



2009 ECOSOC coordination segment- Panel IV

“Effective sustainable development strategies: country level experience”

Tuesday, 14 July, 3:00 – 5:30 pm

Concept Note

Background

Sustainable development is a long-term objective. Strategies aimed at achieving this goal have to balance competing interests and priorities. Recent global crises and the growing impact of climate change have underscored the urgency of finding new and more effective ways to reconcile different short- and long-term priorities and deal with the challenges of sustainable development. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) called on all countries “to take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005”. Although this target is not been fully achieved, 82 Member States of the United Nations have reported to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs that they were implementing a national sustainable development strategy (NSDS) as of 2007. Moreover, over the past decade several countries have developed innovative mechanisms –e.g. economic, regulatory, expenditure and institutional – that have promoted more comprehensive and strategic approaches to sustainable development, which might be replicated in other contexts.

Objective of the panel

The proposed panel discussion will provide an opportunity to:

- Understand short- and long-term challenges faced by countries in promoting more comprehensive and strategic approaches to sustainable development;

- Identify ways to address these challenges in the context of comprehensive sustainable development strategies;
- Share experiences on formulating and implementing effective sustainable development strategies;
- Identify ways in which the UN system approach should be strengthened to provide effective support to these efforts.

Focus of the panel

The panel will focus on country-level experience in:

- 1) Promoting cross-sectoral approaches in the elaboration and implementation of national strategies and policies for sustainable development, including through integrated appraisal mechanisms;
- 2) Incorporating the principles of sustainability into all sectoral policies and strategic plans;
- 3) Promoting cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary, participatory networks to address specific sustainable development challenges (e.g. water scarcity, desertification, land degradation, climate change).

In this regard, panelists could address the following questions/issues:

- How can national understanding be improved of the linkages between economic, social and environmental issues and their policy trade-offs?
- How can countries build their capacity to assess policy initiatives in an integrated manner in order to understand better their economic, social and environmental impact and identify emerging issues?
- How can countries improve coordination between sectors (e.g. departments) and promote cross-sectoral approaches to ensure that national strategies and issue-specific policies are mutually reinforcing?
- What are the challenges in institutionalizing cross-sectoral participation to address the complex inter-dependencies between economic, social and environmental factors?

- Are there specific challenges posed by the current economic crisis in pursuing NSDS?