



2015 ECOSOC High-level Segment

Conference Room Paper

E-discussion on the 2015 ECOSOC Theme

“Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: What it will take”

Summary

I. Introduction

As the world transitions from the MDGs to the SDGs, there is wide recognition of the remarkable progress made on the MDGs and the impact on millions of lives. Several important targets have or will be met by the end of 2015. Yet, much more needs to be done to address poverty, as over 1.2 billion people continue to live in extreme poverty. Progress already achieved toward meeting the MDGs can be set back by macroeconomic shocks, natural and man-made disasters, food shortages, or socio-political unrest. Countries will need to accelerate progress, but, at the same time, safeguard and sustain progress already made.

Recognizing these challenges, the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in Brazil in June 2012 highlighted the need for an integrated approach to development and a transition to more resource-efficient, resilient forms of growth. This integrated approach should focus on the complementarities between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

During a time of intensifying discussions on the post-2015 development agenda and in preparation for the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) deliberations at its High-level Segment in July 2015, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme convened an e-discussion on the ECOSOC 2015 theme “*Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: What it will take.*” The e-discussion took place between 17 February and 17 March 2015 with the aim to engage stakeholder groups, experts, practitioners and policy-makers in a global dialogue on specific aspects of the 2015 ECOSOC theme.

The e-discussion consisted of four concurrent thematic windows, each led by an expert moderator and guided by two to three discussion questions. The thematic windows were:

- i) *Policy choices and mindset change for an integrated agenda*, moderated by Mr. Nik Sekhran, Director for Sustainable Development, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, United Nations Development Programme;
- ii) *Adaptation by institutions and structures*, moderated by Mr. John-Mary Kauzya, Chief, Public Administration Capacity Branch, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs;
- iii) *Partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda*, moderated by Ms. Anita Sharma, Senior Director of Millennium Development Goals Initiatives, United Nations Foundation; and
- iv) *Monitoring and review*, moderated by Mr. Paul Walsh, Chair, International Development Studies, University College Dublin, Ireland and Senior Adviser, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN).

The e-discussion provided a unique opportunity for the wider development community to discuss the 2015 ECOSOC theme and formulate critical policy messages and recommendations for ECOSOC. Relevant contributions were incorporated into the reports of the Secretary-General prepared for the ECOSOC High-level Segment in July on the ECOSOC theme and on the theme of the ECOSOC Thematic Debate, “*Strengthening and building institutions for policy integration in the post-2015 era*”.

The e-discussion generated significant interest and substantive input, with over 750 contributions from more than 170 countries and over 4,600 users who visited the online discussion platform.

This summary provides an overview of the contributions by the e-discussion participants. The views expressed do not represent the views of the moderators or their institutions.

II. Common messages and themes

While the four thematic windows addressed different aspects of the 2015 ECOSOC theme, several common messages emerged and some issues were addressed in more than one thematic window.

A. Common messages

- A change in mindset to integrated sustainable development thinking is needed by all stakeholders in order to successfully manage the transition to SDGs.
- The education system is a key entry point to bring about the needed change in mindset in support of sustainable development policies and actions. Reform of education and training in alignment with the requirements of sustainable development and the SDGs will be needed to transform individuals and societies.
- There is need for more holistic approaches to measure elements of sustainable development to complement or provide alternatives to GDP, such as green national accounting. Adjustments are needed to aim for a triple bottom line of economic growth with social equity and inclusion and environmental sustainability.
- Decision-making processes, institutions, partnerships and monitoring and review processes need to be more inclusive. All relevant stakeholders should be engaged.
- Good governance must continue to be promoted and the provision of public services must be strengthened.

B. Common themes

Local context/specificities

Many countries are already making the transition to more inclusive, sustainable development pathways and national policy pathways towards the SDGs are likely to differ across countries and over time. The importance of taking into account the local context/specificities when considering policies and institutions was highlighted. With this in mind, a change in mindset for an integrated agenda will require consideration of human rights, sovereignty, cultural preservation and cultural observance.

Potential trade-offs, complementarities and synergies

Integrated policy-making, planning and programming towards the SDGs require acknowledging and understanding the potential trade-offs, complementarities and synergies among various development resources and policies. Efforts to leverage synergies among sustainable development policies, international trade, and cross-border environmental issues and to change behaviour at all levels depend on available evidence to inform policy and institutional capacities to design and implement them.

Role of governments and civil society

The central role of governments and communities was emphasized, particularly in terms of the implementation of the new development agenda and monitoring and review. Good governance was viewed as critical in implementing an integrated agenda. Solid democratic institutions are fundamental to ensure that goals and agendas turn into concrete actions and effective policies. Accountability was identified as a crucial component of policy implementation, institutions, partnerships and monitoring and review. Learning from past experience in implementation of the MDGs, including acknowledging gaps and shortcomings, is required to make the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs more effective.

Capacity support

Capacity building, particularly for civil servants, but also for others, including CSOs, was cited as a critical element of success for implementing the SDGs.

Political rights, participation and voice

Political rights, participation and voice are enablers to effective representation in the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda. While reasonably broad representation can be achieved, stakeholders may find it challenging to develop integrated solutions because of the complexity of the interactions, their divergent interests, and the institutional silos in which policies are created.

Communication

New technologies and social media, including online discussion platforms and courses, provide creative outlets to discuss the sustainable development agenda and keep the spotlight on critical issues. As social media has changed the way that constituencies can be engaged, the approach to communications and messaging on the sustainable development agenda must be adapted to reflect this new reality. Media campaigns are also effective ways to support a change in mindset for an integrated approach to development. Traditional media also continues to be an important avenue to provide information and inform the public about the integrated agenda.

The approach to communications messaging on the sustainable development agenda must be adapted to reflect the reality of new creative outlets, including social media and online campaigns. Success stories from countries that have operationalized an integrated agenda as well as South-South Cooperation can be useful strategies in changing mindsets.

III. Managing the transition

The 2015 ECOSOC theme provides an opportunity for ECOSOC to reflect on and map out preparations for ensuring a smooth transition from the MDGs to the SDGs and the post-2015 development agenda. In line with the ECOSOC theme and with the structure of the report of the Secretary-General, the e-discussion addressed the theme through four thematic windows.

A. Policy choices and mindset change for an integrated agenda

Thematic Window I on “*Policy choices and mindset change for an integrated agenda*” discussed successful approaches, tools and examples in operationalizing an integrated approach to policy-making; the changes in behaviour and communication strategies required for an integrated agenda; and the potential complementarities and synergies involved in the pursuit of a universal agenda.

The window was moderated by Mr. Nik Sekhran, Director for Sustainable Development, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, United Nations Development Programme. There were 239 contributions by experts from civil society, business, academia and the UN system.

Overall, e-discussion participants noted that there are many different pathways and policy options for an integrated approach. Many countries are already working to integrate their broader sustainable development agendas through national, sub-national, sectoral, and cross-cutting thematic policy processes.

Key messages from the window include:

Operationalizing an integrated approach to policy-making

To ensure that the design and implementation of an integrated sustainable development approach are informed by the most relevant information, government decision-makers and partners from civil society and the private sector require *access to and understanding of a more advanced, practical set of policy tools, measures and methodologies* that can be adapted and respond to the needs of different country contexts. These include diagnostic and decision-making tools for integrated environmental, social and economic assessments on best options for trade-offs and synergies; policy instruments including Environmental Fiscal Reform, industrial and employment policy and social protection instruments; tools for stakeholder engagement; financing tools; capacity development tools; measurement frameworks, data and indices to inform diagnostics as well as to monitor, evaluate, educate, advocate and raise awareness.

Successfully operationalizing an integrated approach to development depends on how policies and programmes are translated into the local context. *Integrated policies and programmes must be context-specific* depending on the local socio-economic conditions. Acknowledged gaps and setbacks in the implementation of many well-intentioned development programmes are in fact due to a lack of consideration for local specificities, which are crucial for sustainability.

Operationalizing an integrated approach also requires *learning from past experience* in implementation of the MDGs, including acknowledging gaps and shortcomings, to make the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs more effective. Monitoring and evaluation of the MDGs already offer a number of lessons learned that can be compiled to provide tools and benchmarks for the SDGs. Important lessons can be drawn from the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) —a methodological tool offering governments and their partners a systematic way to identify and prioritize bottlenecks to progress on MDG targets that are off track, as well as ‘acceleration’ solutions to these bottlenecks.

Approaches, changes in behaviour and communication strategies

The integrated approach that underpins the emerging SDG agenda clearly underscores a shifting focus from ‘symptoms’ to ‘*root causes*’ of *development challenges*. It is critical to examine how access to various natural or man-made resources, services, as well as opportunities, related inefficiencies and inequalities, governance and capacity deficits and other systemic constraints influence progress against particular goals as well as across goals and targets. The ‘bottleneck analysis’, which lies at the heart of the MAF, could lend itself to a deeper analysis of the structural challenges as well as relevant economic, social and environmental policy trade-offs or synergies.

Integrated policy-making, planning and programming towards the SDGs requires *acknowledging and understanding the potential trade-offs as well as complementarities and synergies between various*

development resources and policies. The adoption of a 'nexus approach' to the SDGs offers a promising avenue in this regard (poverty-environment nexus, water-energy-land-food nexus). However, 'resource nexus thinking' also needs to touch upon issues surrounding people, especially poor and disadvantaged people's control and access to resources. To better empower the poor and disadvantaged groups, including women and youth, *policy approaches need to be more inclusive.*

Many countries are already making the transition to more inclusive, sustainable development pathways through *green economy approaches.* Given the link between sustainable development policies, trade, and cross-border environmental issues, opportunities for synergies are just as great as the challenges which need to be overcome. Efforts to leverage such synergies and change behaviour at all levels depend to varying degrees on available evidence to inform policy, institutional capacities to design and implement them, as well as issues of political economy.

Integrated policy-making and operationalizing an integrated approach requires the *inclusion of key institutions* such as parliaments, the judicial system, political parties, and finance and planning bodies. While there are challenges in working with these actors, there are numerous opportunities, including leveraging their legislative role and fostering their advocacy role especially for budgeting. The implementation of integrated policies also requires *breaking down institutional silos.*

The *use of social capital* is an effective approach in bringing about a change in mindset. International institutions possess strong social capital and could function as a key channel to bring about mindset change at the national level. NGOs can play a key role at the local level given their long interaction with local communities.

Technological innovation has led to an enormous increase in the availability and use of data. This '*data revolution*' provides unprecedented opportunities to chart progress towards the SDGs and provide citizens with the tools they need to hold their governments accountable.

The challenge of communicating the integrated agenda lies in ensuring that the agenda is understood to be inclusive. This implies that *communication strategies* be jargon free and not solely intended for technocrats, academicians and practitioners. The use of success stories from countries that have operationalized an integrated approach can be an effective tool in initiating a change in mindset for an integrated agenda. These stories should be targeted at individuals, communities, institutions and government. South-South exchange visits by policy makers to countries that have been successful in pursuing an integrated agenda can also serve as a useful strategy in changing mindsets.

Potential complementarities and synergies in pursuit of a universal agenda

Successful implementation of the integrated agenda necessitates that it be *translated to the national and local level.* This can be done through *planning and data.* On planning, the principles of sustainable development should be integrated into national development plans, in addition to the SDGs. The scope and coverage of national development plans must be expanded to include the environmental dimension. On data, with the proposed 17 SDGs, 169 targets and over 500 indicators, there could be challenges in systematic data collection and reporting at the national and subnational levels. Hence, there is a need to identify ways of *managing "clusters" of data,* which can provide decision makers with useful information, even if it is drawn from across several SDGs.

Most sector ministries in countries have policies, plans and results frameworks in place. These are avenues for ensuring that SDGs for each sector are prioritized in addition to other goals. *Regional declarations and policies* are another avenue for taking forward the SDGs. A key challenge is to

synchronize national targets with SDG targets. Synchronization of national targets with SDG targets is possible in countries that use Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and could take place when these are formulated. A country's Constitution and laws may also need to be in sync with the SDG's and targets.

B. Required adaptation by institutions, structures and individuals

Thematic Window II of the e-discussion addressed "*Required adaptation by institutions, structures and individuals*" in the context of managing the transition to the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The discussion addressed questions about institutional requirements, but also included discourse on people, values, norms, markets, technology and human rights.

The window was moderated by Mr. John-Mary Kauzya, Chief, Public Administration Capacity Branch, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. There were 148 contributions from experts from civil society, business, academia and the UN system.

Key messages from the window include:

Institutions, conceived as organizations as well as formal and informal rules and regulations at national regional and global levels, will need to *adapt in the transition* from implementing MDGs to SDGs.

Although most intergovernmental discussions of successful implementation of international development goals highlight the need for *capable institutions*, it is not clear where such capabilities reside. Most participants identified norms, rules, regulations, laws and structures as sources of such capacity. However, deeper analysis on how these rules and regulations are put in place and support implementation is needed.

Changing mentalities and mindsets are critical in adaptation and change of institutions, as institutions and structures guide the behaviour and practice of individuals working within them. It will take a significant shift to effectively drive the achievement of SDGs.

Intergovernmental discussions of successful implementation of commitments (e.g., MDGs, plan of action for LDCs, etc.) often refer to the need for capable institutions. Most participants believe that the *capability of institutions* resides in norms, rules, regulations, laws and structures. Once they are in place, they need to be dynamised to effect implementation.

There is a need to think about the *kinds of institutions* being referred to, as there are many different types, such as legislative, executive and judicial institutions, as well as those with coordination and collaboration functions. Some operate at local, national, regional or global levels.

There is also a need to bring on board very strongly the issue of *leadership and human resource capacity*. Leaders and people who work in institutions will implement the commitments contained in the SDGs. Transformative leadership will be critical to ensuring the success of the implementation of the SDGs through engineering the necessary changes in institutions. Leadership will also be needed to transform individuals in their mindset and capabilities and to transform organizations, institutions and society.

There is also a symbiotic relationship between leadership and institutions where leaders engineer institutions and institutions guide the operations and behaviour of leaders. In this connection, the

question of how transformative leadership and human resource capacities will come about in the transition from MDGs to SDGs needs to be addressed.

C. Partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda

Thematic Window III on “*Partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda*” discussed three main areas:

- fostering partnerships that can lead to implementation and development results at the global, national and local levels;
- how multi-stakeholder partnerships can be effectively established and taken into account to facilitate the implementation of development priorities; and
- the elements needed to ensure accountability within partnerships for managing responsibilities, commitments and expectations for the implementation of the SDGs.

The window was moderated by Ms. Anita Sharma, Senior Director of Millennium Development Goals Initiatives, United Nations Foundation. There were 187 contributions from experts from civil society, business, academia and the UN system.

Participants reiterated the importance of fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships for achieving the post-2015 development agenda. They noted that harnessing the potential contributions of multiple actors, including governments, private enterprise, civil society, foundations, and others will be crucial for advancing the deliverability of resources and for increasing the effectiveness of the next development agenda. At the same time, participants noted the need to have a better defined understanding of what partnerships mean, where true partnerships are founded on a shared vision and are multi-stakeholder in nature.

Key messages from the window include:

Appropriate legal, regulatory and policy environments are key to supporting multi-stakeholder partnerships, including with civil society.

The *roles and responsibilities of the different partners* need to be clearly defined when establishing a multi-stakeholder partnership, and stakeholders need to have a common understanding of the partnership goals. Sustained inclusive dialogue is also an important element of ensuring successful multi-stakeholder partnerships.

North-South, South-South and Triangular cooperation can be powerful mechanisms to establish multi-stakeholder partnerships. These mechanisms can help identify solutions to common development challenges through knowledge sharing, technology exchange, and collective action.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can make important contributions to promoting sustainable development through partnerships through their well-established and diverse experience, expertise and capacity, especially in the area of analysis, sharing of information and knowledge, promotion of dialogue and support of implementation of sustainable development. Partnerships with religious organizations and networks can play an important role in achieving development results.

Building systematic *partnerships with the private sector* is a key prerequisite for the successful implementation of a transformative agenda to accelerate poverty reduction and sustainable development. Governments must work with businesses to create coherent policy frameworks and

incentives to ensure that profits are translated into sustained economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.

Multi-stakeholder partnerships for better data play a significant role in supporting countries to effectively utilize and harness all development resources through facilitating data collection, availability and dispersion. Better data on all forms of development finance flows – public and private, domestic and international – is essential to mobilize and track these resources effectively at global and national levels.

Online discussion platforms on sustainable development are an emerging form of partnership to influence policy. Partnerships with ICT providers are important to achieving many aspects of the new development agenda. Massive Open Online Course systems could help raise awareness of the post-2015 development agenda.

Ensuring *accountability* of partnerships requires defining who will be held to account, who is entitled to hold them to account, and against what standards they will be held accountable.

D. Monitoring and review

Thematic window IV addressed “*Monitoring and review*”. The window focused on the challenge of establishing a robust follow-up and review mechanism to support implementation. More specifically, it considered the institutions that would be required to encourage mutual accountability of all UN member states, and the multiple stakeholders involved in the implementation of SDGs.

The window was moderated by Mr. Paul Walsh, Chair, International Development Studies, University College Dublin, Ireland and Senior Adviser, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN). There were 179 contributions from experts in a variety of fields, including from civil society, business, academia and the UN system.

Key messages from the window include:

Effective SDG indicators will serve as a management tool to help countries develop implementation strategies and allocate resources accordingly. Indicators will be the backbone of monitoring progress towards the SDGs at the local, national, regional, and global levels. They will serve to measure progress towards sustainable development and to help ensure the accountability of all stakeholders for achieving the SDGs.

Some participants called for a *global sustainable development index* that is a realistic alternative to Gross National Income. Such a sustainability index should incorporate economic, social and environment dimensions and have the power to drive political debates around issues of efficiency, equity and sustainability. Some participants also called for national gender-based indicators around all targets and the use of integrated micro data.

Governments should ensure that the *public is informed* about progress or gaps in implementation and that all stakeholders have an opportunity to engage in the process. Best practice examples could be later used to inform policy making in other locations that face similar challenges.

Local governments should be involved in the planning of sustainable development strategies and programs and should play an active role in monitoring. Data should be collected regularly at the local level to inform national strategies. ICT solutions for data collection that involve citizens (e.g., through mobile phones) could be developed at the local level.

The *data revolution* is data-driven decision making. It is the provision, collection, analysis and transfer of flows of data. Data management is an important aspect of data revolution to ensure it is stored and used securely. Comparability of data needs to be ensured.

There is a need to *strengthen existing national structures* of data collection, monitoring and evaluation with greater investment in resources and technical assistance. Some participants called for enabling technical platforms for global and national monitoring. Governments and the UN could strengthen their capacities to take leadership on these platforms.

Multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder training courses should also be provided in order to build awareness of sustainable development issues and how they impact one another. Part of the training should be devoted to the importance of program design and monitoring.

The establishment of an *interactive platform to share information* on SDG progress, managed by the UN system in partnership with governments and other stakeholders, was proposed. The platform would draw from governmental data and other existing sources. Similar platforms could be run at the national level and be managed by governments and local civil society. The UN could establish a network of focal points to coordinate among the national platforms. The UN could also compile the data from national platforms and share them on a regular basis.

IV. Policy recommendations by thematic window

1. Policy choices and mindset change for an integrated agenda

- a) Countries need to adopt dynamic and flexible approaches to integrated policy-making for the new agenda. National policy pathways towards the SDGs are likely to differ across countries and over time. Possible trade-offs need to be considered and prioritizations made.
- b) The appropriate legal, policy, political, and, more broadly, institutional conditions need to be fostered through policy dialogue, advocacy, or other means to enable the effective operationalization of an integrated approach.
- c) The inclusion of parliaments, the judicial system, political parties, and finance and planning bodies is key for integrated policy-making and operationalizing an integrated approach. Integrated approaches must be accompanied by legal or other relevant instruments that facilitate operationalization.
- d) Collaborative bodies and institutions will need to use approaches that condition them to integrated policy making and planning and practices, such as joint budgeting. This will require a change in norms (rules, regulations and even laws) that govern, for example, the way government ministries and departments work together.
- e) The culture of working in silos poses a challenge to the implementation of integrated policies. In most countries, ministry lines and decentralized institutions within the public administration are still used to implement public policies in a vertical and compartmentalized manner. Good coordination mechanisms must be set up that enable operational and cross-cutting coordination of policies.

- f) Sustainable development ‘champions’, including high-level decision makers and government officials, media personalities, traditional leaders, and business leaders can advocate for the integrated agenda at the national and local levels.
- g) Ensuring ownership of an integrated agenda will also require adopting a bottom-up approach by including local communities in decision-making processes and in implementation. Given their long interaction with local communities, CSO’s and NGO’s can play a key role.
- h) Policy approaches need to be more inclusive and consideration of human rights is paramount for operationalization of the sustainable development agenda. All local stakeholders, particularly women, youth and the poor and marginalized, should be better empowered to engage in decision-making processes. Opportunities for dialogue should be created, with a hands-on focus on issues and agendas of immediate relevance to such groups.
- i) The role of the UN for integrated policy-making should be recognized and focused upon. UN teams and international financial institutions working in countries must improve the abilities to work together to better support governments in implementing their sustainable development agendas.

2. *Required adaptation by institutions, structures and individuals*

- a) Institutions must prioritise capabilities for coordination, collaboration, partnerships, and holistic approaches. They must be participatory, anticipatory, networked, connected and collaborative, and must also be more transparent, accountable, responsive and flexible.
- b) Institutional behaviour must accommodate diversity and be context-sensitive at the national, regional and global levels. Institutions must be anticipatory, connected and flexible. The nature and magnitude of the adjustments in institutions will not be uniform everywhere, but will depend on the contexts at the national, regional or global levels.
- c) Coordination among different stakeholders involved with developing tools and methodologies for sustainable development requires strengthening. Expertise and data should be shared among institutions responsible for environment, energy, climate change and the economic and social areas at all levels.
- d) Institutional capacity development will be key to ensure a smooth transition to the implementation of the SDGs, which will necessitate new knowledge, new skills, new approaches, networking, and a change in mindsets. Implementing SDGs will need to go hand in hand with capacity development efforts, including institutional reforms, organizational restructuring, advocacy, sensitisation and training.
- e) Capacity building is also required for individuals, particularly civil servants, who need training on awareness building of sustainable development issues. Existing national structures of data collection and monitoring and evaluation capacities also need to be strengthened.
- f) One institution that may require further reform is the United Nations. The UN system will need to adopt working approaches and methodologies that enable it to tap into capabilities outside its own institutions for implementing the SDGs.

3. *Partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs and the post-2015 agenda*

- a) Countries need to support systematic and inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue to take into account the interests of diverse development actors, particularly those representing poor and marginalized populations, and create the foundation for multi-stakeholder partnerships in the implementation of development priorities.
- b) Governments need to support an enabling environment for the participation of civil society and other actors in partnerships through appropriate legal, regulatory and policy environments.
- c) The substantive and technical expertise offered by academia and research institutions is critical to the development of sound policy, and so their inclusion in these multi-stakeholder partnerships is essential. Governments need to invest in these kinds of knowledge partnerships.
- d) The strong engagement of communities world-wide in shaping public-private partnerships is needed support the public interest. Mechanisms that facilitate the inclusion of civil society actors in public-private partnerships should be considered.
- e) Basic standards or principles related to environmental sustainability, human rights, and non-discrimination, among others, should be an integral part of multi-stakeholder partnerships with binding commitments by partners to conform to these principles.
- f) Successful partnerships require institutionalized periodic reflection mechanisms that will help foster transparency and accountability within the group.

4. *Monitoring and review*

- a) As underscored by the OWG, the focus of monitoring the SDGs must be at the national level. An effective global monitoring framework that complements national efforts is also necessary. To ensure effective global monitoring, the global monitoring indicators for the SDGs should be tracked in every country and reported periodically at the global level by each country.
- b) The architecture for review could also play an important role in strengthening existing mechanisms, with responsibilities for oversight delegated to appropriate UN bodies that already fulfil an existing follow up and review function.
- c) National parliaments are important oversight bodies and should hold regular hearings on the implementation of the national sustainable development strategies and progress reports.
- d) Civil society and other stakeholders, such as business or municipalities, should be involved in drafting and discussing national targets, commitments and reviews, and should have full access to information, including monitoring data. The outcomes of participatory monitoring and accountability processes led by civil society organizations (“citizen reviews”) should be taken into consideration.
- e) Member States need to ensure the participation of non-governmental actors in follow-up and review to guarantee transparency, build national capacities, and promote ownership and implementation of the post-2015 agenda. Civil society and private sector actors should

also be subject to review processes to monitor their compliance with sustainable development practices.

- f) Guided by each country's unique context, National Sustainable Development Councils (NSDCs) should be established or reinstated. NSDCs should guarantee a broad multi-stakeholder membership and could help coordinate national consultation and discussion processes on the national post-2015 sustainable development strategies, goals, targets, commitments and progress reports.
- g) NSDCs should inform national policy development, promote public understanding and engagement in implementation of sustainable development strategies. In partnership with National Statistical Offices, the NSDCs should promote evidence-based development and monitoring of national strategies.
- h) Regional monitoring and accountability will play a critical role in fostering regional collaboration and coherence in pursuit of the SDGs. Facilitated by the UN Regional Commissions, regional review processes should use review mechanisms to promote mutual learning, knowledge exchange, transboundary cooperation, and identification of best practices that could be replicated in context-similar settings.