

27 October 2010

Minutes of the Meeting of EC-ESA Plus Deputies on 18 October 2010

**Meeting of EC-ESA Plus Deputies
18 October 2010**

8:30-10:30 a.m., New York time

A meeting of EC-ESA Plus Deputies was held on Monday, 18 October 2010. The purpose of the meeting was to consider ideas and plans in preparation for the meeting of Principals scheduled on 4 November, which will discuss the UN System's role in the preparation of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in Rio in 2012 (Rio +20). An issues' note was circulated to guide the discussions which will serve as a background document for the upcoming Principals' meeting.

Conclusions and Decisions

- **Broad consultations should be initiated to bring clarity to the concept of “green economy” and how to place it in the context of sustainable development.**
- **Input to Issues' note for the 4th November Meeting of Principals should be sent by Friday, 22 October.**
- **Share UNCSD Secretariat Organigramme with EC-ESA Plus members.**
- **Confirm participation of Principals in both meetings on 4 November, i.e. meeting of EC-ESA Principals and meeting with UNCSD Bureau.**
- **Proposed to establish a UN System Task Force in preparation for UNCSD similar to the one that was established for the MDG Summit.**
- **Forward ISDR's request for EC-ESA Observer status to Principals for final approval.**
- **Provide input to the SG Report and questionnaire by 31 October (see at: http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=62&Itemid=112). It was noted that there will be at least three rounds of inputs that will feed into the preparatory process:
 - **31 October 2010 (for 1st Intersessional and PrepCom II)**
 - **31 August 2011 (for 2nd Intersessional tentatively scheduled on 14-15 Nov 2011)****

- **31 December 2011 (for 3rd Intersessional tentatively scheduled in March 2012)**

Summary of Discussions

The Chairperson, Mr. Thomas Stelzer, ASG of DESA, thanked participants for attending the meeting and introduced the agenda items: (i) UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20), (ii) preparations for 4th November Meeting of EC-ESA Plus Principals, (iii) MDG Summit outcome, and (iv) UNISDR Request for Observer status with EC-ESA.

1. UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20)

Mr. Stelzer drew attention to the two notes for the Principals' Meeting: a background note which provides the latest update regarding preparations for the Conference, and an issues' note that frames the issues on the UNCSD agenda and provides initial ideas on how the UN system could collaborate to prepare for the Conference.

Mr. Stelzer invited the EC-ESA Plus members to provide technical inputs to the preparations of SG Reports and other documents; to consider hosting and organizing expert group meetings (EMGs), seminars, workshops on the themes and objectives of the Conference; and to consider assisting countries in contributing to the preparatory process and the Conference itself. He informed participants of ECLAC and UNEP's offer to second staff members to the Conference Secretariat. He invited Mr. Tariq Banuri, Head of the Office of the Secretary-General of the Conference, to introduce these two notes.

Mr. Banuri explained that the Issues' note asks the simple question- "what opportunities do they provide for us?" He also emphasized how UNCSD provides an opportunity for the UN System to contribute in many different ways: i) contributing to the SG Reports; ii) sharing experiences of lessons learned by filling in the questionnaire (available at: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>) which asks four simple questions relating to experience, drivers of success, risks/challenges, and next steps. The synthesis of the lessons of experience will provide the substance for the synthesis report; iii) seconding staff members to aid the preparation process; (iv) supporting national and regional preparations; (v) considering collaborating around specific initiatives (UN-led, UN and Member States) that could be launched at the time of the Conference (e.g. trade and green economy; energy access, etc.). He stressed that the central question was about how to take advantage of the Conference. He called for concrete initiatives and noted

the importance of bringing together the work of the agencies. He pointed out that Member States also have an interest in briefings, policy notes, etc, and suggested that the UN System and Member States work together in this regard.

OHRLLS highlighted how sustainable development is a cross cutting issue that also pertains to Least Developed Countries (LDCs). In preparing for the LDC IV Conference, the issues of vulnerability and environmental degradation remain high on the LDCs agenda. OHRLLS emphasized that these issues should also be focused on in Rio +20 and offered its expertise and input to the analytical work underway. OHRLLS noted that it is important to clarify any misunderstanding around the concept of green economy pointing out that there is reluctance by the G77 to accept the term as it seems to imply a loss of policy space in terms of shaping their respective development. OHRLLS stated that LDCs could take on the role of 'laboratories' for green development which in turn would present a big opportunity to attract green fdi / green ODA. OHRLLS highlighted that the challenge is to present the concept of green economy as a new paradigm that supports and reinforces sustainable development.

UNESCO reaffirmed its continued commitment to working with OHRLLS on LDCs and asked how the preparations for UNCSD will be financed.

UNDP indicated that DESA could count on UNDP to be an active partner in the preparatory process, not least in supporting countries including getting evidence. Discussions on how to contribute are still ongoing. UNDP referred to the UNDG as an additional framework for discussing UNCSD issues and referred to the MDG summit experience as a good example to follow for UNCSD preparations particularly the establishment of a UNDG task force. UNDP underlined how green economy concept, if approached in a balanced way, could provide mid-term solutions such as low carbon and climate resilient development, energy access, etc. without losing sight of the long term vision. UNDP mentioned that the Human Development Report (HDR) 2011 will focus on sustainability and referred to the need to broaden the discussion linked to international framework for sustainable development beyond International Economic Governance (IEG) to also include the economic and social pillar. The UN should make a contribution in this area, maybe a task team could be formed under ECESA. Lastly, UNDP suggested that ways to interface with the High Level Panel on Global Sustainability be considered.

ILO underlined the importance of listening to what Member States are saying about the green economy and pointed out that green jobs are an important element and it should be considered in the discussion. ILO added that through employment and decent work, we can find a way of knitting together the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. ILO suggested that participants look at existing UN experiences with reference to the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development Governance (IFSDG). While referring to the forthcoming inputs to the SG Report, ILO

sought clarification on the expectations and use of the uncsd2012.org website for this purpose.

UNEP reiterated the importance of assisting Member States by clarifying that green economy is a way to address sustainable development and not its replacement. UNEP asked clarification about the Secretariat's work and structure through the provision of an organigramme so that other members of the UN System can see where they could provide input. With regards to the website, UNEP highlighted the importance of coordination when posting documentation developed jointly on the Conference website. UNEP suggested that inputs from members of the UN System be first sought and fine tuned before they are uploaded onto the website and made available to stakeholders and the general public.

OHRLLS asked UNEP to comment on the New Green deal in relation to Rio +20.

UNFPA underlined the key role played by population dynamics in sustainable development and expressed keen interest in supporting the process. UNFPA also seconded the idea of establishing a task force similar to that set up for the MDG Summit.

UN-HABITAT mentioned the role of cities as a special platform for sustainable development and reiterated UN-HABITAT's commitment to contribute to the preparatory process. UN-HABITAT suggested establishing a UN vision on green economy and sustainable development, and also raised the importance of ensuring that all aspects, the social, economic and environmental perspectives of sustainable development are covered.

UN-ISDR reminded participants of the importance of disaster risk reduction and management as a cross-cutting issue as per the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation JPOI and one that needs to be included in the discussions on sustainable development. UN-ISDR also added that risk reduction and management is "intimately related" to climate change.

OSAA highlighted the critical importance of sustainable development and its related themes for the African Region and stressed the importance of taking into account regional processes and actors in the UNCSD preparatory phase. OSAA supported the idea of using some of the same preparatory processes employed for the MDG Summit. OSAA also emphasized the need to work closely with the African Union, NEPAD and the Economic Commission for Africa in order "to get their voices in the preparatory process". OSAA promised to do their best to contribute to the UNCSD preparations.

CBD and CCD Secretariat representative commended the open and participatory inter-agency process. On behalf of UN-CCD, she flagged the extreme importance of land which is currently a missing element in the green economy debate. CCD has recently undertaken a study with UNDP which suggests that the countries with dry lands are

lagging behind on the MDGs. Both Secretariats stand ready to contribute their strengthened scientific basis and methodological approaches to the UNCSD process. CBD/CCD remarked that they were moving towards measurability on the issue of land remarking that at their last conference they were able to have a consensus on indicators. CBD declared that it was happy to enrich the preparatory process by drawing on its vast experience. CBD stated that it was not only a conservation instrument but also a sustainable development instrument. One of CBD's objectives is the sustainable use of biodiversity on which the poor rely.

RCNYO noted that all UN actors have a stake in the process and stressed the importance of working together to present a cohesive set of approaches to Member States. RCNYO also emphasized that the Principals will have to take some strategic decisions about the overall approach of the UN System to Rio +20. RCNYO suggested that the Principals also reflect on what the main policy message will be.

ECLAC mentioned the forthcoming regional expert group meeting (Santiago, 15-16 December 2010) that will focus on green economy, poverty eradication, and sustainable development as well as a related study on green economy in the context of sustainable development being prepared for that purpose. ECLAC also emphasized the importance of deepening the debate not only on the concept of green economy but also on policy implementation. ECLAC flagged the importance of maintaining contact with agencies.

FAO mentioned that it held its Committee of Food Security meeting last week. FAO has decided to hold its constituencies' meeting next year where they will look at all the issues related to the economy, agriculture and food system and will consider different options, challenges and scenarios for the future until 2050. FAO will prepare it through a technical meeting that will be held in September 2011. The result of this will be put in front of its governing bodies for their consideration in October 2011. Hence, FAO will be able to contribute to the third meeting of the preparatory committee.

ECE suggested formulating a mapping of the policy areas related to green economy and sustainable development as an input to the UNCSD. ECE raised the example of green jobs, an issue related to both green economy and the social dimension of the development pillar. ECE also asked about possible incentives or legal framework toward more green production and consumption patterns.

UNCTAD reported on the Expert Group Meeting (EMG) on green economy and trade held in early October, and announced its plans to organize a second one in the second half of 2011. UNCTAD raised the importance of analyzing the potential implications on trade and trade policy resulting from the implementation and transition to a green economy. UNCTAD remarked that trade should be neutral to green economy and not an obstacle to it.

Mr. Banuri, UNCSA Secretariat, responded to some of the comments made by the participants pointing out that the UNCSA website is meant to be an open and transparent repository of UN System-wide inputs on the themes of the conference, where relevant publications, reports, outcome of EMGs, technical papers etc. can be uploaded and clustered by UN entities. He stated that the website has the capability to host individual pages for all UN entities, granted that content is driven by them. It was noted that DPI is leading a task force on information and communication, while DESA has established its own internal task force comprised of all its Divisions' Directors. The organigramme of the UNCSA Secretariat will be made available to EC-ESA Plus members.

In response to a question on the relation between EC-ESA, UNDG and EMG, Mr. Banuri pointed out that EC-ESA Plus is the platform for Rio+20 UN System-wide coordination, complemented by the UNDG and EMG coordinating mechanisms and their related networks. He highlighted that UNDP and UNEP Principals, as conveners of UNDG and EMG are committed to using them to contribute to the conference and its preparatory process. Mr. Banuri also reiterated that the issue of vulnerability was "very much on people's minds" and noted that some agencies were coming together on this issue.

Mr. Stelzer, ASG of DESA, reiterated the importance of clarifying the concept of green economy and supporting this with relevant empirical evidence. He stressed the importance of addressing the question of what the implications of green economy are for human development. He also stated that green economy expands rather than restricts policy space.

2. Preparations for 4th November Meeting of EC-ESA Plus Principals

Mr. Stelzer informed participants that, following its last meeting on 12 October, the UNCSA Bureau decided to take advantage of the EC-ESA Plus meeting of Principals scheduled for 4th November as an opportunity to meet with representatives of the UN System. Mr. Stelzer also made mention of the revised schedule of the 4th November EC-ESA Plus Principals' Meeting which will now be held from 3:00 to 5:00pm and followed by the meeting with the UNCSA Bureau from 5:00 to 7:00 pm in conference room 6 of the North Lawn Building. He requested participants to confirm the participation of their Principals in the upcoming meeting by Monday, 25 October.

3. MDG Summit Outcome

Due to time constraints, Mr. Stelzer briefly highlighted the great success of the MDG Summit thanking participants for their cooperation and contributions. He remarked that "opportunities are in front of us" and he maintained that the follow-up to the Summit will be the main focus at the forthcoming CEB meeting in early November.

4. Request for Observer Status by UN International Disaster Risk Reduction

Mr. Stelzer informed participants of UNISDR's request for Observer status with EC-ESA. With no objections to this request, he announced that UNISDR's request will be recommended to the Principals.

Mr. Stelzer called the meeting to a close and thanked participants for their attendance.