

## E-discussion: “*Managing the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the sustainable development goals: What it will take*”

### Summary Report

#### Thematic Window I: Policy choices and mindset change for an integrated agenda

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

In general, 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 points from Thematic Window 1 of the e-discussion are summarized below.

**What are current examples of an integrated approach to policy-making and what is their degree of success? What are the existing tools and approaches for operationalizing an integrated approach at global/regional and country levels?**

#### **Poverty-environment mainstreaming approach**

Close to 30 governments have started examining the poverty-environment nexus and explored new ways to address these challenges by adapting [the poverty-environment mainstreaming approach](#), developed by the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI), to specific national and subnational contexts.

Mozambique is a good example of how the Government has adopted an integrated approach to policy-making. A PEI supported [economic study of natural resources](#) found that the yearly economic loss due to environment degradation and the unsustainable use of natural resources equaled 17% of the country's GDP while the estimated cost to remediate these damages was 9% of GDP. A separate [study on public environmental expenditure](#) showed that only 1.4% of GDP was the expenditure on environment. Such economic paradoxes go to the very core of the sustainable development problem. Influenced by these studies, the Government was determined to move towards inclusive sustainable development by **adopting an integrated cross-sectoral approach to development planning and budgeting**. The economic findings from the studies helped the Ministry of Environment Coordination Affairs successfully lobby for the appointment of three environment focal points within the Ministry of Finance who are championing the inclusion of environmental sustainability objectives in the country's budget processes. In 2014, the Ministry of Finance introduced a budget code for climate change which will help track climate change expenditure and monitor commitments by sectors to address climate change. Mozambique's Ministry of Planning and Development **adopted a mainstreaming matrix for cross-cutting issues** including environment and gender, with PEI support. This matrix now serves as an important tool to ensure that sector plans and budgets include objectives that aim to promote inclusive sustainable use of natural resources. The Ministry of Environment Coordination Affairs (MICOA) has played an instrumental role in operationalizing the mainstreaming matrix and supporting sector ministries to appoint environmental focal points. As a result of the cross-sector collaboration between MICOA and the Ministry of Planning and Development, nine sector social and economic plans integrate poverty-environment objectives. In Mozambique's Zambezia province, where the well-being of the population is closely linked to the sustainable management of natural resources, over-exploitation of mangroves has increased riverbank erosion impacting negatively on housing, settlements, and agriculture. Most riverbank villages have been forced to relocate at least once. The **adoption of ecosystem based approaches** has prevented relocations and communities are now able to focus on income generating activities inspired by sustainable agriculture practices. The implementation of integrated policy approaches contributed to sustainability efforts on the ground.

Rwanda is another good example where in accordance with the **poverty-environment mainstreaming approach**, Rwanda's Environment Management Authority (REMA) supported by the UNDP-UNEP

Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) developed country specific evidence showing the benefits of an integrated approach to environment, poverty and economic development. Evidence from an [economic analysis of natural resource management](#) demonstrated how due to environmental degradation, poverty had increased, provincial health budgets were escalating, and soil loss of 15 million tons per year was costing the country 2% of GDP annually. This was equivalent to a reduction in the country's capacity to feed 40,000 people a year. Further, the analysis showed that the cost of electricity had increased by up to 167% per unit cost following the degradation of the Gishwati forest and the Rugezi wetland. Siltation from soil erosion and the reduced water levels in the lakes and the hydropower reservoirs downstream decreased electricity generation and resulted in an extra cost of \$65,000 per day as fossil-fuel generated electricity replaced hydro-electricity. By using the country specific evidence, REMA worked together with the PEI to successfully advocate for the integration of inclusive environmental sustainability into Rwanda's Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) which was being developed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN). The Government of Rwanda, with the support of PEI, worked to extend the poverty-environment mainstreaming approach beyond the national level into the **sectors and districts**. This required capacity strengthening of sector and district policy makers and budget officers as well as institutions for integrated planning, budgeting and cross-sector coordination. The enhanced capacity resulted in sector ministries and district authorities integrating more sustainable environmental practices, including sustainable watershed and waste management and soil erosion control measures in their policies and district development plans in line with the EDPRS. To ensure implementation of policy objectives that link poverty and environment issues, it is essential to also adopt an **integrated approach to budgeting**. Through the annual budget call circular, Rwanda's MINECOFIN requested all sector ministries in 2010/2011 to plan and budget for environmental sustainability. In 2013, MINECOFIN further included a dedicated annex on environment and climate change budgeting in the budget call circular. As a result of the policy and budget shifts across various sectors Rwanda's expenditure on the environment and climate change increased from 0.4 % in the period 2005-2008 to 2.5 % in 2008-2012 ([Public Expenditure Review of Environment and Climate 2013](#)). To sustain this change in planning and budgeting processes, capacity building of government planners and budget officers for poverty-environment mainstreaming is now an annual event.

#### **Integrated approach in the extractives sector**

Many developing countries have financed their development through resource extraction. However, there are risks related to natural resource wealth, including volatile economic growth, limited job creation, violent conflicts, corruption, environmental degradation, etc. Such negative outcomes of resource extraction can be tackled through effective strategies, legal frameworks and policies. Government, industry, civil society and other stakeholders have been working together to advance sustainable development in the extractives sector. International government bodies like the [APEC Mining Task Force](#), industry groups such as the [International Council on Mining and Metals](#) and international agencies like the World Bank and UNDP are very active in promoting sustainable development in the mining sector that take into account gender and indigenous peoples issues and small scale mining. [The African Minerals Development Centre](#), launched by the UN Economic Commission for Africa, African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, and UNDP, is a new hub which will help implement the African Mining Vision, which aims to ensure Africa's mineral resources can support economic growth and development. It will translate that vision into practical solutions for reducing poverty and involving people in development. UNDP has also launched a [Strategy to guide its work on supporting countries to govern their extractive sector sustainably](#). Support includes facilitating formal and informal participatory decision making processes to institutionalize representation of communities, women's organizations and indigenous peoples in the governance of extractive industries; strengthening the capacity of artisanal and small-scale miners and of the public institutions that regulate and promote them; and helping countries develop strategies to invest resource revenues in economic transformation, social development and environmental regeneration.

#### **Access to and understanding of policy tools, measures and methodologies**

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 yet practical set of policy tools, measures and methodologies that can be adapted and respond to the needs of different country

contexts. These tools and measures 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 and related Green innovation, industrial and employment policy and Social protection instruments; **financing tools**; tools for stimulating sustainable development behaviors; **capacity development tools**; **tools for stakeholder engagement** throughout the policy cycle; and **measurement frameworks**, data and indices to inform diagnostics, as well as to monitor, evaluate, educate, advocate and raise awareness.

### **Local context**

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. Ensuring ownership of an integrated agenda requires **adopting a bottom-up approach by including local communities** in decision-making processes and in implementation. Examples of successful case studies can be found in the "[Science for Environment Policy In-depth Report: Social Innovation and the Environment](#)", by the European Commission DG Environment.

### **Lessons learned from implementation of the MDGs**

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. 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. The MAF’s success is in part due to its ability to enable communication between stakeholders responsible for MDG implementation. This framework examined how existing strategies and sectoral plans were being implemented, and the bottlenecks in achieving the targets, while seeking cost-effective solutions for such bottlenecks. It also called for a specific action plan to address these bottlenecks, agreed upon by all actors responsible for implementation, and included a monitoring and evaluation framework to track progress and take remediation action. In countries where there has been political will to find solutions to lagging indicators, the MAF has enabled interdisciplinary dialogue - a key component of an integrated solution; aligned development partners behind a government defined agenda; enabled achievement of concrete development results; helped address inequality within a country; and has been used as a logical framework with 2030 as the horizon and the SDGs as a development reference framework in Saint Maarten and Panama, for example.

### **Beyond GDP measures**

There is need for more holistic approaches to measure elements of sustainable development to complement or provide alternatives to GDP. Green national accounting is one such approach.

### **Reassess SDGs**

There is need to re-assess the proposed 17 SDG’s as they lack logical cohesion, which is essential for the development of a rational approach to sustainable development and successful implementation. Another suggestion made is to expand the proposed SDGs to 21 Goals that would include conflict resolution, anti-corruption, religion, and data goals

### **Documented experiences on mainstreaming sustainable development**

The following resources synthesize experiences, challenges, and lessons learned by national policy makers and the development community in pursuing an integrated agenda:

- [UNDP-UNDESA Rio+20 global Synthesis Report](#) draws on over 50 National Reports assessing integrated sustainable development approaches and challenges at the country level;
- [What drives institutions to adopt integrated development approaches? The poverty-environment nexus and analysis of country evidence from the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative](#) highlights key lessons learned in promoting integrated approaches that enable the simultaneous achievement of

poverty reduction and environmental improvement by strengthening the institutional framework for planning, policy-making, budgeting and reporting to deliver sustainable development;

- [Breaking Down the Silos: Integrating Environmental Sustainability into the post-2015 Agenda](#) captures the key messages from the eight-month consultation process that engaged academia, think tanks, representatives of civil society, youth, women and men from North and South who chose to focus the dialogue on the linkages between environmental sustainability and human development. At the forefront of the discussions was the need for the post-2015 agenda to be based on principles related to integrated approaches to development, equality, human rights and resilience in order to fully embed environmental sustainability.
- UNDP's [Triple Wins for Sustainable Development](#) report highlights, with country examples, what it takes to move towards sustainable development. Instead of focusing on the tradeoffs between the three strands of development, this report highlights the range and significance of the complementarities between them. It describes 'triple win' development policies and programming that regenerate the global commons by integrating social development with economic growth and environmental sustainability.

**What are the approaches and changes in behaviour required for promoting integrated policy making for the new agenda? What kind of communication strategies are needed for changing a silos mindset?**

### **Focus on 'root causes' of development challenges**

The integrated approach that underpins the emerging SDG agenda clearly underscores shifting focus from 'symptoms' to 'root causes' of development challenges. Critical in this process is the need 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 as well as across goals and targets. The 'bottleneck analysis', which lies at the heart of the [MDG Acceleration Framework](#) (MAF) could lend itself to a deeper analysis of the structural challenges as well as the economic, social and environmental policy trade-offs or synergies surrounding 'solutions' to the achievement of particular SDG targets. In Western and Central Africa for instance, inequality and exclusion, governance deficits, and resilience building and environmental sustainability challenges were captured [at various stages of the MAF roll-out chain](#).

### **Nexus approach to the SDGs**

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' cannot be confined to purely technological and economic considerations and needs to touch upon issues surrounding people, especially poor and disadvantage people's control and access to resources and the national and local governance frameworks that facilitate or undermine this control.

### **Green economy approaches**

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 behavior 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. Empirical and theoretical evidence on how inclusive green economy and related sustainable development approaches can be planned, implemented, and evaluated in different contexts. However, this remains limited, especially in developing countries. Coordination among different stakeholders involved with developing tools and methodologies for planning inclusive green economy requires strengthening. Expertise and data is often siloed across institutions responsible for environment, energy, climate change, economic and social areas at all levels and these challenges need to be overcome.

### **Dynamic and flexible approaches to integrated policy-making**

There is need for adopting 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. In the Arab region, for instance, the SDG 'policy mix' in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries may involve reducing the ecological footprint while preserving human wellbeing (second order condition) – while for LDCs and some middle-income countries, this would rather entail accelerating human development, while minimizing environmental impacts (second order condition). LDCs and middle-income countries should still be pro-active in investing in environmental sustainability (including renewable energy etc.) but possible trade-offs need to be considered and the prioritizations to be made over time.

### **Inclusive policy approaches**

Policy approaches need to be more inclusive and all local stakeholders, particularly the poor and marginalized should be better empowered to engage in decision-making processes. Spaces and opportunities for dialogue and constructive interaction, with a hands-on focus on issues and agendas of immediate relevance to the poor and marginalized should be created. The appropriate legal, policy, political, and more broadly institutional conditions need to be fostered (through policy dialogue, advocacy, or other means) that can enable the effective operationalization of an integrated approach. **Political rights, participation and voice** are enablers to effective representation. 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. There are successful examples of multi-stakeholder initiatives from various sectors. The Great Rivers Partnership is an ambitious initiative in the water sector based on partnerships among businesses, conservation groups, local communities, and formerly siloed government agencies, working together to create new strategies for water conservation and sustainable use. REDD+, in the forest sector, requires that the creation of new policies and institutional arrangements integrate the interests of governments in forest carbon sequestration, businesses in the carbon market, and local communities that depend on forests for livelihood and environmental services as well as local cultural and religious views.

**Women and youth** can be key drivers of change for sustainable development. Women's empowerment is a key process in reaching gender equality and, through that, sustainable development. This requires involving women actively in decision-making at all levels, integrating their concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes, and establishing ways to assess the impact of development policies on women. La Vía Campesina, a transnational social movement comprising about 164 local and national organizations in 73 countries from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas and representing about 200 million farmers, has been widely considered as one of the most successful social movements in history. The movement unites peasants, farmers, landless people, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world in supporting small-scale sustainable agriculture as a way to promote social justice and dignity. Women of this movement have proven to be a critical factor in its success and continued growth. Policymakers are also encouraged to pay attention to the views and concerns of youth, and actively engage with them in the sustainable development process.

### **Social capital**

The use of social capital is an effective approach in bringing about change in mindset. International institutions possess strong social capital and could function as a key channel to bring about change in mindset at the national level. CSO's and NGO's can play a key role at the local level given their long interaction with local communities. Ensuring ownership of the integrated agenda requires adopting a bottom-up approach, starting at the local level and CSO's and NGO's can play a key role. Sustainable development 'Champions' can also advocate for the integrated agenda at the national and local levels. Champions include high-level decision makers and government officials, media personalities, traditional leaders, and business persons.

### **Inclusion of key institutions**

The inclusion of key institutions such as parliaments, the judicial system, political parties, and finance and planning bodies is required for integrated policy-making and operationalizing an integrated approach. Country experiences show that there are challenges and opportunities in working with these actors. For

instance, parliaments may not be involved in all stages of development planning, may have limited awareness of sustainable development issues, and may face conflicting interests. Despite these challenges there are opportunities in working with them, including leveraging their legislative role and fostering their advocacy role especially for budgeting. Challenges in working with the judicial system include its limited awareness of sustainable development issues, lack of enforcement of laws, and conflicting interests. Developing synergies with laws related to good governance, for instance, could be an opportunity. Integrated approaches must be accompanied by legal or other relevant instruments that facilitate operationalization. While political parties lack direct involvement in development planning, the election process can be used to raise awareness on sustainable development issues and these issues can be made a theme of political campaigns.

### **Breaking down the institutional silos**

The institutional 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. For example, recent experience in promoting the formulation and implementation of two MDG Acceleration Frameworks for HIV/AIDS and employment highlighted the difficulty for public administration departments to coordinate within a joint plan given the culture of parallel sectorial public policies and the siloed nature of the departments. Good coordination mechanisms must be set up that enable operational and cross-cutting coordination of policies. A good example includes the experience of social programmes based on conditional cash transfers where multi-sectorial coordination and integrated policies (education, health, social protection) have achieved relevant progress and results.

### **Good governance**

Good governance is critical in implementing an integrated agenda. Solid democratic institutions are fundamental to ensure goals and agendas turn into concrete actions and effective policies. A change in mindset for an integrated agenda requires consideration for human rights, Free Prior and Informed Consent, sovereignty, cultural preservation and cultural observance.

### **Data for improved accountability**

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 to account.

### **Role of media**

New technologies and social media provide the world with creative outlets to discuss the sustainable development agenda and 'keep it alive.' 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. Traditional media continues to be an important avenue to inform the public about the integrated agenda. Campaigns are also effective ways to support change in mindset for an integrated approach to development. [The World We Want 2015](#) campaign is an example of enabling citizens around the world to debate the sustainable development agenda. It helped gather the priorities of people from every corner of the world and build a collective vision that is being used directly by the United Nations and World Leaders to plan the new sustainable development agenda. This could perhaps be transformed to a sustained campaign into 2030.

### **Communication strategies**

The challenge of communicating the integrated agenda lies in ensuring that the level of understanding of the agenda is **inclusive**. This implies that communication strategies be jargon free and not solely be 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.

### **Formal education system**

The formal education system is a key entry point to bring about the needed change in mindsets by equipping students with the relevant knowledge (the 'what'), the key dispositions and skills (the 'how') and the values (the 'why') that will empower them to make informed decisions in support of sustainable development policies and actions.

### **Role of the UN**

The role of the UN for integrated policy-making should be recognized and focused upon. Work on mainstreaming sustainable development undertaken by governments was triggered by the UN's call for a universal agenda, e.g., ending poverty, reducing hunger, respecting the rights of a child, etc. Working with governments, the UN also plays a significant role in setting the tone, steering the way and enumerating the agenda. UN teams and international financial institutions working in countries must improve working together to better support governments in implementing their sustainable development agendas.

## **What are the potential complementarities and synergies involved in the pursuit of a universal agenda at the national, regional and global levels?**

### **Planning and data**

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. Traditionally, national development plans have focused on the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. The scope and coverage of national development plans must be expanded to include the environmental dimension. For instance, UNDP and UNDESA are working with the Government of Belize to mainstream sustainable development into their national development plan. One key challenge is that the time horizon of the plan is 4 years, making it difficult to address issues with much longer time horizons and which require identifying their implications and the impacts of actions being taken (for example, climate change adaptation strategies). The development of Belize's Monitoring and Evaluation framework is being informed by the SDGs, an exercise in localizing them. On data, with the proposed 17 SDG's, 169 targets and over 500 indicators, there could be challenges in systematic data collection and reporting at national and subnational level. 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. There is ongoing work being undertaken in localizing the SDGs in the Amazon region at the subnational level and such patterns are emerging, where data exist.

### **Synchronize national targets with SDG targets**

A key challenge is to synchronize national targets with SDG targets. For example, India is moving from national planning to provincial and state level planning which makes the process of synchronization even more complex, but necessary. Synchronization of national targets with SDG targets is possible in countries that use PRSPs and this can 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.

### **Sector ministries as avenues for SDG implementation**

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.

### **Lessons from MDG monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of the MDGs already do offer a number of lessons learned that can be compiled to provide a tool and benchmark for the SDG's.

### **Moderator**

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