

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT TIME FOR ACTION



Empowered Lives.  
Resilient Nations.

Rio+20 will be one of the most important global meetings on sustainable development in our time. At Rio, our vision must be clear: a sustainable green economy that protects the health of the environment while supporting achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through growth in income, decent work and poverty eradication.  
- Ban Ki-moon  
UN Secretary-General

While also addressing important environmental issues and problems linked to climate change, the Rio meeting will address a much broader and more decisive issue: a new development model, comprising three dimensions - economic, social and environmental. We want the word "development" to appear, from now on always associated with the term "sustainable".  
- Dilma Rousseff  
President of Brazil

World leaders should use Rio+20 to make sure that sustainable development is high on the global economic agenda. This is where it belongs - not in some environment silo distant to central economic decision-making. This is the only way we will be able to take rapid action on the required scale.  
- Connie Hedegaard  
EU Commissioner

## RIO+20

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development – popularly referred to as Rio+20 – will be held on 20-22 June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. The agenda will focus on transition to green economy with an emphasis on poverty reduction, access to efficient and renewable energy for all, protection of our water resources and eco systems as well as food security. The conference will also look at strengthening international cooperation for sustainable development, and at how rich countries can support developing countries in achieving a sustainable development path.



# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

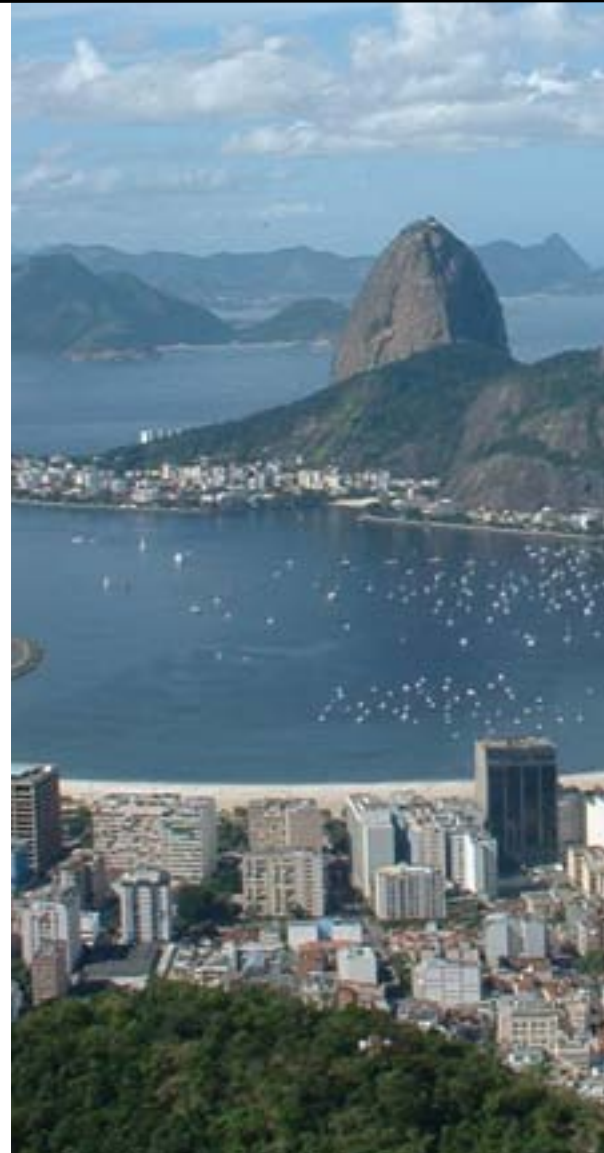
...more than environmental protection

**Development** is about change, and sustainable development is about lasting change. The goal is to ensure a future for all; a world where all human beings on earth - in this and future generations - can live free from fear, hunger and poverty. A world in harmony with nature and with responsible use of its resources. A world with opportunities and freedom to fulfill one's potential and with possibility to influence decisions that affect one's life.

Such a world is possible. But it requires us to rethink our approach to development. It calls for action and political WILL.

The concept of sustainable development was introduced by the Brundtland report in 1987. It defined the concept as 'meeting the needs of people today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs'. This became the foundation for the first Rio conference (the UN Conference on Development and the Environment), that was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This year, 20 years later, a follow-up UN Conference on Sustainable Development - known as Rio+20 - will be held.

The objective is the same, which is to promote sustainable human development in the world by reaching agreement on measures to reduce poverty and at the same time ensure a sustainable and just use of our natural resources.



Yet, the world has changed since 1992. On the one hand, significant development progress has been made over the past 20 years. People are healthier, wealthier and better educated than ever before. On the other hand, a larger number of people populate our planet today and the global development challenges are greater and more pressing; environmental degradation and climate change are eminent and affect the poorest the hardest. The pressure on the world's natural resources is increasing as population grows and so is the need for food security. Poverty has declined but inequalities are increasing both between and within countries. At the same time, the world is faced with a growing demand for justice and inclusion.

There is greater understanding of the fact that social, economic and environmental aspects of development are closely inter-linked, and that it is necessary to focus on these as integrated dimensions at both the global, national and sub-national level.

#### Post-2015 with sustainability at the centre

The millennium development goals (MDGs) have contributed to significant development achievements during the past 10 years. They have placed human development at the centre and helped to create a shared global development agenda based on mutual commitments by both rich and poor countries. As we approach 2015, there is a need to accelerate our effort to achieve the targets. At the same time, we need to look ahead. We must build on the successes of the MDGs but with an eye for better incorporating the agenda for sustainability in a new global development framework in the years to come. It is critical that this new framework will embrace both the social, the economic and the environmental dimensions of development to ensure sustainability.

#### The Millennium Development Goals

-  1 Eradicate extreme hunger and poverty
-  2 Achieve universal primary education
-  3 Promote gender equality and empower women
-  4 Reduce child mortality
-  5 Improve maternal health
-  6 Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
-  7 Ensure environmental sustainability
-  8 Develop a global partnership for development

[www.un.org/millenniumgoals/](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/)

**UNDP** is the UN's largest development organisation with a broad mandate to promote sustainable human development. We work to reduce poverty, support democratic governance, prevent crises and promote recovery, protect the environment and advance gender equality. We seek to achieve this through integrated programmes, national capacity building, technical advice and partnerships with national and international stakeholders. UNDP's global knowledge network and engagement counts more than 170 countries, where we work in close cooperation with governments, civil society, private sector and other UN agencies.

As chair of the UN Development Group and as coordinator of the UN system at country level, UNDP plays a central role in promoting a strategic, coherent and efficient development arm of the UN. UNDP works to strengthen cooperation with all UN Funds and Programmes including United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP, whose research-based and normative role effectively complements and underpins UNDP's practical implementation of sustainable development in the countries we work in.



*Empowered Lives.  
Resilient Nations.*

[www.undp.org/www.undp.dk](http://www.undp.org/www.undp.dk)

## Proposed UN goals for Sustainable Energy for All

- 1.** Ensure universal access to modern energy services
- 2.** Double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030
- 3.** Double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030

[www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/energy](http://www.un.org/en/sustainablefuture/energy)



# TIME TO ENSURE A FUTURE for all

*"Achieving development which lasts is not about trading economic, social, and environmental objectives off against each other. It is about seeing them as interconnected objectives which are best pursued together".- Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator*

**Rio+20** presents a historic opportunity to recalibrate our approach to, and understanding of, human development and welfare. It is a chance to make sustainability the fundamental principle for the way we work, think and support development in the 21st century.

UNDP works to promote sustainable human development. By way of our broad mandate we are able to support governments and civil societies connect the dots between good governance, poverty reduction, sustainable management of eco systems, climate change, crisis prevention, water, food security and women's rights.

Based on decades of practical experiences and knowledge, UNDP recommends that the Rio+20 negotiations and follow up discussions on the post-2015 agenda focuses on a number of key issues:



1

## Equity and inclusion must be a high priority

Development results are only sustainable if they contribute to increase equity in society and include all social groups. In a world of 7 billion human beings, it is necessary to promote economic growth that is not only environmentally sustainable but also creates new jobs and contributes to improve the living conditions for women, the poor and the vulnerable. The traditional growth model can lead to further environmental degradation, greater health risks, increased inequalities and violent conflicts in contradiction to sustainable development.

2

## Integrated approaches are necessary

Continued economic growth, poverty reduction and protection of our planet are linked and require a common solution. It is necessary to integrate social protection measures with economic growth and safeguarding of the environment at all levels of decision-making to ensure sustainability. Social development, economic and environmental policies must work together and in the same direction. Today this is not always the case.

3

## Access to efficient and sustainable energy for all

Access to efficient and renewable energy is critical for reducing poverty, create economic growth and to preserve our environment. 1.4 billion people today do not have access to modern energy services. This prevents them from escaping poverty, involves serious health risks, hinders economic growth and contributes to environmental degradation. We have an opportunity to break the energy poverty cycle by investing in clean and cheap energy for all.

4

## Partnerships are the way forward

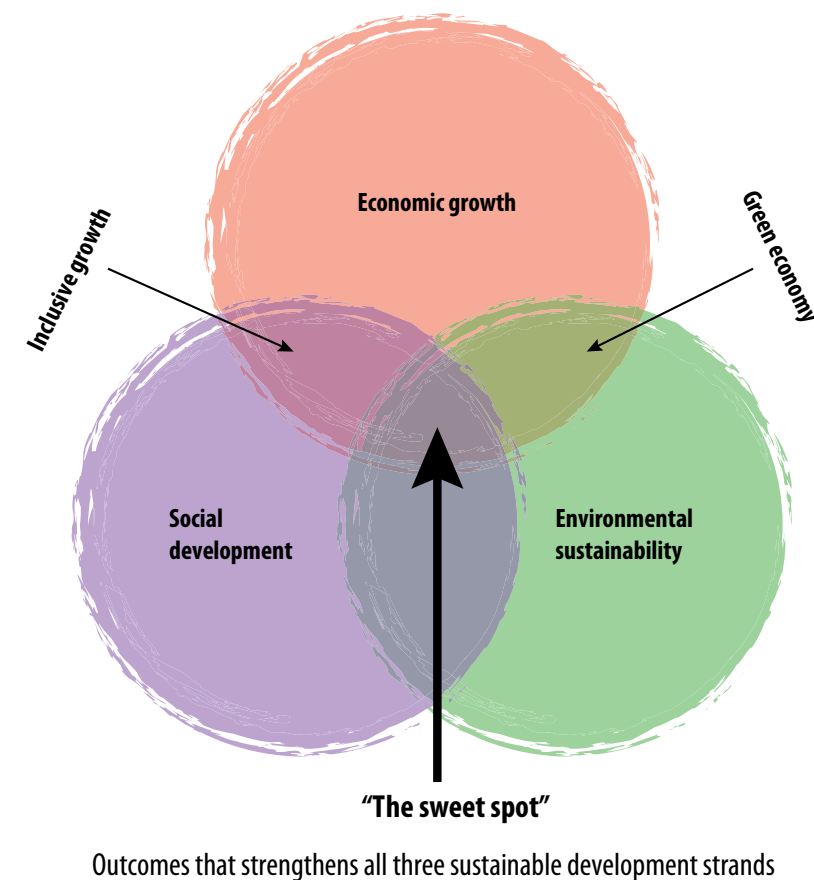
Sustainable development calls for new and more partnerships. We need to establish more cross-sector cooperation agreements between the private and the public sector, with research and technical institutes and with civil society and labour market organizations. There is a need to develop new technologies, and look for new financing and investment models that can contribute to reduce poverty, promote economic growth and secure environmental improvements at the same time.

5

## New measurement for sustainable development

The UN Sustainability Panel notes that 'what cannot be measured cannot be managed'. Sustainable human development cannot be measured by way of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) only. It is time to develop a better tool. Since 1990, UNDP has published a human development index that measures development from a combined set of economic and social indicators including GDP, life expectancy, education level, gender equality and economic inequality. It is time to reach agreement on a new measurement for development that reflects all dimensions of sustainable development including economic, social and environmental improvements.

**Figure 1: The three strands of sustainable development**



# INTEGRATED APPROACHES

## PROMOTES SUSTAINABILITY

### -EXAMPLES OF TRIPLE WINS

#### NIGER

In one of the world's poorest countries, greatly affected by drought in 2010 and 2012, efforts are made to adapt to devastating climate changes, and at the same time create new income opportunities. Local farmers are trained, and receive salary for, planting and nurturing trees that help prevent desertification. The project is labour intensive and rely almost exclusively on labour from the local communities (of whom a large share are women), and on local knowledge of plants and trees. The project is estimated to have reestablished 5 million hectare of forest in Niger (equivalent to 4% of the country's area), and improved food security and living standards for 2,5 million people.

#### BRAZIL

Since the meeting in Rio in 1992, different governments have sought to combine programmes that focus on economic growth, social protection and services and environmental protection. This has called for cross sector coordination and cooperation with the private sector and civil society organizations. The 'Bolsa Verde' Program combines social services to the poor Amazon population with training in sustainable forestry. The results are clear: There has been a decline in both deforestation and extreme poverty. The nation-wide 'Bolsa Familia' program ensures families social services on condition that they send their children to school. The outcome has been a decrease in inequality and a reduction in poverty by one sixth in the period between 2003-2009.

#### SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's "Working for Water" programme employs 20,000 persons per annum to remove waterintensive alien tree and plant species from local habitats. Since its inception in 1995, "Working for Water" has cleared more than one million hectares of alien plant species, releasing 50 million cubic meters of additional water per annum. Much of this water was used for irrigated agriculture, reducing local food insecurity. Many of the programme's beneficiaries come marginalized groups: it seeks to ensure that 60 percent of its staff are women, 20 percent are youth, and 5 percent are living with disabilities.

#### CROATIA

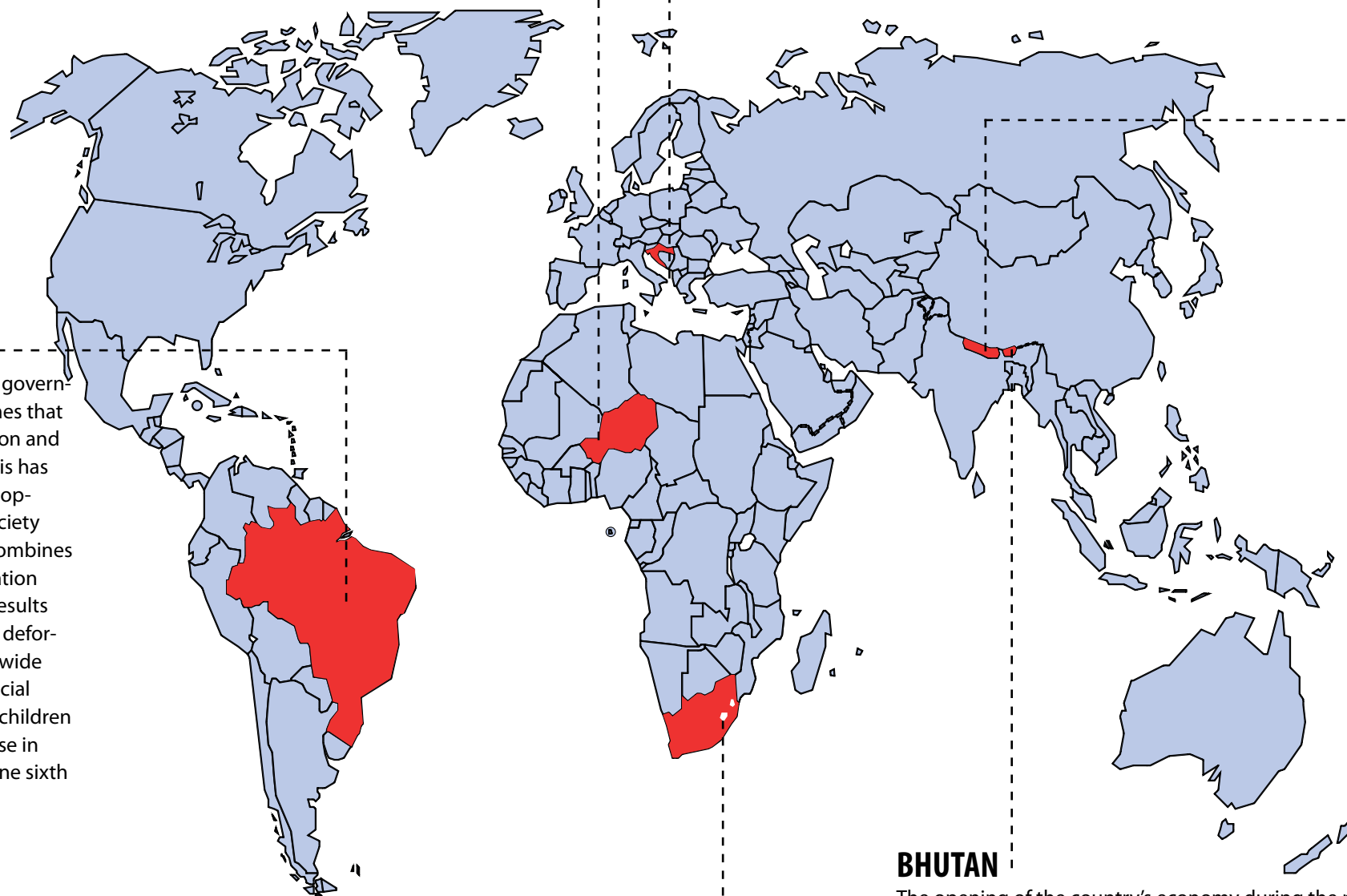
Measured against GDP, Croatia's energy consumption is 12% higher than the EU average. Consequently, Croatia decided to review the energy efficiency of all public buildings. So far half of all public buildings have been assessed, which in just three years have resulted in savings of up to 18 mil. USD and a reduction in CO2 by 63,000 tons annually. At the same time, the investments in energy efficiency have created hundreds of new jobs in the private sector.

#### NEPAL

The rural population in Nepal is highly dependent on traditional bio fuel for heating and cooking. This form of energy however, is a threat to the environment and the health of the population. A large project therefore now seeks to promote renewable energy sources by way of establishing small hydro power and solar heating systems. The project has so far provided 1 million Nepalese people access to electricity from renewable energy sources, which has meant lower energy prices, growing income and the establishment of an average of 40 small enterprises for each new micro hydro power system.

#### BHUTAN

The opening of the country's economy during the past decades has resulted in triple growth in GDP. The fast growing economy has called for measures to protect the environment. For this reason, environmental protection is now written into the country's constitution. At the same time, the government works from a broad based socio-economic welfare model – "Gross National Happiness" – as a foundation for its development strategy. The results, among others, is a growth in forest coverage. At the COP 15 in Copenhagen in 2010, the government was also able to promise that Bhutan would remain a CO2-neutral country.





# FACTS FOR THOUGHTS

900 million people do not have access to clean water and 3 billion do not have access to modern sanitation.

Globally, one third of all food for human consumption is wasted. This is equivalent to 1.3 billion ton annually. At the same time 16% of people in the world go hungry!

*Only five countries meet the internationally agreed target of 0.7% of GDI in development aid – Sweden (1.02%), Norway (1%), Luxembourg (0.99%), Denmark (0.86%) and the Netherlands. (0,75%)*

**Over 10 million people, mostly rural poor, have gained access to modern energy services through UNDP-supported projects over the past decade.**

**In 1992 we were 5,5 billion people on this planet. Today we are 7 billion. It is estimated that we will be 9 billion in 2050.**

*The world's riches 1% owns 43% of the world's total wealth, while the poorest 50% owns less than 2%.*

**75% of the world's poor live in middle income countries.**

**The world spent combined 1 trillion on environmentally unsustainable subsidies incl. for fossil fuel, and only 66 billion on investments in sustainable energy.**

Every fifth person in the world is poor and lives on less than 1,25 USD a day.

Inhabitants in the highest developed countries emit on average 30 times as much CO2 than inhabitants in the poorest countries.

**1.4 billion people do not have access to modern energy services.**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION



• United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012: [www.uncsd2012.org](http://www.uncsd2012.org)



• United Nations Development Programme: [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)



• Sustainable Energy for All: [www.sustainableenergyforall.org](http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org)



• United Nations Environment Programme: [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)



• International Institute for Sustainable Development: [www.iisd.org](http://www.iisd.org)



• Overseas Development Institute: [www.odi.org.uk](http://www.odi.org.uk)



• 92-gruppen: [www.92grp.dk](http://www.92grp.dk)