

KEY MESSAGES FOR RIO+20

- Sustainable development is synonymous in the minds of many with the colour green. While the greening of development is imperative, the social and economic strands of sustainable development are equally vital.** Sustainable development is about health, education, women's empowerment, and jobs, as much as ecosystems. It is about ever widening inclusion and movement away from decisions that erode democratic space and breed social inequality, intolerance, and violence.
- The world has seen significant development progress in the last 20 years,** particularly in terms of reducing income poverty and extending basic services, as captured in progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For example, the number of children who die before their fifth birthday every year declined from 12 million in 1990 to 7.6 million in 2010. This means that 12,000 fewer children die each day.
- But there is much to be done.** Some 1.3 billion people did not have access to reliable electricity services in 2009; 2.7 billion were without clean cooking facilities. Some 780 million people lacked access to safe drinking water in 2010, and 2.5 billion lacked access to modern sanitation systems. Many planetary boundaries are close to being breached: the world's fisheries are over-exploited; a fifth of the world's coral reefs have been damaged beyond repair; and desertification in regions such as the Sahel threatens livelihoods in the drylands which are home to a third of the world's people. People living in fragile states are twice as likely to be undernourished as people living in other developing countries; and child mortality rates in fragile states are roughly twice those in other developing countries. Worldwide, among school-aged children not enrolled in primary school, 77 percent live in fragile and conflict-affected and recovering states. Without securing and building peace, there can be no sustainable development.
- Things can be different.** Many countries, in both the south and the north, have designed and implemented policy and programming frameworks that are making sustainable development happen. For example, Brazil during the past decade has enjoyed strong economic growth and major reductions in poverty and inequality, while also dramatically extending the share of the Amazon rainforest covered by protected areas, slowing the rate of deforestation, and further boosting the share of renewables in its energy mix.
- In this time of multiple crises it is tempting to focus on the 'short term fix'. But what we need is to **reset the global development agenda**. We need a long-term plan. Getting there will require keeping six things in mind:

 - We must deliver on the MDGs, while moving towards the SDGs:** We must sustain progress already made towards the MDGs and accelerate action to bridge remaining MDG gaps. At the same time we must effect a post-2015 transition, including the possibility of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by building on what worked and learning from what did not work, from the MDG process.
 - While the greening of development is imperative, the social and economic strands of sustainable development are equally vital. **'Triple-win' policies** and programming are the future. The key to accelerating progress towards sustainable development is expanding 'triple win' policies and programming that intertwine the economic, social, and environmental strands of sustainable development. Examples include water programme, productive safety nets and energy policies (specific examples can be found in [Triple wins for sustainable development](#)). Particularly **Energy** offers clear opportunities for integrating the three strands of sustainable development.

3. **Governance matters, a lot.** Governance is the glue that will bind together the three strands of social, economic, and environmental development, both in policy and in practice. This is particularly the case when it comes to:

- a) enforcing local communities' resource rights—including the rights of women to land and property;
- b) ensuring the capacity to design and implement integrated development programmes; and
- c) establishing frameworks for integrating social protection with service provision, employment, the sustainable management of water, land, and biodiversity resources, and climate risk management.

4. **Finance for development must be revisited**, so that ODA can be used to access larger pools of development finance. Reductions in environmentally damaging subsidies, and the adoption of sustainable public procurement policies, can also make significant contributions to financing sustainable development.

5. **Beyond GDP and the bottom line—new metrics to measure progress are necessary**, in both the public and private sectors. Rio+20 should be the beginning of the end of GDP as the 'gold standard' of development progress. We need a new approach that builds on the Human Development Index and reflects environmental values, for a more holistic measure of human wellbeing and sustainable development.

6. **Leveraging knowledge and innovation will deliver results:** there are innumerable examples of what works when it comes to sustainable development, but that information is typically hard to access. A globally-recognized **solution and innovation exchange** that connects *all* interested stakeholders to the knowledge and experience they need should be supported.

- **UNDP and the UN system support national transitions to sustainable development, by:**

- Promoting genuinely integrated national development approaches that focuses on 'triple-win' policies and programming;
- Supporting governments with policy and technical support, including through innovative development programmes like the *Poverty and Environment Initiative*, the *Green Commodities Facility*, and *Legal Empowerment of the Poor*, which can help them move towards 'triple-win' development results;

- Ensuring that the UN's country presence is fully supporting this agenda, through UNDP's stewardship of the Resident Coordinator system; and
- Brokering partnerships—including between donors, the private sector, and civil society—to turn national visions of sustainable development into reality.

Contact Information: Hannie Meesters, Policy Specialist,
hannie.meesters@undp.org