

STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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The UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, in June 1992 provided, through Agenda 21 and other related outcomes, a clear agenda for sustainable development. However, ten years later, despite many initiatives and activities, progress towards the goals established at UNCED has been slower than anticipated and in some respects conditions are worse than they were 10 years ago.

In this context the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, 26 August – 4 September provides a major opportunity for the international community to agree on key actions to enhance the implementation of Agenda 21 and achieve global sustainable development.

An effective institutional framework for sustainable development at all levels is key to the full implementation of Agenda 21, to the follow-up of the outcomes of WSSD and meeting emerging sustainable development challenges. In this context, good governance at all levels, both in government and in civil society and stakeholder groups is essential for sustainable development. An effective institutional framework for sustainable development, should also include the following:

- Strengthening of coherence in implementation, including in particular through integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner;
- Enhancing participation and effective involvement of civil society in implementation of sustainable development; and,
- Strengthening capacities for sustainable development at all levels, particularly in developing countries.

At the international level a key issue in strengthening the institutional framework is to strengthen collaboration within and between the UN system, the International Financial Institutions and the WTO, both at the inter-agency-level, utilizing such mechanisms as the Chief Executive Board, and at the inter-governmental level, through such bodies as ECOSOC.

While the General Assembly should continue to give overall political direction to the implementation of Agenda 21, ECOSOC should increase its role in overseeing system-wide coordination, and balanced integration of economic, social and environmental

aspects of the United Nations policies and programs aimed at implementing sustainable development. In this regard ECOSOC could:

- Organize periodic consideration of sustainable development themes in regard to implementation of Agenda 21;
- Making full use of its high level, coordination, operational and general segments to effectively take into account all relevant aspect of the work of the UN on sustainable development;
- Promote greater coordination, complementarity, effectiveness and efficiency of the relevant sustainable development activities of its functional commissions and other subsidiary bodies; and,
- Ensure that there is a close link between ECOSOC's role in the follow-up of both the WSSD outcomes and the Monterrey as well as the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millenium Declaration.

The Commission on Sustainable Development should continue to be the high level commission on sustainable development within the UN system, but in the context of implementation, the CSD could give more emphasis to implementation.

Implementation of sustainable development could be strengthened through enhanced action by regional institutions, including the UN Regional Commissions, in collaboration with other regional and sub-regional bodies. Such regional action could address both regional (or cross border) sustainable development issues as well as support global and regional institutional frameworks for sustainable development.

Strengthened institutional arrangements and enhanced coordination and coherence at the national level is a key factor for achieving sustainable development.

In this context, the international community should continue to support developing countries efforts to strengthen institutional arrangements for promoting sustainable development, including through capacity building related to human resource development and in regard to tools and methodologies for implementing sustainable development goals.

Good governance at the domestic level is particularly important for enhancing sustainable development. This includes sound environmental, social and economic policies, democratic institutions responsive to the needs of the people, the rule of law, anti-corruption measures, gender equality and an enabling environment for investment.