

Post Rio+20 SDG/MDG - *Single Developmental Agenda* Environmental Sustainability

**19th Poverty, Environment Partnership
Meeting
Durban, 23 May 2014**



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Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



RIO+20
United Nations
Conference on
Sustainable
Development

BACKGROUND

- United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO+20) held in **June 2012** in Brazil
- Objectives:
 - ⊙ **Renewed political commitment** for global sustainable development,
 - ⊙ **Assess the progress and implementation gaps** in meeting previously-agreed commitments, and
 - ⊙ **Address new and emerging challenges;**
- Themes
 - ⊙ a **green economy** in the **context of sustainable development** and **poverty eradication**; and
 - ⊙ *the institutional framework for sustainable development.*



Rio+20 OUTCOME

- Member States agree to establish ***an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global sustainable development goals*** for the consideration of the General Assembly at its 68th session (Sept. 2013-Sept.2014).
- Paragraphs 245-251 from '*The Future We Want*'
- Member States agreed that the **SDGs must be anchored** on these **building blocks**, namely:
 - ✓ **Agenda 21** and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation(**JPoI**)
 - ✓ Fully **respect** all **Rio Principles**
 - ✓ Contribute to the full implementation of the outcomes of all major summits in the economic, social and environmental fields



Cont...

- ✓ **Be consistent with International Law**
- ✓ **Build upon commitments already made**
- ✓ Focus on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development, being guided by the Rio+20 outcome document
- ✓ Address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages
- ✓ **Be coherent** with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015
- ✓ Not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals
- ✓ **Include active involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the process – An inclusive process.**



Cont...

- It was further agreed that **SDGs *must* be:**
 - ✓ **Action-oriented**
 - ✓ **Concise**
 - ✓ **Easy to communicate**
 - ✓ **Limited in number**
 - ✓ **Aspirational**
 - ✓ **Global in nature**
 - ✓ **Universally applicable** to all countries while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.



Cont...

- Rio+20 outcome specifies that development of SDGs should:
 - ✓ **Be useful** for pursuing focused and coherent action on sustainable development
 - ✓ Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
 - ✓ Serve as a **driver** for **implementation** and **mainstreaming** of **sustainable development in the UN system as a whole**
 - ✓ Address and **be focused on priority areas** for the **achievement of sustainable development.**



CHALLENGES

- **BIODIVERSITY:** 27% of the world's 845 species of reef-building corals have been listed as **threatened** and an additional 20% are considered **near threatened** - 2008 *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*
- **DEFORESTATION:** About a quarter of the earth's land area is highly degraded (up from 15% in 1991) and 5.2 million hectares of forests are lost every year.
- **WATER & ECOSYSTEM LOSS:** Rivers and lakes are drying up, groundwater aquifers are depleting, oceans are becoming acidified, and **more than 30% of global fisheries** that are harvested are overfished. – (UNCCD 2013 & FAO 2012).
- **GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS** increased by more than 30% between 1990 and 2010 and are leading to substantial changes in the environment.
- Current challenges of **sufficient and equitable access to natural resources** are certain to increase as the world population is projected to reach 8 billion by 2030, and over 9 billion by 2050;



CHALLENGES

- The challenges are further exacerbated by **food and energy crises, and high prices for many commodities**, point to a world where **increasing resource scarcity** is the norm.
- Without sustainability, **we cannot end poverty**; the poor are too **deeply affected by natural disasters** and too **dependent on deteriorating oceans, forests and soils**.



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SDG – ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- **SDGs should build upon and complement MDGs targets**, in particular **Goal 7** of Ensuring Environmental Sustainability and **Chapter 4** of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation with emphasis on protection and management of natural resources.
- Therefore, access to natural resources, sustainable utilisation of natural resources and promoting health ecosystems should be key principles pursued for design and conceptualisation of SDGs, focusing on the thematic area of environmental sustainability.
- This thematic area should ensure balanced integration of the pillars of sustainable development, whereby the natural resource base should be at the core of economic prosperity and progressive societies.



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SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (STI)

- Science, technology and innovation can play a critical role in each and every MDG, including by
 - ❖ **Fostering access to knowledge;**
 - ❖ **Increasing productivity**, industrialization, economic growth and the **creation of decent jobs;**
 - ❖ **Promoting health** and access to essential drugs;
 - ❖ Achieving **food security** through sustainable, equitable agricultural systems and by raising production and incomes, especially of smallholder farms;
 - ❖ **Promoting renewable energy** technologies in order to respond to the dual challenge of reducing energy poverty while mitigating climate change.



SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (STI)

- In a **highly unequal society**, STI is often an elite activity, serving a few people and industries.
- In **pursuing an inclusive development Agenda**, STI is **no longer restricted to laboratories and frontier technologies**, but contributes to **solving day to day challenges**.
- **Promote local innovation capabilities** to meet basic needs, and bring together local and scientific knowledge for **solving local problems**.



Current thoughts

- **Focus area 16. Peaceful and inclusive societies, rule of law and capable institutions** (very controversial for Africa as this related to governance issues).
- In terms of the **environmental areas**, which cover all the multilateral environmental agreements (MEA's), the view is that the **targets** identified under these environmental-specific goals **should not be something new and additional to already agreed language and commitments made under the MEAs.**
- **Support** agreed text as adopted in the multilateral arena, which **reinforces standing international obligations.** This prevents additional burdens being placed on member states.



Current thoughts...

- **‘Poverty Eradication’**, is core to the all SDGs. The overarching objective of the SDG process thereby leverages on the progress made by the MDG process.
- **SDG’s must build upon the MDG’s**, both its successes and failures.
- **Triple challenge** of Poverty, Unemployment & Inequality
- The key to SDG’s should be a review mechanism, so as to monitor and evaluate progress.



THANK YOU



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