

**Summary Report**  
**Civil Society Consultation Conducted by the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS)**  
**For the UN Secretary General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability**  
**March 2011**



## Introduction

At the request of the Secretariat of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (GSP), the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) conducted a civil society consultation to gather inputs for consideration by the GSP Panelists, their deputies, and the GSP Secretariat. Based on the GSP [Terms of Reference](#) and the [reports of the Panel's and Sherpas' meetings](#) so far, NGLS formulated a menu of questions for consideration by civil society organizations during the month of March 2011.

NGLS received 38 submissions from a diverse array of organizations and networks. Many of these submissions were from international networks representing several hundred to over one thousand organizations each. The full list of contributing organizations and networks is provided in Annex IV. Although the duration of this consultation was limited to one month, which precluded it from having broader participation, it was conducted with the intent to gather presently relevant considerations for the GSP before the next meeting of the Sherpas on 13-14 April 2011 as well as the third meeting of the Panel, taking place 16-18 May 2011.

Predominantly through the use of quotes from submissions, this summary report presents an overview of the principle messaging received from civil society organizations in response to the consultation questionnaire.

There was broad agreement among the civil society organizations participating in this consultation that current models of economic development are not socially and environmentally sustainable. Overall assessments for global sustainability are quite dire.

Many organizations hold the view that the division of sustainable development goals into the three pillars of economic development, social development, and environmental protection has proven to be problematic, and that the economic pillar has been wrongfully treated as paramount, to the detriment of social equity and the safeguarding of our natural world for future generations. The emphasis on an economic model that favours high short-term gains for some has failed to lift the majority of the world's population out of poverty and has allowed private interests to dominate the public agenda.

Civil society groups resoundingly call for a new paradigm through which economic activity supports environmental health and social equity, prioritizes long-term over short-term horizons, builds resilience, and demonstrates respect for human rights principles. To be effective and credible, the new paradigm must be more transparent and accountable to all stakeholders and likely requires a strengthened public sector. Enhanced international cooperation and cross-border regulation are likely parts of the equation as well. Most of all, it will require sustained political will. Detailed recommendations have been provided on priority areas for action, and on how to overcome present obstacles.

- All consultation submissions from civil society organizations have been posted as individual web pages on the NGLS website, and can be viewed [here](#). A compilation document containing all full submissions in one file can be downloaded from this same page.
- This summary report contains many hyperlinks that connect to more detail on a subject within a full submission. The majority of organizations provided detailed recommendations and a wealth of valuable information lies within the full submissions. **This summary report is best read on a computer to enable the reader to easily follow the links to more detail.**

For more information about NGLS, please visit: [www.un-ngls.org](http://www.un-ngls.org)

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## I. Assessing the Status of Global Sustainability

There is broad agreement among the civil society organizations participating in this consultation that current models of economic development are not socially and environmentally sustainable. Overall assessments for global sustainability are quite dire.

“Rising populations, rising material prosperity, rising absolute consumption, rising waste production, rising pollution, rapid depletion of ecosystems and biodiversity, rapid depletion of the natural resource base and global commons, massive and rising income inequality all are terribly negative signs that the global community is not headed in the right direction in terms of sustainability. The current model of consumption and production continue to benefit certain strata of the population of the developed world, while those who deal with the negative consequences such as waste dumping are not the ones responsible for it. Not only is this unjust, it renders the problem invisible to the part of the world's population who is responsible for it.” (*Major Group Children and Youth, UNCSD*)

“When scientists are predicting that Earth is entering the sixth major extinction event in its history, it is impossible to argue that global sustainability has even been partially achieved.” (*Greenpeace*)

“Food security, the most basic of human needs, is a key test of whether development is working for poor people. Yet despite huge increases in growth and incomes, as well as gains in agricultural productivity, the number of hungry people globally has not changed much in the last 40 years...The current degradation and stress on the environment is a major threat to those development gains which have been made. Humanity's ecological footprint has more than doubled since 1966 and we are now using nature's services 50 per cent faster than Earth can renew them.<sup>1</sup> We have transgressed three out of nine critical planetary boundaries through excessive biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions and nitrate use. We are already over the limit of what the planet can take, but for more than a quarter of the world's population, human development has barely begun. This is a far cry from a sustainable approach to development.” (*Oxfam*)

“Due to inadequate governance, marine ecosystems have degraded and some species' populations are dangerously depleted...There can be no 'green economy' and no healthy, sustainable future for humanity, without a healthy ocean.” (*Pew Environment Group*)

“The idea of Sustainable Development has increasingly been vacated of its original meaning: *meeting the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs* (WSSD 1992). It now is more often read as sustainable economic growth, clearly putting one of the three pillars on top of the environmental and social concerns. This interpretation and its excessive persecution especially over the last 15 years has led us to the triple crisis of food, fuel, finance we are facing today: the economy should in fact be a servant to the people (social) and has to respect the laws of nature (environment) if it wants to be sustainable.” (*World Future Council*)

### A) Views on the Three Pillars Approach to Sustainable Development

Many organizations hold the view that the division of sustainable development goals into the three pillars of economic development, social equity, and environmental protection has proven to be problematic:

“When the pillars are treated as separate and independent components of sustainable development, policies are not cohesive. This disjointed manner of working has led to an incomplete framework which fails to

<sup>1</sup> WWF (2010). Living Planet Report 2010.

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successfully integrate considerations of the three pillars into coherent policy decisions and actions.” (*Pew Environment Group*)

*World Democratic Governance Project Association* provides two clear examples of the lack of integration, and resulting consequences:

- 1) “The current economic growth path which is principally based on the widespread use of fossil energy (in 2010, fossil energy represented more than 85% of the world energy consumption) is the key factor in the greenhouse effect and, thus, in global warming and climate change. As it follows, we cannot assume that the economic and environmental pillars of sustainability have integrated at all.”
- 2) “Less than 20% of the world population owns more than 80% of the economic wealth generated by the growth of world economy. Up to now, economic growth resulting from wealth accumulation has not been able to work without creating such inequities. It appears, on the contrary, that inequity is inherent to this type of growth.”

Several other organizations articulated additional limitations of the three pillars approach. Some examples:

“To deal in a coherent manner with environmental issues, it is necessary to overcome this concept of three pillars, because the environment is not one pillar, it is the basic foundation for maintaining societies and economies over time.” (*PRODENA - The Association for Defense of Nature*)

“The pillar approach does not recognize the existence of limits, it does not acknowledge the fact that we live on a finite planet.” (*World Society for the Protection of Animals*)

“Additionally, the three defined pillars deviate our attention from other crucial dimensions of sustainable development such as cultural diversity and an inclusive politics which foster broad participation.” (*Major Group Children and Youth, UNCSD*)

## **B) Dominance of the Economic Pillar: Causes and Consequences**

There is clear consensus among responding organizations that the economic pillar has been overwhelmingly prioritized by governments, to the detriment of social equity and environmental protection.

“Social equity and environmental sustainability goals have thus far merely been add-ons, accommodated only insofar as they do not challenge the policy mainstay of economic growth. The reason this environmentally-blind policy goal predominates is, quite simply, because governments are tightly wedded with interests e.g. banks and corporations vested in the current economic system based on ever-expanding debt, consumption and profits. Pursuing an integrated approach to development would involve not only bold shifts in thinking among policy-makers but more importantly profound political and socioeconomic changes, something current power structures prohibit.” (*IBON*)

“One key reason why short-term economic gains for the few continues to overrule longer term social and environmental benefits for many, and why the compliance regimes of MEAs have remained weak is that corporate polluters have effectively undermined stronger regulation over the last twenty years. They are sabotaging environmental and social legislation on a national level and creating a race to the bottom by scaremongering, with loss of competitiveness in the absence of a global level playing field. At the same time, those same companies are doing their best to prevent strong global regulation...There is a lack of understanding of the huge economic returns that are to be had in investing in biodiversity protection, and there is little or no accountability for the impacts of the loss of nature.” (*Greenpeace*)

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“The ‘three pillars’ has been problematic as it has perpetuated the idea of trade-off. Most national governments have prioritised the pillar of economic growth, with the desired outcome of jobs, taxes and public services. Environmental resource is considered an input into this formula, and social progress is assumed to be delivered by the economic growth strategy within country or funded through small development budget internationally. The consequence is that, to most national policy makers, environment is still predominately considered an exploitable resource rather than the vital life support system, and social progress does not need explicit economic management.” (*Green Economy Coalition Convenor*)

“Short-term economic gains (within the next fiscal quarter or election cycle) are prioritized over long-term environmental and social benefits. As an example of this, the current economic model does not integrate externalities into the price of products/services, therefore ignoring the value and cost of common goods. Such a short-term perspective is further aggravated by the use of indicators such as GDP and by the failure of governments to undertake systematic monitoring and reporting of time-bound targets related to environmental and social issues, as well as the development of compliance mechanisms that would ensure economic, environmental and social justice.” (*Major Group Children and Youth, UNCSD*)

## II. Foundations for True Sustainability

Civil society groups resoundingly call for a new paradigm through which economic activity supports environmental health and social equity, prioritizes long-term over short-term horizons, builds resilience, and demonstrates respect for human rights principles.

“The vision of a new paradigm should focus on pursuing human development and well-being, and ensuring food for all, in ways that will keep the planet within essential ecological boundaries, reduce vulnerability and end extreme poverty and inequalities. The need to address volatility and build resilience for vulnerable people facing environmental or other shocks is critical, and a key difference from many existing conceptions of sustainability.” (*Oxfam International*)

“Essentially this is about getting business and markets to operate differently. To some extent, it is about working with business to help it think long-term and to minimise its external costs, and to some extent it is about government intervention in markets to remove the ‘short-termist’ and ‘cost externalising’ pressures which act on firms.” (*WWF-UK*)

“We are in need of a new social and green economy, socially distributive and environmentally compatible, where the real demand posed by human needs (instead of the often artificial and unnecessary supply) is the leading factor of the basic economic fact.” (*World Democratic Governance Project Association*)

### A) Key Ingredients for a New Sustainability Paradigm

#### **Holistic Growth**

“A new paradigm needs to define the role of growth and associated metrics, and be rooted in a clear understanding of whether growth expectations are reconcilable with population pressures, equity and environmental goals – and if not, what alternate goals for our economy should be. [...] [W]e would be supportive of an approach for a 21st century economy aimed at growing, harvesting and replenishing the four sources of wealth on which human prosperity depends:

- natural assets (ecosystems, renewable resources)
- social assets (the reproductive economy, community and institutions),

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- human assets (knowledge, skills and, for many people, spirit)
- physical assets (infrastructure and machinery).

In this approach, financial assets of course matter a great deal too, but they are a store and transfer of wealth, rather than a source of it. If we increase and maintain these four fundamental sources of wealth, we can every year reap sufficient goods and services – some priced, some un-priced, but all valued – for well-being. Human prosperity, defined in these terms, can increase substantially from where we are today.” (*Oxfam International*)

“By mapping the human development index against the ecological footprint of different countries, [WWF's Living Planet] report<sup>2</sup> demonstrates that development does not have to be dependent on increasing consumption.” (*WWF-UK*)

**Localisation / Decentralization / Deglobalization**

“[T]o reduce exploitation of people and nature, economic production should be local. The present global trading system has pushed us in completely the opposite direction.” (*Focus on the Global South*)

“The global market should be seen as a tool for delivering local needs and supporting local sustainable livelihoods, rather than local markets delivering resources to a global demand.” (*Christian Aid*)

“The locus of decision-making should be devolved to the lowest level of government with the competence to deal with the issues concerned – as close as possible to the people most affected.” (*IBON*)

“First and foremost, a paradigm shift requires reclaiming the power from the corporations to democratically elected regimes. Central governments for their behalf need to empower and enable local communities to implement local solutions.” (*Greenpeace*)

“Localization, combined with equity considerations both locally and globally, is key to revamping the global economy in a sustainable direction.” (*Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development*)

“In looking at the bigger picture, it is evident that food production needs to shift from industrial, multinational systems towards moderate- and small scale, humane models with local supply chains and markets, thereby contributing to greater national and regional self-sufficiency in food. This transition would reduce not only the environmental damage caused by livestock production,<sup>3</sup> but also the unpredictability in global food markets such as that underlying the current food crisis.” (*World Society for the Protection of Animals*)

“It is time for the rejection of the old assumptions that energy is generated at a central location and transmitted / distributed to “sinks” (buildings and houses). It is time to adopt a paradigm that requires every building / house to become a net-zero energy node, so power generation is distributed, and the need for externally generated energy consumption is minimized; where possible eliminated.” (*Nuclear Information and Resource Service*)

*Focus on the Global South* proposes a “deglobalisation” paradigm:

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<sup>2</sup> See [http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf\\_lpr2010\\_lr\\_1\\_.pdf](http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf_lpr2010_lr_1_.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Livestock is responsible for 7 billion tonnes of green house gas emissions globally a year (9% of all carbon dioxide, 37% of all methane and 64% of all nitrous Oxides) FAO, *Livestock's Long Shadow*, 2006; and is one of the largest polluting sectors – including phosphorous, nitrogen and pesticide pollution of water; WSPA 2008.

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"Deglobalisation is not a synonym for withdrawing from the world economy. It means a process of restructuring the world economic and political system so that the latter builds the capacity of local and national economies instead of degrading it. Deglobalisation means the transformation of a global economy from one integrated around the needs of transnational corporations to one integrated around the needs of peoples, nations, and communities." For more detail please view their full proposal [here](#).

**Equity, Public Goods and Human Rights**

"Overall what is needed is a quantum leap in ethics." (*PRODENA - The Association for Defense of Nature*)

"Equity is a key matter to address - everybody in the world should have the same right to sustainable development." (*CAN International*)

"To shift to sustainable human development requires the redistribution of productive resources and 'environmental space' within and between countries to ensure that the needs of all, especially the poor and marginalized, are met without breaching ecological limits. The range of property rights regimes must move decisively away from an overwhelming emphasis on private property rights towards more democratic forms of property ownership and control (e.g. public, common, cooperatives, worker-based, community-based, etc.)" (*IBON*)

"Expanding the commons and reclaiming the public: in opposition to privatisation and exploiting nature for profit, we need a new model of managing and sharing the common good – whether it be water, forests, land, biodiversity, cities, transport, knowledge, etc." (*Focus on the Global South*)

"The language and action of a Human Rights Based Approach is key to the paradigm shift and serves as an overarching guide to systemic change. Focusing on the protection and realization of human rights, it provides a framework that addresses the most marginalized and excluded in society, strengthening social, political, economic and environmental justice and equity. Human rights principles (e.g., participation and inclusion, accountability) can drive every activity, across any sector and become part of the design, implementation and monitoring of sustainable development policies and programs. The Human Rights approach coexists with many key Rio Principles - including common but differentiated responsibilities, access and participation, gender equality, polluter pays and the precautionary principle - that should remain part of any new vision because they intimately tie together the 3 pillars." (*Women's Environment and Development Organization*)

"The vision of transparency, inclusiveness and accountability in all government decision-making – whether on the economic, social or environmental pillar is necessary but not sufficient. New rights will need to be created to ensure that poor and marginalized people including women and children have a seat at the table and a voice in the room." (*World Resources Institute – The Access Initiative (TAI)*) For detailed recommendations from *TAI* concerning transparency, inclusiveness and accountability, please click [here](#).

**B) Should Sustainable Development Goals Be Created?**

Many civil society organizations underline that new international time-bound sustainable development goals should revise and correct the shortcomings of the current MDG framework, with a particular focus on social well-being and/or safeguarding ecological and planetary boundaries:

"The world needs a global, overarching, cross-thematic framework for development after 2015... The process must be open and transparent, participatory, inclusive and responsive to the voices of those directly affected by poverty and injustice... Plans need to be developed now for what that new agreement looks like, without detracting from the need to deliver the current goals by 2015." (*Bond – Beyond 2015*)

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"Differentiation of development goals between goals for the overdeveloped North and the underdeveloped South is a prerequisite. There should be environmental, social and economic goals, addressing extremes of both wealth and poverty, so that everyone is targeted." (*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance*)

"One criticism of the current MDG framework is that it focuses largely on the symptoms of poverty rather than the causes and drivers. The attention, and consequently the money, is focused on delivering against the MDG targets rather than tackling the root causes of poverty, such as inequality within and between countries, poor governance, unfair trade systems, environmental degradation, climate change. A post 2015 framework for poverty eradication needs to address this shortcoming." (*WWF-UK*)

"Elements of this framework should include time-bound goals both for the long-term as well as the short and medium term (2015, 2020, 2030)." (*Major Group Children & Youth, UNCSD*)

A summary of some of the specific proposals from civil society organizations regarding the creation of Sustainable Development Goals is presented in **Annex 1** to this report.

**Annex 2** reviews some proposals for measuring progress (beyond GDP) on sustainability, whether expressed in terms of new goals or otherwise.

**Some questionnaire respondents do not believe that new goals should be developed:**

"Instead of 'sustainable development goals' we need new visions of society and nature. For example, [...] the concept of "buen vivir," [which means that people do not only think in terms of income per capita, but also of cultural identity, community, and harmony, among themselves and with Mother Earth]." (*Focus on the Global South*)

"Looking at the 97 indicators for SD published after Rio 1992, a very good basis for measurements is available – just prioritising them differently and putting teeth to their implementation is core." (*World Future Council*)

*CropLife International* "believes that the MDGs are a sufficient form of international goal setting and that adding further goals would create confusion and potentially divert focus from the essential realisation of the MDGs. Efforts to support sustainability should focus on the implementation of existing goals and commitments we already have on all levels (regional, national and local) rather than on defining new ones."

"[...] setting goals is one thing. Implementing them is quite another. Setting new goals is worthless if there are no signs of governments even trying to reach their existing goals." (*Greenpeace*)

### III. The New Paradigm: Priorities for Action

#### A) Addressing Inequalities and Poverty at National and International Levels

"First, the emphasis on issues of inequality, and gender inequality above all, has been inadequate and failed to deliver the type of progress needed. While progress is being made to meet poverty targets, this is often coming at the expense of rising inequality. To take one simple example, twice as many of those living on less than one US dollar a day are women as are men. This is not by chance, but rather the result of known and predictable power dynamics that the MDGs have failed to challenge with sufficient force." (*Christian Aid*)

"High rates of global poverty stem from an unequal distribution of wealth... Innovative financial mechanisms have the capacity to play a role in reducing inequality and empowering the poor and marginalised. Those

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mechanisms which reach small scale activities with minimal 'leakage' are vital for supporting urban development and effective local level climate change adaptation." (*Bond*)

"Income inequality could be reduced by setting maximum wage differentials, increasing the progressivity of taxation, universalizing public services such as education and healthcare, and reorganizing enterprises along worker- or community-based forms of ownership, decision-making, and distribution of profits." (*IBON*)

"Firstly we want to draw the attention to the framework [Greenhouse Development Rights \(GDR\)](#). The main idea of the GDR is to share the burden and responsibility of limiting the climate change in a fair and equitable manner....The GDR seeks to secure for the developing nations a viable portion of the scant remaining atmospheric space, and to do so in a manner that allows them to prosper within it. It does this by codifying the right to development in terms of a development threshold, an income level below which individuals are not required to help shoulder the burden of solving the climate problem....The GDR has estimated capacity and responsibility for all countries. GDR then combine those estimates to quantify national mitigation and adaptation obligations corresponding to a global emergency program." (*Norwegian Church Aid*)

"Make the transition to a green economy fair and equitable and commit to a decent jobs agenda by committing to making national just transition plans." (*Greenpeace*)

"The work of social enterprises such as Development Alternatives in India show how using low carbon materials, green technologies, training and promotion of effective institutional systems could create a million new jobs. The current economic crisis offers a unique opportunity to re-orient the economic compass to initiate change at scale. This has been taken up in South Korea, where 81% of a massive fiscal stimulus package has been earmarked for green investment. However meaningful progress depends on addressing the systematic and structural causes of poverty (such as inequality, lack of good governance and lack of control over resources), not just investing in green technology." (*Bond*)

## **B) Sectoral Dimensions of Sustainability**

### **Agriculture – Food Security / Sovereignty**

A great many contributors strongly supported placing a renewed emphasis on strengthening the viability, scale and security of local, small-holder, ecologically friendly agriculture. This section presents a selection of specific proposals that are representative of the priorities indicated by a number of organizations.

"Food sovereignty (as defined by La Via Campesina and supported by hundreds of peasant farmer organisations, social movements and NGOs, as well as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food) is the only viable agricultural paradigm that can restore biodiversity and soils, produce safe food for the planet, reduce the greenhouse gas emissions from industrial agriculture, and ensure livelihoods for hundreds of millions of peasant producers and small-family farmers. Similar transformation needs to happen in all other economic sectors: industry, energy, transport, etc." (*Focus on the Global South*)

"Smallholders are the key to sustainable food security....Grow and produce food as close to those who eat it as possible....Replace monocultures with diversity....Redirect research and investment funding towards ecological farming systems....Escape the pesticide treadmill....Reduce waste... Minimise fossil fuel dependency....Reduce and optimise meat production and consumption.... [Establish] a permanent intergovernmental body of experts, similar to the IAASTD, to assess and monitor all aspects of multi-functional agriculture, food production and consumption, based on a multi-stakeholder governing body..." (*Greenpeace*)  
**For more details connected to these recommendations from Greenpeace, please click [here](#).**

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“Corporate control of key inputs via proprietary technologies has had negative impacts on peasants and small-scale producers... They do this in a policy environment that continues to favour big agribusiness – despite the well-known failures of the industrial agricultural system and a broad-based consensus that the direction agriculture has taken in the last 30 years must be radically altered in order to help resolve the food and climate crises.” (*ETC Group*)

“Build a new agriculture future by prioritizing the needs of smallholders in developing countries....Reverse the current gross misallocation of resources, which sees the vast majority of public money for agriculture flow to agro-industrial farms in the North....Finalise a fair, ambitious and binding global climate change deal....Support sustainable intensification of smallholder agriculture....Build global governance and national strategies to avert food crises, radically reforming our frameworks for prevention and response.” (*Oxfam International*)

**For more details connected to these recommendations from Oxfam, please click [here](#).**

“To address the global food security crisis we must consider a whole range of issues including human health, livelihoods, cultural identities and autonomy, ecosystems, landscapes, biodiversity and animal welfare. An adequate, holistic approach will encompass both production and consumption, both human rights and animal welfare, both livelihoods and the environment, both climate change mitigation and adaptation, both land use and land use change and so on.” (*World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)*)

**For more details connected to these recommendations from WSPA, please click [here](#).**

### **Forests - Biodiversity**

“Achieving zero deforestation by 2020 requires commitment and actions by both governments and businesses around the world. In order to reduce pressure on forests, developed countries need to address demand-side causes of deforestation and implement policies and measures to reduce and ultimately stop the import and consumption of goods stemming from deforestation and degradation (including unsustainable timber, palm oil, and other commodities). [...] [S]trengthening existing protected areas for forests, and creating a global network of forest protected areas must be the cornerstone of biodiversity and climate protection.” (*Greenpeace*)

**For more recommendations on forest protection from Greenpeace, please click [here](#).**

“The Bolsa Floresta programme in Brazil offers benefits to families in the Amazonas region of Brazil who make a commitment to zero deforestation. [This programme] is an example of how the strands of economic, social and environmental development can be woven together successfully.<sup>4</sup> On an international scale, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) demonstrates how stakeholders at every level can act together in developing global consensus and effective action on sustainable forest management.” (*Bond*)

### **Oceans - Fisheries**

“The ocean generates most of the oxygen in our atmosphere and absorbs vast quantities of carbon dioxide. It is also key to food security for hundreds of millions of people...A healthy ocean – and a “blue economy”– is key to successful economic development dynamics, especially for small island developing states and coastal countries. [...] In order to restore the health and economic viability of the marine environment, the international community must take steps to bridge existing gaps in implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development.” (*Pew Environment Group*)

**For specific recommendations regarding oceans management from Pew, please click [here](#).**

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<sup>4</sup> Viana, V M *Sustainable Development in Practice: Lessons Learned from Amazonas*, iied, 2010

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“At a time when ocean ecosystems all over the world may be reaching tipping points, establishing networks of large-scale marine reserves becomes an indispensable tool to building resilience in ocean ecosystems against the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification. It has been estimated that conserving 20-30% of global oceans through a network of Marine Protected Areas could create a million jobs, sustain a marine fish catch worth US\$70-80 billion/year. Greenpeace recommends large no-take marine protected areas covering 40% of the high seas should be established.” (*Greenpeace*)

**For recommendations regarding oceans management from Greenpeace, please click [here](#).**

### **Atmosphere – Climate Change**

“The developed countries should develop zero carbon action plans that detail what actions should be taken throughout society to transform these into carbon neutral societies and detail the tools needed for this to happen. Working for a fair, ambitious and binding climate agreement on an international level as well as carbon taxes, polluter pays principles and other national measures should be implemented into these action plans.” (*Climate Action Network International*)

WWF-UK encourages governments to take actions such as phasing out fossil fuel subsidies and putting “climate and biodiversity on the agendas of G20, IMF, WTO and World Bank, with the aim of ensuring that decision-making on economic policies, investment and financial reform is compatible with agreed targets on climate and biodiversity.” **Please view WWF-UK’s full set of recommendations [here](#).**

Some groups also referred to the concept of Greenhouse Development Rights (GDR) mentioned on Page 9

### **Sustainable Energy**

“Support an energy revolution based on renewable energy and energy efficiency and provide access to energy for all. The energy revolution must be the cornerstone of any green economy roadmaps. This requires, among other things, introducing mandatory targets and standards for renewable energy and energy efficiency on a domestic level; facing out subsidies for dirty energy - which altogether receive more than 10 times the support given to renewable energy; introducing robust feed-in tariffs for renewables on a national level; guaranteeing priority access to grid for renewables and outlining a long-term grid investment plan that enables 100 % uptake of renewables; funding policies and technologies that enable modern energy access for the poor; reflecting the true price of dirty energy in energy costs, for example through the pricing of carbon.” (*Greenpeace*) Greenpeace’s [Energy \[R\]evolution report](#) provides a blueprint for achieving 100% renewable energy supply.

“The research into and production of nuclear energy would be impossible without huge subsidies from public money needed for other purposes. The mining and production processes emit greenhouse gases, are dependent on the use of scarce water resources and produce long lived radioactive and poisonous waste materials, as well as raw materials for nuclear and uranium weapons. Nuclear should be discouraged by the panel.” (*ForUM, Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development*)

“Members of society deserve equal protection under the law. It has been and is evermore clear that nuclear and coal technology do not allow a society to deliver such a guarantee to those impacted by these forms of power generation.” (*Nuclear Information Resource Service*)

“Instead of directing huge amounts of public money to CCS [carbon capture and storage], which is an expensive and inefficient technology, it would be better to use this money to support renewable energies and more efficient energy system.” (*World Bioenergy Association*)

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**Sustainable Technology**

“Some technologies will create new problems as they attempt to solve old ones. [...] The absence of a multilateral institutional mechanism for technology evaluation and assessment – one that considers not only whether a technology functions, but also its human rights, social, environmental and unintended impacts, as well as the structures of ownership, control and diffusion – is a serious gap in our existing international sustainable development architecture. Our proposal for a bold and innovative step would be to create a new multi-lateral treaty on technology assessment and evaluation: an International Convention for the Evaluation of New Technologies (ICENT).” (*ETC Group*) More information about ICENT is available in the ETC Group report [Geopiracy: The Case Against Geengineering](#)

“The Panel must reconfirm the ultimate importance of the precautionary principle, and ask that large scale technological fixes should not be deployed to reduce CO2 in the atmosphere.” (*ForUM – Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development*)

**C) Strengthening Corporate Accountability**

A clear message emanating from respondents was that transnational corporations – and their emphasis on short-term profitability in particular – remain a major hindrance to achieving more sustainable development. Governance and oversight over corporate investment and activities, especially across borders, remains irresponsibly weak. Respondents emphasized that the public sector must re-assert itself and find better ways to cooperate internationally in order to provide direction and incentives to the private sector to reform their business practices.

“Caps on resource use/extraction and waste production should be phased in according to scientific evidence and social need. Enterprises and governments should practice full lifecycle cost accounting of goods and services in the economy. [...] [S]trip corporations of legal personhood and other rights, and eliminate limitations on shareholder liability; revoke charters of corporations with recurring records of offending human and environmental rights; subject corporate charters to regular review processes during which a corporation should prove it is operating in the public interest; break up large companies to more human-scale enterprises to be sold off to workers and communities.” (*IBON*)

*Green Economy Coalition Convenor* calls for “Mandatory corporate reporting on how they contribute to ecological health and social wellbeing.” For more details on this recommendation, please click [here](#).

*WWF-UK* calls for the “Extension of company reporting requirements, taking environmental and social reporting as seriously as financial reporting.” Additional recommendations from *WWF-UK* can be viewed [here](#).

*Christian Aid* advocates for “Much higher transparency from extractive industries, such as Forest Stewardship Council and Extractives Industry Transparency initiative.”

“States should make full transparency of negotiations and contracts, HRIAs and complaint mechanisms mandatory for any large scale land acquisition. Free, prior and informed consent of the affected people and communities should also be a condition for large-scale land transfers to be made.” (*CIDSE*)

## **D) Finance and Trade**

### **Trade and Sustainability**

“States should undertake comprehensive Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIA) before concluding bilateral or multilateral trade agreements to make sure that these agreements do not limit national policy space to realise the Right to Food and other human rights.” (*CIDSE*)

“It is clear that the WTO is not equipped to assess interventionist measures, as it cannot undertake a detailed account of the developmental and environmental impacts of an economic measure on other countries, and on the global environment. An institution is needed to adjudicate upon both trade and complex environmental issues.” (*Major Group Children and Youth, UNCSD*)

“[A]n international research project should be set up and financed to investigate [the issue of green protectionism], as it presently poisons international relations and there are no easy answers.” (*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance*)

### **Financial Reform**

*Oxfam* “recently conducted a two-year project, with 80 different investors across Europe and the United States, examining how investors could better contribute to poverty reduction and development. This emphasized that, ultimately, what is required...is for governments to start regulating properly - nationally and through multilateral mechanisms – in order protect rights, livelihoods and scarce resources, thereby providing the macro sticks and carrots that investors respond to. [...] Two key barriers identified by investors, which the GSP should focus on, were short-termism and the lack of transparency in the investment industry.” To address short-termism, *Oxfam* supports “proposals to:

- require more active oversight role from institutional investors;
- link remuneration to social and environmental performance;
- encourage investors to hold shares for a longer period.

To address lack of transparency, *Oxfam* “believes that governments should set rules requiring companies to disclose information to the public and shareholders, for instance through Initial Public Offering (IPO) and ongoing listing rules.”

*World Future Council (WFC)* states that, “Closing offshore centres will be crucial and a clear prohibition of trading in new shadow markets as well. Every financial “product” should be easy enough to understand in order to be able to put it through a clearing house procedure.” *WFC* also asserts, “Some sectors – like most of the basic commodities and ecosystems should remain strictly exempt to financialisation and speculation.”

“Re-regulation of the financial sector, separating retail and investment banking, splitting up banks (to ensure that none are too big to fail), limits on staff incentive structures which encourage excessive risk-taking, re-localising banks to serve local businesses and communities. Removal of voting rights from speculative shareholding. International sanctions against tax havens. Establishment of new public/private hybrid banks to encourage channelling of private investment finance into green economic development.” (*WWF-UK*)

### **Domestic Tax Mobilization Through International Cooperation**

Many contributors emphasized the need for meaningful international cooperation to combat illicit capital flight and strengthen domestic tax mobilization in developing countries, including through South-South exchange of best tax practices adapted to their realities and priorities.

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“Capacity building can be accomplished through enhanced international cooperation efforts through globally representative intergovernmental bodies such as the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters.” (*New Rules for Global Finance and South-South Sharing of Successful Tax Practices (S4TP)*) See additional proposals on sharing of successful tax practices by *New Rules and S4TP* [here](#).

“We need global agreements on basic universal levels of global company taxation, carbon tax, resource tax and ecosystem service taxes, and the closing of tax havens.” (*Green Economy Coalition Convenor*)

*Christian Aid* calls for “country by country reporting of financial activities in particular for extractive industries to ensure transparency of revenues and tax due to the country of origin.”

### **Meeting ODA Commitments**

“[I]t is critical that rich nations deliver the 0.7 percent of GNI as foreign aid they promised in 1970. In addition to 0.7% commitments, rich countries need to provide climate finance to meet the needs of poor countries.” (*Oxfam International*)

*CIDSE* calls for “A legal framework to enforce ODA obligations in order to make donors accountable to the citizens of their own countries and ultimately to the main beneficiaries of development assistance in recipient countries.”

### **Debt Relief / Cancellation / Resolution**

“[I]mmediate debt cancellation and reparations for ecological and climate debt are essential.” (*Focus on the Global South*)

“There is need for binding criteria for responsible lending and an independent international debt work out mechanism which can assess the sustainability and legitimacy of debt. Without such reforms it will be difficult to solve the present debt crisis and to prevent unsustainable and illegitimate debts from accumulating in future.” (*Norwegian Church Aid*)

“Establish...a binding, independent and predictable framework for arbitrating on sovereign debt claims.” (*CIDSE*)

### **Innovative Sources of Finance**

A great many contributing organizations call for government to end subsidies that are harmful to sustainability goals, and to re-direct those funds to programs that do advance sustainability. Harmful fossil fuel, agricultural and fisheries subsidies have been singled out by organizations including: *Greenpeace*; *Green Economy Coalition Convenor*; *ForUM – Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development*; *Major Group Children and Youth*; *Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance*; *Peace Child International - EU-sponsored Road to Rio+20 project*; *Pew Environment Group*; *World Future Council*, *World Resources – the Access Initiative*; *World Society for the Protection of Animals*; *WWF-UK*.

**This statement from Greenpeace provides a commentary representative of common perspectives:** “Reforming perverse incentives, in particular environmentally harmful subsidies that under-price natural resources or encourage unsustainable increases in production, for example, has multiple benefits. It stops encouraging environmentally harmful behaviour, may remove wider economic distortions, and, in the case of

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harmful subsidies, may free up scarce fiscal resources. Moreover, removing or mitigating perverse incentives can reduce the need to introduce positive incentive measures.” (*Greenpeace*)

A large number of contributing organizations advocate for a **Financial Transaction Tax (FTT)** including: *CIDSE; Climate Action Network International; Climate Action Network France; Focus on the Global South; ; ForUM – Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development; IBON; Integrative Strategies Forum; Major Group Children and Youth; Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance; Oxfam International; Peace Child International – EU-sponsored Road to Rio+20 project; Temple of Understanding; Women's Environment and Development Organization; World Future Council.*

*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance* sums up the prevailing view of all organizations that advocate for an FTT: “As part of the reform of the financial system, global **taxes on financial transactions** could both restrain speculation and generate a global source of income for global sustainability mechanisms.”

*Oxfam International, World Future Council, and Climate Action Network International* state that substantial new revenues can be generated for climate finance from **international aviation and maritime transport**.

*World Bioenergy Association* proposes **Feed-in-Tariffs** as another promising innovative source of finance.

*WWF-UK* asks the GSP to consider “The design of policy instruments to follow up the TEEB reports, reviewing the experience of REDD, and considering other types of ecosystems,” and the “Establishment of new public/private hybrid banks to encourage channeling of private investment finance into green economic development.”

*World Future Council* proposes legislation that would “allow for local complementary currencies under clear institutional rules for the issuing unit – including an acceptance of communities to pay local taxes with them.”

## **E) Improving Governance and Institutions for Global Sustainability**

### **Human Rights Based Accountability – Including Participation Rights**

A great many participants emphasized that participation rights for all stakeholders must be strengthened, accountability and transparency must be improved, and that all frameworks should adhere to human rights principles.

“To obtain the benefits of active citizen engagement across in a new sustainable development framework, both for people themselves and through more effective policy making, there are some key accountability building blocks that must be put in place. These include freedom of information, transparent budgets, participatory policy making and the political ‘space’ to allow civil society organisations to operate without draconian restrictions.” (*Christian Aid*)

*CIDSE* described the reform of the Committee on Food Security as a significant development in institutionalizing “spaces for better participation of all stakeholders - not only those with power and influence and particularly those traditionally excluded from policy considerations.”

Some contributors called for strengthening implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, building on the ECE Aarhus Convention, which some suggested could be adopted in other regions. (*ForUM, Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development; Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International*

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*Environmental Governance; Major Group Children and Youth, UNCSD; World Resources Institute – The Access Initiative)*

A systematic, comprehensive, nuanced and forward-thinking analysis of accountability would be an outstanding contribution to the effort to achieve global sustainability..." (*Center for International Environmental Law*)

*CIDSE and Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance* propose to adapt the Human Rights Council's complaint procedure to sustainability issues, as well as the "protect, respect and remedy" framework proposed by the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on business and human rights and accepted by the Council.

*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance* suggest that the tripartite governance of the International Labour Organization "could be used as a model for deeper participation of major groups and stakeholders in international governance."

### **The Role of Local and Subnational Governments**

"Reforms in the global sustainability governance architecture should not concentrate capacities and resources in international institutions. A meaningful reform process must not only actively involve developing countries in all stages, but must also strengthen institutions and actors in sustainability governance at various levels, specifically at the regional, sub-regional, national and local levels." (*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance*)

See also the submissions from [ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#) and [Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development \(nrg4SD\)](#)

## **F) Do We Need to Create New Institutions or Reform Existing Ones? Views and Proposals**

### **Reform Global Economic Governance**

"At a global governance level, rather than creating new institutions, effective integration of environment across other UN and non UN institutions, such as the IMF, World Bank and WTO is required, to ensure an alignment of economic policies, investment and financial reforms aligned with agreed targets on climate and biodiversity. Equivalent forms of cross-government alignment and integration need also to occur at a national level." (*Bond*)

*CIDSE* advocates that, "The Relationship Agreements linking the IMF and World Bank with the UN should be renegotiated to enhance the role of the UN and to ensure that IFIs fully abide by the mandates of other UN agencies, funds and bodies, particularly those with non-economic mandates. Clear legal principles for addressing conflicts of interest between the IFIs and other UN bodies, agencies and fora should be established." *CIDSE* further calls for "A mandatory requirement for proper and ex-ante parliamentary approval of all IMF and World Bank programmes in a country."

*CIDSE* also supports the Stiglitz Commission's proposal to create a Global Economic Coordination Council (GECC) supported by an International Panel of Experts: According to *CIDSE*, "This recommendation is valid in the quest to redress global power imbalances as a necessary condition to ensure policy coherence to equitable and just development."

"Existing institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the WTO serve no function in the transition to a new relationship between nature and society, given their ideologically-driven interests and

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their proven incapacity to change. Instead, bottom-up processes such as the “Cochabamba World Summit on Climate Change”, which gather together peoples movements, NGO, policy makers and politicians on an equal footing, need to be expanded.” (*Focus on the Global South*)

**The Role of Courts and Tribunals**

*World Resources Institute – The Access Initiative (TAI)* contributes, “Across the board reforms are best accomplished through generic legal reforms,” and advocates that “Establishing courts and tribunals that have power to consider all three pillars in cases brought before them can improve accountability.” For more information on this subject from *TAI*, please click [here](#).

*PRODNA - The Association for Defense of Nature* calls for “An International Court for the Environmental. Most of the MEA have no teeth. The International Environmental Law should be enforced. Every individual should have the right of access to environmental justice.”

**Should a Global Environment Organization be Created?**

“The United Nations Environment Programme should be upgraded from a ‘Programme’ to an ‘Organisation’. It should have representation within the governing bodies and agenda-setting of the IMF, World Bank, WTO, and G20. It should receive, publish, and comment on national government reports on progress towards a green economy in fields such as energy policy, transport policy, tax/subsidies, and urban planning. Moves to establish an ‘IPCC for biodiversity’ should go ahead.” (WWF-UK)

“[C]reate a Global Environment Organization. This organization should transform the UNEP in a powerful organization that should have the highest standards of good governance: accountability, transparency, inclusiveness, participation, and effectiveness.” (*PRODNA - The Association for Defense of Nature*)

“Upgrade UNEP as a UN agency or establish a World Environment Organization. Ensuri[e] the coherence of its action with other UN agencies and its arbitration capacity in economic matters through a shared dispute settlement body with the WTO. (*Climate Action Network France*)

“This conversation has, for our Youth Sector, the resonance of ‘re-arranging deck chairs on the Titanic...’ Why should we be interested if UNEP decides to change a letter in its title to UNEO?” (*Peace Child International - EU-sponsored Road to Rio+20 project*)

**Establish a Trusteeship for Future Generations**

“Accountability could be improved through establishing some kind of trusteeship for future generations, and different models for how that could work have been proposed. It could be similar to the Ombudsman for Future Generations or ‘7 Generation Councils’ established at different spatial levels, that evaluate expected policy impacts in a long-term perspective, building on the traditional wisdom of indigenous North Americans.” (*Major Group Children and Youth, UNCSD*) Please see additional governance recommendations by this Major Group [here](#).

*World Society for the Protection of Animals* also calls for the creation of national ombudspersons to represent the interests of those do not have a direct voice in policy making, such as future generations and animals.

*World Future Council* has provided a detailed proposal for the creation of “Ombudspersons for Future Generations” which can be viewed [here](#).

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**Calls for Independent Review of Global Sustainable Development Governance**

“One immediate need is for an independent external review of (1) the system of international governance for sustainability, (2) the role and performance of the institutions within the system; (3) mandates and relationships of UN agencies and programmes, the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and international financing institutions. Such a review will reveal comparative advantages and provide vision for reduced competition and a productive division of labour. It should be undertaken by an independent commission established for this purpose by the UN Secretary-General and performed regularly thereafter by a commission of experts from governments and civil society.” (*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance*)

“A third party assessment of UN institutions' work, particularly in the environment and development sectors is needed to guide the reform.” (*Greenovate China*)

## IV. Conclusion: Overcoming Obstacles to Sustainability

This summary report will now conclude with a series of recommendations from civil society organizations regarding how to overcome some of the central obstacles to achieving a sustainable future.

### A) Economy, Jobs and Finance

“A transition to zero carbon societies requires a lot of changes but rather than fear for the economic consequences this is thought to have, it should be seen as the opportunity needed to secure economies. There are many potential jobs and economic growth within the transition to green economies.” (*CAN International*)

“The main argument used repeatedly in these times of economic crisis, is to ask where the money will come from to finance these large-scale changes in how we run the planet. There are sufficient sources of money, but it is a case of redirecting these sources towards sustainable activities, as well as mobilizing them from other sources in order to ensure a swifter and smoother transition to a truly sustainable future.” (*Greenpeace*)

“On the economic level structural changes need to be made, basically framing markets in strong regulating institutions, also on the global level. The financial system should be tamed, and global taxes on financial transactions are long overdue.” (*Integrative Strategies Forum*)

“As we have seen in North Africa, the tragedy of wasted young lives and lost opportunities for economic growth that result from failure to invest in job-creation programmes can – and does – spill over into violence and political instability. Investing in Green Skills, and Green Entrepreneurship, training – and micro- + macro-investments in the Green Economy will generate thousands of jobs and ease this crisis, especially in non-industrialised economies.” (*Peace Child International - EU-sponsored Road to Rio+20 project*)

“Environment and resource considerations are...a long run constraint on growth. This creates an important opportunity for advocates of sustainability to get a hearing from economists, business people, and politicians focused on economic growth, who are not generally focused on environmental protection for its own sake.” (*WWF-UK*)

### B) Popular Mobilization for Systemic Change

“Entrenched influence by banks and multinational corporations over national and global institutions is quite possibly the biggest obstacle to creating and implementing hard sustainable development policies....Popular

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mobilization, counter-lobbying, and pressure politics can be used to persuade publics and policy makers to support bold and far-reaching changes that are necessarily anathema to business interests.” (*IBON*)

“Necessary systemic change will only happen through political struggle, however conflict and injustice can be avoided to the extent that international norms, institutions and political forces can support and reinforce these processes and movements for change.” (*Focus on the Global South*)

### **C) Public Education and Awareness-Raising**

*Greenovate China* calls for “Education that empowers local people with the knowledge of their rights and the value of their resources.”

“Only by ‘re-orienting education to prepare youth to build the Green Economy’ will a generation of students emerge with the necessary green entrepreneurship skills – and the total commitment required for the challenge of building the green economy in their communities / nations / world in their lifetimes.” (*Peace Child International - EU-sponsored Road to Rio+20 project*)

“At the political level, leadership should be promoted through increased training of decision makers on long-term perspectives, as well as communication and education to enable the public to better apprehend long term aspects of decision making.” (*Major Group Children and Youth, UNCSD*)

### **D) Ethical and Human Rights Considerations**

“Transparency, inclusiveness and accountability must apply to ALL THREE pillars of sustainable development...affected stakeholders including affected communities should be included in early decisions about project siting, and development rather than waiting to include them at the end when many key decisions have already been made.” (*World Resources Institute - The Access Initiative*)

“The vulnerable, poor, and disempowered peoples cannot rely on market mechanisms, because they cannot invest and discount the future. They need rights to protect their lives and livelihoods. Assuring these rights should be a primary aim of global reform.” (*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance*)

“The general outlook on a comprehensive assessment of “Who can afford to pay for our common future” should clearly stick with the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and focus on the benefits for young and future generations without responsibilities for the current crises in order to avoid the typical zero-sum-bargaining that is marking our political games and judgments of fairness today.” (*World Future Council*)

### **E) Indigenous Knowledge**

“Indigenous knowledge and practices, especially among women, have the potential to increase resilience and therefore security at household, regional and national levels. In building on this local knowledge base, energy and adaptation technologies—hardware, software and institutions—can be readily received and implemented.” (*HELIO International*)

“[T]hrough all the history of our species, societies have been guided by a sense of humility and respect for our Mother Earth. This experience could serve as a great learning and inspiration opportunity.” (*Major Group Children and Youth, UNCSD*)

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## Annex I. Proposals Regarding Sustainable Development Goals

Many civil society organizations underline that new international time-bound sustainable development goals should revise and correct the shortcomings of the current MDG framework, with a particular focus on holistic development, social well-being and safeguarding ecological and planetary boundaries. This Annex presents a number of specific proposals provided by civil society for a potential sustainability goals framework.

### A) The Need for a More Comprehensive, Ambitious and Cohesive Framework

“A future framework for poverty reduction will have to deal effectively with climate change, energy, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. All of these issues are undermining efforts to reduce poverty and meet the MDGs and they are not effectively dealt with in the current framework. To be truly effective, a post 2015 framework should integrate the poverty reduction with other key UN processes, particularly the UNFCCC and CBD. The accountability mechanisms of the current framework are weak with no penalties for countries who fail, this includes donor countries that pledge money and then do not follow through. Clear, and possibly legally binding, accountability mechanisms should be built into the future framework from the start. A future framework needs to address cross-cutting issues including human rights, climate change, gender and environmental sustainability much more effectively than the current MDGs.” (WWF-UK)

Please view the full sustainable development goals proposal from [WWF-UK here](#).

“The framework must address:

- poverty and injustice in all countries, from the richest to the poorest
- inequity and inequality
- Environmental sustainability and climate change
- The responsibility of national governments to sustainably manage their natural and financial resources
- The responsibility of the international community to support developing countries in the face of global challenges, through respecting their ODA and existing climate commitments as well as through innovative redistributive funding mechanisms which would generate additional predictive finance.”

(*Bond – Beyond-2015*)

Please view the full sustainable development goals proposal from [Bond – Beyond-2015 here](#).

“[G]oals should include:

\*[S]ecuring access to modern energy services for all people by 2020, without locking them into a high GHG intensity development path....\*[H]alting gross emissions from deforestation and forest degradation by 2020, in a manner that protects biodiversity and fully respects the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.

\*Commitment to eliminating the excess capacity of the world's fishing fleet. Given that more than 70 percent of the world's fisheries are already fully exploited, over exploited or significantly depleted, the measures to tackle overfishing cannot be modest. \*Commitment to zero discharge of all hazardous substances within one generation, based on the precautionary principle and a preventative approach to chemicals management with the substitution principle at its core and producer responsibility to drive innovation in Green Chemistry and Toxics Use Elimination. \*An immediate halt to the expansion of genetically modified organisms.” (Greenpeace)

Please view the full sustainable development goals proposal from [Greenpeace here](#).

“Other serious diseases, disorders, and health impacts need their own indicators, beyond HIV/AIDS, or else these sub-indicators should be incorporated into overall goals of human health increase. [...] [C]larity is needed on what constitutes decent work, especially its relationship to material income and consumption, and a goal is needed to clarify whether simply rising above abject poverty is a sufficient income or employment goal. [...] An overall indicator of total resource consumption and generation in each nation, such as the ecological footprint concept, needs to be its own goal, with a goal of keeping yearly resource creation above yearly resource use. Greenhouse gas pollution and all six of the other major environmental tipping points need their own goals of

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minimizing the risk from nearing or exceeding them, not just biodiversity loss.” (*SustainUS – US Youth for Sustainable Development*) [Please view the full sustainable development goals proposal from SustainUS here.](#)

“Pew urges the international community to establish time-bound goals to require that the precautionary principle is incorporated as a core element of all decision making processes for activities which affect the marine environment. Fishing and other activities which threaten to harm ocean health should not be allowed to take place until precautionary, science-based conservation and management measures are agreed and implemented.” (*Pew Environment Group*)

[Please view Pew's detailed proposal for marine sustainability goals here.](#)

“...Principle 10 [on public participation] of the Rio Declaration should be turned into a new international time bound sustainable development goal. [...] Experience and research have demonstrated that freedom of expression, access rights (including access to information, public participation, and access to justice), transparency and civic engagement are fundamental to sustainable development and the achievement of the Rio Principles” (*World Resources Institute - The Access Initiative (TAI)*)

[Please view TAI's proposal for how to advance Principle 10 at the national and international levels here.](#)

## **B) Differentiated Goals for Developed and Developing Countries**

Contrary to the current MDG framework, which only set targets for developing countries, many civil society groups highlight that the new framework should include targets for both developed and developing countries, in differentiated ways. (*Greenovate China; Christian Aid; Bond – Beyond-2015, Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance*).

“This goes back to the fundamental principles of the Rio Declaration on ‘common but differentiated responsibilities.’” (*Christian Aid*)

“Differentiation of development goals between goals for the overdeveloped North and the underdeveloped South is a prerequisite. There should be environmental, social and economic goals, addressing extremes of both wealth and poverty, so that everyone is targeted.” (*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance*)

“Classical economic growth will still be necessary for some time in some areas of the world where not even basic infrastructures for sustainable human development are in place (agricultural, educational, health, etc. infrastructures). Such growth will have to be compensated with clear complementary and redistributive de-growth in so-called rich countries.” (*World Democratic Governance Project Association*)

“Munasinghe's Millennium Consumption Goals would be a good start to address overconsumption mostly in the global North, but also in parts of the global South.” (*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance, Integrated Strategies Forum*)

## **C) Governance**

Various organizations note that the issue of ‘governance’ is missing within the current MDG framework, something that needs to be addressed when developing new Sustainable Development Goals.

“The MDGs can be extended to look at sub-national territorial boundaries, and complimented with the multi-level governance performance indicators. [...] Time-bound Sustainable Development Goals can include the creation of new international institutions with regulatory powers to address such issues.” (*ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability*)

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“Such a framework should go beyond the current state level arrangements and integrate all relevant stakeholders in civil and political society in line with the Accra Agenda for Action. Subsequently, national ownership, and the strengthening of the role of youth is imperative for this framework.” (*Major Group Children & Youth, UNCSD*)

“The framework must address: [i] The responsibility of national governments to sustainably manage their natural and financial resources; [ii] the responsibility of the international community to support developing countries in the face of global challenges, through respecting their ODA and existing climate commitments as well as through innovative redistributive funding mechanisms which would generate additional predictive finance.” (*Bond – Beyond-2015*)

According to *MycroAction Sweden* “combating corruption at all levels” should be added as a new goal.

#### **D) Accountability mechanisms**

“The accountability mechanisms of the current framework are weak with no penalties for countries who fail, this includes donor countries that pledge money and then do not follow through. Clear, and possibly legally binding, accountability mechanisms should be built into the future framework from the start.” (*WWF-UK*)

“One challenge now is to both deliver on these existing goals and agree on the specific rules that are necessary to ensure that they are effectively implemented.” (*Pew Environment Group*)

“Finally, policies that promote particular goals cannot simply be viewed in light of how much they may advance their target goals, but by how much they may subtract from progress toward other goals, and this comprehensive set of impacts must guide our support for particular policies.” (*SustainUS – US Youth for Sustainable Development*)

“[I]n addition to new metrics and roadmaps there needs to be a clear commitment to auditing and enforcement functions at international as well as national and regional or even local levels [...] An upgrade of SD Councils with an Ombudsperson mandate to investigate assumed violations on long-term goals and policy-incoherences, and with the power to take legal action would be one example. This mandate could also be given to an upgraded UNCSD to take oversight over the UN goal to “act as one”. It should cover Bretton Woods institutions as well, though. At best it would be directly accessible to citizens that often see themselves without a place to file complaints on misconduct they observe.” (*World Future Council*)

#### **E) The Process for Defining the Framework Must be Transparent and Inclusive**

“The development of the framework (and its monitoring) must include an extensive consultation involving all stakeholders at local, national, regional and global level. This must include a formalised and meaningful process for civil society engagement.” (*Bond – Beyond-2015*)

“...national ownership, and the strengthening of the role of youth is imperative for this framework. This should start as soon as possible with the consultation and participation in the definition of this framework.” (*Major Group Children & Youth, UNCSD*)

“The process to develop a new set of goals and targets needs careful consideration. It needs to be a consultative process that prioritizes the needs of poor people in developing countries and engages fully with civil society.” (*WWF-UK*)

## Annex II. Measuring Progress on Sustainability: Indicators Beyond GDP

Under a new paradigm and as we implement reform, it will be important to be able to better measure our progress and have useful data to hold actors accountable. Indeed, a lack of reliable and useful measurements is part of the reason the world has found itself in its present situation.

As *WWF-UK* explains, "At present Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the primary measure of development and growth. However, GDP does not incorporate the quality of growth, equity issues, environmental costs or the status of the natural environment." The following statement from *Women's Environment and Development Organization* exemplifies the prevailing perspective of contributors on the issue of progress indicators: "The panel's vision for a paradigm shift must create the space in which standard GDP is no longer valid or sufficient in the eyes of governments and investors."

Following are some suggestions from contributors regarding how to move beyond GDP for the assessment of global sustainability.

"Instead of searching for any one single best indicator which could "challenge" GDP, governments should endorse and apply a group of several existing indicators and indices which serve different (yet inter-linked) end goals. Some of the promising ones include:

- Bhutan's Gross Happiness Index
- New Economics Foundation's Happy Planet Index
- WWF's Living Planet Index

...and there are others. The indicators must serve the sustainable development goals set. An example of a good end-goal focused index is the Renewable Energy Attractiveness Index by Ernst & Young, which assesses the attractiveness of investment environments for renewable energies." (*Greenpeace*)

"The UNDP's Human Development Report recently introduced measures for income inequality, gender inequality and a new index on multidimensional poverty. The Happy Planet Index (HPI) measures the efficiency with which countries convert the natural resources into long and happy lives for their people. Another alternative proposed in 2010 by Saamah Abdallah is an index with three groups of indicators (environment, human well-being, and economic system) each having its headline indicator (ecological footprint, "happy life years" [a product of life expectancy and life satisfaction], and a choice between income inequality, the Genuine Progress Indicator, etc). Any post-GDP index of development should incorporate measures of equity, ecological impact, human well-being, and economic development." (IBON)

"To replace GDP as the main indicator of development, the youth would support the establishment of a new set of indicators, based on a broad set of components in order to avoid bias towards a particular aspect of the concept of development." (*Major Group Children and Youth, UNCSD*) Please see this Major Group's proposal text relating per capita indicators to the UNFCCC framework [here](#).

"Our preference is for a basket of indicators, including economic indicators, environmental indicators (such as ecological footprint, rate of deforestation, and global average temperature rise), and social indicators (e.g. Under-Five Mortality Rate). However, just as important as the specific indicators themselves are the institutional structures into which they are reported, and from which decisions could be made to influence trends. In particular, it is essential for social and environmental indicators to be taken notice of by economics and finance ministries, and by international economic bodies." (*WWF-UK*)

"Establishing indicators is key, however these should be generated through broad local, national and international participatory processes that give space and voice to the most marginalised and vulnerable. The

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UN should support such processes politically and also by providing information and technical input as requested.” (*Focus on the Global South*)

“New thinking suggests that local governments can work towards happiness and well-being of their people by promoting health, education, culture, good governance, ecology, community vitality and a good living environment. Local governments are already exploring with a combination of new tools based upon these models. [...] Qualitative assessments of people’s sense of well-being and their satisfaction of local service delivery can help prioritize actions and inform decision makers.” (*ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability*)

“In the debate over how to develop indicators, some advocate full monetarisation of valued goods and services, others call for using natural units (such as ecological measures of deforestation and climate change). Oxfam feels that the latter is a more grounded approach because of the enormous complications of attempting to estimate monetary values for resources that have historically been hard to price, and also because of the importance of diversifying indicators beyond monetary measures.” (*Oxfam International*)

“A key mandate of governance for sustainability is scientific assessment of environmental capacities and limits, which should generate indicators of planetary boundaries and limits and identify types of progress that respect or threaten those limits.” (*Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance*)

“Overall, every identified planetary boundary and threatened ecosystem should be addressed with a comprehensive global assessment (e.g., phosphate, aerosols, chemical pollution, land use and degradation) and be developed into a convention or treaty that seeks to tackle single trends in their conjunction.” (*World Future Council*)

“Equality across races and ages and other categories that define and divide people must be measured.” (*SustainUS – US Youth for Sustainable Development*)

“Any integrated progress index needs to take animal welfare fully into account.” (*World Society for the Protection of Animals*)

“The MSDG [Millennium Sustainable Development Goals] Road Map being prepared by our Road to Rio+20 project will include a set of Green Economy Indicators: at its simplest level, this will measure the number of investments made in each sector of the Brown-to-Green Economy color-coded spectrum. It would also measure the number of green jobs created, the number of Education ministries that include serious Green Economy Education in their curricula etc.” (*Peace Child International - EU-sponsored Road to Rio+20 project*)

“If an improved version of the MDGs, as discussed in a previous question, could be developed, these indicators could serve as many of the data points for an overall sustainability indicator, and the time-bound targets of improved MDGs could then be used to assess progress in improving the sustainability assessment.” (*SustainUS – US Youth for Sustainable Development*)

“Indicators should measure quality of life for both women and men, including paid and unpaid work, leisure time, political participation and rights, among others. Indicators should also measure ecosystem degradation, carbon emissions, and natural resources. [...] The data gathered for the new index should be routinely disaggregated by sex. Progress in the indices, including gender-differentiated progress, must be linked to the time-bound SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals] as one way of measuring their attainment. By incorporating the Beyond GDP indicators into the SDGs, it will help promote global acceptance/use of the Beyond GDP index and create the enabling environment for it to replace current GDP.” (*Women’s Environment and Development Organization*)

## Annex III. Consultation Questionnaire Distributed to Civil Society



### **GSP Civil Society Consultation Questions**

#### **Introduction**

The UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (GSP) is currently working "to reflect on and formulate a new vision for sustainable growth and prosperity, along with mechanisms for achieving it." The GSP expects to issue its final report in late November 2011. Its inputs will feed into inter-governmental processes, including the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio 2012), and the meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

At the request of the GSP Secretariat, the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) is now launching a civil society consultation to share information about the work of the GSP and gather inputs for consideration by the GSP Panelists, their deputies, and the GSP Secretariat. Based on the GSP [Terms of Reference](#) and the [detailed reports of the Panel's and Sherpas' meetings](#) so far, UN-NGLS has formulated the menu of questions below for consideration by civil society representatives. We invite you to respond to any number of these questions by 28 March 2011. We would like to emphasize that the questions are intended as a selection of potential topics for your consideration, and we welcome any amount of your input for the GSP.

The **deadline of 28 March 2011** is required so that your inputs can reach the GSP Sherpas with sufficient time for their consideration before their next meeting at the beginning of April. UN-NGLS greatly respects your expertise on these important topics and would like very much to be able to include your valuable input in the information conveyed to the GSP at this formative stage of their work. Given the time frame, we do encourage you to be as concise as possible in your responses. UN-NGLS will produce a compilation report for the GSP of the inputs received. Thank you very much.

#### **1. Context: assessing progress towards global sustainability**

- a) What is your objective assessment of progress (or regress) in the achievement of global sustainability over the past few decades?
- b) Why have the three pillars of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental) not been better integrated into coherent policy making?
- c) What do key contemporaneous factors (e.g. growing inequalities, chronic mass unemployment and underemployment, the global economic, food and climate crises, new geopolitical realities) imply in terms of both risks and opportunities for a "quantum leap" towards policy and institutional reforms for global sustainability?

#### **2. Foundations for a new vision of sustainability**

- a) How would you define the new vision (or "paradigm shift") required to transform economic development dynamics in a manner that simultaneously pursues the goals of poverty eradication, full and decent employment and reducing inequalities, while promoting social and environmental regeneration and sustainability?

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- b) Should components of this new vision be turned into new international time-bound Sustainable Development Goals? If so, how would you define these new Goals and what should be the relationship between these goals and the current Millennium Development Goals framework?

**3. Better and more coherent policies and institutional mechanisms**

- a) What better policies and measures are required at national and international levels to put into practice the goals of the new development paradigm? These can be discussed generically, or in relation to particular sectors such as agriculture, forestry, extractives, services (including social/environmental services), manufacturing, water, energy, housing, etc..
- b) What obstacles (at the national or international level) need to be overcome in implementing these new policies and measures? What are fair and politically acceptable ways of overcoming these challenges?
- c) How to reform corporate governance in order to overcome the limits of “financial investor-based accountability” and extend accountability to serve broader development, social and environmental goals?
- d) How to factor in environmental costs fairly in international trade and investment practices and rules so as not to create a form of “green protectionism” staked against low-income and other developing countries? How should “green protectionism” be assessed?
- e) How to reform capital markets so that global finance does not cause more crises and exert undue pressure on public policy choices, but instead genuinely serves long-term investments needed for accelerating sustained job creation, green infrastructure, and the shift to environmentally sustainable production?
- f) Which financing mechanisms should be considered in the GSP deliberations?
- g) What mechanisms should be put in place to ensure better policy dialogue and coherence among all stakeholders in meeting the goals of the new development paradigm and holding public institutions accountable? Should existing institutions be reformed and/or new ones be created? And if so why and how?

**4. Measures of progress beyond GDP**

- a) A number of alternative progress indicators (beyond GDP) have been developed to assess progress on sustainable development (e.g. UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI), the work of the Stiglitz/Sen/Fitoussi Commission, the Kingdom of Bhutan's Gross Happiness Index). What are your preferred indicators and why?
- b) How can they be combined or built upon to provide clear indication of progress on global sustainability?
- c) How could these indicators become associated with time-bound targets that could be a part of new sustainability goals?

**5. Any other feedback and input**

- a) Based on the [Terms of Reference](#) for the GSP, what are your hopes and expectations regarding their recommendations for new mechanisms to ensure the achievement of the Panel's overall vision?
- b) Please share any other feedback and input related to the information provided thus far in [reports from the GSP Panel's and Sherpas' meetings](#).

## Annex IV. List of Contributing Civil Society Organizations and Networks

Please click on an organization's name to access their submission on the NGLS website.

1. [Bond Development and Environment Group UK](#)
2. [Bond UK Beyond-2015](#)
3. [Climate Action Network France](#)
4. [CAN International](#)
5. [Center for International Environmental Law \(CIEL\)](#)
6. [Christian Aid](#)
7. [CIDSE](#)
8. [CropLife International](#)
9. [ETC Group](#)
10. [Focus on the Global South](#)
11. [ForUM – Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development](#)
12. [Green Economy Coalition Convenor](#)
13. [Greenovate China](#)
14. [Greenpeace](#)
15. [HELIO International](#)
16. [IBON](#)
17. [ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#)
18. [Integrative Strategies Forum](#)
19. [Major Group Children and Youth, UN Conference on Sustainable Development](#)
20. [Major Groups and Stakeholders Advisory Group on International Environmental Governance](#)
21. [MycroAction Sweden](#)
22. [Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development](#)
23. [Norwegian Church Aid](#)
24. [Nuclear Information and Resource Service](#)
25. [Oxfam International](#)
26. [Peace Child International](#)
27. [Pew Environment Group](#)
28. [PRODENA – Association for Defense of Nature](#)
29. [South-Sharing of Successful Tax Practices \(S4TP\) and New Rules for Global Finance](#)
30. [SustainUS – US Youth for Sustainable Development](#)
31. [Temple of Understanding](#)
32. [Women's Environment and Development Organization](#)
33. [World Bioenergy Association](#)
34. [World Democratic Governance project association \(WDGpa\)](#)
35. [World Future Council](#)
36. [World Resources Institute – The Access Initiative](#)
37. [World Society for the Protection of Animals](#)
38. [WWF-UK](#)