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Sustainable Development Observatory  
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***Setting the Agenda for a sustainable future – the  
road to the UN Summit on Post 2015 Agenda***

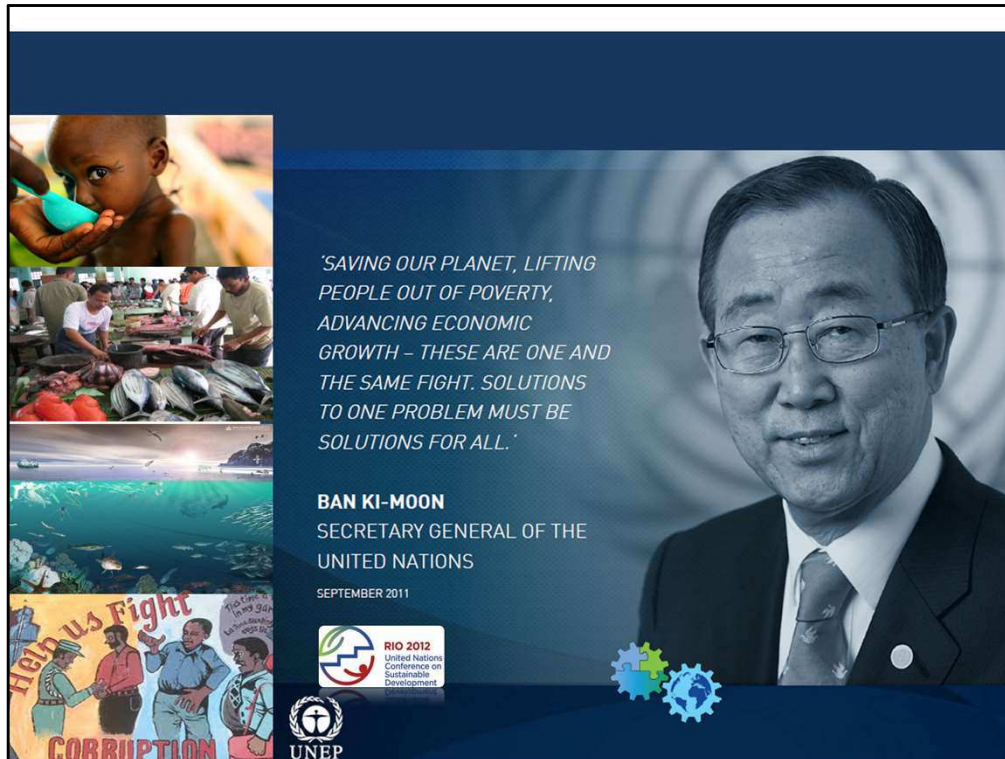
## **Integration and Universality in the Post 2015 Agenda**



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This presentation has been prepared by the Special Advisor to the Executive Director of UNEP for the Post 2015 Agenda, in collaboration with the Post 2015 Support Team and Regional Support Office.



The call for achieving sustainable development has gained momentum with the **UNCSD in June 2012 (Rio+20)**. In both **Rio+20 and the MDG Summit** (September 2013), member States affirmed that a new development agenda for the Post 2015 period will carry forward the:

- **Unfinished work of the MDGs** (Millennium Development Goals)
- Build on **existing commitments**, including the GEGs (Global Environmental Goals)
- Address **emerging issues** in all three dimensions of SD

The “Future We Want” renewed commitment of the world’s nations to:

- a. “Sustainable development and to ensuring the promotion of an economically, socially and environmentally viable future for our planet and for present and future generations” (Para 1)
- b. “Eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge ... and indispensable for sustainable development” (Para 2)
- c. “Integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their interlinkages” (Para 3)
- d. “Recognized the need to change unsustainable consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base” (para 4)
- e. “People centered - A world that is just, equitable and inclusive (Para 6)”

The **European Union and its member states** has played a **highly constructive role** in this two-year journey, but also from the outset. Their contributions have driven the process ever since the first Rio conference, into the 10YFP processes, into the upgrading of UNEP and establishment of UNEA, and now the OWG SDG and Post 2015 negotiations. They must continue to lead the way, even though they are cognizant of trade offs and political risks.



**MDGs** were achieved in some areas, but not all. for example:

- Ozone layer depletion
- Improved drinking water sources
- Poverty alleviation in many countries

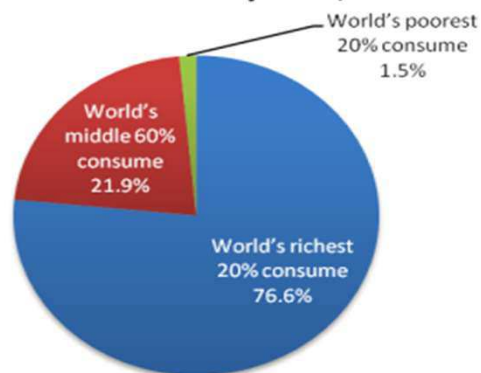
Similarly, with the Global Environmental Goals (**GEGs**), only 4% have been achieved so far.

Lessons were learnt along the way, and I would like to highlight just three:

- In the world's poorest countries progress often failed to keep up with **rapidly changing demographics, globalization, and the effects of global environmental, social and economic shocks**, including the fiscal crisis of 2008. For example, in both Ethiopia and India, between 1994 and 2004, roughly the same number of people escaped poverty as those who became newly poor. Even the MIC and HICs were affected, or helped cause the effects. Thus the world has drawn toward the conclusion that the new agenda cannot just focus on development for developing countries, but must become a universal agenda for all.
- **Working in silos** can help to achieve single-source targets, but may impact the gains in other areas. Environmental risks can defeat development gains, e.g. through the effects of climate change. Not building on environmental opportunities can hamper development, e.g. electricity for all can only be achieved with renewable energy. An integrated approach is indispensable, but our institutions need to evolve if we are to achieve SD; we have to learn to reach across sectors, and work within partnerships, with strong policy and fiscal reforms.
- **Finally, monitoring , reporting and mutual/self-accountability are key elements of success for a voluntary agenda**

## Emerging Issues since 2000 : inequality

Share of world's  
private consumption, 2005



Source: World Bank Development Indicators 2008



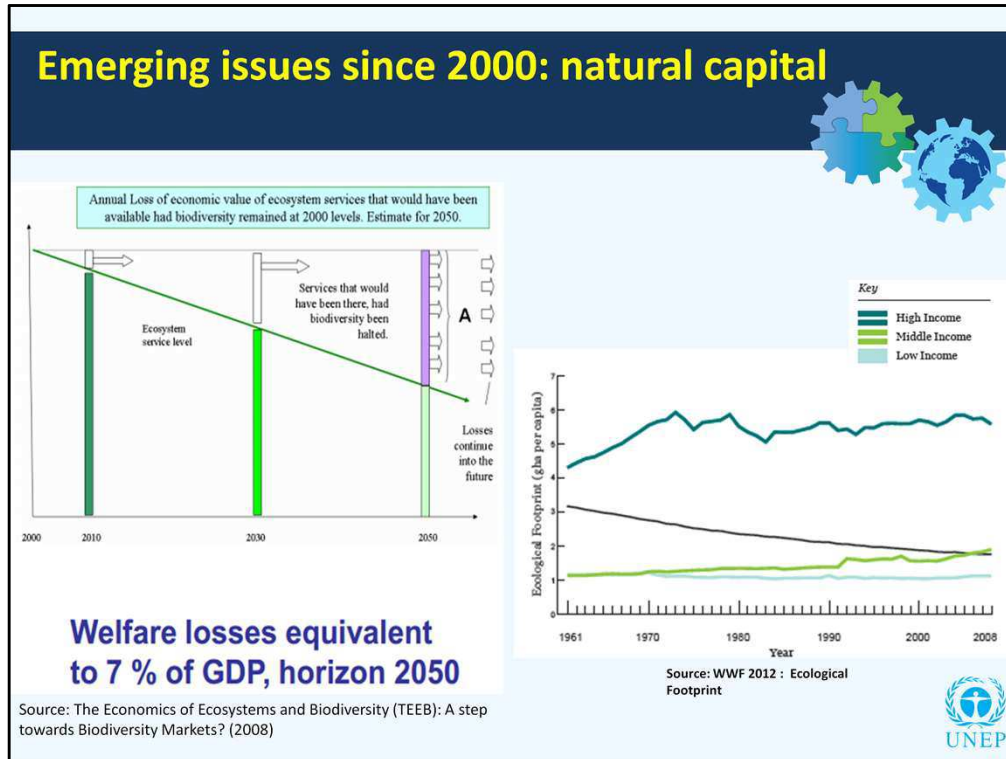
But since 2000 when the MDGs and most of the international agreements were established, there have been many other emerging issues.

We are now able to measure **rising inequality** more effectively.

World's poorest 20% consume only 1.5% of its resources - world's richest 20% consume more than 76%.

But there are **regional differences** in inequality. African and Latin America have the highest levels of inequality within nations, as measured through income and expenditure GINI coefficients.

And there are **gender differences** in inequality : for example, women work longer hours than men, and yet receive less wages.



Destruction of the environment continues, leading to a fall in ecosystem services, and natural capital

By 2050 this may translate into a **welfare loss** of 7 % of the global gross domestic product (GDP)

Poverty eradication cannot be irreversibly achieved unless a sustainable development pathway is adopted. Many countries, especially in developing countries, are primarily dependent upon natural capital for their growth and people's livelihoods, or as TEEB put it: **natural capital is the GDP of the poor**

Although we have a slight dip in the **ecological footprint** of high income countries recently, the same cannot be said for Middle or Low Income countries.

Nevertheless, the **average use of resources** in some developed countries is as high as 30-40 tonnes/person/year, compared to 2 tonnes/person/year for some of the developing countries (Source: UNEP 2014. "Decoupling 2".)

These are just some of the facts that have come to light recently through efforts of scientists, but also OECD, OXFAM, and others.





Approximately 4.3 million people a year die prematurely from illness attributable to **household indoor air pollution** caused by the inefficient use of solid fuels, the largest impacts are seen in developing countries.

In addition, 3.7 million deaths can be attributed to **outdoor air pollution** of which transport, energy production and industry are major sources. The largest impacts are in emerging economies, but also some HICs.

These recent findings more than double previous estimates and confirms that **air pollution is now the world's largest single environmental health risk**. Reducing air pollution could save millions of lives.

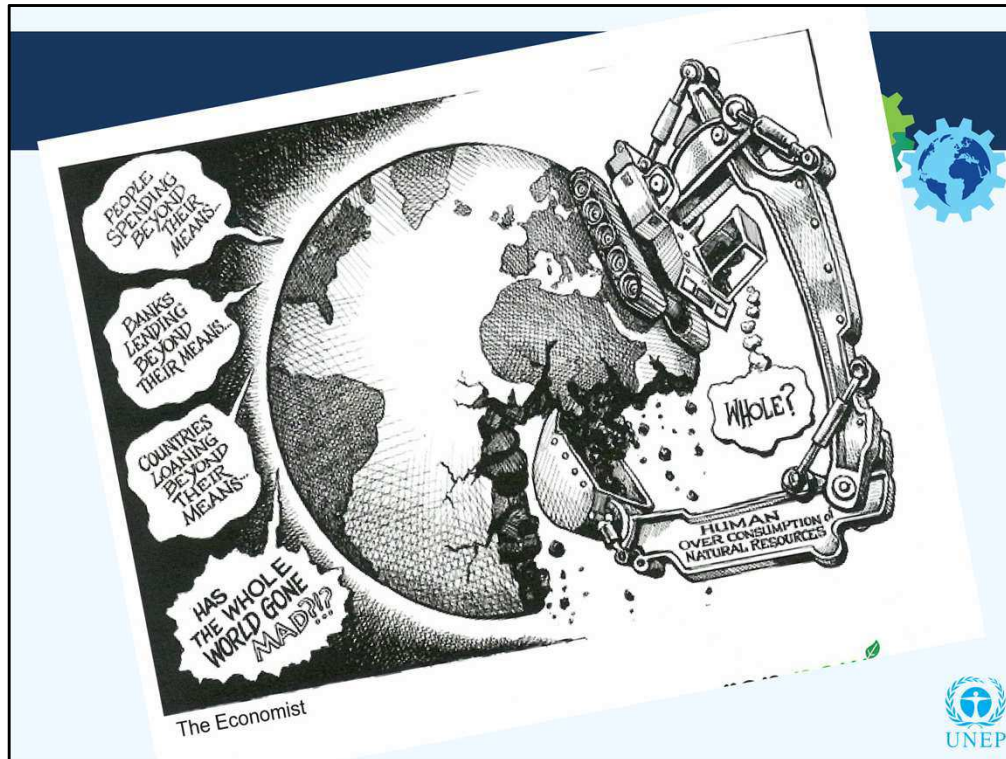
(WHO, Climate change and health, fact sheet No 292, updated March 2014

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs292/en/>

WHO Global Health Observatory Data Repository <http://apps.who.int/gho/data/node.main.156?lang=en>

A study in the Bronx , USA showed that people have a 66% chance of getting **asthma** if they live near noxious land uses – most poor live there.

EC estimated in 2011 that at least **500,000 new jobs would be created if countries recycle 70% of their waste**. (ref. EC. 2011. A resource efficient Europe- A flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 Strategy).



The world has achieved **greater prosperity**, but at the expense of environmental degradation, and social exclusion.

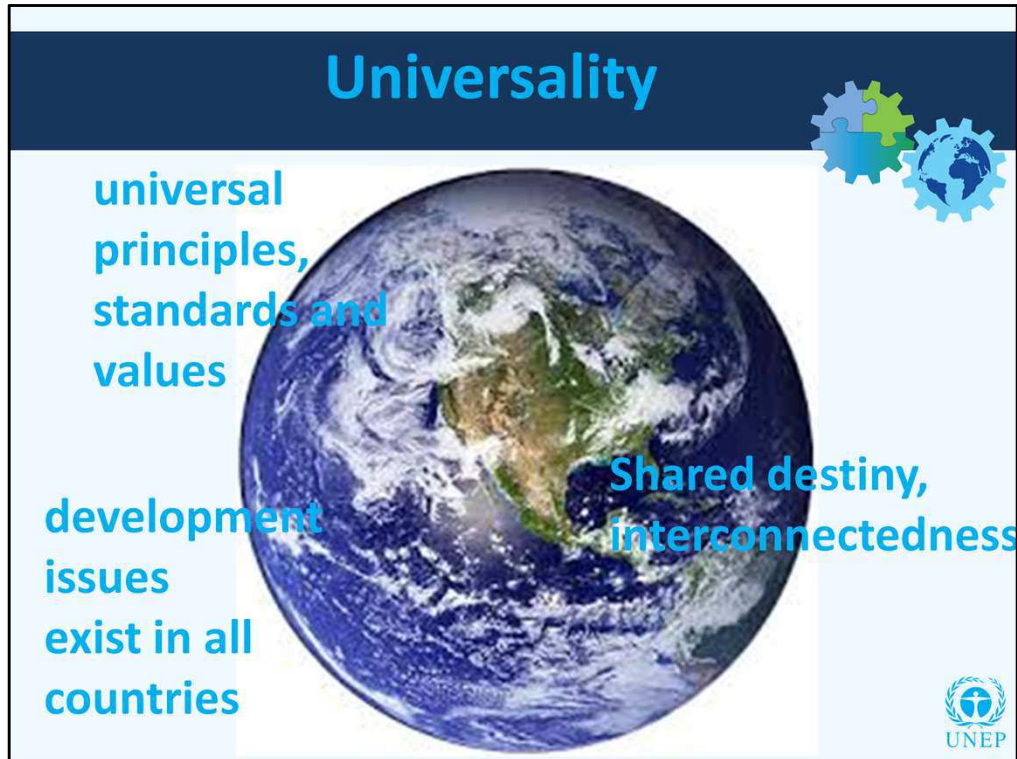
We seem unable to collectively halt the growing environmental challenges, such as biodiversity loss and climate change

But the environmental and social crises are increasing awareness on our patterns of over-consumption. Indeed, there is increasing recognition that we need to stay within the **safe operating space of our planet and manage our consumption and production patterns**.

This is why we need the SDGs; this is why the **SDGs are a state-of-the-art collection of top issues**. But are they ambitious enough? Many in the environment field do not think so. Many also understand that achieving a universally applicable agenda has to have political compromises.

**In UNEP, we believe that the SDGs are a significant step forward from Rio+20.** UNEP along with other UN agencies has been working in the background to support the OWG process, and we have drawn in the views of civil society, scientists, private sector, parliamentarians, and more.

The SDGs do **not necessarily capture all the critical environmental issues**, but then why should they? We have global environmental agreements, many of which will continue to evolve and aim higher. The SDGs complement them, do not detract from them, and link them to underlying social and economic dysfunctions in our world.



What differentiates the pre-2015 agenda from the post-2015 agenda ? Two key aspects : universality and integration

In Rio+20 member states agreed that the sustainable development goals would be universally applicable, but nationally differentiated.

The SG's Synthesis Report also calls for a "universal call for action". There are several compelling reasons.

1) That **universal principles, standards and values applicable to all countries and all peoples**. This is not a new idea – it has been recognized especially in the areas of human rights, labour and environment. All countries are signatories of the UN Charter. These principles underpin the SDGs.

2) That **national and global development challenges are interconnected, and therefore we universal commitment to address them**. Sustainable development seeks to catalyze options for a greater common good. The SDGs are not a zero-sum game, nor are they the maximum of what we should achieve. Those who can do more, should do so.

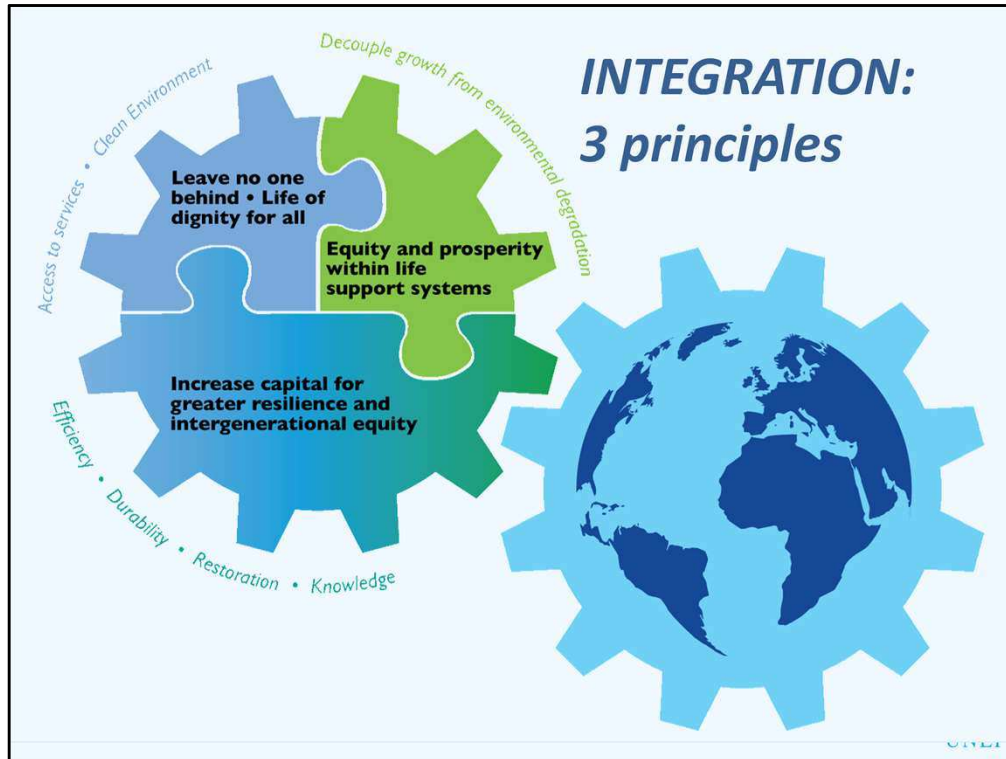
3) that **development issues exist universally in all countries**, regardless of their income levels. In Europe:

- Poverty exists in deprived areas in Europe (Goal 1 – even if the target is lower, Europe must set its own target)
- Substance abuse, traffic deaths, obesity and malnutrition, and exposure to hazardous chemicals and waste (Goal 3)
- SCP, decoupling and GDP+ (Goals 8, 12 and 17)
- Retrofit and upgrade infrastructure by making them long lasting, sustainable, low carbon (Goal 9)

The SG also reminds us that we are stewards of our planet, and calls on our sense of empathy and enlightened self-interest, to see universality as the core of the new Agenda. Thus we have **common responsibilities**. All Goals are relevant to all countries.

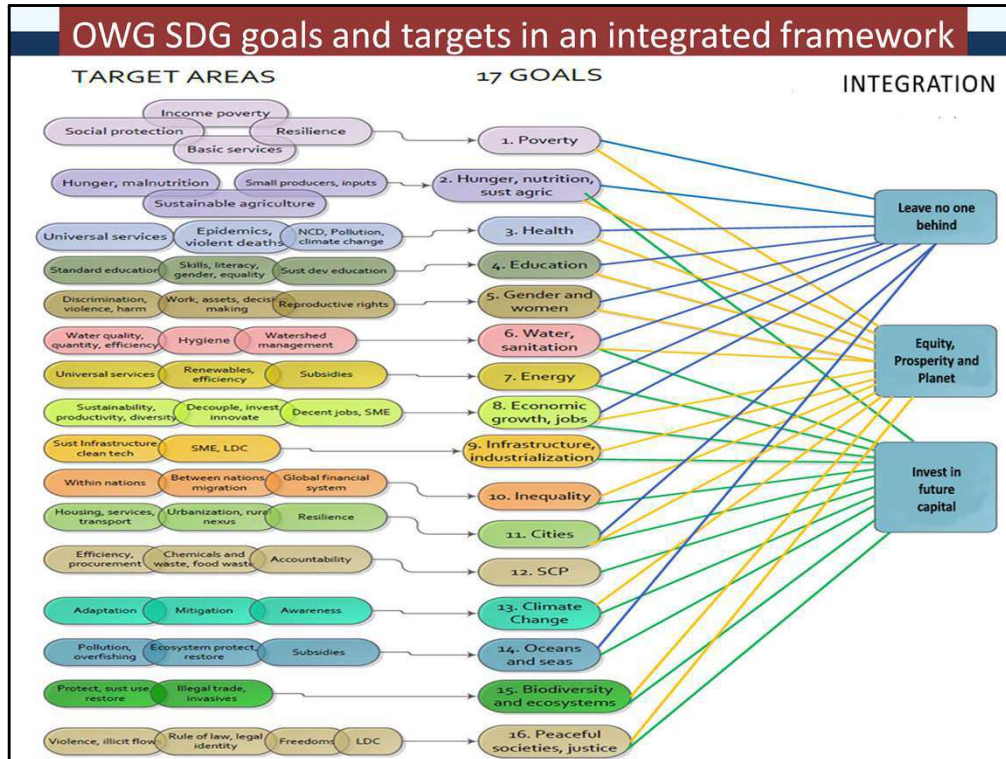
But we also have **different responsibilities and capacities**. And these are captured in the different targets, and can be further defined in the selection of indicators.





The second notion, that of integration, is more difficult to define. We have distilled the conceptual approaches of the Brundtland Commission Report, WSSD, Millennium Declaration, and Rio+20. The SG's Synthesis Report calls for an integrated approach to the post 2015 sustainable development agenda. From an environmental perspective, the road to sustainability needs to address at least three key principles:

- a) Leave no one behind and provide a life of dignity for all, through environmentally sound practices and technologies
- b) Live within our means : achieve greater prosperity in an inclusive manner, within the capacity of the earth's life support system
- c) Leave something behind: Increase natural, social and economic capital to achieve greater resilience and secure future generations' livelihoods



How can countries implement such an ambitious agenda in an integrated manner?

If we were to map the SDGs against the three integrative principles, we could find ways to achieve them through integrated approaches. Conceptually, this can help to find interlinked solutions for the implementation of the agenda.

There are many benefits from integration, even though it is a challenge to implement:

- Offers multiple benefits and greater impacts
- Address root causes and drivers for irreversible and sustained gains
- Provides structured ways to manage trade-offs
- Economies of scale (do more with less)

A blueprint approach does not work. Each country must find its own way to promote an integrated agenda.



For example, Linking the poverty agenda to the issues of green economy, and green and decent jobs can provide additional dividends.

- 3 billion poorest people in the world live on smallholder farms, around forests or in coastal area and depend on the productive capacity of nature (such as soil, forests, fish, water and other forms of environmental assets) = this is the GDP of the poor

#### Interlinked solutions:

- **Income-based poverty measures** are too narrow in focus. Similarly, measures of wealth and growth focus only on a few economic indices, whereas recent indices, such as the **Inclusive Wealth Index (IWI)**, measure a full range of assets such as manufactured, human and natural capital. Redefining poverty and economic growth would show the true state of a nation's wealth and the sustainability of its growth, and provide incentives for redirecting public and private investment
- Public and private investments in green and decent jobs will provide the foundation for sustainability; Today, "**green and decent jobs**" are one of the fastest growing sectors in the global economy. These include jobs related to nature-based activities, environmental technologies, ecological restoration and waste-recycling activities that provide good working conditions, are meaningful and socially protected.
- **Social policy tools** (e.g., safety nets, access to productive assets, to justice and security, and investing in skill-building, education, health and other social sectors) offer a viable pathway for reducing extreme poverty, increasing inclusiveness and addressing environmental and economic risks

Some examples of existing initiatives that use these interlinked solutions: UNDP+UNEP Poverty Environment Initiative ; PAGE ; WB WAVES



A second example :

- productivity and capacity of our planet is increasingly at risk to meet human needs and sustain economic activities in the light of increasing populations and a growing consumer middle class
- Demographic trends show that by 2030 the growing global middle class is likely to comprise three billion consumers, placing increasing pressures on resources.

Interlinked solutions:

- policies to redirect investment towards a decoupling of economic growth from both social inequality and environmental degradation
- sustainable innovation and dematerialization processes, such as industrial ecology, resource substitution, and resource decoupling
- sustainable public procurement, since Governments are the largest consumer in many national economies
- sustainable agricultural systems tend to be more labour intensive - this labor replaces often-toxic or polluting chemical inputs, and generates employment
- sustainable consumption is not about consuming less; it is about consuming better and more responsibly – i.e., more efficiently, with less risk to our health, environment and society; it can be promoted through a mix of policy, economic and voluntary instruments, including formal and informal education

The 10YFP for SCP is an important and ready-made mechanism for promoting integrated solutions





Finance for sustainable development, is one aspect of the means of implementation:

The **ICESDF** has presented a comprehensive report that points out the complementarity between 4 sources of finance: domestic public and private, and international public and private. Much can be said about all four, but let me leave you with the following thoughts:

1. Developed countries must fully recommit to the target of **0.7% GNI for ODA**, and this should be done at the FFD3. It is also important to separate current negotiations for climate change finance, or biodiversity and other environmental issues, from ODA.
2. Developing countries must embrace innovation. For example, the **innovations on domestic taxation** (shift the burden of tax away from labour to taxes on resources) can not only will this help increase resource efficiency, but it will also likely result in more employment and reduced inequality.

Innovative financing, such as a **tax on financial transactions**, **carbon bonds**, **eliminating harmful subsidies**, **moving fair trade**, and fiscal and policy incentives for higher performance from natural resource based sectors of the economy, can unlock tremendous resources.

**Transforming the financial landscape** is a critical element for long term stability and sustainability. The SDGs recognized this through a target aimed at improving regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions.

**Innovations in accounting practices**, such as durable value creation, and private sustainability finance, are helping companies and investors assess social and environmental sustainability. (method of quantifying non-financial performance on e.g.: innovation, quality, and environmental and community issues).

**UNEP's Finance Inquiry**: dysfunctions of the global financial system, such as over-discounting of future risks, and structural under-investment in sustainable assets.

## Technology transition and innovation



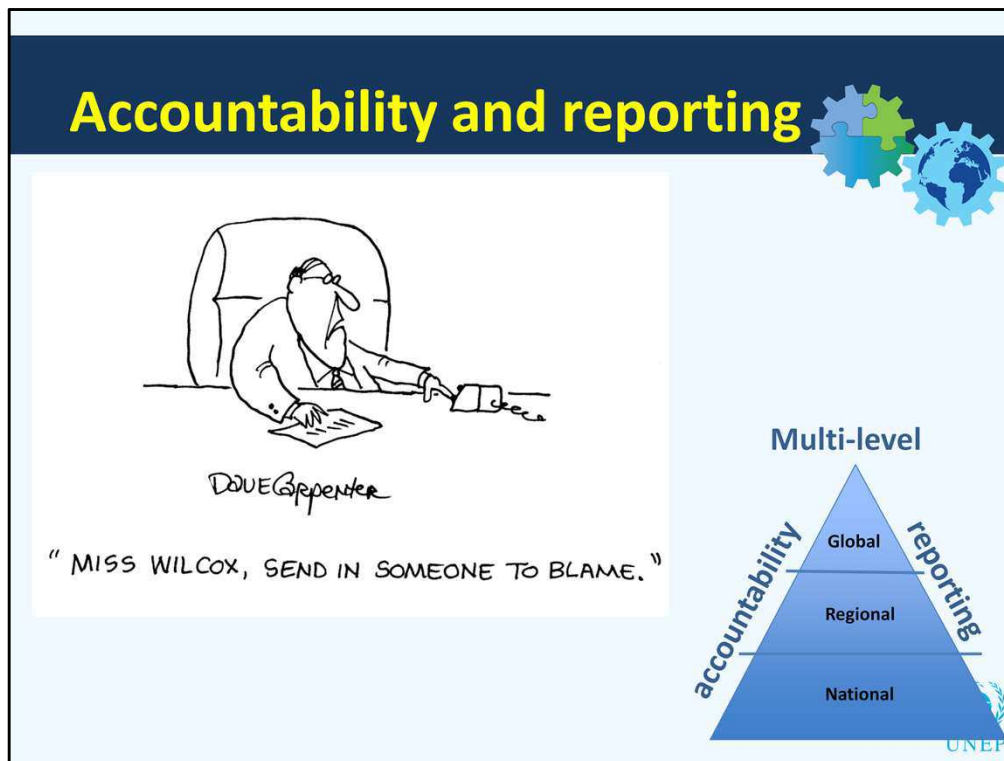
Member states are debating **technology transfer** on four issues :

- reforming IPR rules,
- a global data portal,
- a Technology Bank, and
- a global facilitation mechanism.

UNEP in collaboration with the UN system is conducting a **mapping of existing technology transfer mechanisms** for environmentally sound technologies, for example CTCN and Enlighten with lessons learnt and recommendations. Key issues we expect from this review are :

- importance of global partnerships, south-south and triangular cooperation for transferring technology and capacities to manage new technologies
- building capacity for innovation, research and development, including by tapping indigenous and local knowledge.

But sustainable development will not be achieved by a mere “transfer” of technologies, but by building the enabling environment for countries to **transition** towards environmentally sound technologies.



**Accountability is not about blame.** Accountability for the Post 2015 agenda, must be guided by national leadership, be universal, and hold all stakeholders accountable through a **mutual** approach.

Different kinds of **peer review mechanisms** are used in the context of the MEAs, or through the African Union, the Pacific Peer Review. But existing mechanisms are not fully integrated – they often focus only on poverty or economic growth. Our institutions need to be made fit for purpose.

**Corporate and business reporting** is essential (Goal 17). More can be done to motivate small and medium businesses to follow suit.

**Third party independent reviews**, can be done at national level by parliaments or other trusted bodies, or at global level (looking at global trends and differentiation by region or country) by normative UN agencies specialized in the different sectors.

The **UN Secretary General has proposed a multi-levelled reporting system**. Such a system should aggregate information, synergize data, reduces reporting burden on countries, make best use of global geospatial data, and leverage the data revolution to move towards an integrated approach to reporting.

Agreement should be achieved on an accountability, monitoring and reporting framework, including the role of HLPF vis a vis other existing entities such as the newly established United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).



To monitor such an integrated and transformational agenda, we need innovation.

The **data revolution** is already happening. Today the amount of information available dwarfs what we had just a few years ago. This revolution can make innovation happen.

With the debates on the goals and targets almost now settled, the Member States are turning their attention to the indicators. There is a general understanding that indicators don't just measure, they are a tool for **self-appraisal and accountability**. A **multi-tiered system of indicators** will be needed, with a small number at the global level.

UNEP is working with other UN agencies and has brought forth its considerable work through **UNEP-LIVE, and the National Reporting Systems** – both online, cloud-based, and free access portals for all stakeholders.

We will need a **mixture of indicators at the global level**:

- single-parameters (especially geospatial data, or absolute poverty line),
- measuring drivers of change, both process and outcome
- Multi-dimensional, such as a more integrated multi-dimensional poverty index
- Indices, such as beyond GDP – for example, Inclusive Wealth Index (which has shown that since 2004 the average growth rate of countries has been zero).

But **"integrated indicators" do not contradict the need to disaggregate**. All indicators will need to be more disaggregated than ever before, so as to monitor inequality (Goal 10).





**Innovation and new technologies** need to be embraced for data collection, monitoring, analysis, quality control and verification and to empower and enable a wider range of stakeholders, beyond governments and the UN system, including international organizations, foundations, citizens and responsible businesses to play an important role.

**We cannot afford to standardize, or centralize data.** Diversity is needed. But diversity only works through inter-operability, and therefore it is essential that the science of **semantic ontologies** - which has been successfully part of the medical profession for decades - be brought to the development profession.

**Measuring existing indicators is already a challenge** - one country reports that it took them 11 years to build the capacity to measure the MDGs.

**Capacity – technical and financial - will need to be strengthened**, especially in developing countries, to build solid statistical systems to undertake monitoring:

- Cross-sectoral coordination
- Quality assurance of data
- Analysis and translation of data and measurements into trends, scenarios, and statistics
- Technological innovations, including using renewable energy for mobile and sedentary monitoring stations
- Leveraging citizen science
- Building transparency and information access

## Popularizing the SDGs



- *SDGs are not MDG+*
- *SDGs can help balance social protection, growth, and planetary boundaries*
- *Sustainable development is a universal concern*
- *17 goals are necessary – we live in a complex world*



We still have a long way to go in communicating the SDGs and Post 2015 agenda to citizens at large.

The UN's Million Voices campaign was very successful (last count = almost 1.5 million people), and other initiatives are underway, such as the Hard Rain Project's Whole Earth Campaign for 2015, have reached out to many more. But we have 7 billion people in the world !

Also, more needs to be done to explain that the SDGs are not just a revamped MDG+ ; that sustainable development is a universal concern.

Some say that there are too many goals – no one will remember all 17 of them. But they are the top priority issues in all three dimensions of sustainable development PLUS governance. We live in a complex world.

We count on you to help spread the word !