

**Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs**

**Minutes of the Meeting of ECESA Plus Principals**

**4 November 2010**

**3:00 – 5:00pm**

**New York**

**Conclusions and Decisions**

- **Principals decided to grant UNISDR observer status with ECESA**
- **Principals were of the general view that the Rio+20 Conference should uphold the principles and commitments contained in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) which remains relevant to sustainable development. The Conference should in particular, address the reasons for the gaps in implementation.**
- **Principals stated that the concept of a “green economy” should take into consideration national systems and policies that have proved successful in supporting sustainable development, and examine national experiences based on in-depth analysis from the ground up in developing countries. “Green economy” should not be translated as “green protectionism” or aid conditionality.**
- **Principals identified several key sectors as critical towards progress on sustainable**



process. They are also concerned about whether or not the green economy concept will be defined within the principles and parameters agreed in Rio and Johannesburg. The SG Report for PrepCom I provided a summary of approaches developed within the UN system, including by ESCAP, UNEP, ILO, DESA, and others.

3. The third issue is how to frame the debate on institutional framework for sustainable development governance. At the global level, attention has focused on the environmental pillar, especially on the International Environmental Governance (IEG) process, and there is interest in supplementing it with inputs on broader sustainable development questions and integration of the three pillars.

**Mr. Sha** also raised the issue of inadequate funding for preparatory activities especially for providing technical assistance to country level preparations. In addition to his request to the donor community, the DSG held a meeting with the donors encouraging them to contribute to the CSD Trust Fund. While some donors had responded with the intention of providing Associate Experts, the challenge of insufficient funds remains serious. Indeed, the existing level of Trust Fund can barely support the activities of CSD-19. He therefore urged Principals to discuss ways of overcoming this challenge.

He then invited principals' perspectives on the following issues:

1. Vision about the expected outcomes of the conference.
2. Views and perspectives on progress and gaps in implementation and on emerging issues.
3. How should the concept of "green economy" be framed as part of sustainable development?
4. How should the discussion on institutional framework for sustainable development governance be framed?
5. What concrete initiatives the UN system or their agency could launch at the conference?
6. How shall UN system organize itself to provide support required for national and regional preparations?

**UNEP** while describing its vision of the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference recommended that the outcome should not take the form of an Agenda 21. UNEP suggested that UN system entities should consider why implementation has not taken place much faster than at present. UNEP invited Principals to consider ways in which the international community can help speed up the process of implementation.

**UNEP** also called on Principals to consider how the UN system can learn from past lessons. UNEP envisioned significant reform for sustainable governance emerging from the Rio+20 Conference. UNEP expressed interest in working with ECESA Plus members and with the whole UN family over the next year and a half particularly on the issue of the green economy through many different platforms and processes such as outreach activities aimed at civil society, regional consultations, and national-level initiatives.

**UNEP** indicated that in March 2012 it will publish its 'Global Environmental Outlook' report which has been brought forward by six months so as to serve as a useful contribution and "feeder document" to the Rio+20 preparatory process. The report will be an environmental assessment of the state of the world and priorities for action. UNEP invited Principals to indicate expressions of interest in a major UNEP-led event focusing on the concept of environmental justice and in a number of events which are expected to involve a number of Supreme Court judges and that would mature around the time of the Rio+20 Conference.

**CBD** outlined its vision of the outcome of Rio+20 as one where sustainable development was

On the issue of elements for a proposed institutional framework for sustainable development, **IFAD** cautioned about the idea of establishing new institutional arrangements. IFAD stressed that such new arrangements would have a cost and could represent “a burden, even an imposition”, particularly for developing countries as they risk being marginalised within nationally-owned processes. It suggested that the approach in terms of an IFSD should instead be to integrate the understanding of the sustainable development concept within existing institutions at all levels to influence already-established nationally-driven policy processes including those for Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and sector-level policies.

**IFAD** urged Principals not to forget the importance of organizations owned by poor people and the key roles they can and do play in promoting sustainable development at the local level. To illustrate this, IFAD gave the example of what it considered “perhaps one of the major institutional successes for sustainable development since the first Rio E 51 0 Td(Ihin0.00116U 44 -st Rio )Tsr aloo ( iia )g001-34 i

country and international level. For instance, at the country level there is a need to strengthen capacities across government to address sustainable development issues at a strategic level as well as to mainstream environmental and poverty concerns into economic and sectoral decision making. UNDP argued that the same challenge exists at the international level. **UNDP** stressed two main points: 1. bringing the bottom-up approach to the Conference by highlighting the national experience and 2. informing outcomes based on the national experience. UNDP was ready to support national preparations, stakeholders meetings as well as bringing forward the experiences at the country level for the Conference, by undertaking in-depth analysis and gathering evidence at the country level.

## **UNDP**



patterns. For instance, land-degrading production patterns employed by rich countries exploit natural resources in poor countries, highlighting a need for sustainable production patterns.

**UNIDO** will be organizing an energy conference in June under the auspices of all 20 agencies in UN Energy which could be an opportunity to focus discussions on energy-related matters. UNIDO will also publish the “*Industrial Energy Efficiency*” Report and a “*Greening the Industry*” Report.

**WFP** pointed to the fact that deep poverty and malnutrition are still widespread and risk being further compounded with the changing climate. WFP believed the challenge for the UN System is to develop more inclusive and sustainable rural developmen



**UNESCO** furthermore, reiterated the need for the UN System to strive for policy coherence across the various areas. For example, UNESCO suggested

entity. He also stressed that initiatives should be coordinated with the dedicated Secretariat so as to avoid a duplication of efforts.

**Mr. Sha** thanked participants and encouraged them to continue with such frank dialogues in the run up to the forthcoming intersessional and PrepCom meetings. He reiterated that Rio+20 is an intergovernmental process in which Member States themselves will make decisions on the preparation and organization of the Conference. In this light, he underlined the duty of the Secretariat to provide coordinated, efficient and effective support to Member States.