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POLICY ISSUES IN THE ESCWA REGION**THE PREPARATIONS FOR RIO+20 IN THE ARAB REGION****Summary**

This paper provides background information and will be the basis of discussions for the round table on the preparations for Rio+20 in the Arab region, which is being held as part of the twenty-seventh session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Over the past two years and in cooperation with regional and national partners, ESCWA has led a regional, multi-stakeholder consultative process aiming to harmonize Arab positions towards the objectives and themes of Rio+20, including regional and national meetings, briefings, reports and outreach activities. The consultation process led to a convergence of views regarding the green economy and an institutional framework for sustainable development, which were conveyed through a joint statement to the Rio+20 secretariat and subsequently adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment. Additional preparatory activities are scheduled until Rio+20, which will be held from 20 to 22 June 2012.

Rio+20 will produce a political document, for which a preliminary version (Zero Draft) is currently under extensive negotiations. The paper provides highlights of the contents of the Zero Draft and a summary of feedback provided by member countries and different country groupings, with particular attention to the proposed sustainable development goals (SDGs), which are presented to complement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) post 2015.

The projected outcomes of Rio+20 have raised a number of questions of special importance for the Arab region and which deserve further discussion and research: How can a green economy contribute to job creation, especially for the youth? How can it be financed and what technologies need to be acquired? How can a green economy support a water-energy-food nexus approach? What institutional framework would best support sustainable development objectives in the Arab region? The paper provides an overview of these issues as basis for discussions at the round table.

It is important for member countries to fully engage in current negotiations of the Rio+20 outcomes to ensure their best interests are accounted for. Even greater engagement from all concerned stakeholders will be required post Rio to ensure adequate implementation and ESCWA stands ready to support its member countries throughout these phases.

CONTENTS

| | <i>Paragraphs</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------------|-------------|
| Introduction | 1-5 | 3 |
| <i>Chapter</i> | | |
| I. THE PREPARATORY PROCESS IN THE ARAB REGION | 6-9 | 4 |
| II. EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE RIO+20 CONFERENCE | 10-26 | 6 |
| A. The Zero Draft..... | 10-18 | 6 |
| B. Arab and other reactions to the Zero Draft..... | 19-26 | 8 |
| III. ISSUES OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE ARAB REGION | 27-48 | 10 |
| A. Building a green economy responsive to the challenges of the Arab region..... | 29-43 | 11 |
| B. An institutional framework supportive of sustainable development in the Arab region..... | 44-48 | 14 |
| IV. NEXT STEPS | 49-57 | 14 |
| A. Global events..... | 50-54 | 15 |
| B. Regional events and activities | 55-57 | 15 |
| V. CONCLUSION..... | 58-60 | 16 |

ANNEXES

| | |
|--|----|
| I. Regional and national preparatory activities for Rio+20 in the Arab region (October 2010-February 2012)..... | 17 |
| II. Statement by the Arab group of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York before the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee during the Second Intersessional Meeting of UNCSD (15 December 2011)..... | 19 |
| III. Zero Draft of the outcome document of Rio+20 (as issued on 10 January 2012) | 21 |

Introduction

1. In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (known as the Earth Summit), held in Rio de Janeiro, produced the fundamental principles of sustainable development (Rio principles), a global programme for advancing and integrating its economic, social and environmental pillars (Agenda 21), and three landmark conventions, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). Twenty years later, Rio de Janeiro will host yet another global summit on sustainable development, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development or Rio+20, from 20 to 22 June 2012. Rio+20 will also mark the tenth anniversary of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which took place in Johannesburg in 2002. WSSD focused on partnerships among stakeholders and produced the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) to expedite the implementation of Agenda 21.

2. Rio+20 seeks to secure renewed political commitment to 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 main themes, namely:

(a) A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication: similarly to its predecessor (First Rio Conference), Rio+20 will re-examine through the green economy paradigm the relationship between the environment and economic development while seeking to reinforce sustainable development and the social dimension;

(b) The institutional framework for sustainable development: while the First Rio Conference led to the establishment of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 will examine a number of institutional reform options to address the emerging challenges of sustainable development.

3. Rio+20 is expected to make notable contributions in advancing the goal of sustainable development. Its importance stems from the historic opportunity it provides to move away from business-as-usual and identify new pathways to a greener and more equitable economic growth. Rio+20 will bring together governments, international institutions and major groups to discuss seven critical issues: jobs, energy, cities, food, water, oceans and disasters.¹ It aims to produce a focused political document, for which a Zero Draft was issued on 10 January 2012 (see annex) and is currently the subject of intense negotiations by member countries.

4. Preparations for Rio+20 are a shared responsibility of the entire United Nations system. Specifically, the five regional commissions, including ESCWA, have been mandated² to lead regional preparations to ensure that member countries make high quality inputs to the Conference. In implementation of its mandate, ESCWA capitalized on its strong collaboration with two of its major regional partners, the League of Arab States and the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) to lead a consultative process aiming to harmonize Arab positions towards the Rio+20 objectives and themes.

5. The present paper was prepared to provide background information for the round table on the preparations for Rio+20 in the Arab region, which is being held as part of the twenty-seventh session of ESCWA. Chapter I provides an overview of the preparatory process in the Arab region and takes stock of its major outcomes, while chapter II highlights the expected outcomes of Rio+20. Issues emanating from Rio+20 and which are of special importance for the Arab region are discussed in chapter III. Chapter IV

¹ <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/7issues.html>.

² General Assembly resolution 64/236.

identifies future steps that are expected to be implemented beyond Rio+20, and the final chapter concludes with recommendations to increase the engagement of member countries towards Rio+20.

I. THE PREPARATORY PROCESS IN THE ARAB REGION

6. In 2010, ESCWA initiated and led a regional, multi-stakeholder consultative process aiming to harmonize Arab positions towards the objectives and themes of Rio+20. In particular, a series of regional meetings and reports sought to provide an in-depth review of green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. It is worthwhile noting that the preparatory process featured the participation of ministries and governmental institutions from various sectors, in addition to the private sector and regional United Nations organizations. In addition, the strong involvement of civil society and major groups was a main attribute, as ESCWA supported two civil society consultation meetings to raise awareness regarding the issues at stake at Rio+20, and ensured that the concerns of the various major groups were voiced and reflected in the regional input to the global process.

7. Below is a summary of the main consultative events implemented and reports and newsletters developed up until February 2012, while the full list is provided in annex I to this paper:

(a) Ten regional consultation meetings addressing the topics of environmental goods and services, sustainable consumption and production, green economy, economic policies and green financing, green jobs, an institutional framework for sustainable development and green industry;

(b) Two main regional reports, one on green economy³ and another on institutions for sustainable development,⁴ informed the consultative process and reflected its outcomes;

(c) Outreach activities: A bi-monthly newsletter⁵ and a dedicated website⁶ kept stakeholders informed about Rio+20 developments at the national, regional and international levels;

(d) Six national events were held in Jordan, Lebanon (2 events), Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic to address national priority areas specific to these countries and various national stakeholders;

(e) Briefing sessions: ESCWA disseminated the outcomes of the preparatory process and supported the need to harmonize and reinforce Arab country positions at Rio+20 through briefings to the ESCWA Technical Committee, the Joint Committee of Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR), the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) and the Arab Group of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York;

(f) Coordination meetings with United Nations agencies: ESCWA leveraged the yearly meetings of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) in the Arab region to push forward a coordinated approach to Rio+20 preparations (see box 2 for a summary of outcomes of the fifteenth and sixteenth RCM meetings in relation to Rio+20).

³ ESCWA, 2011. *Review of Productivity and Sustainable Development in the ESCWA Region, First Issue, Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication: Principles, Opportunities and Challenges in the Arab Region* (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/3).

⁴ ESCWA, 2011. *Regional Review of Institutions for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region* (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/5).

⁵ <http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/projects/rio20times/index.asp>.

⁶ <http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=1570E>.

8. The Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for Rio+20 (Cairo, 16-17 October 2011) represented a significant milestone and the culmination of the preparatory process. It resulted in a joint statement⁷ reflecting the Arab region perspective and reaffirming the political commitment by the region to sustainable development. The statement was submitted to the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee Bureau in New York to be taken into consideration for the Rio+20 output document (Zero Draft). It was subsequently adopted by CAMRE and the Arab Group of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York in December 2011 (the Arabic version of the statement of the Arab Group before the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee during the Second UNCSD Intersessional Meeting is provided in annex II to this paper).

Box 1. Summary of outcomes of the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for Rio+20

The Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) for Rio+20 reiterated adherence to the Rio principles and called for developed countries to honour commitments made at major sustainable development summits, while refraining from accepting any additional commitments for developing countries. It stressed the importance of integrating the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Arab regional integration was considered as imperative for achieving sustainable development, while achieving sustainable development under conditions of occupation and conflict was perceived as a major challenge for a number of countries in the Arab region.

Regarding the institutional framework for sustainable development, the Arab RPM issued the following recommendations:

- At the international level: Activating available mechanisms and existing institutions to address the shortcomings in coordination, and ensure cooperation and the optimum use of available resources;
- At the regional level: Activating, strengthening and enhancing the existing institutional structures, notably regional commissions, and reinforcing the three pillars of sustainable development;
- At the national level: Strengthening and establishing national councils for sustainable development with a clear structure and defined terms of reference to enhance their ability to implement sustainable development strategies, plans and programmes;

In relation to green economy, the Arab RPM clearly indicated that this paradigm should not be:

- An alternative for sustainable development, but rather a tool to achieve it;
- A standard model applicable to the region as a whole;
- A pretext to create trade barriers and environmental standards that are difficult to implement;
- A basis and precondition for providing financial support and aid to recipient countries;
- A means to restrict the right of developing countries to utilize their natural resources according to their own development priorities;
- A tool to exempt developed countries from honouring their commitments towards developing countries.

⁷ Full text of the joint statement is available at: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=510&nr=205&menu=20>.

**Box 2. Summary of outcomes of the deliberations on Rio+20
at the fifteenth and sixteenth RCM meetings**

A side event to the fifteenth RCM meeting (Beirut, 2 June 2011) was organized to provide a briefing on the progress of Arab regional preparations for Rio+20. The meeting took note of activities being undertaken by the various United Nations agencies and helped clarify their positions regarding the issues under discussion at Rio+20.

The sixteenth RCM meeting (Beirut, 25-26 November 2011) was devoted to “Sustainable Development in the Arab World: Rio+20 and Beyond”. Its outcomes called for exploring the issue of sustainable development goals for the Arab region, building on the work of the CAMRE Arab Working Group on Environment and Sustainable Development Indicators (supported by ESCWA and UNEP/ROWA). In addition, ESCWA will be coordinating a mapping exercise of United Nations regional activities on Rio+20.

9. The preparatory process is planned to continue in 2012 and until the Rio+20 Conference in June. Planned activities at the time of preparation of this paper include the following:

(a) A briefing on Rio+20 preparations during the ad hoc expert group meeting organized by the Economic Commission for Africa/Office of North Africa (ECA/NA) under the theme “Rio+20: developments and challenges for North Africa”. The EGM is being held as a side event during the twenty-seventh Intergovernmental Committee of Experts (Rabat, 6-9 March 2012);

(b) Support to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in their preparations for Rio+20. The Fifth Islamic Conference of the Environment Ministers, which will be organized in Astana, Kazakhstan in April 2012, will be fully devoted to the objectives and themes of Rio+20;

(c) Support to CAMRE during their upcoming session devoted to Rio+20 preparations, which is planned to be held in Cairo in April 2012. Among others, the session will aim to discuss and finalize an Arab Declaration on Sustainable Development, which is currently in preliminary draft form;

(d) National level engagement in support of ESCWA member country preparations for Rio+20: requests for technical assistance have already been received from Lebanon and Oman.

II. EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE RIO+20 CONFERENCE

A. THE ZERO DRAFT

10. As mentioned in the introduction to this paper, the final outcome of the Rio+20 is a political document for which an initial draft (Zero Draft) entitled “The Future We Want” has been prepared by the Bureau of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee. It provides a “canvas” or a basis for negotiations by governmental delegates. ESCWA shared the Zero Draft with all stakeholders taking part in the regional preparatory process, encouraging them to submit their comments, in order to ensure wide access to the negotiation process.

11. It is important to note that the Rio+20 secretariat has underlined that the objective of the current draft was to present an initial framework which outlines all the critical issues, and acts as a “place-holder” for specific suggestions from member States as part of the negotiations, while avoiding divisive issues. As such, it is meant to function as an acceptable draft for most stakeholders and country groupings in order to avoid a situation where the draft would be rejected as a basis for negotiations and another draft would have to then be negotiated from the beginning.

12. The structure of the Zero Draft reflects the objectives and themes of the Conference. In addition to the preamble, sections are devoted to “Renewing political commitment”, “Green economy in the context of

sustainable development and poverty eradication” and “Institutional framework for sustainable development”. The final section of the document provides a “framework for action and follow-up”, under a number of thematic priority issues and areas, a method for monitoring and measuring progress through sustainable development goals, and means of implementation including finance, access to and transfer of technology, capacity-building and trade.

13. The section on “renewing political commitment” reiterates earlier commitments made at the First Rio Conference (notably the Rio principles) and subsequent major summits on sustainable development. It also recognizes progress made during the last twenty years, but acknowledges that there have been major setbacks triggered by multiple interrelated crises. Focus is then made on the importance of engaging major groups and the need for broad public participation in decision-making. In relation to this section, ESCWA raised the issue that political instability and popular uprisings, conflict, and occupation were not included in the list of setbacks and challenges to the attainment of sustainable development.

14. The section on “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” reflects all the considerations of the Arab countries raised during the Arab preparatory meeting (box 1). It calls for experience sharing among countries in developing a green economy, and requests the United Nations and other stakeholders to establish an “international knowledge-sharing platform” that would provide a menu of policy options, a toolbox of good practices, a set of indicators to measure progress and a directory of technical and financial services. The section also provides a framework for action, which recognizes the value of a green economy tailored to the needs of various countries and developed through a consultative process, which also includes business and industry. More importantly, the need to support developing countries in building their green economies is clearly stated, notably in relation to financing and research support. In this section, ESCWA argued that the language used should be made stronger, as the current statements play down the additional costs that would be incurred by developing countries for such a transition.

15. The section related to the “institutional framework for sustainable development” calls for strong governance at all levels and further strengthening and integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. The section is heavily weighted towards the global level, and calls for strengthening and promoting the role of the Economic and Social Council. Options are then provided to either improve the existing Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) or transform it into a new sustainable development council. Two options are also provided in relation to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), by either strengthening its capacity to fulfill its mandate, or establishing a specialized United Nations agency for the environment based on it. The section also tackles regional, national and local mechanisms and calls for strengthening the United Nations regional commissions, national sustainable development councils (where they exist) and local authorities.

16. The final section on “framework for action and follow-up” commits to actions under a number of sectoral and cross-sectoral priority areas, namely food security, water, energy, cities, green jobs and social inclusion, oceans, natural disasters, climate change, forests and biodiversity, land degradation and desertification, mountains, chemicals and waste, sustainable consumption and production, education and gender equality. In relation to land degradation, ESCWA commented that the section failed to refer to the Western Asia region, despite being one of the regions that are most affected by land degradation, desertification and water scarcity. In addition, and under the food security and right to food heading, ESCWA suggested adding to the list of targeted groups, the people struggling for freedom and self determination and the internally displaced.

17. For the purpose of accelerating and measuring progress towards sustainable development, the “framework for action” section of the Zero Draft proposes a set of global sustainable development goals (SDGs) to be devised by 2015. It is expected that Rio+20 will produce a definition of SDG themes, in addition to an agreement on the mandate to further define them subsequently to the Conference (post Rio+20) by identifying targets and indicators, timelines, the geographical level of application, and

relationship to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).⁸ It should be noted that the idea of SDGs is not a new one and that efforts have been exerted in that direction by a number of organizations.⁹ However, there is yet no set of internationally agreed SDGs. SDGs may have important implications for the Arab region as they will involve long standing issues affecting the area like food security, water and land degradation. However, concerns are being raised regarding the possibility of a new set of goals to dilute the current focus on poverty reduction incorporated within the MDGs. Box 3 provides further information on existing SDG proposals.

18. Means of implementation is an important component of the “framework for action” section of the Zero Draft and one that received particular attention from the developing countries. In terms of financing, the document calls for fulfilling official development assistance (ODA) targets already committed to through previous world summits and prioritizing sustainable development in the allocation of such ODA while paying attention to increasing aid effectiveness. South-South cooperation and public-private partnerships are highlighted, in addition to the strengthening and reform of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

B. ARAB AND OTHER REACTIONS TO THE ZERO DRAFT

19. Reactions to the Zero Draft have been varied. For example, a number of civil society organizations have expressed their opinion that the draft is not strong or ambitious enough. Even within the Bureau of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee, some developed member countries felt that the draft had many non-specific elements, and was weak on human rights and governance. Developing countries have voiced concerns about the means of implementation not being addressed strongly enough, and that the aspect of integration of the pillars of sustainable development had not received adequate and specific attention. The following paragraphs summarize official written comments submitted as of February 2012.

1. *Regional commissions*

20. In an official, joint statement submitted to the first negotiating session of the Zero Draft, the Regional Commissions New York Office (RCNYO) presented the perspective of the five regional commissions on a number of critical issues. The statement considered that the outcome document should be more action-oriented with a strong focus on implementation issues based on the Rio principles. The importance of a multisectoral and a multidisciplinary approach was highlighted for achieving an effective integration of the pillars of sustainable development, with emphasis on the regional dimension. Regional and subregional cooperation among various stakeholders was considered critical for the effective implementation of the sustainable development agenda and for supporting national level actions. Therefore, there is a need for strengthening regional and national institutional frameworks and improving linkages at the global level. The statement stressed that the proposed sustainable development goals should be adaptable to regional specificities and should comprise measures of inclusion and equity, with special consideration to women and youth. South-South cooperation in accessing knowledge and technology is to complement North-South cooperation. It was pointed out that sustainable transport has been omitted from the key issues included in the document despite its importance, and its inclusion was recommended. The statement concluded that the regional commissions possess the convening power and the multidisciplinary technical expertise that allows them to play an important role in the implementation of the envisaged “knowledge-sharing platform”, which should complement the existing RCM.

⁸ *Rio+20 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A Proposal from the Governments of Colombia and Guatemala.* <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/colombiasdgs.pdf>.

⁹ For example, the CSD indicators have been developed since 1995 to reflect the chapters of Agenda 21 see UNCSD Secretariat, Rio 2012 Issues Briefs No. 6, *Current Ideas on Sustainable Development Goals and Indicators.* http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/218Issues%20Brief%206%20-%20SDGs%20and%20Indicators_Final%20Final%20clean.pdf.

Box 3. Sustainable development goals

Rio+20 represents a timely opportunity for the international community to define a new set of internationally agreed sustainable development goals (SDGs) as a concrete way for measuring advances to sustainable development, comparing results, and identifying bottlenecks such as in the means of implementation and institutional strengthening. As such, it is hoped that SDGs would also serve to further opportunities for cooperation, including South-South cooperation. Initially proposed by the Governments of Colombia and Guatemala, the SDGs are meant to complement the MDGs and would apply to both developed and developing countries. A number of member States and other stakeholders have welcomed the idea of SDGs, and the table below includes proposed themes for these SDGs. It is noticeable that differently from the MDGs, the proposed SDG themes show more focus on the productive sectors.

Suggested SDG themes

| The Governments of Colombia and Guatemala | Civil society organizations |
|---|---|
| Combating poverty | SDG1 Sustainable consumption and production |
| Changing consumption patterns | SDG2 Sustainable livelihoods, youth and education |
| Promoting sustainable human settlements development | SDG3 Climate sustainability |
| Biodiversity and forests | SDG4 Clean energy |
| Oceans | SDG5 Biodiversity |
| Water resources | SDG6 Water |
| Advancing food security | SDG7 Healthy seas and oceans |
| Energy, including from renewable sources | SDG8 Healthy forests |
| | SDG9 Sustainable agriculture |
| | SDG10 Green cities |
| | SDG11 Subsidies and investment |
| | SDG12 New indicators of progress |
| | SDG13 Access to information |
| | SDG14 Public participation |
| | SDG15 Access to redress and remedy |
| | SDG16 Environmental justice for the poor and marginalized |
| | SDG17 Basic health |

Source: UNCSO secretariat, Rio 2012 Issues Briefs No. 6: Current Ideas on Sustainable Development Goals and Indicators. <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/218Issues%20Brief%206%20-%20SDGs%20and%20Indicators%20Final%20Final%20clean.pdf>.

2. ESCWA member countries

21. Saudi Arabia stressed the need to adhere to the principle of common but differentiated responsibility, but also to the sustainable development objectives set during WSSD in Johannesburg. Saudi Arabia further commented that the framework of action indicated in the outcome document should fully address the means for implementation and respect country specificity and national priorities, which member countries can implement in accordance with available resources (financial and technical). Saudi Arabia described the green economy as a new and complex concept that requires further evaluation, stressing that it should not replace – and should be compatible with – the agreed concept of sustainable development and the Rio principles. Saudi Arabia pointed out that some elements in the Zero Draft were not aligned with previous agreements and that the means of implementation are ineffective unless appropriate resources are allocated to developing countries to carry out their sustainable development goals.

22. Jordan echoed some of the concerns made by Saudi Arabia regarding the means of implementation, which were argued as requiring more work. The linkages between health and sustainable development and also between the economic crisis and development were found to be lacking. In addition, Jordan commented that the document ought to be more action-oriented and the language strengthened.

3. *The group of 77 and China*

23. The Group of 77 and China summarizes the concerns of many developing countries. In its statement on the Zero Draft, it indicated that the draft lacked vision and action-oriented language, notably on means of implementation and the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development. It called for the creation of concrete mechanisms for the transfer of technology and capacity-building, and put forward the possibility of establishing a registry of financial resources and technology transfer opportunities that support the implementation of a sustainable development agenda. In addition, the G77 and China called for reform of the global financial system towards an equitable international economic order. It also pointed to the omission from the draft of any reference to peoples living under occupation.

4. *The European Union*

24. On the other hand, the European Union considered that Rio+20 should accelerate the transition to a green economy, and that the outcome document should provide a clear framework for action for such a transition. It also indicated that a roadmap approach is needed, which includes concrete international actions supporting the transition. In terms of the reform of the institutional framework for sustainable development, the European Union is in favour of establishing an independent environmental organization based on UNEP. On sustainable development goals, the European Union stated that they should be coherent with the MDG-review. The statement called for giving more prominence to a number of issues which have not received adequate attention in the draft, including private sector involvement, employment, health care, education, democracy, good governance, rule of law, and gender balance. Finally, concerning means of implementation, the European Union called for relying on all sources of finance, including domestic resource mobilization (in addition to ODA), and facilitating trade in environmental goods, technologies and services.

5. *The Africa Group/the least developed countries*

25. The Africa Group considered that the Zero Draft lacked vision and ambition, especially in terms of means of implementation. The Group called for strengthening economic governance and voiced concern regarding the marginal attention given to issues of drought, desertification and land degradation, in addition to sustainable land use management and climate change adaptation, all of which was considered critical for the African countries. The Group warned about the proposed SDGs being used as an excuse to by-pass or disregard MDGs, given that many of the African countries are having difficulties achieving the MDGs. Finally, they called for corporate social responsibility in support of sustainable consumption and production.

26. In addition to the points raised by the African Group, the least developed countries (LDCs) stressed the importance of the provision of high-yielding and climate resilient seed varieties and fertilizers. They called for robust commitment to investment in rural infrastructure, and for concrete steps by the international community to reduce and cancel debt and open their markets for all LDC products.

III. ISSUES OF SPECIAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE ARAB REGION

27. The Arab region is characterized by a scarcity of water and arable land resources and an abundance of fossil fuels and renewable energy resources (wind and solar), as well as the high vulnerability of its people to the imminent adverse effects of climate change. Furthermore, the region faces serious economic, political and social challenges that affect its ability to move towards an inclusive model of socio-economic development. High youth unemployment rates, high population growth and increasing rural to urban migration are further complicating long-standing and serious environmental challenges including water scarcity, drought and desertification.¹⁰

¹⁰ ESCWA, 2011. *Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region, 2010-2011* (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2011/8).

28. Within that context, the consultative preparatory process for Rio+20 has brought forward a number of issues connected to the two themes of the Conference – green economy and institutional framework – which may have implications on the sustainable development of the Arab region. Furthermore, ESCWA, through participation and involvement with global stakeholders and events, has identified potential concerns for the region that are relevant to the current discussions on Rio+20. The following paragraphs attempt to shed some light on a number of these important issues.

A. BUILDING A GREEN ECONOMY RESPONSIVE TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE ARAB REGION

29. The green economy has been advanced as a paradigm for achieving sustainable development and this has been reflected in UNEP's broad definition of a green economy as "*an economy that results in improved human well-being and reduced inequalities of the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcities*".¹¹ Advocates of this concept claim that a green economy can lead to faster growth that maintains and restores natural capital, enhances social equity and job creation, promotes resource and energy efficiency, and delivers more sustainable modes of living. Several pathways for transition have been put forward, including but not limited to enabling policy and legislative environments, taxation and subsidy schemes, research and development systems, education programmes, and new finance mechanisms to facilitate technology transfer.

30. However, one may question those assumptions based on a number of grounds and proofs are yet to be provided. Indeed, the Arab region has shown some skepticism on the transition towards a green economy as a replacement to sustainable development. This uncertainty is exacerbated when the transition appears to be backed primarily by the developed countries of the international community. Many Arab stakeholders argue that the costs of such a transition and, in particular during the global crisis currently witnessed, may delay any economic growth anticipated and negatively affect initiatives to alleviate poverty. Others claim that the green economy is a way through which rich countries can enforce environmental standards and impose green trade barriers/tariffs on exports from developing countries. They feel that such transition would require government subsidies for green investment and technologies, which are unattainable for the less developed countries with huge precedent commitments to honour.

31. Even in the best conditions, one of the key challenges for Arab countries remains the determination of the entry points into a green economy that would ensure that actions and programmes are coherent with, and responsive to, national conditions and challenges, namely unemployment, food insecurity and lack of financing and technology transfer.¹²

1. Green jobs

32. In the Arab region, it would be imperative for a green economy to create new job opportunities in green sectors – or so called green jobs – in order to help address youth unemployment and inequitable growth. Given current challenges, the Arab countries cannot afford that certain jobs be eliminated without direct replacement, or that green economy investments would simply shift employment to other sectors, without tangible gains in additional jobs.

33. Successful case studies exist that support the notion of green job creation. For example, the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC) estimates that for every one megawatt of new wind capacity, 15 person-years in job opportunities would be created covering activities from manufacturing to commission, and an

¹¹ UNEP, 2011. *Towards a Green economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication - A Synthesis for Policy Makers*. www.unep.org/greeneconomy.

¹² ESCWA, 2011. *Review of Productivity and Sustainable Development in the ESCWA Region, First Issue, Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication: Principles, Opportunities and Challenges in the Arab Region* (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/3).

additional 0.33 jobs in support of regular operation and maintenance activities.¹³ In the field of solar energy, it is estimated that for every new megawatt, 10 full-time manufacturing, contracting, installation and commissioning jobs could become available, while also creating 0.3 jobs in support of regular operation and maintenance activities.¹⁴ Similarly, a recent study by the ILO Regional Office for Arab States¹⁵ on green employment in Lebanon has projected that the number of employment opportunities in the waste management sector in Lebanon could increase by 65 per cent by the year 2020, and would operate in waste collection, recycling, sorting, composting, biogas generation and other services.

34. However, we should be prudent about the underlying assumptions above. So far, renewable energy is more expensive and less efficient than fossil fuel. If alternative energy solutions are promoted and in some instances enforced, with disregard to the fact that they involve more expensive investments than conventional ones, this may result in increasing prices of commodities for investors and end users ultimately having an unfavourable impact on the already challenged economy of the region. In addition, the new green jobs promised by the transition to green economy might be only a replacement of “brown” jobs, and consequently not address significantly the increasing youth unemployment in the region.

35. The special role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has to be recognized in engaging emerging green sectors as they are perceived as labour intensive and often the main source of employment in the Arab region. Furthermore, SMEs have the potential to fit within the new green value chains and network of green industries, as well as in agro-food and organic agriculture applications.

2. *The water-energy-food nexus*

36. The Arab region is highly food insecure. The scarcity of water and arable land resources available for agriculture has led the region to become highly dependent on food imports, which highly increases the vulnerability of the Arab countries to food price fluctuations and the political implications of such food import dependency. This combination of characteristics calls for a nexus approach to water-energy-food sustainability that addresses the efficient management of natural resources and resolves the trade-offs of meeting the increasing demand for these natural resources without threatening sustainable development.

37. A green economy in the Arab region should support this nexus perspective, increase the understanding of this interdependency and make it easier for policymakers to develop policies, strategies and investments to exploit synergies and mitigate trade-offs among various development goals. Indeed, the international community meeting at the international conference “The Water Energy and Food Security Nexus: Solutions for the Green Economy” (Bonn, 16 to 18 November 2011) voiced out a clear message: “*The outcomes of Rio+20 in June 2012 should adequately take into account and address the interdependencies between water, energy and food and act upon the challenge to make the nexus work for the poor and for all of us. The nexus approach is very much at the heart of the overall challenge of transforming our economies to green economies by changing growth patterns to become more sustainable*”.¹⁶

38. An international conference organized by ESCWA in cooperation with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on “A Food Secure Arab World: A Roadmap for Policy and Research” (Beirut, 6-7 February 2012) called for linking food policy with research for evidence-based decision making. It put forward the need to reposition agriculture for broad development outcomes, including food security, conflict resilience, employment, nutrition, health, land/water saving and low carbon-cross-sectoral impact. A collaborative regional approach and improved transparency and information were identified to support food security in the Arab region.

¹³ Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC), *Global Wind Energy Outlook 2008*.

¹⁴ European Solar Thermal Electricity Association (ESTLA), 2008, *Solar Thermal Electricity Report*.

¹⁵ ILO Green Jobs assessment in Lebanon 2011.

¹⁶ <http://www.water-energy-food.org/en/conference.html>.

3. Green finance and technology transfer

39. The role of green finance and green technology transfer to mobilize adequate financial resources in supporting the achievement of sustainable development is a crucial element of global deliberations centered on moving towards a green economy. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development strongly recognized the importance of financing to achieve sustainable development in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which called for the international community to “assist in the mobilization of technical and financial assistance, and facilitate the provision of adequate financing for the implementation of regionally and sub-regionally agreed sustainable development programmes and projects”.¹⁷

40. Globally, funding of climate change adaptation and mitigation is mainly available through the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, including the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). These and other existing financial mechanisms provide good opportunities to initiate new projects or modernize existing ones within the context of green economy. However, access by Arab countries to these funding mechanisms has been relatively limited. Green funds (both new and/or existing sources) are also being debated within the context of Rio+20.

41. At the regional level, Arab development banks have increasingly devoted funds for financing sustainable development projects. However, much more is needed, specifically funds dedicated to green investments, such as the Arab Environment Facility (AEF), which has been established but is still in the activation phase (see box 4).

42. At the national level, governments are asked to assume a leading role to help finance green projects as banks in some cases lack the technical capacity to assess green projects, and avoid the risks to finance such projects. In addition, there are poor information channels about existing initiatives and funds. Existing policies to stimulate green markets and technology transfers include tax-equity legislation to facilitate investors participation, credits for research and development (R&D) and the greening of governmental infrastructure.

43. Considering the limitations in accessing financial institutions in the region, entrepreneurial start-ups with growth potential can benefit from alternative financing opportunities such as venture or risk capital funds that are developed to invest in technology innovations. Green venture funds that invest in environmental technologies are increasing in the Arab region. More recently, an Islamic banking model of venture capital – the “Green Sukuk” – has been introduced in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Box 4. The Arab Environment Facility

The Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) initiated the establishment of the Arab Environment Facility (AEF) as a concrete mechanism to attract financial resources for environmental projects and programmes conceived to improve sustainable development in the Arab Region. The Lebanese Ministry of Environment has been entrusted with the Founding Secretariat and the Union of Arab Banks is to host it in its premises.

The success of the AEF will depend heavily on the commitment of the Arab countries and the different institutional and private sector stakeholders to support the facility with a sustainable source of funding that can be directed to support environmental projects in the Arab region. So far, only nine countries signed the by-laws of the AEF and two have ratified it. However, seven ratifications are needed before the AEF is operationalized. Until then, some questions remain open for further discussion among the stakeholders: How to operationalize the AEF? Where to get the funding? How to ensure its sustainability and a high standard of delivery, and how to engage the different partners in the process?

¹⁷ Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002 (A/Conf.199/20), annex, *Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, chapter XI, para.160 (c).

**B. AN INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK SUPPORTIVE OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
IN THE ARAB REGION**

44. Rio+20 is a timely occasion for a region that is undergoing major socio-political changes. These changes provide an opportunity to align the development process to respond to the needs and expectations of people. The participation of stakeholders, including government, civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in planning, designing, implementing monitoring and evaluating development programmes needs to be widened. The sustainable management of natural resources cannot be achieved unless mechanisms for transparency and adequate checks and balances are put in place.

45. The issue of institutional framework for sustainable development has been raised repeatedly in major summits on sustainable development, in an effort to identify the institutional reforms needed to address emerging challenges. In the Arab region, countries have responded to global calls to mutually reinforce the three pillars of sustainable development by restructuring their national and regional institutional setups, registering numerous developments on that front. However, a significant gap still remains in developing a fully integrated approach to environmental, social and economic policy-formulation and decision-making in the Arab region, which presents a major hurdle for its long-term development.

46. A rethinking and strengthening of the existing institutional frameworks for sustainable development at the global, regional and national levels is a priority. The Rio+20 Conference is just a few months ahead and it is very likely that the international community will receive important inputs for redesigning its dynamics and might also receive a clear mandate for changing its institutional framework for sustainable development at the global level. As such, Rio+20 presents a timely opportunity to review progress towards sustainable development in the Arab region, the institutional framework through which it is being pursued, and the options available for effective implementation. The Arab world will then have to react fast to those international changes by reshaping existing institutions and designing and establishing new bodies and institutions responsible for sustainable development in a rapidly changing socio-economic context.¹⁸

47. In order to ensure coordination at the national level, a standing mechanism for consultation between governmental institutions engaged in sustainable development may be established in the form of a high council for sustainable development or its equivalent. The mechanism could lead the development of a national sustainable development strategy.

48. At the regional level, urgent attention should be given to the activation, strengthening and enhancement of existing mechanisms and Arab regional specialized institutions (including League of Arab States affiliated bodies). Recommendations stemming from the Workshop on the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region (Jeddah, October 2011) identified several options including expanding the mandate and membership of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development (JCEDAR) to include representatives of the three (economic, social and environmental) pillars of sustainable development. In addition, attention should be directed towards economic integration and cooperation in the region, including the revitalization of the Council for Arab Economic Unity.

IV. NEXT STEPS

49. With Rio+20 rapidly approaching, the ESCWA twenty-seventh session provides a timely opportunity to identify next steps at the regional and global levels that would build on the momentum and results achieved so far, and pave the way for post Rio+20 commitments by all stakeholders to sustainable development.

¹⁸ ESCWA, 2011. *Regional Review of Institutions for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region* (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/5).

A. GLOBAL EVENTS

50. At the global level, the third Preparatory Committee Meeting scheduled for 13-15 June 2012 will offer the last avenue for member countries to negotiate the Rio+20 outcome document. By that time, it is expected that the first and second rounds of informal negotiations and the third intersessional meeting (March-April 2012) would have unfolded a revised version of the outcome document.

51. During the Rio+20 Conference and in parallel with the plenary meetings, four high-level round tables will be held under the common theme “Looking at the way forward in implementing the expected outcomes of the Conference”.¹⁹ The outcomes of these round tables will be included in the final report of the Conference.

52. Side events will be held in the margins of both the third Preparatory Committee Meeting and the Rio+20 Conference, in addition to the days in between. Sponsored by governments, major groups, the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations, those events will provide opportunities to discuss approaches to sustainable development that can potentially bring added value to the outcomes of Rio+20, including voluntary commitments.²⁰

53. ESCWA will be contributing to a side event organized jointly by the United Nations regional commissions. The side event, which will be organized on 21 June 2012, will strive to: (a) highlight the added value of developing regional approaches for an effective integration of the pillars of sustainable development and a better understanding of the role of a strong institutional framework at the regional level, including the regional commissions, in promoting such integration; and (b) share concrete examples of regional good practice and public policies in key areas of importance for the respective regions. These issues include: (a) economic system change for implementing a green economy (led by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)); (b) youth employment in emerging green sectors (led by ESCWA); (c) natural resource governance (led by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)); (d) achieving food security while greening the agricultural sector (led by Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)); and (e) environmental democracy as a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development (led by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)).

54. ESCWA is also planning to hold a second side event jointly with key international and regional sustainable development players, including the League of Arab States, the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED), and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ). The event would be fully devoted to the Arab region and would address food security.

B. REGIONAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

55. At the regional level, ESCWA will be coordinating support to member countries with the United Nations regional organizations through the RCM. In particular, a mapping exercise of United Nations regional activities on Rio+20 is currently under preparation to help ensure complementarity and synergy of interventions.

56. ESCWA will also support the League of Arab States in updating the 2002 “Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region”, which was prepared for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in order to reflect emerging challenges at both global and regional levels. The update is also expected to reflect the outcomes of Rio+20.²¹

¹⁹ General Assembly resolution 66/197.

²⁰ <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?menu=127>.

²¹ CAMRE, twenty-third regular session, resolution 362.

57. It is noteworthy mentioning that ESCWA, within its current programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013, will be implementing a number of regional activities relating to the themes of Rio+20. The following activities are of particular relevance:

(a) A field project aiming to strengthen national capacities in the ESCWA region to formulate policies and programmes for stimulating and developing green production sectors. Among other activities, the project will establish pilot “green help desks” that would collect and disseminate information on green economy opportunities;

(b) A field project on “Capacity-building in climate change mitigation for poverty alleviation in Western Asia”, which aims to build capacity of policymakers, civil society and the private sector in the field of renewable energy technologies to enhance energy security and improve access to energy services in the poor rural areas;

(c) A study and expert group meeting on “Monitoring transition into a green economy in the Arab region” as a benchmarking exercise that will also identify what green economy policies and programmes work and what do not, in view of regional specificities;

(d) A field project aimed at developing the climate change adaptation capacity of the Arab countries by applying Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) tools in key sectors including agriculture, economy, environment, health and human settlements, which are expected to be affected by climate change impacts on freshwater resources;

(e) A regional initiative for the assessment of the impact of climate change on water resources and socio-economic vulnerability in the Arab region, which will provide a common platform for addressing and responding to these impacts and serve as the basis for dialogue, priority setting and policy formulation on climate change adaptation at the regional level.

V. CONCLUSION

58. The present paper highlighted a number of challenges facing sustainable development in the Arab countries, which are exacerbated by the current socio-political changes sweeping the region. Within that context, Rio+20 represents an opportunity that Arab countries should seize in order to renew political commitment to sustainable development and ensure that sustainable development priorities are not overshadowed by other immediate concerns. Indeed, it is these changes that have proven the importance of the sustainable development agenda for enhancing the well-being of Arab citizens and the achievement of their expectations.

59. As Rio+20 approaches, it is especially important for the Arab countries to remain in dialogue with ongoing negotiations of the Conference outcome document, be alert to any attempts by developed countries to renegotiate their commitments towards developing countries, and accept nothing less than the commitments already agreed upon in previous summits and conferences. ESCWA encourages active engagement of member countries at the highest level during Rio+20 in June, and hopes that representation would be balanced across the three pillars of sustainable development. In particular, it is hoped that constructive input would be provided to the formulation of the anticipated SDGs, in order to ensure that they address the priorities and needs of the region, and build on the progress achieved with the MDGs.

60. ESCWA reiterates its readiness as per its mandate to support regional and member country preparations for active participation in Rio+20. As indicated in this paper, activities are planned from now until the Conference, but also beyond it, to assist member countries in the implementation of its outcomes.

Annex I

**REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PREPARATORY ACTIVITIES
FOR RIO+20 IN THE ARAB REGION
(October 2010-February 2012)**

A. REGIONAL CONSULTATION MEETINGS

| Activity | Venue and date | Remarks |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| Regional Workshop on Trade and Environment: Developing the Environmental Goods and Services Sector in the Arab Region for Transformation into a Green Economy | Beirut, 15-16 December 2010 | Discuss the basic concepts of a green economy and the contribution that Environmental Goods and Services can give to the achievement of such an economy |
| Third Round Table Meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production in the Arab Region: Paving the Path to Green Economy in the Arab Region | Cairo, 26-27 January 2011 | Showcase best practices, review progress and exchange views on the needs and priorities of the region to promote the shift to sustainable consumption and production and the transition to a green economy |
| Meeting on Economic Policies Supporting the Transition to a Green Economy in the Arab Region | Beirut, 20-21 July 2011 | Discuss with representatives of ministries of finance available options for economic policy reform and financial instruments for transition to a green economy |
| Workshop on Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) to promote sustainable agricultural production, food quality and safety, environmental protection and trade in the Arab Region | Beirut, 27 September 2011 | Review and raise awareness regarding the concept of VSS and its potential contribution to enhancing market share and market access for products and commodities from the region |
| Conference on the Role of Green Industries in Promoting Socio-Economic Development in the Arab Region | Beirut, 28-30 September 2011 | Develop an action plan on green industries, notably small and medium industries (SMIs) |
| Workshop on Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region | Jeddah, 3-5 October 2011 | Discuss the existing institutional framework in the Arab region and possible reforms to address emerging challenges of sustainable development; and develop an Arab position in relation to international environmental governance |
| Regional Civil Society Consultation in Preparation for Rio+20 | Dubai, 9-10 October 2011 | Consultation with civil society and major groups |
| Regional Consultative Workshop for Civil Society Organizations in the Arab Region | Beirut, 12-13 October 2011 | Consultation with civil society on Rio+20 |
| Training Session for Major Groups in the Arab Region | Cairo, 15 October 2011 | Increase the awareness of major groups and other stakeholders about the themes of the Rio+20 Conference and build their capacity to engage with the United Nations |
| Arab Regional Preparatory Conference for Rio+20 | Cairo, 16-17 October 2011 | Discuss and adopt regional outcome report |
| Annual Conference on Green Economy in a Changing Arab World | Beirut, 27-28 October 2011 | Launch of the Arab Forum for Environment and Development (AFED) Arab Green Economy Report. Conference features round table on green jobs |

B. BRIEFING SESSIONS AND COORDINATION MEETINGS

| Activity | Venue and date |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Briefing to the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Countries (JCEDAR) at its twelfth session | Cairo, 16-19 October 2010 |
| Briefing to the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment (CAMRE) at its twenty-second session | Cairo, 19-20 December 2010 |
| Briefing to the ESCWA Technical Committee at its fifth meeting | Beirut, 6-7 April 2011 |
| Briefing to the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) at its fifteenth meeting | Beirut, 2 June 2011 |
| Briefing to the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Countries (JCEDAR) at its thirteenth session | Cairo, 18-20 October 2011 |
| Briefing to the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) at its sixteenth meeting | Beirut, 25-26 November 2011 |
| Briefing to the ESCWA Technical Committee at its sixth meeting | Beirut, 1-2 December 2011 |
| Briefing to the Arab Group of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York | New York, 13 December 2011 |
| Briefing to Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment (CAMRE) at its twenty-third session | Cairo, 21-22 December 2011 |

C. NATIONAL MEETINGS

| Activity | Venue and date | Remarks |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| Syrian Arab Republic: Transition into Green Economy | Damascus, 23-25 March 2011 | Discuss green economy and environmental goods and services from the Syrian perspective, including working groups discussions |
| Jordan: Workshop on the Role of Productivity Improvement in Enhancing Competitiveness of Manufacturing Firms in Jordan | Amman, 6-9 June 2011 | Discuss industrial energy generation and consumption efficiency, the role of the private sector in a green economy, environmental goods and services and eco-labelling |
| Lebanon: Green Business Opportunities Conference | Beirut, 14-15 June 2011 | Discuss green business opportunities in Lebanon |
| Green Jobs Kick-Off Workshop in the Arab States: Lebanon Case Study | Beirut, 28-29 July 2011 | Present and validate assessments on the green jobs potential of different sectors, including the energy sector, waste management, agriculture and construction |
| Saudi Arabia: National Approach to Sustainable Development | Riyadh, 21-22 November 2011 | Discuss issues related to green economy, Rio+20 progress in addition to approaches to National Coordination on Sustainable Development |
| Qatar: National Preparatory Workshop for Rio+20 | Doha, 26-29 February 2012 | Support the national team engaged in Rio+20 preparations |

D. PUBLICATIONS AND OUTREACH

| Publication/Outreach | Date | Remarks |
|--|-------------------|--|
| Reference paper on Green Economy in the Arab Region | April 2011 | Paper lays the ground for discussions of green economy challenges and opportunities for the Arab region |
| ESCWA Portal and Newsletter on Rio+20 | May 2011-May 2012 | Bi-monthly newsletter |
| Regional Report on the Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication | September 2011 | Report provides a review of the current regional status and identifies green economy opportunities for the Arab region |
| Regional Review of Institutions for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region | October 2011 | Assess developments since the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002) |
| Third Progress Report of the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region | October 2011 | Report aims at assessing progress achieved and evaluating the initiative while identifying needed amendments |
| The Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting report | 1 November 2011 | Report was submitted to Rio+20 secretariat for inclusion in compilation document |

Annex II

**STATEMENT BY THE ARAB GROUP OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK BEFORE THE RIO +20
PREPARATORY COMMITTEE DURING THE SECOND
INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF UNCSD
(15 December 2011)**

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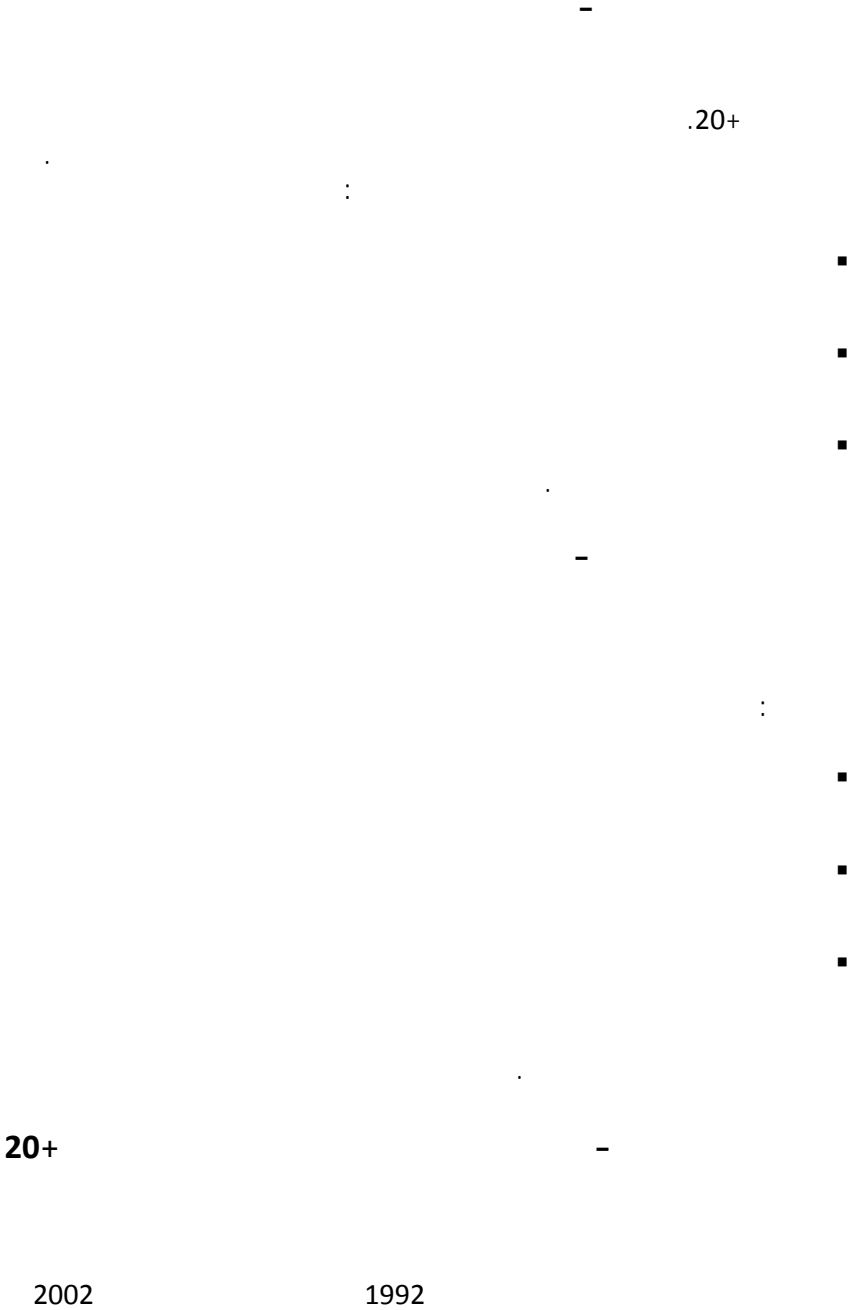
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Annex III**ZERO DRAFT OF THE OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF RIO+20
(As issued on 10 January 2012)**

UNITED NATIONS

**THE FUTURE WE WANT***

| TABLE OF CONTENTS | Paras |
|---|--------------|
| I. PREAMBLE/STAGE SETTING | 1-5 |
| II. RENEWING POLITICAL COMMITMENT | 6-24 |
| A. Reaffirming Rio principles and past action plans..... | 6-9 |
| B. Assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges (Integration, Implementation, Coherence)..... | 10-16 |
| C. Engaging major groups..... | 17-21 |
| D. Framework for action..... | 22-24 |
| III. GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION | 25-43 |
| A. Framing the context of the green economy, challenges and opportunities..... | 25-31 |
| B. Toolkits and experience sharing | 32-36 |
| C. Framework for action | 37-43 |
| IV. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT | 44-62 |
| A. Strengthening/reforming/integrating the three pillars | 44 |
| B. GA, ECOSOC, CSD, SDC proposal | 45-49 |
| C. UNEP, specialized agency on environment proposal, IFIs, United Nations operational activities at country level..... | 50-58 |
| D. Regional, National, Local..... | 59-62 |
| V. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP | 63-128 |
| A. Priority/key/thematic/cross-sectoral issues and areas..... | 63-104 |
| B. Accelerating and measuring progress (SDGs, GDP and others) | 105-111 |
| C. Means of Implementation (finance, access to and transfer of technology, capacity building | 112-128 |

* Submitted by the co-Chairs on behalf of the Bureau in accordance with the decision in Prepcom 2 to present the zero-draft of the outcome document for consideration by Member States and other stakeholders no later than early January 2012.

I. PREAMBLE/STAGE SETTING

1. We, the heads of State and Government, having met at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20-22 June 2012, resolve to work together for a prosperous, secure and sustainable future for our people and our planet.
2. We reaffirm our determination to free humanity from hunger and want through the eradication of all forms of poverty and strive for societies which are just, equitable and inclusive, for economic stability and growth that benefits all.
3. We are committed to making every effort to accelerate progress in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, thus improving the lives of the poorest people.
4. We are also committed to enhancing cooperation and addressing the ongoing and emerging issues in ways which will enhance opportunities for all, be centred on human development while preserving and protecting the life support system of our common home, our shared planet.
5. We urge bold and decisive action on the objective and themes for the conference. We renew our commitment to sustainable development and express our determination to pursue the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. We further affirm our resolve to strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development. Taken together our actions should fill the implementation gaps and achieve greater integration among the three pillars of sustainable development – the economic, the social and the environmental.

II. RENEWING POLITICAL COMMITMENT

A. REAFFIRMING RIO PRINCIPLES AND PAST ACTION PLANS

6. We reaffirm that we continue to be guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with full respect for international law and its principles.
7. We reaffirm our commitment to advance progress in implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. The Rio Principles shall continue to guide the international community and serve as the basis for cooperation, coherence and implementation of agreed commitments.
8. We also reaffirm our commitment to the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development: the Political Declaration on Africa's development needs, and the Istanbul Programme of Action for Least Developed Countries.
9. We recognize the need to reinforce sustainable development globally through our collective and national efforts, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the principle of the sovereign right of states over their natural resources.

B. ASSESSING THE PROGRESS TO DATE AND THE REMAINING GAPS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOMES OF THE MAJOR SUMMITS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ADDRESSING NEW AND EMERGING CHALLENGES (INTEGRATION, IMPLEMENTATION, COHERENCE)

10. We recognize that the twenty years since the Earth Summit in 1992 have seen progress and change. There are deeply inspiring examples of progress, including in poverty eradication, in pockets of economic dynamism and in connectivity spurred by new information technologies which have empowered people.

11. We acknowledge, however, that there have also been setbacks because of multiple interrelated crises – financial, economic and volatile energy and food prices. Food insecurity, climate change and biodiversity loss have adversely affected development gains. New scientific evidence points to the gravity of the threats we face. New and emerging challenges include the further intensification of earlier problems calling for more urgent responses. We are deeply concerned that around 1.4 billion people still live in extreme poverty and one sixth of the world's population is undernourished, pandemics and epidemics are omnipresent threats. Unsustainable development has increased the stress on the earth's limited natural resources and on the carrying capacity of ecosystems. Our planet supports seven billion people expected to reach nine billion by 2050.

12. We note that national commitment to sustainable development has deepened. Many Governments now incorporate environmental and social issues into their economic policies, and have strengthened their commitment to sustainable development and the implementation of Agenda 21 and related agreements through national policies and plans, national legislation and institutions, and the ratification and implementation of international environmental agreements.

13. We nevertheless observe that, despite efforts by Governments and non-State actors in all countries, sustainable development remains a distant goal and there remain major barriers and systemic gaps in the implementation of internationally agreed commitments.

14. We resolve to redouble our efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger and to ensure that human activities respect the earth's ecosystems and life-support systems. We need to mainstream sustainable development in all aspects of the way we live. We acknowledge the particular responsibility to nurture sustainable development and sustainable consumption and production patterns.

15. We recognize the special challenges facing least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, Small Island developing States, middle-income countries and African countries.

16. We acknowledge the diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind and the protection of the Earth's life support system. We emphasize the importance of culture for sustainable development. We call for a holistic approach to sustainable development which will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature.

C. ENGAGING MAJOR GROUPS

17. We underscore that a fundamental prerequisite for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making. Sustainable development requires major groups – women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organisations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and farmers – to play a meaningful role at all levels. It is important to enable all members of civil society to be actively engaged in sustainable development by incorporating their specific knowledge and practical know-how into national and local policy making. In this regard, we also acknowledge the role of national parliaments in furthering sustainable development.

18. We recognize that improved participation of civil society depends upon strengthening the right to access information and building civil society capacity to exercise this right. Technology is making it easier for Governments to share information with the public and for the public to hold decision makers accountable. In this regard, it is essential to work towards universal access to information and communications technologies.

19. We acknowledge the important role of the private sector in moving towards sustainable development. We strongly encourage business and industry to show leadership in advancing a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.

20. We also acknowledge the essential role of local governments and the need to fully integrate them into all levels of decision making on sustainable development.

21. We recognize the importance of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the global, regional and national implementation of sustainable development strategies. We also recognize the need to reflect the views of children and youth as the issues we are addressing will have a deep impact on the youth of today and the generations that follow.

D. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

22. We commit to improving governance and capacity at all levels – global, regional, national and local – to promote integrated decision making, to fill the implementation gap and promote coherence across institutions.

23. We commit ourselves to reinvigorating the global partnership for sustainable development. We recognize that States must work together cooperatively and join with all stakeholders to address the common sustainable development challenges we face.

24. We call for a global policy framework requiring all listed and large private companies to consider sustainability issues and to integrate sustainability information within the reporting cycle.

III. GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION

A. FRAMING THE CONTEXT OF THE GREEN ECONOMY, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

25. We are convinced that a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should contribute to meeting key goals – in particular the priorities of poverty eradication, food security, sound water management, universal access to modern energy services, sustainable cities, management of oceans and improving resilience and disaster preparedness, as well as public health, human resource development and sustained, inclusive and equitable growth that generates employment, including for youth. It should be based on the Rio principles, in particular the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and should be people-centred and inclusive, providing opportunities and benefits for all citizens and all countries.

26. We view the green economy as a means to achieve sustainable development, which must remain our overarching goal. We acknowledge that a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should protect and enhance the natural resource base, increase resource efficiency, promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, and move the world toward low-carbon development.

27. We underscore that green economy is not intended as a rigid set of rules but rather as a decision-making framework to foster integrated consideration of the three pillars of sustainable development in all relevant domains of public and private decision-making.

28. We recognize that each country, respecting specific realities of economic, social and environmental development as well as particular conditions and priorities, will make the appropriate choices.

29. We are convinced that green economy policies and measures can offer win-win opportunities to improve the integration of economic development with environmental sustainability to all countries, regardless of the structure of their economy and their level of development.

30. We acknowledge, however, that developing countries are facing great challenges in eradicating poverty and sustaining growth, and a transition to a green economy will require structural adjustments which may involve additional costs to their economies. In this regard, the support of the international community is necessary.

31. We note that the transformation to a green economy should be an opportunity to all countries and a threat to none. We therefore resolve that international efforts to help countries build a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication must not:

- (a) Create new trade barriers;
- (b) Impose new conditionalities on aid and finance;
- (c) Widen technology gaps or exacerbate technological dependence of developing countries on developed countries;
- (d) Restrict the policy space for countries to pursue their own paths to sustainable development.

B. TOOLKITS AND EXPERIENCE SHARING

32. We acknowledge that countries are still in the early stages of building green economies and can learn from one another. We note the positive experiences in developing a green economy in some countries, including developing countries. We recognize that a mix of policies and measures tailored to each country's needs and preferences will be needed. Policy options include, inter alia, regulatory, economic and fiscal instruments, investment in green infrastructure, financial incentives, subsidy reform, sustainable public procurement, information disclosure, and voluntary partnerships.

33. We support the creation of an international knowledge-sharing platform to facilitate countries' green economy policy design and implementation, including:

- (a) A menu of policy options;
- (b) A toolbox of good practices in applying green economy policies at regional, national and local levels;
- (c) A set of indicators to measure progress;
- (d) A directory of technical services, technology and financing that could assist developing countries.

34. We request the UN Secretary-General, in consultation with international organizations, relevant entities of the UN system and others, to establish such a platform.

35. We urge member States to make national presentations on their experiences in the appropriate institutional framework as described in Section IV below.

36. We also urge all major groups, particularly business and industry, to share their experiences in this regard.

C. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

37. We recognize the value of having a set of differentiated strategies, tailored to the needs of different countries and different sectors.

38. We encourage all States to develop their own green economy strategies through a transparent process of multi-stakeholder consultation.

39. We encourage the United Nations, in cooperation with other relevant international organizations, to support developing countries at their request in developing green economy strategies.

40. We strongly encourage business and industry – organized by industrial sectors, cooperating across countries and in consultation with governments, workers and trade unions and other stakeholders – to develop green economy roadmaps for their respective sectors, with concrete goals and benchmarks of progress, including for net creation of jobs.

41. We acknowledge and encourage voluntary national commitments and actions by State actors as well as stakeholders to achieve a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, including through the shaping of innovative partnerships.

42. We realize that to make significant progress towards building green economies will require new investments, new skills formation, technology development, transfer and access, and capacity building in all countries. We acknowledge the particular need to provide support to developing countries in this regard and agree:

- (a) To provide new, additional and scaled up sources of financing to developing countries;
- (b) To launch an international process to promote the role of innovative instruments of finance for building green economies;
- (c) To gradually eliminate subsidies that have considerable negative effects on the environment and are incompatible with sustainable development, complemented with measures to protect poor and vulnerable groups;
- (d) To facilitate international collaborative research on green technologies involving developing countries, ensuring the technologies so developed remain in the public domain and are accessible to developing countries at affordable prices;
- (e) To encourage creation of Centres of Excellence as nodal points for green technology R&D;
- (f) To support developing countries' scientists and engineers and scientific and engineering institutions to foster their efforts to develop green local technologies and use traditional knowledge;
- (g) To establish a capacity development scheme to provide country-specific advice and, where appropriate, region and sector-specific advice to all interested countries and to assist them in accessing available funds.

43. We recognize the importance of measuring global progress. In this regard, we will be guided by a roadmap that contains the following indicative goals and timeline:

- (a) 2012-2015: establishment of indicators and measures to evaluate implementation; establishment of mechanisms for the transfer of technology, sharing of know-how, and enhancement of capacities;
- (b) 2015-2030: implementation and periodic assessment of progress;
- (c) 2030: comprehensive assessment of progress.

We request the Secretary-General, in close cooperation with the UN system, to provide a report for the General Assembly at its 67th session, detailing further steps in this regard.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A. STRENGTHENING/REFORMING/INTEGRATING THE THREE PILLARS

44. We recognize that strong governance at local, national, regional and global levels is critical for advancing sustainable development. The strengthening and reform of the institutional framework should, among other things:

(a) Integrate the three pillars of sustainable development and promote the implementation of Agenda 21 and related outcomes, consistent with the principles of universality, democracy, transparency, cost-effectiveness and accountability, keeping in mind the Rio Principles, in particular common but differentiated responsibilities;

(b) Provide cohesive, government-driven policy guidance on sustainable development and identify specific actions in order to fulfil the sustainable development agenda through the promotion of integrated decision making at all levels;

(c) Monitor progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and relevant outcomes and agreements, at local, national, regional and global levels;

(d) Reinforce coherence among the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, including the International Financial and Trade Institutions.

B. GA, ECOSOC, CSD, SDC PROPOSAL

General Assembly

45. We reaffirm the central role of the General Assembly as the highest policy-making body, and call for it to further integrate sustainable development as a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities.

Economic and Social Council

46. We reaffirm that the Economic and Social Council is a central mechanism for the coordination of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies and supervision of its subsidiary bodies, in particular its functional commissions.

47. We also reaffirm that ECOSOC is a central forum for intergovernmental deliberations on economic and social issues, and provides guidance and coordination to the UN system's operational activities for development in the field.

48. We agree to promote the role of ECOSOC in the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development including by making better use of the coordination segment of ECOSOC for monitoring implementation of agreements on sustainable development and, similarly, making use of the ECOSOC operational activities and humanitarian segments to promote mainstreaming of sustainable development into programmes of UN agencies and programmes.

Commission on Sustainable Development

49. We reaffirm the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development as the high level commission on sustainable development in the United Nations system. We agree to consider options for improving the working methods, the agenda and programme of work of the Commission to better facilitate, promote, and coordinate sustainable development implementation, including measures to ensure more focused, balanced and responsive engagement with a more limited set of issues, and enhanced implementation of its decisions. We also agree to consider means to enhance the review function of the Commission, including through a voluntary review process.

OR

Sustainable Development Council

49. alt. We resolve to transform the CSD into a Sustainable Development Council that will serve as the authoritative, high-level body for consideration of matters relating to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

49. alt. bis The work of the Council should be based on fundamental documents on sustainable development such as Agenda 21, the Rio principles and related outcomes. The Council should, inter alia, fully carry out the functions and mandates of the Commission for Sustainable Development. It would be guided by the need to promote integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, promote effective implementation at all levels and promote effective institutional coherence. It should help in enhancing the involvement of all stakeholders, particularly major groups, in the follow-up of Rio+20.

49. alt. ter. We request the President of the General Assembly to conduct open, transparent and inclusive negotiations, with the aim of establishing the mandate, modalities, functions, size, composition, membership, working methods and procedures of the Council and report on the outcome before the end of the 67th session of the General Assembly.

C. UNEP, SPECIALIZED AGENCY ON ENVIRONMENT PROPOSAL, IFIS, UNITED NATIONS
OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT COUNTRY LEVEL

50. We reaffirm the need to strengthen international environmental governance within the context of the institutional framework for sustainable development, in order to promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development, and to this end:

51. We agree to strengthen the capacity of UNEP to fulfil its mandate by establishing universal membership in its Governing Council and call for significantly increasing its financial base to deepen policy coordination and enhance means of implementation.

OR

51 alt. We resolve to establish a UN specialized agency for the environment with universal membership of its Governing Council, based on UNEP, with a revised and strengthened mandate, supported by stable, adequate and predictable financial contributions and operating on an equal footing with other UN specialized agencies. This agency, based in Nairobi, would cooperate closely with other specialized agencies.

52. We stress the need for a regular review of the state of the planet and the Earth's carrying capacity and request the Secretary-General to coordinate the preparation of such a review in consultation with relevant international organizations and the UN system.

53. We call for the scientific basis for decision making to be strengthened across the UN system and recognise that the interface between science and policy-making should be enhanced.

54. We recognize that sustainable development must be given due consideration by the International Financial Institutions, especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the regional development banks, UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization in regulating global trade. In that regard, we request the international financial institutions to review their programmatic strategies to ensure the provision of better support to developing countries for the implementation of sustainable development.

55. We recognize that coordination and cooperation among the MEAs are needed in order to, inter alia, address policy fragmentation and avoid overlap and duplication. We welcome the work already undertaken

to enhance synergies among the three conventions in the chemicals and waste cluster. We call for further measures to enhance coordination and cooperation among MEAs in other clusters.

56. We emphasise the need to strengthen operational activities for sustainable development, especially the delivery of the UN system in the field.

57. We agree to further consider the establishment of an Ombudsperson, or High Commissioner for Future Generations, to promote sustainable development.

58. We agree to take steps to give further effect to Rio Principle 10 at the global, regional and national level, as appropriate.

D. REGIONAL, NATIONAL, LOCAL

59. We reaffirm that overarching sustainable development strategies incorporated in national development plans are key instruments for the implementation of sustainable development commitments at regional, national and sub-national levels.

60. We call for the strengthening of existing regional and sub-regional mechanisms, including the regional commissions, in promoting sustainable development through capacity building, exchange of information and experiences and providing expertise.

61. We underline the need for more coherent and integrated planning and decision-making at the national level. We therefore call on countries to establish and strengthen, as appropriate, national sustainable development councils to enable them to coordinate, consolidate and ensure the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues in the highest decision-making bodies, with the integration and full participation of all stakeholders.

62. We recognise the need to integrate sustainable urban development policy as a key component of a national sustainable development policy and, in this regard, to empower local authorities to work more closely with national governments. We recognize that partnerships among cities have emerged as a leading force for action on sustainable development. We commit to support international cooperation among local authorities, including through assistance from international organizations.

V. FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION AND FOLLOW-UP

A. PRIORITY/KEY/THEMATIC/CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES AND AREAS

63. We recognize that progress in implementation requires attention to a number of sectoral and cross-sectoral priority areas as well as to the linkage among different sectors. We also recognize that assessing progress in these areas can benefit from defining aspirational goals, targets and indicators, as appropriate. We therefore commit to the following actions:

Food security

64. We reaffirm the right to food and call upon all States to prioritize sustainable intensification of food production through increased investment in local food production, improved access to local and global agri-food markets, and reduced waste throughout the supply chain, with special attention to women, smallholders, youth, and indigenous farmers. We are committed to ensuring proper nutrition for our people.

65. We call for more transparent and open trading systems and, where appropriate, practices that contribute to the stability of food prices and domestic markets; ensure access to land, water and other resources; and support social protection programmes.

66. We further support initiatives at all levels that improve access to information, enhance interactions among farmers and experts through education and extension services, and increase the use of appropriate technologies for sustainable agriculture.

Water

67. We underline the importance of the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights. Furthermore, we highlight the critical importance of water resources for sustainable development, including poverty and hunger eradication, public health, food security, hydropower, agriculture and rural development.

68. We recognize the necessity of setting goals for wastewater management, including reducing water pollution from households, industrial and agricultural sources and promoting water efficiency, wastewater treatment and the use of wastewater as a resource, particularly in expanding urban areas.

69. We renew our commitment made in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) regarding the development and implementation of integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans. We reaffirm our commitment to the 2005-2015 International Decade for Action “Water for Life”. We encourage cooperation initiatives for water resources management in particular through capacity development, exchange of experiences, best practices and lessons learned, as well as sharing appropriate environmentally sound technologies and know-how.

Energy

70. We propose to build on the Sustainable Energy for All initiative launched by the Secretary-General, with the goals of providing universal access to a basic minimum level of modern energy services for both consumption and production uses by 2030; improving energy efficiency at all levels with a view to doubling the rate of improvement by 2030; and doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030 through promoting the development and use of renewable energy sources and technologies in all countries. We call for provision of adequate financial resources, of sufficient quality and delivered in a timely manner, to developing countries for providing efficient and wider use of energy sources.

71. We agree that each country should work for low-carbon development. We encourage more widespread use of energy planning tools to provide a robust framework for donors and partners to coordinate their development cooperation efforts.

Cities

72. We commit to promote an integrated and holistic approach to planning and building sustainable cities through support to local authorities, efficient transportation and communication networks, greener buildings and an efficient human settlements and service delivery system, improved air and water quality, reduced waste, improved disaster preparedness and response and increased climate resilience.

Green jobs-social inclusion

73. We recognize that the development of human capacity is essential to achieving broad-based economic growth, building strong, sustainable communities, promoting social well-being, and improving the environment. Workers must have the skills and protections necessary to participate in and benefit from the transition to a green economy, which has great potential to create decent jobs, particularly for the youth, and eradicate poverty.

74. We also recognize that significant job creation opportunities can be availed through investments in public works for restoration and enhancement of natural capital, sustainable land and water management

practices, family farming, ecological farming, organic production systems, sustainable forest management, rational use of biodiversity for economic purposes, and new markets linked to renewable and unconventional energy sources. We encourage business and industry to contribute to green job creation throughout their global supply chains, including through support to small and medium enterprises.

75. We recognise and acknowledge that social well being and growth are also built on robust and high quality infrastructure that creates jobs and wealth, adds long term value and allows for broad inclusion. In this regard, we commit to enhanced infrastructure investment which promotes sustainable development.

76. Understanding that building green economies will depend critically on creating green jobs, we agree to take the following measures:

(a) Improve knowledge of green jobs trends and developments, and integrate relevant data into national economic statistics;

(b) Address potential skills shortages through skills mapping and promoting of green jobs training programs;

(c) Put in place an enabling environment for robust creation of decent jobs by private enterprises investing in the green economy, including by small and medium enterprises.

77. We stress the need to provide social protection to all members of society, including those who are not employed in the formal economy. In this regard, we strongly encourage national and local initiatives aimed at providing a social protection floor for all citizens.

Oceans and Seas, SIDS

78. We recognize that oceans are critical to sustaining Earth's life support systems. Careless exploitation of the oceans and their resources puts at risk the ability of oceans to continue to provide food, other economic benefits and environmental services to humankind. We stress the importance of the conservation, sustainable management and equitable sharing of marine and ocean resources. We also recognize the significant economic, social and environmental contribution of coral reefs to island and coastal States, and support cooperation based on the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI).

79. We endorse the Regular Process for the Global Marine Assessment as a credible, robust process, and support the completion of its first global integrated assessment of the state of the marine environment by 2014. We call for consideration of assessment findings in formulation of national, regional and global oceans policy.

80. We note the establishment by the UN General Assembly of an Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction, and we agree to initiate, as soon as possible, the negotiation of an implementing agreement to UNCLOS that would address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

81. We call on countries to advance implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, including further capacity-building and mobilization of resources for investment in treatment of human wastes and waste water and to develop a global action plan to combat marine litter and pollution.

82. We also propose to implement an international observing network for ocean acidification and to work collectively to prevent further ocean acidification.

83. We note that despite agreement to restore global fish stocks to sustainable levels by 2015, many stocks continue to be depleted unsustainably. We call upon States to re-commit to maintaining or restoring depleted fish stocks to sustainable levels and to further commit to implementing science-based management plans to rebuild stocks by 2015.

84. We urge countries to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing by adopting and implementing effective tools, in accordance with international law. We note the agreement on port state measures to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing approved by FAO in 2009 and urge States that have not yet acceded to the agreement to do so.

85. We reaffirm that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. The vulnerability of SIDS has worsened over the last two decades, primarily because of higher exposure to external shocks, including increasing adverse impacts of climate change and more frequent and intense natural disasters as well as the fuel, food, and financial crises, combined with inadequate international support.

86. We call for increased efforts to assist SIDS in implementing the BPOA and MSI and achieving sustainable development, including improvement and strengthening of the relevant entities within the United Nations system that support SIDS' sustainable development. We also call for the convening of the third international conference for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States in 2014.

Natural disasters

87. We reiterate the call for disaster risk reduction to continue to be addressed in the context of sustainable development and placed within the post-2015 development agenda. We call for increased coordination among national, regional and international levels for a robust response to environmental emergencies and improved forecasting and early warning systems, as well as closer coordination between emergency response, early recovery and development efforts, including adoption of a post "Hyogo Framework" and its integration into development policy.

Climate change

88. We reaffirm that climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and express our deep concern that developing countries are particularly vulnerable to and are experiencing increased negative impacts from climate change, which is severely undermining food security and efforts to eradicate poverty, and also threatens the territorial integrity, viability and the very existence of small island developing states. We welcome the outcome of COP17 at Durban and look forward to the urgent implementation of all the agreements reached.

89. We encourage international initiatives and partnerships to address the interrelationship among water, energy, food and climate change in order to achieve synergies as well as to minimize conflicts among policy objectives, being particularly sensitive to impacts on vulnerable populations.

Forests and biodiversity

90. We support policy frameworks and market instruments that effectively slow, halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation and promote the sustainable use and management of forests, as well as their conservation and restoration. We call for the urgent implementation of the "Non-Legally Binding Instrument on all Types of Forests (NLBI)".

91. We welcome the Nagoya Protocol adopted at the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity. We support mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services in policies and decision-making processes at international, regional and national levels, and encourage investments in natural capital through appropriate incentives and policies, which support a sustainable and equitable use of biological diversity and ecosystems.

Land degradation and desertification

92. We recognize the economic and social significance of land, particularly its contribution to growth, food security, and poverty eradication, and note that the intensity of desertification of most of Africa's arable land is a serious challenge to sustainable development in the region. We call for enhanced support by the international community to the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

93. We agree to support partnerships and initiatives for the safeguarding of soil resources such as the Global Soil Partnership (GSP). We also encourage scientific studies and initiatives aimed at raising wider awareness of the economic benefits of sustainable land management policies that achieve healthy and productive land and soil.

Mountains

94. We recognize that mountains are highly vulnerable to global changes such as climate change, and are often home to communities including of indigenous peoples, who have developed sustainable uses of their resources yet are often marginalized, sometimes with high poverty rates, exposure to natural risks and food insecurity. We recognize the benefits derived from mountains and their associated ecosystems. We also recognize the need to explore global, regional, national, and local mechanisms to compensate and reward mountain communities for the services they provide through ecosystem protection.

Chemicals and waste

95. We call for strengthening the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM), to step up efforts towards a more robust, coherent, effective and efficient international regime for chemicals throughout their lifecycle. Sustainable and adequate long-term funding will be important to assist developing countries with sound chemical and waste management through an integrated approach.

96. We commend the increased coordination and cooperation among the Basel Convention, the Rotterdam Convention and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, and call for public-private partnerships aiming to enhance capacity and technology for environmentally sound waste management. We also note with concern the emerging challenges of electronic waste and plastics in the marine environment, which should be addressed inter alia through appropriate programmes and environmentally sound technologies for material and energy recovery.

Sustainable Consumption and Production

97. We agree to establish a 10-Year Framework of Programmes on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) as part of a global pact on sustainable consumption and production, based on the text elaborated in the negotiations in the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development at its nineteenth session.

Education

98. We recognize that access by all people to quality education is an essential condition for sustainable development and social inclusion. We commit to strengthening the contribution of our education systems to the pursuit of sustainable development, including through enhanced teacher training and curricula development.

99. We call upon universities to become models of best practice and transformation by setting an example of sustainability of facilities on their campuses and teaching sustainable development as a module across all disciplines. In this way sustainable practices will become embedded in learning and action.

100. We encourage international education exchange activities on education for sustainable development, including the creation of fellowships and scholarships for international study in disciplines and inter-disciplinary fields pertinent to the promotion of sustainable development.

101. We agree to promote education for sustainable development beyond the end of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development in 2014, to educate a new generation of students in the values, key disciplines and holistic, cross-disciplinary approaches essential to promoting sustainable development.

Gender equality

102. We recognize that sustainable development is linked to and depends on women's economic contributions, both formal and informal. We note with concern that persistent social and economic inequities continue to affect women and children, who make up the majority of those living in poverty.

103. We call for removing barriers that have prevented women from being full participants in the economy and unlocking their potential as drivers of sustainable development, and agree to prioritize measures to promote gender equality in all spheres of our societies, including education, employment, ownership of resources, access to justice, political representation, institutional decision-making, care giving and household and community management.

104. We support the work of UN Women in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in all aspects of life and bringing greater attention to the linkages between gender equality and the promotion of sustainable development.

B. ACCELERATING AND MEASURING PROGRESS

105. We recognize that goals, targets and milestones are essential for measuring and accelerating progress towards sustainable development and agree to launch an inclusive process to devise by 2015:

- (a) A set of global Sustainable Development Goals that reflect an integrated and balanced treatment of the three dimensions of sustainable development, are consistent with the principles of Agenda 21, and are universal and applicable to all countries but allowing for differentiated approaches among countries;
- (b) A mechanism for periodic follow-up and reporting on progress made toward their achievement.

106. We invite all stakeholders to join this process and request the UN Secretary-General to coordinate this process.

107. We propose that the Sustainable Development Goals could include sustainable consumption and production patterns as well as priority areas such as oceans; food security and sustainable agriculture; sustainable energy for all; water access and efficiency; sustainable cities; green jobs, decent work and social inclusion; and disaster risk reduction and resilience.

108. We consider that the Sustainable Development Goals should complement and strengthen the MDGs in the development agenda for the post-2015 period, with a view to establishing a set of goals in 2015 which are part of the post-2015 UN Development Agenda.

109. We also propose that progress towards these Goals should be measured by appropriate indicators and evaluated by specific targets to be achieved possibly by 2030, and request the Secretary-General for proposals in this regard.

110. We resolve to strengthen the capacity of all countries to collect and analyze data and information needed to support the monitoring of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We request the

Secretary-General, with the support of interested donors, the UN system, international organizations and other entities, to promote a global partnership in this regard.

111. We also recognize the limitations of GDP as a measure of well-being. We agree to further develop and strengthen indicators complementing GDP that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions in a balanced manner. We request the Secretary-General to establish a process in consultation with the UN system and other relevant organizations.

C. MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

Finance

112. We call for the fulfilment of all official development assistance commitments, including the commitments by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries by 2015, as well as a target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to least developed countries. To reach their agreed timetables, donor countries should take all necessary and appropriate measures to raise the rate of aid disbursements to meet their existing commitments. We urge those developed countries that have not yet done so to make additional concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries, including the specific target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to least developed countries in line with the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2011-2020 in accordance with their commitments.

113. We call for the prioritization of sustainable development in the allocation of resources in line with the priorities and needs of developing countries, and for substantial increases in the provision of financing to developing countries for sustainable development.

114. We call for increased aid effectiveness, taking into account the Paris Declaration, the Accra Action Agenda and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in ensuring that aid is effective, accountable and responsive to the needs and priorities of developing countries. There is a need for greater coherence at both the international and national levels, including effective oversight of resources to ensure that developing countries have steady and predictable access to adequate financing, including by the private sector, to promote sustainable development.

115. We welcome the ongoing efforts to strengthen and support South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. We stress that South-South cooperation is not a substitute for, but rather a complement to, North-South cooperation. We also stress that triangular cooperation should be further utilized as an effective modality for development cooperation.

116. We reaffirm the key role of the private sector in promoting sustainable development including through multi-stakeholder partnerships. Public policy should create a stable investment climate and regulatory framework conducive to long-term investment and socially and environmentally responsible behaviour by business and industry.

117. We call for the Global Environment Facility to be strengthened, with regularity in funding flows and reform of governance processes towards more transparent and democratic systems. We urge simplification of procedures and assistance to the least developed countries and SIDS in accessing resources from the GEF.

Science and Technology

118. We reaffirm the commitments related to science and technology contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 and in the outcomes of other major United Nations Summits and Conferences.

119. We recognize the importance of strengthening the scientific, technological and innovation capacities of countries to promote sustainable development. In this regard, we stress the need for effective mechanisms, enhanced means, appropriate enabling environments, and the removal of obstacles to the scaling up of the development and transfer of technology to developing countries.

120. We agree to strengthen international cooperation conducive to investment and technology transfer, development and diffusion.

Capacity Building

121. We reaffirm the need for providing support to existing regional and sub-regional structures and mechanisms in developing countries and encouraging their creation, where needed, with the aim of facilitating cooperation and the exchange of information, including capacity building, exchange of experiences and expertise to advance the implementation of the decisions at regional and sub regional levels.

122. We call for the immediate implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building.

123. We urge the participation and representation of scientists from developing countries in processes related to global environmental and sustainable development assessment to strengthen scientific capacities in these countries.

Trade

124. We urge the members of the WTO to redouble efforts to achieve a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system and for an early balanced, ambitious and development-oriented outcome of the Doha Development Round of multilateral trade negotiations. We call for the full realization of the commitments made in the 2005 Hong-Kong Ministerial Declaration of the WTO in favour of the least developed countries.

125. We reaffirm that there is an urgent need for the international economic and financial institutions to work together to ensure that developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, are able to benefit from the advantages of the multilateral trade system and their integration into global markets.

126. We support the eventual phase out of market distorting and environmentally harmful subsidies that impede the transition to sustainable development, including those on fossil fuels, agriculture and fisheries, with safeguards to protect vulnerable groups.

127. We support the trade capacity building and facilitation activities of international and regional organizations which would assist developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, in identifying and seizing new export opportunities, including those created by the transition towards a green economy.

Registry/compendium of commitments

128. We welcome the voluntary commitments made at Rio+20 and invite the Secretary-General to compile them in a registry/compendium that will serve as an accountability framework.
