

## SUMMARY OF THE FIRST INTERSESSIONAL MEETING FOR THE UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 10-11 JANUARY 2011

The first Intersessional Meeting for the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (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, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges; and panels on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. Delegates then engaged in interactive discussions with the panelists. As delegates left UN Headquarters before 6:00 pm on the second and final day, hoping to avoid the impending snow storm, most seemed satisfied that the first intersessional meeting had provided a relaxed setting to learn and discuss the concept of green economy and the existing institutional framework, including associated issues.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF UN ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCES

On 24 December 2009, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 64/236 agreeing to convene the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 in Brazil. The UNCSD will mark the 40th anniversary of the first major international political conference specifically having the word “environment” in its title, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which took place in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972. The UNCSD will also mark the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992.

The UNCSD will seek to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress and implementation gaps in meeting previously-agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges. The focus of the Conference includes the following themes to be

discussed and refined during the preparatory process: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development. 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.

**UNCHE:** The UN Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 5-16 June 1972, and produced three major sets of decisions. The first decision was the Stockholm Declaration. The second was the Stockholm Action Plan, made up of 109 recommendations on international measures against environmental degradation for governments and international organizations. The third set of decisions was a

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group of five resolutions calling for: a ban on nuclear weapons tests; the creation of an international databank on environmental data; addressing actions linked to development and environment; creation of an environment fund; and establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the central node for global environmental cooperation and treaty-making.

**WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT:** In 1983, the UN General Assembly decided to establish an independent commission to formulate a long-term agenda for action. Over the next three years the Commission—more commonly known as the Brundtland Commission after 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, 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 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.

Chapter 38 of Agenda 21 called for the creation of a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to: ensure effective follow-up to UNCED; enhance international cooperation and rationalize intergovernmental decision making; and examine progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels. In 1992, the 47th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) set out, in resolution 47/191, the CSD's terms of reference, composition, guidelines for NGO participation, organization of work, relationship with other UN bodies, and Secretariat arrangements. The CSD held its first meeting in June 1993 and has met annually since.

**UNGASS-19:** Also at its 47th session in 1992, the UNGA adopted Resolution 47/190, which called for a Special Session of the UNGA (UNGASS) to review implementation of Agenda 21 five years after UNCED. 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 (A/RES/S-19/2). It assessed progress since UNCED, examined implementation, and established the CSD's work programme for the period 1998-2002.

**WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) met from 26 August – 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The WSSD's goal, 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 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 eleven chapters: an introduction; 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.

**FIRST PREPCOM FOR THE UNCSD:** 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 institutional framework for sustainable development. On the procedural side, participants met in contact groups to organize their work in the lead up to 2012, and to consider the UNCSD's rules of procedure.

## INTERSESSIONAL MEETING REPORT

Park In-kook (Republic of Korea), Co-Chair of the Bureau for the Preparatory Process of the UNCSD, opened the first Intersessional Meeting on Monday, 10 January 2011. Co-Chair Park reported that progress made since the first Preparatory Committee meeting (PrepCom I) included, among others, submissions for the Synthesis Report on Best Practices and Lessons Learned on the Objective and Themes of the Conference (A/CONF.216/PC/3). He highlighted the need to reach a clear understanding and agreement on several issues, including: gaps in implementation; emerging issues and challenges; contributions of a green economy toward sustainable development and poverty eradication; and challenges faced in the transition to a green economy and the role of international cooperation in facilitating the transition. He noted that the outcome of the meeting would take the form of a Co-Chairs' summary that would faithfully reflect discussions.

UNCSD Secretary-General Sha Zukang explained that the final Synthesis Report will be issued at PrepCom II due to low member state responses, and summarized current key findings including: the development of green economy strategies as more important than defining “green economy”; stronger national and international commitments to sustainable development; and how limited resources constrain the implementation of international agreements. Delegates then adopted the organization of work.

**OPENING STATEMENTS:** Yemen, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), asked how the green economy approach can contribute to the implementation of policies for poverty eradication and for the achievement of

the internationally-agreed development goals and highlighted the diverse views on how to enhance the efficiency of the UN system in the area of sustainable development. The European Union (EU) stressed that developing a common understanding of green economy relies on having relevant policies in place in several countries. He also highlighted that green economy can help face problems caused by recent multiple crises. Chile, on behalf of the Rio Group, lamented that the Trust Fund could not finance the participation of developing countries' delegates and stressed that their participation is essential for ensuring balance in negotiations. He stressed the importance for the UNCSO to address climate change, energy security issues, loss of biodiversity and desertification and the promotion of efficient institutional mechanisms for sustainable development and financing to increase the capacity of developing countries. On green economy, he noted the lack of a clear and consensual definition.

Nepal, on behalf of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), said LDCs are bearing the brunt of current global crises, "although they contributed least to the problem," and predicted that LDCs would not attain development goals on time. He urged the creation of a global sustainable development partnership that matches national ownership of development with international support.

***SECURING RENEWED POLITICAL COMMITMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ASSESSING THE PROGRESS TO DATE AND THE REMAINING GAPS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE MAJOR SUMMITS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ADDRESSING NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES***

Tariq Banuri, Director of the UN Division for Sustainable Development, presented the findings of the Synthesis Report (A/CONF.216/PC/3) on securing renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges. He noted that the report supplemented the low level of states' responses to the questionnaire by drawing on delegates' statements at the UN General Assembly's Second Committee meeting on 19 November 2010. Banuri highlighted the report's overall assessment that progress had been made in all three pillars of sustainable development but less so in their integration. Finally, he outlined five themes for action: legislation, policies, and plans, the overall implementation of which was weak; institutions, which have had success with partnerships but remained fragmented; information, which had failed to change behavior; insufficient resources, regarded as the major obstacle to integrative goals; and new and emerging challenges.

**PANEL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION:** Jeffrey McNeely, IUCN, proposed the use of biology to help drive the principal social, ethical and economic issues and promote sustainability. He highlighted that keys to success are support from industry and other interest groups, a strong legal basis, and clear and convincing science. He noted that improving the discussion between science and policy would support the move to a focus on biology and that the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) would be a promising step toward this goal. Charles Holliday, Chairman of

the Board of Directors, Bank of America Corporation, and Board Member, UN Global Compact, discussed the role of business in promoting sustainability.

Brazil highlighted that while McNeely referred to a number of elements contributing to the Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer's success, suggesting it as a template for future actions, he did not touch on the social dimension, which Brazil considers to be the "litmus" for ensuring sustainability. Barbados noted that one of the most important aspects of the Montreal Protocol is its Multilateral Fund, which provides predictable financing, in contrast to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Pakistan said that coordination and fragmentation in international agreements is not the only issue, and, with Cuba, noted the lack of enforcement. Venezuela and Argentina welcomed private sector commitment to sustainable development. Agreeing with them, Cuba noted that the partnership with business is not happening in practice.

On the Synthesis Report, Argentina suggested that discussions on a green economy should focus on approaches rather than concepts. Pakistan wondered if the gap in responses would be bridged in time for PrepCom II. UNCSO Secretary-General Sha highlighted the need to improve developing countries' capacity to contribute to the deliberations. Youth and Children stressed the importance of a more simplified institutional framework and questioned whether the time allotted for negotiations was enough.

In closing the session, Hungary, on behalf of EU, noted that a transition to a new environmentally and socially sustainable economic system is recognized as the best answer to global crises and that it will require the adoption of advanced policy measures to sustain growth and reduce poverty. Gabon expressed concern that the search for alternative energy resources could threaten ecosystems and suggested a "right to natural property." Regarding the UNCSO's outcome, Japan called for a short, political message focused on the two themes of this meeting that is clear and understandable for states' high-level representatives. Chile said environmental institutions were vulnerable to political changes and needed international aid to strengthen them and enable long-term programmes.

***GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION***

Co-Chair Park opened the second session focused on green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. Park said that green economy is an important economic instrument while acknowledging that some developing countries question its relevance to their priorities and its effect on trade barriers. He called upon delegates to address questions raised during PrepCom I in order to make the most of this meeting.

Banuri introduced the chapter of the Synthesis Report on green economy. He noted the need to focus on the strategy rather than the definition of green economy, but stressed the importance of the definition, as it has a top-down quality, whereas focusing on strategy is a bottom-up approach. Banuri also emphasized how affordable energy could impact developing countries in terms of transitioning to a green economy.

**PANEL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION:** Bedrich Moldan, Charles University, emphasized that: social policy should take into account economic inequity between countries; the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development into a new framework is one of the most important aspects of a green economy; and markets should be regulated. Mohan Munasinghe, Munasinghe Institute for Development, described a “growth bubble” that hides the growth of poverty and the “environmental bubble” in which current economic systems destroy the biological base on which they depend.

Achim Steiner, Executive Director, UNEP, discussed green economy, stressing that it is not a new concept, but a means that will enable the transition to a model that fulfills human needs and creates less scarcity and environmental degradation. He emphasized that an enabling environment, policy, financing and transfer of technology are key to the transition to a new model and the role of the UNCSD as a platform to address the way subsidies and taxation currently constrain such a transition.

Martin Khor, South Centre, discussed the challenges of green economy implementation; if not done properly it may constrain growth and job creation. He emphasized a three-prong approach to sustainable development, which involves developed countries taking the lead in changing consumption patterns; developing countries following sustainable development methods and pathways to meet goals; and developed countries supporting sustainable development through finance, reforms and technology transfer.

Nepal asked how green economy can help accelerate development and promote poverty eradication in LDCs. Steiner noted the mistake of focusing on large marketplace figures instead of actual progress, highlighting that LDCs are progressing quickly in terms of green economy.

Venezuela stressed that the green economy debate is a complex one, as it is linked to consumption patterns, power relationships, security and commodity-dependence. Brazil noted that attaining a consensual definition of green economy is unlikely and that green economy tools should not be rigid or prescriptive. Supported by France, she also stressed the value in seeing themes and objectives as crosscutting. Australia highlighted the need to draw linkages to address issues in a crosscutting way.

Cuba observed that few questions are new and instead focus on the same implementation issues of past agreements, and questioned how green economy will combat inequality. The EU highlighted the need for a global commitment and common understanding of green economy, a UN Green Economy Road Map that clarifies the steps needed at the national and international level, and a toolbox of actions transforming green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication into action.

Argentina agreed with Martin Khor that the greatest challenge is implementation of a green economy. Indonesia stressed the importance of a common understanding of green economy and the role of industry in taking a leadership role in the transition to a green economy. Farmers stressed the need for policy coherence and the importance of rewarding farmers for providing ecosystem services through their farming practices. China stressed, and Mexico agreed, that developing a green economy represents the means to achieve sustainable development.

Pakistan asked what is missing in the sustainable development paradigm to decouple the dependence between resource use and economic growth and said that if we can identify the missing link between sustainable development and a green economy we will have a shared understanding of the concept of green economy. Egypt said that a green economy should be seen as a means to sustainable development and stressed the need for evaluation to prevent past mistakes from occurring in the future. Germany explained that they would like to see an acceleration of implementation and proposed a green economy roadmap that would contain clear timelines for action finalization. Germany and the Republic of Korea highlighted that only a tailored approach, reflecting the needs of countries, will deliver a green economy.

Canada noted that it is critical for a transition to a green economy to have a science-based decision-making process that can assess progress towards sustainable development. The US highlighted the role of green economy in strengthening sustainable development and stimulating a more sustainable economy on a long-term basis. India warned that green economy should not become a tariff barrier. Along the same lines, Kenya noted the risk of green economy creating conditionalities. Bolivia emphasized the need to recognize the rights of nature and to avoid the commodification of nature. Indigenous People called for the spirit of Mother Earth to provide inspiration. Acknowledging that trade protectionism is a possible risk associated with green economy, Steiner stressed that all models bear such risk. He highlighted the importance of valuing the contribution of nature to communities and that a green economy model does not imply commodification of nature but rather a way to guide economic planning.

Qatar suggested that there is no need to define green economy at this stage. Ecuador noted that the concept should allow for flexibility in definition. Russia emphasized that defining green economy is a problem of substance, noting that countries need to know what activities fall under the definition of green economy. Algeria asked that costs associated with green economy be defined. Business and Industry highlighted that green economy calls for institutional changes and expressed support for defining the direction of innovation. Steiner emphasized that definitions are helpful but not the means by which action happens.

### **INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

PrepCom Co-Chair John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) opened the session on institutional framework for sustainable development. He proposed discussion questions focusing on: major gaps in existing architecture; the challenges to strengthening the sustainable development institutional framework and building a stronger bridge between the three pillars; and enhancing ownership by CSD actors with responsibility for country-level implementation.

**PANEL PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION:** Olav Kjørven, UNDP, expressed UNDP’s commitment to activities ensuring a successful UNCSD outcome and presented proposed actions to assist developing countries in their preparations to contribute effectively to the UNCSD process. Adil Najam, Boston University, noted that the institutional framework should consider the differences faced at earlier conferences and summits in addition to challenges of growth. In anticipation of the

UNCSD he suggested creating “second generation” institutions, explaining that existing ones should be evaluated and strengthened rather than dismantled. Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED), discussed options for strengthening sustainable development governance, including institutional adjustments within the UN system. He noted that the challenges are great, from generating large financing with no promise of quick return to providing simple explanations to complex problems.

The EU called on a stronger framework for implementation. He also highlighted UNEP’s effort to strengthen “international sustainable development governance” and the proposal to transform UNEP into a stronger body. Pakistan noted that integration at the national level is missing. Similarly, Brazil suggested that UNEP should be strengthened to assist countries in incrementing capacity and in implementing policies. Barbados suggested strengthening sustainable development governance by bringing in financial actors that can assist with the implementation of UNCSD mandates.

Najam highlighted the importance of addressing in the governance debate the way many key environmental decisions lie beyond the authority of states. NGOs urged action on, among others, the weakness of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, transparency, and stronger disclosure of information.

Venezuela discussed the need to strengthen and revitalize the UN General Assembly and Office of the President. Canada noted that institutional reform is not a new challenge and that the goal should be to streamline institutions rather than making them more complex and asked how a real partnership among governments, business and civil society can be formed to work on a successful outcome of the UNCSD. Nepal noted that future institutional mechanisms should be inclusive of LDCs. Mexico asked how to reconcile a global agenda for sustainability with the revision of implementation of internationally agreed goals and how to link debate on financing and implementation with decision-making processes. France encouraged efforts aimed at planning for sustainable development. Women highlighted the gaps in implementation and the inability of the current institutional framework to address them, including gender equality. She called for a new structure that recognizes the role of women, including a mechanism for access to justice of vulnerable groups and communities. Business and Industry welcomed the decision to establish an IPBES. The International Labour Organization (ILO) called for stronger efforts towards policy coherence, stating that the key to achieving this is the inclusion, dialogue and partnership between actors.

Chile lamented the gaps in policy formulation and overlaps between current existing structures and suggested strengthened national and regional institutions in the civil society and private sectors.

#### **CLOSING PLENARY**

On Tuesday afternoon, Co-Chair Ashe presented the Co-Chairs’ summary. The G-77/China noted that the preparatory process needs to be enhanced and that greater dynamism and leadership is needed. Pakistan stressed that the time allocated for discussions is inadequate and called for greater technical and financial support to assist the participation of developing

countries. Brazil and Guatemala expressed hope to engage in negotiations as quickly as possible. The EU highlighted that the next task will be to adopt the rules of procedure at PrepCom II.

UNCSD Secretary-General Sha highlighted that the purpose of this meeting was to prepare delegates for PrepCom II and it succeeded in this task. He summarized the key messages of this meeting as follows:

- strong commitment to development needs to be emphasized;
- emerging challenges have impeded progress;
- green economy should not be viewed as a substitute to sustainable development;
- win-win aspects of a green economy strategy and road-map need to be elaborated;
- more studies on green economy are needed;
- current institutional framework needs to be strengthened by improving coordination; and
- different views exist on what is the best architecture for sustainable development.

He concluded by noting that the next PrepCom will advance substantive discussions on objectives and themes of the conference and delegates need to be ready to identify common-ground and seek solutions to problems rather than repeating them. He also said that the Synthesis Report will be finalized with the views expressed during this intersessional meeting.

Co-Chair Ashe highlighted some elements of the Co-Chairs’ Summary, including:

- progress on defining what the international community seeks to achieve at the UNCSD;
- the inadequate delivery of commitments since UNCED and the need to address the shortfalls;
- a common definition of green economy remains elusive, but elements emerge from national policies;
- if green strategies succeed they will have proven their usefulness;
- the need for bottom-up approaches to sustainable development;
- on green economy, areas of concern include the relationship between green economy and poverty eradication, trade, employment and technology;
- means of implementation remain a critical issue;
- international environmental governance is a component of sustainable development governance; and
- support for strengthening UNEP.

Co-Chair Ashe closed the session at 5:36 pm.

### **A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST INTERSESSIONAL MEETING**

Delegates arrived in the temporary UN North Lawn Building on Monday morning with uncertainty. Many were not sure what to expect from the discussions at this two-day intersessional meeting and how concrete they would be. After PrepCom I in May 2010, there were still many questions of issue definition and procedure, including the fact that some developing countries had not initially supported holding this intersessional meeting. Nevertheless, the intersessional meeting did provide an opportunity to educate delegates and further define the issues on the agenda, even though actual negotiations have not yet begun. By the end of the two-day session, the major areas of concern

appeared to be the short amount of time now remaining to conduct negotiations, and what the outcome of the process might be.

### **“THE PEAK IS COVERED IN CLOUDS”**

While the two themes of the UNCS D, green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and institutional framework for sustainable development, were slotted equal time over the two days, green economy dominated the meeting. While at PrepCom I there was much developing country resistance to green economy as a theme for the UNCS D, the mood at the intersessional meeting seemed to have shifted as delegates embarked on a forward-looking discussion. Two key questions that emerged were how new a concept it is and whether a definition is worth seeking. Most agreed that the concept is not new or invented by the UN system, but that its elements are found in domestic policies worldwide. What would be “new” is to agree on a pathway to a global sustainable development strategy that incorporates a green economy.

Some expressed the view that countries are unable to embark toward a green economy without knowing what it is and what activities would fall under it. But that position was counteracted by ideas expressed by Germany, among others, that each country would apply it differently and should be free to do so, that an implementing mechanism is the missing piece, and that, as articulated by UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner, providing the enabling environment is better than a finding a definition.

Concerned about “green protectionism”, some participants wanted reassurances that green economy would not become a means to impose barriers to trade and aid, in the form of tariffs, non-tariff barriers and conditionalities. Developing countries were noticeably concerned about jobs and the way green economy policies can become a barrier to developing country exporters, particularly small ones, which may lack the necessary resources to meet the new standards. They seemed to want developed countries to prove that green economy can be implemented without compromising energy and food security and economic growth.

While momentum to reach a definition of “green economy” has slowed, there are some delegates who continue to push to find such a definition. However, as success stories and concrete proposals on implementation make their way forward, the definitional questions may become less of a concern. In fact, some delegates suggested it is time to hear proposals on implementing mechanisms of green economy, studies, and examples showing that green economy can be a tool for sustainable development and not a replacement for it. This could solidify the tentative steps just taken toward acceptance of this part of the UNCS D’s agenda. As Mohan Munasinghe noted, “the peak is covered in clouds,” and taking one step up at a time might be the way to bring clarity.

### **“THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT”**

A few participants noted the low attention to the three agreed objectives of UNCS D and links between those objectives and the two themes, green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and institutional framework for sustainable development. In the words of a developing country delegate, it is critical that UNCS D addresses the “rest

of sustainable development” not just the two themes, an opinion that echoes a similar view expressed during PrepCom I. It was suggested that “green jobs” could serve as a link between the themes and the objectives; generating jobs that are both economically and environmentally sustainable would serve as proof that green economy works. Overall, while several countries made reference to the need to address themes and objectives in a cross-cutting manner as well as identify linkages, few concrete examples were brought forward. In Australia’s words, drawing out in a clear and practical way the key cross-cutting elements as a basis on which to move forward is the challenge for the preparatory process. As one delegate noted, the North Lawn Building’s temporary conference room has only two pillars, which seems to reflect the nature of discussions and potentially of negotiations, given that already some comments overlooked the third pillar of sustainable development—social development.

There were differing views on what the expected outcomes from this process should look like. Some delegates hoped to have a more substantive discussion on implementation and financing, others talked about a “menu of options” of expected outcomes from the UNCS D. Some of the delegates that were still present during the governance discussions hoped to hear concrete proposals on structural matters, including CSD reform. But then a few shook their heads, noting that it was too soon for concrete proposals to be tabled.

This process brings up the image from the Indian parable about the blind men and the elephant, where a group of blind men touch an elephant to see what it is like. Each man feels a different part and comes away with an entirely different understanding of what an elephant is. All we know for sure is that this elephant is going to Rio. Hopefully between now and Rio, consensus can be reached on what that elephant looks like.

### **WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

After two sessions and four days of “official” discussions and numerous opportunities in other fora over the past eight months to delineate the key issues before the UNCS D, the issue definition phase has proven fruitful. As delegates left the North Lawn Building on Tuesday, ahead of a snow storm, there was renewed optimism that with assistance of the panel presentations, the softening of positions on green economy and the cordial, but abbreviated, discussions on the institutional framework for sustainable development, there is now readiness to move to the next phase—actual negotiations—at PrepCom II in March.

As Co-Chair Ashe noted in his closing remarks, it is time to engage in negotiations and decide what the international community would like to achieve at the UNCS D. However, with only eight working days remaining on the PrepCom’s calendar, delegates were left wondering whether this will be enough to ensure there is a strong forward-looking outcome in Rio, once there is agreement on what that outcome should be.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**CSD Intersessional Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production:** This meeting will provide a non-negotiating space for Member States, Major Groups and UN Agencies to discuss potential programmes to be included in the 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production. **dates:** 13-14 January 2011 **location:** Panama City,

Panama **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development  
**fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** [http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd\\_aofw\\_scpp/scpp\\_tenyearframprog.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_scpp/scpp_tenyearframprog.shtml)

#### **49th session of the Commission on Social Development:**

The UN Commission for Social Development will hold its 49th session under the priority theme of Poverty Eradication. **dates:** 9-18 February 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Social Policy and Development **fax:** +1-212-963-3062 **www:** <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csocd/2011.html>

**OECD Green Growth Strategy Workshop:** This workshop will bring together policymakers and experts across OECD and partner countries, as well as a range of stakeholders from international organizations, business, and civil society to review the Synthesis Report for an OECD Green Growth Strategy. **dates:** 10-11 February 2011 **location:** Paris, France **contact:** Nathalie Girouard, Green Growth Coordinator, OECD **email:** [greengrowth@oecd.org](mailto:greengrowth@oecd.org) **www:** [www.oecd.org/greengrowth](http://www.oecd.org/greengrowth)

#### **26th session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global**

**Ministerial Environment Forum:** This meeting constitutes the annual ministerial-level global environmental forum in which participants gather to review important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment. **dates:** 21-24 February 2011 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** Secretary, Governing Bodies, UNEP **phone:** +254-20-762-3431 **fax:** +254-20-762-3929 **email:** [sgc.sgb@unep.org](mailto:sgc.sgb@unep.org) **www:** <http://www.unep.org/gc/gc26/>

#### **Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for CSD 19:**

This meeting will prepare for the policy-year session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which will negotiate policy options related to the thematic cluster for the CSD 18-19 cycle: transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and the Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. **dates:** 28 February-4 March 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** [http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd\\_csd19\\_ipm.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19_ipm.shtml)

**UNCSD PrepCom II:** This meeting will convene in preparation for the UNCSD. **dates:** 7-8 March 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-1267 **email:** [uncsd2012@un.org](mailto:uncsd2012@un.org); **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org>

**LDC-IV Preparatory Committee:** This meeting is the second session of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC-IV). **dates:** 4-8 April 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** Margherita Musollino-Berg, OHRLLS **phone:** +1-212-963-4844 **email:** [musollino@un.org](mailto:musollino@un.org) **www:** <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ldc/home>

**CSD 19:** This policy-year session will negotiate policy options related to the thematic cluster for the CSD 18-19 cycle: transport, chemicals, waste management, mining and the Ten-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. **dates:** 2-13 May 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for Sustainable Development **phone:** +1-212-963-8102 **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** dsd@un.org **www:** [http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd\\_csd19.shtml](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd19.shtml)

#### **Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries:**

This conference aims to assess the results of the ten-year action plan adopted at the third UN Conference on LDCs and to adopt new measures and strategies for their sustainable development.

**dates:** 9-13 May 2011 **location:** Istanbul, Turkey **contact:** Cinthya Marquez, Secretariat **phone:** +1-917-367-4509 **email:** [marquez1@un.org](mailto:marquez1@un.org) **www:** <http://www.un.org/wcm/content/site/ldc/home>

#### **64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference: Sustainable**

**Societies; Responsive Citizens:** The 64th Annual Conference of NGOs and the UN Department of Public Information (DPI), will seek to highlight effective ways in which civil society can contribute to creating and maintaining sustainable societies. The Conference will seek to contribute to civil society preparations for the UNCSD. **dates:** 3-5 September 2011 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** NGO Relations Center, DPI **phone:** +1-212-963-6842 **fax:** +1-212-963-6914 **email:** [dpingo@un.org](mailto:dpingo@un.org) **www:** <http://www.un.org/dpi/ngosection/annual-conf.asp>

**Second Intersessional Meeting for the UNCSD:** As called for at the first PrepCom of the UNCSD, three intersessional meetings will be convened, in addition to three PrepComs, to prepare for the UNCSD event. The aim of the meeting is to hold "focused substantive discussions to advance the subject matter of the Conference." **dates:** 14-15 November 2011 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-1267 **email:** [uncsd2012@un.org](mailto:uncsd2012@un.org) **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

**Third Intersessional Meeting for UNCSD:** This meeting was called for by the first PrepCom of the UNCSD to prepare for the UNCSD event. The aim of the meeting is to hold "focused substantive discussions to advance the subject matter of the Conference." **dates:** 5-7 March 2012 (tentative) **location:** to be announced **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-1267 **mail:** [uncsd2012@un.org](mailto:uncsd2012@un.org) **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

**UNCSD PrepCom III:** This meeting will take place in 2012 immediately prior to UNCSD in Brazil and is expected to focus on the outcomes of UNCSD. **dates:** to be announced **location:** to be announced **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-1267 **email:** [uncsd2012@un.org](mailto:uncsd2012@un.org) **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

**UN Conference on Sustainable Development:** The UNCSD will take place in Brazil in 2012. Under UN General Assembly resolution 64/236, which was adopted on 24 December 2009, UNCSD will aim to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development, assess the progress and implementation gaps in meeting already agreed commitments, and address new and emerging challenges. The Conference will include the following themes: a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and the institutional framework for sustainable development. **dates:** to be announced **location:** to be announced **contact:** UNCSD Secretariat **phone:** +1-212-963-1267 **email:** [uncsd2012@un.org](mailto:uncsd2012@un.org) **www:** <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>



## Sustainable Development Policy & Practice

A Knowledgebase of International Activities Preparing for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development



Announcement from Friday, 14 January 2011

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) is pleased to announce the launch of

### Sustainable Development Policy & Practice:

A Knowledgebase of International Activities Preparing for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

[UNCSD.iisd.org](http://uncsd.iisd.org)

**Sustainable Development Policy & Practice** is a knowledge management project tracking intergovernmental and other international activities on sustainable development. It is managed by the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](http://www.iisd.org/) [http://www.iisd.org/] (IISD) [Reporting Services](http://www.iisd.ca/) [http://www.iisd.ca/].

The launch of **Sustainable Development Policy & Practice** comes as the UN, governments, academics, NGOs, businesses, and the media undertake preparations for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, also known as Rio+20), set to take place in Brazil in 2012. The UNCSD will convene 20 years after the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also known as the Rio Earth Summit), and will seek to assess implementation of previous commitments while addressing new and emerging challenges to sustainable development.

Information on United Nations activities is provided in cooperation with the UN system agencies, funds and programmes through the [United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination](http://www.unsystemceb.org/) [http://www.unsystemceb.org/] (CEB) Secretariat.

All news articles on **Sustainable Development Policy & Practice** are researched and produced by our [team of thematic experts](http://uncsd.iisd.org/about-sustainable-development-policy-and-practice-team/), [http://uncsd.iisd.org/about-sustainable-development-policy-and-practice-team/] resulting in all original content.

Features of the website include:

- A knowledgebase of summaries of activities (publications, meetings, statements or projects) by a range of actors, with the option to search by several categories (region, actor, action and issue);
- An archive of all posts on the site, organized by date posted;
- A clickable world map, enabling you to view the latest sustainable development policy news by region (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America & the Caribbean, Near East, Northern America, and South West Pacific);
- A link to subscribe to UNCSD-L, a moderated community announcement list for policy-makers and practitioners involved with UNCSD preparations;
- A link to the most recent "UNCSD Update," a periodic feed of recent posts to the Sustainable Development Policy & Practice knowledgebase;
- A Calendar of upcoming international events related to the UNCSD;
- A link to our Sustainable Development iCalendar, which automatically updates your own calendar program with upcoming UNCSD-related events; and
- A link to our RSS feed.

We invite you to visit Sustainable Development Policy & Practice, at <http://uncsd.iisd.org/>.

Funding for Sustainable Development Policy & Practice has been provided by [Germany's Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety](#) (BMU) and [France's Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing](#) (Directorate for European and International Affairs Department of Climate Change and Sustainable Development).

For further information on this initiative or to provide us with information about your sustainable development-related activity, please contact Faye Leoné, Content Editor, at [faye@iisd.org](mailto:faye@iisd.org)

The Sustainable Development Policy & Practice Team  
IISD Reporting Services



Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety



Ministère de l'écologie, du Développement durable, des Transports et du Logement