

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

The Convenor, Mr. Sha Zukang, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) welcomed Principals and introduced the agenda items for the meeting:

1. **Follow-up to the General Assembly Resolution on ‘The United Nations in global governance’ (A.65/94);**
2. **Follow-up to the 2010 MDG Summit;**
3. **Update on preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio 2012).**
4. **Other matters**

AGENDA ITEM 1: Follow-up to the General Assembly Resolution on ‘The United Nations in global governance’

Mr. Sha informed the Principals that Member States had decided to have a formal deliberations on global governance by the UN General Assembly, under a new sub agenda item entitled **“Reaffirming the Central role of the United Nations System in Global Governance.”** He referred to resolution 65/94, which requested the Secretary-General to submit an analytical report focusing on **‘global economic governance (GEG) and development’** at its **66th session**.

He informed the group that DESA was requested by the Office of the Secretary-General to take the lead in preparing the report, in consultation with Member States and relevant organizations of the United Nations system.

Mr. Sha then highlighted the salient points of the draft outline.

- The first substantive chapter will set the stage by providing an overview of the global trends and recent developments that have led to concerns about the adequacy of the existing system of global economic governance. The next chapter of the report would focus on the existing system of GEG, in particular the deficiencies and gaps that lie at the heart of it. It has been widely recognized that these shortcomings include the deficits of legitimacy, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.
- The analysis of main flaws of the current system would lead to the central chapter of the report focusing on ways of how to address these challenges. It is proposed that various ideas and proposals be grouped under four key headings: (i) **strengthening the role and effectiveness of the UN system in GEG**; (ii) **defining the relationship between the UN and G20**; (iii) **the role of regional institutions in GEG** and (iv) **analysing ways of addressing new challenges requiring even more effective global economic governance**.
- The report will conclude with concrete proposals and recommendations.

Finally he mentioned that he had requested Mr. Alexander Trepelkov, Director of the Financing for Development Office, to coordinate the preparation of this report. To this end, Mr. Trepelkov will liaise with his ECESA colleagues.

Following remarks by Mr. Sha, ECESA principals discussed the draft outline of the analytical report on GEG and Development. Overall, the outline received favourable comments with most speakers emphasizing that they liked its structure and comprehensiveness. At the same time, the following suggestions were made:

ESCAP and ECLAC stressed that reference should be made, especially in section II of the outline, of the rising importance of regionalism. For instance, it was pointed out that growing regional interdependencies and the rise of regional trade blocs impacts upon, and brings into question, the efficacy of the existing architecture of GEG.

ESCAP also stated the importance of governance in the environmental sphere.

ECLAC added that it had planned to organize seminars relevant to GEG, later in the year that could complement DESA's work. Moreover, the Government of France had asked ECLAC to organize a seminar on exchange rates under the framework of the G20. ECLAC also asked how other agencies such as the ILO, and ECLAC would be brought into the GEG process.

ECLAC and UNDP posed questions on the timeline of the drafting process.

UNCTAD stated that the importance of South-South cooperation in the context of GEG should be reflected in the outline. Mention should also be made of LDCs and other vulnerable economies that are not adequately represented in the current GEG architecture.

UN-HABITAT stated that the outline should more explicitly refer to the recent volatility in energy and food prices and their impact on development.

OHCHR stated that the report should welcome the inclusion of non-state actors, including civil society in the governance arena. Also important was the equitable participation of least developed countries (LDCs) and other vulnerable populations.

Mr. Sha agreed on the importance of governance in the sphere of environment and sustainable development. However, since this matter was being discussed at length in the context of Rio 2012, the report on GEG and development would not address this issue.

AGENDA ITEM 2: Follow-up to the 2010 MDG Summit

Mr. Sha informed Principals that the outcome document of the 2010 MDGs Summit: "Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals" (A/RES/65/1) had mandated the Secretary-General to:

1. Report annually on progress in implementation of the MDGs until 2015; and to,
2. Make recommendations in his annual reports, as appropriate, for further steps to advance the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015.

In addition, in a subsequent resolution (A/65/10), the General Assembly requested the inclusion of analysis and policy recommendations on "sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth for accelerating poverty eradication and achievement of the MDGs in the annual report on progress in the implementation of the MDGs until 2015."

These mandates indicate the need for an additional but analytical report on the implementation of the MDGs. This report should:

1. Provide an analytical assessment of the progress on the implementation of the MDGs;
2. Include policy recommendations on sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth for accelerating poverty eradication and achievement of the MDGs;
3. Outline further steps to continue to advance the United Nations development agenda and make concrete recommendations for actions beyond 2015 and;
4. Serve as a building block towards a major review in 2015.

This new report would be supplemented by the two major United Nations reports on MDG achievement – **the Millennium Development Goals Report** and **the MDG Gap Task Force Report**, which would continue to be prepared over the next five years.

Mr. Sha asked Principals for their views on the following:

1. How should we approach this new report over the next four years? What should be our key policy messages?
2. How should we initiate system-wide work on a framework for implementing the UN development agenda beyond 2015?

UNODC emphasized that the UN should advocate for a zero tolerance policy towards corruption if the MDGs are to be met. Such a policy would help combat corruption and impede illicit financial flows among others. In this regard, UNODC supported the use of existing UN mechanisms such as the UN Convention against Corruption.

ECLAC stated that five Regional Commissions (RCs) had come together to produce an analytical paper on the implementation of the UN development agenda post 2015. ECLAC added that RCs had been successfully collaborating with UNDG on inter-agency reporting for MDGs.

UNDP recommended the inclusion of evidence based analysis in the report. UNDP also informed Principals of the MDG Acceleration Framework, which was developed as an approach designed to help countries identify challenges and find solutions to eradicating extreme poverty and achieving sustainable development. UNDP also stressed that the Rio 2012 process must inform the process of implementation of the UN development agenda post 2015. While green growth was important, the international community must be mindful of inclusive green growth driven by sustainable policies.

ESCAP emphasized the need to address the issue of international food price crisis in the report, especially its impact on the poorest and most vulnerable. ESCAP mentioned that its future MDG Report in 2011/2012 will focus on the disparities in the achievement on health goals within the region. ESCAP is also assisting 16 countries with their national development strategies.

UNCTAD suggested that the new MDG report focus on the following key messages:

1. The need to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation.
2. Developed countries need to abide by their commitment to provide 0.7% of their GDP as ODA.
3. Inclusive growth and addressing the challenges to alleviating inequality needs to be at the heart of the UN development agenda.
4. The need to redefine the role of the State in light of new challenges faced by countries.

5. The need to avoid fragmentation of development aid and enhance coherence and cohesion in development cooperation.

OHCHR underscored that human rights are indispensable to the achievement of the MDGs and this message should be reflected in the report.

After discussions, **Mr. Sha** informed Principals that following the model of the “Keeping the Promise” report, Assistant Secretary-Generals (ASGs) of DESA and UNDP will take the lead in the preparation of the report. He also informed that Mr. Robert Vos, Director, Development Policy Analysis Division, DESA to coordinate preparations for this report.

Furthermore, **Mr. Sha** alerted Principals of the Integrated Implementation Framework (IIF) announced by the Secretary-General to monitor the follow-up to the MDG Summit. The IIF is meant to make all stakeholders accountable for the commitments they have made to date. The forthcoming HLCP meeting will consider a proposal coordinated with the DSG, linking this task to the work being undertaken by the MDG Gap Task Force.

The MDG Gap Task Force, which is already monitoring the commitments related to MDG-8, would expand this role by covering commitments for the achievement of all other MDGs, and national policies. **Mr. Sha** requested the support of Principals in putting the IIF into place.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Update on the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio 2012)

Mr. Sha highlighted various activities that had taken place since the last meeting of ECESA Principals in November 2010. They included Regional Coordination Meetings and other activities involving inter-agency cooperation at the regional and sub-regional levels. He expressed his satisfaction with the level of engagement and collaborative efforts set in motion thus far.

The following key messages were stressed at the first intersessional meeting held on 10-11 January:

1. “Green economy” should not be viewed as a substitute to sustainable development, rather, as an effective entry point to accelerated implementation of sustainable development.
2. There was a need to further elaborate on the win-win aspects of the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.
3. On the themes of the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD), divergences of views remain. Two main options have emerged on this matter: (i) options that can strengthen UNEP and CSD, and (ii) options that will eventually lead to a new governance structure. PrepCom II (7-8 March 2011) will provide the opportunity to discuss these issues further.

On the synthesis report mandated by Prep Com I, **Mr. Sha** stressed that as the report was a work in progress, those entities that had not provided their inputs yet, could still do so. He informed Principals that both the Executive Coordinators Ms. Liz Thompson and Mr. Brice Lalonde have joined the Secretariat team and are fully engaged in the preparatory work.

Mr. Sha emphasized the need for clarity on the timing of and expectations from the outcome document of Rio 2012.

UNEP underscored the importance of defining the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD) through a coordinated and joint approach by all relevant UN entities. UNEP stated that it was important not to relegate this task to the Ministries for Environment.

UNDP noted that a UNDG Task Team was established for the Rio 2012 conference. A work plan is currently under discussion. Joint UNDP and DESA letters on funding national preparations for the conference had been mailed to bilateral donors for consideration. UNDP inquired about a proposal on an inter-agency options paper on IFSD.

ECLAC referred to its December meeting on themes of the conference (including the briefing by the Government of Brazil on the venue and other relevant information on preparations). ECLAC referred to the Regional Coordination Meeting (RCM) and stressed that the regional perspective should also inform the conference. ECLAC asked for Mr. Sha's view on the invitation it had received from the Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Global Sustainability (GSP) to assist them in holding regional consultations.

UNITAR highlighted its training and capacity development activities being undertaken in support of the conference. These included workshops and an e-learning course on green economy. UNITAR stressed the strategic importance of its training centres in Brazil based in Brasilia and Curitiba and also informed of its plan to host a Sustainable Cities Summit next April.

ESCAP mentioned that the five Regional Commissions are working on a joint paper focusing on green growth and poverty reduction. Since there is no concrete road map for green growth policy, ESCAP is designing it for the Asia Pacific region.

UNCTAD pointed out that developing countries have begun the transition to green economy, but the challenges that they face need to be addressed. UNCTAD mentioned that it will convene on 23-24 June, a public symposium on the topic "How to make the transition to a green economy fair and equitable" with the aim to hear comments and ideas from non-governmental organizations, citizens' groups, business associations, and other representatives of civil society. UNCTAD planned to convene later in the year an ad hoc expert meeting on how advancement of the green economy will affect trade and sustainable development. The results of these initiatives and recommendations for future action will be presented at Rio 2012. UNCTAD is also introducing a new series of publication entitled "the Road to Rio" for a transition to green economy.

UNRISD noted that while the economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development were being adequately addressed, the social pillar was being neglected. There was a need to address the social aspects of sustainable development if issues related to poverty and inequality are to be addressed leading up to Rio 2012. UNRISD is considering setting up discussion groups on the social dimension of sustainable development. It will organise a meeting of experts from the civil society community, including academic, business, media etc. on the social dimension of sustainable development.

ESCWA is planning for a Regional Preparatory Meeting, for which three main regional reports will be produced. These reports will include inputs from ESCWA, the Arab League and UNEP on the objective and theme of the Conference. Reference was also made to the collaboration with ILO on the regional report on green jobs.

In response to comments and queries, **Mr. Sha** stressed that his main concern as Conference Secretary-General is to ensure the full involvement of developing countries in the

preparatory phase and in the conference itself. Without their full engagement it will be difficult to obtain a consensus on issues as IFSD and green economy.

In reference to ECLAC's query on holding GSP related regional consultations, **Mr. Sha** noted that the Secretary-General's initiative is an important one, for which expectations are high. The Panel's output is envisioned to complement the intergovernmental preparations for Rio 2012.

In reference to the schedule of the outcome document, **Mr. Sha** reported that the UNCSD Bureau took a decision at its last meeting on 28 Feb., which will be shared by the Co-chairs during Prep Com II. The decision was the result of a compromise among its members' differing views. On the matter of discussions related to the social pillar of sustainable development, Mr. Sha acknowledged that regrettably, there was a lack of discussion on the subject and encouraged entities to highlight the issue in their own interventions in the upcoming PrepCom.

OTHER MATTERS

Update on the work of the Secretary-General's Policy Committee

Since the last meeting of Principals of ECESA, the Secretary-General's Policy Committee completed reviews of various peacebuilding-related items, including:

1. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) arrangements,
2. Update from the integration steering group and
3. Security Sector Reform.

Just last week, the Committee considered the item on the LDC-IV Conference, led by OHRLLS. **Mr. Sha** thanked OHRLLS for its extensive consultations on the paper and to all ECESA members for their engagement. He emphasized that all ECESA members will need to be actively involved in the follow-up to the decision, which should be available soon.

Forthcoming thematic issues include:

1. Drug trafficking and transnational organized crime: UN response (3 March 2011)
2. Update on Responsibility to Protect (8 March 2011)

The PC Secretariat is in the process of filling out the schedule for the second quarter. DESA will keep ECESA posted on relevant items. As per the usual practice, ECESA members are welcome to send DESA proposals for new agenda items for the Secretary-General's consideration.