

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON GREEN ECONOMY

(18-19 MAY, 2012) ISLAMABAD

BACKGROUND

Brazil is hosting the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio+20 Conference, in Rio on 20-22 June 2012 in pursuance of a decision of the UN General Assembly (Res.64/236 adopted on 24 December 2009). The objective of the Conference is to “secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges”. The two main themes of the Conference are: a) Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication and b) the institutional framework for sustainable development.

Heads of States and Governments of more than 130 countries are expected to attend the Rio+20 Conference. The Summit will be preceded by a sustainable development dialogue comprising high level debates on food and nutritional security, sustainable development for fighting poverty, sustainable development as an answer to the economic and financial crisis, the economics of sustainable development, including sustainable consumption and production, sustainable cities, unemployment, sustainable energy for all, water, oceans and forests.

The global preparatory process for the UNCSD, spearheaded by a 16 member Bureau comprising representatives of all the regions and facilitated by a secretariat hosted by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) has comprised two sessions of the preparatory Committee (PREPCOM) in 2010 and 2011, several inter sessional meetings of the PREPCOM and numerous informal meetings of senior Government officials, joined by representatives of non state sectors. Scores of studies and meetings on the two major themes as well as the new and emerging challenges facing the world have informed the inter governmental discussions.

Since early 2012, representatives of states and the non state sector and civil society have been discussing and negotiating a document titled ‘THE WORLD WE WANT’, the zero draft spelling out the proposed outcome of the UNCSD/Rio+20 Conference proposed by the co-chairs of the Bureau on the basis of inputs provided by member states and NGOs and Civil Society. The negotiations have been protracted and deeply contentious: the divergence of opinion being evidenced by rival drafts on nearly all relevant subjects, leading to a swelling of the 19 page original draft to over 200 pages. The third and last meeting of the PREPCOM in the first half of

June 2012 will seek to reach consensus on the outstanding issues, leaving unresolved questions to be addressed by the Summit itself which will endorse the final outcome.

The divergences of approach along and across the familiar North-South divide relate to a wide spectrum of issues. Those include the definition of Green Economy and its implications for developing countries; the continued validity and implementation of the Rio+20 principles and Agenda 21, including the provision of financial, technology and capacity development support by the developed to the developing countries; institutional arrangements for sustainable development; the purpose and process of articulation of sustainable development goals; and the means of implementation, including the role of international cooperation for accelerating sustainable development with equal attention to its three pillars. Developing countries seek guarantees against abuse or misuse of Green Economy for trade protectionism or imposition a new set of non-tariff barriers.

Despite the sharp divergences of positions, the negotiations are likely to eventually forge consensus on a broad, flexible definition of Green Economy, a process for the articulation of sustainable development goals building up on Millennium Development Goals, and reforming and strengthening the existing multilateral structures for enhanced implementation of Agenda 21 and outcomes of subsequent Summits as well as the recommendations adopted by the Rio+20 Conference.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATION

Pakistan has been participating in the preparatory process of the UNCSD/Rio+20 Conference as a member of the Bureau driving the preparations and an active member of the G 77 and China. The Pakistan delegation at the Summit will be led by the Prime Minister and expected to include ministers and senior officials of the relevant ministries, parliamentarians, the Private Sector and Civil Society and the media.

A number of decisions taken by the Government recently underline a commitment to Sustainable Development, such as the adoption of the Economic Growth Strategy 2011, the approval of a Climate Change Policy and the creation of a Ministry of Climate Change, launching of an ambitious programme of hydropower generation, approval of plans of action on maximizing energy efficiency and developing renewable sources of energy, the campaign to end hunger, the income support programme for the poor, etc. However, much more needs to be done to effectively address the myriad economic, environmental and social challenges, including widening and deepening poverty, facing the country.

The forthcoming Consultations are part of efforts made by the Government and the non state stakeholders and the UN System and multilateral institutions in Pakistan to ensure that the

outcome of the Rio+20 promotes efforts to address the global economic, environmental and social challenges, most of them being relevant to Pakistan. The Consultation will seek to:

- i. Examine the relevance of green economy to Pakistan's economic, environmental and social priorities given the indispensable contribution of the ecosystems and the agricultural sector to the country's GDP, jobs and livelihoods and exports, and the urgent imperatives of food, water and energy security.
- ii. Review the global discourse on green economy and ongoing negotiations on the outcome of the Rio+20 summit with a view to identifying how Pakistan, as a member of G77 and China, may help promote consensus on the contentious issues with a view to ensuring the success of the Rio+20 Summit.
- iii. Review the ongoing efforts by countries of the Asia and the Pacific region to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication through a transition to green economy and a low carbon growth paradigm shaped by national circumstances and priorities and identify relevant lessons for Pakistan.
- iv. Achieve an informed understanding of the roles and contributions of the key stakeholders, including the government at the federal, provincial, and local levels, and non-state actors, especially the private sector, civil society and the scientific community to promote green economy with a view to accelerating the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and suggest ideas for elaboration of a green economy future for Pakistan.

AGENDA OF THE CONSULTATION

The agenda of the Consultation comprises sessions on the evolution of the concept of Green Economy and its implications in the context of sustainable development, the concerns of the developing countries, efforts to turn the concept of Green Economy in to tangible practices in the Asia and the Pacific region, the state of the ongoing negotiations on the outcome of the Rio+20 Summit, a comprehensive dialogue on the water, food and energy security challenges, and the urban agenda. The Consultation will also discuss the prerequisites of an appropriate institutional framework for sustainable development and green economy in Pakistan.

RESOURCE PERSONS AND KEY PARTICIPANTS

The participants and resource persons leading or contributing to the discussions during the consultation include members of parliament, high level officials of the federal and provincial governments, relevant federal statutory bodies, the private sector, policy and technical

experts, the academic community, UN agencies and programmes, and civil society representatives.

OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION

It is hoped that the Consultation will articulate a set of suggestions for consideration by the Pakistan delegation at the forthcoming Rio+20 Summit as well as ideas for consideration by all stakeholders after the Summit in order to accelerate the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication in Pakistan.