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'Participation and Integration for Local and Global Sustainability'

GUIDELINES for NCSD RIO+10 ASSESSMENT



Stockholm+30

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I BACKGROUND

I. WHAT IS RIO+10/STOCKHOLM+30?

For almost two weeks in 1992, the world was Rio. The Brazilian city played host to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) or Earth Summit, a historic event, which was envisaged to have deep implications for the destiny of the Earth in the 21st century. It represented a historic pinnacle of public and political support for the interlinked goals of development, poverty eradication and environmental protection.

UNCED was the culmination of a long process kicked off by UN General Assembly Resolution 44/228 in December 1989, which mandated the holding of the Earth Summit. UNCED sought to build upon the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm 1972), by establishing a new global partnership among states, sectors of societies, and peoples, and by working towards international agreements to protect the integrity of the global environmental and development systems. In this vein, UNCED adopted the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21 (a global plan of action for sustainable development), and the Statement on Forest Principles. It also opened for signature the two conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

The first major review of progress in achieving the UNCED commitments, Rio +5, took place in 1997. In the aftermath of Rio +5, the General Assembly, in Resolution S/19-2, approved a Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. The same resolution identified the date of the next comprehensive review and assessment of progress in the implementation of the UNCED commitments: June 2002, the 10th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit, and the 30th anniversary of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment.

In spite of improved environmental legislation, strengthened institutions in charge of environment and sustainable development, and in general, increased national action and commitment for Agenda 21 implementation, current analyses indicate that governments and people have not done enough to respond to our crisis: the destruction of ecosystems, the degradation of land and soil, loss of forests, fisheries, and biodiversity, air and water pollution, freshwater over-consumption, and the linkages to increasing poverty, inequality, exclusion and alienation, and worsening health, social conflicts and violence. There is growing consensus that there is a dire need to assess our implementation strategies and to take collaborative steps to resolve the problems and weaknesses. The ten-year anniversary of Rio provides a timely opportunity to review our progress in implementing sustainable development over the past decade, and re-chart the path to sustainable development.

During the Eighth Session of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development in April 2000, it was recommended that the 2002 review should result in action-oriented decisions and renewed political commitment and support for sustainable development from both governments and civil society. The Commission also stressed that Agenda 21 should not be re-negotiated and should constitute the framework within which progress is reviewed and new challenges are addressed. It recommended that the review focus on areas where further efforts are needed to implement Agenda 21 and the other outcomes of UNCED, and that measures be identified for their further implementation, including sources of funding.

In May 2000, the Environment Ministers who gathered in Malmo, Sweden, for the First Global Ministerial Environment Forum, declared that the 2002 Summit should aim to address the major challenges of sustainable development, and review requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional architecture for environmental governance.

A critical input to the 2002 Summit will be national and regional assessments. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary of the United Nations for Economic and Social Affairs, has emphasised that National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSDs) should play a significant and important role at both the national and regional levels¹.

Against this background, the global network of NCSDs is undertaking national and regional reviews of progress in implementing the Earth Summit commitments, focussing on critical issues as well as implementation and governance concerns.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE NCSD RIO+10 ASSESSMENT PROCESS

1. To conduct national multi-stakeholder assessments of progress in implementing the Earth Summit agreements in terms of: national strategies for sustainable development; strengthening integration and participation; and critical issues, including education and public awareness.
2. To identify implementation problems, weaknesses and barriers and recommend solutions in the form of national and regional action programmes.
3. To consolidate (sub-)regional recommendations and identify (sub-)regional opportunities for cooperative action amongst NCSDs to advance implementation of the Earth Summit agreements.
4. To consolidate and present recommendations and national and regional action programmes to the UN Earth Summit III in 2002, and to key regional forums and processes, including the UN Regional Economic Commissions.

III. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

(i) Who should participate?

As a first step in the Rio+10 process, countries are being invited to report on their progress and obstacles in the implementation of sustainable development, especially Agenda21. It is critical that these National Assessments engage broad participation from the private sector, academia and civil society, in addition to governmental organizations. In particular, participation of major social groups is strongly encouraged, including Women, Indigenous Peoples, Youth, NGOs, Local Authorities, Workers, Business and Industry, Farmers, and the Scientific and Technological Community.

It is expected that National Councils for Sustainable Development or similar entities play a leading role in carrying out the necessary national multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder consultations, including at the local level, in order to prepare the national report of the ten-year review of progress in implementing Rio Summit Agreements.

Countries that do not have an NCSD or similar entity are encouraged to establish a multi-stakeholder team, with representation from government, private sector and civil society, to guide the assessment process.

¹ Nitin Desai 2000: 'UN Commission on Sustainable Development and the National Councils for Sustainable Development: Partnership', *NCSD Report 1999-2000*, Earth Council: Costa Rica.

(ii) What methods should countries use?

Each NCSD will decide the most appropriate way to conduct their national assessments. However, for consistency and effective process, the following minimum elements are encouraged:

- An **Introductory Workshop** will orient key stakeholders as to the purpose and process of the assessment.
- **National Experts** will be identified, with expertise in either the selected critical issues or in implementation/governance aspects, as a resource group for the assessment.
- **Multi-stakeholder Working Groups** will be created for each critical issue to direct the assessment of that issue.
- **Local and National Issue Identification and Problem-Solving Workshops** will be held to engage a broader multi-stakeholder constituency in the assessment of each critical issue.
- A **National Forum** will consolidate the outcomes of the process.

(iii) What is the expected outcome?

The outcome of the national assessment process should be a national report that summarise recommendations for the next decade of sustainable development.

(iv) What is the suggested format for national reports?

The Rio+10 Process will integrate inputs from many different countries. In order to collect this information in a manner that will allow comparisons and synthesis, it is important that all national reports address similar questions. Part II of these guidelines outlines the themes and questions that each National Report should address. The suggested maximum length for the National Report is 15 pages.

D. INTEGRATION AT SUB-REGIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVEL

(i) Sub-regional NCSD Forums

Sub-regional NCSD Forums will take place between September 2001 – November 2001. The aim of the Sub-regional Forums is to enable NCSDs within sub-regions to: exchange experiences and discuss common issues arising from their national assessments; consolidate sub-regional recommendations; and explore opportunities for sub-regional cooperation to advance implementation with respect to their mutual sustainable development concerns. The primary outcome of the sub-regional forums will be integration and consolidation of sub-regional action programmes and recommendations. The results of the sub-regional forums will feed into the UN Regional Economic Commissions process, as well as into a variety of other region-specific processes.

(ii) Regional Integration

The UN Regional Economic Commissions, regional offices of the UN Environment Programme, the UN Development Programme Regional Bureaux and the CSD Secretariat are organising regional preparatory committee meetings (PrepComms) to compare national findings and seek consensus on regional priorities. The results of the sub-regional NCSD Forums and national assessment processes will provide an input into the Regional PrepComms. The PrepComms will formulate a platform of regionally relevant policy issues and priorities, and include these in a Regional report, along with examples of successful practices.

Preceding each Regional PrepComm will be a Regional Roundtable, involving prominent experts from the region and representatives of all key sectors of society. The aim of the roundtables is to discuss regional progress and future directions.

(iii) Global Electronic Discussion and Coordination (<http://www.ncsdnetwork.org/rio10>)

Throughout the assessment process, NCSDs will be linked via an **internet-based Knowledge Network**, which will catalyse NCSDs to exchange and discuss perspectives, experiences and recommendations in relation to Rio+10. This will include global electronic discussion forums on: dimensions of implementation and governance; specific critical issues; and other topics related to the planning and implementation of sustainable development. The Knowledge Network will also act as a hub for coordination amongst NCSDs, and enable NCSDs to upload their national reports, view a dynamic calendar of Rio+10 activities, and monitor the Rio+10 assessment progress and results from around the world.

(iv) International Forum for NCSDs

The global community of NCSDs will share and consolidate their recommendations and other inputs into the Rio+10 review during an **International Forum for NCSDs**, tentatively scheduled for December 2001.

(iv) Intergovernmental Preparations and the Rio+10 Summit

The UN CSD will initiate intergovernmental work on the Rio+10 assessment in early 2002. The recommendations and reports of the national NCS assessment, Sub-regional NCS Forums, and the International Forum for NCSDs will provide important inputs into this process. The culminating step in the Rio+10 review will be a Summit in which Heads of State will seek consensus on the outcomes of the assessment process and the priority targets for further national, regional and international action to implement Agenda 21.

E. WHAT IS THE TIMETABLE FOR THE RIO+10 ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

National Assessment Process	September 2000 – August 2001
Orientation workshop	
Selection of critical issues	
Identification of national experts	
Creation of working groups	
Expert research	
Local and national problem-solving workshops	
National Forum	
Final National Report	August 2001
(Sub-)Regional Integration	September 2001 - November 2001
Sub-Regional Forums	
Regional Roundtables and Conferences	
Global Integration	
Electronic forums	October 2000 - March 2002
International Forum for NCSDs	December 2001
Intergovernmental assessment	January 2002
Rio+10 Summit	mid-2002

II ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

I. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The five-year review of Agenda 21 that took place in 1997 confirmed a target for all countries to develop national strategies for sustainable development, such as National Agenda 21s.

- (1) Describe your country's national strategy or planning process for sustainable development. If your country has no national strategy for sustainable development, recommend steps that need to be taken to develop one.
- (2) Diagnose strengths and weaknesses in implementation of the national strategy or planning process, focusing on:
- Organisational and management system:** clarity of responsibilities and accountabilities; clarity and adequacy of management objectives; criteria and measurement for monitoring and evaluation; and openness to ongoing multi-stakeholder participation.
 - Institutional capacity:** mandate; human resource capabilities; the strength of strategic leadership; and the extent of inter-institutional co-operation and coherency.
 - Resourcing:** the adequacy of the knowledge, technology, financial and social resources available for implementation; and the adequacy of the budgetary or investment programme.
 - Political support:** the extent to which the political constituency is informed about the issue; and the extent to which the political constituency has supported or hindered effective implementation.
 - Legislative support:** the extent to which the legislative or regulatory framework enables or hinders effective implementation.
- (3) Comment on the impacts of the national strategy (or planning process) in terms of changes in: (a) policymaking, (b) decision-making, (c) financing for sustainable development (particularly changes in the national budget); (d) decentralization and local empowerment. In each of these areas, consider the impacts on different stakeholders, including those that have benefited and those that have been negatively affected.
- (4) Recommend the next steps that should be taken to improve the national strategy (or planning process) and its implementation. In particular, formulate specific sustainable development targets that are achievable in the next 5-10 years, and which could make a significant difference in your country's progress towards sustainable development.

II. INTEGRATION AND PARTICIPATION

- (i) Assess the extent to which national sustainable development strategies, plans, and programs demonstrate an integrated approach. Provide concrete examples of policies that resulted in integration between social, economic and ecological dimensions.
 - (ii) Assess the extent to which national strategies, plans, and programs enable continued, broad-based participation in sustainable development policymaking and implementation. Assess the extent to which different sectors and different levels of decision-making have participated in sustainable development policymaking and implementation. Provide concrete examples of public-private-civil society partnership in the implementation of sustainable development in your country.
 - (iii) Assess national policy barriers to effective local Agenda 21 implementation.
 - (iv) Describe your country's coordinating mechanism (eg a National Council for Sustainable Development or similar) for stakeholder participation in sustainable development planning and implementation. Indicate which sectors participate in this mechanism.
 - (v) Diagnose strengths and weaknesses of the coordinating mechanism that you described in the previous question B(iv).
- (vi) Recommend steps to be taken to strengthen the coordinating mechanism. If your country has no coordinating mechanism, recommend next steps that need to be taken to develop one.

III. NATIONAL CRITICAL ISSUES

- (1) Prioritize between one and three national critical issues and an emerging critical issue².

FOR EACH CRITICAL ISSUE:

- (2) Review national actions taken to address the issue, including:
- Extent to which they encompass the Earth Summit commitments.
 - Their coherence with regional and international agreements.
- (3) Describe best practices, and lessons learnt.
- (4) Identify the main accomplishments and implementation failures, including weaknesses and barriers. Diagnose the factors that contributed to these accomplishments and failures, taking into account:
- Organisational and management system:** clarity of responsibilities and accountabilities; clarity and adequacy of management objectives; criteria and measurement for monitoring and evaluation; and openness to ongoing multi-stakeholder participation.
 - Institutional capacity:** mandate; human resource capabilities; the strength of strategic leadership; and the extent of inter-institutional co-operation and coherency.
 - Resourcing:** the adequacy of the knowledge, technology, financial and social resources available for implementation; and the adequacy of the budgetary or investment programme.
 - Political support:** the extent to which the political constituency is informed about the issue; and the extent to which the political constituency has supported or hindered effective implementation.
 - Legislative support:** the extent to which the legislative or regulatory framework enables or hinders effective implementation.
- (5) Comment on measures already taken or planned to overcome the implementation failures. Identify other creative measures that could be taken to overcome the implementation failures, particularly in terms of:
- Capacity-building needs.
 - Improvements in the effectiveness of key institutions to respond to failures.
- (6) Provide suggestions of the major 'course corrections' needed at national and international levels to help solve your prioritized critical issues

² Emerging critical issues are issues which are presenting new challenges to the achievement of sustainable development, such as: the relationship between globalisation and national/local sustainability, especially in terms of trade, investment, labour and environmental standards; access to new technologies and knowledge systems; and the emergence of global civil society.

- (j) Provide suggestions of additional measures that should be undertaken by the international community, including the United Nations system, to support these 'course corrections'.

**IV. GLOBAL CRITICAL ISSUE: EDUCATION, TRAINING
AND PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 focuses on the need to: reorient education towards sustainable development; increase public sensitivity to environment and development problems; foster a sense of personal environmental responsibility and commitment towards sustainable development; and promote and strengthen training.

- (أ) Describe how education, training and public awareness are integrated into your country's national sustainable development strategy or planning process.
 - (ب) Diagnose the key implementation problems in terms of meeting the commitments of Chapter 36 of Agenda 21.
 - (ج) Describe the accomplishments that have been achieved to reorient your country's education system (formal and non-formal) for sustainable development. Give examples of best practices and lessons learnt.
 - (د) Comment on any measures already taken or planned to overcome these implementation problems. Identify other creative solutions to respond to these problems, and link these solutions to capacity-building needs.
- (هـ) Make recommendations to improve institutional effectiveness to provide education for sustainable development. In particular, consider the potential for inter-institutional alliances.

V. THE WAY AHEAD

- (أ) Integrate the analyses and recommendations of sections A, B, C and D into a vision for your country's future.

III TOOLS FOR THE ASSESSMENT

I. National Reports

The national reports that governments have prepared since 1992 for the UN CSD can provide a useful place to begin outlining progress, best practices and obstacles.

II. Agenda 21

Agenda 21, the United Nations Programme of Action from Rio, available at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/agenda21.htm>

III. Other International Environmental Agreements

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, available at <http://www.unfccc.de>

UN Convention on Biological Diversity, available at <http://www.biodiv.org>

UN Convention to Combat Desertification, available at <http://www.unccd.int/main.php>

UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, available at <http://www.cities.org>

IV. Commitments of the United Nations Human Settlements (Habitat), Social, Women's and Food Summits

Habitat Summit: <http://www.undp.org/un/habitat>

Social Summit: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev>

Women's Summit: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch>

Food Summit: <http://www.fao.org/>

V. The Earth Charter

The Earth Charter is available at <http://www.earthcharter.org>

The Earth Charter is a result of a worldwide consultation process to identify common principles for sustainable development, and will be presented to the United Nations in 2002 for endorsement. The Earth Charter provides a tool to address the challenges of sustainable development by paying attention to the underlying, interrelated ethics and values of sustainable living. In the Rio+10 Assessment, the Earth Charter may be useful as a reference or checklist against which to assess:

- The extent to which national and local sustainable development strategies or development plans reflect an integrated vision of sustainability.
- The extent to which education systems address key dimensions of sustainable development.

VI. Other Relevant Documents

Global Environmental Outlook 2000, available at <http://www.unep.org>

UNDP Human Development Report, available at <http://www.undp.org>

