# 2014 INCHEON COMMUNIQUÉ
### *Ready to deliver the Post-2015 Agenda?*

## The Sustainable Development Transition Forum

We, 55 experts and practitioners in planning and implementation from governments and organizations around the world, along with co-chairs from the Organisation of American States and the German Council for Sustainable Development, are grateful to have assembled in Incheon, South Korea from April 9-11 2014, under the auspices of the UN Office for Sustainable Development (UNOSD) to inter alia, explore the future of innovative governance and practice for integrating sustainable development into local, sub-national, national and regional planning and scaling-up of implementation.

We are acting out of a shared commitment to contribute towards the success of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the efficient and timely attainment of the goals and objectives set out in the Outcome Document, "*The Future We Want*" adopted at the Rio+20 Conference.

Our deliberations benefitted immensely from the series of related regional workshops and events, including those organized by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the UNOSD on integrating sustainable development into national development strategies; as well as regional workshops held in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, organized by SDplanNet.[1]

We believe that the true success of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will rest in the degree of transparency, inclusiveness and participation that is built into the process and the extent to which citizens at local, sub-national and national levels feel a sense of ownership of its outcomes.

Moreover, we feel that even as the world awaits with great anticipation the finalization of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, Governments and their development partners must urgently begin the task of implementing critical reforms in governance and decision-making that can help them better address present-day realities and future challenges.

Against this background we feel privileged to be engaged in this process of examining the current and future state of governance and practice that are crucial for integrating sustainable development into local, sub-national, national and regional planning and the scaling-up of implementation at all levels. And it is in this context that we offer the following recommendations for strengthening: (i) multi-stakeholder processes and institutions; (ii) integrated development planning; (iii) cross-cutting policies; (iv) institutions and practices for monitoring, reporting and accountability; and (v) communities of practice.

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[1] And involving the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), the African Technology and Policy Studies Network (ATPSN), the Global Network of National Councils for Sustainable Development and Similar Bodies (GN-NCSD), and Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

# 1.   Advancing Multi-Stakeholder Institutions and Processes

1.1   There was a universal agreement amongst us that good governance and the rule of law is fundamental and foundational to sustainable development. There is a need to actively promote effective, *participative systems of governance at all levels of society* – engaging people's creativity, energy and diversity.

1.2   A participatory, multi-stakeholder approach can best develop and enable institutions and partnerships for delivery of the SDGs. *National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSDs) and other similar institutions*, by upholding the principles of transparency, accountability and participation, offer key fora to engage stakeholders in setting national sustainable development agendas. Good examples exist that effectively deal with or initiate multi-layered, multi-dimensional governance systems. In keeping the long-term view on the sustainability challenge, NCSDs are instrumental in helping to bridge policy cycles and keeping the momentum on the sustainable development agenda. Given that universal SDGs are to be applied in a differentiated and nationally-appropriate way, the capacities of NCSDs or similar institutions should be strengthened.

1.3   Coordination and coherence are essential to good governance. Developing and adopting sustained *stakeholder engagement policies* is required, possibly through legal responsibilities.

1.4   *Inclusive and consultative decision-making* throughout the national policy cycle provides a key means of integrating sustainable development into local, sub-national, national and regional planning and scaling-up of implementation.


# 2.   Integrated Planning: Vertical and Horizontal Collaboration

2.1   There was a shared appreciation among us that the success of the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs will also depend on effective *vertical collaboration between all* governmental levels, as well as *new modes for cross-sectoral collaboration*.

2.2   *NCSDs and similar institutions* must be given a central role for achieving effective vertical and horizontal collaboration in planning and implementation.

2.3   There is an urgent need to clarify new approaches to planning that create mechanisms and processes for *global goals and targets to inform national, sub-national and local action*, and for *local development planning issues to feed upwards* and shape sub-national and national priorities.

2.4   *Transparent, participatory and outcomes-based budget setting and allocation processes* are critical to ensuring that resources are mobilized to achieve agreed priorities.


# 3.  Implementing Cross-cutting Policies and Programmes

3.1   In anticipating the very real challenges that all countries will face in securing adequate financing for sustainable development and the future fiscal pressures posed by climate change adaptation and recovery from economic shocks, doing more with less will become a basic operating principle in the decades ahead. Scaling-up implementation will demand the *use of policies and programmes that produce multiple, complementary benefits for water, energy and food security whilst realizing equity, resilience and the greening of economies*.

3.2   The use of *policy screening, appraisal and assessment tools* are critically important at all stages of the policy cycle for ensuring consistency with visions and goals.

3.3   *Inter-agency coordinating mechanisms* can help ensure the effective use of policy tools to promote sustainable development across government sectors and will drive horizontal collaboration.

## 4. Monitoring, Reporting and Accountability Mechanisms and Processes

4.1   Improved monitoring and reporting are imperatives for ***fostering accountability and supporting compliance and enforcement.*** As the SDGs will be delivered at the national and sub-national and local levels, there is a need to track progress and hold governments to account on their international and domestic commitments.

4.2   There is a need to **ensure that adequate, credible, and timely information is freely available.** In addition, targets and indicators must be *SMART*[2] and easily communicated.

4.3   ***NCSDs and similar institutions, together with national parliaments, administrative structures, and statistical and audit offices should provide comprehensive scrutiny programmes*** in order to report on and effectively communicate progress toward national sustainable development objectives.

4.4   ***Strategies for sustainable development must be 'living plans' that are regularly reviewed and updated.*** Key to the review process is ensuring that findings are fed back into the decision-making process.


## 5. Strengthening and Coordinating Communities of Practice

5.1   ***Communities of Practice (CoP) are playing important roles in helping countries to share good practices*** for integrating sustainable development into national plans and scaling-up implementation.

5.2   There is an urgent need to ***build capacity of institutions and stakeholders tasked with delivering sustainable development*** to share and co-develop best practice tools and platforms. Similarly, programmes for "twinning" and for undertaking peer-to-peer reviews can encourage mutually-beneficial capacity building.

5.3   ***Knowledge Management underpins productive*** CoPs and should encompass knowledge development, sharing and application.

5.4   ***CoPs should have clearly defined responsibilities and be given full recognition and support.*** Furthermore, there should be increased coordination of different CoPs at various levels to deliver the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Agreed at Incheon, South Korea, on April 11, 2014.

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[2] Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.