

4 February 2008

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We are pleased to open this e-Discussion on ‘**Achieving Sustainable Development**’. The discussion will be held in two parts, each of three weeks’ duration. This substantive discussion is part of the process of global consultation undertaken for the 2008 [Annual Ministerial Review \(AMR\)](#) referred to in the [message](#) sent from Mr. Kemal Dervis, UNDP Administrator, and Mr. Sha Zukang, Under Secretary-General of UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The [Background](#) note highlights some key initial points for your consideration.

Part I of this e-discussion held from 4 to 22 February will broadly look at the challenges countries face in integrating the goals of economic growth, social development and environmental protection – the three pillars of sustainable development – in their development strategies.

Part II of this e-Discussion held from 25 February to 14 March will look into policy initiatives for countries to achieve sustainable development progress.

The policy consensus developed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), along with the Millennium Summit (New York, 2000), set the framework for national and sub-national governments to work towards sustainable development. Yet the progress towards the implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation (JPOI) and the MDG7 environmental sustainability targets is mixed.

In the interest of distilling lessons that we can share with Member States to help them strengthen their efforts to achieve sustainable development, we seek your experiences and views on the following:

1. What are the main barriers for countries in integrating the objectives of sustainable development, i.e., economic growth, social development and environmental protection, in their development strategies and in the planning and implementation processes of these strategies?
2. How can various instruments for development planning and assistance frameworks such as National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) more effectively serve the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development at the national level?

3. How can our organizations and each of us most effectively support countries in leaning from the practices of those countries that have made significant progress in pursuing the goal of sustainable development?

We are expecting a wide range of responses, indicative of the array of challenges and opportunities countries face depending upon their national circumstances.

We look forward to receiving your perspectives, responding to your questions and guiding the first half of what we are sure will be dynamic and productive discussions.

Warm Regards,

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