



## HLPF-2 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY 2 JULY 2014

The third 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 on natural capital accounting (NCA) for sustainable development. Moderated dialogues took place on two topics: from silos to integrated policy making; and reviewing progress and implementation: making the most of the HLPF reviews after 2015.

### PRESENTATION ON NATURAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ECOSOC President Martin Sajdik chaired this session. Valerie Hickey, World Bank, said the world could no longer afford boom and bust growth built on the back of liquidating natural capital. She described the benefits of NCA in promoting growth without this liquidation, saying it could move the world beyond a GDP matrix towards a focus on long-term growth and well-being. Noting that 70 countries endorsed NCA at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20), Hickey supported a global data revolution, saying NCA provides an agreed framework under the UN System of Environmental and Economic Accounting, and can assist countries to plan and develop indicators to achieve and monitor progress towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### MODERATED DIALOGUE: "FROM SILOS TO INTEGRATED POLICY MAKING"

Chair Sajdik introduced the dialogue, saying it will explore how to re-organize traditional institutional arrangements to allow for more collaborative approaches to policy making.

Moderator David Nabarro, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Food Security and Nutrition, underscored the importance of governance and integrated policy making in the post-2015 agenda, urging participants to move from silos to integration to ensure policy making is "fit for governance purpose."

Joel Netshitenzhe, member of the National Planning Commission, South Africa, said silo mentality among States and multilateral agencies reflects the hyper-specialization of education and research institutions. He recommended moving from coordination to integration and from "multi-disciplinarity to trans-disciplinarity."

Ambassador Vladimir Drobnyak (Croatia), ECOSOC Vice President, described the value of integrated approaches in policy making for urban areas, and in the context of climate change. He highlighted: support from national governments; appropriate institutional arrangements and mechanisms; capacity building;

participation of the private sector and other civil society stakeholders; and bottom-up decision-making to ensure a people-centered approach.

Indomatee Ramma, Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute, Mauritius, presented a case study on integrated policy planning using the Climate, Land-Use, Energy, Water Resources (CLEW) approach. She highlighted the limited understanding and low government interest in resource linkages, and called for institutional frameworks for accessing, interpreting, and integrating scientific information into planning.

Ambassador Ferit Hoxha (Albania) called for reflection on: measures required to develop socially inclusive, environmentally friendly, and economically viable national development strategies; the role of NGOs in an integrated approach to sustainable development; and whether the UN system is ready to support the implementation of the SDGs. He proposed that the UN develop a common, and possibly single, monitoring and reporting mechanism to measure progress towards sustainable development.

Ousainou Ngum, Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) International, called for visionary, effective leadership that is willing to make tough decisions on trade-offs to achieve transformative sustainable development. Maria Ivanova, University of Massachusetts at Boston, US, shared her experience in creating a new academic program that crosses disciplines, scales, and geographies.

In the ensuing discussion, Netshitenzhe emphasized the need to integrate concepts and practices rather than only coordinating them and stressed the need for decisive leadership that can generate long-term strategies among diverse stakeholders. Drobnyak highlighted the importance of analyzing information from multiple angles and a simplified approach for decision-making.

KENYA called for a multi-stakeholder approach in development planning, data collection, and monitoring and evaluation to overcome the silo mentality. ZAMBIA noted a problem of nomenclature of terms across disciplines and called for harmonization to promote a common understanding.

SOUTH AFRICA highlighted the country's national development plan, with a 20-year poverty eradication vision, which overcomes traditional short-term planning.

The NGO Major Group called for participatory, multi-stakeholder policies that promote open source-data sharing. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY supported continuous improvements to sustainable development models, calling for sharing of successful best practices. NORWAY highlighted the use of comprehensive planning to balance different interests, and green taxation as successful approaches to integration. COTE D'IVOIRE shared its experience in developing a

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national sustainable development strategy to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development. ALBANIA said system-wide coherence is critical for sustainable development.

Panelists emphasized governance and rule of law as essential elements of integrated sustainable development; called for research on institutional arrangements that support integrated national development planning; and called on the UN to be nimble and simple to function effectively.

In conclusion, Nabarro stressed the need to move away from multi-sectoral approaches to trans-sectoral ones; and to integrate political and informational dimensions with the social, economic, and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

#### **MODERATED DIALOGUE: “REVIEWING PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION: MAKING THE MOST OF THE HLPF REVIEWS AFTER 2015”**

Ambassador María Emma Mejía, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the UN, introduced the panel, noting that the HLPF would begin to conduct its regular review on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development from 2016 and that the UN General Assembly would adopt an accountability framework for the development agenda in 2015.

Ambassador Masood Khan, Pakistan, moderated the discussion. He emphasized that the post-2015 agenda must learn from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and must involve multi-stakeholders to enhance integration.

Ambassador Christian Wenaweser, Permanent Representative of Lichtenstein to the UN, noted that a key lesson learned from the MDGs was the need for accountability and an effective review mechanism. He called for a mechanism that is voluntary, and based on constructive dialogue and a review of best practices of other review mechanisms. He also raised questions regarding the review’s scope, basis, and the availability of required capacity.

Ambassador Fatuma Ndongiza Nyirakobwa, Chairperson of the Panel of Eminent Persons, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), described the APRM as an open, inclusive, and broad-based mechanism for reviewing governance. Noting that 34 countries in Africa have acceded to this voluntary mechanism, with 17 having gone through peer review since 2003, she said it has allowed citizens to articulate concerns on, *inter alia*, corruption, governance, natural resource management, and youth unemployment. She also highlighted the involvement of the private sector and civil society in the mechanism.

Christian Averous, Division of Environmental Performance and Information, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), highlighted lessons from the OECD peer review processes. He said the HLPF could improve international cooperation and national processes on sustainable development by drawing lessons from OECD country reviews on implementation. He stressed that the HLPF must go beyond intentions, to actions and results.

Marianne Beisheim, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, proposed a review model that is, *inter alia*, bottom-up with a multi-level design, includes national and regional reviews, and includes broad participation from diverse stakeholders. She recommended compatible reporting requirements to avoid duplication and suggested appointing task managers, following the example of the UN Technical Support Team.

Baba Drame, Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, Senegal, said the national level is the most appropriate level for evaluating implementation, and shared examples and lessons learned from three sustainable development reviews in Senegal, underscoring the importance of peer reviews.

The WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS Major Group suggested two minimum conditions for national assessments: full and genuine participation of key stakeholders; and accountability

instruments to guarantee fulfilment of commitments. He offered the supervision mechanism of the International Labour Organization as an example.

A representative of the Major Group for CHILDREN AND YOUTH called on the HLPF to: put volunteers, aging people, and those with disabilities at the center of the development agenda; take a human rights approach to strengthen legitimacy and accountability; and build on existing review processes such as the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review and the Universal Periodic Review process of the Human Rights Council.

Responding to a question on the atmosphere during the APRM peer review process, Nyirakobwa said there was a sense of excitement and ability to discuss issues considered taboo in other forums, including corruption, political succession, and separation of powers. CHILE said the follow-up processes in the OECD’s review mechanism allowed for better formulation of public policy, and supported GERMANY’s proposal of moving forward on means of implementation for SDGs.

KENYA called for: regular reviews with monitoring systems at the national and sub-national levels; mainstreaming SDGs throughout government processes; and the importance of qualitative information in review processes, particularly to facilitate the participation of local communities.

Calling the HLPF the new “hub” in the UN system for sustainable development, SWEDEN called for a bottom-up review structure that is inclusive and urged establishing the Global Sustainable Development Report as a strong pillar in the HLPF’s monitoring system.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the review should not duplicate the efforts of ECOSOC; should maintain its intergovernmental character; be guided by state sovereignty and the principles of equal participation; and not become an instrument of political pressure.

LIBERIA questioned the APRM model of voluntary accession, asking for information on how to encourage more countries to participate in the mechanism.

The NGO Major Group called for a multi-layered, inter-country approach to the review, beginning at the grassroots level, and ending with major unresolved issues being brought to the international-level review process.

Responding to comments, Averous stressed the importance of positioning the reviews in the context of a broader economic understanding of world realities. Nyirakobwa stressed that there is no one-size-fits-all review process, and called on the HLPF to focus its review on the ECOSOC mandate.

Offering concluding thoughts, Khan said there is clear support for the review process to be a voluntary exercise. He also suggested that the HLPF should begin its work, and not wait until the SDGs have been finalized.

Ambassador Mejía concluded the session, thanking the panelists for their contributions.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

With integration on the agenda, it was only a matter of time before the mirror turned to the UN, with participants discussing its role in making and breaking silos. Panelists called for a “nimble and simple” UN to lead transformational change. Integration and silo-breaking sometimes encompass redundancy, however, and as one panelist put it, trying to drive transformational change from the top is like “asking a turkey to vote for Christmas.” Is the UN finally ready for transformational change? It is starting to feel the heat, according to some participants, and a lot rides on the success of the post-2015 process – and the success of the HLPF in driving it. They also point out that there is a big difference between “orchestration” and “integration.” As one panelist put it, this is the time for bold leadership from the UN and its Member States.