

Concept Note**Dialogue of Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions with the Second Committee of the General Assembly**

Title: Integrating the Economic, Social and Environmental Pillars of Sustainable Development: Perspectives from the Regions
Venue: United Nations Headquarters, New York
Date: 4 October 2011
Time: 3:00 to 6:00 PM

Panellists: The Executive Secretaries of the five Regional Commissions.

Expected outcomes:

- a) An exchange of ideas on how to promote the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, in preparation for and beyond Rio+20, to ensure that policies and initiatives are mutually reinforcing and benefit all members of society;
- b) Provide examples from the regions on good practices and public policies that promoted integration of the three pillars of sustainable development;
- c) An enhanced understanding of the work of the regional commissions and their role as a unique regional platform for the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development in their respective regions
- d) Provide a substantive input into the current discussions and debates in the second committee of the GA and in preparation for the Rio+20 Conference, including on the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD), from a regional perspective.

Background and Description:

The three components of sustainable development – economic development, social development and environmental protection – were recognized as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in 2002 and reaffirmed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. However, ensuring that all three components are promoted in a balanced manner to build on the potential synergies among them and the multiplier effect of their integration has been challenging.

The effective integration of these three pillars has become a critical element in debates around defining a new paradigm for sustainable development in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) that will take place in Brazil in June 2012 on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In this regard, this dialogue aims to serve as a forum for the exchange of views and knowledge between regions, and stimulate discussion among member states on some of the key issues central to the ongoing debates. The Regional Commissions, mandated to address social, economic and environmental issues, have the capacity to promote a balanced and integrated approach to sustainable development, taking into account regional specificities, given their comparative advantage of having strong institutional multi-disciplinary skills and extensive expertise in the service of their member states.

During this dialogue the Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions will: (i) highlight the region-specific experiences and challenges to the integration of the three pillars; (ii) highlight some good practices and public policies that promoted integration of

the pillars of sustainable development in their regions; (iii) outline the actions taken at the regional level and the role played by the Regional Commissions in developing regional frameworks and supporting members States in promoting sustainable development through an effective integration of the three pillars; and iv) highlight the role regional commissions can play in providing a regional platform for promoting sustainable development and the need to strengthen their mandates in the context of IFSD, the second theme of Rio+20.

Representatives of member States will be invited to engage in an interactive dialogue with the Executive Secretaries on the presentations and on other matters of regional concern to the member States.

Target Audience:

The primary target audience is member States of the United Nations, but representatives of international organizations and civil society could also contribute and benefit from this interactive discussion.