

**Concept Note Supporting National Preparations for
The United Nations Conference for Sustainable Development,
UNCSD Rio+20, 2012
Prepared by DESA and UNDP**

Background

1. The United Nations General Assembly has called (in GA 64/236) for a UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 to take stock, 20 years after the historic United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, or the Rio Earth Summit). Following-up, the 65th UNGA, inter alia, *encouraged* “the United Nations development system to support, as appropriate, national country preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, upon request of national authorities.”
2. The three-pronged objective of the Conference is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and, address new and emerging challenges. The themes of the UNCSD are identified in the Resolution as: (a) a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and (b) institutional framework for sustainable development. It is expected that the outcome of the first Inter-sessional Meeting of the preparatory process, 10-11 January 2011, will help to further guide the consultations to be undertaken.
3. As part of the preparatory process, the secretariat of the UNCSD, created within the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has sent out guidance notes to member states and all other stakeholders soliciting technical inputs for the preparation of the Secretary-General’s report to be submitted to the 2nd PrepCom of the UNCSD on 7-8 March 2011 in New York. Questionnaires were also sent out to all stakeholders to collect information on progress to date and success factors, as well as challenges, risks and opportunities. As early January 2011, none of these are from LDCs.
4. The effectiveness of preparations for UNCSD will depend first and foremost on the national level preparations and the regional preparations that will feed into the global process. It is clear that significant capacity gaps may hinder effective participation of some member states. It is therefore necessary that the UN system supports, in the first instance, the preparations which will provide the necessary technical and stakeholder inputs. The Administrator of UNDP has given full support to the UNSCD process. UNDP has teamed with UNCSD Secretariat to elaborate how UN Country Teams can support a number of countries in the preparations up to the Rio+20 Conference in 2012. These efforts require extra-budgetary resources and are the subject of this concept proposal.
5. The United Nations system and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) has a long experience in the provision of support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the field of sustainable development, including in facilitating multi-stakeholder processes and consultations. DESA is also responsible for the provision of substantive support to the intergovernmental processes in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and its functional commissions and expert bodies.

6. UNDP is the UN global development network on the ground in 166 countries with detailed knowledge of national priorities. The Administrator of UNDP also chairs the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and UNDP is caretaker of the UN Resident Coordinators system. It is thus well suited to supporting national-level consultations and preparations.
7. In light of these comparative strengths, it is logical that these two UN entities collaborate to support developing countries in responding to the challenges being faced to assist countries in sustainable development solutions. This partnership is expected to be further consolidated in the context of a mechanism to be set up in UNDG engaging the broader UN system in support for country level preparations through UN Country Teams.

Need for support to developing countries

8. In the 20 years since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit the development challenges being faced by developing countries have become multi-dimensional. The paradigms which support policies geared towards economic growth are increasingly being influenced by issues of social equity and the challenges from climate change. In the meantime, the environmental multi-lateral support to developing countries, while still strong, is slowly being complimented with a broadening development agenda which values natural resource endowments contribution to development and poverty reduction. This view, which has developed over the past two decades, must be integral to the national level preparations.
9. Many developing countries have capacity and resource constraints which makes it difficult for them to provide for robust national level preparations. This has been seen by the lack of detailed responses provided to the initial call for inputs to the Synthesis Report. These constraints will hinder proper review and assessment of implementation, identification of gaps and challenges that should result in national reports as part of the preparatory process.
10. The UN system has also evolved in the last two decades from headquarter dominated field based agencies to a decentralised system seeking to support national development priorities based on the 'One UN' system and the UN Country Team led by the Resident Coordinator. This provides an obvious entry point for the UN system to engage with developing countries in their preparatory processes for the UNCSD Conference. The UN Country Team is integral and many resident agencies will support various national ministries in achieving their development goals.
11. Critical to the process is the need to identify which countries will be targeted for additional support based on country demand. While there is a preference to focus on low income countries, there is also a view to focus on a smaller number of middle income countries. The focus on these countries would be based on the fact that graduation to MIC status embodies many development challenges. Indeed, global poverty as an aggregate view may today be more prevalent in MICs as opposed to LDCs. The development challenges therefore, recognize the need for social and environmental sustainability to be embodied in national planning processes.
12. The theme of green economy since its inception has attracted a number of views in relation to its applicability to the development agenda. Not least, there is no unified view of what represents a green economy. While this project proposal is not aiming to define the concept further, it does propose to support a demand driven process that assists countries define their

individual contexts for more sustainable development approaches. These may encompass aspects of green economy to a lesser or greater extent. In addition to green economy issues the themes of the conference will need to be informed by the views of member states on how the outcomes from the original Earth Summit in 1992 has added to their development agendas and what needs strengthening for the economic, social and environmental pillars to be fully integrated.

Project Description

13. The main objective of the project is to assist selected developing countries, approximately 60 altogether, to prepare for and contribute effectively to the UNCSD process based on their expression of demand and their particular needs, taking into account that countries may have undertaken preparatory work already. The project should enable developing countries to participate effectively in formal and informal preparatory meetings of the UNCSD, including PrepComs, Inter-sessionals, regional meetings, and expert meetings, including the preparation of technical inputs, responses to questionnaires, mobilization of national stakeholders, and identification of opportunities for national action. At the same time, the project will include a more in-depth analysis and synthesis of experiences in up to 10 countries (two from each region) where green economy concepts and institutional reform for sustainable development are beginning to take root.
14. The UN Country teams through the Resident Coordinator will be requested to identify and liaise with the relevant stakeholders in the target countries to solicit views and assess interest in possible UN Country Team support for national processes. At the government level, these stakeholders will include Ministries of Planning, Economy, Finance, Environment and possibly representatives from central ministries and commissions, as dictated by the governance structures in each target country. At the level of civil society they will include organizations representing Major Groups.
15. The project will consist of various components building on a multi-stakeholder approach that can be tailored to meet the needs, interests, experiences and level of ambition of individual countries in terms of advocacy, stakeholder engagement, capacity building, reporting and participation. It is important to recognise these efforts should not be geared on an end product (i.e inputs into the UNCSD) although some countries may want to take the opportunity of the process to engage national stakeholders in responding to the questionnaire circulated by UNCSD Secretariat. Rather, it should add to building the capacity of relevant institutions and individuals to engage in the outcomes from UNCSD. That is, a commitment to the principles, objectives and any new agreements that may emanate from the process.
16. One component could include interviews and consultations to be conducted by a qualified national consultant, seeking to elicit relevant contextual information from a number of stakeholders in government and Major Group organizations (up to 25 representatives), and compiling some relevant documentation of national strategies, plans, policies, capacity needs assessments, and practical experience. From this process the consultant could prepare a 10-20 page synthesis report which could take the shape of a response to the Questionnaire or any other form deemed appropriate. In countries where preliminary preparatory work, including maybe some stakeholder consultations, has already taken place, the synthesis report could help summarize these experiences. The only requirement will be the multi-stakeholder approach and that the report addresses the three-pronged objective and two themes in the context of the situation, experiences gained, and aspirations of that particular country. The

outcome of the first Inter-sessional Meeting of the preparatory process, 10-11 January 2011 will help guide the consultations.

17. Another component, adding a more ambitious note, would be a multi-stakeholder meeting leading to a more elaborate national report. Based on the synthesis report, a multi-stakeholder meeting should be organized by the government with support from the UN Country Team, to discuss and move towards consensus on a national assessment of progress, remaining gaps, and opportunities for scale up as well as of experiences, opportunities and risks pertaining to the two themes of the conference. This should result in a final and more elaborate national report which could take the shape of a response to the Questionnaire or any other form deemed appropriate by the stakeholders. The only requirement will be that the report addresses the three-pronged objective and two themes in the context of the particular country, through the organisation of a multi-stakeholder dialogue.
18. The third component will consist in synthesizing the reports from the national stakeholder processes. To enable this, an international consultant will backstop countries where stakeholder meetings will be held and assist the finalization of national reports. This overall synthesis report will lay out areas of consensus as well as differences of views on progress with sustainable development and main contributors, remaining challenges, green economy and institutional framework for sustainable development.
19. The fourth component will consist of more in-depth analysis and synthesis of experiences in up to 10 countries where green economy concepts and institutional reform for sustainable development are beginning to take root. Case examples will be developed in conjunction with the UN Country Team and will include countries which have developed approaches to integrate environmental concerns into development planning and budgeting.
20. An international consultant will be employed to assist the process with the task of assisting in developing the stakeholder engagement process and to act as a technical backstop to national consultants and UNCTs. The consultant may be available to travel to assist in a select number of cases only. In addition, an international consultant will be engaged to assist in preparing the more in-depth case studies in 10 chosen countries.

Outcome

21. The expected outcome of this project is that, in particular, lesser developed countries will be enabled to actively contribute to and participate in the preparatory process leading up to the UNCSD Rio+20 and the conference itself and that they will be better prepared to engage in the outcomes of UNCSD in a way that is meaningful to their own sustainable development context, needs and experiences.

Detailed Activities

22. **Documents:** The project will include the preparation of the following documents from participating countries:
 - A national report that addresses the three-pronged objective and two themes in the context of the situation, experiences gained, and aspirations of that particular country. The report could take the shape of a response to the Questionnaire or any other form

deemed appropriate by the stakeholders. The report should lay out areas of consensus as well as differences of views on progress with sustainable development and main contributors, remaining challenges, green economy and institutional framework for sustainable development. However, a strategic element of the report should include the assessment of how national governments will address their capacity needs from the outcomes of UNCSD.

- It will feed into the next Synthesis Report.
- A further detailed evidence based report on how sustainable development approaches (e.g. fiscal reform for poverty reduction, economic valuations of natural resources, institutional and coordination arrangements) can contribute to the sustainable development agenda will be achieved for up to 10 target countries.

23. National preparations: The project will facilitate the following activities in participating countries:

- A two-day multi-stakeholder meeting, comprising plenary sessions with brief expert introductions and roundtable discussions incorporating diverse perspectives and interactive debates; and breakout sessions devoted to case studies of successful experiences, partnerships, and initiatives. The aim is to develop consensus on broad areas of national action, as well as on priorities for regional action and for international decision at UNCSD.
- A consultant to support the meeting by preparing a background paper on the basis of consultations with relevant government ministries and key stakeholders; help the government in organizing the meeting and identifying experts; and draft an outcome document based on the recommendations of the meeting. Where necessary technical and administrative backstopping will be provided by the UNCSD Secretariat.

24. Participants: For countries where multi-stakeholder meetings will be supported, the aim of the project is to convene 80-90 persons directly in the multi-stakeholder meeting, and to mobilize a multiple of this number through interviews, soliciting of information, and background and follow up work. The internationally supported participants in the stakeholder meeting (up to 50 persons) will include:

- Senior officials from relevant ministries, and where relevant, provincial or state governments. 10-20
- Representatives of Major Groups (NGOs, Business, Labour, Local Authorities, Women, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Youth, and Science and Technology Institutions). Total: 10-20
- Parliamentarians. 3-5
- Media. 2-5

In addition to the above, up to 40 participants may participate in the meetings covering their own cost of participation, and these may include:

- Additional government representatives. 5-10
- Additional major group representatives. 5-10
- National and international experts in areas of relevance to Conference themes and objectives. 5-10
- Representatives from the UNCSD Secretariat and other UN organizations.
- Representatives of major donors.

Action Plan

25. The overall timeline for the project is as follows. In addition each participating country will have to draw up its own timeline.

Activities	Timeframe
Through letter from Chair of UNDG to RCs UNCTs in target countries requested to identify and liaise with the relevant stakeholders to solicit views and assess interest in possible UN Country Team support for national processes and to report back on these questions.	Jan 2011
Based on feed-back from RCs and availability of funding country processes supported in up to 60 countries and national reports produced.	Mar – Dec 2011
National reports to feed into the updated Synthesis Report for the 2 nd Inter-sessional Meeting in November 2011.	Aug – Oct 2011
In depth analysis of 10-12 countries on the sustainable development planning green economy approaches and institutional frameworks	Jun 2011 – Mar 2012

Estimated Costs and Funding Modalities

26. The total resource requirement for the national preparations, including programme support costs, is estimated at the level of \$2,809,820.

27. The funding modality will develop along two proposed options including:

- Option 1: This would include the provision of funding through a Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) and apportioned to countries based on requests from countries via UN Country Teams or UNDP Country Offices.
- Option 2: This will place the potential for the UN Country Team to assist national partner institutions seeks support from donors and other sources at the county level. In this case, the global project will provide support for aligning the process to the extent possible.

Budget Summary

No.	Description	Amount (in US\$) per country	Total amount (in US\$) for all countries
1.	National preparations (indicative activities)		
	National consultants – to act as resource persons in-country	25,000	
	50 national participants for 2 days (50 x 2 x \$100)	10,000	
	Miscellaneous expenses (travel, communications, publications, copying, venue, etc)	5,000	
	Administrative costs (7%)	2,800	
	<i>Sub-total for national preparations</i>	<u>42,800</u>	2,568,000
2.	In-depth analysis – assessment costs for 10 countries including consultancy fees	10,000	
	Administrative costs (7%)	700	
	<i>Sub-total for in-depth analysis</i>	<u>10,700</u>	107,000
3.	International Support to National Preparations		
	International consultants to support national preparatory processes		100,000
	Administrative costs (7%)		7,000
4.	Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) Administrative costs (1%)		27,820
	Grand Total		<u>2,809,820</u>

Matrix of Roles and Responsibilities for UN system in National level preparations

	Global	National
UNDG	Task Group to support progress and feedback on national level issues related to themes and objectives	
DESA (UNCSD Secretariat)	Joint collaboration with UNDP Fundraising Provide synthesis and analysis of country level outputs	Liaison and support for national level preparations
UNDP		
- Headquarters	Joint collaboration with DESA Fundraising Coordination with RBX, RSCs and UNCTs	Liaise with COs/RCs as required.
- Regional Bureaux	Coordinate and feedback with COs and joint proposal	
- Regional Service Centres	Provide comments and feedback to joint proposal	Assist COs as required
- Country Offices		Provide support to government ministries in preparatory activities Fundraising
UN Country Team / Resident Coordinator		Relevant agencies support to government ministries in preparatory activities

Note – this matrix is designed to inform roles for the execution of this proposal

For more information about this proposal, please kindly get in touch with:

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