35. Some countries have made considerable progress in slowing the rate of deforestation. Most recently the Government of Brazil reported that the Amazon's deforestation rate over the past year was the slowest in 22 years and expressed its determination to continue to slow it. In mid-2010, the Indonesian Government announced a two-year moratorium on the conversion of peat land and forest as part of its voluntary commitment to addressing climate change. Norway and Indonesia have been at the forefront of a group of countries that have launched a global initiative to reduce deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), with $3.5 billion in pledged financing so far.

36. Under the auspices of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), member States met in December in Cancun, Mexico, and succeeded in brokering key global agreements on mitigation, adaptation, deforestation, financing and technology transfer. They achieved consensus on a formal, transparent system known as MRVICA, to receive, monitor, report on and verify their commitments to mitigate the negative effects of climate change, and progress was made in financing the climate change agenda. Developed countries are reportedly fulfilling their promise to contribute USD 30 billion into so-called "fast-start" funding in the next three years. The Cancun agreement also set up a mechanism to register and track those promises, a move that would build global confidence in financing overall, and laid the groundwork to create a green climate fund under the Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC and to identify funding sources. Particularly important for developing countries was the creation of an adaptation framework and mechanisms to deploy money and technology to help them address the damages and losses due to climate change.

37. The World Water Forums, organized by the World Water Council, have served to catalyze political interest and commitment to addressing aspects of water directly related to sustainable development. The World Water Assessment Programme's *World Water Development Report* (WWDR) is an example of a periodic, comprehensive review

that provides an authoritative picture of the state of the world's freshwater resources. The Global Water partnership has promoted integrated water resources management (IWRM) through its extensive regional and country-level networks.[50]

38. Most major Groups cited multiple studies documenting progress in various areas. For example, Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration establishes the three pillars of environmental democracy (access to information, public participation and access to justice, collectively called "access rights"), and progress in this area has been recorded through in-depth research carried out by World Resources Institute and its partners in the Access Initiative.[51] A recent report of this initiative (WRI 2010) recommends four steps to institutionalize more inclusive access to information: (i) create access rights; (ii) ensure equal application of access rights; (iii) ensure equal ability to use access rights; and (iv) create additional rights that ensure the ability of the poor to use access rights. It responds to concerns, for example, over allocating scarce resources to improved information access by the poor given other high priorities[52]. Community-level "social audits" of poverty-related spending in India, most recently given official backing in one Indian state, are a good example of the potential power of information in the hands of the poor[53].

Success factors

39. Most member States ranked "use of integrated strategies" and "investment in institutional and technical capacity" equally high in explaining progress in implementation, while the majority of Major Groups ranked "investment in institutional and technical capacity" highest, and the majority of UN system organizations ranked "use of integrative strategies" as most important (Figure 3). Most countries have introduced or promoted integrated planning and decision making for sustainable development through NSDSs, PRSPs, and numerous other variations of such strategies or plans, and most such processes are supported by UN System organizations, particularly the Regional Commissions, as well as the international financial institutions (IFIs). Some Major Groups noted that regardless of the different tools or titles used by countries, integrated planning and decision making are essential for progress in sustainable development.[54]
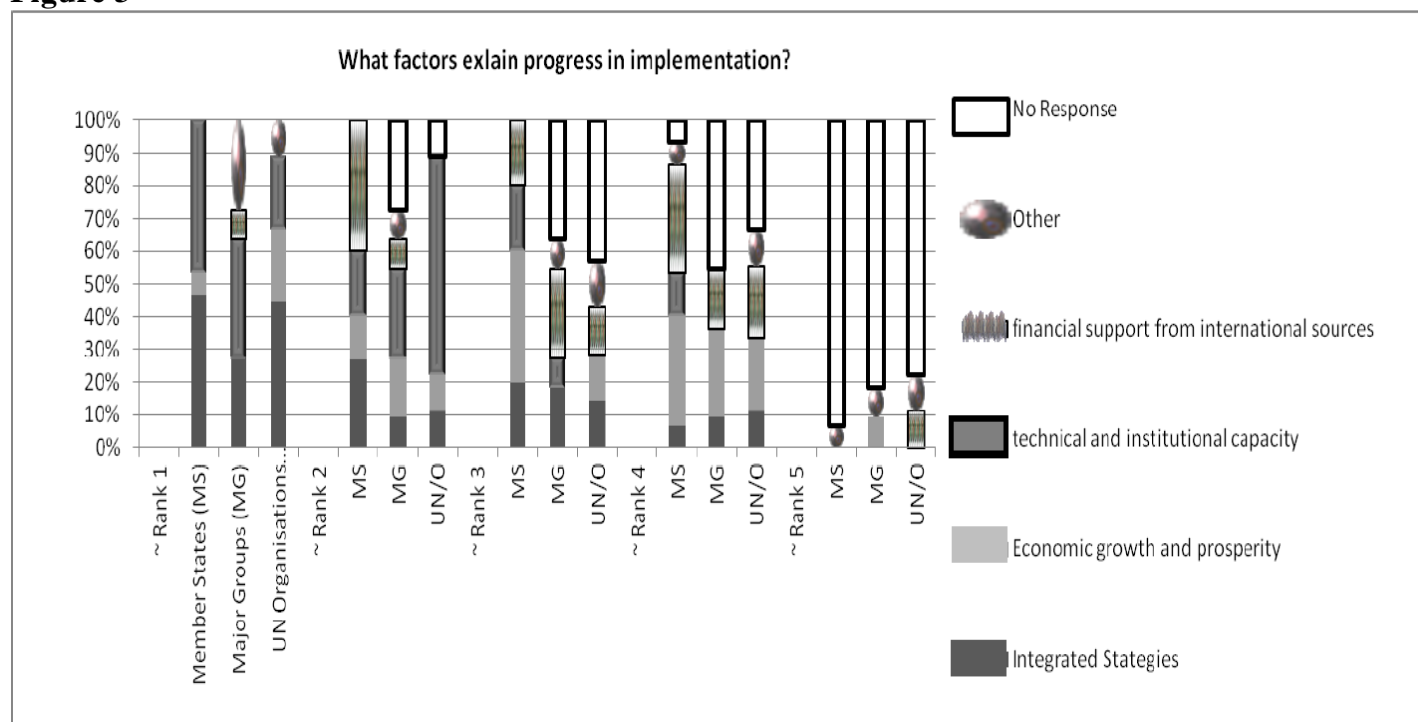
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[50] UNESCO.

[51] The Access Initiative.

[52] WRI (2010), *A Seat at the Table: Including the Poor in Decisions for Development and Environment*, J. Foti and L. de Silva based in findings of the Access Initiative.

[53] L. Polgreen, "Indian State Empowers Poor to Fight Corruption", *NY Times*, 3 Dec. 2010.

[54] ICSU.

Figure 3

What factors exlain progress in implementation?

40. One response observed that, in many developing countries, the Ministries of environment and health have little input in the development of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and vulnerable groups are often not involved, despite the fact that National Environmental Plans, Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions and National Adaptation Plans of Action were effective in attracting funding related to climate change and sustainable development.[55] One regional commission echoed this view, stating that PRSPs in their current form reinforce a preoccupation with short-term poverty reduction interventions, thus paying little or no attention to intergenerational equity considerations, and advising countries to develop NSDSs that can be implemented in stages that take into account short, medium and long-term development objectives.[56] At the same time, in order for people to be committed to the NSDS process, it must result in the improvement of their living standards. UNEP and UNDP highlighted cooperation under the Poverty and Environment Initiative to mainstream environment in national poverty reduction and economic development strategies in countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia and the Pacific.[57]

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[55] Key member organizations of the Women's Major Group.

[56] ECA.

[57] UNEP. http://www.unpei.org/.

41. Existing disparities between the trade regimes and multilateral environmental agreements, such as those between the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) regime and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) regarding the patenting of genetic resources, need to be thoroughly addressed.[58] The World Trade Organization (WTO) noted that the Doha Development Agenda calls on two WTO committees — the Committee on Trade and Environment and the Trade and Development Committee—to act as fora for debating the environmental and developmental aspects of all areas of the negotiations so that the objective of sustainable development can be achieved in all areas of the Doha mandate.[59] Some noted the urgency of completing a balanced, ambitious and development oriented Doha Round agreement, including the removal of environmentally harmful subsidies of developed countries[60].

42. Public-private partnerships are promoted in various forms by many although not all countries, with an emphasis on corporate social responsibility in some cases. Such partnerships are supported and promoted by most Major Groups and the UN System in most regions, and a number of responses highlighted involvement in UN Partnerships for Sustainable Development as an outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002. Member States most often cited public-private partnerships in the delivery of public services such as waste management, water, energy and transport. The Clean Technology Fund was a noted example, where USD 4.5 billion in concessional finance is estimated to be mobilizing co-financing of about $35 billion, of which $12 billion is from the private sector.[61] One Major Group respondent noted with concern that partnerships for provision of public services such as water or energy have often led to reduced quality of service provision and corruption.[62]

43. Technical assistance from the UN system is not necessary for some countries, nor is it a factor for success for others, although it can be especially helpful for developing countries in areas of agriculture, biodiversity, water, energy, and climate change. Many Major Groups also benefit from such assistance.

Challenges

44. "Low political priority for integrated decision making" was ranked by the majority of member States and Major Groups as the biggest barrier to implementation, while the majority of UN System organizations ranked "inadequate coordination between ministries" and "inadequate or unpredictable international support" equally as the biggest barriers to implementation (Figure 4).
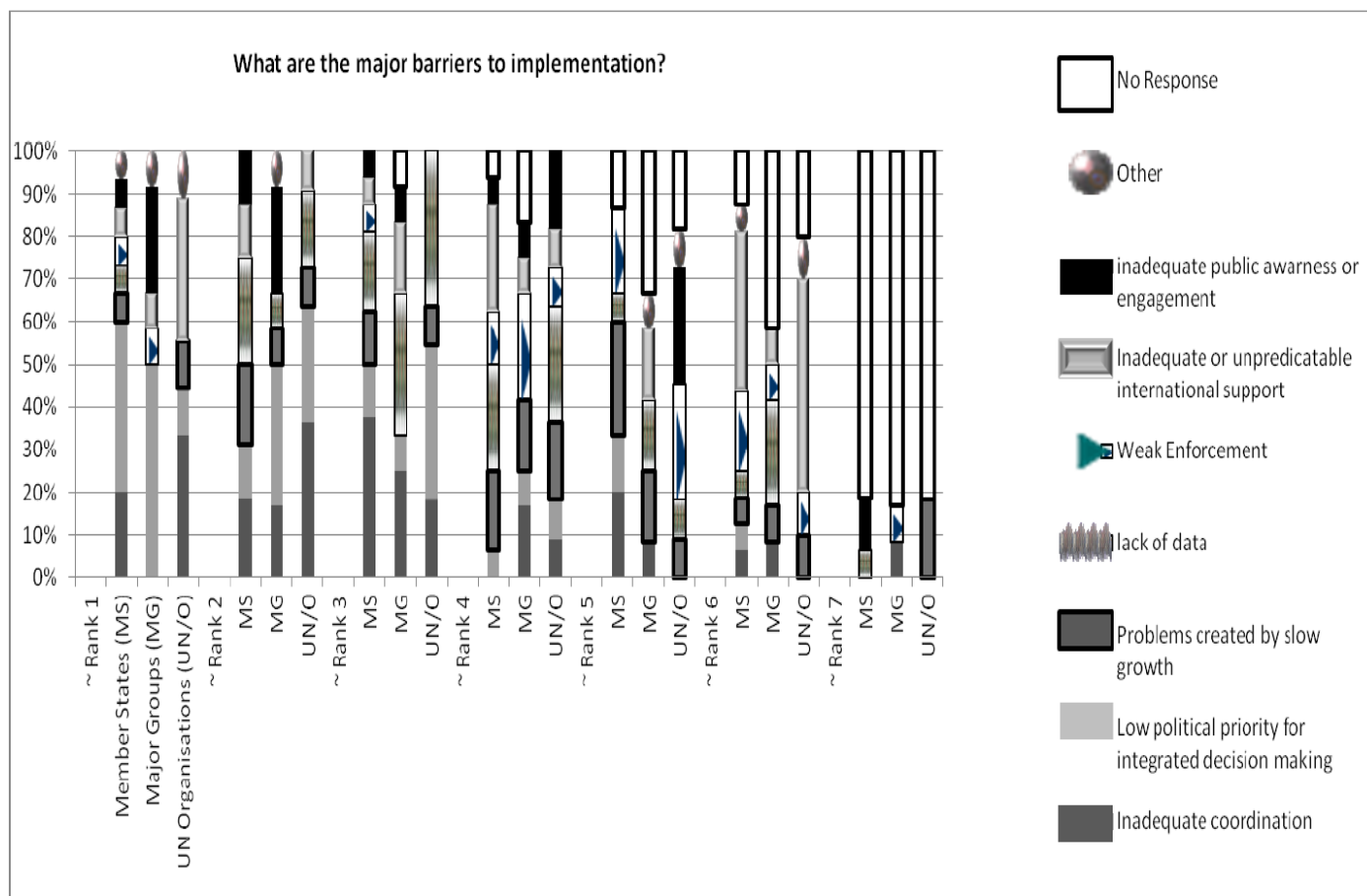
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[58] India.
[59] WTO.
[60] Argentina
[61] World Bank.
[62] ITUC, http://www.psiru.org/.

Figure 4

What are the major barriers to implementation?

45. Respondents highlighted many different steps that could be taken to bridge the implementation gaps, with efforts toward increasing political will and commitment, improving coordination at all levels, increasing awareness, communicating with the public and providing information ranking highest. Actions should also be continued to ensure the use of economic instruments contributing to market transparency and shaping prices which reflect the real economic, social and environmental costs of activities. In particular, some member State noted the need to take action to phase out environmentally harmful subsidies.[63] Implementation of NSDSs and similar strategies and plans must be given a much higher priority, and national budget allocations should be in conformity with these. For example, one Major Group suggested that investment in science and technology for sustainable development must be significantly stepped up.[64] Institutional and financial support of Major Groups' initiatives (e.g. Education for

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[63] Poland, Argentina.
[64] ICSU.

Sustainable Development, Local Agenda 21) would also contribute to implementation.[65] Pressure and support from global institutions can be influential, especially where they inspire public support.[66]

46. A recent compilation[67] by UNDP et al. of national capacity self-assessments (NCSA) in the area of environmental sustainability highlights five widely shared priorities for capacity development: (i) public awareness and environmental education; (ii) information management and exchange; (iii) development and enforcement of policy and regulatory frameworks; (iv) strengthening organizational mandates and structures; (v) economic instruments and sustainable financing mechanisms.

47. At the regional and sub-regional levels, efforts to promote collective action on key political and economic issues, together with accelerated regional economic integration, would also help to bridge implementation gaps, as would an increase in accountability and transparency, basic good governance skills, and peace and stability.[68]

48. In general, limited technical capacity and financial resources were a recurrent challenge to effective implementation. As one example, the resource needs for HIV prevention, AIDS care and treatment and impact mitigation, for example, constitute a significant proportion of the gross national income (GNI) in the highest burden countries of sub-Saharan Africa.[69] SIDS reported that they are severely constrained in monitoring and evaluating sustainable development due to lack of national disaggregated data systems and weak analytical capabilities.

49. The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (NEAA) provides an assessment of global environmental assessments, drawing lessons for policy in two clusters: agriculture, food security and biodiversity; energy, climate and air pollution. The 2008 report notes a strong consensus across assessments that tackling poverty eradication, biodiversity loss and climate change are the highest sustainable development priorities, observing that the biggest challenge is "to find effective political and economic mechanisms to achieve the required global cooperation, while paying special attention to distributional issues" [70].

50. The main difficulties experienced in promoting integrated planning and decision-making mentioned most often included lack of transparency in the decision-making process on

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[65] Hungary.

[66] UK.

[67] UNDP, UNEP, GEF (2010), National Capacity Self-Assessments, August.

[68] ESCWA, Republic of Korea (Statement to GA65 Second Committee).

[69] UNAIDS.

[70] Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (2008), *Lessons from global environmental assessments*, p.8.

development, lack of public participation in the planning process, lack of coordination among government Ministries and agencies with competing priorities, and lack of capacity in human resources and technology. Some vulnerable member States highlighted the impact of environmental degradation and pollution as one of the primary challenges.[71] One member State indicated that, all too often, sustainable development is still considered a synonym for environmental policy rather than an integrated approach.[72] Others cited the inherent complexity and range of sustainable development.[73] Several Major Groups noted that it is difficult for some decision-makers to look at issues from a long-term viewpoint,[74] and that trade-offs exist among sectoral authorities' objectives.[75] Unclear mandates, low accountability, competition for funds, conflicting interests, the absence of institutional mechanisms for joint work and collaboration all exacerbate these problems, which are also reflected in the UN system.[76]

51. Voluntary actions and multi-stakeholder partnerships working towards sustainable development goals have proven to be an important outcome of the WSSD complementary to governments' political commitment, and further actions could be taken to promote these. It is important to involve a broad range of stakeholders, and support could be provided to umbrella stakeholder organizations to facilitate more effective participation.[77] Instruments of corporate social responsibility should be promoted more actively,[78] as should the link between business and sustainable development.[79] Better education for sustainable development could significantly contribute to shaping conditions for promotion of actions and partnerships.[80]

Risks

52. The main risks to sustained progress towards convergence among the three pillars of sustainable development commonly stressed by respondents include: a focus on economic growth to the exclusion of other issues, vested economic and industry interests in various sectors (energy, agriculture, mining), lack of shared vision, weak leadership, failure to reach agreement in multilateral negotiations particularly on trade and climate change, failure to deliver on existing commitments especially regarding ODA, poor integration of and coherence between diverging strategies, increased natural and global disasters affecting the world's most vulnerable people, and political conflict in some parts of the world.

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[71] Caribbean Regional Report for the Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5).

[72] Belgium, Pacific Regional Report for the 5-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of SIDS (MSI+5).

[73] Spain, Switzerland, others.

[74] World Aquarium and Conservation for the Oceans Foundation.

[75] ITUC.

[76] WWF.

[77] Belgium, Global EcoVillage Network, others.

[78] Switzerland, Poland.

[79] UN HABITAT.

[80] Czech Republic.

V. Addressing new and emerging challenges

53. All countries face similar challenges, but they differ widely in their ability to cope with risks and shocks. Challenges have been exacerbated in developing countries by poverty, competition for scarce resources, the rapid pace of rural to urban migration, and the concomitant challenges to provide food, infrastructure and access to basic health, water and energy services. Particularly high levels of vulnerabilities of the natural, economic and social systems of SIDS have been highlighted in the recent five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States (MSI+5). Due to their unique characteristics, the SIDS are especially vulnerable to external shocks and thus have made less progress than most other groupings, or even regressed, especially in terms of poverty reduction and debt sustainability. How these challenges are best addressed, including the degree and types of support needed, may vary depending on the context and circumstances of each country or region.

54. One significant development since Rio 1992 has been the acceleration of the globalization process. As NEAA (2008) notes, different global assessments take different perspectives on the benefits and costs of globalization: put simply, whether it is a 'race to the top' or 'race to the bottom', in particular from an environmental perspective. While there have been important economic benefits of global market integration through trade and investment, there are also increased economic risks for example from greater financial market interdependence. Similarly, there are benefits for the environment from a freer flow of knowledge and technology across borders, but those can in some cases be more than offset by the increased environmental pressures from the rising scale of consumption and production. Consumption and production have become highly globalized, with consumption choices of consumers in one part of the world having measurable effects on production in another. Greater interdependence of economies argues for stronger cooperation in addressing resultant sustainable development challenges.

Experiences

55. New and emerging challenges ranked highest by respondents included: climate change and natural disasters related to it; the interrelated financial, economic and food crises; energy security; degradation of ecosystems (particularly marine ecosystems) and diminishing natural resources including water scarcity; political instability and social unrest; unsustainable consumption and production patterns; impacts of population growth and rapid urbanization. One member State responded that, instead of identifying new and emerging issues, the focus must remain on integrating the issues and understanding their potential multiple effects, noting that the most important challenges we are faced with today are not new, but are older issues that require stronger political action.[81]

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[81] Belgium.

56. Respondents described many types of mechanisms in place to address challenges at the national and local levels that often encompassed the same policies and programmes outlined in their assessment of progress. Some other measures mentioned related specifically to disaster preparedness and early warning systems, climate change adaptation (notably in SIDS), shifting to renewable energy, and water scarcity in connection with health. Several member States described multidimensional approaches in disaster reduction and risk management: one achieved significant progress by establishing a socio-economic model that reduces vulnerability and invests in social capital through universal access to government services and promotion of social equity;[82] another established an early warning network to alert citizens on anticipated disasters through mobile phones, constructing multi-hazard warning towers in coastal areas.[83] Public education on disasters, meteorological research, early warning systems, effective communication systems, comprehensive plans and civil defence structures are all recognized as important resources in reducing risk.[84]

57. Support from the international community has been forthcoming with regard to climate change, energy efficiency and security, food security, the MDGs including poverty reduction, rural development, capacity building and combating disease. Enhanced support to member States, including for institutional and policy reform, enhanced agricultural productivity, water sector development[85], reversing degradation of marine ecosystems[86], waste management[87], and population management[88] were cited as priorities by many countries. Several Major Groups noted, *inter alia*, that very little attention has been given to ocean acidification.[89] In the field of biodiversity conservation, some are of the view that too much emphasis is put on inefficient and inequitably strategies like the United Nations Collaborative Initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD) and too little on providing political, legal and other forms of support to community initiatives to conserve and restore biodiversity.[90]

58. Although some agree that the emerging challenges, including those cited above, should be acted upon at UNCSD, others stated that UNCSD should focus on the two agreed themes of the Conference.

Success factors

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[82] GA65 Second Committee, Statement by Cuba.
[83] GA65 Second Committee, Statement by Sri Lanka.
[84] India, Caribbean SIDS Regional Synthesis Report.
[85] Tanzania.
[86] Croatia.
[87] Caribbean Regional Report for the Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5). .
[88] Philippines.
[89] International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP).
[90] Key member organizations of the Women's Major Group.

59. "Adequate financial resources" was ranked by nearly all respondents as the most important factor in the successful ability to address new and emerging challenges, with "strong government leadership" ranked second (Figure 5). Long-term strategies, increasing South-South and regional cooperation, promotion of good governance, programmes to improve energy efficiency and energy saving, investment in infrastructure (including information technology), awareness-raising programmes on sustainable development, regional cooperation on water management, and building technical capacity for data collection and monitoring are a few examples mentioned by many Member States of steps taken to enhance success factors.

Figure 5
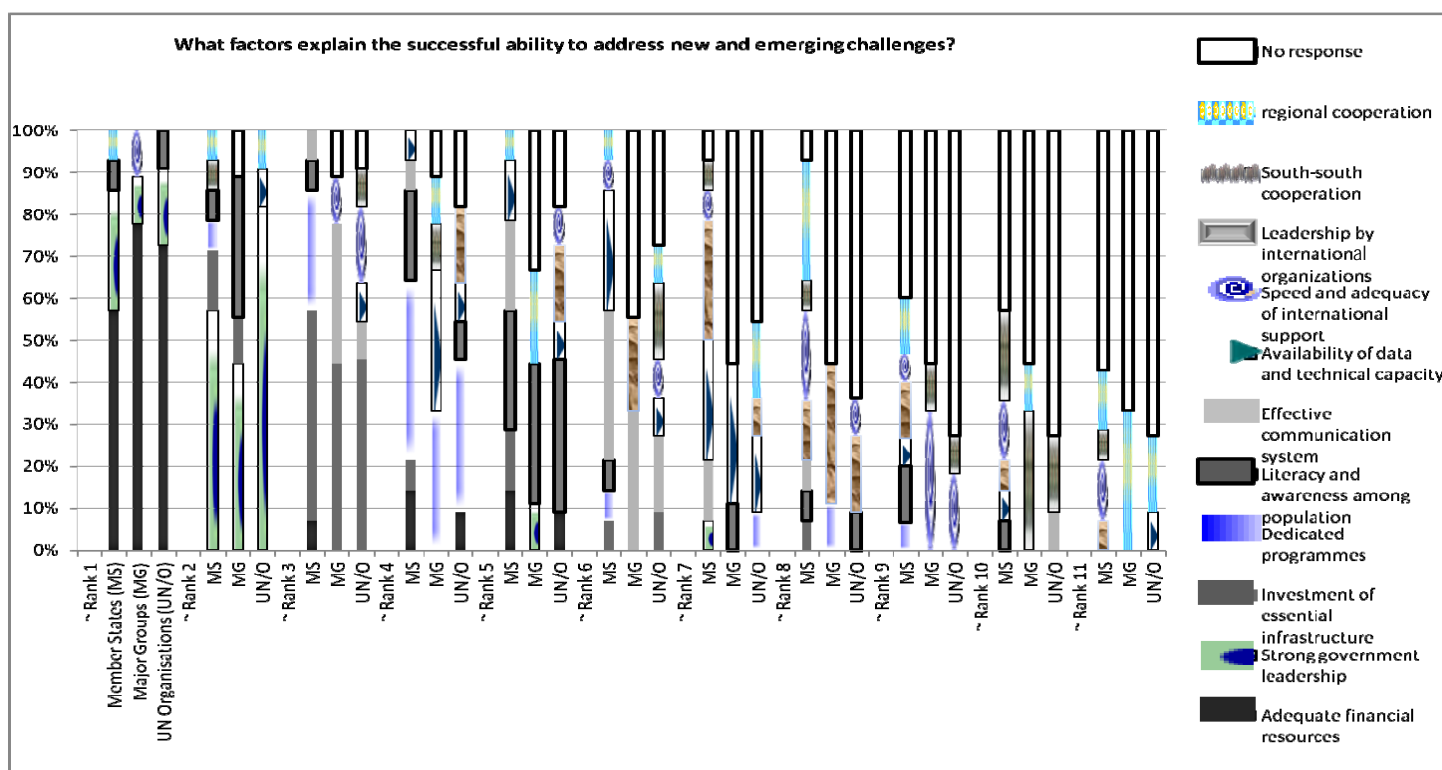
60. One Member State established a Sustainable Development Fund that represents a significant, coherent and predictable allocation of funds for sustainable development projects and programmes.[91] Another has established a National Fund on Climate Change, the first to use funds from the profits of an oil supply chain to finance mitigation and adaptation to climate change.[92] Still another highlighted implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, contribution to the Adaptation Fund, and commitment to the "fast start finance" for climate change in developing countries.[93] Multi-party democracy, implementation of a Common Market under

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[91] Italy.

[92] "Brazil set to meet low-carbon targets four years early", *Environment News Service*, 27 Oct. 2010..

[93] Spain.

the East Africa Community (EAC), and implementation of a Local Government reforms programme were cited by another as enhancing success factors.[94]

61. Many Major Groups also highlighted their influence on success factors, noting that, in India and Russia, strong emphasis is placed upon literacy and education of youth as future stakeholders and decision makers.[95] In Barbados, the Barbados Workers' Union urged its government to invest more in agriculture, halt the removal of land from agriculture, and support food production, and the Government of Barbados subsequently included relevant measures in its budgetary proposal for 2009.[96]

Challenges

62. The link among scientific research, education, and policy could be strengthened through, *inter alia*, increasing political commitment to science-based education, increasing funding for research and innovation, emphasizing policy decisions based on both physical and social science, supporting technology development and transfer, and maintaining the momentum of the UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) through long-term actions for sustainable development. Non-formal learning, especially by youth-led organisations, should be stimulated as a valuable tool for SD education.[97] One member State stressed that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides one of the best available models for feeding newest scientific findings into the policy-making process.[98] A number of member States welcomed the agreement to establish an intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (IPBES), following broadly the IPCC model.[99]

63. A stronger connection is required between the generators of evidence (i.e. scientists) and the academic community and policy or decision makers. To this extent a strengthened science- policy interface building upon the experiences carried out within MEAs could represent an added value to be upgraded and applied, where appropriate, in other areas. National and regional experiences in this direction provide a valuable input (e.g. NSDCs, the European Environment Agency's *European Environment State and Outlook Report 2010* (EEA SOER 2010) consultation process, UNEP GEO, and others) to be considered.[100] Global science organizations, in cooperation with Governments and relevant UN system organizations, are taking steps to enhance significantly the delivery of data, information and understanding on sustainable development challenges and on solutions. However, these efforts are underfunded.[101]

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[94] Tanzania.

[95] World Aquarium and Conservation for the Oceans Foundation.

[96] ITUC.

[97] Children and Youth Major Group through the CSD Youth Caucus.

[98] Switzerland.

[99] GA65 Second Committee General Debate, statements by EU, India, Japan and Germany.

[100] EU comprehensive response.

[101] ICSU.

64. International support for addressing emerging challenges should ensure that research is coordinated, foster collaboration and dialogue, build partnerships and work to improve the international governance structure, including reform of the Bretton Wood Institutions (BWIs). Internationally and nationally, strong commitment to sound and strong science education would also help address these challenges.[102] One member State reported recent success in increasing the number of science and engineering graduates, and supporting their subsequent contributions to sustainable development.[103]

Risks

65. Respondents are unanimous in agreeing that new and emerging challenges pose a fundamental risk to the prospects of economic growth and development in their countries and regions, and observe that both the challenges and their effects are tightly interlinked. Although every society can be affected, some impacts are more devastating than others, and the highest risks are to the poorest and most vulnerable societies and communities. Increasing efforts in the most vulnerable countries should be prioritized through investment and targeted partnerships in multidisciplinary areas where capacity-building and building resilience to external shocks are required: climate change mitigation and adaptation, rural and small-scale agriculture, sustainable tourism, diffusion of low-cost and low-tech solutions for energy and water provision, protection of marine and coastal resources and fisheries, investment in infrastructure, promotion of secure jobs, support for social safety nets, empowerment of women, recognition of indigenous peoples' rights, and addressing political conflict.

66. The risks to such vulnerable populations are addressed by national development plans in some countries,[104] but much more should be done by member States to implement these at national and local level through legislation and committed resources to support associated policies and programmes that are community-based and promote local solutions.[105] Development strategies should address not only potential risks and challenges in general but also must specifically include an assessment, including from a gender perspective, on the extent to which the poor or vulnerable populations are likely to be affected.[106] The MDG Summit in September 2010 concluded that women's rights and empowerment are at the core of poverty reduction and achieving MDG1.

VI. A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

67. The concept of the green economy is one of the several closely related constructs that have emerged in recent years to enhance convergence among the three pillars of

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[102] NRDC.
[103] Croatia.
[104] Ecuador's National Plan for the Well Living. See Ecuador response.
[105] Tanzania.
[106] EU comprehensive response.

sustainable development. While the idea has an intrinsic appeal, questions have been asked regarding conceptual clarity, precise definition, and implications for key social and economic goals.

Experiences

68. While the term "green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" (GESDPE) is gaining recognition among policy makers, most responses indicated that so far there is no common understanding or agreed definition of the concept. However, different national policies were identified as consistent with the concept. Some member States underscore that GESDPE must not replace the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development, but should embrace both the development and environment agendas and help create new jobs.[107] The Seventh African Development Forum (ADF-VII)[108] held in October 2010 developed a degree of consensus on the meaning of the green economy and its implications for sustainability and poverty reduction. Ultimately, it was agreed that "green economy" is an outcome-oriented concept that is deliberately aimed at improving human well-being without undermining the resource-base that current and future generations depend on for their livelihoods.

69. Overall, numerous respondents indicated that, instead of trying to define GESDPE, it is more important to develop green economy strategies at the regional and national levels, through different sectors and with different stakeholders. It was stressed that the concept of a green economy, to have legitimacy, must be given content through consultation with and engagement of all stakeholders. A number of member States and Major Groups noted that there are as many 'green economies' as there are development paths, with no "one-size-fits-all" solution.[109]

70. Differences exist on the relative emphasis to be accorded different types of 'green economy' policies – e.g., internalization of environmental externalities in prices, taxes and subsidies, public expenditures on green infrastructure and technologies, etc. – but there is broad agreement that some sectors clearly belong in any working definition of a green economy, including renewable energy and energy and material efficiency improvements, and sustainable buildings, and many agree on the importance of a supportive fiscal policy framework.

71. Most of the emerging economies have some policies in place that relate to the GESDPE concept, although these vary considerably in terms of their degree of both ambition and impact: in the Republic of Korea and China, the green component of national stimulus packages were among the highest in the world, while in South Africa and almost twenty other developing countries renewable energy feed-in tariffs have been approved or are

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[107] GA65 Second Committee General Debate, Statement by Serbia.

[108] www.uneca.org/adfvii

[109] India, ITUC, others.

under development, and in Brazil considerable government support, both financial and non-financial, has been provided for biofuels.[110] Putting a price on pollution through economic policy instruments such as environmental taxes and emissions trading schemes was cited by several Member States[111] as one of the most effective ways of promoting a green economy. Policies that strengthen incentives for stakeholders to adopt more sustainable production and consumption choices were also emphasized.[112]

72. Legislation and institutions must be effective while placing as little administrative burden as possible on businesses. Several noted that there is great potential for spreading green technology through the development of standards. However, the challenge lies in striking a balance between, on the one hand, drafting environmental standards and, on the other, preventing the creation of new barriers to international trade, in particular trade with developing countries. One member State stressed the need for further work on the trade and development aspects of environmental and climate-related standards, including labelling and certification schemes, with the aim of finding international solutions that support environmental and climate objectives while facilitating trade and development.[113] A strong national political leadership also is recognized as an important factor to transition to a green economy, projecting green economy as a vision and embracing the private sector as its propeller.[114] Most respondents stressed that it is essential to consider poverty and social impacts when designing policies, noting that green economy policies should incorporate, in a balanced and simultaneous way, the three pillars of sustainable development. Generally, the main benefit of a green economy strategy was cited as strengthening the three pillars of sustainable development in a wide range of sectors.

73. Supported by a conducive policy framework, public and private investments provide the mechanism for the reconfiguration of businesses, infrastructure and institutions towards greater energy and resource efficiency and lower pollution and waste intensity, through the adoption of sustainable consumption and production processes. Such reconfiguration should lead to more green jobs, lower energy and materials intensities of production, lower waste and pollution, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.[115]

74. Several member States, Major Groups and UN agencies have taken a particular interest in the potential for green economy measures to create decent, remunerative jobs. The Green Jobs Study[116] notes four ways in which green economy measures may affect employment, viz., Four types of job shift in a green economy: (i) creation of additional

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110 WWF.
111 Finland, Poland, Tanzania.
112 Finland, CBD, others..
113 Sweden.
114 GA65 Second Committee Side Event, Republic of Korea.
115 UNEP.
116 UNEP, ILO et al. (2008).

jobs – in manufacturing of pollution-control devices and in environmental consulting services; (ii) substitution between jobs – e.g., in the renewable energy sector versus the fossil fuels sector; (iii) elimination of some jobs without direct replacement —as when packaging materials are discouraged or banned and their production is discontinued; (iv) reorientation and re-skilling of many existing jobs, notably in the construction sector.

75. The nature and extent of "green job" creation is a function in part of whether a country has or can develop sectors which produce green innovations. New technology sectors can be to some extent at the expense of traditional sectors. The synergies between environmental policies and job creation should be explored in national experiences, as well as the participation in that process of governments, professional associations, civil society, non-governmental organizations financial institutions and research entities.[117] One member State noted that one of its policy targets is to create 1.4 million new environmental sector jobs through the promotion of green innovation.[118] Where countries are not green innovators, green jobs could still be created for installing and operating green technologies and capital equipment – e.g. for improved energy, water and other resource efficiency in construction and buildings; also for solar, wind and other renewable energy facilities.

76. Although many countries are incorporating the green economy concept in many policy sectors, most do not have an overall strategy for a green economy for sustainable development and poverty eradication. Some countries and regional groups are in the early stages of planning such strategies, and some UN System organizations are committed to advancing and supporting green economy initiatives through advisory and technical assistance services.[119] There is a need for integration of the social, economic and environmental issues in green economy strategies, which should not duplicate but support sustainable development strategies.

77. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, if it is to be a useful framework for all countries, irrespective of level of development and resource endowments, must be sufficiently broad and flexible. There was wide agreement among respondents that green economy measures should not be limited only to promoting "green sectors" but should also support "greening" of traditionally "brown" sectors. Among sectors mentioned by various respondents were: energy, petroleum, automotive, building and construction, urbanization, transport, food industry, land use, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, sustainable forest management, water and sanitation, waste, sustainable materials management, chemical industry, extraction, telecommunications, education, tourism and leisure. Most emphasis was given to the energy, agriculture, transport and housing sectors as having the greatest impact.

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[117] Brazil.
[118] Japan.
[119] UNEP, UNIDO, Statement by the Republic of Korea (GA65 Second Committee Agenda Item 20).

Success factors

78. The most effective green economy policies highlighted by a number of Member States included: fiscal incentives and reform, regulation and legislation, and green procurement, notably those for promotion of more resource-efficient and low-emission technologies, promotion of renewable energies, and improvement of energy efficiency. Also mentioned were support for the development of eco-industry and markets for green business, and eco-labelling.

79. Green economy policies have emerged as a central element in the policy discourse relating to the recovery from the financial and economic crisis, reflecting the idea that environmental goals can be attained while stimulating a viable and competitive economy. However, apart from discussion of green job creation, the social dimension has received too little attention in green economy discussions[120]. Social policies will continue to be important in a green economy, but the question remains of whether and how green economy measures can contribute to meeting poverty eradication and social policy objectives[121].

80. Successful policies have been brought forward when the longer term case for strong measures is made clearly and the policies themselves are well thought through and coordinated with other policies.[122] A consultative, bottom-up approach that includes transparent communication, Government leadership and broad multi-stakeholder engagement, particularly involving youth, is needed to build support for green economy policies. Careful design of such policies with a view to social equity is essential. The media is also a powerful tool that can help to shape public perception and increase support. Availability of relevant institutional or technical capacity is also important for policy design and implementation.[123]

Challenges

81. Numerous studies were cited that identify success factors, challenges or risks associated with green economy policies. Possible outcomes of UNCSD on a green economy which were mentioned include: a global commitment and common understanding of GESDPE that encapsulates all aspects of global sustainability; a UN Green Economy Road Map that clarifies and stimulates the transitional steps needed at the national and international level; a toolbox or best practice guide to actions, instruments and policies to advance GESDPE; and explicit financial commitments, such as the bilateral financial contribution of USD 30 million in 2009 and USD 250 million though 2015 by Norway to Guyana.[124]

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[120] Belgium.

[121] See UNDP's International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (http://www.ipc-undp.org/).

[122] Sustainable Development Commission.

[123] Spain, UK, Croatia, Stakeholder Forum.

[124] Caribbean Regional Report for the Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the

82. Developing countries emphasized the imperative for developed countries to make enabling resources—both financial and technological—available to developing countries in an affordable and transparent manner to achieve a gradual transition to a green economy.[125] A commitment of an agreed percentage of GDP or national budgets to GESDPE investments, as well as a possible tax on financial transactions for GESDPE was suggested by one UN organization, along with regional Green Investment Forums where green entrepreneurs and business could be connected with public finance institutions.[126] Access to micro-financing mechanisms for small-scale projects by local communities, particularly women, was proposed by several Major Groups.[127] As one member State noted, sustainability depends on the "ability to mobilize green financing to make environmentally friendly technology available to those for whom the latest technology remains financially prohibitive."[128]

Risks

83. The risk of conflict between green economy policies and those related to other areas stems from real and perceived trade-offs between economic and environmental outcomes. Questions have been raised on whether/how a green economy is/can be consistent with continued economic development. Concerns were raised regarding the costs of new, green investments and how they would be financed. Also, potential conflicts were cited between a green economy and free trade, notably if some countries move faster than others and comparative advantages shift. Concerns were raised of "green protectionism" in the name of promoting a green economy.[129] Removal of environmentally harmful subsidies from developed countries such as in the areas of agriculture and fisheries through a balanced, ambitious and development-oriented agreement in the Doha Round of WTO was cited by several respondents. Environmentally helpful subsidies also risk becoming a growing focus of trade disputes. The role of intellectual property rights in the transfer of technology was mentioned as a possible factor affecting access to green technologies.[130]

84. The 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production should also be considered as a major response to the need to green economies worldwide while addressing social concerns.[131] UNCSD must then ensure that resources, technical assistance, and technological transfer are made available to enable countries to participate competitively in a global "green" marketplace, and to ensure that

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Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5).

[125] Tanzania, India, Montenegro.

[126] UNEP.

[127] Key member organizations of the Women's major group, World Aquarium and Conservation for the Oceans Foundation.

[128] GA65 Second Committee, Statement by Seychelles.

[129] India.

[130] Argentina, WWF.

[131] EU comprehensive response.

"green" industries will also generate jobs and improve livelihoods and contribute to equality both within countries and between them.[132]

85. The greatest risk arises from resisting the scale of changes required as suggested by the best available science – that is, the risk of inaction.[133]

VII. Institutional framework for sustainable development

86. Many Member States have called for consideration of the institutional framework for sustainable development at UNCSD, which suggests that all is not well. There are two sets of concerns to be addressed: the question of international environmental governance (IEG), which has been the subject of longstanding discussions; the question of the broader institutional framework for sustainable development, of which IEG is just one important part.

87. UNCSD will provide an opportunity for agreement on an ambitious and effective IEG reform package. Since Rio, many UN bodies and international organizations have aligned their work with the principles of sustainable development, which is referred to in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (GA Resolution A/RES/06/1) as "a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities". The process of developing integrated strategies has taken root at all levels, but there is a need to review this experience to assess how the goal of integration can best be advanced, and how to enhance effectiveness of the institutional framework for sustainable development.
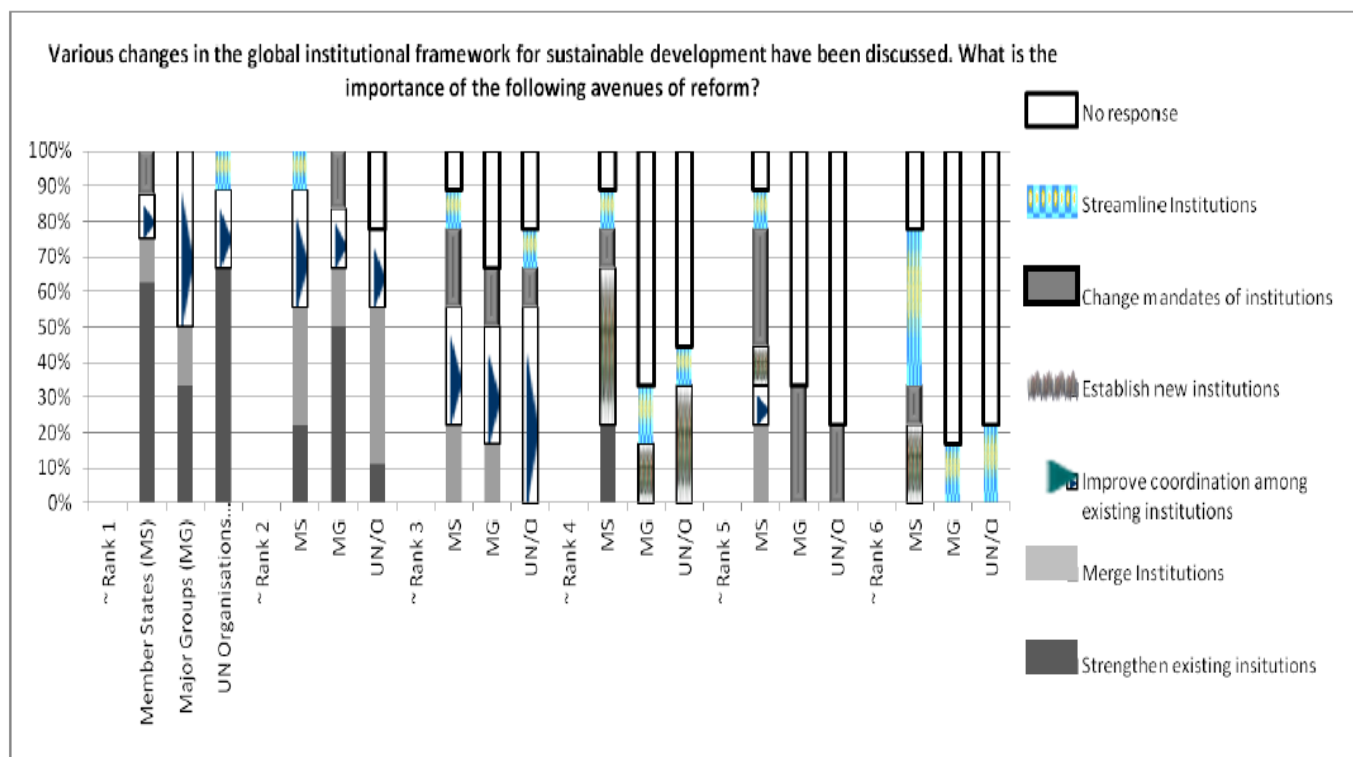
Experiences

88. When asked about the most important avenue for reform of the global institutional framework for sustainable development, the majority of member States and UN system organizations ranked "strengthen existing institutions" highest while the majority of Major Groups ranked "improve coordination among existing institutions" as most important (Figure 6). The dense network of intergovernmental and international institutions focusing on sustainable development issues complicates efforts at greater coordination and coherence.

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[132] ECLAC.
[133] One Earth.

Figure 6

Various changes in the global institutional framework for sustainable development have been discussed. What is the importance of the following avenues of reform?

89. To ensure effective coordination among different agencies and organizations responsible for aspects of sustainable development, some favour merging institutions, suggesting formation of a single World Environment Organisation or merging the CSD into an expanded UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) with a stronger mandate for promoting sustainable development throughout the UN family, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). One member State called for strengthening ECOSOC as an effective forum for the multilateral discussion of economic and social themes through a sustainable development approach, which necessarily includes an environmental perspective.[134] An International Court for the Environment (ICE) was proposed by some Major Groups to address the lack of legal authority in the current system with regard to enforcing sustainable development strategies such as MEAs.[135] One regional group stated that, given the proliferation of institutions, creation of new institutions should be a last resort, but could be desirable if it entails the merging of institutions with complementary mandates.[136]

90. It was suggested that ore cooperation and better utilization of existing UN coordination mechanisms, looking through the lens of countries (bottom-up) rather than the lens of

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[134] Brazil.
[135] Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future.
[136] ECA.

individual UN agencies (top down) would help, supported by more coherent messaging from governments across the governing boards of different agencies[137].

91. Ensuring synergies among instruments and processes related to sustainable development is a task that needs to be performed by and across the UN system as a whole. Already some of the MEAs have made progress towards achieving greater synergies, notably in the chemicals and waste domain as well as at the intersection of forests, biodiversity and climate change, with one member State noting the example of clustering the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm convention secretariats.[138] Another member State emphasized that the global institutional architecture should remain firmly anchored to the principles of "common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR)" and "respective capabilities" of all countries.[139]

92. UNEP reform to strengthen its capacity and leadership to enable the efficient implementation of sustainable development was emphasized by some member States,[140] especially with regard to strengthening coherence at the global level to ensure UN system service delivery to member States as an objective of IEG reform.[141] All UN agencies are taking steps to operate as one system by harmonizing related programmes and dealing with national governments through the UN "Delivering as One" initiative, which was launched in 2007 in eight pilot countries: Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay, and Viet Nam.[142] Montenegro also adopted this approach in 2009.[143] UN agencies are also working together to assist NEPAD. With an effective institutional framework, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should be able to leverage the results of this new pilot "One UN" initiative as a platform for building the needed synergies for a more co-ordinated implementation of sustainable development.[144] A number of recent improvements, such as greater use of the Environmental Management Group, UN-Water, and UN-Energy, were cited by one member State as helping to identify and implement synergistic activity among existing instruments and actors, who also suggested that reinvigoration of the concept of the Inter-Agency Coordination on Sustainable Development (IACSD) might further improve coordination within the UN system.[145] An independent evaluation of the effectiveness of UN inter-agency coordination mechanisms was also proposed.

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[137] UNDP

[138] Serbia.

[139] India.

[140] GA65 Second Committee, Agenda Item 20, Statements by Germany, Mexico and Norway.

[141] GA65 Second Committee, Agenda Item 20, Statement by Serbia.

[142] *How Delivering as One Adds Value: Stories and Testimonies from Eight Programme Pilot Countries* (June 2010). http://www.undg.org/docs/11313/DaO-Thematic-Report_final.pdf

[143] Montenegro.

[144] Japan, International Maritime Organization, and others.

[145] USA.

93. At the national level, in most developing countries, co-ordination of policy development and implementation across relevant agencies remains a challenge.[146] Most countries report that active NSDCs are in place, and that they include participation of major groups and other stakeholders, although youth are still underrepresented in many cases.[147] Those that do not have an NSDC in place reported on various types of inter-Ministerial coordination or similar mechanisms for centrally addressing sustainable development at the national level. It is agreed that involvement of NSDCs in countries' preparations for UNCSD would be useful and should be promoted.

94. The overall effectiveness of NSDS depends on many factors and dimensions – economic, social, environmental – and on effective governance within national circumstances. Those that have been effective embody participatory approaches in development and implementation, effectively integrate the different dimensions of sustainable development, and are adequately resourced. National Development Plans (NDPs) and Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategies (GPRS), linked to budget processes and contextualized within a country's long-term vision for sustainable development, as well as strategically linked to sectoral plans and complemented by sub-national plans, could be quite effective.[148]

95. Often the scope of NSDS is too narrow, focusing solely on environmental issues. Cultural, political and socio-economic aspects are not always adequately reflected. For example, all of the Pacific SIDS have an NSDS or a planning process that adheres to some of the principles of NSDS. However, as shown from the Five-year Review of the MSI, the integrated planning process needs improvement.[149] Most of the NSDSs in the West Asia region have also failed to identify the optimum institutional and administrative arrangements needed effectively to coordinate and implement their action plans, which are often not compatible with other sector strategies.[150]

96. Sub-national and local governments play a critical role in integrating national sustainable development and sectoral policies into practical local programmes for urban and rural planning and management, along with fostering community and civil society participation in these programmes.[151] Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 emphasized the important role of the local authorities in promoting sustainable development at the local level and, since 1992, many thousands of municipalities in countries throughout the world have formulated and implemented Local Agenda 21 strategies, although they may not always be identified as such, having evolved and refocused their activities under different programmes.

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[146] Mauritius, others.

[147] Children and Youth Major Group through UNCSD Youth Caucus.

[148] See ECA's report on NSDS at www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/documents /.

[149] ESCAP.

[150] ESCWA.

[151] GA65 Second Committee, Agenda Item 20, Statement by Israel.

97. Almost all respondents reported that participation of Major Groups in national decision-making processes on sustainable development has significantly increased since 1992. Participation in policy development ranked as the most common form of engagement overall, followed by public hearings, partnerships, and inclusion in scientific panels. Most UN system organizations also ranked multi-stakeholder consultations for international meetings high on the list (Figure 7).

Figure 7
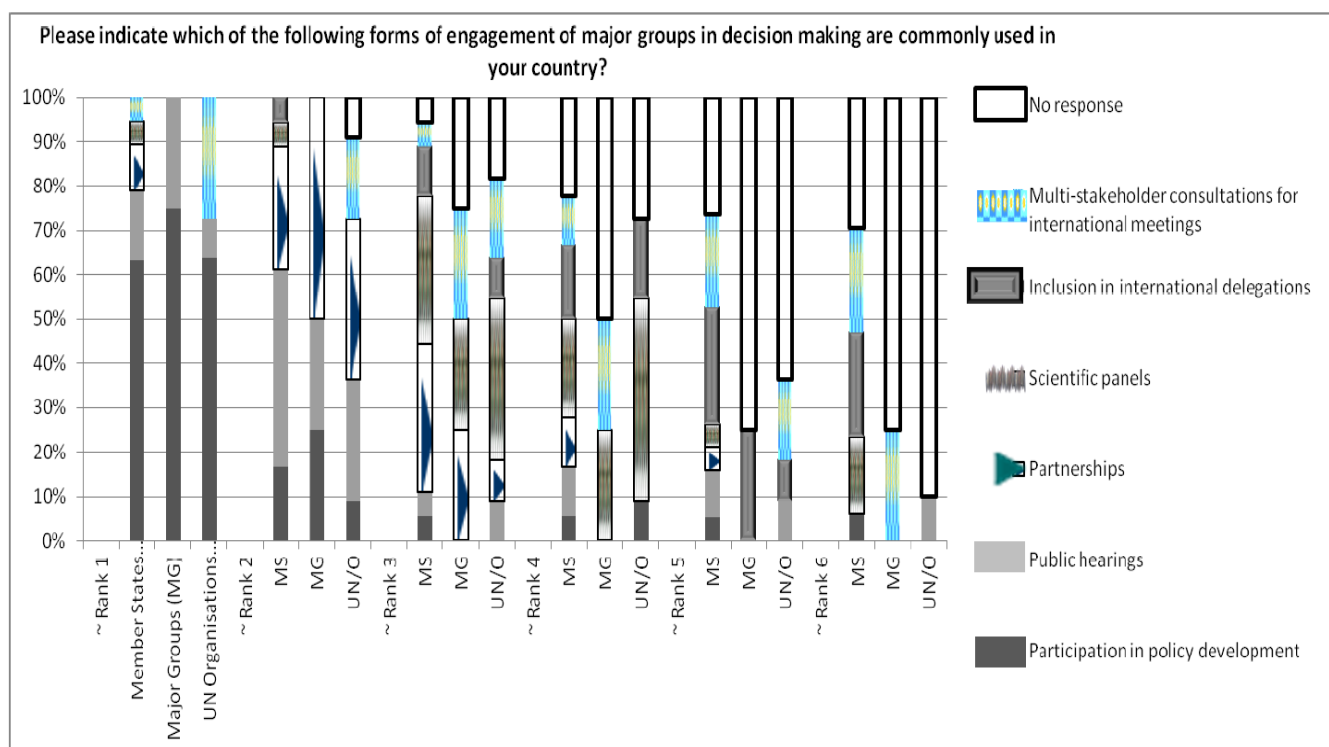
98. Almost all member States reported close collaboration with NGOs. Developed countries more often reported collaboration with trade unions, local authorities, business and industry, and the scientific and technological community; while developing countries more often cited collaboration with women, indigenous people, and farmers. Youth are consulted in fewer instances, but were mentioned by both developed and developing countries as well as UN organizations. The latter tend to reach out to all nine major group sectors based on the spectrum of their activities, but most often reported collaboration with business and industry or the scientific and technological community.

99. Major Groups generally collaborate with the country or countries of interest to their organization, and also reported on collaboration with numerous UN Organizations, as well as with each other. The increase in collaboration among some Major Groups

themselves at the international level is an important development that has served to strengthen their role and voice in international sustainable development institutions.

Success factors

100. Systematic institutional and governance reforms at national, regional and international levels are essential to achieve sustainable development. Examples of effective institutional frameworks contributing to significant positive outcomes included the MDGs, creation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) and the organization of International Council on Mining and Metals (ICCM), the DESD, the Aarhus Convention,[152] and the effective use of regional commissions.

101. Relevant lessons for sustainable development include recommendations to build on existing institutions; promote collaboration, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in partnerships; and ensure meaningful and equitable public access to international forums related to sustainable development by adapting and structuring their processes and mechanisms in a way that they promote transparency and facilitate the participation of those groups that might not have the means for participation without encouragement and support.

102. The lessons are indeed relevant for CSD, which should strengthen its collaboration with regional commissions and others for decision-making and for leveraging the participation of other UN agencies and funds. Several responses also noted that the CSD is tasked with too broad an array of policy issues that might be better integrated throughout other relevant bodies. At the same time, its function as a sustainable development forum could be enhanced by giving increased importance to side events, the learning centre, and informal meetings.[153]

103. A number of specific lessons from experience at national level were drawn: greater institutional strengthening through capacity building is needed; even strong institutions cannot deliver sustainable development in the absence of appropriate and effective coordination mechanisms; to be effective, coordination mechanisms should be led or chaired by strong cross-sector ministries such as finance or planning[154].

104. These lessons could be relevant to CSD in the sense that CSD attracts only certain parts of governments and that finance and planning ministers/ministries are not among the more frequent participants. On the other hand, the growing prominence of climate change and green economy on the international agenda has begun to place the sustainable development agenda more centrally on economic ministries' radar screens.

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[152] ECE, Stakeholder Forum.
[153] Sweden.
[154] UNDP

105. Partnership, dialogue and public participation through consultative processes, often through NSDCs, were highlighted by most member States as highly effective means of strengthening Major Groups' and other stakeholders' participation in national sustainable development efforts. Most Major Groups and UN System organizations responded that provision of the basic financial, human and technical advisory resources to support stakeholder groups to undertake sustainable development projects is paramount.[155] Bringing in the voices of those who are most affected by policies and decisions to speak on their own behalf in promoting development strategies,[156] involving them in concrete implementation of projects, giving them occasion to set the agenda and have a formal role in decision-making processes are important.[157] Local governments often do not have the constitutional and legislative authority or ability to raise resources necessary to address issues that directly impact upon their communities. Increased national political commitment to Local Agenda 21, supportive sustainable development policies, and partnerships among all spheres of government that create mutually reinforcing activities, ensure coherent policies, and have a long-term focus would greatly strengthen major groups' and other relevant stakeholders' participation in national sustainable development efforts.[158] The Aarhus Convention was cited as one of the most effective means of strengthening participation in sustainable development efforts, as it guarantees any person the right of access information and participation in decision-making.[159]

Challenges

106. Some of the main challenges facing international institutions that were mentioned include:
   • Lack of political will, institutional capacity, and technical capability
   • High competition for inadequate financial resources during a global financial crisis
   • Complexity and scope of the sustainable development agenda
   • Lack of coordination among organisations and agencies
   • Low accountability and conflicting interests
   • Competing short-term versus long-term priorities
   • Weak or non-existent monitoring, reporting, assessment and enforcement mechanisms.

107. Some of the main challenges facing national institutions that were mentioned include:
   • Lack of mandate or high-level political commitment to engage stakeholders
   • Weak engagement of Major Groups, particularly women and youth
   • Ensuring effective and continuous inter-ministerial cooperation
   • Achieving a balanced distribution of financial resources

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[155] ITUC, IMO

[156] Key member organizations of Women's major group.

[157] ITUC, WWF, UNIDO

[158] UN-HABITAT.

[159] Italy, Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, UNECE.

- Ensuring coordination between local and national institutions
- Inefficient and wasteful patterns of consumption and production
- Varied commitment of countries to root sustainable development in national institutions.

Risks

108. For some, it is too early to state clearly what decision should be taken at UNCSD on the overarching sustainable development framework, but most agree that UNCSD will provide an opportunity for agreement on an ambitious and effective IEG reform package. Others proposed decisions involving restoring the institutional balance among the three pillars and strengthening capacities to ensure effective implementation; providing a strong and predictable financial basis for action; ensuring effective participation by civil society in decision making functions; and aiming to reach agreement on elevating the lead responsibility for sustainable development at the international level to the highest decision making levels of the multi-lateral system.

109. Some noted that the regional commissions' leading role in coordinating regional and subregional activities towards sustainable development, as per chapter 38 of Agenda 21, must be preserved and strengthened within the context of reforms to the international institutional framework for sustainable development. Opportunities provided by existing regional and subregional level institutions, including relevant intergovernmental organizations that drive the sustainable development agenda at these levels, should be leveraged. It would be of great significance, especially for developing countries, to re-establish regional expert units within the UN Division for Sustainable Development, which previously were tasked to provide direct and continual expert help to member States in sustainable development implementation.[160]

110. The main risk to a successful outcome relates to insufficient political will of some member States to reform the existing institutional framework, North-South and other divisions, national vested interests, and overall lack of commitment to cooperate at the international level. The design of flexible yet robust effective partnership platforms that facilitate North-South and South-South two-way knowledge sharing will play an important role in the future.[161]

VIII. The Way Forward

111. The questionnaire responses of member States, Major Groups and UN agencies contain a number of useful suggestions and recommendations for consideration in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. A number of those are listed here under the respective questionnaire headings.

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[160] Montenegro.

[161] Caribbean Regional Report for the Five-Year Review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (MSI+5).

112. **Renewed political commitment for sustainable development:**

- Reaffirm the Rio Principles and ensure their more consistent and effective application
- Reach out beyond environment ministries to economics and finance ministries, key sectoral ministries to ensure broad, coherent political commitment to sustainable development goals
- Foster longer term perspectives in decision making at all levels and in all entities whose decisions impact on sustainable development goals
- Mainstream corporate social and environmental responsibility in private sector decision making
- Continue to emphasize transparency in information sharing and decision making
- Increase awareness-raising efforts and communication with the public
- Strengthen the link between environmental sustainability and development in discussions on achieving the MDGs, and establish a clear post-2015 framework that places sustainable development at its core.

113. **Assessment of progress and remaining gaps:**

- The process of developing integrated national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) has advanced, but there is a need to review and evaluate this experience, including how sustainable development can be better mainstreamed into economic planning processes
- Ensure that national budget allocations adequately reflect sustainable development priorities spelt out in NSDS
- Phase out environmentally harmful subsidies, freeing up resources to support sustainable development goals
- Strengthen regulations and incentives for stakeholders to adopt more sustainable production and consumption choices
- Take steps to institutionalize more inclusive access to information, especially by the poor and vulnerable groups
- Increase investments in science and technology
- Continue and deepen the work on sustainable development indicators, including the work on the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting, ensuring an adequate reflection of social and equity concerns
- Development strategies should include an assessment, including from a gender perspective, of effects on the poor and vulnerable populations, supported by disaggregated data.

114. **New and emerging issues:**

- Strengthen international support to and capacity building in the countries most vulnerable to emerging sustainable development threats like climate change

- Reinforce efforts at all levels to enhance early warning, disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction
- Build on the outcome of the Convention on Biological Diversity COP10 in Nagoya to strengthen cooperation and capacity building to protect biodiversity and ecosystems
- Consolidate and advance gains made in slowing deforestation and extending sustainable forest management, including further scale up of REDD+
- Strengthen the links among scientific research, education, and policy. Ensure scientific research is responsive to sustainable development challenges and incorporates local knowledge.

115. **Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication:**

- Provide strong national political leadership to guide countries' green economy strategies
- Scale up investment in green sectors, putting in place policy frameworks to encourage more active financial sector involvement
- Develop green jobs programmes linked to policy measures to promote a green economy transition, including job (re-)training
- Design green economy measures at all times with a view to their contribution to social and poverty eradication goals
- Strengthen government capacities to design and implement fiscal incentives, regulation and legislation, sustainable procurement, scale-up of renewable energies, investment in green infrastructure, improvement of energy efficiency, and development of green industries as new growth drivers
- Further work on the trade and development aspects of environmental and climate-related standards, including labelling and certification schemes, with the aim of finding international solutions that support environmental and climate objectives while facilitating trade and development
- Mobilize financing, including at the international level, to make environmentally sound technologies available to those for whom the latest technology remains financially prohibitive
- Ensure that international intellectual property rights rules are consistent with affordable and timely access to environmentally sound technologies, including innovative solutions
- UN system, IFIs and other international organizations to support, technically and financially, as appropriate, countries choosing to develop and implement green economy/green growth strategies and policies.

116. **Institutional framework for sustainable development:**

- Strengthen UNEP and enhance its capacity to realize fully its mandate and its leading role in relation to the environmental pillar of sustainable development

- Conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of UN inter-agency coordination mechanisms
- Foster more cooperation and better utilization of existing UN coordination mechanisms, looking through the lens of countries (bottom-up), rather than the lens of individual UN agencies (top down)
- Reinvigorate Inter-Agency Coordination on Sustainable Development (IACSD) to further improve coordination within the UN system
- Strengthen ECOSOC as an effective forum for the multilateral discussion of the sustainable development agenda
- Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should elaborate the new pilot "One UN" initiative to build needed synergies for more co-ordinated implementation of sustainable development
- CSD's function as a sustainable development forum could be enhanced by giving increased importance to side events, the learning centre, and informal meetings
- Preserve and strengthen the regional commissions' leading role in coordinating regional and sub-regional activities for sustainable development, as per chapter 38 of Agenda 21.
- In this connection, CSD and its secretariat should strengthen collaboration with regional commissions and should also forge closer links with implementing agencies
- Create or strengthen institutional mechanisms for joint work and collaboration across social, economic and environmental portfolios at all levels of government
- To be effective, coordination mechanisms should be led or chaired by strong cross-sectoral ministries such as the prime minister's office, finance or planning
- Strengthen vertical links between national governments and local authorities who are directly responsible for delivery of vital environmental services, ensuring the latter have adequate resource mobilization capacities
- Promote collaboration, coherence, efficiency and effectiveness in sustainable development partnerships
- Put in place stronger information disclosure and accountability mechanisms, to ensure civil society can participate in decision making and monitor use of public monies.

Annex of Respondents to the Questionnaire

Responses to the questionnaire were received by the following Member States:

Argentina, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, European Union (comprehensive submission), Finland, France, Germany, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

Responses to the questionnaire were received by the following United Nations System Organizations:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Atomic Energy Association (IAEA), International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Secretariat, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UNEP-Secretariat of the Convention on Biological

Diversity (SCBD), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), World Bank, and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Responses to the questionnaire were received by the following Major Groups:

The Access Initiative; AEGEE/European Students Forum; Assemblée des Chambres Françaises de Commerce et d'Industrie (ACFCI); Association 4D; Association of Science-Technology Centers; Baha'i International Community; Brazilian Forum Empresarial Rio+20; Chulalongkorn University M.A. Student and Research Assistant; Earth Partners Foundation; European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC); European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC); Global Ecovillage Network (GEN), US Citizens Network for Sustainable Development, and the Association of World Citizens; Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES); Helio International; Integrative Strategies Forum (ISF);

International Centre of Comparative Environmental Law (C.I.D.C.E.); International Council for Science (ICSU); International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP); International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) on behalf of the Trade Unions Major Group; Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC); One Earth; Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future; Sustainable Development Commission UK (SDC); WaterCulture; Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF); Women's Major Group; World Aquarium and Conservation for the Oceans Foundation; World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO); WWF International; and the Youth and Children Major Group.