



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## HLPF-2 HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY 1 JULY 2014

The second day of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF-2) under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) started with a presentation of a prototype Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR). Moderated dialogues took place on: how to improve the conversation between science and policy: scope and methodology of a global sustainable development report; ideas and trends that can shape the lives of present and future generations; island voices, global choices: promoting genuine and durable partnerships; and countries in special situations: building resilience.

### PRESENTATION OF A PROTOTYPE GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

ECOSOC President Martin Sajdik (Austria), introduced the panel, noting the session aims to consider options for the scope and methodology of the GSDR.

Wu Hongbo, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, described the preparation of the prototype GSDR and outlined three options for the scope and methodology of future editions. He noted that progress on sustainable development is off track, and special efforts are needed to meet required global investments.

Moderator Claudio Huepe Minoletti, Universidad Diego Portales, Chile, called for a productive dialogue to overcome language barriers and build trust between natural and social scientists.

Manuel Montes, South Centre, Switzerland, recognized differences in scientific approaches between Western societies and developing countries, and suggested the HLPF encourage and facilitate developing country input.

Jill Jäger, Sustainable Europe Research Institute, Austria, called for the GSDR to support individual and societal learning to achieve transformative change, and suggested the Report adopt a systemic approach with a multi-level iterative process.

William Colglazier, Science and Technology Adviser to the US Secretary of State, highlighted the need for the GSDR to, *inter alia*: cover diverse disciplines; be relevant to policy making; and be peer-reviewed. He proposed an expert body to review the scientific quality of a near-final version.

Keola Souknilanh, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan, promoted the use of remote sensing data to recover data lost during "administrative aggregation," and to track changes at high spatial and temporal resolution. Peng Sizhen, Ministry of Science and Technology, China, called for an index system for a comprehensive evaluation of sustainable development; attention to synergies and interaction among different elements

of sustainable development; and the preparation of national sustainable development reports every four years, following the GSDR's time cycle.

In the discussion that followed, many countries stressed that the GSDR should not duplicate efforts by other organizations, but focus on interlinkages between the three dimensions of sustainable development. Moderator Minoletti commented on the importance of: quality data; national efforts; and adequate institutional frameworks. NIGERIA said the GSDR should focus on measuring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) based on an agreed matrix.

SOUTH AFRICA and SUDAN called for building the financial and technical capacity of developing countries to collect and produce reliable data. SWITZERLAND called for the report to focus on cross-sectoral linkages and challenges to SDG implementation.

The US said the role of the GSDR as a monitoring tool for the SDGs needs further discussion, and, with MEXICO, highlighted its role as a tool for synthesis and integration. GERMANY said the report should be part of the accountability framework of the post-2015 development agenda. EGYPT underlined that the report should suggest an integrated vision on enhancing sustainable development. The EU said the report should be aimed primarily at policy makers and key stakeholders. BELGIUM urged that the report view the implementation of the post-2015 agenda from a long-term perspective.

In closing, Montes underlined the aggregating role of the GSDR. Jäger stressed that the process design should be inclusive and build developing country capacity. Colglazier reiterated the call for all countries to prepare country-level reports.

### MODERATED DIALOGUE: "IDEAS AND TRENDS THAT CAN SHAPE THE LIVES OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS"

The dialogue was opened by Ambassador Ibrahim Dabbashi (Libya), Vice President, ECOSOC, and moderated by Montes.

Noting the intergenerational and international dimensions of climate change, Gordon McBean, President-elect, International Council for Science, highlighted the importance of managing risks and uncertainties, and retaining information for future generations. Nebojsa Nakicenovic, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Austria, described how the world might look if we achieve a sustainable transition, emphasizing the need to decrease inequalities.

Peter Davies, Sustainable Futures Commissioner, UK, described how Wales aligned its national, long-term development goals to the SDGs process, to be assessed by a future generations commissioner. Marcel Szabó, Ombudsman for Future Generations, Hungary, recommended referencing future generations at all levels in the SDGs.

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Catherine Pearce, World Future Council, welcomed the Secretary-General's proposal for a High Commissioner for future generations, with advocacy powers, to be involved in policymaking processes at the international level.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates spoke on, *inter alia*, the need for the HLPF to consider material resource accountability in the post-2015 development agenda; the importance of an intergenerational representative; and considering best practices in the development of policies on climate change, health, and sustainable resource exploitation. Nakicenovic highlighted the role of energy as an enabling mechanism for development and gaps in the understanding of human behavior. McBean stressed the role of the precautionary principle in understanding risks for present and future generations. ECUADOR noted its legal framework, which includes intergenerational solidarity, rights of nature, and a holistic view of sustainability.

#### **MODERATED DIALOGUE: "ISLAND VOICES, GLOBAL CHOICES: PROMOTING GENUINE AND DURABLE PARTNERSHIPS"**

This dialogue was chaired by Sajdik and moderated by Ambassador Amanda Ellis, New Zealand. Ellis reminded participants that 2014 is the year of small island developing States (SIDS). Cristina Duarte, Minister of Finance and Planning, Republic of Cape Verde, urged SIDS to effectively manage their exclusive economic zones, encourage inclusive development for long-term sustainability, and promote strong leadership and enlightened "follow-ship." Anjeela Jokhan, University of the South Pacific, Fiji, stressed national and regional capacity building and engaging institutions of higher education to strengthen resilience.

Taholo Kami, International Union for the Conservation of Nature, stressed the importance of natural resources management. Via video link, Letuimanu'asina Emma KruseVa'ai, National University of Samoa, reflected on how to build the resilience of SIDS at national and regional levels and called for a SIDS vulnerability index.

Noting the efforts underway for the Third International Conference on the SIDS in Samoa, in September 2014, Peseta Noumea Simi, Ministry of Finance, Samoa, called for durable and genuine partnerships that are accountable, easy to monitor, and endorsed in the final outcome document. Noelene Nabulivou, Major Group for Women, called for the inclusion of gender equality, reproductive rights, and commitments on climate change in the document.

In the ensuing discussion, FIJI underscored the importance of attracting the private sector to SIDS. CHILE called for a forward-looking Samoa outcome document. The NGO Major Group recommended specific reference to Major Groups and NGOs as critical partners in the document. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION supported taking the needs of SIDS into account in the post-2015 agenda and said it plans to launch initiatives on energy and natural disasters in Pacific SIDS. Delegates also discussed partnerships with multinational companies, the importance of developing tools to address threats due to climate change and weather, and stronger partnerships with the EU.

#### **MODERATED DIALOGUE: "COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS: BUILDING RESILIENCE"**

Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak (Croatia), Vice-President of ECOSOC chaired, and Margareta Wahlström, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, moderated this dialogue. Two questions framed the discussion: how best to address needs of countries in special situations in the context of universal goals and a universal development agenda; and are we succeeding in building resilience in vulnerable countries and how can these gains be consolidated?

Dasho Sonam Tshering, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Bhutan, emphasized the crucial role of infrastructure in building resilience. Fatimetou Abdel Malick, Mayor of Teveragh-Zeina,

Mauritania, highlighted the role of local governments and women in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and SDGs.

Jean-François Zinsou, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Benin to the UN, recommended integrating concepts from the Istanbul Programme of Action, which charts a vision and strategy for sustainable development in Least Developed Countries (LDCs), into the post-2015 agenda. He also emphasized the importance of private sector financing.

Paolo Soprano, Ministry for the Environment Land and Sea, Italy, outlined challenges faced by LDCs, Africa, landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), SIDS, and Middle Income Countries.

Samuel Tumiwa, Asian Development Bank (ADB), informed delegates of an ADB study that found the need for countries in special situations, including SIDS, to overcome the middle-income trap, and to move away from agrarian economies into service economies. He also highlighted the need to address inequality and climate change.

Helen Stawski, Islamic Relief, called for increased dialogue between actors working on the post-2015 development agenda and those working towards achieving the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015.

Calling on donor countries to consider vulnerability criteria for SIDS, Lino Briguglio, University of Malta, noted that building resilience is multifaceted, expensive, and needs to be mainstreamed into national sustainable development policies.

During the discussion, participants discussed, *inter alia*: the continued value of official development assistance in helping LDCs and SIDS in achieving the MDGs; the need for determined action by the international community to limit negative effects on countries with special needs; the potential for greater value addition by development assistance agencies through strategies such as risk pooling and sharing; and the role of regional integration to promote South-South cooperation. Participants also agreed on the role of strong institutions and quality of governance to allow countries to escape the middle-income trap.

Tshering emphasized the importance of South-South cooperation and regional solutions to address LLDC challenges, such as transportation and logistics, but said triangular cooperation was necessary to tackle climate change. The PHILIPPINES shared lessons learned from Typhoon Haiyan, stressing development partners should focus resources on pre-disaster assistance rather than post-disaster relief.

Delegates also highlighted the need for the international community to assume responsibility to save lives in disaster situations; ethics as a basis for eco-resilience; and the role of women as a force for disaster management. Delegates also acknowledged the need to bridge the gap between policymaking and implementation on the ground.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Participants greeted the prototype GSDR with excitement, but also fatigue at another UN report. Some wondered where it would fit within the existing landscape of assessments with similar ambitions, such as the UN Environment Programme's Global Environment Outlook. Delegates also questioned the balance between peer review and stakeholder engagement: some favored scientific rigor while others said broader stakeholder participation is necessary for transformative change. Form and function seem to be critical questions for the GSDR going forward.

Future generations also featured on the agenda, as participants discussed how to shift public perception from Groucho Marx ("Why should I care about future generations? What have they ever done for me?") to Gandhi ("The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed"). A proposal to appoint a High Commissioner for Future Generations found traction, although some privately questioned how such an appointment would make a difference on the ground.