

SUMMARY OF THE SECOND INTERSESSIONAL MEETING FOR THE UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 15-16 DECEMBER 2011

The Second Intersessional Meeting of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) was held from 15-16 December 2011 at UN Headquarters in New York. The meeting discussed the compilation of submissions from states, UN bodies, intergovernmental organizations and Major Groups (compilation document) and provided comments and guidance for the development, structure and format of a “zero draft” of the outcome document to be adopted at the June 2012 conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Delegations presented the key elements of their contributions to the compilation document and identified areas where progress can be made. Most delegates emphasized that Rio+20 needs to deliver concrete results. The zero draft is expected to be circulated in mid-January 2012.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCES

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) will mark the 40th anniversary of the first major international political conference that specifically had the word “environment” in its title. The UNCSD seeks to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess progress and implementation gaps in meeting previously-agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges. The Conference will focus on the following themes: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD).

STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE: The UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 5-16 June 1972, and produced three major sets of decisions: the Stockholm Declaration; the Stockholm Action Plan, made up of 109 recommendations on international measures against environmental degradation for governments and international organizations; and a group of five resolutions calling for a ban on the testing of nuclear weapons, the creation of an international databank on environmental data, addressing actions linked to development and the environment, the creation

of an environment fund, and establishing the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) that was charged with providing the central node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making.

BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION: In 1983, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) established an independent commission to formulate a long-term agenda for action. Over the next three years, the World Commission on Environment and Development—more commonly known as the Brundtland Commission, named for its Chair, Gro Harlem Brundtland—held public hearings and studied the issues. Its report, *Our Common Future*, which was published in 1987, stressed the need for development strategies in all countries that recognized the limits of the ecosystem’s ability to regenerate itself and absorb waste products. The Commission emphasized the link between economic development and environmental issues, and identified poverty eradication as a necessary and fundamental requirement for environmentally sustainable development.

UN CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: UNCED, also known as the Earth Summit, was held from 3-14 June 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and involved over 100 Heads of State and Government, representatives from 178 countries, and some 17,000 participants. The principal outputs of UNCED were the Rio

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Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 (a 40-chapter programme of action) and the Statement of Forest Principles. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity were also opened for signature during the Earth Summit. Agenda 21 called for the creation of a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), as a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED, enhance international cooperation, and examine progress in implementing Agenda 21 at the local, national, regional and international levels.

UNGASS-19: The 19th Special Session of the UNGA for the Overall Review and Appraisal of Agenda 21 (23-27 June 1997, New York) adopted the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. It assessed progress since UNCED and examined implementation.

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE

DEVELOPMENT: The WSSD met from 26 August - 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The goal of the WSSD, according to UNGA Resolution 55/199, was to hold a ten-year review of UNCED at the Summit level to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development. The WSSD gathered over 21,000 participants from 191 countries, including governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, civil society, academia and the scientific community. The WSSD negotiated and adopted two main documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI); and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development.

The JPOI is designed as a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at UNCED and includes chapters on: poverty eradication; consumption and production; the natural resource base; health; small island developing states (SIDS); Africa; other regional initiatives; means of implementation; and institutional framework. The Johannesburg Declaration outlines the path taken from UNCED to the WSSD, highlights challenges, expresses a commitment to sustainable development, underscores the importance of multilateralism and emphasizes the need for implementation.

UNGA 64: On 24 December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 64/236 and agreed to convene the UNCSD in 2012 in Brazil. Resolution 64/236 also called for holding three Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meetings prior to the UNCSD. On 14 May 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang as Secretary-General for the Conference. The UN Secretary-General subsequently appointed Brice Lalonde (France) and Elizabeth Thompson (Barbados) as executive coordinators.

UNCSD PREPCOM I: The first session of the PrepCom for the UNCSD was held from 17-19 May 2010, at UN Headquarters in New York. The PrepCom took up both substantive and procedural matters. On the substantive side, delegates assessed progress to date and the remaining gaps in implementing outcomes of major summits on sustainable development. They also discussed new and emerging challenges, a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the IFSD. On the procedural side, participants organized their work in the lead-up to 2012, and considered the UNCSD's rules of procedure.

FIRST INTERSESSIONAL MEETING FOR THE

UNCSD: The first Intersessional Meeting for UNCSD convened from 10-11 January 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York. During the meeting, delegates listened to a summary of the findings of the Synthesis Report on securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development, which: assesses progress to date and remaining gaps in implementing the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development; and addresses new and emerging challenges. Panel discussions were also held on the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and on the IFSD.

UNCSD PREPCOM II: The second session of the PrepCom for the UNCSD took place from 7-8 March 2011, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates discussed progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, addressed new and emerging challenges, discussed the scope of a green economy and the idea of a blue economy, and debated the IFSD. At the end of the meeting, a decision was adopted on the process for preparing the draft outcome document for the UNCSD.

UNCSD SUBREGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETINGS

FOR SIDS: Three subregional preparatory meetings were convened to allow SIDS the opportunity to prepare inputs into the UNCSD preparatory process. The Subregional Preparatory Meeting for the Caribbean convened in Georgetown, Guyana, on 20 June 2011. Participants identified the value and benefits in engaging in the process and the opportunities that it represents, particularly in regard to the green economy. The Subregional Preparatory Committee for the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and South China Sea (AIMS) countries, convened in Mahé, Seychelles, from 7-8 July 2011. Participants adopted recommendations including on the blue-green economy and strengthening the regional IFSD, through building on the work of the Indian Ocean Commission and developing links with regional UN entities. The Pacific Subregional Preparatory Joint Ministerial Meeting convened in Apia, Samoa, from 21-22 July 2011. Participants adopted a draft outcome document focusing on creating a green economy in a blue world, and the regional IFSD.

UNCSD REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:

This event was held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in Santiago, Chile, from 7-9 September 2011. The main outcome of this meeting was a set of conclusions, which were negotiated by government representatives over the course of the meeting. Conclusions included calls for: finding better ways to measure the wealth of countries that adequately reflect the three pillars of sustainable development; and a flexible and efficient global IFSD ensuring effective integration of the three pillars. The conclusions do not mention "green economy," as government representatives could not agree on whether to refer to the concept. Delegates also discussed a proposal from Colombia and Guatemala to launch a process to develop sustainable development goals (SDGs).

HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM ON THE UNCSD: This Symposium, which took place from 8-9 September 2011, in Beijing, China, aimed to facilitate in-depth discussions among all relevant stakeholders on both the objective and the two themes of Rio+20, in order to formulate concrete proposals as a contribution to preparations for the UNCSD.

Participants emphasized five new and emerging issues for “priority attention”: energy access, security, and sustainability; food security and sustainable agriculture; water scarcity and sound water management; improved resilience and disaster preparedness; and land and soil degradation and sustainable land management. On the IFSD, participants highlighted that reforms should be guided by a set of principles, including: agreement on core problems to be addressed; form should follow function and substance; any reform should not only improve integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, but restore the balance among these pillars; enhancing transparency; and embracing complexity by simplifying administration, implementation and compliance arrangements.

UNCSD ARAB REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING:

This meeting took place from 16-17 October 2011, in Cairo, Egypt. On the green economy, delegates highlighted the lack of a universal definition and agreed to identify the green economy as a tool for sustainable development rather than as a new principle that might replace sustainable development. Some participants raised concerns that the green economy concept might add constraints on the development or socioeconomic requirements of their countries and the recommendations from this meeting spell conditions for the use of any future green economy concept.

Regarding the IFSD, many delegates brought their national experiences to the table, with some explaining, for example, that they have or are in the process of establishing national sustainable development councils. Some said they could not discuss the international options in detail until the proposals and their financial implications are made clear. Participants also highlighted the need for balance among the three pillars of sustainable development. The meeting also featured the very active engagement of Major Groups.

UNCSD REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC: This meeting took place from 19-20 October 2011, in Seoul, Republic of Korea. During the meeting, participants shared their views on the main themes of the UNCSD. On green economy, although many found merit in the idea, some participants expressed concern about the concept, noting that a green economy should not lead to protectionism or conditionalities. Others noted that a “one-size-fits-all” approach will not be successful due to countries’ unique circumstances.

Most participants noted that there is a need to strengthen the IFSD. While many favored “strengthening” UNEP, there was no consensus on whether this should be done through transforming UNEP into a specialized agency. Some participants also expressed interest and support for establishing a sustainable development council. Participants adopted the “Seoul Outcome,” which was submitted to the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee.

UNCSD REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR AFRICA: This meeting took place in conjunction with the seventh session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development from 20-25 October 2011, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Most participants agreed on the need for strengthened IFSD. While there was some opposition to the idea of transforming UNEP into a specialized agency, all participants agreed on the need to strengthen the organization. Delegates supported the concept of green economy, with the caveat that it needs more definition. They agreed that transitioning to a green economy should not result in protectionism or trade

conditionalities, there is a need for enabling environments, and sustainable land management should be a part of the green economy framework.

On means of implementation, delegates committed themselves to a number of objectives including ensuring improved environmental governance, transparency and accountability. They also called on the international community to meet existing commitments, such as the need to double aid to Africa. Delegates adopted the Africa Consensus Statement to Rio+20.

UNCSD PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE UNECE REGION: The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Regional Preparatory Meeting convened in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1-2 December 2011. Participants called for improvement in monitoring and evaluation of progress on sustainable development, better integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, and stronger regional coherence and cooperation. The proposal for SDGs was discussed and the need for a green economy roadmap was strongly backed, while there was also acknowledgement of different views and the need to accommodate the unique challenges of different countries.

On IFSD, many supported upgrading UNEP and creating a sustainable development council, as well as strengthening the regional commissions and national sustainable development councils, and engaging civil society. There was both support for and opposition to proposals for a new international convention elaborating Rio Principle 10 on access to information and public participation.

INTERSESSIONAL MEETING REPORT

Amb. John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), Co-Chair of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20), opened the Second Intersessional Meeting of the UNCSD on Thursday, 15 December 2011. He noted that three changes to the Bureau and the accreditation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to participate in the UNCSD PrepCom needed to be formally adopted, and presided over a short formal meeting of the PrepCom for this purpose. Delegates elected by acclamation: Amb. Kim Sook (Republic of Korea) as Co-Chair, to replace former Co-Chair Park In-Kook (Republic of Korea); Bedřich Moldan (Czech Republic), to replace former Vice-Chair Jiri Hlaváček (Czech Republic); and Keith Christie (Canada), to replace former Vice-Chair John Matuszak (US). Ashe noted that the UN General Assembly (UNGA) has taken a decision to accredit organizations that were accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to the Rio+20 event itself, but not to the PrepCom. Delegates agreed to accredit them, with the status of observer, to the preparatory process. Ashe then adjourned the special formal meeting of the PrepCom.

Amb. Kim noted that the Second Intersessional Meeting offers the first opportunity to discuss the 6,000 page compilation document and help guide the Bureau and Secretariat in the preparation of the zero draft of the outcome document, which will be circulated in January 2012. He encouraged delegates to keep their discussions focused on concrete deliverables, remarking that elections in major countries in 2012 and the economic crisis may reduce international attention to Rio+20, and that the Rio Earth Summit was successful because Agenda 21 became a peoples’ agenda.

Tariq Al-Ansari, Deputy Chef de Cabinet, Office of the President of the General Assembly, on behalf of UNGA President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, said that the expected outcome should be a concise document, with a results-oriented programme of action, clear timeframes and specific targets; and that integration, coherence and implementation are the cornerstones of the conference outcome.

UNCSD Secretary-General Sha Zukang called on governments to “aim high” for Rio, particularly given “new” sustainable development issues, such as food insecurity, volatility in energy prices, global financial instability, and unemployment. He called for the meeting to provide guidance on how the objectives and themes of the conference should inform the format and structure of the outcome document, highlighting the broad interest in measuring progress through sustainable development goals (SDGs), and that proposals on the international framework on sustainable development (IFSD) focus on enhancing integration among the three pillars of sustainable development and strengthening individual pillars, with a focus on the environmental pillar.

Delegates adopted the organization of work and then heard opening statements. Argentina, for the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), called for, *inter alia*: increased contributions to the Rio+20 Trust Fund; a registry of financial and technology transfer commitments; and an international mechanism to bridge the technological gap. She supported a single outcome document and called attention to a proposal to modify the schedule of preparatory meetings. Tanzania, for the African Group, urged: creating a mechanism to monitor financial commitments and their fulfillment; transforming UNEP into a specialized international institution based in Nairobi; creating centers of excellence for joint research and information-sharing; developing new indicators to assess performance beyond gross domestic product (GDP) and the human development index (HDI); and an outcome document integrating a strong political message with a clear implementation plan and key deliverables.

The European Union (EU) and Croatia preferred: negotiating a single outcome document; focusing on access to and management of scarce resources; and including a green economy roadmap and a package of IFSD reforms comprising the upgrading of UNEP into a specialized agency for the environment. He expressed willingness to consider global goals within the green economy roadmap. Nepal, on behalf of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), looked forward to strong support for LDC delegations’ participation in the UNCSD preparatory process. He suggested that Rio+20 focus on: ensuring LDCs universal access to affordable, reliable energy and related technologies; appropriate investment in water infrastructure and management, and sanitation; financial and technical support for the enhancement of food and nutritional security and provision of high-yielding and climate-resilient seed varieties and fertilizers, as well as help combating desertification and land degradation; and support for sustainable development of forests and mountains, protection of biodiversity, sustainable use of marine resources, and protection from disasters and vulnerability of small islands, mountain countries, coastal countries and other vulnerable LDCs.

New Zealand, on behalf of Pacific Islands Forum members, urged realization of international oceans-related goals, including to establish the global network of marine protected

areas; actions on ocean acidification, pollution and illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing; conservation and sustainable management of marine eco-systems and resources; and arrangements ensuring that small island developing states (SIDS) enjoy a greater share of the benefits derived from the conservation and sustainable management of ocean resources. Papua New Guinea, on behalf of Pacific SIDS and joined by the Maldives and Timor-Leste, commended Monaco for its advocacy for inclusion of the “blue economy” in the Rio+20 process, and stressed the need to reduce IUU fishing, address climate change and ocean acidification, and streamline UN agencies dealing with oceans issues.

Lebanon, for the Arab Group, favored coordination among existing institutions for sustainable development rather than building new ones, and said that any agreed concept of green economy should be a means to achieve sustainable development and not an alternative to it, involve a gradual transition and not be imposed as a condition for financial support. Grenada, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), called for sufficient funding for the Rio+20 Voluntary Trust Fund. Barbados, on behalf of Caribbean Community (CARICOM), highlighted that the Rio outcome must honor all international commitments to SIDS, and proposed calling for the third global conference on SIDS in 2014.

GUIDANCE FOR THE ZERO DRAFT

Delegates then exchanged views on the compilation document and offered comments and guidance for the zero draft. Botswana supported the green economy as an approach to further define the economics of sustainable development, and proposed including desertification and the related need for an enhanced scientific research-base in the outcome document. Malaysia favored a focused political document with a strong commitment to the green economy, reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), and a plan for building the IFSD. Children and Youth called for the adoption of SDGs supplemented by a 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10-YFP) on sustainable consumption and production (SCP), and the establishment of: a council on sustainable development as a subsidiary body to the UNGA; a global environmental court; an intergovernmental panel on sustainable development; and a UN Environment Organization by upgrading UNEP.

China cautioned against departing from the CBDR principle in the outcome document and using the green economy as a condition for development aid or as a means for trade protectionism. On the IFSD, he called for: demonstrating the leading role of the UN; reinforcing ECOSOC and the CSD; ensuring that international financial institutions incorporate sustainable development into their planning and programming; and increasing the voice of developing countries. Monaco called attention to sustainable fisheries, marine renewable energy and sustainable tourism. The Republic of Korea called for a political declaration with an annex defining action for implementation and the transformation of the CSD into a sustainable development council. Women pointed to gender equality as a cross-cutting issue for sustainable development, the protection of women’s rights to land and resources, and the role of consumption and production patterns, rather than population growth, in unsustainable development.

Canada proposed that the zero draft should: reflect issues where there is broad agreement across all regions and avoid divisive issues; include a tool kit identifying best practices; and identify indicators to help states monitor their own progress towards a green economy. He supported the proposal for SDGs. Venezuela stated: the results of Rio+20 must lead to concrete actions to combat poverty; and oil must be recognized as a source of secure energy that requires commitments for its production and sustainable use. Uruguay suggested: the implementation of the green economy requires investment in agricultural technology, waste management and promotion of SPC; the revitalization of UNEP; and changing the structure of the CSD.

The Scientific and Technological Community recommended that an outcome on the green economy include a mechanism to foster international scientific cooperation and research on global sustainability issues. Bolivia highlighted the need to create institutional mechanisms guaranteeing compliance with commitments to developing countries, such as official development assistance. The Republic of Congo, on behalf of the African Group, emphasized the need to strengthen UNEP's authority and to couple SDGs with targeted support and resources. Peru supported the adoption of SDGs and stressed the need to guarantee protection of indigenous peoples. Trade Unions asked for a concrete pledge from countries on the precise amount of green and decent jobs the green economy agenda will produce and called for a tax on financial transactions.

The US called for a focused political outcome document of less than five pages, with a compendium of commitments as an annex listing voluntary, non-negotiated commitments from governments and stakeholders at all levels, and the creation of a mechanism for accountability. Nepal drew attention to sustainable mountain development. Local Authorities requested a recognized negotiating status for sub-national governments, and favored the creation of a council on sustainable development and SDGs that are closely linked to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Belarus affirmed that a politically binding document should be adopted by consensus at Rio+20 and a global voluntary fund promoting the transfer of green technologies should be created. Japan favored the development of SDGs and their contribution to post-2015 MDGs based on a new international strategy with human security as the guiding principle; and a step-by-step approach to enhance collaboration between existing sustainable development bodies. The Russian Federation called for a new sustainable development agenda, a modified concept of production and consumption, and an assessment of the risks of the green economy.

Cambodia called for: broadening market access for green agriculture; defining SDGs; strengthening the UN's Delivering as One structure; and addressing SCP, especially through the 10-YFP. NGOs called for: commitments to green public procurement policies by governments at all levels; including a SDG for zero net deforestation by 2020; charging the Committee on World Food Security with developing proposals based on the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development recommendations; developing a convention on corporate responsibility; implementing the 10-YFP; adopting a global financial transaction tax; and establishing a sustainable development council. Cuba remarked

that it is unclear how the concept of green economy will lead to the transfer of environmentally-friendly technologies to the South if agreement is not reached in the "forum addressing intellectual property rights." Jordan suggested considering a green stimulus to help developing countries make the transition to a green economy, and supported the proposal to integrate SDGs into the post-2015 MDG debate. The World Trade Organization proposed developing initiatives to build trade capacity in developing countries.

Switzerland noted the need for national green economy action plans and better monitoring of production and consumption impacts, and called for a global sustainability council. India suggested that the green economy outcome should provide a menu of policy options. Sudan queried the impact of the green economy, particularly on national poverty eradication efforts and green protectionism. Norway recommended considering green taxes and incentives, the inclusion of value of natural capital in national accounting, and a leading role for UNEP in developing SDGs. Iceland emphasized the importance of the marine environment for food security, renewable energy sources in the green economy, and mainstreaming gender perspectives in decision-making at all levels. Kenya affirmed that the outcome document should promise mass poverty elimination and adoption of the 10-YFP.

Costa Rica underscored the need to integrate the economic value of ecosystems and their services in national accounts. Ghana proposed mandating the United Nations Development Programme to collect best practices globally, increasing GEF funding for desertification, establishing SDGs, creating an international mechanism for technology transfer, and promoting a people-centered concept of the green economy. Liechtenstein favored a green economy roadmap accompanied by a toolkit with policy options and green economy indicators, and the launch of a platform to coordinate and peer-review stakeholder activities such as a sustainable development council and a global registry of governmental, sub-national and stakeholder voluntary commitments. Italy emphasized sustainable development indicators and a green economy roadmap focusing on sustainable natural resource management. Indonesia recommended that Rio+20 should support the MDGs by focusing on planetary well-being.

Brazil noted that Rio+20 will not only have an intergovernmental element, but also components for actors from civil society and the business community. During the four-day period between the last PrepCom and the UNCSD in June, he proposed focusing on food security and poverty, cities, energy, innovation, water, oceans, economics of sustainable development including unsustainable patterns, and jobs. Ecuador underscored the need for a new financial architecture and lasting commitments for humanity. Chile recommended that the outcome document address protection of marine coastal areas, mountain ecosystems and their services. Morocco proposed filling implementation gaps, improving access to finance on the basis of sustainability criteria, and making Rio+20 the conference of the blue economy.

Colombia stressed that the SDGs should be one of the most concrete results at Rio+20 and should function as a platform for cooperation. Israel highlighted green agriculture as a cross-cutting issue and stated that indicators beyond GDP should be promoted. Australia suggested that the outcome document

should promote short, focused high-level outcomes, and that SDGs bridge the two conference themes. The Czech Republic stressed that the outcome should contain guidelines for entities at national, regional and local levels to propose indicators. Guatemala pointed to recognizing the value and knowledge of indigenous peoples and the patterns of society in relation to nature. Turkey called attention to urbanization and private sector involvement in disseminating socially responsible practices. Singapore highlighted the importance of adopting the 10-YFP, and stressed that Rio+20 should address sustainable cities. Burkina Faso discussed its national growth strategy addressing sustainable development and poverty reduction, and recommended including natural capital in national budgets. Uganda proposed that the outcome document focus on a measurement framework for sustainable development, and emphasized the need for a global institution to spearhead international action on sustainable development. Nicaragua stressed the need for compliance on official development assistance commitments, stating that the green economy is a tool to achieve sustainable development based on a model in harmony with nature. Iran underscored the need for action on all three pillars of sustainable development and for technology transfer to developing countries.

STRUCTURE AND FORMAT OF THE ZERO DRAFT

On Friday, delegates discussed the structure and format of the zero draft. The EU highlighted how global goals could provide linkages between the two conference themes, and suggested the outcome document be focused, forward- and action-oriented, and have three sections: a political declaration; a green economy roadmap; and the IFSD. Kazakhstan stressed the need to implement the Global Energy-Ecological Strategy and the Green Bridge Partnership Programme. India recommended that the outcome document clearly state what the green economy is not about. Business and Industry suggested including in the outcome document: a balanced factual evaluation of sustainable development progress in the last 20 years; a common vision for sustainable development in the future; an outline for an enabling framework for policy and regulation to support sustainable development; clear priorities for action at the international level; and a programme to stimulate technology and innovation across the full spectrum of sustainable development issues. New Zealand recommended the zero draft focus on common ground found in the submissions, and provide concrete steps on eliminating harmful fisheries subsidies and fossil fuel subsidies. Iceland recommended that green economy road maps be adopted at the national level using a bottom-up approach and stressed that SDGs could help bridge the implementation gap.

Mexico preferred a brief document outlining goals and deadlines, presenting the green economy as a set of political tools to help progress on sustainable development, and recommending strengthening UNEP according to the Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome on international environmental governance. Farmers called for an action plan addressing the needs of small-scale farmers and the rural poor.

The Republic of Korea suggested a political declaration with an annex including an action plan on priority actions and a compendium of commitments. Ukraine favored: a compendium of voluntary commitments by governments, UN bodies and

stakeholders; a process for the elaboration at the global level of SDGs, as well as a call for national conferences to develop national SDGs; and providing UNEP with universal membership.

Switzerland favored a short political declaration with an annex going beyond a compendium of individual commitments, but rather containing a green economy roadmap comprising common goals and concrete targets and timelines for specific sectors and common enabling conditions, as well as best practices and tools for meeting these targets. Indigenous Peoples requested: incorporating inputs from indigenous peoples in the discussions on the green economy; respecting the rights of the urban poor; discussing the sacred value of nature; and censuring sufficient participation by indigenous peoples representatives in the Rio+20 process.

China expressed hope that a rational schedule for negotiations would be developed and that it would allow for developing countries' full participation, as well as openness and transparency. Saudi Arabia noted that: the green economy should not constitute an obstacle to finding energy sources in their various forms; negotiations should not reopen the Rio Principles; and there is no need to create new entities for IFSD. Cambodia proposed the outcome document be simple and concise, and include sections on: principles such as CBDR; green economy, with identification of tools for implementation; and IFSD, establishing a coherent institutional arrangement and including a multistakeholder mechanism. Bolivia supported an action-oriented political document including references to crises related to finance, energy, food, climate, water and limits for living in a finite world.

Australia supported a short, focused document that: is understandable, actionable and reflects an ecosystem approach; reflects common ground shared by states; and identifies gaps such as the high seas. Japan emphasized that the outcome should be a concise, political declaration focused on only two themes: green economy and IFSD; and that this meeting is different from Rio and the WSSD, and should only focus on the two themes, in part due to the limited time available to negotiate the outcome.

Canada recommended a concise, results-oriented single outcome document in three parts according to UNGA Resolution 64/236, focusing on four or five sustainable development guideposts that recognize regional and state differences. The Inter-Parliamentary Union stressed the need to: bring the voices of parliamentarians into sustainable development at the UN, agree on a short and comprehensible outcome document, and ensure that the implementation of international green budgets overcome the limitations of GDP indicators. The US reiterated that the outcome document should be a concise political statement of no more than five pages focusing on key high-level issues, with a compendium of commitments in an appendix.

Tunisia supported an outcome document with a separate action plan detailing objectives and targets, and four sections on: progress and insufficiency of sustainable development; the green economy; new and emerging issues; and IFSD. Namibia favored scaling up means of implementation for sustainable development and an action-oriented outcome document, including best practices examples in an annex and drawing attention to what the green economy should not be, such as a top-down approach. Bosnia and Herzegovina noted that the challenges of the current economic crisis may slow down support from developed countries to developing countries, although this

support is obligatory and should not be decreased. Germany stressed the transition to the green economy is in all countries' interest, suggested concrete deliverables such as the 10-YFP and sustainable urban development, and proposed a voluntary capacity-building scheme to provide country-specific advice.

Montenegro underscored that the CSD has not lived up to the hopes of the international community and should have a new mandate and the capacity to provide direct assistance to countries, and that UNEP should be upgraded into a specialized UN agency. Thailand said that the green economy should focus on food security, sustainable energy and disaster risk reduction, among others, and SCP is an important tool in contributing to the green economy. He expressed openness to discussing the idea of a sustainable development council, and said that UNEP needs to be strengthened and must work closely with other UN agencies for effective delivery at the country level, and regional commissions should continue to play a key implementing role.

Norway suggested that: the outcome should be a short, concise, forward-looking and results-oriented political document; SDGs should be part of the renewed political commitment for sustainable development; and the outcome should focus on the two themes, with the green economy incorporating a toolbox and best practices, and IFSD including an improved intergovernmental forum for sustainable development and reform of UNEP's governance structure. She also highlighted gender and engagement of civil society as cross-cutting themes. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization emphasized that there will be no green economy without sustainable agriculture.

CLOSING SESSION

On Friday afternoon, UNCSD Secretary-General Sha summarized views on the structure, format and content of the zero draft of the outcome document. On structure and format, he noted support for: a single, focused and action-oriented political document focusing on the objectives and two themes set by UNGA Resolution 64/236; a vision for the future and a declaration of renewed political commitment, accompanied, as an annex, by a set of agreed actions specifying actors, timeframes and means of implementation; and accountability for delivering on commitments, whether negotiated or voluntary, highlighting some proposals for a compendium or registry of voluntary commitments to accompany the negotiated outcome.

On the content, he noted calls to: reaffirm the Rio Principles and prior sustainable development commitments; have the ambition to eradicate poverty, by restoring stability and inclusive growth and entrusting future generations with the conditions for full, productive and healthy lives in harmony with nature; and providing actors with the necessary means of implementation. On the green economy, he underlined broad agreement that: the concept should be inclusive, advance poverty eradication and be a means to sustainable development; national action should be guided by agreed principles and a menu of policy options to ensure flexibility, and should be supported by capacity building for developing countries to develop national green economy strategies; and there is a need to share experiences and establish a platform to this end. He also emphasized broad support for SDGs, noting that the outcome document will need to reflect this proposal.

As priority areas for action, Sha singled out oceans, food security and sustainable agriculture, sustainable energy for all,

water access and efficiency, sustainable cities, green jobs and decent work, and disaster risk reduction and resilience, as well as desertification, mountains, forests, biodiversity and climate change. As cross-cutting issues, he pointed to the 10-YFP as a critical component of agreement on the green economy; as well as gender equality, social equity, education, and access to technology, finance and capacity building. On IFSD, he pointed to: proposals to "strengthen UNEP/elevate it to a specialized agency;" "growing interest" in creating a sustainable development council to replace the CSD, building upon and strengthening existing institutions, including ECOSOC and the UNGA; and the need to include economic and financial governance institutions for improving sustainable development governance. He concluded that the zero draft will be distributed by the Co-Chairs in consultation with the Bureau.

Co-Chair Ashe said he considered the meeting a learning experience and expressed hope that the zero draft will be circulated in mid-January 2012. He invited delegates to thank Vivian Pilner, Secretary, for her contributions to UN sustainable development negotiations over the past 20 years and to wish her well on her retirement on 31 December 2011, and he gavelled the meeting to a close at 4:52 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE SECOND INTERSESSIONAL MEETING

Since the Preparatory Committee for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development last met at UN Headquarters in March 2011, the world has undergone major changes. The Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street Movement and EU economic crisis, not to mention the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in Japan, and record extreme weather events around the world, are just a few of the events that provide important context for the road to Rio+20. As delegates crowded into Conference Room 1 at the opening of the Second Intersessional Meeting for the UNCSD, with many still weary from the recent climate change negotiations in Durban, the meeting opened with muted optimism. Many thought that the Durban outcome was a good omen to re-energize sustainable development multilateralism. However, as UNCSD Secretary-General Sha Zukang emphasized in his opening remarks, the magnitude of sustainable development challenges is daunting, particularly given new and emerging threats such as food insecurity, volatility in energy prices, global economic uncertainty and high unemployment.

Many delegates also expressed dismay at the seemingly insurmountable task of providing guidance on the structure, format and content of the zero draft of the outcome document to enable the UNCSD Bureau to narrow down the 6,000 pages of submissions from governments, UN agencies, intergovernmental organizations, regional meetings and Major Groups into a concise, focused basis for negotiations by early January. However, the extent to which a consensus emerged and the meeting actually assisted the Bureau with its daunting task of drafting the zero draft remains to be seen. This brief analysis offers an initial summary of the key themes and challenges that were identified during the two-day meeting at the end of 2011.

SYMBOLISM VERSUS SUBSTANCE

As the meeting began, expectations were unclear as to how its format would add value to the process of compiling a zero draft.

Delegates appeared to have more to say on the content of the zero draft, when interventions continually ran over time on day one, than on its structure and format, when the list of speakers was completed well before the end of the allotted meeting time. Instead of engaging in an interactive discussion on the seven questions provided by the Bureau on the structure and scope of the outcome document, most delegates read prepared statements summarizing their contributions to the compilation document.

A few noted the irony that the regional commissions presented the outcomes of the regional preparatory meetings during a side event, because of the expectation that there would not be time for presentations during the Second Intersessional itself, which could have benefited from hearing outcomes encompassing some of the few intergovernmental contributions to the compilation document that reportedly resulted from more interactive discussions.

Nonetheless, many indicated that the Second Intersessional Meeting filled an important purpose in the process of developing a zero draft that countries could accept as the basis for negotiations beginning in early 2012. Some pointed to the meeting as an opportunity for delegates to outline their priorities. To that end, the meeting served to “rehearse” speaking points or “vent” on key concerns, depending on whom you spoke to. And although the meeting appeared rather symbolic in ensuring the legitimacy of the process leading to the zero draft, there was also evidence of substantive discussions occurring in the hallways between sessions. In addition, many anticipated a more creative discussion on the Rio+20 outcome on 17-18 December during an event organized by UNGA President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser. Nevertheless, while many thought the Second Intersessional Meeting had accomplished its goal, the next step will be the most crucial on the road to Rio+20. As one representative said, “The heat will start when we get the zero draft.”

EMERGING CONSENSUS AND FAULT LINES

Although areas of disagreement emerged over the two days, on the structure of the zero draft, most delegates agreed on the need to closely follow UNGA Resolution 64/236, which focuses on objectives and the two themes. In his closing summary, UNCSD Secretary-General Sha reiterated that the overall message was to: “Be brief and to the point. Be understood by the world; avoid a text full of jargon.” Indeed, delegations repeatedly emphasized that the final text needs to communicate to the “average citizen” and not remain within the confines of UN processes and technocrats. To that end, many called for a political declaration to be accompanied by a set of agreed actions. Whether these actions are negotiated or voluntary, a framework or roadmap, attached as annexes or included in the document, remain to be seen. The common denominator, so often set disappointingly low, appeared to be buoyant, as a great deal of support was behind calls for these actions to specify actors, timeframes and means of implementation.

On the content of the zero draft, various proposals for the green economy and IFSD emerged. There was broad agreement that an inclusive green economy will require action at multiple levels—international, regional, national, and sub-national—avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach. This also mirrored recommendations for the IFSD, where in order to promote implementation and integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, coherence is needed at all levels, as Sha stressed: “Coherence to promote integration...coherence

to promote implementation.” Coherence may in fact act as a bridging mechanism between integration and implementation. However, what “coherence” means in practice will need further deliberation. Various proposals were presented for both strengthening the environmental pillar embodied by UNEP, and further integrating the three pillars of sustainable development, including recommendations to create a sustainable development council to replace the CSD. Delegations presented different views on international environmental governance, with some voicing full support for raising UNEP’s status to a specialized agency and others opposed to the creation of new institutions, highlighting this could in fact be a “red herring” that would diminish the organization’s ability to enact change within the UN system.

Another area of significant discussion was the importance of measuring progress towards sustainable development. Colombia and Guatemala’s proposal for a process to develop sustainable development goals (SDGs) garnered support. Some, however, pointed to the fact that UNGA Resolution 64/236 does not provide a basis for a section on SDGs in the outcome document. Others privately raised questions about how such goals would be identified, measured and monitored, indicating that much work remains to be done to elaborate this proposal so that it delivers on its promise. As a result, some delegations preferred to speak of integrating “global goals” that could provide linkages between the two conference themes. Others commented that the SDG proposal spoke to the desire of many for clear, concise and understandable deliverables from Rio+20, wondering if any other proposals aimed at this objective would emerge and gain sufficient traction in the time left before June 2012.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AN AGE OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

As key elements for the zero draft were voiced in plenary, some also recognized the elephant in the room: political and economic uncertainty underpins and could undermine the Rio+20 outcomes. As UNCSD PrepCom Co-Chair Kim Sook noted, 2012 is an election year in key countries and many national and regional efforts are focused on measures to overcome the financial crisis. Both may have an impact on the priority that Rio+20 receives. But as Secretary-General Sha reiterated in his opening remarks: “Failure is not an option.”

So to ensure needed political will and momentum for Rio+20, Co-Chair Kim recalled that the 1992 Rio Earth Summit was successful because Agenda 21, particularly its translation into Local Agenda 21s, became a peoples’ agenda. In this age of social unrest, punctuated by mass movements and government overthrows, and seemingly instantaneous action galvanized by the Twitter generation, many participants recognized that, to be successful, Rio+20 needs to galvanize action from the bottom up (ideally, with a slogan that can fit in 140 characters or less). Whether governments are able to agree on a common purpose to be understood and shared at all levels and lead the sustainable development narrative from the front, or whether they are left to respond to global events overtaking the UNCSD moment, remains the challenge during the next six months of intensive work on the road returning to Rio.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

For additional meetings leading up to the Rio+20 conference, go to the UNCSO homepage <http://www.uncsd2012.org/> or IISD's Sustainable Development Policy & Practice knowledge-base <http://uncsd.iisd.org/>

UNCSO Informal and Intersessional Meetings: The UNCSO Preparatory Committee is scheduled to hold a series of informal discussions and intersessional negotiations on the zero draft of the outcome document in January, February, March and April 2012. This schedule is subject to change and will be reviewed at the 22 December 2011 Bureau meeting. **tentative dates:** 16-18 January 2012; 13-17 February 2012; 19-23 March 2012; 26-27 March 2012; and 30 April - 4 May 2012 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSO Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>

Fifth World Future Energy Summit: The fifth World Future Energy Summit will concentrate on energy innovation and policy implementation, technology development, finance and investment approaches, and existing and upcoming projects. The Summit will seek to set the scene for future energy discussions in 2012. **dates:** 16-19 January 2012 **location:** Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates **contact:** Naji El Haddad **phone:** +971-2-409-0499 **email:** naji.haddad@reedexpo.ae **www:** <http://www.worldfutureenergysummit.com/>

Global Conference on Land-Ocean Connections: Towards Greener Coastal Economies: This Conference precedes the Third Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR-3) on the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), and will seek to ensure that a contribution from the linked marine and freshwater communities is fed into the Rio+20 process. This conference also will include the launch of a new UNEP report on the "Green Economy in a Blue World." **dates:** 23-24 January 2012 **location:** Manila, Philippines **contact:** Takehiro Nakamura, UNEP/GPA Coordination Office **phone:** +254-20-7624793 **fax:** +254-20-7624249 **email:** takehiro.nakamura@unep.org **www:** <http://www.gpa.unep.org/>

12th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum: The UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum will, at its 12th special session, focus on the UNCSO-related themes of green economy and international environmental governance and emerging issues. **dates:** 20-22 February 2012 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Jamil Ahmad, UNEP **phone:** +254-20-762-3411 **fax:** +254-20 762-3929 **email:** sgc.sgb@unep.org **www:** <http://www.unep.org/resources/gov/>

GLOBE 2012: GLOBE 2012 is hosted by the GLOBE Foundation, as part of its collaboration with UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP FI), to offer platforms for thinking, dialogue and action by the worldwide financial services and investment community in preparation for the UNCSO. The aim of the meeting and of the overall collaboration with the UNEP FI is to enhance communication among bankers, insurers and investors to achieve a sustainable finance environment where responsible investment is a priority, and to provide opportunities for discussing a roadmap to a financially sustainable economy. **dates:** 14-16 March 2012 **location:** Vancouver, Canada

contact: Globe Foundation **phone:** +1-604-695-5001 **fax:** +1-604-695-5019 **email:** info@globeseries.com **www:** <http://2012.globeseries.com/>

Planet Under Pressure: New Knowledge Towards Solutions: This conference will focus on solutions to the global sustainability challenge. The conference will discuss solutions to move societies on to a sustainable pathway and provide scientific leadership towards the UNCSO. **dates:** 26-29 March 2012 **location:** London, United Kingdom **contact:** Jenny Wang **phone:** +86-10-8520-8796 **email:** Jen.wang@elsevier.com **www:** <http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net>

UNCTAD XIII: The 13th Session of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII) will be held in April 2012 on the theme, "Development-centered globalization: Towards inclusive and sustainable growth and development." **dates:** 21-26 April 2012 **location:** Doha, Qatar **contact:** UNCTAD Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-1234 **fax:** +41-22-917-0057 **email:** info@unctad.org **www:** <http://www.unctad.org>

Third PrepCom for UNCSO: The third meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the UNCSO will take place in Brazil just prior to Rio+20. **dates:** 13-15 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSO Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

UN Conference on Sustainable Development: The UNCSO will mark the 20th anniversary of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. **dates:** 20-22 June 2012 **location:** Rio de Janeiro, Brazil **contact:** UNCSO Secretariat **email:** uncsd2012@un.org **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

GLOSSARY

10-YFP	10-Year Framework of Programmes on sustainable consumption and production
CBDR	Common but differentiated responsibilities
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GDP	Gross domestic product
IFSD	Institutional framework for sustainable development
LDC	Least Developed Countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or UNCSO)
SCP	Sustainable consumption and production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSO	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (or Rio+20)
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development



International Institute for Sustainable Development Reporting Services (IISD RS) Knowledge Management Resources

IISD RS, publisher of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, also maintains online knowledgebases that are updated daily with information regarding meetings, publications and other activities related to international sustainable development policy and its implementation.

Each knowledgebase project consists of several integrated resources, to help the sustainable development policy and practice communities assess trends and activities at the international level. These resources are:

- Daily news reports researched and written by our own experts and organized in a **freely accessible, searchable on-line knowledgebase**;
- A **comprehensive calendar of upcoming events** related to international sustainable development policy, which can be downloaded to your own online calendar;
- And a **community listserve**, which exclusively delivers email updates of the most recent additions to our knowledgebases, as well as announcements by listserve members regarding their organizations' sustainable development activities.

Each knowledgebase focuses on a specific environmental challenge or region, as noted below:



Sustainable Development Policy & Practice
<http://uncsd.iisd.org/>



Climate Change Policy & Practice
<http://climate-l.iisd.org/>



SIDS Policy & Practice
<http://sids-l.iisd.org/>



Biodiversity Policy & Practice
<http://biodiversity-l.iisd.org/>



Latin America & Caribbean Regional Coverage
<http://larc.iisd.org/>



African Regional Coverage
<http://africasd.iisd.org/>