



NMUN • EUROPE

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UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
BACKGROUND GUIDE 2012

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Official Welcome to NMUN-Europe 2012

Dear Delegates, Faculty Members, Head Delegates and Friends,

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that we welcome you to the 2012 NMUN-Europe conference in Lille, France. We are delighted to host the second international NMUN conference in Europe from 31 January to 6 February 2012.

The NMUN-Europe conference is directed towards giving delegates a chance for a deeply rewarding educational experience. It will challenge them with interesting and current topics, and give them the chance to interact with participating students from more than ten different countries. We have selected committees and topics to reflect recent developments and challenges facing the international community; ranging, for example, from the protection of armed civilians in conflict to international cooperation on drugs, to one of the main events in the UN calendar for 2012: the Conference on Sustainable Development. To ensure the quality of our educational mission, each committee is staffed with directors that have held or currently hold senior staff positions at NMUN-NY, working with talented new volunteer staffers from our host university, Sciences Po Lille.

The conference will take place in the center of Lille in the modern building of the Conseil de Région, the local administration where elected representatives from the region meet every month. The conference site, offers an insight into the Nord Pas de Calais region in northern France. Lille is famous for its architecture, its local dishes and beverages, and as the birthplace of General Charles de Gaulle. The city and its region are very well connected, situated at the crossroads of major European cities. Delegates are invited to participate in an excursion to Brussels, the centre of political decision-making in the European Union.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you're facing in the preparation for the conference.

Best regards, safe travels and see you in Lille in January 2012!



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Message from the Directors-General Regarding Position Papers for the 2012 NMUN-Europe Conference

At the 2012 NMUN-Europe Conference, each delegation submits one position paper for each committee it is assigned to. Delegates should be aware that their role in each committee impacts the way a position paper should be written. While most delegates will serve as representatives of Member States, some may also serve as observers, NGOs or judicial experts. To understand these fine differences, please refer to the Delegate Preparation Guide.

Position papers should provide a concise review of each delegation's policy regarding the topic areas under discussion and establish precise policies and recommendations in regard to the topics before the committee. International and regional conventions, treaties, declarations, resolutions, and programs of action of relevance to the policy of your State should be identified and addressed. Making recommendations for action by your committee should also be considered. Position papers also serve as a blueprint for individual delegates to remember their country's position throughout the course of the Conference. NGO position papers should be constructed in the same fashion as position papers of countries. Each topic should be addressed briefly in a succinct policy statement representing the relevant views of your assigned NGO. You should also include recommendations for action to be taken by your committee. It will be judged using the same criteria as all country position papers, and is held to the same standard of timeliness.

Please be forewarned, delegates must turn in material that is entirely original. ***The NMUN Conference will not tolerate the occurrence of plagiarism.*** In this regard, the NMUN Secretariat would like to take this opportunity to remind delegates that although United Nations documentation is considered within the public domain, the Conference does not allow the verbatim re-creation of these documents. This plagiarism policy also extends to the written work of the Secretariat contained within the Committee Background Guides. Violation of this policy will be immediately reported to faculty advisors and may result in dismissal from Conference participation. Delegates should report any incident of plagiarism to the Secretariat as soon as possible.

Delegation's position papers can be awarded as recognition of outstanding pre-Conference preparation. In order to be considered for a Position Paper Award, however, delegations must have met the formal requirements listed below. Please refer to the sample paper on the following page for a visual example of what your work should look like at its completion. The following format specifications are **required** for all papers:

- All papers must be typed and formatted according to the example in the Background Guides
- Length must **not** exceed two single spaced pages (one double sided paper, if printed)
- Font **must** be Times New Roman sized between 10 pt. and 12 pt.
- Margins must be set at 1 inch for whole paper
- Country/NGO name, School name and committee name clearly labeled on the first page; the use of national symbols is highly discouraged
- Agenda topics clearly labeled in separate sections

Positions paper for NMUN-Europe need to be submitted via e-mail, unless other arrangements are made with the Director-General. To be considered timely for awards, please read and follow these directions:

1. A file of the position paper (**.doc or .pdf**) for each assigned committee should be sent to dirgen.europe@nmun.org. Delegates should carbon copy (cc:) themselves as confirmation of receipt.
2. Each of the above listed tasks need to be completed no later than midnight on **January 1, 2012** (Eastern Standard Time).
3. Please title each e-mail and document with the name of the committee, assignment, and delegation name (for example: SC_Namibia_University of Caprivi). If you prefer to send a complete set of positions per country please note this in the subject line (Delegation_Namibia_University of Caprivi).

Once the formal requirements outlined above are met, Conference staff use the following criteria to evaluate Position Papers:

- Overall quality of writing, proper style, grammar, etc.
- Citation of relevant resolutions/documents
- General consistency with bloc/geopolitical constraints
- Consistency with the constraints of the United Nations
- Analysis of issues, rather than reiteration of the Committee Background Guide
- Outline of (official) policy aims within the committee's mandate

Finally, please consider that a considerable number of position papers will be handled and read by the Secretariat for the Conference. Your patience and cooperation in strictly adhering to the above guidelines will make this process more efficient and is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact the Director-General, though as we do not operate out of a central office or location your consideration for time zone differences is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Holger Bär
Director-General
dirgen.europe@nmun.org

Sample Position Paper

The following position paper is designed to be a sample of the standard format that an NMUN position paper should follow. While delegates are encouraged to use the front and back of a single page in order to fully address all topics before the committee, please remember that only a maximum of one double-sided page (or two pages total in an electronic file) will be accepted. Only the first double-sided page of any submissions (or two pages of an electronic file) will be considered for awards.

**Delegation from
The United Mexican States**

**Represented by
(Name of College)**

Position Paper for the General Assembly Plenary

The issues before the General Assembly Plenary are: The Use of Economic Sanctions for Political and Economic Compulsion; Democracy and Human Rights in Post-Conflict Regions; as well as The Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa. The Mexican Delegation first would like to convey its gratitude being elected and pride to serve as vice-president of the current General Assembly Plenary session.

I. The Use of Economic Sanctions for Political and Economic Compulsion

The principles of equal sovereignty of states and non-interference, as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, have always been cornerstones of Mexican foreign policy. The legitimate right to interfere by the use of coercive measures, such as economic sanctions, is laid down in Article 41 of the UN-charter and reserves the right to the Security Council.

Concerning the violation of this principle by the application of unilateral measures outside the framework of the United Nations, H.E. Ambassador to the United Nations Enrique Berruga Filloy underlined in 2005 that the Mexico strongly rejects “the application of unilateral laws and measures of economic blockade against any State, as well as the implementation of coercive measures without the authorization enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.” That is the reason, why the United Mexican States supported – for the 14th consecutive time – Resolution (A/RES/60/12) of 2006 regarding the *Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba*.

In the 1990s, comprehensive economic sanctions found several applications with very mixed results, which made a critical reassessment indispensable. The United Mexican States fully supported and actively participated in the “Stockholm Process” that focused on increasing the effectiveness in the implementation of targeted sanctions. As sanctions and especially economic sanctions, pose a tool for action “between words and war” they must be regarded as a mean of last resort before war and fulfill highest requirements for their legitimate use. The United Mexican States and their partners of the “Group of Friends of the U.N. Reform” have already addressed and formulated recommendations for that take former criticism into account. Regarding the design of economic sanctions it is indispensable for the success to have the constant support by all member states and public opinion, which is to a large degree dependent the humanitarian effects of economic sanctions. Sanctions must be tailor-made, designed to effectively target the government, while sparing to the largest degree possible the civil population. Sanction regimes must be constantly monitored and evaluated to enable the world-community to adjust their actions to the needs of the unforeseeably changing situation. Additionally, the United Mexican States propose to increase communication between the existing sanction committees and thus their effectiveness by convening regular meetings of the chairs of the sanction committees on questions of common interest. An example is the case of negative spill-over effects of economic sanctions on neighboring countries, in which affected countries additionally need to be enabled to voice their problems more effectively, as addressed in the resolution *Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions* (A/RES/54/107). Non-state actors have in the last years tremendously grown in their political importance, especially with regard to the international fight against terrorism. Their position and the possibilities of the application of economic sanction on non-state actors is another topic that urgently needs to be considered.

II. Democracy and Human Rights in Post-Conflict Regions

As a founding member of the United Nations, Mexico is highly engaged in the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights all over the world, as laid down in the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)* in 1948. Especially since the democratic transition of Mexico in 2000 it is one of the most urgent topics to stand for Democratization and Human Rights, and Mexico implements this vision on many different fronts.

In the Convoking Group of the intergovernmental Community of Democracies (GC), the United Mexican States uphold an approach that fosters international cooperation to promote democratic values and institution-building at the national and international level. To emphasize the strong interrelation between human rights and the building of democracy and to fortify democratic developments are further challenges Mexico deals with in this committee. A key-factor for the sustainable development of a post-conflict-region is to hold free and fair election and thus creating a democratic system. Being aware of the need of post-conflict countries for support in the preparation of democratic elections, the United Mexican States contribute since 2001 to the work of the International Institute for Democracy

and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), an intergovernmental organization operating at international, regional and national level in partnership with a range of institutions. Mexico's foreign policy regarding human rights is substantially based on cooperation with international organizations. The Inter American Commission of Human Rights is one of the bodies, Mexico is participating, working on the promotion of Human Rights in the Americas. Furthermore, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights is the regional judicial institution for the application and interpretation of the *American Convention of Human Rights*.

The objectives Mexico pursues are to improve human rights in the country through structural changes and to fortify the legal and institutional frame for the protection of human rights on the international level. Underlining the connection between democracy, development and Human Rights, stresses the importance of cooperation with and the role of the High Commissioner on Human Rights and the reform of the Human Rights Commission to a Human rights Council.

Having in mind the diversity of challenges in enforcing democracy and Human Rights, Mexico considers regional and national approaches vital for their endorsement, as Mexico exemplifies with its *National Program for Human Rights* or the *Plan Puebla Panama*. On the global level, Mexico is encouraged in working on a greater coordination and interoperability among the United Nations and regional organizations, as well as the development of common strategies and operational policies and the sharing of best practices in civilian crisis management should be encouraged, including clear frameworks for joint operations, when applicable.

III. The Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa

The United Mexican States welcome the leadership role the African Union has taken regarding the security problems of the continent. Our delegation is furthermore convinced that The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) can become the foundation for Africa's economic, social and democratic development as the basis for sustainable peace. Therefore it deserves the full support of the international community.

The development of the United Mexican States in the last two decades is characterized by the transition to a full democracy, the national and regional promotion of human rights and sustainable, economic growth. Mexico's development is characterized by free trade and its regional integration in the North American Free Trade Agreement. Having in mind that sustainable development is based not only on economic, but as well on social and environmental development, President Vicente Fox has made sustainable development a guiding principle in the Mexican Development Plan that includes sustainability targets for all major policy areas.

The United Nations Security Council has established not less than seven peace-keeping missions on the African continent, underlining the need for full support by the international community. In post-conflict situations, we regard national reconciliation as a precondition for a peaceful development, which is the reason why Mexico supported such committees, i.e. in the case of Sierra Leone. The United Mexican States are convinced that an other to enhance durable peace in Africa is the institutional reform of the United Nations. We therefore want to reaffirm our full support to both the establishment of the peace-building commission and the Human Rights Council. Both topics are highly interrelated and, having in mind that the breach of peace is most often linked with severest human rights' abuses, thus need to be seen as two sides of one problem and be approached in this understanding.

As most conflicts have their roots in conflicts about economic resources and development chances, human development and the eradication of poverty must be at the heart of a successful, preventive approach. Lifting people out of poverty must be seen as a precondition not only for peace, but for social development and environmental sustainability.

The United Mexican States want to express their esteem for the decision taken by the G-8 countries for a complete debt-relief for many African Highly-Indebted-Poor-Countries. Nevertheless, many commitments made by the international community that are crucial for Africa's sustainable development are unfulfilled. The developed countries agreed in the *Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development* (A/CONF.198/11) to increase their Official Development Aid (ODA) "towards the target of 0,7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries and 0,15 to 0,20 per cent of GNP of developed countries to least developed countries". Furthermore, the United Mexican States are disappointed by the result of the Hong Kong Ministerial conference of the World Trade Organization, which once more failed to meet the needs of those, to whom the round was devoted: developing countries and especially African countries, who today, more than ever, are cut off from global trade and prosperity by protectionism.

With regard to the African Peer Review Mechanism, the United Mexican States want to underline that good governance is an integral part of sustainable development. Therefore, we support all efforts by African countries to make the mechanism obligatory to increase transparency and accountability in all African countries.

Committee History for the Conference on Sustainable Development

Introduction

The international conversation on the environment can be traced back to the first intergovernmental conference concerned with the environment, the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE), held in 1972 in Stockholm, Sweden.¹ In the decades since, concerns for the environment have become rooted in the political agenda, leading to the adoption of a diverse set of policy instruments to reduce air, water and soil pollution and to foster a healthier management and conservation to ensure human well-being.²

The Stockholm conference triggered an upwards momentum that led to the organization of several smaller, regional conferences throughout the 1980's, and the signing of international agreements addressing various aspects linked to environmental preservation.³ However the idea of sustainable development itself came into the public eye only in 1987 with the World Commission on Environment and Development's (WCED) report "Our Common Future" also known and referred to as the "Brundtland Report."⁴ This report represents a milestone for the debate on the environment and more specifically sustainable development by providing the most commonly used definition of sustainable development, as: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs."⁵ By the time the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the "Earth Summit" or "Rio", was held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, the environment had become an important item on the political agenda and the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development were identified.⁶

Currently, sustainable development permeates all aspects of our social and economic lives, regardless of whether you live in a developed or developing country. However, the institutional system put in place in Rio 1992 to promote sustainable development has proven inadequate. Thus the 2012 Rio conference, will attempt to revitalize the international community's commitment to sustainable development and focus their efforts in two equally important directions: the institutional framework for sustainable development and the transition to a green economy.

Genesis of sustainable development in the international community

Each United Nations conference has had a significant input to our current vision of sustainable development, beginning with the 1972 Stockholm conference.⁷ The latter did not focus independently on the environment, but rather to the place of the human in the environment.⁸ It acknowledged that the preservation of the environment and the management of its resources were a global issue and required common action.⁹ As the conference report outcome documents stated, the environment is essential to the well-being of the world's population and represents a basic human right: the right to life.¹⁰ The objective of the conference lied in tackling environmental deterioration, whilst preserving the right of humans to benefit from natural resources.¹¹ With respect to this, it already highlighted the difference between developed countries whose environmental degradations stemmed from industrialization and developing countries, which experienced degradations caused by under-development.¹² However the main achievements of the *Stockholm Declaration*, of the main outcomes of the conference itself, remains the establishment of institutions concerned with the environment and the start of a set of international conventions to prevent water, air and soil pollution.¹³

¹ UNEP, *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, 1972.

² Heinrich Böll Foundation, *The Jo'burg Memo: Fairness in a Fragile World*, 2002.

³ Von Moltke, *Why UNEP matters*, 1997.

⁴ WCED, *Our Common Future*, 1987.

⁵ WCED, *Our Common Future*, 1987 p. 43.

⁶ Von Moltke, *Why UNEP matters*, 1997.

⁷ WCED, *Our Common Future*, 1987.

⁸ Von Moltke, *Why UNEP matters*, 1997.

⁹ UNEP, *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, 1972.

¹⁰ UNEP, *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, 1972.

¹¹ Von Moltke, *Why UNEP matters*, 1997.

¹² UNEP, *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, 1972.

¹³ Von Moltke, *Why UNEP matters*, 1997.

Indeed, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), founded in 1948, was a central actor in the preparation of the Stockholm conference, notably thanks to its experts' report *Environment and Development*.¹⁴ This report in particular, resulted in the establishment of various international legal instruments relevant to nature preservation, such as the *Convention for International Trade of Endangered Species* (CITES) in 1975 and the *Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance* in 1971.¹⁵ With time, the IUCN developed a principle and policy point of view, which advocated for “working *with* rather than *against* local people” as the preservation of nature represented a human interest.¹⁶ In 1980, the IUCN also produced a cornerstone publication for nature conservation the *World Conservation Strategy* (WCS), a program for the interlinked promotion of nature conservation and human development, in a sustainable manner.¹⁷ This in turn influenced the *World Charter for Nature* adopted by the General Assembly (GA) in 1982 pursuant to Resolution 37/7, and the latter *Brundtland Report*.¹⁸

The WCED was called for in 1982 by the United Nations Environment Program, through the GA resolution 38/161, in order to solely focus on the interdependence between environmental issues and development.¹⁹ Its main input to the debate linking the environment and development is the *Brundtland Report* presented in 1987, which redefined the environmental and development agendas and linked them under the definition of sustainable development.²⁰

The Road to Rio +20

By the time a new international conference was held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro to address sustainable development, the environment had acquired some small measure of legitimacy as an item on the political agenda throughout the world: environmental governance had become part of many governments' policy agenda.²¹ With the *Brundtland Report* as a background, the conference revolved around the central notion of sustainable development, and consequently linked economic, social and environmental concerns in a three pillared approach.²² The conference concluded with the adoption of several documents: the *Rio Declaration, Agenda 21* and the *Forest Principles*, as well as the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* and the *Convention on Biological Diversity*.²³

The *Rio Declaration* laid fertile ground for implementing sustainable development through specifically emphasizing technology transfer; civil society awareness and participation; and special attention to the needs of the developing countries.²⁴ Attention was given to the role of women, youth and notably indigenous populations, whose knowledge and traditional practices have played, and continue to play a vital role in environmental management.²⁵ These ideas stem from two essential outcomes of the Rio conference, which are the “right to development” for and the “principle of common but differentiated responsibility” of countries in the context of sustainable development and environmental preservation and conservation.²⁶ Agenda 21 is an important outcome of Rio to highlight, as it is a concrete program of action that is implemented through local agenda processes where human activity affects the environment and revolves around the notions of economic and social development with respect to the conservation and management of resources for development.²⁷ A *Program for Further Implementation of Agenda 21* was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session of June 1997 as an annex to Resolution S-19/2.²⁸

The United Nations General Assembly also adopted resolution 47/191 in 1993, establishing the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) with the objective, of the following-up from the Earth Summit in Rio and

¹⁴ Christoffersen, *IUCN: A Bridge-BUILDER for Nature Conservation*, 1997.

¹⁵ Christoffersen, *IUCN: A Bridge-BUILDER for Nature Conservation*, 1997.

¹⁶ Christoffersen, *IUCN: A Bridge-BUILDER for Nature Conservation*, 1997.

¹⁷ IUCN, *World Conservation Strategy*, 1980.

¹⁸ Christoffersen, *IUCN: A Bridge-BUILDER for Nature Conservation*, 1997.

¹⁹ UNGA, *Process of preparation of the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/RES/38/161)*, 1983.

²⁰ WCED, *Our Common Future*, 1987.

²¹ Heinrich Böll Foundation, *The Jo'burg Memo: Fairness in a Fragile World*, 2002.

²² Von Moltke, *Why UNEP matters*, 1997.

²³ Von Moltke, *Why UNEP matters*, 1997.

²⁴ UNEP, *United Nations Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992.

²⁵ UNEP, *United Nations Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992.

²⁶ UNEP, *United Nations Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992.

²⁷ UNEP, *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development: Agenda 21 Press Summary*, 1992.

²⁸ UNGA, *Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (A/RES/S-19/2)*, 1997.

monitoring the institutional arrangements for the implementation of Agenda 21.²⁹ It is important to note that the CSD, while laudable in its original inception for the vision of its supporters, has widely been considered to be unable to bring about concrete changes, and subsequently has been unable to push forward the sustainable development agenda.³⁰ It lacks effective enforcement mechanism as legitimacy with regard to a lack of integration of the three dimensions of SD as Member States tend to send only their representatives of environmental departments to the sessions - in absence of those representing social affairs and the economics and finance ministries to find concrete steps for integrating the three dimensions.³¹

In 2002, ten years after Rio, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held in Johannesburg with the objective of ridding the world of environmental degradation, poverty and the patterns of unsustainable development, for the younger generations who will inherit it.³² The conference focused mainly on five themes: water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity, whilst reaffirming the interdependence of sustainable development with economic development, social development and environmental protection.³³ Similar to the Stockholm and Rio conferences, the Johannesburg conference produced a *Declaration on Sustainable Development* and the *Johannesburg Plan for Implementation*.³⁴ The former contained objectives of poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns, and management of natural resources for economic and social development.³⁵ The latter is committed to the realization of the goals from the *Rio Principles, Agenda 21* and the *Program for Further Implementation of Agenda 21*.³⁶

2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: Rio +20

In 2010, United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/236 called for the Conference on Sustainable Development to be held “at the highest possible level” in Brazil in 2012.³⁷ In order to “secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development” as well as assess the progress gaps and challenges ahead with regards to the implementation of former conferences objectives.³⁸ The two themes set for the conference are: “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development.”³⁹

The first focus of the conference suggests an innovative and comprehensive approach to sustainable development, in transitioning to a green economy.⁴⁰ A number of studies have shown that a green economy can be an engine for growth, create jobs, improve efficiencies in resource use in addition to restoring ecosystems, and ensuring equal well-being for the most vulnerable.”⁴¹

On the other hand, the institutional framework is characterized by ineffectiveness due to fragmentation and lack of capacity.⁴² Over 500 multilateral environmental agreements exist in the UN framework for which the UN Environment Program is both lacking funds and staff to serve its mandate to be the central focal point for international environmental governance.⁴³ Secondly, the CSD is lacking “teeth” in implementing its decisions and is

²⁹ UNGA, *Institutional arrangements to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (A/RES/47/191)*, 1993.

³⁰ Von Moltke, *On Clustering International Environmental Agreements*, 2011.

³¹ IISD, 2011, *Summary of the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, 2-14 May 2011*, 2011, p. 13.

³² United Nations, *Global Challenge Global Opportunity*, 2002.

³³ United Nations, *Global Challenge Global Opportunity*, 2002.

³⁴ United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Declaration on Sustainable Development*, 2002.

United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Johannesburg Plan for Implementation*, 2002.

³⁵ United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Declaration on Sustainable Development*, 2002.

³⁶ United Nations, *Global Challenges Global Opportunity*, 2002.

³⁷ UNGA, *Implementation of Agenda 21 (A/RES/64/236)*, 2010.

³⁸ UNGA, *Implementation of Agenda 21, The Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/RES/64/236)*, 2010.

³⁹ UNGA, *Implementation of Agenda 21, The Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/RES/64/236)*, 2010.

⁴⁰ UNGA, *Implementation of Agenda 21, The Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/RES/64/236)*, 2010.

⁴¹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Opening statement by Sha Zukang at the Second Preparatory Meeting of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*, 2011.

⁴² Von Moltke, *On Clustering International Environmental Agreements*, 2011.

⁴³ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 5.

suffering by the low interests of governments in it and correspondingly effective tools to ensure the implementation of its decisions.⁴⁴

The preparatory process of the Rio +20 conference has seen the publication of major background documents and reports useful for decision-makers. Significant lines of conflict could already be identified in the debate as well as by the failure of the 19th session of the CSD.⁴⁵ Contentious issues concerning the basis of the definition of the green economy, financing mechanisms for developing countries, the transfer of technology and the distinction in responsibility and capability between Western countries and developing countries were all brought to light.⁴⁶ The voices of members of the G77 also raised their concerns with regards to the consequences of environmental norms for investment and trade on development aid in the developing world (“green protectionism”).⁴⁷ Issues related to a “blue economy” were highlighted by the Association of Small Island States, emphasizing the specific role of the oceans.⁴⁸ Civil society has also contributed significantly to the debate, most recently at the 64th annual United Nations Department of Public Information and NGO meeting by, among other aspects, reinforcing the importance of concrete financing options to support policy objectives at Rio+20, such as an international financial transaction tax.⁴⁹

Conclusion

In the run-up to Rio 2012, most of the debate on sustainable development is anchored to the aforementioned conferences and their respective outcomes: reports, conventions, protocols, and implementation programs. Delegates are strongly encouraged to familiarize with them and review the zero-draft for the conference outcome document that will be published by the Brazilian hosts in January 2012. According to the CSD, the meeting in January 2012 will be a “historic opportunity to define pathways to a safer, more equitable, cleaner, greener and more prosperous world for all” and in the words of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, there is a momentum for governments to take renewed political commitments and decisions at what will be “one of the most important global meeting on sustainable development in our time.”⁵⁰

Annotated Bibliography

Committee History for the Conference on Sustainable Development

Heinrich Böll Foundation. (2002). *The Jo'burg Memo: Fairness in a Fragile World*. Retrieved July 18, 2011 from http://www.worldsummit2002.org/publications/memo_en_without.pdf.

Coordinated by Wolfgang Sachs, this publication by the Heinrich Böll Foundation was released a few months before the Johannesburg conference in 2002. It provides a retrospective of the first Rio conference and outlines the challenges facing the international community at Johannesburg. The memorandum looks at the Johannesburg agenda, the various areas of focus for sustainable development and compiles governance imperatives. This publication is useful to the delegate for a state of the art report at an important milestone for sustainable development, post Rio and pre-Johannesburg.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. (1992). *The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*. Retrieved July 19, 2011 from <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid=78&articleid=1163>

The Rio Declaration is the outcome document of the landmark 1992 Rio Conference on Environment and Development. It lays out the principles enunciated at the conference, which will become a basis for future environment and sustainable development related conferences, conventions and declarations. This document is necessary background information for delegates to understand substantive progress in the debate on sustainable development over the last decades. It also pertains to green economy in Principle 1 through 4, and 9 through 14.

⁴⁴ IISD, *Summary of the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, 2-14 May 2011*, 2011, p.13.

⁴⁵ Bär et al., *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-up to Rio 2012*, 2011.

⁴⁶ Bär et al., *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-up to Rio 2012*, 2011.

⁴⁷ Bär et al., *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-up to Rio 2012*, 2011.

⁴⁸ UNCSD, *Co-Chairs' Summary Second Preparatory Committee Meeting United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012*, 2011.

⁴⁹ UNDPI, *Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference*, 2011.

⁵⁰ UNCSD, *Building Our Common Future*, 2011.

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. (1992). *Agenda 21*. Retrieved July 19, 2011 from <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/>

This document is one of one the major outcomes that resulted from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992. It is a comprehensive plan of action with recommendations to be carried through at the global, national and local level. Pursuant to this Agenda 21, were adopted Programs for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 in 1997, 2002 and 2010. Agenda 21 is an essential document for the preparation of delegates to familiarize with implementation of sustainable development principles at various levels.

United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. (2011). *Co-chairs Summary First Preparatory Committee Meeting for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012*. Retrieved August 25, 2011 from http://www.uncsd2012.org/files/other_pdfs/prepcom1/CoChairsSummary.pdf

Written by the Co-Chairs of the First Preparatory Committee held in advance of Rio+20, this report summarizes the proceedings of the meeting. The introductory section of the report discussed the opening session of the meeting (including organizational features and the main objectives of the 2012 conference. The first section of the report is focused on gathering and evaluating progress information and documents from previous conference on sustainable development, as well as outlining new and emerging challenges for Rio+20. The second section provides definitions and objectives for the transition to a green economy, whilst the third section is focused on the second theme of the conference: institutional framework. This document is essential for the preparation of the committee as it provides an insight to the official preparatory process and progress and delegations' input.

United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. (2011). *Co-chairs summary Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012*. Retrieved August 25, 2011 from <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/Co-Chairs%20Summary%20of%20PrepCom%202.pdf>

This document by the UNCSD is the report of the Second Preparatory Committee Meeting in the preparatory process of the 2012 Rio conference. The second installment of the Preparatory Committee Meeting report covers the same points as the previous publication only with more input from delegations, as subregional preparatory meetings take place. This installment introduces the SIDS input on blue economy. This document is essential for the preparation of the committee as it provides an insight to the official preparatory process and progress and delegations' input.

United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (2011). *Rio+20: Making it Happen: Special Issue on "Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development. Volume 2, Issue 14*. Retrieved August 24, 2011 from : [http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/Volume%202.%20Issue%2014%20\(29%20July%202011\).pub.pdf](http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/Volume%202.%20Issue%2014%20(29%20July%202011).pub.pdf)

The UNCSD Newsletter "Rio+20: Making it happen" is a weekly publication by Secretariat of the UNDESA. It provides updates on the preparatory process of Rio+20 including input from various UN offices, subregional committees, major groups and international governmental organizations. Two special issues focus on each of the main themes of the conference: the transition to a green economy and the institutional framework. It is a useful tool for the preparation of the delegate with frequent updates.

United Nations Environment Program. (1972). *Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*. Retrieved September 19, 2011, from <http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid=97&articleid=1503>

This declaration is an essential background document to understand the evolution of environmental and sustainable development talks in the realm of United Nations conferences. It is the outcome document of the first ever international conference organized at the UN level and concerned with the environment. Delegates will find most interesting to familiarize with the early principles agreed on the relation of the human to its environment. The declaration clearly proclaims in its first installment that the environment as a cornerstone to the basic human right of a decent life.

United Nations General Assembly. (2010). *Implementation of Agenda 21, the Program for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/RES/64/236)*. Retrieved July 19, 2011 from <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/RES/64/236>

Resolution 64/236 was signed at the General Assembly's 64th session on March 31, 2011. It is a political document that aims at renewing the international community's commitment, assess the progress and gaps of implementation of the Agenda 21 so far and address emerging challenges for the future of sustainable development and in the light of Rio+20. This resolution also identifies the two main topics of the 2012 Rio conference: green economy in the context of poverty eradication and the institutional framework for sustainable development. Thus this resolution is important for delegates to familiarize with the immediate context that saw the organization of the Rio+20 conference.

World Commission on Environment and Development. (1987). *Our Common Future: The Brundtland Report*. Retrieved July 19, 2011 from <http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>

The Brundtland Report is the outcome document of the World Commission on Environment and Development called for in resolution 37/7. It provides the internationally recognized definition of the concept of sustainable development and represents a cornerstone for sustainable development talks since. Delegates are advised to review this report to understand the basis of sustainable development debates, the definition of sustainable development (Chapter 2 : Towards Sustainable Development) and in particular the three pillars of the concept: the economic, social and environmental aspects of the issue later emphasized at Rio 1992.

Von Moltke, K. (1997). *Why UNEP matters*. Green Globe Yearbook 1997. Retrieved August 26, 2011 from http://www.fni.no/ybiced/96_05_moltke.pdf

This paper by Konrad von Moltke published in 1997 gives an interesting historical approach to the sustainable development talks at the United Nations level with detailed context explanations of the landmark conferences and texts by the international community. The article is interesting for delegates for its perspective on the input and shortcomings all of major events and texts to the debate on the environment and sustainable development.

I. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

Transitioning to a “green economy” (GE) is a concept that has been growing steadily over the years within the realm of sustainable development policy and practice at an international, regional and local level. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) in its Green Economy Report suggests a definition in which a green economy ensures “improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.”⁵¹ Ideally, the transition towards a GE will require shifting away from the current economic system and its production and consumption patterns without undermining wealth creation or employment opportunities.⁵² It is important to note the concept of GE has not been officially defined, and indeed the definition in itself is a contentious issue.⁵³

Throughout the debate on the GE, developing countries have emphasized the need to anchor the GE concept within the broader sustainable development (SD) framework.⁵⁴ This is highlighted in the title of the GE theme for the Rio conference – “in the context of SD and poverty eradication.”⁵⁵ The UNEP Green Economy initiative has identified a number of areas where the GE could lead to this pro-poor growth and can provide incomes to impoverished sectors of populations.⁵⁶ This topic has a wide range of potential directions, many of which are divergent and contradictory of each other, which is the backdrop and context in which we find ourselves in the year leading up to Rio +20.

⁵¹ UNDESA, *Report by Panel of Experts on the Transition to a Green Economy*, 2010.

Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, *Green Economy*, n.d.

⁵² UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

UNCSD, *Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication*, n.d.

⁵³ Bär et al., *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-up to Rio 2012*, 2011.

⁵⁴ Khor, *The “Green Economy” Debate: a Sustainability Perspective*, 2011.

⁵⁵ UNGA, *Objective and themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development*, 2011

⁵⁶ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011, p. 11.

Transitioning to a Green Economy

The emergence of the paradigm of a GE has thrived in a social and economic context marked by the challenge of climate change, the 2008 financial crisis and the heritage of development imperatives framed by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The recent economic crisis, the market failures and unequal distribution of wealth throughout the world provide social and economic justification for a transition to a GE. The rewards of such a change are considerable and need to be engaged by both governments and the private sector.⁵⁷

The trends of the last decade shed light on the flaws of our economies: high oil prices increase the price for basic commodities, the scarcity of water feeds conflicts and social inequities, whilst current production and consumption patterns fuel the threat of climate change. In addition, the question of how to feed the 9 billion people projected to live on earth in 2050 needs to be addressed especially if the international community wants to achieve the MDGs and prevent the depletion of the earth's natural resources and ecosystems.⁵⁸

The transition to a GE will provide economic incentives in areas especially important for poor rural communities of lower income countries, which depend largely on natural resources and ecosystems.⁵⁹ Investments in the world's natural assets will significantly improve the well-being of poor rural communities who depend largely on them. Moreover, an economy based on sustainable development and management of the environment will create employment opportunities at the same level of a business as usual scenario with even more job creation in the long term for the sectors of agriculture, energy efficiency in buildings, forestry and transports.⁶⁰

Nonetheless, at the 19th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) it was clear that there is no agreement yet on a shared definition of “green economy” amongst the various actors, with some, specifically NGOs and developing nations, expressing concerns with regard to the relation between the three pillars of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental dimension - and the development of a GE.⁶¹ Indeed, the links between the three dimensions is itself, unclear, yet it is an important concept, especially for developing countries whose social and economic development must not be sidelined in the process of greening the world economy.⁶² Members of the G77 also fear that the new environmental standards and norms could result in a new form of protectionism, hindering the economic development of developing countries.⁶³ At the sub-regional preparatory meeting for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), held on the Seychelles in early mid-2011, participants emphasized that the GE is “not [a] one size fits all” solution.⁶⁴ The report resulting from this preparatory meeting goes on to stress the need to recognize the specific needs of the SIDS in the development of the concept of a “blue” economy, alongside a “green” economy, the former of which is more focused on the sustainable management of fisheries and the oceans as well as better sharing mechanisms for the benefits of the resources of the oceans.⁶⁵ The concept of a blue economy continues to develop as an approach for any state whose territory comprises maritime borders and/or islands.⁶⁶ A similar notion in the debate to recognize the diversity of framework conditions for the transition to and shape of a green economy between different countries, is to use the plural term “green economies” and thus underscore the bottom-up nature of the concept.

The Green Economy within the United Nations

The United Nations has focused a great deal of its energy over the past two decades on issues of SD, and in recent years, particularly the issue of the green economy. Part of the impetus for the recent interest in the issue, is the increased, visible, environmental degradation, with negative effects on human health and the ecosystem, triggered by

⁵⁷ UNDESA, *Report by Panel of Experts on the Transition to a Green Economy*, 2010.

⁵⁸ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

⁵⁹ UNDESA, *Report by Panel of Experts on the Transition to a Green Economy*, 2010, p.81. Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, *Earth Summit 2012*, n.d.

⁶⁰ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

⁶¹ Bär et al., *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-up to Rio 2012*, 2011.

⁶² UNEP, *Why a Green Economy Matter sot the Least Developed Countries*, 2011.

⁶³ Bär et al., *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-up to Rio 2012*, 2011.

⁶⁴ UNCSD, *Rio+20 Subregional preparatory meeting of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) Subregion*, 2011, p.2.

⁶⁵ IISD, *Summary of the UNCSD Subregional Preparatory Meeting for the Caribbean*, 2011.

⁶⁶ UNCSD, *Co-Chairs' Summary Second Preparatory Committee Meeting United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012*, 2011.

rapid growth rates in the Asia-Pacific region beginning in 2005.⁶⁷ In response, the fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific, coordinated by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), agreed on a “Green Growth” concept for the first time. At the conference, the latter was defined as an “economic progress that fosters environmentally sustainable, low-carbon and socially inclusive development”, which involves “using fewer resources and generating fewer emissions in meeting demand.”⁶⁸ The “inventor” of the concept – the Republic of Korea – has further promoted the concept in the G20 in its 2010 Seoul declaration.⁶⁹ UNEP leads the UN efforts under the heading of the Green Economy Initiative, which it promoted more openly as an alternative development concept since the 2008 financial crisis. Under it, UNEP works with other UN and international agencies on various aspects.

In 2007, the UNEP joined with the International Labor Organization (ILO), the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and later the International Employers Organization (IEO) to establish a partnership to address the issue of green jobs.⁷⁰ The initial report resulting from this partnership assesses the challenges of the sector, the needs and opportunities for green jobs to strive.⁷¹ The report promotes the creation of decent jobs as an answer to the challenges of the 21st century: produce with fewer resources and decreased environmental impacts for a growing world demography.⁷² Thus green jobs represent a dual development opportunity in their capacity to merge the sustainability requirements of producing in a world concerned with environment degradation and climate change and the demands of a growing population for more social standards and decent equitable jobs.⁷³

Since 2008, the United Nations Industry and Development Organization (UNIDO) has been engaged in a Green Industry Initiative, whose components - Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) and Cleaner Production (CP) - work towards alleviating the harmful environmental externalities and impacts of the sector of industry by decoupling production and growth from the use of resources: use less to produce more.⁷⁴ Policy recommendations are outlined in UNIDO's Green Industry publication, whilst trends and studies can be found under UNIDO's Green Industry for a Low-Carbon Future.⁷⁵

Resource management: reviewing challenges, opportunities and policy priorities

In a GE, the challenge of agricultural growth is to feed the world's growing population without causing excessive pressure on the sector, depleting the resources of the earth, damaging its ecosystems or human health.⁷⁶ This sustainable intensification calls for an increased rate of productivity with reduced environmental impacts, which can be achieved through, for example, more ecologically sound farming practices that rely on water efficiency; innovation and diversification; climate, pests and weed resistant crops and better management of the latter.⁷⁷ Such changes require actions such as investments, the removal of subsidies that distort the market, better regulation to incorporate environmental degradation costs in the commodity price, and job creation.⁷⁸ Additionally, key sectors that require significant research and development include “soil fertility management; more efficient and sustainable water use; crop and livestock diversification; biological plant and animal health management; and appropriate farm level mechanization.”⁷⁹

In order to preserve depleted and degraded ecosystems and to sustain livelihoods, forests and ecosystems need to be managed in a sustainable manner.⁸⁰ This, in turn, supports poverty alleviation efforts, since the livelihoods of the rural communities in a greened economy will protect the natural resources upon which they are dependent for income as well as basic human needs.⁸¹ This is particularly true when examining the issue of water access and water

⁶⁷ UNESCAP, *Report of the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific*, 2005.

⁶⁸ UNESCAP et. al., *Green Growth, Resources and Resilience*, 2011, p.10.

⁶⁹ G20, *The G20 Seoul Summit Leader's Declaration*, 2011.

⁷⁰ UNDPI, *Press conference to launch study “Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable Low-Carbon World”*, 2008.

⁷¹ UNDPI, *Press conference to launch study “Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable Low-Carbon World”*, 2008.

⁷² UNDPI, *Press conference to launch study “Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable Low-Carbon World”*, 2008.

⁷³ UNEP, ILO, ITUC, IEC, *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*, 2008.

⁷⁴ UNIDO, *Green Industries: Policies for Supporting Green Industries*, 2011, Foreword.

⁷⁵ UNIDO, *Green Industry for a Low-Carbon Future*, 2011.

⁷⁶ OECD, *A Green Growth Strategy for Food and Agriculture: Preliminary Report*, 2011.

⁷⁷ OECD, *A Green Growth Strategy for Food and Agriculture: Preliminary Report*, 2011, p.22.

⁷⁸ OECD, *A Green Growth Strategy for Food and Agriculture: Preliminary Report*, 2011.

⁷⁹ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

⁸⁰ European Communities, *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity*, 2008.

⁸¹ European Communities, *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity*, 2008.

security. At present, water remains an expensive commodity, often costing a significant portion of monthly income, particularly for those living in poverty, to access clean water.⁸² Moreover, the risks associated with climate change, including floods or desertification also contribute to the argument for a better management of water resources, as to avoid exacerbating already existing tensions over scarce water resources, which can multiply the risks for conflict and displacement.⁸³

In terms of the blue economy, which can be seen as part of the GE, a more sustainable way of managing fish and marine stocks is essential both to prevent the total collapse of the ocean ecosystems as well as to sustain it as a source of employment, food security and income for many people in the world.⁸⁴ Transitioning to a green economy would entail the decommissioning of large vessels and the reallocating of fishing potential throughout smaller fishing units and thus recreate jobs.⁸⁵ The transition towards more sustainable fishing methods, through the replacement of large fishing vessels with fleets of smaller fishing boats and after giving fish stocks the time to rebuild would cause a temporary decrease in employment.⁸⁶ However once the stocks are recovered, the creation of jobs for small-sized fishing fleets would increase in response by 2050.⁸⁷

Towards a green economy: a sectoral approach

The UNEP publication, *Towards a Green Economy*, compiles the various conditions to establish a green economy worldwide according to sectors of the world economies. More than a sectoral catalogue, this experts report provides a comprehensive overview of the prospects of a green economy as an engine of growth.⁸⁸ The sectors treated in the report cover investment in natural capital (agriculture, fisheries, water and forests) and investment in energy and resource efficiency (renewable energies, manufacturing, waste, buildings, transport, waste and cities), thus providing basic knowledge for the decision maker in key sectors.⁸⁹

Building and transport

An important aspect of this sectoral approach is the building sector. With the largest contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions (8.6 billion tons of CO₂), the third largest consumption of resources including water and a significant amount of solid waste, the building sector is of paramount importance in the transition to a greener and more sustainable economy for our and future generations.⁹⁰ With adequate policy reforms including better efficiency and greater financial incentives, the building sector can become more sustainable by massively improving energy and resource efficiency.⁹¹ In 2006, the UN launched the Sustainable Building and Climate Initiative to provide a global platform for stakeholders of the building industry, to share and meet needs and challenges of the sector.⁹² The C40 Cities initiative launched in 2008, which brings together 40 of the world's largest cities engaged in the fight against climate change, is another related initiative which demonstrates that cities are key actors in promoting sustainable development.⁹³ The cities of the world consume two-thirds of the world's energy and produce 70% of its CO₂ emissions, they concentrate a growing half of the world's population and most of the largest ones are in coastal areas particularly at risk of climate change related sea-level rise.⁹⁴ Consequently, cities throughout the world have opportunities to reduce their contribution to environmental degradation and global climate change by reducing their carbon emissions and increasing their energy efficiency for instance.⁹⁵

Closely linked to the question of building and urban planning, the issue of transportation must also be considered in a transition to a green economy. Indeed, the current design of transportation, relying mostly on private transport

UNCSD, *Rio+20: United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)*, n.d.

⁸² UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011, p.10.

⁸³ Evans, et. al., *Making Rio 2012 work*, 2011, p.10.

⁸⁴ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p.93.

⁸⁵ UNEP, ILO, ITUC, IEC, *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*, 2008.

⁸⁶ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

⁸⁷ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

⁸⁸ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p.24.

⁸⁹ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p.24.

⁹⁰ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

⁹¹ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p.329.

⁹² UNEP, *Sustainable Building and Climate Initiative – Promoting Policies and Practices for Sustainability*, (n.d).

⁹³ C40 Cities, *Fact Sheet: why Cities?*, (n.d.).

⁹⁴ C40 Cities, *Fact Sheet: why Cities?*, (n.d.).

⁹⁵ C40 Cities, *CDP Cities 2011 – Global Report on C40 Cities: Carbon Disclosure Project*, 2011.

C40 Cities, *Fact Sheet: why Cities?*, (n.d.).

contributes greatly to the threat of climate change with high levels of pollution and health hazards with up to a quarter of the world's CO₂ emissions.⁹⁶ Within 40 years the fleet of private vehicles in the world is expected to increase three or four-fold, with most of the private vehicles located in non-OECD countries⁹⁷. In this respect, achieving a greener transportation would entail shifting to low carbon vehicles and cleaner alternative fuels such as second-generation biofuels and hydrogen as well as improving clean public transports including with non-motorized transportation.⁹⁸

Consumption and production patterns

With relation to this, the industry sector also needs an overhaul in both manufacturing and waste management to change our consumption and production patterns⁹⁹. The manufacturing industry is currently responsible for 23% employment in the world but also a great amount of environmental hazards due to the toxicity of products, the production processes and the resulting waste, causing both health problems and increased pollution.¹⁰⁰ Greening this sector of the economy would require reinventing our production and consumption patterns including by manufacturing longer-living goods that can be repaired, reused and recycled and giving incentives to the private and public sector to use recycled and reused materials to reduce environmental impacts.¹⁰¹ At the end of the production cycle, waste management will also concur towards the transition with improved waste management and recycling, generating an average growth in job creation of 10% jobs to meet the demand of a growing population.¹⁰²

The consumption of services is no different than that of goods and will undergo changes if it will become greener. In this sector, tourism for instance, poses many threats to the environment, notably greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption, discharge of untreated water, waste generation, damage to local terrestrial and marine biodiversity, and threats to the survival of local cultures and traditions as well as the smuggling of protected and introduction of foreign species.¹⁰³ As a result, there are many entry points within the sector that could be impacted through sustainable development and the transition to a GE, including through the creation of related jobs and employment opportunities.¹⁰⁴ In return a greener tourism sector can act towards to sustaining the local economy, achieving poverty eradication and environmental and cultural conservation through the employment of local population and the conservation of local environmental knowledge and heritage.¹⁰⁵ This transition will require the action of private and public actors to end business-as-usual.¹⁰⁶

Energy

Renewable energies and energy efficiency are cornerstones for the transition to a GE. They require investments, research and development and job creation especially since it has shown to be an engine for growth and employment.¹⁰⁷ According to UN experts, if half of the investment for energy solutions are directed towards renewable energies, it would result in 20% more job creation than a business as usual scenario by 2050.¹⁰⁸ The development of this sector significantly benefits from economic incentives such as feed-in tariffs or renewable portfolio-standards. This would also lift out of poverty the 1.6 billion people who currently live without electricity and decreasing the associated health hazards of living off biomass for the 2.7 billion people dependent on it.¹⁰⁹

Reform of the financial framework: an investment-led strategy for structural change

Four macroeconomic challenges for the transition to a green economy have been identified within the international community: the challenge of incorporating in today's green investments the welfare and environmental benefits of future generations; the possibility of a slower economic growth in the course of the transition to a green economy (to

⁹⁶ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

⁹⁷ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p.381.

⁹⁸ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p.389.

⁹⁹ CSD, *19th Session of the CSD: Chair's summary*, 2011.

¹⁰⁰ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

¹⁰¹ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p.285.

¹⁰² UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

¹⁰³ UNEP, *Making Tourism More Sustainable*, 2005.

¹⁰⁴ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

¹⁰⁵ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p.414.

¹⁰⁶ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p.415.

¹⁰⁷ UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Synthesis for Policy-Makers*, 2011.

¹⁰⁸ UNDESA, *Report by Panel of Experts on the Transition to a Green Economy*, UNDESA DSD, UNEP, UNCTAD, 2011.

¹⁰⁹ World Bank, *World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change*, 2009, p.192.

IEA, *Energy Poverty: How to Make Modern Energy Access Universal?*, 2010, p. 7.

allow natural resource stocks to rebuild); the need for technology transfers; and finally the issue of financing the technological revolution which would permit the transition.¹¹⁰

To finance the transition to a green economy, the experts report a “\$1.3 trillion (2% of world GDP) target for green (public plus private) investments.”¹¹¹ A solution for financing the transition was proposed by civil society organizations during a Rio+20 preparatory meeting¹¹². They put forth the idea of establishing an international tax on financial transaction directed with a specific focus on funding social protection for most vulnerable populations and the agricultural sector in the transition.¹¹³ The idea has also been raised in the European Commission when a tax on financial transactions aimed at raising 57 billion Euros was suggested in September 2011. European Commissioners have expressed their intention to partly allocate this revenue to fulfill the European funding pledges to fight climate change.¹¹⁴ There is also a need for an overhaul of domestic tax systems to redirect them towards purposes of developing and sustaining the green economy as well as giving investment incentives in the sector of renewable energies and low-carbon technologies.¹¹⁵

International trade is a major feature of the economic aspect of the green economy, thus reforming it is paramount for the installment of a green economy rid of subsidies directed towards the industrial farming sector in the developed world but rather incentives for investment in local and environmentally sound farmers.¹¹⁶ As Aaron Cosbey highlights it in the UNEP Green Economy Report, most environmentally respectful technologies are concentrated in the developed world, thus to ensure dissemination of technologies there must be export opportunities. Thus an overhaul of the international trade system is necessary to ensure the dissemination of best practices and technologies and remove subsidies in areas of trade with harmful environmental impacts to create disincentives for activities with important environmental impacts in favor of more sustainable sectors with little to no environmental impacts.¹¹⁷

Local educational imperatives to foster social improvements

To disseminate best practices and technologies affordable to the countries in need of this knowledge there needs to be increased cooperation between those producing and benefiting from research and development investments and those in need of research and development opportunities.

For an effective societal and economic shift to a green economy, new governance structures need to be implemented.¹¹⁸ Concerning international institutions, their role will remain similar to their usual prerogatives “coordination of the information, negotiation, and implementation” and “increase the likelihood that states will live up to their commitments to protect the environment.”¹¹⁹ Civil society, for instance, should oversee that sustainable development in theory is implemented in practice and that the promises of an environmentally sound and equitable economy for all becomes a reality.¹²⁰ Finally, attention must be given to the importance of educating populations to practices respectful to the environment and re-skilling the workforce towards green activities to create a supply of workers that meet the demand of green jobs.¹²¹

Conclusion

The GE is a complex concept that entails all aspects of contemporary economic structures: from production to consumption patterns, both in the developed and developing world. As a result, the transition will require significant structural overhaul and reallocation of investments to ensure that the objectives of the green economy are met. If this transition is made, it has the possibility to result in substantial poverty alleviation, environmental preservation, natural resources repletion and conservation. Through “relatively small investments in strategic sectors, such as

¹¹⁰ UNDESA, *Report by Panel of Experts on the Transition to a Green Economy*, 2011, p.3.

¹¹¹ UNDESA, *Report by Panel of Experts on the Transition to a Green Economy*, 2011.

¹¹² UNDPI, *Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference*, 2011.

¹¹³ UNDPI, *Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference*, 2011.

¹¹⁴ ENDS Europe, *EC: financial tax would help fund climate efforts*, 2011.

¹¹⁵ Bär et al., *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-up to Rio 2012*, 2011.

¹¹⁶ Boston University Pardee Center, *Beyond Rio+20: Governance for a Green Economy*, 2011.

¹¹⁷ UNDESA, *Report by Panel of Experts on the Transition to a Green Economy*, 2011.

¹¹⁸ Boston University Pardee Center, *Beyond Rio+20: Governance for a Green Economy*, 2011.

¹¹⁹ Boston University Pardee Center, *Beyond Rio+20: Governance for a Green Economy*, 2011, p.11.

¹²⁰ Boston University Pardee Center, *Beyond Rio+20: Governance for a Green Economy*, 2011, p.82.

¹²¹ UNEP, et. al., *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*, 2008.

renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, energy efficiency in buildings and sustainable transport and low carbon mobility,” the world will experience “higher long-term growth and improved environmental outcomes,” with ideally, little “negative impact on employment in the long run.”¹²² A green economy is, therefore, a win-win universal solution.

Annotated Bibliography

I. Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

Rockström, J., Steffen, W., Noone, K., Persson, Å., Chapin, F., Lambin, E. et. al. (2009). *A Safe Operating Space for Humanity*. *Nature*, 461(7263), 472-475. Retrieved September 18, 2011 from <http://www.environment.arizona.edu/files/env/profiles/liverman/rockstrom-etc-liverman-2009-nature.pdf>

This article published in the review Nature, along with the visual support that accompanies it, provides the reader and delegate with basic scientific understanding of the importance of safeguarding the earth environment, ecosystems and biodiversity. The authors briefly review environmental degradation processes and rates to highlight the margin left to humans for their use of the earth resources. It is a useful tool for any decision maker to grasp the reality of environmental degradation and most urgent challenges ahead.

United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. (2011). Co-chairs summary Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012. Retrieved August 25, 2011 from <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/Co-Chairs%20Summary%20of%20PrepCom%202.pdf>

This document by the UNCSD is the report of the Second Preparatory Committee Meeting in the preparatory process of the 2012 Rio conference. The second installment of the Preparatory Committee Meeting report covers the same points as the previous publication only with more input from delegations, as subregional preparatory meetings take place. This installment introduces the SIDS input on blue economy. This document is essential for the preparation of the committee as it provides an insight to the official preparatory process and progress and delegations' input.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2011). *World Economic and Social Survey 2011: The Great Green Technological Transformation*. Retrieved October 5, 2011 from <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/2011wess.pdf>

This report is produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and it is focused on the technological changes that a transition towards a green economy would require. The report recalls that economic growth and sustainability are not opposing objectives for the world economies but are rather intrinsically linked. To ensure both and also include the least developed countries and population in the process, the UNDESA survey proposes a collection of technological transformations pertaining to various sectors of our economies' activities. This survey is essential for delegates to understand the opportunities of a technological 'green' revolution.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2010). *Report by Panel of Experts on the Transition to a Green Economy*. Retrieved July 19, 2011 from <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=12&menu=45>

This document is a report requested at the First Preparatory Committee Meeting for Rio 2012. It has been prepared by UNDESA, DSD, UNEP and UNCTAD. The report compiles three experts' papers each focused on an aspect of the transition to a green economy. The first one is concerned with macro-economic implications, the second with international trade, investment and technology and the third with the challenges of implementing a green economy in developing states. This report is paramount for the preparation of the delegates as it is a central document for the preparatory process of the UNCSD.

¹²² UNDESA, *Remarks by Sha Zukang at The Second Preparatory Meeting of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Side Event on UN-wide Contribution to Supporting Countries to Make a Transition*, 2011.

United Nations Environment Program. (2011). *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*. Retrieved August 28, 2011 from:

<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/GreenEconomyReport/tabid/29846/Default.aspx>

This report produced by the UNEP with experts and economists input provides evidence that a green economy can be an engine rather than a drag for economic growth. The report is divided in three parts, the first one focused on investment in natural capital, the second with investing in energy and resource efficiency and the last part with the necessary structural changes to support this transition. This report is essential for a comprehensive overview of the implications of a green economy for the environmental resources and industrial sectors.

United Nations Environment Program. (2011). *Why a Green Economy Matters to the Least Developed Countries*. Retrieved October 5, 2011, from

http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/unep_unctad_un-ohrlls_en.pdf

This document is a publication by the United Nations Environment Program focused on the relation of least developed countries to the notion of a green economy. It is particularly important for the delegates to get a comprehensive overview of the political, social and economic implications of the transition to a green economy from the perspective of least developed countries. It sheds light on the challenges facing developing countries with respect to their special relation to agriculture, natural resources, technology, energy and industrial development.

United Nations Environment Program, International Labor Organization, International Trade Union Confederation, and International Employers Organization. (2008). *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*. Retrieved August 29, 2011, from http://www.unep.org/labour_environment/PDFs/Greenjobs/UNEP-Green-Jobs-Towards-Sustainable-Summary.pdf

This document is a report by the World Watch Institute, funded by the UNEP in the framework of the Green Jobs Initiative in partnership with ILO, ITUC and IOE. It reports on green jobs worldwide and presents estimates for green job creations in the future. Thus it is useful to highlight employment opportunities of a green economy. This document also provides the delegate with various examples of already existing green jobs initiatives throughout the world.

United Nations General Assembly. (2011). *Objective and themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development: Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.216/PC/7)*. Retrieved October 5, 2011 from

<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/CONF.216/PC/7>

This General Assembly document is the result of the second session of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Preparatory Committee held on March 7-8, 2011. Its main input is the presentation of the 2012 UNCSD: green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development. It also recalls the three pillars of sustainable development and the political commitment of the international toward poverty eradication. In this sense, this document is essential for delegates to understand in which context and with what goals the topics of the 2012 UNCSD were brought forward.

United Nations Industry and Development Organization. (2011). *Green Industries: Policies for Supporting Green Industries*. Retrieved August 29, 2011 from

http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media/Services/Green_Industry/web_policies_green_industry.pdf

This document is produced by the UNIDO and compiles policy recommendations in order to integrate the industrial sector in the transition to a green economy. The recommendations cover a vast array of issues that would need overhaul: the framework for greening industries, the place of the environment, investment incentives, technologies and instruments. This report is useful for the delegate to familiarize with the need of the major and specific sector of the industry.

United Nations Industry and Development Organization. (2011). *Green Industry for a Low-Carbon Future*. Retrieved August 30, 2011 from

http://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media/Services/Green_Industry/1256_11_Onscreen_Green%20Industry.pdf

This report was commissioned by the UNIDO as part of the Green Industry Program. It focuses on two aspects of industrialization: resource efficiency and resource use as central dimension to improve sustainability of the industrial sector to achieve a greener industry worldwide. The report

analyses trends in resource efficiency and use over the past 25 years in specific regions. It is thus useful for delegates to familiarize with resource use and efficiency and country specifics.

II. Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

“There is widespread acceptance that our current institutions are inadequate in addressing present and emerging challenges. For sustainable development strategies and policies to be enacted, sustainable development institutions need to be robust at all levels - local, sub national, national, regional and global.”¹²³

Introduction

We are currently at a place in the development of our world where “resource intensive consumption and production patterns have already stretched the biosphere’s capacity beyond its limit” meaning “our ecosystems are increasingly inhibited in their ability to perform essential functions such as filtering water, providing food and purifying the air.”¹²⁴ This “deterioration of ecosystems” has “serious consequences for human health and food security, and it also impair economic development opportunities” and poses a “direct threat to realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).”¹²⁵ As stated in the opening quote, “there is widespread acceptance that our current institutions are inadequate “and fail to meet our needs in terms of addressing the challenge of climate change.”¹²⁶

At present, there are 44 UN institutions with mandates for environmental-related activities, and upwards of 500 environmental agreements and associated amendments.¹²⁷ The “fragmentation” that has resulted of the establishment of new institutions, rather than reforming existing ones when agreements are reformed, “creates substantial problems, affecting coordination between international organizations and amongst multilateral environmental agreements.”¹²⁸ Additional challenges to effective governance include problems related to financing of environmental initiatives.¹²⁹

Within the discussion of the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD) topic at Rio+20, several options for ways in which to reform and adapt the structure of institutions will be discussed, including exploring the role of the United Nations General Assembly and Economic and Social Council, the function of the Commission on Sustainable Development and United Nations Environmental Programme (and related environmental governance issues), ways in which to strengthen arrangements at regional and national levels, how best to engage Major Groups and civil society in sustainable development policymaking in the long term, and how to ensure coherence and coordination within the UN system.

Existing structures for sustainable development

The existing institutional framework for sustainable development ranges from the international to regional, national and local level and includes systems “charged with developing, monitoring and implementing policies on sustainable development.”¹³⁰ There are two main governing institutions at the international or global level: United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). Additionally, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and United Nations General Assembly (GA) address the issue of sustainable development and contribute to the overarching international framework.¹³¹

Commission for Sustainable Development

The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), as previously mentioned, was established in 1992.¹³² The work of the Commission has been separated into review and policy cycles, focusing on thematic

¹²³ UNCSD, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011.

¹²⁴ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*: 2011, p. 7.

¹²⁵ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 7.

Castello, *The Environmental Millennium Development Goal: Progress and Barriers to its Achievement*, 2010.

¹²⁶ UNCSD, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011, p. 3.

¹²⁷ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 10.

¹²⁸ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 10.

¹²⁹ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*., 2011, p. 10.

¹³⁰ Stakeholder Forum, *Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development*, n.d.

¹³¹ Stakeholder Forum, *Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development*, n.d.

¹³² IISD, *Summary of the Nineteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development*, 2011.

clusters since 2003, however this system has been “widely perceived to be ineffective, with only low-level government buy-in and limited impact on national decision-making.”¹³³ The main challenges that the CSD faces, which led to its inability to reach consensus and the widely considered “failure” of its most recent session held from 2 – 14 May 2011, include a myriad of factors.¹³⁴ First, the lack of attendance at the CSD by ministers of economy, finance, and trade, leaving “a lion’s share of the discourse up to the environment ministers, despite the need for engagement from an array of other ministers” is cited as a significant barrier, and has been over the previous 18 sessions, to real, concrete action being taken.¹³⁵ Additionally, a “waning confidence in the value of decisions made by the CSD” and subsequent lack of any enforcement mechanism for such decisions, contributed greatly to the perceived and real ineffectiveness of the session.¹³⁶ These and other issues make it a nearly impossible challenge to overcome, without significant reform of the CSD.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and related bodies

The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), founded in June 1972 as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, is “responsible for the coordination of environmental activities” within the United Nations system, and providing support for “developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices.”¹³⁷ As the principal body within the United Nations system in the field of the environment, it is charged with promoting the “coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development” also known as the “third pillar” or “bottom area of the sustainable development pyramid”, as well as “catalyzing the development and implementation of environmental policies and instruments” also known as “multilateral environmental agreements” (MEAs).¹³⁸ Alongside this, the Governing Council, established through General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) on 15 December 1972, promote international cooperation on the issue of the environment, provide general policy guidance, review reports by UNEP on the implementation of relevant programmes within the UN system, and “review the world environmental situation in order to ensure that emerging environmental problems of wide international significance receive appropriate and adequate consideration by Governments.”¹³⁹ The Environmental Management Group (EMG) and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF), established via General Assembly resolution 53/242 (1999), for which UNEP serves as the Secretariat, consists of the specialized agencies, programmes, funds and entities within the United Nations, including the secretariats of the MEAs.¹⁴⁰

Economic and Social Council

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is recognized within the World Summit Outcome Document of 2005 as an entity that needs to be “more effective” as a “principle body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the international development goals.”¹⁴¹ ECOSOC is “uniquely placed as a bridge between normative and operational capacities of the United Nations,” and can capitalize on its existing role in ensuring there is coherence and coordination between UN agencies, programmes and funds on the issue of sustainable development.¹⁴² The various “segments” of ECOSOC, which occur annually, can serve as a forum for strengthening these efforts, and in particular, time could be allotted to ensuring the full implementation of relevant sustainable development decisions.¹⁴³

¹³³ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 9.

¹³⁴ IISD, *Summary of the Nineteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development*, 2011.

¹³⁵ IISD, *Summary of the Nineteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development*, 2011.

ICTSD, *Rio+20 Expectations Unclear as CSD 19 Ends on Sour Note*, 2011.

¹³⁶ ICTSD, *Rio+20 Expectations Unclear as CSD 19 Ends on Sour Note*, 2011.

¹³⁷ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 30.

¹³⁸ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Institutional framework for sustainable development*, 2011.

United Nations Environment Programme, *Environmental Governance: Actors*, n.d.

¹³⁹ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 17.

United Nations Environment Programme, *Governing Council Overview*, n.d.

UNGA, *Institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation (A/RES/2997/XXVII)*, 1972.

¹⁴⁰ UNCSO, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011.

Environmental Management Group, *About the Group: Membership*, n.d.

¹⁴¹ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Institutional framework for sustainable development*, 2011.

¹⁴² United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Institutional framework for sustainable development*, 2011.

¹⁴³ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Institutional framework for sustainable development*, 2011.

United Nations General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA) “plays a central role in fashioning the institutional framework for sustainable development.”¹⁴⁴ In particular, the GA is able to “translate into legal form the content of summit and conference outcomes,” which you can see, for example, in the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development following the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.¹⁴⁵ Over the years, several resolutions have been adopted by the GA reaffirming the connection in the fields of social, economic and environmental development.¹⁴⁶ The Presidents of the General Assembly also play a key role in their official capacity in supporting the “ongoing intergovernmental efforts on sustainable development, including the preparatory process for the Rio +20 Earth Summit.”¹⁴⁷

Previous institutional framework reform efforts

Reform of the institutional framework has focused primarily on international environmental governance (IEG), which includes reforming UNEP, as well as the broader sustainable development governance system, such as the efforts to reform the CSD.¹⁴⁸ It is important to view the UNEP reform efforts as part of the overall efforts to reform sustainable governance institutions, as they have been such a large focus of the international community, but should not take up the entirety of the discussion.¹⁴⁹

From 1992 to 2000 the reform attempts focused on expanding the IEG system included a multitude of new agreements, as well as the establishment of CSD, the Environment Management Group (EMG) and the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF).¹⁵⁰ From 2001 – 2008, reform efforts can be characterized as containing expansive reform plans and also intense political opposition to efforts, ultimately leading to a situation in which it was a challenge to even decide on the process for discussion reform, or the necessity of international environmental governance as a system.¹⁵¹ The consultative process which was called for in 2006 was a concerted efforts to develop plans for reform, however due to significant differences of opinion, the result was not the resolution that had been drafted to inform future processes, but rather advice to “make the best of upcoming intergovernmental meetings.”¹⁵²

In 2009, there was a shift in position from many Member States, regarding the importance of international environmental governance, which is focused more specifically on the UNEP, and does not include reform of the CSD. These discussions led to the adoption of UNEP Governing Council Decision 25/4, which established the UNEP Consultative Group of Ministers and High Level Representatives on International Environmental Governance Reform (The “Consultative Group”) in February 2009.¹⁵³ The Consultative Group held several consultations, with the express mandate to complete its work in 2010.¹⁵⁴ The first meeting in Belgrade in June 2009, provided participants with a number of “ideas and suggestions for reform” of the international environmental governance system.¹⁵⁵ This led into the discussion for the second meeting of the Consultative Group in October 2009, held in Rome, which resulted in a set of “options” for improving IEG, “including a set of objectives” linked with the UN system. These first two meetings are collectively referred to as the “Belgrade Process.”¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁴ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Institutional framework for sustainable development*, 2011.

¹⁴⁵ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Institutional framework for sustainable development*, 2011. Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 27.

¹⁴⁶ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 27.

¹⁴⁷ United Nations General Assembly, *President of the 65th Session: Sustainable Development*, n.d.

¹⁴⁸ UNCSO, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011.

¹⁴⁹ UNCSO, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011.

¹⁵⁰ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 17.

¹⁵¹ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 18.

Najam, *Global Environmental Governance*, n.d.

United Nations General Assembly, *2005 World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1)*, 2005.

¹⁵² Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 19.

Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, Letter from the co-chairs of the informal process of the General Assembly on the strengthening of international environmental governance (UNEP/GC.25/INF/35), 2009.

¹⁵³ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 107.

¹⁵⁴ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 107.

¹⁵⁵ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 111.

¹⁵⁶ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 111.

The final two meetings of the Consultative Group, and most fruitful in the eyes of the international community, were in Nairobi in July 2010 and Helsinki in November 2010, collectively referred to the “Nairobi-Helsinki Process.”¹⁵⁷ The “framing objectives and associated functions, as well as options for broader institutional reform” which had been discussed during the Belgrade process enabled participants to produce a comprehensive document elaborating on broader reform options which provide the framework for the current discussions in the lead-up to Rio+20.¹⁵⁸ These options include a) “enhancing the UNEP, b) establishing a specialized agency, such as a world environmental organization, and c) enhancing institutional reforms and streamlining present structures.”¹⁵⁹

Strengthening the international system

The central goal of this topic is to develop a set of proposals that can be enacted and reform and strengthen the existing institutional framework for sustainable development. Below is a discussion of the central proposals for reform within the areas which are emerging as the central focus for Rio +20.

International Environmental Governance and the UNEP

The International Environmental Governance (IEG) (also called to as “Global” Environmental Governance or “GEG”) refers to the “global environmental architecture” or the “sum of organization, policy instruments, financing mechanism, rules, procedures and norms that regulate the processes of global environmental protection.”¹⁶⁰ As previously mentioned, the central institution which governs the system is the UN Environmental Programme. One of the main suggestions for reforming IEG is to “enhance” UNEP by, among other things, opening up membership to all UN Member States, enabling the body to lead the UN in a system-wide environmental strategy, establish a “permanent science-policy interface,” develop a “multi-scaled policy review mechanism” and enhance its capacity to assist in science and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.¹⁶¹ A related proposal is to establish a specialized agency, which would be a “hybrid normative and operational entity” in the same vein as UN Women, the World Health Organization or the Food and Agriculture Organization.¹⁶² A final proposal includes establishing a “World Environmental Organization” which would be a new “treaty body” – it would be a strong “voice for the environment,” however would be very challenging to adopt by all governments.¹⁶³

There are multiple proposals that have been made which have not been widely accepted or discussed by Member States and are unlikely to become part of any solution to this issue, however they do warrant mention. These include the establishment of an International Environmental Court (ICE) which would “provide a mechanism by which MEAs could be enforced” and a “Parliament for the Environment.”¹⁶⁴

Reform of the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Sustainable Development

Building on the failed previous sessions in which the CSD came to no conclusions regarding their deliberations, calls for change have also been building.¹⁶⁵ There are a number of possibilities related to reforming the Commission on Sustainable Development, in addition to, possible options for reforming the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Suggestions include transforming the Commission on Sustainable Development in several ways, including notably the integration of the CSD into ECOSOC itself, an idea which has gained support in recent months, particularly amongst European delegations.¹⁶⁶ This has the potential to “promote greater convergence between the economic, social and environmental pillars as well as enhanced synergies and cooperation” across the UN system, and “simultaneously advance both sustainable development and the environment.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁵⁷ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 21-22.

¹⁵⁸ UNCSO, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011.

¹⁵⁹ Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level Representatives, *Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome*, 2010.

UNCSO, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011.

¹⁶⁰ Global Environmental Governance Project, *International Environmental Governance Reform*, n.d. Najam, *Global Environmental Governance: A Reform Agenda*, 2006.

¹⁶¹ Global Environmental Governance Project, *Broader IEG Reform*, n.d.

¹⁶² Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 115.

¹⁶³ UNCSO, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011.

¹⁶⁴ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011.

¹⁶⁵ UNCSO, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011.

¹⁶⁶ UNCSO, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011.

¹⁶⁷ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 116.

Enhancing Interagency coordination and coherence

Interagency coordination within the United Nations system is a “crucial component in ensuring coherence” on environmental issues.¹⁶⁸ The options that have been presented at recent high-level preparatory meetings include re-establishing an interagency committee on sustainable development, specifically the High Level Committee on Sustainable Development, “which would act as a subcommittee of the Chief Executive Board.”¹⁶⁹ Another option includes re-establishing the committee, and shifting the following to serve as sub-committees: UN Water, UN Oceans, UN Energy, Environment Management Group.¹⁷⁰ The negative of both options is that it would create another interagency body, when proliferation of committees is an issue in itself.¹⁷¹ However, the positive of in particular the second option, would allow there to be stronger coordination due to the sub-committees working closer together under one overarching body.¹⁷²

Clustering Multilateral Agreements

One proposal for reform includes combining, integrating or merging several multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to make them more efficient and effective.¹⁷³ Clustering potentially “holds the promise of harnessing synergies between MEAs suffering from overlapping competencies,” and involves the coordination and administrative aspect of monitoring agreements, such as holding meetings in the same location.¹⁷⁴ Despite the acknowledged fact that environmental issues are complex and require specific responses, and this might then necessitate multiple international conventions, the “need for integration of related or overlapping MEAs” is nearly undeniable.¹⁷⁵ One example of clustering was initiated in the chemicals and waste sector through the establishment of a joint working group which has succeeded in intensifying cooperation between three of the relevant conventions previously addressed individually.¹⁷⁶

International Finance & Trade Institution Reform

International finance and trade institutions (IFTIs) can play a central role in determining the success of sustainable development policy and programs, through directly supporting through financial support or enabling policy, activities and development programs.¹⁷⁷ IFTIs are also, however, considered to be one of the largest sources, in the minds of many policymakers, and members of civil society, for the current intractable situation, thus reform of this particular area is unlikely.¹⁷⁸

The role of Major Groups

The field of sustainable development has benefited from an organized civil society movement for the past 20 years.¹⁷⁹ At the UNCED in 1992, the concept of the “Major Groups,” was developed as a way to enhance participation and strengthen the inclusion of multiple stakeholders into international processes.¹⁸⁰ Reference to these groups and organization of parallel processes has occurred in 2002 at the WSSD in Johannesburg, and in sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development.¹⁸¹ The resulting Agenda 21 formalized nine of the major groups of people actively participating as a way through which “all citizens could participate in the UN activities on achieving sustainable development”¹⁸² The major groups in the lead-up to Rio +20 include: 1) Business and Industry, 2) Children and Youth, 3) Farmers, 4) Indigenous Peoples, 5) Local Authorities, 6) NGOs, 7) Scientific and Technological Community, 8) Women, and 9) Workers and Trade Unions.¹⁸³

¹⁶⁸ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 69.

¹⁶⁹ UNCSD, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011, p. 5.

¹⁷⁰ UNCSD, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011, p. 5.

¹⁷¹ UNCSD, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011, p. 5.

¹⁷² UNCSD, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011, p. 5.

¹⁷³ UNGA, *Objective and themes of the UNCSD: Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.216/PC/7)*, 2010, p. 24.

¹⁷⁴ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 66.

¹⁷⁵ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 66.

¹⁷⁶ Simon, *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century*, 2011, p. 25.

¹⁷⁷ UNGA, *Objective and themes of the UNCSD: Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.216/PC/7)*, 2010, p. 27.

Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 72.

¹⁷⁸ Stakeholder Forum, *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*, 2011, p. 12.

¹⁷⁹ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Major Groups*, n.d.

¹⁸⁰ Strandeneas, *Sustainable Development Governance towards Rio +20: Framing the Debate*, 2011.

¹⁸¹ Strandeneas, *Sustainable Development Governance towards Rio +20: Framing the Debate*, 2011.

¹⁸² United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Major Groups*, n.d.

¹⁸³ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Major Groups*, n.d.

Major groups will be actively participating in regional capacity building sessions, regional preparatory meetings, and UN Department of Public Information (UNDPI) briefings and UNEP consultation, which aim to reinforce and support governmental preparatory processes occurring at the same time in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Africa region, the Arab region, and the Asia Pacific Region.¹⁸⁴ On September 1, 2011, the UNEP held a Global Consultation with Major Groups and Stakeholders on Rio +20, followed by the UNEP Regional Consultation for Europe on September 2, 2011.¹⁸⁵ The goal of the event was to generate targeted input for the agenda and discussion at Rio+20 through analyzing opportunities and strategic options for the transition to a green economy and the reform of the institutional framework.¹⁸⁶

The myriad of ways in which the Major Groups can participate in the preparatory process for Rio+20 is impressive, however there are areas which remain lacking in terms of contribution to the governance of the institutional framework itself. Some ways in which to do this include developing and maintaining, within UNEP Regional Offices, “regional and sub-regional outreach and partnerships with civil society organization,” and “enhancing civil society’s involvement in the development and implementation of UNEP’s activities in the region.”¹⁸⁷ The overarching message from civil society organizations in how they would like to be integrated into any future institutional changes is simple: participation.¹⁸⁸ All the major groups state an interest in “recognition” that the groups are key actors in the development and implementation of “solutions to environmental challenges.”¹⁸⁹ This participation can be in the form of consultations, as has been occurring, as well as official positions within the governance structures of sustainable development institutional framework – such as a seat on the governing board of a new specialized agency on sustainable development.¹⁹⁰

Conclusion

The challenges faced by the current institutional framework for sustainable development have reached a point where reform is the best course of action forward, the current system does not work. Whether reform takes place through the creation of new institutions, such as a World Environmental Organization or the integration of ECOSOC and CSD, or a combination of several of the previously identified plans, there are concrete solutions which have been proposed that have the real possibility make a meaningful and lasting impact on the governance of sustainable development institutions at the international level. Reform of the institutional framework is a necessary step in ensuring sustainable development becomes the norm for development efforts globally.

Questions for delegates to consider as they move forward in research on IFSD include, identifying the many proposals under consideration and assessing the best ways in which to make the system strong, resilient and responsive to the threat of climate change? How can the UN Environmental Programme be reformed to more effectively implement its mandate? What are the options for the Commission on Sustainable Development? How can civil society organizations be part of the governance structure of new entities?

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II. Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

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¹⁸⁴ Carpentier, *Rio+20 The UN conference on Sustainable Development*, 2011.

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Major groups Regional and other Capacity Building Workshops*, n.d. UNESCAP, *Major Group Participation: Guide to the Asian and Pacific Preparatory process for Rio +20*, 2011.

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¹⁸⁷ UNCSO, *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening IFSD*, 2011, p. 20.

¹⁸⁸ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Responses to Bureau on Major Groups engagement*, n.d.

¹⁸⁹ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Responses to Bureau on Major Groups engagement*, n.d.

¹⁹⁰ United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, *Responses to Bureau on Major Groups engagement*, n.d.

The Consultative Group of Ministers or High-level Representatives on International Environmental Governance was mandated to discuss broader reform of the international environmental governance system and develop a set of options that could be considered at the 2012 Rio conference. The Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome is the result of the second meeting of the Consultative Group held in 2010. The document proposes several reform initiatives for the IFSD framework, including increasing cooperation on environmental agreements and reforming the Commission on Sustainable Development. This document should ground the work of the committee on this topic, thus it is highly relevant for delegates to review.

International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2010). *Sustainable Development: From Brundtland to Rio 2012*. Background Paper prepared for consideration by the High Level Panel on Global Sustainability at its first meeting, 19 September 2010. Retrieved October 10, 2011 from:

http://www.un.org/wcm/webdav/site/climatechange/shared/gsp/docs/GSPI-6_Background%20on%20Sustainable%20Devt.pdf

This resource was published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development as a background paper for the High Level Panel on Global Sustainability in 2010. The document is critical in the current proposals for reform, as well as the sustainable development movement in general, citing the ongoing environmental crisis, compounded by the economic crisis as a sign that urgent action must be taken, including in the reform of institutions governing sustainable development. This document is very helpful for delegates as it clearly lays out the options and background for the IFSD discourse.

Strandenaes, J. (2011). *Sustainable Development Governance towards Rio+20: Framing the Debate*. Retrieved July 15, 2011 from: http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/SDG%20Paper%20Jan%20Gustav%20_2_.pdf

This paper, published as part of the Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future “think pieces” series, aims to provide context for the discussion of institutional framework in the context of sustainable development. The document outlines the history of global governance and identifies milestones, as well as challenges and proposals for reform. Although shorter and less comprehensive than other resources, it is useful for a succinct version of the background of this issue.

Simon, N. (2011). *International Environmental Governance for the 21st Century: Challenges, Reform Processes and Options for Action on the Way to Rio 2012*. Retrieved July 18, 2011 from: http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/2011_RP01_sin_ks.pdf

Published by Nils Simon of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, this paper provides an overview of the current IEG reform options moving into Rio +20. The document focuses in particular on the UNEP and the complex system that has developed to manage multilateral environmental agreements, and highlights the ways to fix the underlying issues. Although only examining one slice of the IFSD discussion, delegates will find the report informative and helpful in identifying the key trends and issues in this very important field.

Stakeholder Forum. (2011). *A Pocket Guide to Sustainable Development Governance*. Retrieved July 18, 2011 from: <http://www.stakeholderforum.org/fileadmin/files/sdgpocketguideFINAL-no%20crop%20marks.pdf>.

This report was recently published by the stakeholder Forum and the Commonwealth Secretariat in an effort to fill the “knowledge gap” on the context of the issue of global governance for sustainable development. This guide provides a comprehensive and detailed background on various related concepts, global institutions, reform proposals and the processes involved with global sustainable development governance. This document will without a doubt be incredibly valuable to delegates in their research on this topic.

The Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future. (2011). *Beyond Rio+20: Governance for a Green Economy*. Retrieved July 19, 2011 from: <http://www.bu.edu/pardee/publications/green-economy/>

The Frederick S. Pardee Center for the Study of the Longer-Range Future at Boston University convened a task force of experts to examine the institutional framework for making the green economy a reality. The report outlines lessons learned from institutions for sustainable development over the last several decades, and proposes opportunities for “continuous development of a green economy in the future.” This report, although slightly theoretical, will

provide a grounding for delegates on this topic and can serve as a strong representation of the current streams of discourse from across academic institutions globally on this topic.

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. (2011). *Discussion Paper: High Level Dialogue on Strengthening the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development*. Retrieved October 11, 2011 from: http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/SOLO%20DISCUSSION%20PAPER_TEXT.pdf

This paper, published by the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, focuses on the institutional framework for sustainable development theme of the Rio conference. Proposing key questions and options for discussion during a mid-2011 High Level Dialogue on Strengthening the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development, the paper attempts to serve as a “think-piece” for attendees to the dialogue and beyond. Delegates will find this resource particularly informative as it clearly lays out the options at time of printing for the IFSD reform.

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. (2011). *Institutional framework for sustainable development*. Retrieved July 18, 2011 from:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=12&nr=228&menu=63>

This is the official webpage for this topic on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) website. The webpage provides a brief overview of the issue at hand, as well as provides links to key background documents, presentations, and other related publications. This source is an excellent starting place for delegates beginning research on this topic.

United Nations General Assembly. (2011). *Synthesis report on best practices and lessons learned on the objective and themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Note by the Secretariat (A/CONF.216/PC/8)*. Retrieved July 19, 2011 from:

<http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=A/CONF.216/PC/8>.

As requested by the 1st session of the Preparatory Committee for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, this report synthesizes input from Member States, UN system entities, international financial institutions, and other major stakeholders on the key themes that will be discussed in 2012. The report is broken up into multiple sections which aim to provide insight into the key challenges and gaps remaining, as well as good practices as perceived by the respondents. This report is useful in gaining a clearer picture of the diversity of opinions held within stakeholders on the issues related to sustainable development and its institutional framework, and might spark some idea for delegates in ways in which to move forward on the issue.

United Nations University. (2002). *International Sustainable Development Governance - The Question of Reform: Key Issues and Proposals*. Retrieved July 17, 2011 from:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/ISDGFfinalReport.pdf>.

Published by United Nations University as part of a large-scale collaborative research initiative, this report was presented to the World Summit on Sustainable development in 2002. Although nine years old, this document still provides a solid background on the various institutions and options for reform within the field of sustainable development. Delegates should in particular focus Section 2, as it provides an overview of issues and challenges that still remain to this day.

III. The social dimension of the green economy

Green economies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should be economic systems that foster citizen participation; require social justice and equity and gender equality; protection of ecosystems; creation of economic sufficiency, and that aims for the core idea that green economies enhance sustainable development and prosperity of all nations; ensure the wellbeing of all people; respect the rights, cultures, languages and wisdom of indigenous peoples and local communities; safeguard animal welfare and conserve biodiversity for future generations, while stressing that green economy does not replace sustainable development.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ UNDPI, *Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference: Sustainable Societies: Responsive Citizens*, 2011, p. 6.

Introduction

There is a real imperative for sustainable development and a transition to an inclusive, just green economy to be successful. As the world's population has expanded over the last 50 years, "humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and more extensively than in any comparable period of time in human history," resulting in a "substantial and irreversible loss in the diversity of life on Earth."¹⁹² Simultaneously, there are currently 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty worldwide, and the number of people who are hungry is over a billion people and rising.¹⁹³ We have therefore an economic, social and environmental crisis that cannot be ignored – sustainable development, of which a green economy is a part of – is thought to be a promising way to address these current issues head-on.

The social dimension of the green economy (GE) encompasses efforts, within the context of sustainable development, to alleviate poverty and attempts to provide access to education, strengthen health systems, and generate employment opportunities, with a special focus on youth, women and disadvantaged groups.¹⁹⁴ There is a widespread consensus amongst the United Nations system, and a large number of countries and civil society organizations, that without adequately addressing the social dimension of sustainable development, the transition to a green economy will be undermined.¹⁹⁵ Poverty eradication and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing – eradicating poverty is a "requirement for sustainable development," and a green economy can contribute significantly to this goal.¹⁹⁶

The social dimension is vital when discussing the green economy in the global context, particularly for developing countries, as it represents an opportunity to contribute to poverty alleviation, while at the same time strengthening economies.¹⁹⁷ Indeed, critical voices from developing countries and civil society worry that the green economy concept could serve as a substitute for the sustainable development framework. In that, they fear that the current lack of a shared definition would lead to a GE that is nothing more than a "greened capitalism" that fails to address development priorities and global justice.

International Framework and Definitions

The very concept of a GE was developed partially "in response to the growing [realization] that our system of production and consumption, based as it is on the need for and the possibility of infinite growth fuelled by fossil energy was quickly running into certain limits imposed by the fact that we continue to live on a finite planet."¹⁹⁸

There is a wide array of, but at present there is no internationally agreed definition of the term.¹⁹⁹ Definitions range from characterizing green economy as one which is "low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive," as defined by the UNEP, to concepts focusing on "greening a brown economy," which leaves out the attempts by more inclusive definitions to address underlying socio-economic issues, including poverty.²⁰⁰ A comprehensive definition of a green economy was put forth within the Final Declaration of the September 2011 United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) conference as an "economic system that fosters citizen participation; requires social justice and equity and gender equality; protection of ecosystems; creation of economic sufficiency, and that aims for the core idea that green economies enhance sustainable development and prosperity of all nations."²⁰¹ A green economy should further ensure "the wellbeing of all people; respect the rights, cultures, languages and wisdom of indigenous peoples and local communities; safeguard animal welfare and conserve biodiversity for future generations."²⁰²

¹⁹² Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, *Current State & Trends Assessment*, 2005.

¹⁹³ United Nations General Assembly, *Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015: Report of the Secretary-General (A/64/665)*, 2010, p. 4.

¹⁹⁴ UNDPI, *Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference: Sustainable Societies: Responsive Citizens*, 2011, p. 7.

¹⁹⁵ UNGA, *Objective and themes of the UNCSD: Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.216/PC/7)*, 2010.

¹⁹⁶ UNCSD, *Delhi Dialogue on "Green Economy and Inclusive Growth": Concept Note*, 2011, p. 1.

¹⁹⁷ UNGA, *Objective and themes of the UNCSD: Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.216/PC/7)*, 2010.

¹⁹⁸ Mueller, *Beyond the "Green Economy": System Change, Not Climate Change?*, 2011, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ UNEP, *Background paper for the ministerial consultations: Green economy (UNEP/GC.26/17/Add. 1)*, 2011.

²⁰⁰ UNEP, *What is the "Green Economy"*, n.d.

Fulai, *A Green Economy: Conceptual Issues*, 2010.

²⁰¹ UNDPI, *Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference: Sustainable Societies: Responsive Citizens*, 2011.

²⁰² UNDPI, *Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference: Sustainable Societies: Responsive Citizens*, 2011.

Efforts to transition to a green economy, when using the more expansive definition of the term, support the social dimension of sustainable development through job-creation, improved educational opportunities, and investing in green infrastructure and public services, while at the same time ensuring “gender equality, democracy” improved “human well-being,” and reduction of “environmental risks.”²⁰³

There are several principles that help connect the concept of the green economy to social development. These principles include the right to development, which is defined as “human development in harmony with the environment is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development, so that individuals and societies are empowered to achieve positive social and environmental outcomes.”²⁰⁴ Additionally, the Rio principle of “common but differentiated responsibility” guides this issue.²⁰⁵ Common but differentiated responsibility acknowledges that “despite their common responsibilities, important differences exist between the stated responsibilities of developed and developing countries.”²⁰⁶ Additional key differences between developed and developing countries include whether with the green economy will come “new forms of conditionality and protectionism, the exclusion of marginalized groups, and the commodification of nature.”²⁰⁷

The social dimension of the green economy is also grounded in outcome documents, international conventions, and treaties focused on sustainable development, social issues, and the environment. Of particular importance are: *Agenda 21*, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development’s *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation* (JPOI), the *Earth Charter*, and the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*.²⁰⁸ The *Rio Declaration* in particular provides some principles of sustainability, namely the “right to development” (principle 3) as well as the “responsibility to protect the environment as an integral part of the development process (principle 4).”²⁰⁹

Poverty eradication

Poverty is defined as a “multidimensional phenomenon” which encompasses not only the “economic arena,” but also prevention of an individual from participation in social and political spheres of life.²¹⁰ The issue is complex, and is characterized by the United Nations as follows:

*“[Poverty] has various manifestations, including lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition; ill health; limited or lack of access to education and other basic services; increased morbidity and mortality from illness; homelessness and inadequate housing; unsafe environments; and social discrimination and exclusion. It is also characterized by a lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural life.”*²¹¹

As a result of the ongoing debate regarding the social dimension, there are two streams of thought regarding the impact of green economy on poverty eradication. The optimistic view, which is commonly held by developed countries, is as previously referenced – a green economy can “contribute to economic growth” and help alleviate poverty.²¹² The green economy, therefore, has the potential to be “a vital strategy to eliminate persistent poverty.”²¹³

The second stream, which is represented broadly by many developing countries and a large segment of civil society, is that the economic systems currently in place have “all tended to expand rather than redress inequality, worsen

²⁰³ UNGA, *Objective and themes of the UNCSD: Report of the Secretary-General (A/CONF.216/PC/7)*, 2010.

UNDP, *Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference: Sustainable Societies: Responsive Citizens*, 2011, p. 6.

²⁰⁴ Stakeholder Forum, *Earth Summit 2012: Principles for the Green Economy*, 2011.

²⁰⁵ CISDL, *The Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities: Origins and Scope*, 2002.

²⁰⁶ CISDL, *The Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities: Origins and Scope*, 2002.

²⁰⁷ Smith, *Bringing Back the Social? UNRISD Conference on Green Economy and Sustainable Development*, 2011.

²⁰⁸ FAO, *Payments for Environmental Services within the Context of the Green Economy*, 2010.

²⁰⁹ FAO, *Payments for Environmental Services within the Context of the Green Economy*, 2010, p. 4.

UNCED, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, 1992.

²¹⁰ United Nations, *Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010 (ST/ESA/324)*, 2009, p. 8.

²¹¹ United Nations, *Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9)*, 1995, Para. 19.

²¹² UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p. 15.

De Zoysa, *Another Earth Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012: Leading or Misleading the World through the Green Economy?*, 2011.

Bär et al., *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-Up to Rio 2012*, 2011.

²¹³ UNEP, *Background paper for the ministerial consultations: Green economy (UNEP/GC.26/17/Add. 1)*, 2011, p. 6.

UNEP, *Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication*, 2011, p. 15.

poverty and increase marginalization.”²¹⁴ The system, according to this stream of thought can be characterized as “pro-growth” and having “promoted unsustainable production regimes and over-consuming societies,” rewarding “exploitation by a few” while obstructing access to resources for the majority.”²¹⁵ Developing countries have expressed concern that the current trajectory of the GE discussion ignores the principle of common, but differentiated responsibilities, and the right to development, which is central to many emerging economies in their development efforts.²¹⁶ The green economy therefore cannot simply “reinforce” the standard “market-led approaches to development that have increased North-South and inter-group inequalities in recent decades” – rather, it is seen as crucial to restructure the underpinning framework of economic development in order to transition to a green economy and implement the overarching sustainable development framework.²¹⁷ Regardless of the discourse, social policy “must be seen as integral to the development process and to structural transformation” that is necessary for the transition to a green economy and at the same time, basic social protection and social expenditures should be safeguarded and even increased as part of the shift.²¹⁸

Job creation and access to decent work

The issue of access to decent work and employment is guided by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the 2005 World Summit Outcome, as well as a multitude of international labor standards, conventions and policy frameworks.²¹⁹ The Decent Work Agenda, from the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, which was adopted by ILO constitutions, grounds the Global Jobs Pact, and other similar policy instruments which aim to promote the creation of jobs which uphold the right of people’s access to “decent work.”²²⁰ UNEP and ILO have collaborated within the Green Economy Initiative to promote the concept of “green and decent jobs” – an initiative that has been replicated by unions and environmental groups in several countries.

Green jobs are “pivotal for achieving an economic and social development that is also environmentally sustainable.”²²¹ The jobs that would be generated from a transition to a green economy are entitled “green jobs.”²²² Green jobs, “contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality,” and in particular can assist with reducing “energy consumption and use of raw materials, greenhouse gas emissions, minimization of waste and pollution, and protection of ecosystems.”²²³ These jobs will be created in part via “two channels,” including the provision of “new green services and technologies, such as sustainable tourism and technologies increasing energy efficiency of buildings” as well as secondly, “shifting employment opportunities” to focus on green technology, away from “polluting” sectors.²²⁴ It has been estimated that up to 20 million jobs could be created by the year 2030, “in the renewable sector,” particularly in “developed countries and some emerging markets, such as Brazil and China.”²²⁵

In addition to the potential creation of a range of new employment opportunities, these jobs should also be “decent, inclusive and gender-sensitive” or specifically, they should be “good jobs which offer adequate wages, safe working

²¹⁴ Maharajh, *The Green Economy, Poverty and the Global Inequality*, 2011, p. 19.

²¹⁵ De Zoysa, *Another Earth Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012: Leading or Misleading the World through the Green Economy?*, 2011, p. 5.

²¹⁶ Bär et al., *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-Up to Rio 2012*, 2011, p. 13.

Ocampo, *Summary of “The Transition to a Green Economy: Benefits, Challenges and Risks from a Sustainable Development Perspective”*: Report by a Panel of Experts, 2011, p. 2.

²¹⁷ UNRISD, *Social Dimensions of Green Economy and Sustainable Development*, 2011.

²¹⁸ United Nations, *Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010 (ST/ESA/324)*, 2009, p. 159.

²¹⁹ United Nations, *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, 1966.

ILO, *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work*, 2007, p. V.

United Nations General Assembly, *2005 World Summit Outcome (A/RES/60/1)*, 2005.

United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Economic and Social Council for 2006 (A/61/3)*, 2006.

²²⁰ ILO, *Global Jobs Pact: About the Pact*, n.d.

ILO, *Recovering from the crisis: A Global Jobs Pact*, 2009.

²²¹ International Labor Organization, *Green Jobs Programme of the ILO*, n.d.

²²² UNEP/ILO/IOE/ITUC, *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*, 2008.

²²³ UNEP/ILO/IOE/ITUC, *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*, 2008, p. 3.

International Labor Organization, *Green Jobs*, n.d.

²²⁴ Bimesdoerfer, *Driving Green Jobs through Creating a Rural Renewable Energy Systems Industry*, 2011, p. 3.

²²⁵ Bimesdoerfer, *Driving Green Jobs through Creating a Rural Renewable Energy Systems Industry*, 2011, p. 3.

United Nations, *World Economic and Social Survey 2011: The Great Green Technological Transformation*, 2011.

conditions, job security, reasonable career prospects, and worker rights.”²²⁶ There are already in existence jobs related to environmental technologies, but are “characterized by extremely poor practices, exposing workers to hazardous substances or denying them the freedom of association.”²²⁷ The key drivers of green employment include the business community, but the role of individual governments remains central.²²⁸

When transitioning to a green economy, there has been concern that jobs would be lost, due to the displacement of some jobs in “brown” economies in favour of developing “green jobs.” The OECD policy framework for green growth recognized the centrality of the “labour market, skills and education policies” to help “smooth the transition” to a green economy.²²⁹ This transition should, be “socially fair transition, in which vulnerabilities, changes in the labour market and new business models are addressed through and inclusive social dialogue.”²³⁰

Within the context of marginalized or special populations, green job creation must have a special focus on youth, women, indigenous communities, and disadvantaged groups.²³¹ This can include ensuring “green jobs” are also “healthy jobs” in which women or youth are not exposed to chemicals, or focusing on sectors which are traditionally dominated by women, such as agriculture.²³² Ensuring that unpaid labor performed by women, is valued and included in the restructuring of the economy has been stated as essential by the Women’s Major Group at multiple UNCSD preparatory meetings.²³³ Youth unemployment rates in 2008 are three times higher than adults, at a global level, with young people under the age of 24 having a “higher likelihood than adults of being amongst the working poor.”²³⁴ It is important, therefore, that employment policies, and the creation of green jobs creates opportunities for youth unemployment, as has been reinforced by the Children and Youth Major Group in the lead up to Rio +20.²³⁵

Health in the green economy

The Rio Declaration and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation both reinforce that sustainable development “can only be achieved in the absence of a high prevalence of debilitating diseases,” and further that health “gains” for the entire population are grounded in poverty reduction strategies.²³⁶ As it has been stated by the Director-General of the World Health Organization, a “healthy life is an outcome of sustainable development, as well as a powerful and undervalued means of achieving it. We need to see health both as a precious asset in itself, and as a means of stimulating economic growth and reducing poverty.”²³⁷ Therefore, health should be seen as both “a resource for, as well as an outcome of, sustainable development”²³⁸

As part of the goal of achieving sustainable development, transitioning to a green economy will contribute to a healthier environment, and thus it can mitigate pollution and health effects of climate change.²³⁹ The impact and benefits for public health in the green economy are currently being systematically discussed by various international bodies and organization, in the lead up to the 2012 conference.²⁴⁰ As part of sustainable development efforts, health-care systems’ capacity should be strengthened in order to deliver basic services “in an efficient, accessible and affordable manner.”²⁴¹ The green economy additionally needs to provide access to services such as social security, family planning, and childcare, as well as reproductive health care.²⁴²

²²⁶ UNEP/ILO/IOE/ITUC, *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*, 2008, p. 4.

Bimesdoerfer, *Driving Green Jobs through Creating a Rural Renewable Energy Systems Industry*, 2011, p. 4.

²²⁷ UNEP/ILO/IOE/ITUC, *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*, 2008, p. 4.

²²⁸ UNEP/ILO/IOE/ITUC, *Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low-Carbon World*, 2008, p. 5.

²²⁹ OECD, *Towards Green Growth*, 2011, p. 85.

²³⁰ International Labor Organization, *Green Jobs*, n.d.

²³¹ UNDPI, *Declaration of the 64th Annual UN DPI/NGO Conference: Sustainable Societies: Responsive Citizens*, 2011, p. 7.

²³² ENERGIA, *A Gender Perspective on the “Green Economy”: Equitable, healthy and decent jobs and livelihoods*, 2011, p. 5.

²³³ UNCSD, *Statement by the Women’s Major Group at Session 1 of the 1st Preparatory Committee Meeting for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development*, 2010.

²³⁴ ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth*, 2008, p. 3.

²³⁵ UNCSD, *Statement by the Children and Youth Major Group at Session 1 of the 1st Preparatory Committee Meeting for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development*, 2010.

²³⁶ World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation*, 2002, Ch. VI.

²³⁷ World Health Organization, *World Summit on Sustainable Development*, n.d.

²³⁸ World Health Organization, *World Summit on Sustainable Development*, n.d.

²³⁹ ICLEI, *A Green Economy for Cities: Briefing Sheet*, 2011.

²⁴⁰ World Health Organization, *Health in the Green Economy*, n.d.

²⁴¹ World Summit on Sustainable Development, *Johannesburg Plan of Implementation*, 2002, Ch. VI.

²⁴² ENERGIA, *A Gender Perspective on the “Green Economy”: Equitable, healthy and decent jobs and livelihoods*, 2011, p. 2.

Education in sustainable development

Education is an important component of sustainable development, and in particular, the transition to the green economy.²⁴³ Education is not only about assisting in the development of skills and accessing a higher quality of life, but also the content of the education.²⁴⁴ A green economy will “require a heavy investment in knowledge,” as it is “a knowledge-based economy in which research and innovation play a central role.”²⁴⁵ The UN General Assembly established 2005 to 2014 as the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), via the adoption of resolution 57/254, with the goal of integrating the “principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning.”²⁴⁶ The DESD and the issue of sustainable development education broadly, are further grounded in the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs), the Education for All (EFA) movement, and the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD).²⁴⁷

The United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has underscored the centrality of education and training to sustainable development, and the transition to a green economy, stating that “education is a fundamental lever for change,” without which the “challenges of globalization” or “socio-economic and environmental transformations” cannot be met.²⁴⁸ Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is not only about intensive training in new fields on skills relevant for green jobs, it is also about “shared knowledge” within a “green society.”²⁴⁹ The recent EU-Brazil summit emphasized the “role that higher education, academic cooperation and mobility as well as scientific research, technology and innovation,” play in the green economy and sustainable development.²⁵⁰ As previously mentioned, the green economy will require new jobs; however it will also require redefining “many existing job profiles.”²⁵¹ In order to “meet this challenge, education and training systems will need to supply a well-trained, highly skilled labor force,” which can not only contribute to the green economy, but provide employment opportunities populations, particularly in the developing world.²⁵²

Conclusion

Transitioning to a green economy is a “significant transition, on par with other grand transitions in human socio-economic history.”²⁵³ In order to be successful, however, the green economy discussion needs to move “beyond green projects or green finance (though these are of course needed) toward a transformation of global economic models to deliver long-term sustainability and greater equity,” which includes “global and national markets and finance and governance” systems which will “work together in new ways to support both green and poverty reduction objectives.”²⁵⁴ The details of the transition to the green economy is of concern to many developing countries, thus the establishment of an enabling environment which takes into consideration the social dimension of the transition is an important issue to discuss.²⁵⁵ In particular, international support for developing countries and their efforts to protect and support the most vulnerable population must be prioritized.²⁵⁶

As delegates continue their research, some key questions to consider include, what are the key missing links in the current discussion of the social dimension of the green economy? How can the social dimension be prioritized at Rio+20? What are the ways in which civil society organizations can engage in initiatives to support the social

²⁴³ UNESCO, *Strengthening Education Systems: Sustainable Development*, n.d.

²⁴⁴ UNESCO, *Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)*, n.d.

²⁴⁵ UNESCO, *Towards a Green Economy and Green Societies*, 2009, p. 22.

²⁴⁶ UNESCO, *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014): International Implementation Scheme (ED/DESD/2005/PI/01)*, 2005, p. 6.

²⁴⁷ UNESCO, *United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014): International Implementation Scheme (ED/DESD/2005/PI/01)*, 2005, p. 8.

UNESCO, *Report by the Director-General on the UNESCO World Conference On Education for Sustainable Development and the Bonn Declaration*, 2009.

²⁴⁸ UNESCO, *Towards a Green Economy and Green Societies*, 2009, p. 7.

²⁴⁹ UNESCO, *Towards a Green Economy and Green Societies*, 2009, p. 13.

²⁵⁰ Council of the European Union, *Fifth European Union – Brazil Summit: Joint Statement*, 2011, p. 2.

²⁵¹ CEDEFOD, *Future skill needs for the green economy*, 2009, p. 1.

²⁵² CEDEFOD, *Future skill needs for the green economy*, 2009, p. 1.

²⁵³ Cosby, *Trade, sustainable development and a green economy: Benefits, challenges and Risks*, 2011, p. 40.

²⁵⁴ Doig, *A Fair Green Economy: Framing Green Economy and the Post-MDG Agenda in Terms of Equity*, 2011.

²⁵⁵ UNEP, *Enabling Conditions: Supporting the transition to a global green economy*, 2011.

²⁵⁶ Stakeholder Forum, *Earth Summit 2012: Principles for the Green Economy*, 2011.

dimension? The way to ensure that sustainable development results in the outcomes desired is to restructure the global economic system – how can Rio +20 lay the groundwork to do this, particularly with the aim to eradicate poverty?

Annotated Bibliography

III. The social dimension of the green economy

Bär, H., Jacob, K., & Werland, S. (2011). *Green Economy Discourses in the Run-Up to Rio 2012*. Retrieved September 30, 2011 from: http://edocs.fu-berlin.de/docs/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/FUODOCS_derivate_000000001735/FFU_Report_07-2011_Baer_Jacob_Werland_Green_Economy-1.pdf

Published in 2011 by academics at the Environmental Policy Research Centre (FFU) of Freie Universität Berlin as an overview of the current landscape of concepts related to the Green Economy. The document analyzes “central contributions to the debate” in the lead-up to the United Nations Conference on Development to be held in Rio in 2012. Of particular importance is the discussion regarding the discourse between developed and developing countries and the challenge politically in terms of a successful outcome for Rio. This report is highly recommended for all delegates as it provides a strong, and concise summary for delegates that is also comprehensive in its scope.

Cosbey, A. (2011). *Trade, sustainable development and a green economy: Benefits, challenges and Risks*. Report by a Panel of Experts to Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Retrieved September 30, 2011 from:

http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/Green%20Economy_full%20report.pdf

This paper is one portion of the Report by a Panel of Experts to the Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for the 2012 UNCS D. The document explores the opportunities and risks from a transition to a green economy, specifically through the lens of trade. This paper is particularly relevant for this topic as it explores the ways in which the transition can be helpful, particularly to developing countries, as well as what challenges they might encounter.

De Zoysa, U. (2011). *Another Earth Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012: Leading or Misleading the World through the Green Economy?*. Retrieved September 30, 2011 from: [http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/59/ANOTHER%20EARTH%20SUMMIT%20IN%202012%20\(by%20Uchita%20de%20Zoysa\).pdf](http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/59/ANOTHER%20EARTH%20SUMMIT%20IN%202012%20(by%20Uchita%20de%20Zoysa).pdf)

Written by Ychita de Zoysa, the Chairman of Global Sustainability Solutions, this paper critiques the current efforts of many segments of the international community in watering down the sustainable development debate. The paper walks through the preparatory process, providing strong analysis representative of many civil society organizations

Doig, A. & Carroll, E. (2011, September 7). *A Fair Green Economy: Framing Green Economy and the Post-MDG Agenda in Terms of Equity*. Retrieved September 30, 2011 from:

<http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/newsview.nsf/%28httpNews%29/541981366FC48B10C125790400313EFB?OpenDocument>

This article is one of the “think pieces” produced as a contribution to the United Nations Research Institute for Sustainable Development’s conference to be held from October 10-11, 2011 in Geneva, Switzerland entitled “Green Economy and Sustainable Development: Bringing Back the Social Dimension.” This document in particular provides a cohesive and articulate summary on the linkages between the social dimension of the green economy to development with a particular focus on equity. Delegates will find this short article instructive in articulating some of the key elements of the social dimension of the green economy.

Fulai, S. (2010). *A Green Economy: Conceptual Issues*. Retrieved September 1, 2011 from:

<http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/59/Documents/GMGSF12-GE-Conceptual-Issues.pdf>

Written for the United Nations Issue Management Group on the Green Economy, this paper overviews conceptual issues related to the green economy, and provides definitions, rationale and definitions for moving towards a green economy. Overviewing the types of green economy that have been proposed, as well as sustainable consumption and production, the document establishes the link between the practical and conceptual elements of the green economy. The paper reviews the historical roots of many of the concepts, which is particularly relevant for delegates as research is undertaken.

International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2011). *Sustainable Development Policy & Practice: A Knowledgebase of International Activities Preparing for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development*. Retrieved July 16, 2011 from: <http://uncsd.iisd.org/>.

Developed and managed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) Reporting Services, the Sustainable Development Policy and Practice “knowledgebase” was launched in December 2010. This database provides news, reports and updates on international activities and events across a wide range of themes and issues, including gender and poverty. This resource is absolutely essential for delegates and will prove to be invaluable.

United Nations. (2011). *World Economic and Social Survey 2011: The Great Green Technological Transformation*. Retrieved September 30, 2011 from:

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wess/wess_current/2011wess.pdf

The World Economic and Social Survey for 2011 is focused on the highly relevant topic of green technology and the potential impact it can have within the transition to a green economy. The report outlines the challenges for the world as it moves forward – both if it chooses to maintain the current technological trajectory, as well as if it makes the radical changes proposed by the report. This resource is particularly important for delegates in providing important information on the wide range of green technologies that can support and reinforce an equitable, just and efficient transition to a green economy.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. (2011, July 21). *The Road to Rio +20*. Retrieved July 17, 2011 from: http://www.unctad.org/trade_env/greeneconomy/road2rioGE2.asp

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development published this comprehensive report in order to ground the current debate over the green economy and provide issues of concern, in particular, for developing countries. The goal of the publication is to provide a range of perspectives – and it does this through examining the global context of the green economy, the risks of the transition, and then how to manage the transition. Delegates will find this collection of essays particularly helpful in identifying varying streams of thoughts within the international discourse on sustainable development.

Center for International Sustainable Development Law. (2002). *The Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities: Origins and Scope*. Retrieved September 1, 2011 from:

http://66.147.244.83/~cisdlorg/public/docs/news/brief_common.pdf

The Centre for International Sustainable Development Law (CISDL) at McGill University Faculty of Law, published this brief for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa. Not only does this document overview the definition of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the document discusses the implications of the principle and the ways in which the principle manifests itself in international law. As this principle is central to the arguments made by developing countries, and is at the core of the original intent of sustainable development initiatives, this document is particularly essential for delegates to review.

United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. (2011). *Social Dimensions of Green Economy and Sustainable Development*. Retrieved September 30, 2011 from:

[http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/projects.nsf/\(httpProjects\)/6901343F6EC7DEDEC12578C6004A56DA?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/unrisd/website/projects.nsf/(httpProjects)/6901343F6EC7DEDEC12578C6004A56DA?OpenDocument)

This project within the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development was established in order to provide strong analysis and research on the social dimension of the green economy in the lead up to the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The project includes activities and outputs such as a conference in early October 2011 on the issue,

publication of “think pieces” on the social dimension of the green economy, and also a formalized method of input into the preparatory conference. This resource being updated regularly over the next several months, thus delegates will find it not only rich in information, but also extremely relevant and up to date.

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