



**CONCEPT NOTE
NATIONAL PREPARATIONS
RIO + 20 INTERREGIONAL LEARNING MEETING
Dakar Senegal
May 15th – 17th 2012**

1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, also known as Rio+20) to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012, is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges. The Conference will focus on two themes: (a) a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and (b) the institutional framework for sustainable development.

The effectiveness of the preparations for Rio+20, both in terms of negotiated outcome as well as the implementation of the outcomes will depend first and foremost on the national level preparations and the regional preparations that will feed into the global process and the interpretation in local context where implementation takes place. A robust and inclusive process of national preparations for Rio+20 is, therefore, essential for the success of the negotiations, the quality of the outcomes of the Conference, and the likelihood of implementation. In this context, the 65th UNGA encouraged "the United Nations development system to support, as appropriate, national preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, upon request of national authorities."

In light of the above, DESA and UNDP prepared a project proposal and raised funds to support select developing countries, to enable them to prepare for and contribute effectively to Rio+20. The initiative supports a multi-stakeholder process based on each country's sustainable development goals and objectives, with a view to ensuring a solid foundation at the national level for implementation of the outcomes of the Conference. The Rio+20 national preparations therefore need to be closely linked to, and be guided by, the overarching sustainable development framework

and national development processes, plans and strategies in each country. It places focus on nationally led and owned exercise which reflect the views of participating stakeholders. It is hoped that national preparatory processes to Rio+20 will trigger consultative processes that continue beyond June 2012.

The national level preparatory processes consist of three consecutive and interlinked components, contributing to the preparation of a national report. These three components are:

- i. Preparation of a stocktaking report based on interviews, consultations and a desk review;
- ii. A multi-stakeholder consultations meeting to address the objective and themes of UNCSD, informed by the stocktaking report; and
- iii. Preparation of a national report based on the outcomes of both the stocktaking report and multi-stakeholder consultation meeting.

Thus, the overall objective of the national preparatory process is to produce a well informed report on progress made towards sustainable development since UNCED in 1992. In this context, the national preparatory processes provide an opportunity for coordinating and facilitating effective stakeholder participation in order to ensure that their concerns in regard to advancing the country's sustainable development agenda are articulated and captured in the national position papers. In addition, the national processes enable the preparation of well-articulated documentation of national progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) commitments, the constraints and challenges faced, and recommendations to enhance implementation progress.

2. BACKGROUND

UNDP and UNDESA are providing support to some 80 countries in the lead up to Rio+20. Through these processes countries are outlining their priorities for sustainable development, the challenges they face and in moving forward, the issues they would like to address further. This evidence-based knowledge therefore provides a good backdrop for the learning meeting, and will provide a basis for discussions on post-Rio implementation. In addition, the meeting is also aimed at carrying out high level advocacy on the themes of the conference.

2.1 Advocacy and Outreach

An important element of the national preparatory process is advocacy on the themes of the conference and multi-stakeholder engagement aimed at capturing the aims

and aspirations of the citizenry. Similarly, the regional meeting will serve as a mechanism for advocacy to encourage high level and multi stakeholder participation at Rio. As such, a number of advocacy activities will be carried as part of the meeting. These include a high level panel that will address the themes of the conference and key priorities identified in the national reports; a separate one-day civil society forum to be co-convened with the United Nations Millennium Campaign to explore ways of enhancing civil society engagement in national and regional consultations both for Rio and the Post 2015 processes; and the organization of a seminar for media practitioners in Senegal on the themes of the conference and national and regional priorities for sustainable development.

2.2 Experience Sharing on the Themes of the Conference and National Preparations

A very preliminary analysis of reports received to date highlight a number of challenges countries have identified a number of emerging issues through which these challenges can be confronted, such as poverty eradication, youth employment and job creation, social inclusion, sustainable energy, food security, water scarcity, climate change, *inter alia*. Across the board, the lack of capacity to integrate the three pillars of sustainable is recognized as a major challenge, and the need to address all three pillars, especially the social issues, and not to just focus on the environment pillar.

In this regard many of the country reports are also including an emphasis on the MDGs as an objective measure of progress in sustainable development. This in itself is an interesting lesson which proposes that links between Rio+20 and the post 2015 development agenda are more tangible at a national level and point to the role which MDGs have been able to play in understanding the multiple dimensions of sustainable development at this point in time.

However, the need for the development of capacity development approaches to address the relationship between MDGs and the evolving policy agenda for the post-Rio period is important. This event provides opportunities to share country level experiences on moving towards broader sustainable development reporting methods.

Thus, the knowledge generated from the national process will be summarized, and synthesis reports from these processes, both thematic and regional, and summary of the inputs from the submissions to the compilation text, will be key background documentation for the meeting.

2.2.1 *Green economy*

UNDP, UNEP and UNDESA are working through a Netherlands funded project to provide support to countries on green economy. Contact with stakeholders and the UNDP country offices and UNEP regional offices has already occurred and the regional meeting therefore provides an opportunity to continue further engagement on green economy. In addition, national consultations for the preparations have been instrumental in identifying knowledge and analytical gaps and in defining priority areas for further intervention to support countries.

Already under the above mentioned project, two events have been organized where countries have shared their experiences on green economy at the national level. The case studies addressed how green economy is being addressed for different sectors and touched on investments, decarbonization, resource efficiency, and job creation. At the same time, they also highlight challenges and concerns, the need to have a better understanding of what the transformation will entail; a concern that green economy does not become conditionality, the need to tailor made green economy to each country's needs, and overall a need for dissemination of good practice. The workshop will further build on these events by providing a broader platform for knowledge sharing and learning.

2.2.2 *Institutional Frameworks for Sustainable Development at the National and Local Levels*

The institutional framework for sustainable development at the national level has been accorded a very high priority in all the reports received to date. This is highlighted with respect to institutional and policy coherence and the challenges related to the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. In this context the need to have the capacity to work across sectors, to provide the leadership for sustainable development that is able to mobilize different stakeholder groups, to institutionalize the stakeholder consultative mechanisms were all key areas for action identified. Linked to these issues also are data and information management that will support decision making for sustainability, accountability mechanisms that include the citizenry, and which clearly identify commitments, roles and responsibilities and are linked to the budgeting and policy making processes.

Means of implementation in terms of finance, technology and capacity to address the ever wide implementation gap since Rio is an important part of all the reports received to date.

2.3 Implementation of the Outcomes

Against this backdrop, it is envisaged that the workshop will therefore provide a forum to learn on the themes of the conference and to also begin to address issues of implementation post Rio. This would include strengthening of institutional capacity for sustainable development at the national level, and correspondingly addressing the type of support that is expected from UNCT's in the implementation process, and looking at the partnerships for implementation, including public private partnerships.

3. OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the meeting are:

- To provide a platform for countries to share good practice on the themes of the conference and to learn from each other on their national preparatory processes for Rio +20, with a view to identifying key areas of support for implementing the outcome of the conference;
- To identify and outline areas for follow up support for implementation, and to explore partnerships for implementation, including UNCT support;
- To carry out advocacy for the conference at the regional level.

4. OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

The following outputs/deliverables are expected from the workshop:

- The availability of case studies and other knowledge products on the themes of the conference;
- The outline of a preliminary framework for capacity development support to the countries in the implementation of the outcomes of the conference;
- Enhanced appreciation of the convergence between the Rio+20 MDG's and Post 2015 development framework processes and a well defined national and regional multi-stakeholder consultative process;
- Increased visibility of the conference at the regional level.

5. PARTICIPANTS

The learning and planning event will bring together the following participants:

- Government representatives leading the Rio + 20 national preparations in some 50 countries
- National and Regional Consultants
- UNDP Country Offices, UNCT /UN partners
- Regional Economic Commissions
- Civil society organizations
- Private sector

Approximately eighty practitioners will participate in the event.

6. LOCATION AND TIMING

The meeting will be held in Dakar, Senegal, from 15-17 May 2012.

7. FUNDING and BUDGET

The meeting will be funded jointly by UNDESA and UNDP under the support project for national preparations, the UNEP/UNDP/UNDESA/Joint project for green economy funded by the Netherlands Government, and the Millennium Campaign.

8. LANGUAGE

The meeting will be conducted in English, French, and Spanish.

9. AGENDA (See Annex 1)