

People's Republic of China

Information on National Report Preparation

under the request of NIAU for
the Agenda Item on: Exchange of Country Experiences
in preparing National Reports of the Meeting for National focal Points
on Improving Future National Reporting to the CSD, 13-14 September 2001

China started to formulate its national sustainable development framework-China's Agenda 21-immediately after Rio Conference. In August of 1992, the State Council designated the former State Planning Commission (SPC) and State Science and Technology Commission (SSTC) to organize Leading Group for China's Agenda 21 (LGCA21) to lead the formulation and implementation of China's Agenda 21. China has made great efforts in implementing China's Agenda 21 and sustainable development strategy since then. Sustainable development has been listed as key national strategies for guiding the social and economic development plans both at central and local levels. In order to further promote sustainable development, the government of China made a decision to change LGCA21 into the Leading Group for Promoting Sustainable Development (LGPSD) in 2000 for the review of the progress of the implementation of China's Agenda 21 and to further coordinate more generally the implementation and sustainable development strategy.

(a) The role of national focal point

For the purpose of preparing the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002, another Leading Group is established based on LGPSD. The Leading Group is consisted of more than 20 ministries and agencies headed by the State Development Planning Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Science and Technology, the State Environmental Protection Agency. Under the guidance of the Leading Group, the Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21(ACCA21), as the focal point for preparing the national report on sustainable development, is responsible for the organization of experts to draft, review, finalize and translate the national report. The role of the focal point is also responsible for undertaking the daily management, communication and coordination among involved departments and reporting regularly to the Leading Group on the progress of the national report preparation. At the same time, ACCA21 has been updated information on the implementation of China's Agenda 21 in a timely manner for the use of information exchange with CSD and domestic evaluation etc.

(b) Inter-ministerial coordination in preparing national report

Under the leadership of the Leading Group, a Working Group and an Expert Group are organized respectively for the specific work of the national report. A questionnaire that designed by the Expert Group has been circulated among pilot provinces and local cities of China's Agenda 21 to conduct a survey of the information on progress, experience and obstacles in their practice in implementing China's Agenda 21. The survey also asks for information on needs and suggestions on further implementation of sustainable development strategy in China. Based on the survey. An outline of the national report has been finalized and distributed to the involved ministries and some selected local provinces and cities. These ministries and local authorities are asked to contribute to the national report by preparing relevant part of report. The Expert

Group will be responsible to compile and review the different part of the report and to finalize the report. The draft report will be provided to the Working Group that consisted of members from the departments of Leading Group for comments before the finalization. The Leading Group will be responsible for coordination in the whole process of the national report preparation.

(c) Reconcile reporting requirements from different UN System bodies including mandatory reporting for conventions

To meet the reporting requirements from different UN System bodies, Chinese government has designated different departments to be responsible for different reporting issue including mandatory and voluntary reporting. Information exchange or meetings on UN reporting issue will be conducted when it is necessary. The Working Group of the national report on sustainable development is preparing to collect various reporting information during the drafting period of the national report in order to have this issue reflected in the report.

(d) Capacity and resource issues in preparing national report

Formulation of the national report on sustainable development to CSD is a self-review and evaluation process of a country on its implementation of sustainable development strategy. The capacity of the focal point, and more widely, of the involved departments should be able to meet the requirement of such kind of mandate. This means both human and financial resources need to be ensured in order to carry out the national report preparation. China has been making great effort to ensure a timely and effectively national reporting on sustainable development to CSD. As a developing country, however, the relevant organizations that participated in this national reporting process in China still needs to increase its capacity through technical and financial assistance. We would therefore wish to call on a strengthened international cooperation on capacity building for national reporting on sustainable development.

(e) other issues including difficulties/obstacles encountered in national reporting

Chinese Government has attached great importance to the preparation of national report. This work has been listed as one of the key activities under the National Preparation Committee of China for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which was established recently. Currently, it is going quite well in organizing and coordinating various participating departments for preparing the national report.

However, we have still encountered difficulties during the national reporting process. Domestically, on one hand, as China is such a large country with a huge population and diversified local social, economic and natural conditions, it needs to spent quite some time and input significant human resources to collect data, information and compile material from different areas for the use of national report preparation. On the

other hand, we feel that it would be much more useful and efficient that countries focal point could gain from the Division for Sustainable Development of DESA, United Nations, more information on the national reporting situation such as status of different countries in preparing national report, ideas from experts for commenting on this issue. We consider this will be helpful for country focal point in preparing the national report as the information can be a good reference for the reporting work although we certainly believe that the national report should be formulated based on the country's own conditions. We don't consider the issue mentioned above is a "difficulty" in national reporting but we would like to suggest that the information exchange between the responsible department in UN and country focal point be strengthened in the future.