

Fulfilling the Rio+20 Promises:

Reviewing Progress since the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

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About Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future

Stakeholder Forum is a nonprofit international organization working to advance sustainable development and promote democracy at a global level. Our work aims to promote open, accountable and participatory international decision-making on sustainable development through enhancing the involvement of stakeholders in intergovernmental processes.

Stakeholder Forum works with a diverse range of stakeholders globally on international policy development and advocacy; stakeholder engagement and consultation; media and communications and capacity building—all with the ultimate objective of promoting progressive outcomes on sustainable development through an open and participatory approach. The organization played a key role in the preparations for, and follow-up on, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 and Rio+20 in 2012. Visit us at www.stakeholderforum.org and follow us on Twitter @stakeholders.

About NRDC

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is a nonprofit environmental advocacy organization with more than 1.4 million members and online activists. Our staff of lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists work on the broad range of environmental challenges, including climate and energy, oceans, and sustainable communities. NRDC has a long history of engagement with international sustainability summits starting with the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. NRDC has its principal offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter @NRDC.

NRDC’s policy publications aim to inform and influence solutions to the world’s most pressing environmental and public health issues. For additional policy content, visit our online policy portal at www.nrdc.org/policy.

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FOREWORD

Written by: Nikhil Seth, Director, United Nations Division for Sustainable Development and Head of Rio+20 Secretariat



The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20, was a resounding success. A landmark for both people and the planet, it was the largest conference ever convened by the United Nations. More than 80 Heads of State and Government and an estimated 50,000-plus participants converged on Rio de Janeiro, including thousands of representatives from civil society and the private sector, as well as from across the UN system and other international organisations. The Conference was action-oriented, with a strong focus on the implementation of sustainable development. Its outcome document, ‘The Future We Want’, reaffirmed Member States’ political commitment to sustainable development and launched a number of crucial processes. Next to the negotiated outcomes, over 730 voluntary commitments were announced, with an estimated value of about US\$530 billion.

Over a year after the Conference, where do we stand? I feel that good progress has been made on key issues. The General Assembly Open Working Group for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has held four sessions. Properly conceived, the SDGs offer a transformative moment. They will be vital in breaking down thematic silos and creating a truly integrative vision which looks at development from the prism of human deprivations and our fragile planet.

The High-Level Political Forum will shortly hold its inaugural meeting. With it comes the chance to put in place a different kind of governance, one that looks to the long term, takes into account economic, social and environmental challenges, engages a broad range of actors who have a stake in development, and responds to change and new challenges. The Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, which is to develop options for a sustainable development financing strategy, has also held its initial meeting. And the preparations for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in 2014 are well under way.

When reflecting on Rio+20, it is important to recall the game-changing nature of the voluntary commitments and partnerships that were announced at the conference. They have galvanized a wide range of actions for sustainable development. The number of voluntary commitments and partnerships in the “Sustainable Development (SD) in Action Registry” has grown to over 1,400 valued at around US\$ 636 billion.

These multi-stakeholder initiatives voluntarily undertaken by Governments, intergovernmental organizations, major groups and other stakeholders are important contributions to the implementation of sustainable development goals and commitments agreed at the intergovernmental level.

However, for the voluntary commitments and partnerships to maintain their long-term value to all stakeholders, we need accountability. While the UN Secretariat has the responsibility to build upon and maintain the “SD in Action Registry”, third party independent reviews of commitments and partnerships are also critical.

Self-reporting sometimes has too strong a focus on achievements. Reviews by third parties such as the Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC), who are not bound by political correctness, can enhance the public perception of accountability through bold and critical feedback of voluntary commitments and partnerships. And the value of such independent reviews also applies to the negotiated outcomes of Rio+20—here undertaken by Stakeholder Forum.

I therefore appreciate and welcome the report “Fulfilling the Rio+20 Promises: Reviewing Progress since the UN Conference on Sustainable Development”, which reviews both negotiated outcomes and voluntary commitments. It is an important contribution towards our common objectives.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Nikhil Seth'.

Nikhil Seth

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SETTING THE STAGE FOR A NEW GLOBAL ARCHITECTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The June 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, also known as Rio+20, brought together leaders from government, civil society, and the private sector for the most participatory and socially inclusive U.N. conference to date. Rio+20 built upon the commitments made 20 years ago when world leaders gathered to stimulate political will toward sustainable development at the first Earth Summit, held in Rio in 1992.

Rio+20 resulted in the outcome document “The Future We Want,” which laid out a number of negotiated commitments intended to spur action toward sustainable development. In addition, the Rio Summit mobilized more than 700 voluntary commitments with an estimated valuation in excess of US\$500 billion. These commitments have now grown to more than 1,400 with a value greater than US\$600 billion—or nearly 1 percent of global annual GDP.

Stakeholder Forum and the Natural Resources Defense Council have partnered to conduct an initial review of the progress made on key negotiated and voluntary commitments made at Rio+20.

GLOBALLY NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS

While merely a year and a half has passed since Rio+20, significant progress has been made on some of the key negotiated outcomes. The formation of a set of Sustainable Development Goals is now well underway—a process that will play a critical role in shaping the U.N.’s vision for sustainable development when the Millennium Development Goals expire in 2015. A new, high-level political forum for sustainable development has been established at the U.N., and a process to develop an effective and ambitious financing strategy for sustainable development has begun; both initiatives will be crucial to the implementation of the SDG framework. In addition to these landmark steps, good progress has been seen in preparations for the Third Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in 2014, and in efforts to develop broader measures of progress on sustainable development that go beyond GDP. However,

the headway made on other commitments—such as those relating to oceans and seas and the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development—has been much less marked.

In terms of negotiated commitments, Rio+20 is perhaps best seen as a starting point rather than an ending point for action on sustainable development, with the true impact of many commitments yet to be felt due to the long implementation times required.

VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

There’s been real progress on a number of the key voluntary commitments made at Rio+20. We’ve seen Microsoft fulfill its pledge to become carbon neutral just one year after Rio+20, and the promise by eight multilateral development banks (MDBs) to commit US\$175 billion toward sustainable transportation is well on track. Brazil’s ground-breaking US\$235 billion commitment to Sustainable Energy for All is spurring huge investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and energy access, and Australia has nearly tripled its marine reserves, fulfilling its pledge to create the world’s largest network of marine protected areas.

Rio+20 highlighted more than ever the significance of voluntary commitments as a means of achieving the goals set forth by globally negotiated agreements; however, it remains for the United Nations to fully recognize their importance and create strong framework to support and encourage commitment-makers.

THE WAY FORWARD

Action through just one of these elements—globally negotiated agreements or voluntary commitments—is not sufficient if we are to address the myriad environmental, social, and economic issues we face today. While significant progress has been made on many of the negotiated and voluntary commitments established at Rio+20, stakeholders have a responsibility to maintain the momentum initiated at the Summit and hold governments and other commitment makers to account on their promises. In support of this, mechanisms that facilitate accountability and transparency are needed for both types of commitment, in order to encourage the support, drive, and ownership of all actors and to ensure that the promises made at Rio+20 are indeed fulfilled.

INTRODUCTION

In June of 2012, more than 80 Presidents and Prime Ministers and thousands of other leaders from governments, civil society and the private sector worldwide came together in Rio de Janeiro for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. The “Rio+20” conference marked two decades since the first Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 where the previous generation of leaders pledged to work together to address the mounting challenges of sustainability.

The objective of Rio+20 was 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.

Initial expectations for the global negotiations at Rio+20 were high. But as the preparatory process for the 2012 summit progressed, the ambitious globally negotiated agreement that many had hoped for failed to materialize. In the end, the Rio+20 Outcome Document—entitled “The Future We Want”—was widely met with disappointment from many civil society groups and in the international media. However, tangible and significant agreements were reached at Rio+20. While they do not measure up to the landmark conventions and other agreements at the first Earth Summit, decisions made at Rio+20 are laying the groundwork for a new transformative paradigm for sustainable development. Chief amongst these are: an agreement to develop a new set of universal sustainable development goals (SDGs); the establishment of a new high-level international governing body for sustainable development; and the launch of an intergovernmental process to develop a sustainable development financing strategy.

With so much focus on the negotiations and the politics of the moment, many missed the other major outcome of Rio+20: hundreds of voluntary commitments to take near-term actions to meet pressing global goals. At the final Rio+20 press conference, the Rio+20 Secretary General announced that Rio+20 had mobilized over 700 commitments with an estimated valuation of more than US\$500 billion. These were promises made by not only Presidents and Prime Ministers, but also by governments leaders at all levels, CEOs, and other leaders from around the world to take specific actions for advancing global sustainability.

It is also significant that Rio+20 was the largest UN conference ever. More than 50,000 people participated in more than 3,000 official Rio+20 events, with tens of thousands more participating in other parallel events around Rio de Janeiro. In addition, millions around the world around the world engaged in Rio+20 through the internet and social media.

Encouraged by Rio+20, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said he saw there the “further evolution of an undeniable global movement for change.” He further observed that if the negotiated commitments in the Rio+20 Outcome Document is seen as the “foundation” for the world to move to a sustainable future, then the “voluntary commitments” are the “bricks and cement.” Both elements of this new architecture of commitments are essential and equal. The voluntary commitments, including partnerships, are being recognized as a “means of implementation” essential to achieving real results on global agreements on sustainable development.

As was the case with the first Rio Earth Summit, civil society now has an important role to play in ensuring action and accountability on the important promises made at Rio+20. Many civil society groups are indeed actively engaged in follow up to Rio+20, both in their own countries and internationally.

As our contribution to civil society monitoring, Stakeholder Forum and Natural Resources Defense Council have partnered to undertake this initial review of the progress made on the thousands of commitments made, expanded, or reconfirmed at Rio+20. With guidance from our International Advisory Group, Stakeholder Forum selected and reviewed the implementation of the most significant globally-negotiated outcomes; and NRDC selected and reviewed eleven of the most significant voluntary commitments. While it is still early in the implementation of many of these commitments, we hope this report will serve as a useful assessment of progress to date.

PROGRESS ON KEY NEGOTIATED COMMITMENTS MADE AT RIO+20

INTRODUCTION

Global summits that bring together world leaders to try to establish a new development path for both people and the planet are by no means an everyday occurrence. Expectations ahead of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio+20, were therefore understandably high. Yet as the preparatory process for the summit progressed, the wide range of ambitious commitments many had hoped for failed to materialize. Many Member States appeared unwilling to take the bold steps necessary to bring about the systematic changes needed to reverse current trends in social inequalities, environmental degradation and economic instability. In June, when an agreement was finally achieved in Rio, the consensus amongst stakeholders was that content was not nearly strong or ambitious enough. In fact, 1,000 organizations and individuals refused to endorse the outcome document, *The Future We Want*.¹

The outcomes of Rio+20, which for the most part represent the starting point of new processes rather than decisions on key issues and initiatives, are a contrast to the internationally legally binding global treaties² and comprehensive blueprint for action on sustainable development, Agenda 21, agreed on at the first Rio Earth Summit in 1992.

However, Rio+20 took place in a world very different from that of the 1992 Summit, with recent international failures such as the Copenhagen climate change talks still fresh in the mind of Member States. A lack of faith in multilateralism, in addition to preoccupations with new challenges such as the global financial crisis, made many governments reluctant to invest time and resources in another UN process. Paradoxically, Rio+20 represented a unique opportunity to address these issues—something that civil society organizations attempted to impress on governments throughout the Conference process, albeit with mixed results.

The objectives of Rio+20 were to secure renewed political commitment to sustainable development, and to assess the progress to date and remaining gaps in implementation of outcomes from previous summits, as well as to address new and emerging challenges. The Conference focused on two primary themes, one of which was “a green economy in the context of poverty eradication”. Given the major paradigmatic shift that this theme would seem to necessitate, coupled with controversy arising over what the term “green economy” actually meant, the eventual commitments made on this topic were a disappointment to many observers. On the other hand, Rio+20 can be seen to have been far more successful in delivering on its other main theme, strengthening the

“institutional framework for sustainable development” (IFSD), with firm commitments made to reinforce relevant existing UN bodies and processes, as well as to create new ones.

Just over a year later, as the expectations and disappointments recede, the purpose of this section of the report is to look back at Rio+20 with a degree of separation and objectivity to review what was really achieved in terms of negotiated commitments, evaluate whether action has been taken to implement these commitments and highlight the mechanisms that are needed to enable stakeholders to hold governments to account on their promises. To do this, we have selected 14 of the most important and robust commitments made at Rio+20, summarized key progress made so far, and highlighted outstanding questions and accountability gaps by making an assessment of their implementation to date. It should be noted that it is still early in the follow-up process, and the implementation of many of these commitments has only just begun. However, we hope this report will serve as a baseline assessment of progress and a useful accountability tool.

DID RIO+20 DELIVER TANGIBLE COMMITMENTS?

Before reviewing progress, it was necessary to identify tangible commitments with clear pathways for implementation. To do this, an initial step was to revisit the Outcome Document and look closely at the text and the language used. In doing this, it became apparent that, while many of the paragraphs in the text indicate a commitment to take action, in few cases do they specify the precise action that will be taken, who is responsible for implementation, what the desired outcomes are and the timescales for delivery. Without these parameters, it is difficult for stakeholders to hold Member States and other commitment makers to account on the promises made at Rio+20. Consequently, much of the text does little to facilitate accountability in relation to negotiated commitments.

However, although they are few, Rio+20 did deliver some key tangible commitments, and while they may not bear the weight of the Conventions established at the first Earth Summit, they lay the groundwork for movement toward a transformational paradigm for sustainable development, one that fully integrates the social, environmental, and economic dimensions.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF COMMITMENTS

In order to select significant commitments that could be easily monitored for review in this report, Stakeholder Forum with the assistance of an International Advisory Group made up of stakeholders engaged in Rio+20 and its follow-up, developed the selection criteria outlined below:

1. Language in the outcome document

Only commitments where the text explicitly mandates or encourages action have been considered. This includes language such as: “we request”, “we commit to”, “we agree to”, “we call for”, “we decide to”, “we adopt” and excludes language such as: “we emphasize”, “we reaffirm”, “we support”, “we recognize”.

2. Originality

The commitment must have been established at Rio+20 and cannot be a reiteration of previous commitments made under other existing agreements.

3. Ability to monitor the progress of the commitment

Both the output or action required and the implementing party responsible for said output or action are made clear from the text, and the commitment is to be implemented by UN agencies or by governments but with coordination at the international level. Ideally, the commitments have timescales for delivery against which progress can be reviewed.

Using these criteria, 14 key commitments were selected to use as the focus of this report:

Commitment (relevant paragraph(s) in The Future We Want)
Establish an intergovernmental process to develop sustainable development goals (§248-249)
Establish a high-level political forum on sustainable development (§84-86)
Establish an intergovernmental committee to develop an effective sustainable development financing strategy (§255-257)
Strengthen the role of the United Nations Environment Programme (§88)
Integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development across the UN system (§93)
Produce a report on intergenerational solidarity and the needs of future generations (§86)
Provide information on policies regarding green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (§66)
Work toward broader measures of progress to complement GDP (§38)
Facilitate the integration of sustainability reporting into corporate reporting (§47)
Promote the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and seas (§162, 163, 168)
Convene a third international conference on Small Island Developing States (§180)
Adopt the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (§226)
Identify and recommend options for a technology facilitation mechanism (§273)
Compile a registry of voluntary commitments (§283)

Once selected based on the criteria, the key commitments were consulted with the International Advisory Board, before the research and collation of information on the action and implementation undertaken for each of the commitments since Rio+20 (June 2012) began.

Due to the variety of commitments and implementing parties, and differences in the availability of information for each of the processes, a combination of methods were used

to review progress; including gathering official documents and news articles, undertaking Internet research, and emailing and interviewing key actors in the implementing process. After the evidence was gathered, a first draft of the report was reviewed by the International Advisory Board and key individuals, who provided further comments and inputs.

The findings of the review are summarized in the following section.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE ON KEY COMMITMENTS SINCE RIO+20?

This section summarizes the findings of our research, highlighting some crucial first steps taken to transform these commitments into action, and illuminating key gaps remaining in their implementation and accountability.

LANDMARK COMMITMENTS

Of the multiple commitments made at Rio+20, three in particular stand out due to the crucial role they will play in shaping the sustainable development agenda and facilitating its implementation over the coming years. These are the commitments to create a set of universal sustainable development goals (SDGs) to incentivize and monitor progress toward sustainable development; to establish a new high-level international governing body for sustainable development; and to form an expert committee to assess options for the effective financing of sustainable development.

IDENTIFYING GLOBAL PRIORITIES AND MEASURING ACTION WITH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The call to establish an intergovernmental process to develop a set of universal SDGs is arguably the most significant commitment to emerge from Rio+20. Aiming to build upon the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDGs will form an international framework that will support countries and stakeholders to better target implementation and monitor progress across the three dimensions of sustainable development (social, environmental and economic). The SDGs will be applicable to all countries, regardless of their level of development and are expected to come into force in 2016, after the target date for completion of the MDGs in 2015.

While the MDGs prioritized the social dimension of development, the aim of the SDGs is to embody a comprehensive and integrated approach to development, and to seek to balance sustained socioeconomic growth with the sustainable use of natural resources. Building upon the successes and lessons learned from the MDGs, the SDGs are expected to become an important tool for national priority-setting, mobilization of resources, and the achievement of specific development gains, which are sustainable.

What does the outcome document say?

■ Establish an inclusive and transparent intergovernmental process that is open to all stakeholders, with a view to developing global SDGs to be agreed on by the General Assembly—the main deliberative body of the UN (Para. 248).

■ Constitute an open working group (OWG) comprising 30 representatives, nominated by Member States from the five United Nations regional groups, no later than September 2012. The OWG is to decide on its methods of work from the outset, including developing modalities to ensure the full involvement of relevant stakeholders and expertise from civil society, the scientific community and the UN, and will submit a report, to the 68th session of the General Assembly (September 2013—September 2014), containing a proposal for SDGs (Para. 248).

■ Ensure the SDGs process is coordinated and coherent with the consultations underway on the post-2015 development agenda (see discussion below). Initial input to the work of the OWG will be provided by the Secretary-General, in consultation with national governments, and the Secretary-General is requested to establish an inter-agency technical team to support to the work of the OWG (Para. 249).

What has happened so far?

Modalities

■ A 30-member OWG of the General Assembly has been established to develop a proposal for the new goals. Member States have decided to use an innovative, constituency-based system of representation which means that most of the seats in the OWG are shared by several countries. This complex system of representation took a while for Member States to agree and consequently the OWG was not established until January 2013, four months after the deadline set in the outcome document.³

■ The Secretary-General provided the initial input to the OWG in December 2012, which offered a synthesis of the responses received to a questionnaire sent to Member States to elicit views and suggestions on some key principles and criteria for developing a proposal for SDGs.⁴

■ At its first meeting in March 2013, the OWG decided on its methods of work and appointed Hungary and Kenya as the Co-Chairs of the Group.⁵ In May 2013, the OWG released their program of work for 2013-2014 with a timetable for a series of thematic meetings up to February 2014 that will take stock, facilitate discussion and gather inputs on a variety of topics (input phase).⁶ After February, the OWG will enter its output phase and begin drafting its report on what the SDGs framework should look like. The report will be submitted to the General Assembly by September 2014. The modalities for this phase of its work, however, are still unclear.

Involvement of stakeholders

■ While the OWG did not agree on the modalities for stakeholder engagement as part of its methods of work, the Co-Chairs have since instituted the practice of daily, hour-long morning hearings with representatives of Major

Groups⁷ and other stakeholders, prior to start of the official meetings of the OWG. Members of the OWG are encouraged to attend the morning hearings, which provide stakeholders with an opportunity to make recommendations on the specific thematic areas being discussed by the OWG on that day.⁸ To facilitate the inclusive and transparent planning of these hearings, all interested stakeholders, including those not affiliated with a Major Group, are encouraged to join thematic steering committees to organize each session.⁹

- The UN Secretariat will also hold two full-day intersessional meetings between Major Groups and other stakeholders and the OWG, with the first taking place in November 2013, before the fifth session of the OWG and the second in early 2014. These meetings will provide Major Groups and stakeholders with the opportunity to interact with the members of the OWG and provide inputs into the process.

Coordination with the post-2015 development agenda

- Despite now being used as an umbrella term for what are still essentially separate SDGs and post-MDG processes, the post-2015 development agenda has its origins in 2010, when the Secretary-General was mandated to specifically explore what should follow the MDGs after they expire in 2015.¹⁰ As a result, a large consultation process coordinated by the United Nations Development Group (UNDG)¹¹ has taken place to engage stakeholders via 88 national and 11 thematic consultations, and a number of high level and expert groups have reported their recommendations on the subject.¹² Several of the outputs from these activities have fed into the OWG's deliberations, including the reports of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons and the Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

- The Secretary-General has also established a UN System Technical Support Team (TST) of over 40 UN entities to provide the OWG with analytical inputs, background material and other forms of technical support. The TST has produced a number of conceptual and thematic issue briefs to support the work of the OWG. It works under the umbrella of the UN System Task Team on the post-2015 development agenda and consequently can provide coherence across the two tracks.

Remaining questions

- While there is now broad agreement among many Member States that the SDGs and post-MDG processes should be brought together to create one set of goals, there is still little clarity on how or when this might occur. It is hoped that a roadmap for the convergence of these process will be announced during the 68th session of the General Assembly (September 2013—September 2014).

- The current program of work runs only to February 2014, therefore it is unclear how the report writing stage of the OWG's activities will operate, what the key milestones will be and where opportunities will exist for engagement and influence.

ESTABLISHING A NEW INTERNATIONAL GOVERNING BODY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A key outcome under the theme of 'The Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development' was the call to establish a universal intergovernmental high level political forum (HLPF) as the new institutional home for sustainable development within the UN system. The HLPF will replace the Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), the body that has held this role for the last 21 years. While the Commission made a number of important contributions over its lifetime, it also has a number of shortcomings; most notably it has been criticized for not being successful in attracting participation and attention from representatives of all three dimensions of the sustainable development agenda—environmental, economic, and social.

The new body will provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development and will follow-up and review progress on the implementation of sustainable development commitments, including those made at Rio+20. It is anticipated that the HLPF will become the home of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and be responsible for tracking the progress and their implementation.

What does the outcome document say?

- The text mandates the launch of an intergovernmental and open, transparent and inclusive negotiation process under the General Assembly to define the format and organizational aspects of the body, with the aim of holding its first meeting of the forum in September 2013 (Para. 84-86).

- The outcome document also calls for the HLPF to build on the strengths, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the UNCSD and outlines some potential roles of the forum, including: promoting coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies within the UN system; enhancing evidence-based decision-making and strengthening the science-policy interface by bringing together dispersed information and assessments, in the form of a global sustainable development report, as well as by other means; and promoting transparency and implementation by enhancing the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders (Para. 84-86).

What has happened so far?

■ Brazil and Italy were nominated as co-facilitators in December 2012¹³ and facilitated informal consultations on the format and organizational modalities of the HLPF throughout the first half of 2013. The process was originally due to be completed by the end of May 2013, but discussion ran to the end of June, with the final text on the HLPF agreed by General Assembly resolution on 9th July 2013.¹⁴

■ A two-day Expert Group Meeting (EGM) to develop thinking on the various aspects of the HLPF and its role in the wider institutional framework for sustainable development took place in April 2013. The event saw different stakeholders with expertise in the area of governance met with representatives of Member States and the UN system to discuss a number of key topics regarding the possible form and function of the HLPF.¹⁵

■ The resolution on the format and organizational modalities of the HLPF states that it will convene annually for eight days (including a three-day ministerial segment), under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Furthermore, the forum has been given high political standing with the provision that it will also meet every four years, for a period of two days, under the auspices of the General Assembly and at the level of Heads of State and Governments. Meetings at both levels will result in a negotiated declaration to be submitted to the Assembly for its consideration.

■ The resolution also stresses that the new body will build upon the arrangements and practices for stakeholder engagement that were observed by the UNCSD, opening participation up to other stakeholders beyond the Major Groups, and invites all stakeholders to propose mechanisms for participation in the HLPF.¹⁶

■ In response to the Forum's mandate to strengthen the science-policy interface,¹⁷ a cross-agency UN Task Team has been formed to reach out to scientific communities around the world and to prepare a first edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report in time for the first session of the HLPF in September 2013. At an Expert Group Meeting on the science-policy interface was held on 5 September 2013.¹⁸

■ The first meeting of the HLPF will be held under the General Assembly at the level of Heads of State and Governments on 24th September 2013 with the theme of 'Building the future we want: from Rio+20 to the post-2015 development agenda'.

Remaining questions

■ While the HLPF has formally been established, there are still key processes and issues to resolve, including the modalities for stakeholder engagement and the agenda-setting mechanisms. Until these final procedural arrangements have been agreed upon, it is unlikely that the new body will begin to undertake any substantive work.

■ Concerns have been raised over whether the HLPF will have enough time and resources to fulfill its broad mandate, with fears that the new forum will be provided with less capacity than the CSD. In particular, there is still a question mark over whether the Forum will be provided with a supporting secretariat.¹⁹ Furthermore, given its wide reaching mandate, there is concern that eight days deliberation a year will not be sufficient to address the complex and varied agenda.²⁰

ASSESSING OPTIONS FOR FINANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Finance is one of the most frequently cited barriers to the implementation of sustainable development, particularly in developing countries, and the need for significant mobilization of resources to support countries in their efforts to promote sustainable development, including the achievement of SDGs, was acknowledged at Rio+20 with the decision to establish an expert committee to work toward a sustainable development financing strategy.

What does the outcome document say?

■ Member States agreed to establish an intergovernmental process under the auspices of the General Assembly—with technical support from the UN and in open and broad consultation with relevant international and regional financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders—to assess financing needs, consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks, and evaluate additional initiatives, with a view to preparing a report proposing options on an effective sustainable development financing strategy to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives (Para. 255).

■ This process will be implemented by an intergovernmental committee, comprising 30 experts, which should conclude its work by 2014 (Para. 256).

■ The report of the committee will be submitted to the General Assembly for appropriate action to be taken (Para. 257).

What has happened so far?

- Kazakhstan and Norway facilitated the process to establish the committee throughout the first half of 2013 and in June, the 30 member Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing was established via General Assembly decision.²¹
- The Committee met for the first time from 28-30 August 2013, formally adopting its modalities of work, then proceeding to elect representatives from Finland and Nigeria as its Co-Chairs.²² The modalities confirmed that the sessions of the Committee will be closed, but maintains that the Committee will deliver on its transparency obligations laid out in the outcome document. The Committee will also coordinate its activities with other relevant inter-governmental processes, in particular the SDGs OWG and the wider “Financing for Development” follow-up process.²³
- The Committee also adopted its programme of work, which will involve three smaller groups or “clusters” working on specific issues.²⁴ No meeting dates have been set beyond the Committee’s next session in December 2013, however the clusters will meet individually before this date.²⁵
- A Working Group on Financing for Sustainable Development has been set up under the UN System Task Team (UNTT)²⁶ to support the work of the Committee.²⁷

Remaining questions

- Given the importance of this agenda to the implementation of sustainable development, serious concerns have been raised about the lack of transparency and accountability of the Expert Committee process, both in terms of how its members were selected, and the lack of stakeholder involvement and input into the proceedings so far.²⁸
- Despite the Rio+20 outcome document explicitly stating that the Committee’s work should involve ‘open and broad’ consultations with stakeholders, no formal mechanisms for their engagement have been agreed, with its first meeting being an exclusive, closed-door affair. A strategy for outreach with stakeholders is being discussed and it is hoped will provide some clarity and advancement of this issue.

INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD) refers to the collection of bodies, organizations, and networks that participate in policy formulation and execution at the national, regional and international levels. In other words, IFSD is the systems of governance which enable decision makers and stakeholders to create and implement

sustainable development commitments, and is therefore seen as vital to the success of the agenda.

At Rio+20, the IFSD theme focused primarily on the global institutional arrangements (mainly those within the UN system) necessary to develop, monitor and implement policies on sustainable development. With clear commitments to create the HLPF as the new institutional home for sustainable development (discussed in the “landmark commitments” section above), as well as to strengthen UNEP—the international body responsible for addressing environmental challenges, and to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development across the UN, IFSD can be seen as one of the areas in which Rio+20 really did deliver.

STRENGTHENING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR OF THE UNITED NATIONS

As a programme within the UN system, UN Environment Programme (UNEP)—the primary authority on environmental issues within the UN—lacks the legal personality, budget, or secretarial support of specialized organizations, such as the World Health Organization, and hence has less power and influence within the international governing architecture.²⁹

In the forty years since UNEP was established, the environmental challenges facing communities around the world have increased in number and complexity, leading to calls for UNEP to be upgraded to a specialized agency with improved resources, a strengthened mandate and a greater capacity to coordinate international responses to such challenges.

What does the outcome document say?

- Invites the General Assembly, by September 2013, to strengthen and upgrade UNEP, including in the following ways: by establishing universal membership in the Governing Council of the Programme; by ensuring secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources; by promoting a strong science-policy interface and the sharing of evidence-based information; and by ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society (Para. 88).

What has happened so far?

- In December 2012, the General Assembly adopted a resolution to strengthen and upgrade UNEP, which reiterates a number of points from the outcome document; in particular it provides for UNEP to receive secure, stable and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN and calls for donors to increase their voluntary funding to UNEP.³⁰

- The first universal session of the UNEP Governing Council was held in February 2013 where Member States recommended that the governing body be renamed the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), to reflect its heightened role and membership.³¹ This decision was subsequently approved by General Assembly resolution in March 2013.³² The Assembly will convene its sessions in Nairobi every two years, starting in 2014, with each session concluding with a two-day high-level segment that will take strategic decisions and provide political guidance on the global environmental agenda; the future direction of UNEP; and policy review and guidance.

- One of the areas that has seen the most progress since Rio+20 is the commitment to explore new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society. In December 2012, UNEP undertook an online survey with Major Groups and other stakeholders to collect feedback on UNEP's current engagement system and inputs on new models of participation that can respond to the needs of all stakeholders.³³ This was followed by an expert group meeting in January 2013.³⁴ In February 2013, the 14th Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum (GMGSF) took place in Nairobi, with approximately 270 representatives from the six UNEP regions, Major Groups and other stakeholders participating.³⁵ One of the outcomes of the Forum was a set of principles for stakeholder engagement at UNEP, which were submitted to the Governing Council for consideration.³⁶

- The Governing Council committed to develop and establish by 2014 a process for stakeholder accreditation and participation that builds on existing mechanisms³⁷ and has since put in place a roadmap for the implementation of this decision,³⁸ which consists of a review of existing practices of stakeholder engagement in multilateral organizations (July 2013);³⁹ consultation with member states and stakeholders on possible options (July—October 2013); and development of policies based upon inputs (October—November 2013).

Remaining questions

- The Governing Council has instructed the Executive Director of UNEP to take action on a number of other aspects outlined in paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document, including to present reports on the science-policy interface and the consolidation of the headquarter functions of UNEP in Nairobi to the governing body at its next session. While action has been set in motion, it is too early to review the progress of these other areas.

INTEGRATING THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE UNITED NATIONS

The integration of the three dimensions—social, environmental and economic—of sustainable development is a recurring theme throughout the Rio+20 outcome document, indicating that despite being difficult to achieve and measure, it is a clear priority for Member States.

The failure of governments and other actors to address these priority areas in a coordinated fashion can be seen as one of the key reasons for the overall lack of progress on sustainable development since the first Earth Summit in 1992. For example, many developing countries have achieved significant improvements in reducing poverty levels, but this has often been as a result of economic growth brought about by the unsustainable exploitation of their natural resources.

Within the UN system there is a particular need to enhance the harmonization of agencies and programmes working on specific agendas, such as development and environment, given the highly interrelated nature of their objectives and limited resources at their disposal.

What does the outcome document say?

- Calls for the further mainstreaming of the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the UN system, and requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly—via the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)—on the progress made in this area (Para. 93).
- It also calls for the strengthening of policy coordination and coherence across key structures of the UN, in support of sustainable development, and recognizes the key role of the ECOSOC in the integration of the three dimensions (Para. 93).

What has happened so far?

- In September 2012, a Special Ministerial Meeting of ECOSOC took place which focused on strengthening the multilateral system for pursuing sustainable development, especially through enhancing the role and effectiveness of ECOSOC. It concluded that there is a need to refocus the efforts of ECOSOC across all its programmes (including those with specific social, environmental and economic mandates) to see it become a key hub for sustainable development. This will involve redesigning the way ECOSOC engages all stakeholders.

- Many countries emphasized that the new HLPF would likely be a crucial new institution for achieving these objectives, with the new body also having the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development as one of its primary objectives.⁴⁰ In this regard, a UN Secretary-General report to the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) in July 2013 recommends a system of knowledge-sharing

within the Council, to give individuals and organizations the capacity needed to achieve an integrated approach to sustainable development.⁴¹

■ Also in July 2013, the UN Secretary-General submitted a report⁴² to ECOSOC which analyses efforts made by the UN system in mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development in its work. The report takes account of existing efforts to promote integration within the UN and highlights challenges, gaps and successes, with the aim of identifying areas to strengthen support to Member States and promote stronger coordination and policy coherence. It provides four recommendations for steps to be taken in the future, including a roadmap for accelerating the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development across the UN system and a report by the Secretary-General to the HLPF on progress by the United Nations, which could start in 2014, with reports every 1-2 years.

Remaining questions

■ While a number of recommendations have been made on this agenda, it is unclear what action is being taken to implement them. The recommendations from the Secretary-General's report were noted but not adopted by ECOSOC during its 2013 substantive session, therefore there is currently no timeline for their implementation. The recommendations will now go to the General Assembly in September 2013 for consideration and Member States will have until the end of December—when the autumn session ends—to decide if they will adopt what the Secretary-General has proposed.⁴³

ENSURING THE RIGHTS OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

At Rio+20, several stakeholder groups were involved advocating for establishment of a High Commissioner or Ombudsperson for Future Generations to ensure intergenerational equity is an integral part of the international policy-making processes. The principle of intergenerational equity is central to the concept of sustainable development, which is most frequently defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”⁴⁴ While the call for a high level representative for future generations didn't make it into “The Future We Want”, the outcome document does acknowledge the importance of taking the needs of future generations into account in decision-making on sustainable development.

What does the outcome document say?

■ Invites the UN Secretary-General to present a report on intergenerational solidarity and its role in the achievement of sustainable development (Para. 86).

What has happened so far?

■ The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) is leading on the implementation of this paragraph and has held several meetings and consultations on this issue, with the aim of informing future considerations on the topic, including Secretary-General's report.

■ In May 2013, UN DESA held an Expert Panel on Intergenerational Solidarity to facilitate discussion and exchange of stakeholder views, including the conceptual framework and institutional arrangements for intergenerational solidarity. The discussion highlighted gaps, as well as common perspectives and ideas about incorporating concerns for future generations into decision-making processes at all levels.⁴⁵

■ In June and July 2013, UN DESA held an online consultation to gather views related to future generations and sustainable development and hosted a live two hour Facebook chat ‘Are Future Generations at risk?’ to answer questions on the topic.⁴⁶

■ In addition to the above, a Global Conference on Implementing Intergenerational Equity, organized by the World Future Council and UNEP, took place in July 2013 and discussed new mechanisms and tools, based upon existing best practice, which could more effectively take into account future generations.⁴⁷

Remaining questions

■ It is anticipated that the Secretary-General's Report will be published in September 2013, in time for the opening of the 68th Session of the General Assembly and the inaugural meeting of the HLPF;⁴⁶ however there is no official timeline for activities, including a definitive date for the release of the Secretary-General's report.

GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION

The term green economy came to the fore in 2009 against a backdrop of global financial crisis. With rising unemployment and inequality across all continents, a new vision for greener, fairer and more inclusive economies arose, championed by many as the only solution to the current monetary malaise. Building on this momentum, Rio+20 included green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” as one of its two primary themes

However in reality the green economy concept proved controversial at Rio+20 and negotiations were challenging. This was partly due to the lack of an internationally agreed definition or set of principles for green economy and a lack of clarity around what green economy policy measures encompass.

As a consequence, commitments on the green economy at Rio+20 were perhaps not as strong or as far-reaching as some would have hoped. Nonetheless, a number of agreements were reached on this theme, as well as several others on topics directly associated with fairer, more environmentally sound, and more inclusive financial systems, such as broader measures of progress beyond GDP, even if they were not directly adorned with the somewhat controversial green economy label.

BUILDING A FOUNDATION OF KNOWLEDGE ON THE GREEN ECONOMY

While tensions surrounding the concept prevented any real commitments to implement the green economy from being made, governments did agree to start collating information to support further development and clarification of the agenda, and facilitate the development of policies in this area.

What does the outcome document say?

■ Invites the UN to coordinate and provide information on a number of areas relating to the green economy, including: partnerships; toolboxes and good examples of policies on the green economy; methodologies for evaluation of policies on the green economy; and existing and emerging platforms that can support the collection and sharing of information on this topic (Para. 66).

What has happened so far?

■ Several UN agencies and other international actors are involved in the follow up on the green economy post-Rio+20 and their work will build upon a number of existing initiatives.⁴⁸ Key action and follow up mechanisms are summarized below.

Partnerships

■ The Partnership for Action on Green Economy, (PAGE), was launched in February 2013 by UNEP, International Labor Organization (ILO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), with the aim of supporting countries to build national green economy strategies. The PAGE initiative will include policy dialogues to bring together policy makers from both environment and finance ministries, and representatives from the private sector to exchange experience and best practices. These dialogues, and further networking among countries and partners, will help to match interested countries with those best suited to provide required support. During the first two years PAGE will focus on seven pilot countries, which have so far not been named, scaling up to 30 by 2020.

■ The existing Green Growth Knowledge Platform (GGKP)⁴⁹ and the UN DESA-UNEP-UNDP green economy joint program⁵⁰ will also facilitate the sharing of information and development of partnerships.

Toolboxes and models of best practice

■ The leading agencies: UNEP, UN DESA and UNDP, have produced a number of reports and resources to highlight examples of best practice and contribute to the development of green economy policy toolkits. These resources are available for public access on the UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.⁵¹

Methodologies for the evaluation of policies on the green economy

■ In December 2012, UNEP sponsored a conference in response to Rio+20 call for methodologies for evaluating green economy policies. The subsequent report⁵² provides a practical guide to how indicators can measure progress towards an inclusive, resource-efficient, green economy, and support new national policies to assess human well-being and quality of life.

Remaining questions

■ There is still work to do to reach an agreement on the fundamental principles of the green economy before true progress can be seen on this controversial agenda. Any further definition of the agenda will need to take into account the different development paths and priorities of countries, building upon the recognition, developed at Rio+20, that there will need to be, not one, but multiple “green economies”. Although good progress has been seen on the development of knowledge on this agenda, further international commitment is needed on the implementation of green economy policies to achieve real transformation of the existing economic paradigm.

MEASURING WHAT MATTERS TO PEOPLE AND PLANET

Rio+20 addressed growing concern over the adequacy of economic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as measures of progress, and highlighted the need for more comprehensive measures of prosperity and wellbeing. The need for indicators that are more inclusive of the environmental and social aspects of progress to address global challenges of the 21st century is recognized in final Rio+20 Outcome Document.

What does the outcome document say?

■ Acknowledges the need for broader measures of progress to complement GDP and requests the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC), together with other UN bodies, to work towards identifying a new approach for measuring progress that goes beyond the narrowness of GDP, building on existing initiatives (Para. 38).

What has happened so far?

■ The UNSC at its 44th session (February - March, 2013) established the Friends of the Chair Group on Broader Measures of Progress (FOC)⁵³ to build a program of work to develop broader measures of progress based on a stocktaking of current national, regional and international practices in this field, and to conduct a technical review of existing efforts with the aim of identifying best practices and facilitating knowledge sharing.⁵⁴

■ The FOC is also mandated to closely monitor the evolving debate on global development frameworks and will be actively involved in the process of the formulation of targets and indicators for the post-2015 development agenda. The main outputs of the group will be two reports, which will be submitted to Statistical Commission of 2014 and 2015.⁵⁵

■ Following an informal meeting held in June 2013 at the Conference of European Statisticians of the European Commission for Europe (UNECE) the co-chairs of the Group (France and India) have proposed splitting the work program of the FOC in two for the next two years.⁵⁶

■ Up to spring 2014, the Group will focus its efforts on supporting the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG), in order to develop its dialogue with statisticians and to contribute to the formulation of targets and indicators. This will include providing statistical background and information on measurements of social progress in preparation for the next four thematic meetings of the OWG and preparing significant inputs for the OWG's planned special seminar dedicated to monitoring and measuring, which is likely to be held in December 2013.

■ Furthermore, in July 2013, the co-chairs of the FOC began to compile comments from the Group on the Report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda focusing on the proposal regarding a data revolution and on the capability of the statistical system to measure the proposed targets⁵⁷. The above work will contribute to the first report of the FOC, which will be presented to the next Statistical Commission in February 2014.

■ From summer 2014, the Group will concentrate on completing the work that has been achieved with the OWG and will propose a complete and autonomous program to develop broader measures of progress in its report to the Commission in February 2015.

■ The work of the FOC will build on existing national, regional and international initiatives including the UN's System of Environmental-Economic Accounting and the

Wealth Accounting and the Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) initiative introduced by the World Bank. The World Bank is working closely with the Statistical Commission and others to move the agenda forward, and there is a hope that further commitments will be made as part of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.⁵⁸

■ To ensure that the FOC operates in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, the Group has created a dedicated website to provide updates on its work, as well as relevant resources.⁵⁹

Remaining questions

■ While efforts have been made to ensure that the operations of the FOC Group are open and transparent by providing timely updates via a public website, there are currently no plans to hold consultations with the wider stakeholder community or to institute mechanisms for engagement with these constituencies. Given the key role that the Group will have in shaping the targets and indicators for the SDGs, it is vital that their work builds upon the knowledge and expertise of the wide range of stakeholders that will be key to the implementation of the goals.

ENHANCING CORPORATE TRANSPARENCY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

The private sector is a key driver of development. Its importance for inclusive economic growth, job creation, innovation, investment in essential infrastructure, and partnerships for development has been expressed in many fora, and there is increasing recognition that the potential contribution of the private sector to poverty eradication could far outstrip that of traditional aid. However, the impact of businesses on people and the environment is not straightforward. Business practices can also undermine the social, environmental and governance components of poverty alleviation and prevent countries from achieving development goals. The importance of improving accountability for these impacts is acknowledged in "The Future We Want".

What does the outcome document say?

■ Encourages companies to consider integrating sustainability information into their reporting cycle and calls for governments, the UN and other relevant stakeholders to develop models for best practice and facilitate action for the integration of sustainability reporting, building on existing knowledge and frameworks (Para. 47).

What has happened so far?

■ During Rio+20, Brazil, Denmark, France and South Africa established the Group of Friends of Paragraph 47 (GoF) to share experiences and contribute to the advancement of sustainability reporting policies. The UNEP and the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) were invited to form the Secretariat of the initiative and to provide technical support and guidance to the Group. Colombia and Norway have since joined, and France was appointed Chair of the initiative in April 2013.

■ The GoF met in May 2013, during the GRI Global Conference on Sustainability and Reporting and is participating in a number of key events throughout 2013 to promote the work of the Group. The GoF has developed some goals for its work but no specific activities or timescales have been defined.⁶⁰ The Group has recognized the importance of stakeholder engagement and has invited stakeholders to submit suggestions for modalities, however, formal mechanisms have not yet been established.⁶¹

■ In addition to the GoF, a number of UN agencies and other stakeholder groups are also conducting work to promote and advance the implementation of paragraph 47, for example:

■ The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), one of the lead organizers of the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative,⁶² is developing a guidance document on best practices in sustainability reporting for stock exchanges and regulators. The final draft will be presented to the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting (ISAR) in November 2013. If it is approved, the aim is to disseminate the guidance around the world in 2014 and to develop related training programs.⁶³

■ The Corporate Sustainability Reporting Coalition (CSRC), a group of institutional investors, professional bodies and NGOs—founded and convened by Aviva Investors—continue to advocate for this agenda in different platforms and support the work around paragraph 47.⁶⁴

Remaining questions

It is very promising to see that governments are taking an active role in the promotion of corporate sustainability reporting policies. However, an ambitious plan to address this at the intergovernmental level, and promote the adoption of an international framework through which all countries commit to adopt policies requiring large companies to develop and publish these reports, is required. This would be the only way to level the playing field for this practice. The GoF also needs to develop a clear work plan with timescales and establish formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement as soon as possible.

OTHER THEMATIC AND CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

A sizeable portion of the Outcome Document is dedicated to specific thematic areas and cross-cutting issues, with topics ranging from forests to food security. The majority of these paragraphs, however, do not include commitments to take specific actions with a clear allocation of the actors responsible for their implementation. Nevertheless, a small number do provide such detail, with the paragraphs on oceans and seas, small island developing states (SIDS), and sustainable consumption and production (SCP) each containing concrete commitments with timescales for their delivery.

PROMOTING THE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF OCEANS AND SEAS

Of all the thematic areas addressed in this section of the Rio+20 Outcome Document, the paragraphs on oceans and seas provide the firmest commitments and clearest mandates for action. Principle among these are the commitments to address the issues of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction; the incidence and impacts of pollution on marine ecosystems; and the conservation and management of fisheries.

What does the outcome document say?

■ Address, before September 2015, the issue of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, including by taking a decision on the development of an international instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (Para. 162).

■ Take action to reduce the incidence and impacts of pollution on marine ecosystems, including through the effective implementation of relevant existing conventions and initiatives, as well as the adoption of coordinated strategies. They also make the commitment to take action to, by 2025, achieve significant reductions in marine debris to prevent harm to the coastal and marine environment (Para. 163).

■ Commit to intensify efforts to meet the 2015 target from the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation⁶⁵ to maintain or restore fish stocks to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield, with the aim of achieving this goal in the shortest time feasible. To achieve this Member States commit to a number of measures, including: the development and implementation of science-based management plans; enhanced action to manage bycatch, discards and other

adverse ecosystem impacts from fisheries; and heightened activities to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems from significant adverse impacts (Para. 168)

What has happened so far?

■ In April 2013, UN DESA convened an Expert Group Meeting on Oceans, Seas and Sustainable Development: Implementation and follow-up to Rio+20, which provided an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss key issues, such as implementation measures, and how to enhance multi-stakeholder and international cooperation on the subject. Nevertheless there was no clear mechanism for feeding these discussions into the official post-Rio processes on oceans described below.⁶⁶

The high seas

■ A General Assembly Ad Hoc Open-ended Informal Working Group, made up of Member State representatives from a large number of countries in all global regions and set up under UNCLOS in 2004 to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ),⁶⁷ is the body tasked with implementing the commitments made in paragraph 162. The Group had its first meeting since Rio+20 in August 2013, with two intersessional workshops earlier in the year providing inputs to the meeting.⁶⁸

■ The meeting of the Working Group was open, however criticisms over the transparency of the process were raised. In particular, stakeholders expressed concern over the closed-door sessions of the Friends of the Co-Chairs' group that were held prior to the meeting.⁶⁹

■ Its outcome was an agreement to establish a preparatory process for exploring the scope, parameters and feasibility of a multilateral agreement to strengthen BBNJ within the UNCLOS legal framework. The Group is therefore expected to meet twice in 2014 and at least once in 2015, and has requested that States submit their views on an international instrument ahead of the first meeting, with a view to submitting a draft resolution on BBNJ for the General Assembly's approval before the end of its 69th session (September 2015).

■ The outcome of this preparatory process will directly influence whether the General Assembly decides to open up international negotiations on a new international instrument under UNCLOS.⁷⁰

Marine pollution and debris

■ An International Conference on Prevention and Management of Marine Litter in European Seas was held in April 2013.⁷¹ The Conference aimed to intensify efforts to meet the Rio+20 commitment on marine debris, as well as define an EU-wide reduction target as proposed in the 7th European Union Environment Action Programme: "General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020: Living well, within the limits of our planet".⁷²

■ While participants at the meeting agreed on the merits of a number of actions which would contribute towards the Rio+20 reduction target, such as encouraging financial support for marine litter-reducing initiatives and sharing expertise, no clear roadmap for the way forward was established in the meeting outcome document.⁷³

■ UNEP's Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA)—one of the follow-up mechanisms cited in paragraph 163—and its Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) are working to implement the Honolulu Strategy and to facilitate dialogue and coordination between experts and stakeholders from various levels of government, the business sector and NGOs in the U.S. and Canada to reduce the occurrence of marine litter by focusing on upstream marine litter reduction approaches.⁷⁴

Fisheries

■ In December 2012, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on sustainable fisheries, which reiterates many of the commitments made in "The Future We Want" including the intensification of efforts to meet the 2015 target to maintain or restore stocks to maximum sustainable yield. The resolution urges States to take action in a number of key areas to this effect, however no specific activities or timescales have been defined.⁷⁵

Remaining questions

■ While there has been further recognition and reaffirmation of the need to take action on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and seas since Rio+20, very little has been done so far to implement these commitments. This is not surprising considering that these are some of the few decisions in the Outcome Document that commit to take real action on key issues rather than to launch processes, and therefore are likely to encounter greater political challenges. However, Member States cannot allow these complexities to stand in the way of progress on this critical agenda. They need to commit to develop clear work plans to clarify the next implementation steps and map the pathways to achieving these commitments by their target dates of 2015 and 2025.

PROVIDING AN INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM FOR SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

While they are confronted by many of the development challenges faced by developing countries, small island developing states (SIDS) have their own peculiar characteristics—such as their small size, isolation and vulnerability to sea-level rise and natural disasters—that make the difficulties they face in the pursuit of sustainable development particularly severe and complex. These special vulnerabilities were recognized at Rio+20 and a tangible commitment to action on this agenda was made in the Outcome Document.

What does the outcome document say?

■ Recognizing the importance of coordinated, balanced and integrated actions to address the sustainable development challenges faced by SIDS, the document calls for a third international conference on SIDS to be convened in 2014, and invites the General Assembly to determine the modalities of the conference before September 2013 (Para. 180).

What has happened so far?

■ In December 2012, the General Assembly adopted a resolution which extends the deadline for the determination of the modalities and format of the Conference from September 2013 to the end of 2013, and invites the President of the General Assembly to launch the work of the intergovernmental preparatory process at the end of 2013, with a view to convene the first meeting of the preparatory committee early in 2014.⁷⁶

■ Following this, the UN organized a number of expert group meetings in early 2013 to provide an opportunity for leading figures in academia and policy circles to gather and discuss critical issues in advance of the national and regional preparations for the Conference. The outcomes of these gatherings were shared with Member States and other stakeholders as substantive inputs to process.⁷⁷

■ SIDS were then invited to produce national reports, building on the national consultations from Rio+20 and the Post-2015 Development Agenda.⁷⁸ The outcomes of the national preparatory processes were synthesized into regional background discussion papers for each of the respective regional preparatory meetings (RPMs).

■ The RPMs, held throughout July 2013 in the Caribbean, Pacific and Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and South China Sea (AIMS) regions,⁷⁹ provided the opportunity for SIDS from each region to gather and discuss regional priorities and concerns identified in the course of the national consultations.

■ Together with the three RPMs, three regional youth workshops, also took place in July 2013 in Jamaica, Fiji and the Seychelles. The outcome documents included discussions on issues such as education, climate change, health and sustainable energy, with commitments for home community action.⁸⁰ These meetings are part of a longer process which will include national meetings and campaigns, social media and representation at inter-regional and expert meetings over the next 12 months.

■ In August 2013, there was an inter-regional preparatory meeting in Barbados, where the outcomes from the RPMs and regional youth meetings were presented.

■ The Third International Conference on SIDS will be held in Apia, Samoa with the proposed theme of “The Sustainable Development of SIDS through Genuine and Durable Partnerships”. A website has been launched to provide information on the Conference and the preparatory process.⁸¹

Remaining questions

■ So far, very good progress has been made to follow up on the commitment to convene the Third International Conference on SIDS. A clear timeline for activities and the preparatory process has been established, as well as a dedicated website, making it easy to track progress made. In addition, several opportunities for stakeholder engagement at the national and regional levels have been provided, aiming to ensure that the process is country-led. It is likely that the good progress in this area is due to the non-contentious nature of this commitment.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

Two issues prominent throughout Rio+20 were the universal responsibility for action on sustainable development and the need to integrate environmental sustainability with economic growth and welfare. These two themes are embodied in the concept of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) which acknowledges the fact that unsustainable patterns of consumption and production are the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment, and aims to decouple economic growth and environmental degradation by improving sustainable management of resources and increasing the efficiency of resource use in the production, distribution and use of products. SCP is the responsibility of all countries, however the implications are different depending on the level of their involvement in different stages of the product lifecycle.

The concept of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) and its importance to sustainable development was first recognized by the Member States in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), which was adopted in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). Following a call in the JPOI, the UN-led, global multi-stakeholder Marrakech Process was subsequently launched to support the elaboration of a 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on SCP—a global framework of action to enhance international cooperation to accelerate the shift towards SCP in both developed and developing countries. The 10YFP on SCP was officially adopted at Rio+20.

What does the outcome document say?

■ Member States adopted the 10YFP, highlighting that the programmes included are voluntary. Governments also invited the General Assembly to designate a UN Member State body by September 2013 to be responsible for the operationalization of the framework (Para. 226).

What has happened so far?

■ At Rio+20, UNEP was appointed to act as secretariat of the framework and to establish and administer a trust fund to support implementation of SCP in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.⁸²

■ In December 2012, the 10YFP was endorsed by the General Assembly and ECOSOC was designated the interim reporting body for the framework. This interim arrangement will be reviewed at the General Assembly's 69th session (September 2014—September 2015).⁸³

■ A 10-member board consisting of two members of each of the five UN regional groups was established in June 2013.⁸⁴ The board will report bi-annually to ECOSOC.

■ The Secretariat has established key elements of the institutional structure of the 10YFP, including the Trust Fund and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group, which will ensure UN cooperation and coordination in the implementation of the 10YFP and identify synergies and joint projects.

■ National and stakeholder focal points are currently being designated and the Secretariat is consulting on the most inclusive and participatory model to engage Major Groups and Stakeholders.

■ Regional multi-stakeholder roundtables on SCP were held in the Arab and Latin America and the Caribbean Regions during June 2013 to inform and engage governments and other stakeholders in the implementation of the 10YFP. Further meetings will take place in 2013 in Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia Pacific.

■ Five initial programmes have been established on: consumer information; sustainable lifestyles and education; sustainable public procurement; sustainable buildings; and construction and sustainable tourism. The aim is to launch three programmes by the end of 2013, and the remaining two in the first part of 2014, however currently only the sustainable public procurement programme is on track to be launched in 2013. All the other programmes are still in the first phase of development.

■ Information and knowledge sharing tools, including a 10YFP website, social media and newsletters have been developed, and the Global SCP Clearinghouse—an interactive information hub for the collection, dissemination and sharing of experiences, best practices and knowledge—was launched in May 2013.⁸⁵

Remaining questions

■ Progress on this commitment has been good with key elements of the institutional structure being established, as well as mechanisms to ensure reporting, transparency and stakeholder engagement.

■ It remains to be seen whether the aim to launch three of the initial programmes in 2013 will be met.

■ Next steps will include securing the first contributions to the Trust Fund to support the implementation of projects and programmes.

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

One of the most fiercely negotiated sections of the Rio+20 text was on means of implementation, or in other words, the supporting mechanisms which help ensure that countries have the capacity to devise and deliver sustainable development solutions. Much of the discussion on means of implementation at Rio+20 related to the specific financial and technological needs of developing countries, with a significant proportion of this support expected to come from developed nations. Yet with the lines between 'developed' and 'developing' increasingly blurred in today's multipolar world, opinions on what Northern countries should be providing their Southern counterparts differed vastly between the various individual Member States and negotiating blocks. As a consequence, no new money itself was promised at Rio+20—something which inevitably contributed to many stakeholders, particularly in the developing world, declaring Rio a failure.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, commitments were made to explore new ways of leveraging funds (see "landmark commitments" section), as well as on facilitating technology transfer.

FACILITATING TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

At Rio+20, governments reaffirmed the role of technology as one of the key means of implementation for achieving sustainable development and emphasized the importance of access by all countries to environmentally sound technologies, new knowledge, know-how and expertise.

What does the outcome document say?

■ Requests the UN to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies by assessing the technology needs of developing countries, options to address those needs and capacity-building. On the basis of the options identified and taking into account existing models, the Secretary-General is requested to make recommendations regarding the facilitation mechanism to the 67th session (September 2012—September 2013) of the General Assembly (Para.273).

What has happened so far?

■ The UN Secretary-General submitted his report to the General Assembly in September 2012. The report summarizes recent trends in science and technology for sustainable development, provides an overview of the proposals for improved technology facilitation and outlines recommendations on the functions, format and working methods of a technology facilitation mechanism, as well as on a potential way forward to achieve improved technology facilitation.⁸⁷

■ While the recommendations of the report were generally well received by stakeholders, they were not adopted by the General Assembly,⁸⁸ which instead decided to hold four workshops in April and May 2013 to give further consideration to this contentious topic.⁸⁹ The purpose of the workshops was to provide a platform for knowledge sharing among various groups, including Member States, the UN, academia, research organizations and other stakeholders. Discussions and recommendations arising from these workshops, and from written submissions, will form the basis of a further report by the Secretary-General on the way forward in this area, to be presented to the General Assembly in its 68th session (September 2013—September 2014).⁹⁰

Remaining questions

■ While action has been taken to fulfill the commitment made in the Rio+20 Outcome Document, progress has now stagnated, with countries at an impasse on this contentious topic. It remains to be seen whether the next report by the Secretary-General will be successful in spurring further implementation of this agenda.

TAKING STOCK OF VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

To complement the negotiated outcomes, hundreds of voluntary initiatives were launched at the Summit, and throughout 2012, by a wide range of actors—including governments at all levels, the private sector, and civil society. The official process recognized these commitments by inviting the UN Secretary-General to compile them into an Internet-based registry, in order to make information about the commitments fully transparent and accessible to the public (Para. 283). As the voluntary commitments and the registry are discussed in detail in the second half of this report, we will not elaborate on them here, however a summary of the progress made on this commitment is provide in Table 3 in the “Assessment of implementation so far section.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION SO FAR

The legacy of Rio+20 and the Outcome Document will be measured by the actual implementation of its commitments and its ability to galvanize support, energy and commitment from state and non-state actors.

As expressed previously, the purpose of this report is to provide, firstly, a picture of the progress that has been made on the Rio+20 commitments since the outcome was agreed, and secondly, an assessment of their implementation to date.

Looking at the list of tangible commitments that we selected and presented in the previous section, it is evident that for the most part they represent the starting point of processes, rather than decisions on key issues and initiatives. This, and the fact that only just over a year has passed since these commitments were made, does not allow for assessment of the long-term impact of these commitments to be made at this stage.

Therefore, we decided to assess the implementation of these commitments so far based upon five criteria:

■ **Progress made to date:** Whether action has been taken so far to implement the commitments and requests made in the Rio+20 Outcome Document.

Plus four important accountability dimensions that we believe are the building blocks for effective, transparent and democratic implementation:

■ **Target dates:** Does the commitment have a target date for its implementation? The definition of clear timescales provides a parameter against which progress can be

measured. Without these it is difficult to ascertain whether implementation of the commitment is on track.

- **Work plan:** Has a work plan of activities with dates for their delivery been provided? Clear definition of the activities gives an indication of the action that will be taken to implement the commitment, and a map of the processes and timescales involved.
- **Stakeholder Participation:** Have mechanisms been established to enable stakeholder consultation and input? Stakeholders bring valuable expertise and perspectives to intergovernmental processes and play a crucial role in the implementation of globally negotiated commitments. Decision-making and implementation that involves stakeholders will have stronger and broader recognition, ownership and support by a range of actors.
- **Transparency:** Have efforts been made to ensure that the process is open and information is readily available? Transparency facilitates stakeholder participation and enables third party tracking and verification of implementation.

We have used traffic light indicators to illustrate performance against each of these five criteria. As set out in Table 1, the colors represent the level of implementation or progress made, based upon the evidence gathered through our research.

Table 1: Traffic light indicators of performance against assessment criteria		
Color	Description	Points allocated
Green	“Good implementation” which is defined as being in line with our expectations for implementation at this stage	2
Yellow	“Some implementation” which recognises that some implementation has taken place however there are issues or questions that still need to be resolved	1
Red	“No or poor implementation” where no implementation or, in our judgement, only slight implementation of the criteria has taken place	0

After evaluating performance against each of the assessment criteria, a points system based upon the traffic light indicators was used to provide an overall assessment of implementation. The points allocation is laid out in Table 1 and the translation of these points into our overall assessment of implementation is described below in Table 2.

Table 2: Translation of points allocation into overall assessment of implementation	
Overall points	Overall assessment of implementation
9 - 10	Very good
7 - 8	Good
4 - 6	Fair
0 - 3	Poor

Our assessment of the implementation that has taken place since Rio+20 on the key commitments selected is provided in Table 3.⁹¹ While this assessment is to some extent subjective, it provides a useful reflection on both progress made to date and the accountability mechanisms in place on key commitments. Only by providing a strong accountability framework will negotiated commitments benefit from the support, drive and ownership of all actors expected to support their implementation.

Table 3: Assessment of implementation of key Rio+20 negotiated commitments

Commitment and Key Deliverables	Has there been progress so far?	Is there a target date?	Is there a work plan?	Are there mechanisms for stakeholder consultation and input?	Have efforts been made to ensure transparency?	Overall assessment of implementation so far	Next steps
<p>Third Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) To be convened in 2014</p>	SIDS have been invited to produce national reports and a series of regional preparatory meetings and youth workshops were held throughout July 2013. These provided inputs to the inter-regional preparatory meeting in Aug 2013.	2014	There is a timeline of activities for the preparatory process	A number of consultation mechanisms have been put in place including: national reports, expert group and regional meetings, and youth workshops	A website has been launched to provide all the key information relating to the Conference and the preparatory process	VERY GOOD	The modalities and format of the Conference should be determined by the end of 2013, after which an intergovernmental preparatory process will be launched with the first preparatory committee in early 2014. The Conference will be held in Sep 2014 in Apia, Samoa.
<p>Registry of Voluntary Commitments SG to compile the voluntary commitments made at Rio+20 into an internet-based registry.</p>	The Sustainable Development in Action Registry has been launched, housing 1,382 voluntary commitments. UN DESA published a special report in July 2013, synthesising the latest information on the commitments.	No, but the commitment has been fulfilled	The registry will be periodically updated and UN DESA will produce an annual report on the commitments	The registry allows all stakeholders input and update their own entries	Information on the progress and deliverables of the commitment is provided on the SDKP. The registry facilitates transparency on the voluntary commitments by making information publically available	VERY GOOD	UN DESA will produce annual reports on the contents of the registry. The establishment of a voluntary accountability framework to ensure that these commitments are fulfilled as promised is encouraged.
<p>High level political forum on sustainable development Establish a HLPF to meet for the first time in Sep 2013. Build on the modalities and work of the UNCSD, including mechanisms for participation.</p>	The HLPF has been established and its first meeting is scheduled for Sep 2013. However, there are still key processes & issues to resolve, including the modalities for stakeholder engagement and agenda-setting. Until these procedural arrangements have been agreed upon, it is unlikely that the new body will begin to undertake any substantive work	Sep 2013	There was a work plan for the establishment of the HLPF and the timetable for future meetings is set	Meetings to determine format and modalities of the HLPF were open and stakeholders could participate via the MGs. New mechanisms for participation that build upon those observed by the CSD are to be determined	Meetings to establish the HLPF were open. Outputs, official documents and relevant resources are made available on the SDKP	VERY GOOD	Resolve key procedural and organisational issues, including the modalities for stakeholder engagement and agenda-setting
<p>Sustainable Development Goals An open and transparent intergovernmental process to produce a proposal for SDGs. Ensure coherence with the Post-2015 Development Agenda.</p>	An intergovernmental OWG has been established and is on track to submit its report in 2014. However, there is a lack of clarity on the OWG's activities after Feb 2013 and on how the SDGs and post-MDG processes will be brought together.	Sep 2014	Only up to Feb 2014, after that activities are unclear	Formal mechanisms for input include morning hearings with members of the OWG prior to each input meeting and two full-day intersessional meetings.	Meetings of the OWG are open. Outputs, official documents and relevant resources are made available on the UN's Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform (SDKP) un.org	GOOD	The programme of work for OWG's activities beyond February 2014 needs to be determined. It is hoped that a roadmap for the convergence of the SDGs and Post-MDG processes will be announced during the 68th session of the UNGA

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<p>Financing sustainable development Establish an intergovernmental expert committee to assess financing needs and report on options for a sustainable development financing strategy.</p>	<p>A 30 member Intergovernmental Committee has been established, has developed a work plan and is on track to submit its report in 2014. Three cluster groups have been established to work on specific issues.</p>	2014	The Committee adopted its program of work at its first meeting in Aug 2013	No formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement have been agreed. The first meeting of the Committee was closed.	Both the meetings to establish the Committee and the sessions of the Committee itself have been closed to stakeholders. Key outputs and documents are made available on the SDKP however there is a lack of transparency over how decisions have been made.	GOOD	Formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement need to be established as soon as possible. The next meeting of the Committee will be in December 2013. The clusters will meet individually before this date.
<p>Strengthen UNEP Including by establishing universal membership, ensuring secure and adequate funding, and ensuring active participation of stakeholders</p>	<p>First universal session of the UNEP Governing Council was in Feb 2013 & a UNGA resolution provides for the body to receive stable and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN. A process has been launched to explore new and enhanced mechanisms for stakeholder engagement. However, little, if any, progress has been made on other aspects such as the consolidation of the headquarter functions and enhancing the voice of UNEP within the UN system.</p>	Sept 2013	There is for the strengthening of stakeholder engagement but not for other aspects	The 14th Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum (GMGSF) took place in Feb 2013 ahead of the first universal session. UNEP has established mechanisms for stakeholder engagement, which are being strengthened following the commitment made a Rio+20	Meetings of the UNEP Governing Council are open to Major Groups and other stakeholders. Outputs, official documents and relevant resources are made available on UNEP's website.	GOOD	Develop and establish a process for stakeholder accreditation and participation, building on existing mechanisms, by 2014. Further clarification needed on the action that will be taken to address some of the other strengthening aspects, such as: promoting a strong science-policy interface, enhancing the voice of UNEP and capacity building.
<p>Developing broader measures of progress that go beyond GDP UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) to launch a programme of work to identify new approaches, building on existing initiatives</p>	<p>The UNSC established the Friends of Progress (FOC) in March 2013 to take work forward in this area. The FOC has developed a work programme up to 2015 and has begun to compile inputs for its first report due February 2014.</p>	The Rio+20 outcome document did not specify a target date, however the FOC will conclude its work in 2015	The FOC has developed a work programme up to 2015	The FOC will undertake national consultations. The plan is to primarily consult with official statisticians but may decide to reach out to other relevant constituencies	The FOC Group has created a dedicated website to provide updates, official documents and relevant resources	GOOD	The FOC will support the work of the OWG on SDGs and contribute to the formulation of targets and indicators. After that, it will propose a complete and autonomous program to develop broader measures of progress in its second report in 2015.

Table 3: Assessment of implementation of key Rio+20 negotiated commitments

Commitment and Key Deliverables	Has there been progress so far?	Is there a target date?	Is there a work plan?	Are there mechanisms for stakeholder consultation and input?	Have efforts been made to ensure transparency?	Overall assessment of implementation so far	Next steps
<p>Building a foundation of knowledge on the green economy UN system to coordinate and provide information on green economy policies, toolboxes and best practices, partnerships, and existing and emerging platforms.</p>	<p>Several UN agencies and other international actors are involved in the follow up on this agenda. The Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) was launched in Feb 2013 to support 30 countries by 2020 to build national green economy policies. A number of reports and resources have been developed to support knowledge-building on this agenda.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>All the platforms established facilitate knowledge sharing and partnerships between stakeholders. As there is no one formal process established to follow up on this work there are no formal stakeholder engagement mechanisms</p>	<p>Clear disclosure of the actors working on this agenda and activities taking place</p>	<p>FAIR</p>	<p>Still work to do to further define this agenda and reach an agreement on the fundamental principles of the green economy. Further international commitment is needed on the actual implementation of policies in this area.</p>
<p>Enhancing Corporate transparency and good governance Integrate sustainability information into company reporting. Develop models for best practice; address the needs of developing countries.</p>	<p>Group of Friends of Paragraph 47 (GoF) was established by Member States in June 2012. A number of UN agencies and other stakeholder groups are also conducting work to promote and advance the implementation of paragraph 47.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The GoF has developed some goals for its work and suggested possible activities but no specific action or timescales have been defined</p>	<p>Not yet, but the GoF has recognised the importance of stakeholder engagement and has invited suggestions for modalities</p>	<p>Updates on the GoF and official docs are provided on the UNEP website</p>	<p>FAIR</p>	<p>Mechanisms for stakeholder engagement need to be established, as do clear timescales for the Group's activities.</p>
<p>Oceans - Biodiversity beyond areas of national jurisdiction (BBNJ) Address the above issue and decide on the development of a new international instrument under the UN Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS)</p>	<p>The Ad Hoc Open-Ended Informal Working Group to study issues relating to the conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ met for the first time since Rio+20 in Aug 2013. The Working Group established a preparatory process to explore aspects of a multilateral agreement to strengthen BBNJ within UNCLOS.</p>	<p>September 2015</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>The intersessional workshops and meetings of the working group are open, however, stakeholders have expressed criticism and concern over the closed-door sessions of the Friends of the Co-Chairs' group that were held prior to the meeting</p>	<p>Official documents relating to the Working Group are made available on the UNCLOS website, however the agenda is difficult to follow and stakeholders have criticised the transparency of the process.</p>	<p>FAIR</p>	<p>The Working Group is expected to meet twice in 2014 and at least once in 2015. States have been requested to submit their views on an international instrument ahead of the first meeting, with the aim of submitting a draft resolution on BBNJ to the GA before September 2015.</p>

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<p>Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Adopt the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on SCP. UNGA to designate a Member State body to fully operationalize the framework.</p>	<p>UNEP has been appointed as the Secretariat of the 10YFP and ECOSOC as the interim reporting body. Key elements of the institutional structure, have been established. Regional multi-stakeholder roundtables are being held throughout 2013 and five initial programmes have been established. However, the aim to launch three programmes in 2013 is unlikely to be met.</p>	<p>Sep 2013 for the UNGA to designate a body to operationalize the 10YFP, however there is no target date for full operationalization of the framework</p>	<p>Next steps have been outlined up to July 2014</p>	<p>National and stakeholder focal points are being established and the Secretariat is consulting on the most inclusive model for participation</p>	<p>A website, newsletter and interactive information hub—the SCP Clearinghouse—have been launched to facilitate transparency and information sharing</p>	<p>FAIR</p>	<p>It remains to be seen whether the aim to launch three of the initial programmes in 2013 will be met. The Secretariat needs to secure first contributions to the Trust Fund.</p>
<p>Technology Facilitation Mechanism UN to identify options for a technology facilitation mechanism. SG to make recommendations, based on the options identified.</p>	<p>The SG's report was submitted to the UNGA in September 2012, however the recommendations were not adopted. Four knowledge sharing workshops were held in April and May 2013 to give further consideration to this topic.</p>	<p>The target date for the SG's report was Sept 2013. There is no target date for the operationalization of a facilitation mechanism</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Four multi-stakeholder workshops were held in Apr and May 2013 to facilitate knowledge sharing and gather inputs from stakeholders.</p>	<p>Relevant and official documents and inputs are made available on the UN SDKP</p>	<p>FAIR</p>	<p>The UNSG will submit a second report in this agenda before September 2014, which should provide clarity on the way forward.</p>
<p>Oceans - Reductions in Marine Debris Achieve significant reductions in marine debris and reduce the impact of marine pollution.</p>	<p>Follow-up is taking place through UNEP's GPA. A conference on Marine Litter in European Seas was held in April 2013. A number of recommendations were made but no clear roadmap for the way forward. While some action is being taken, there is a lack of coordinated strategies on this agenda.</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>There is no single follow-up process and so no one stakeholder engagement mechanism. The action that has taken place so far has facilitated stakeholder cooperation and input.</p>	<p>There is no single place to find information on this agenda, making it difficult to follow.</p>	<p>FAIR</p>	<p>Unknown</p>
<p>Oceans - Restoring Fish Stocks Intensify efforts to meet the JOPI 2015 target to maintain or restore stocks.</p>	<p>In Dec 2012 the GA adopted a resolution on sustainable fisheries, reaffirming the commitments made in the Outcome Document, including the 2015 target. The resolution urges States to take action in this regard, however no specific activities or timescales have been defined.</p>	<p>2015</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>As there is so far no coordinated strategy on this agenda, there are also no coherent mechanisms for engagement</p>	<p>There is a lack of transparency on this agenda due to the lack of a coordinated strategy for implementation.</p>	<p>POOR</p>	<p>Unknown</p>

Table 3: Assessment of implementation of key Rio+20 negotiated commitments

Commitment and Key Deliverables	Has there been progress so far?	Is there a target date?	Is there a work plan?	Are there mechanisms for stakeholder consultation and input?	Have efforts been made to ensure transparency?	Overall assessment of implementation so far	Next steps
<p>Integrating the three dimensions of Sustainable Development across the UN</p> <p>Secretary-General to report to the UNGA on progress in this area. Strengthen policy coherence and coordination across the UN.</p>	<p>The SG's report was submitted in July 2013, providing recommendations and a suggested roadmap for accelerating integration. These have not yet been adopted. ECOSOC is leading on the implementation of this commitment and has held several meetings on the topic, however it is unclear how the recommendations from the report or meetings will be implemented.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Roadmap proposed but not yet adopted.</p>	<p>Stakeholders have been able to participate in the meetings facilitated by ECOSOC, however, as there is so far no coordinated strategy on this agenda, there are also no coherent mechanisms for engagement</p>	<p>The SG's report and outcomes from relevant meetings are available online, however, there is lack of clarity about what is being done to implement this commitment and information is difficult to find.</p>	<p>POOR</p>	<p>The recommendations from the SG's report will go to the UNGA in Sep 2013 for consideration and Member States will have until the end of Dec 2013 to decide if they will adopt them.</p>
<p>Needs of future generations</p> <p>Secretary-General to present a report on intergenerational solidarity.</p>	<p>UN DESA has held several meetings and consultations to gather views and inputs on this issue. The SG's report is anticipated to be published in 2013 but there are no official timescales.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>UN DESA has held several meetings and consultations to gather views and inputs on this issue. The outcomes are expected to feed into the SG's report</p>	<p>Outputs from relevant meetings are available online, however, there is a lack of transparency on the timeline for activities.</p>	<p>POOR</p>	<p>Publication of the report and clarification of next steps.</p>

CONCLUSION

In providing an overview of key negotiated commitments made at Rio+20, as well as revealing the gaps between what was promised and what is has actually been taken forward by governments and the UN system since the Summit, this report aims to deliver a snapshot of their success one year on. Overall, it would appear that despite the palpable disappointment of many stakeholders in the immediate aftermath of the Conference, Rio+20 did in fact deliver a number of important commitments. These were perhaps most significant with regards to strengthening the international systems of governance for sustainable development, with processes launched to create a new home for the sustainable development agenda within the UN system, as well as a new global goals framework to guide and monitor efforts towards sustainable development in all countries. An International Expert Committee set up to explore new ways of leveraging the additional finance that is crucial to the implementation of sustainable development has also begun its work.

Our assessment shows that significant steps have been taken to implement the pledges governments made at the Conference, with some commitments inevitably seeing better implementation than others. In addition to the good progress made on the three 'landmark' commitments mentioned above, very good progress has also been seen in the preparations for the Third Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held in 2014, and the commitment to establish an online registry of voluntary commitments has been fulfilled. On the other hand, the headway made on other commitments, such as those on oceans and seas and the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, has been much less marked.

As highlighted by our assessment criteria, accountability mechanisms are needed to encourage the support, drive and ownership of all actors, and ensure that the promises made at Rio+20 are fulfilled. However, the political challenges in reaching consensus must not be forgotten. In many occasions, therefore, global commitments, as well as decisions made on implementation, will in reality have limited levels of ambition and specificity.

Rio+20 is therefore perhaps best seen as a start-point rather than an end-point for action on sustainable development, with the true impact of many commitments still yet to be felt, due to the long implementation processes involved. Nevertheless, given the assessment of overall progress made to date outlined in this report, especially around creating new bodies and frameworks to further global sustainable development efforts, an international environment in which more aspirational actions can be devised and undertaken seems possible.

PROGRESS ON “CORNERSTONE” VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS FROM RIO+20

“If the outcome document is the foundation for the next stage of our journey to sustainable development, the commitments are the bricks and cement. They will be a concrete and lasting legacy of Rio+20. They will help us to implement our vision in all regions.”

–UN SECRETARY-GENERAL BAN KI-MOON

INTRODUCTION

Rio+20 broke new ground in encouraging all actors to make specific promises to take action on the full range of sustainability challenges. At its final press conference, the Rio+20 Secretariat announced that more than 700 such commitments had been made worth more than US\$500 billion dollars. These commitments made by governments at all levels, the private sector, and civil society were launched and recorded on a number of platforms and registries. The final paragraph of the Rio+20 outcome document welcomed the “voluntary commitments” and called upon the UN to create “a public and periodically-updated Internet-based registry to provide transparent and accessible information on these commitments.”

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon aptly described the relationship between globally negotiated agreements and non-globally negotiated, or “voluntary”, commitments when he referred to the Rio+20 outcome document as the “foundation” and these voluntary commitments as the “bricks and cement”. In order to build a new global architecture that will better facilitate concrete action on sustainable development, we need to abandon the artificial hierarchy of importance that places globally negotiated agreements above voluntary commitments. Rather, it is critical these two elements are understood as equally essential. Just as there cannot be a house without both a foundation and bricks and cement, action on sustainable development requires both globally negotiated goals and voluntary commitments by the full range of actors for specific actions to address them. Recognizing and encouraging both will be crucial to accelerating the transition to a sustainable future.

In this section of the report, we have gathered information and perspectives regarding progress on the implementation of 11 Rio+20 “cornerstone commitments” over the past year. We used the following criteria in making our selection of such commitments:

1. Is the commitment SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resource-based and Time-Bound)?

2. Are there major funds and resources associated with the commitment?
3. Does the commitment have potential for transformative or high impact?
4. Are outside stakeholders actively engaged in encouraging implementation of the commitment?
5. Does the commitment reflect the substantive and geographic diversity of all the commitments made at Rio+20?

In reviewing the implementation of each of these commitments, we did not seek to evaluate its level of ambition or adequacy, relative to the need or capacity of the promise-maker. Nor did we examine the commitment in the context of the overall performance or the other activities of the promise-maker. Civil society groups must play a key role in pushing all actors to be more ambitious, but here we wanted to focus on another foundational question: whether the Rio+20 promises, although admittedly imperfect, are actually being kept.

We sought to gather as much as data and as many perspectives as to the progress on the commitment’s implementation. In the process, we faced a lot of difficulties given the extraordinary diversity of the Rio+20 commitments we selected to review. They ranged from an individual country or corporation making a promise to act rapidly to a group of international banks agreeing to work together in financing over the next decade. Some commitments were SMARTer than others that still needed to be fully developed and funded. Thus, it was easier to capture an accurate sense of progress for some commitments than others.

We began our inquiries with extensive internet searches for information and contacts. We followed up with email exchanges and a number of telephone interviews with commitment-makers. We also sought out third-party observers and validators. However, we have not undertaken site visits or audits that could be elements of a more robust accountability scheme. In the end, we tried to make a reasoned judgment as we possibly could on the progress of each commitment.

1. RIO+20 VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS—PLATFORMS AND REGISTRIES

“Rio+20 has given us a new chance. It was not an end, but a new beginning—a milestone on an essential journey. It has given us a new set of tools. Now the work begins.”
—U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

In July 2013, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) released its first report on the implementation of Rio+20 Voluntary Commitments and Partnerships. The report reflected the still-early stage of the discussion now begun on how best to encourage and support this “new set of tools.” Yet the commitments approach is not really new; announcements of unilateral actions by presidents, prime ministers, and other leaders have long been a feature of global summits, though they are often overlooked. In 2002, the UN first encouraged and registered more than 250 “partnerships” at the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). At Rio+20, the term “voluntary commitments” was used to describe the more than 700 promises made by leaders from governments, corporations, and civil society.

What is new is the effort by the United Nations to begin to provide greater structure around this new set of commitments. In August 2012, the United Nations launched the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform website that included a Registry of Voluntary Commitments. This registry has been expanded to house other sustainable development commitments from UN platforms, including the “partnerships” from Johannesburg. The total number of registered commitments is now at 1,412. As highlighted in the UN DESA report, varying entities use different terms to describe these efforts. The Clinton Global Initiative refers to them simple as “commitments”, while NRDC calls them “PINCs”—Partnerships, Initiatives, Networks, Coalitions and Clubs—to encompass the various types of arrangements underlying each commitment. To better ensure their implementation, UN DESA correctly suggests that all of the commitments should at the outset be “SMART” (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Resource-based, and Time-bound).

The UN DESA report discusses the emergence of “Sustainable Development Action Networks” that cover many of the registered commitments. These networks are defined as “action-oriented clusters that bring together stakeholders around specific thematic areas” and are meant to “catalyze and drive action and commitments from stakeholders and their networks to implement concrete policies, plans,

programs, and projects in support of the objectives of the network.” The DESA report describes seven of these Action Networks: the UN Global Compact, Sustainable Energy for All, Every Woman Every Child, Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Cities, Small Island Developing States and the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative.

Of the 1,412 commitments registered in the UN DESA registry as of September 1, 2013, roughly 58 percent were made by the private sector and civil society, 30 percent from individual countries and 12 percent from the UN System. More than 270 commitments were made toward the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative—the highest number of commitments towards any one action network at Rio+20—which focused on encouraging sustainability within universities around the world. Based on their estimated value of some US\$637 billion, the commitments registered with UN DESA are significant—the monetary value of these commitments now amounts to nearly 1 percent of yearly global GDP in total.

The report also begins an important discussion of the need for an “accountability framework” for its registered commitments, saying that it is “an integral part of ensuring long-term value to all stakeholders.” It outlines their vision for an effective accountability framework, centered on three pillars: regular reports from the UN which takes input from all of the Action Networks; ongoing follow up of the commitments through a consolidated and public platform maintained by the UN; and third-party independent monitoring and reviews of these commitments, such as the NRDC’s Cloud of Commitments. For their report, UN DESA relied upon the Action Networks to submit their first annual progress updates on commitment-related activities since Rio+20.

The commitments have varying timelines for their implementation and were initiated by a variety of actors from presidents and prime ministers to corporations and government agencies. The report shows that 716 of the 1,412 total commitments (51 percent) have deliverables targeted at 2015 or earlier, reflecting a strong focus on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. An additional 222 commitments (16 percent) have deliverables targeted at 2022 or earlier—10 years beyond Rio+20.

UN DESA has made good progress toward establishing an accountability mechanism by establishing the UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform to register commitments. However, UN DESA does not currently have adequate resources devoted to the platform, resources that are necessary to build an architecture that would truly support, encourage, and hold commitment-makers accountable for the thousands of commitments made.

2. SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

“Working on transport is part of this moral responsibility we have especially to the cities of today, but also to future generations.”

–World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim

SLOCAT- MDBS, US\$175 BILLION FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

One of the largest financial commitments at Rio+20 was a promise by eight multilateral development banks (MDBs) to commit US\$175 billion toward sustainable transport in rapidly growing urban areas of the developing world over the next decade. People in many of the world’s major cities, particularly in the developing world suffer from lack of quality transport systems. Hundreds of millions of people pay a heavy price in terms of congestion, pollution and lack of mobility. This commitment by the MDBs was the most significant of the 17 commitments made at Rio+20 through the Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) network. SLoCaT is a network of more than 80 organizations around the world working toward sustainable transportation, including multilateral development banks, UN organizations, technical cooperation agencies and NGOs.

In June 2013, one year after Rio+20, SLoCaT released a progress report on its voluntary commitments made at the conference, becoming the first and only one of the Action Networks to publish such a report thus far. SLoCaT says there has been good progress on all 17 commitments and highlights the network’s commitment to work together to fulfill its promises. The SLoCaT report is a critical step in encouraging the implementation of commitments and providing greater accountability.

SLoCaT reports that US\$17 billion has been approved by the MDBs for sustainable transport projects as of June 2013. This financial support not only will help cities finance these projects, but will also support sound public policies and local capacity building to support these initiatives. It mobilizes approximately 500 staff from the MDBs to provide knowledge and technical expertise in support of these projects. This initiative could also catalyze hundreds of billions of dollars in additional public and private investments toward sustainable transport. In December, the MDBs set up a “working group on sustainable transport” to coordinate their efforts; the working group will issue the first full report of their activities toward the end of 2013, including specific information on what projects are being implemented and in which countries.

Other SLoCaT commitments involve a range of other important activities including capacity building, standard setting, public policy support, and knowledge and technology

management. One of these commitments, facilitated by the EMBARQ (WRI Center for Sustainable Transportation) network works with cities in emerging economies to develop and implement sustainable urban transport plans. Their goal is to implement at least ten game-changing policies or projects in up to 200 cities, each in key emerging economies by 2016. According to the SLoCaT report, the EMBARQ initiative is well on track to achieve and exceed its goals and has already delivered five game-changing projects, while impacting 62 cities in total thus far. EMBARQ estimates this initiative has saved more than 850 million hours of travel time for commuters, served over 4.5 billion person-trips, saved more than 1,000 lives, and has avoided more than 2.2 million tons of CO₂ emissions thus far, in only one year since the commitment was made.

Along with the release of its first annual progress report, the SLoCaT network announced six new commitments. These focus on enabling the international community to follow and track the impacts of all of the Rio+20 transport commitments and includes a commitment to develop a set of comprehensive indicators for sustainable transport.

The SLoCaT network is a model for other action networks because of its strategic vision and leadership in obtaining the major commitments on sustainable transportation at Rio+20. SLoCaT’s recently developed major financing structure and its intent to engage in post-2015 development agenda process to mobilize and resources are encouraging signs of progress for sustainable transport.

SLoCaT reports that US\$17 billion of the MDB US\$175 billion sustainable transport commitment has already been approved for projects; this is about 10 percent of the total 10-year pledge. This suggests the MDBs are indeed on track to fulfill or exceed their financial commitment as promised. Non-financial indicators are more difficult to track at the moment, as the MDBs have not yet released their own report, which is due out in late 2013.

3. SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

“Energy is the golden thread that weaves together economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability.”

–UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

Rio+20 was an important launchpad for many of the commitments made under the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative. Established by the UN Secretary General in 2011, the initiative brings together businesses, governments, community groups, and academia to accelerate progress on energy efficiency, energy access, and renewable energy. The SE4ALL initiative so far has registered some 120 commitments amounting to approximately US\$320 billion that will benefit more than a billion people worldwide.

The initiative has three objectives, to be achieved by 2030: 1) providing universal access to energy, 2) doubling the rate of improvement of energy efficiency, and 3) doubling the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. More than 70 countries have joined the initiative, and a subset of countries, including Ghana, Bangladesh, Uruguay, and Vietnam, are in the process of completing national energy action plans.

SE4ALL employs two mechanisms to monitor progress: One tracks overall global progress on the three objectives and the other tracks progress on individual commitments. In May 2013, a consortium of partners led by the World Bank released a SE4ALL “Global Tracking Framework,” which sets baseline measurements for the three objectives, establishes indicators for measuring global progress, and provides a comprehensive look at national actions towards renewable energy, energy access, and efficiency.

At the time of writing, the initiative was still developing the second mechanism for monitoring progress on individual commitments and plans to launch this accountability framework during the fall of 2013. In July 2013, the initiative began reviewing Rio+20 commitments, and will prepare a progress report for release during the opening of the UN General Assembly in September.

SE4All has developed a robust platform for engaging the full range of stakeholders and encouraging them to take action. It has built an impressive portfolio of actions in nations around the world. The SE4All needs to secure the staff and data resources to enable it to support, encourage, and hold accountable the actions to achieve sustainable energy for all. With over 70 countries engaged, committing over US\$50 billion, the structures need to be in place to encourage sustained action by businesses, institutions, and governments.

MICROSOFT’S INITIATIVE TO BECOME CARBON NEUTRAL BY THE END OF 2013

At Rio+20, the Microsoft Corporation announced its promise to become carbon neutral in just a single year—by the start of its fiscal year beginning July 1, 2013. Registered with the UN Global Compact, an Action Network of commitment-makers from business and industry, and under the SE4ALL initiative, Microsoft’s promise was to achieve zero net carbon emissions (CO₂e) for its all data centers, software development labs, offices, and employee air travel. Microsoft, one of the most reputable computer technology companies in the world with almost 100,000 employees in more than 100 countries, generated more than 1.6 million metric tons of CO₂ in 2011. Its pledge to become carbon neutral is significant given the size of its global operations, but it is also an important demonstration of private sector leadership in the global drive to a low-carbon economy.

To achieve this goal, Microsoft took a “lean, green, and accountable” approach by increasing the energy efficiency of its operations—particularly in its data centers—investing in long-term renewable energy projects, and establishing an internal carbon neutral fee. At the start of its fiscal year 2012, the company required all of its business units to include a line item in their budgets for a “carbon neutral fee” based on their emissions. Although Microsoft has not disclosed the precise amount of the fee, it is between US\$5-7 per ton of carbon. The funds generated from the fee—over US\$8 million—are then used to finance grant programs for internal efficiency and travel reduction projects, fund renewable energy and carbon offset projects, purchase U.S. Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs), and plan long-term power purchase agreements.

Much of the progress the company has made toward its goal over the past year is the result of purchasing renewable energy. According to its latest submission to the Carbon Disclosure Project, these purchases reduced its indirect emissions last year by almost a million metric tons, an 81.9 percent decrease in total CO₂e compared with 2011. Microsoft has also established an energy management program for its campus in Redmond Ridge, Washington that is 27 percent more efficient than self-managed facilities and is expected to save US\$1.5 million in energy expenses.

While the carbon neutral fees represent a very small percentage of Microsoft’s operating budget, their introduction has stimulated the engagement of previously uninvolved financial officers and managers. The carbon fees are already changing the culture and will serve as a catalyst to additional investments in carbon pollution reductions.

According to Microsoft representatives, the company fully achieved its goal of carbon neutrality within the timeframe given and is currently undergoing the carbon accounting and verification process.

BRAZIL’S US\$235 BILLION COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL

In one of the largest single commitments made at Rio+20, Brazil pledged to achieve universal energy access within the country by 2014 and to invest US\$235 billion in renewable energy over the next 10 years.

According to a press release issued by the Brazilian Ministry of Mines and Environment, of the US\$235 billion commitment, US\$133 billion will go toward providing 36,000 MW of hydroelectricity, 12,000 MW of biomass-fueled power, and 11,000 MW of wind power. The remaining US\$102 billion will go towards biofuels, an area in which Brazil has become a global leader. To achieve universal access, Brazil will invest an additional US\$4.3 billion by 2014 to provide energy to the remaining 1.7 million Brazilians that still lack access to energy.

Brazil is the ninth largest energy consumer in the world, according to the International Energy Agency. As one of the world's fastest growing countries, energy consumption increased by nearly a third in the last decade. But Brazil has been a leader in renewable energy; SE4ALL's Global Tracking Framework report lists Brazil as one of the top investors in renewables, along with India, China, and the United States. In 2009, Brazil created a voluntary emissions reduction target of 36-39% by 2020, half of which is expected to come from energy efficiency improvements.

Prior to its latest commitment for universal energy access by 2014, Brazil's launched the Luz Para Todos initiative in 2003, coordinated by the Ministry of Mines and Energy, which aimed to provide 12 million people, primarily in rural areas, with electricity access. By the end of 2011, the program had provided access to 14.5 million people, surpassing its initial goal. However, those that still lack access to energy, some 1.7 million people, are some of the most impoverished that live in remote areas of the Amazon, where there are only four inhabitants per square kilometer. The latest goal to reach that remaining 1.7 million without access to energy by 2014 will present the greatest challenge yet for universal energy access in Brazil.

In April 2013, the Brazilian national development bank, BNDES, and research-financing agency FINEP, along with the electricity regulatory agency ANEEL, invested US\$3 billion in the Inova Energia program to fund renewable energy projects. In June, the government announced plans to invest US\$2.85 billion in renewable power research. And one month later, the French energy company Voltalia announced that it will start constructing three wind farms in Brazil on August 1, amounting to 210 MW of wind power capacity.

The Brazilian government reports that since Rio+20, projects have been contracted for the installation of approximately 6,630 MW of wind energy, 1,800 MW of biomass and 23,500 MW of hydropower, to be operational by 2016. In total, these projects represent roughly 55 percent of their commitment to install 59,000 MW of renewable energy capacity by 2022. Additionally, Brazil estimates that through its national energy efficiency plan established in 2011, it will conserve up to 49,000 GWh of energy by 2021.

Despite its grand scale and current forward momentum, neither UNDESA nor SE4ALL has registered Brazil's commitment to sustainable energy, and the commitment seems to have slipped through the cracks of the UN platforms with little to no follow-up by third-party stakeholders.

Brazil has made significant progress toward meeting its goals for universal energy access by 2014 and toward its renewable energy goals. However, for sufficient follow up, the commitment needs to be added to the SE4ALL and UN DESA platforms and follow up on the financial commitment must be ensured by both Brazil and the UN. While Brazil has shown great leadership toward the SE4All initiative, lack of

follow up on financial indicators makes a true assessment of progress toward this commitment difficult to achieve, merely one and a half years since the commitment was made.

BANK OF AMERICA—US\$50 BILLION FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY, ENERGY ACCESS AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

At Rio+20, Bank of America (BoA) announced one of the largest financial commitments within SE4ALL by committing to lend US\$50 billion over the next 10 years to finance projects that advance a low-carbon economy and address energy access, renewable energy, and energy efficiency.

The new goal comes after the completion of a US\$20 billion commitment over ten years that Bank of America set in 2007. In April 2013, the bank announced it had completed its original goal in nearly half the allotted time, delivering US\$21.6 billion to projects around the world.

The US\$50 billion commitment, which officially began on January 1, 2013, will bring Bank of America's total funding for environmental business initiatives to US\$70 billion over 16 years. The money will be used for lending and carbon finance in areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, transportation, and waste. US\$100 million has been earmarked for grants to nonprofit organizations.

With leadership from major banks in lending to clean energy projects, other banks will begin to see these investments as commercially viable. However, despite the positive effects of BoA's commitment to invest in clean energy, the bank still remains one of the largest lenders in the United States to coal-mining companies.

BoA intends to publish a report in January 2014 on its progress toward the US\$50 billion goal. Some examples of investments toward its latest goal to renewable energy and energy access and efficiency projects include: The company has provided US\$42 million in tax equity financing for the Canadian Hills Wind Farm in Oklahoma, The wind farm consists of 135 turbines and will generate 298.5 MW of electricity, and the bank has also become a joint bookrunner on a US\$391 million equity add-on offering for First Solar Inc., a leading solar energy solutions company. Bank of America has also started to invest heavily in green bonds, debt obligations issued to raise financing for green energy projects. Recently, the bank became the largest bookrunner for the European Investment Bank's €50 million Climate Awareness Bond. Finances from the bond will be used for renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. In May, the bank became the lead bookrunner for the Massachusetts Green Municipal Bond, helping the state sell US\$120 million in debt. Money from the bond will be used to fund energy efficiency projects, as well as river revitalization and environmental conservation efforts.

Having just launched its initiative starting in January of 2013 and without BoA's progress report—which is expected to be released in January of 2014—it is too early to assess whether BoA is making sufficient progress toward its lending goal of US\$50 billion toward renewables, energy access, and energy efficiency.

4. CITIES

“Our struggle for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities.”

–UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon

At the Rio+20 C40 Mayors Summit, Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, representatives from 33 other C40 cities (a network of megacities committed to climate leadership), and former U.S. President Bill Clinton came together to discuss the significant steps already being taken by urban areas around the world to address climate change. A new technical report released at the conference showed that since 2005, C40 cities have taken almost 5,000 actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and that, on the current track, such emissions would be reduced by 248 million tonnes by 2020. The report also projected that cities could take further actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent—and more than one billion tonnes—by 2030.

The C40 network, which currently has 63 members and is chaired by New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg, is committed to implementing policies and programs to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and combat the effects of climate change. Mayors of C40 cities convene on a biennial basis to discuss progress and share future plans for greenhouse gas reduction in areas such as energy efficiency, waste, transportation, and water. The Rio+20 Mayors Summit was the first time that mayors from C40 cities had come together to assess the potential impact of commitments already made by the network and to share their progress on climate-related actions taken since the network was formed, in 2005. These actions were often taken without national government support, emphasizing the leadership that cities are showing toward climate change action.

At the Rio+20 Mayors Summit, C40, in partnership with the World Bank and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, launched the Municipal Solid Waste Initiative, a partnership to help cities reduce methane emissions and improve waste management. After C40 and its partners conducted on-the-ground assessments, representatives from 10 major cities around the world met in Vancouver in March 2013 to discuss strategies for implementing the initiative. Some cities have already begun concrete projects: Rio de Janeiro is working on improving landfill operations and leachate treatment;

Lagos is implementing financing mechanisms for a landfill gas project; and New York City plans to double its landfill diversion in less than five years and implement a voluntary organic waste collection program.

At Rio+20, C40 announced it would maintain a newly created online library of best practices for improving sustainability in cities on www.c40.org. In order to be a truly effective platform, this library should be kept as updated as possible to take full advantage of its transformative potential as a resource for sharing technical expertise and facilitating action.

The encouraging actions in 63 of the world's megacities are echoed in urban areas worldwide. The carbon Cities Climate Registry (cCCR) is the world's largest global database for local commitments to climate action. This initiative, maintained by the ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability network, was registered as an official voluntary commitment at Rio+20 and has recorded more than 560 commitments by 302 local governments in 42 countries since its inception in 2010. This registry also includes yearly annual reporting on progress made towards these commitments, which serves as a critical component for accountability.

C40 still needs a director for the Municipal Solid Waste Initiative, but some concrete projects are already underway. While C40 has launched an online library for best practices, the platform does not include many resources yet and must be expanded to recognize its full potential.

5. FORESTS

“Individually, both governments and business have already mobilized significant resources to address the challenge of deforestation but we all recognize that much more can be achieved if we align our efforts and work in partnership.”

–Paul Polman, Chairman of Unilever

REDUCING DEFORESTATION THROUGH THE SUPPLY CHAIN: THE TROPICAL FOREST ALLIANCE 2020

At Rio+20, a new effort called the Tropical Forest Alliance 2020 (TFA 2020) was launched to “reduce the tropical deforestation associated with the sourcing of commodities such as palm oil, soy, beef, and paper and pulp” by the end of the decade. These drivers of deforestation—the demand for beef, soy, palm oil, paper, and other commodities—are major contributing factors to forest loss globally. Deforestation accounts for around 15% of the world's global warming pollution, therefore any step to address this forest loss will go a long way in mitigating climate change.

The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF), a consortium of more than 400 major companies, joined the U.S. government in launching the TFA 2020, a public-private partnership that aims to end deforestation in members' supply chains by the end of the decade. TFA 2020 has now been expanded to include the governments of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Norway, as well as NGOs such as Conservation International, the Dutch Sustainability Initiative, and the World Resources Institute.

The companies that committed to go deforestation-free in their supply-chains by 2020 are now in various stages of implementing supply chain actions—with some taking significant action, and others taking no apparent action at all.

Perhaps the most visible action of the TFA 2020 was a workshop in Indonesia called “Promoting Sustainability and Productivity in the Palm Oil and Pulp & Paper Sectors” held in June 2013, one year after TFA 2020's launch. A number of multinational companies, Indonesian companies, NGOs, and governments were represented at the workshop, including the President of Indonesia and other high-level leaders. The summary of the workshop outlines several action-oriented steps, including a variety of additional commitments and actions by the Indonesian government and CGF.

U.S. President Obama specifically included the TFA 2020 initiative in a list of actions his administration will take to address climate change. Indonesian President Yudhoyono urged more companies to adopt forest conservation policies, and other developed countries and international NGOs joined the effort. In June, leading NGOs made a set of recommendations on how the United States can help break the link between commodities and climate change. In the report, the organizations identified a broad suite of policy levers for the United States can use to address commodity-driven deforestation including policies on trade, procurement, lending and investment, as well as foreign assistance to increase the supply of deforestation-free products.

TFA 2020 has the potential to help leverage tangible action among 400 of the world's largest consumer brands to go deforestation-free in their supply-chain. It should simultaneously bring more companies into the effort (e.g., the commodity suppliers and companies that serve fast-growing markets especially in China and India), drive greater government action to support deforestation-free efforts, and ensure follow-through by the major companies and governments.

TFA has the potential to be a real game-changer, but there have been too few concrete actions so far to inspire confidence that it will fulfill its potential in the next seven years.

6. OCEANS

“Our central message in Rio applies in full force to oceans. We cannot achieve prosperity at the expense of our planet—and we need all partners on deck for sustainable development.”
—Ban Ki-moon

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION FOR RESEARCH ON OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

At Rio+20, eight countries and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) launched a new effort to increase cooperation among scientists worldwide concerned about increasing ocean acidification. With initial funding of US\$2 million, the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Center (OA-ICC), which will be administered by the IAEA's Monaco Environmental Laboratories, will serve as a hub for research on ocean acidification worldwide.

There is clear evidence that ocean acidity has been increasing as the world's oceans absorb close to one-third of all carbon dioxide generated by the burning of fossil fuels. If current rates of acidification continue, oceans may no longer be able to support coral reefs during this century, and commercial fish stocks, food security for millions, and the multi-billion dollar fishing industry will be under threat. While the causes of ocean acidification are known—and the ultimate solutions clear—there is an urgent need for better information to help identify which marine organisms and human communities are most at risk from ocean acidification and how best to protect them.

Over the past year, there has been progress on strengthening international cooperation on ocean acidification research since the OA-ICC was formally established in the fall of 2012. The United States made a matching pledge of almost US\$1 million for the center's first three years. The U.K., Spain, Norway, New Zealand, Italy, France, Australia and China have provided funding or in-kind support to match this U.S. pledge. The center has hired a small staff to support its activities, and an advisory board is being selected.

In July 2012, experts from around the world gathered to take stock of existing monitoring efforts and to discuss the optimal tools and methodologies for measuring the chemistry of ocean acidification. In July 2013, the expert scientists met again and work is currently underway by the center to create a consensus guide and blueprint for a global monitoring network for ocean acidification. Although the Rio+20 commitment to establish the center has been completed, next steps to fulfill the ultimate vision for a global monitoring network will include developing a centralized data portal to enable data sharing, and the identification of critical geographic gaps in the global network.

Completing a fully integrated global monitoring network will likely take about 10 years, and will require a collective commitment of tens to hundreds of millions of dollars by invested countries. But the first priority for the center is to secure its medium to long-term future. To accomplish this and the long-term vision for the center, participating countries need to increase the membership, along with the financial and intellectual commitments of member countries. The U.S. government can play an important leadership role in this effort. Additionally, each member country needs to develop its own national monitoring network. This will require an additional financial commitment of tens of millions of dollars.

Progress toward the OA-ICC commitment is currently on track, as the governments and IAEA have officially established the network. However, countries and other partners will need to commit additional funding to build and maintain the capacity to assess and adapt to ocean acidification.

AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENT TO CREATE THE WORLD'S LARGEST NETWORK OF MARINE RESERVES

Just days before Rio+20, Tony Burke—then Australia's Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities—announced his country's intention to establish the world's largest network of marine reserves. Then Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced the plan at the conference. The establishment of new Commonwealth marine reserves in November 2012 saw Australia's marine protected area estate in Commonwealth waters increase from 27 to 60 marine reserves and the protected areas increasing by 2.3 million square kilometers to 3.1 million square kilometers. This includes areas fully protected from fishing and oil and gas exploration, which will increase by 862,000 square kilometres to 1.2 million to 1.5 million square kilometres, or more than one-third of Australia's territorial waters.

Unique and extraordinary marine ecosystems around Australia will be protected in the new marine parks. These include the southwest Perth Canyon (a canyon even deeper than the Grand Canyon); a mosaic of islands in the Recherche Archipelago off Western Australia; globally important foraging areas for threatened marine turtle species in the Gulf of Carpentaria; the near-pristine Coral Sea of almost 1 million square kilometers; and a submerged mountain range more than seven kilometers deep at the intersection of the Indian and Southern Oceans.

Australia's new marine reserves will help protect 45 whale and dolphin species, six of the seven known species of marine

turtle and 4,000 fish species. According to Australia's Centre for Policy Development, the new national system of marine parks will protect US\$1.2 billion a year of ecosystem services. When added to existing marine parks in Australia, that value increases to US\$2 billion a year.

Following Rio+20, the Australia's Director of National Parks invited public comment on the marine reserves proposal, eventually receiving nearly 80,000 submissions, 87 percent of which were in support. Per recommendation by the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the new Commonwealth Marine Reserves were legally established on November 17, 2012.

In 2012, the Australian Government established 33 new Commonwealth marine reserves, adding roughly 2.3 million square kilometers to Australia's marine reserves, resulting in a total of 3.1 million square kilometers all together, fulfilling its commitment to establishing the world's largest network of marine reserves.

MEXICO'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECT CABO PULMO CORAL REEF MARINE PARK

"It is possible to follow a model of sustainable development that will take advantage of the natural advantages of our territory and attract investment and tourism and create jobs without irreversibly affecting ecosystems and biodiversity, which is the point of green growth."

—Mexican President Felipe Calderon

In the days leading up to Rio+20, Felipe Calderón, then president of Mexico, announced the cancellation of the Cabo Cortés project, a proposed large-scale tourism and real-estate complex that threatened the Cabo Pulmo National Park. The cancellation of the Cabo Cortés project—the subject of many years of international campaigning—has helped preserve, for now, one of the world's most robust marine reserves at a time when coral reefs and other critical marine ecosystems are under increasing pressure from contamination, overfishing and climate change. Calderón's announcement also highlighted the need to move toward a model of green growth in which development and jobs creation does not irreversibly affect ecosystems and biodiversity.

Located on the southeastern tip of Mexico's Baja California peninsula, Cabo Pulmo National Park is home to what may be the oldest and most important coral reef in the American Pacific. After decades of unsustainable fishing practices degraded the Cabo Pulmo reef ecosystem, the local community worked with the Mexican government to establish the site as a protected area in 1995. The community also voluntarily re-oriented its economy to low-impact eco-tourism. In 2005, Cabo Pulmo was designated as part of

a UNESCO World Heritage Site and in 2008 it was declared a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. Thanks to concerted conservation efforts, the recovery of the reef since gaining protected status is impressive: marine life in the park increased by 463 percent between 1999 and 2009.

Yet this international conservation success story was threatened when the Cabo Cortés tourism and real-estate complex was proposed just north of and adjacent to the park. If built, the large scale and scope of the project could have irreparably harmed the protected reef, endangered marine species, and threatened the limited freshwater resources of the local community.

Despite the cancellation of Cabo Cortés, the door remains open for other projects that could threaten Cabo Pulmo. Two months after Calderon's announcement, a project similar in scale and scope was proposed for the very same property. This project, known as Los Pericúes, was subsequently withdrawn from formal consideration by the project proponent. However, its proposal demonstrates that there remains strong interest in expanding large-scale coastal development in the region.

The Mexican administration, under current president Enrique Peña Nieto, can help protect the Cabo Pulmo coral reef by fully upholding Mexico's existing international conservation commitments under UNESCO and Ramsar. It should also follow through with recommendations prepared by these international agencies after they visited Cabo Pulmo in November 2011. In their joint report, the two agencies noted that Mexico should resolve how it will limit future large-scale tourism development near the Cabo Pulmo National Park to avoid the risk of cumulative impacts. They also pointed to the need to ensure that municipal development and ecological planning instruments are coordinated to uphold the exceptional value of Cabo Pulmo. If the type of threat presented by large-scale projects like Cabo Cortés continues, Mexico should also evaluate the possibility of listing Cabo Pulmo in Ramsar's Montreux Register and UNESCO's List of World Heritage in Danger.

President Calderón's action removed the immediate threat to the Cabo Pulmo National Park posed by the Cabo Cortés project. Yet without greater protections, there may be new or revised massive tourism schemes that would endanger this biological gem.

7. GOVERNANCE

"Transparency and accountability are also powerful tools for preventing the theft and waste of scarce natural resources. Without sound institutions, there can be no chance of sustainable development."

—UN High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on Post-2015 Development Agenda

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN PRINCIPLE 10 DECLARATION AND THE THREE DEMANDS CAMPAIGN

At Rio+20, 10 Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries—Ecuador, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay—signed a declaration calling for a process leading to a regional, legally binding instrument to implement Principle 10 on environmental democracy. Adopted at the first Rio Earth Summit in 1992, Principle 10 recognizes that effective environmental decision-making requires public engagement and access to information. Principle 10 affirms citizens' right to have a say in the environmental and development decisions that directly impact them. Since Rio+20, Ireland, South Africa, and Indonesia have also pledged to take action on Principle 10.

In April 2013, representatives from 14 countries from the region gathered in Guadalajara, Mexico, where, two additional nations—Colombia and Honduras—signed the declaration. The group fulfilled the commitment made at Rio+20 to adopt a detailed action plan, available online, that made the commitment SMARTer by giving designated time frames and who the responsible parties would be for each action. They agreed to develop working groups to outline capacity building and cooperation efforts, and to determine the nature and scope of the regional instrument, which has not yet been created.

As another Rio+20 initiative to improve environmental governance, The Access Initiative (TAI), a global advocacy network, launched the Three Demands (3Ds) Campaign in July 2011. As part of the campaign, civil society groups in 34 countries presented a list of three demands to their country's government for actions to be taken at Rio+20. These demands included requests for a regional convention on Principle 10, improvements to environment assessment practices, broad legal reforms for access, environmental databases, environmental courts, and systems for citizen enforcement.

As a result of a 3D requests, Ecuador and Mexico signed onto the LAC Principle 10 declaration and Ireland became

the final European Union (EU) member nation to ratify the Aarhus Convention, an EU declaration establishing principles of civil society participation in environmental matters. In South Africa, TAI partners issued a number of demands and had one of them integrated into the Open Government Partnership—specifically, the launch of a feasibility study for an Open Environmental Data plan.

The TAI's website does not have country-by-country information on responses or successes relating to the 3D campaign. Having access to this information would enhance the ability of civil society groups to continue to press their governments to fulfill their requests.

There is good progress on the LAC Principle 10 Declaration initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean, but there is concern about the adequacy of resources to implement the Plan of Action 2012-2014, support the development of a regional legally binding instrument on Principle 10, and increase the momentum to continue to support more countries of the region to join the declaration. Also, while the United Nations Institute for Training and Research does some reporting on actions in individual countries, the LAC countries have not published any reporting on progress on the action plan they adopted in April 2013.

8. MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

"We now have an opportunity to achieve real, lasting progress—because global leaders increasingly recognize that the health of women and children is the key to progress on all development goals."

—Report on Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health

US COMMITMENT TO SCALE UP ACCESS TO MATERNAL HEALTH, CHILD HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES

A total of 282 commitments made by Every Woman, Every Child (EWEC), an action network initiated in September 2010 by the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, are recorded in the UN DESA registry launched at Rio+20. One of the largest EWEC commitments is from the United States, which made a pledge to increase its support for maternal and child health care through President Obama's Global Health Initiative (GHI), a US\$63 billion plan. By 2015 in assisted countries—48 countries for maternal health and 44 for child health—the United States intends to reduce maternal mortality by 30 percent, lower mortality rates for children under age five by

35 percent, reduce the number of undernourished children by 30 percent, double the number of at-risk babies born HIV-free, and reach a modern contraceptive prevalence rate of 35 percent.

The GHI is an umbrella initiative for most U.S. global health programs, accounting for more than 80 percent of U.S. global health spending. Of the US\$63 billion, 19 percent, or US\$12 billion, would go toward family planning and maternal and child health initiatives in partner countries. Maternal and child health spending was not broken down separately from family planning in the GHI budget. The United States is the largest donor in the world for the global health sector, and the number one donor in total aid for newborns. Coming from such a key donor, the commitment's broad scale and measurable impact makes it a significant voluntary commitment for improving child and maternal health worldwide.

The GHI is currently re-evaluating its monitoring and evaluation plan to find better ways to measure GHI objectives. Its website currently provides some data marking gradual progress on all of its maternal and child health goals over the past year in the assisted countries: 48 for maternal health and 44 for child health. In 2011, the maternal mortality ratio was 297 per 100,000 live births. In 2013, this ratio is projected to have dropped to 261 per 100,000 live births. The percent of births attended by a live skilled attendant in 2011 was 49.4 percent, which is projected to increase to 51.5 percent in 2013. The under-five child mortality rate has decreased from 82 per 1,000 live births to a projected rate of 78 in 2013. The neonatal mortality rate is projected to decrease from 37.1 in 2011 to 36.6 in 2013. The number of countries introducing the pneumococcal vaccine was 12 in 2011, but projected to be 40 in 2013. Those numbers are five and 22 respectively for the rotavirus vaccine. The prevalence of children under five who were underweight was 25 percent in 2011, but is projected to be 23 percent in 2013. In 2011, 41 percent of children were stunted, but that is projected to drop to 38 percent in 2013.

ForeignAssistance.gov has been tracking progress toward GHI maternal and child health financial targets in partner countries in a thorough and detailed website full of updated data on government appropriations. Since fiscal year 2011, congress has appropriated US\$1.78 billion toward the commitment and the GHI has requested another US\$680 million for fiscal year 2014.

Oftentimes commitments are featured in multiple platforms, which can make monitoring their progress difficult. For example, GHI's maternal and child health initiatives are a part of UNICEF's A Promise Renewed initiative and the USAID Child Survival Call to Action. This raises the critical concern of double-counting by different platforms, making it more complex and difficult to monitor

progress toward many overlapping goals and indicators. This proliferation of different platforms for the same causes ultimately hurts outside organizations' ability to hold the United States accountable for its pledges and highlights the need for leadership and clarity in organizational structure within the maternal and child health sector efforts.

Progress indicators toward maternal and child health outcomes of the U.S. commitment show only gradual progress. The appropriations for the first three of the five years of the goal's timeline—which add up to less than US\$2 billion—also indicate it is unlikely the U.S. will meet its goals by 2015. In addition to the commitment's slow progress, UN DESA currently has the size of the financial commitment recorded incorrectly in its registry, saying that US\$63 billion is intended for maternal and child health, when that number actually represents the commitment made toward the GHI in its entirety, not just to maternal and child health.

THE WAY FORWARD

"All of our institutions and our relationships need to be modernized and complemented by new institutions, relationships, and partnerships that are tailored for new challenges and modeled to the needs of a variable landscape."
—Former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton

THE UNITED NATIONS SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTARY COMMITMENTS

In 2012, Rio+20 witnessed an evolution of thinking about multi-stakeholder commitments in a world that is far different from that of the first Earth Summit. In 1992, leaders of more than 110 nations came to Rio and agreed to new "frameworks for action" by governments on a wide range of issues, including climate change and biodiversity, and a provided a blueprint for sustainable development. The outcomes of the original Earth Summit largely put the onus for action on national governments, which were to take the lead in implementing the promises made in Rio.

Ten years later, at the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), it was clear that this model was not producing the needed results. WSSD marked a notable change in approach to taking action toward sustainable development by the UN—encouraging and recording voluntary initiatives by governments and other stakeholders, thus establishing the network of WSSD "partnerships." Another decade later at Rio+20, there were

several major commitment platforms and registries in place. The UN now has a commitment structure with seven "action networks" and a registry that covers more than 1,400 commitments valued at more than US\$600 billion.

The recent report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda ("HLP") goes even further in recommending that these commitments—particularly multi-stakeholder partnerships—should no longer be regarded as secondary, but rather be brought to the center of the post-2015 development agenda. They do more than supplement or complement governmental agreements. These commitments—which involve the full range of actors including national governments—should be recognized as the critical means of implementation for the promises made over the past two decades toward sustainable development. The HLP calls for a new "global partnership" mobilizing millions of people around the world to drive the transformative changes that are need to address climate change and ensure a sustainable future.

THE UNITED NATIONS, COMMITMENT PLATFORMS AND COMMITMENT-MAKERS NEED TO DEVOTE ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO ENSURE GREATER TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

While the United Nations has made progress over the last year in following up on these commitments, it remains an open question as to whether there will adequate resources available to create a robust support and accountability framework for the voluntary commitments.

Ideally the UN DESA registry and each of the new "action networks" would have the capacity to assure that: 1) the each of the commitments are well-formulated and indeed as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Resource-based and Time-Bound) as possible, 2) communities of commitment-makers are nurtured and supported, 3) regular progress reports are produced and made available to the public, 4) commitments are aggregated and measured against global goals, and 5) mechanisms are in place to address concerns about the implementation of particular commitments.

We were unable to obtain sufficient data to make an evaluation of the capacities of the various registries and commitment platforms at the UN. However, we saw evidence suggesting that many of the registries and platforms have very limited resources to support the current level of commitments. We hope the new High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development will undertake a thorough review of what will be required to develop a credible framework for these commitments.

At the same time, individual commitment-makers need to do much more to make information about their initiatives much more accessible. For some of the voluntary commitments we reviewed, we found through our research that there was often little or no information on their progress available on the internet. Additionally, in some cases it was even very difficult to easily identify the individuals responsible for overseeing the implementation of the commitment. However, we did see that commitment-makers very broadly were receptive to our inquiries; and a number of them went to some lengths to provide us with the requested information. We would encourage the UN to continue to encourage all of its commitment-makers to provide a higher degree of transparency toward their commitments.

The HLP report also calls for a “data revolution” to improve the quality of information and analysis available to citizens on progress towards meeting sustainable development goals. The United Nations should use new technologies, improved connectivity, and new approaches—such as crowdsourcing—to facilitate better access to information toward these commitments for greater transparency. In today’s “Information Age”, access to information should not be a barrier to following up on commitments.

WE NEED TO INTENSIFY THE CONVERSATION AROUND A “NEW ARCHITECTURE” FOR THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The Rio+20 voluntary commitments approach is an example of a new and emerging approach to action—part of a “new architecture for a new world” that Hillary Clinton called for in her farewell speech as US Secretary of State. The international community has an important opportunity to integrate voluntary commitments into the major UN processes culminating in the 2015, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the next international climate change treaty.

Encouragingly, the 2014 Conference on Small Island Developing States is expected to focus on voluntary commitments and may provide a useful model for other fora. The UN Secretariat is also in the process of developing a new partnerships facility, further expanding the role of partnerships in the work of the UN. In November 2013, NRDC will convene a high-level conference at Yale University bringing together officials, experts, and practitioners to discuss how best to incorporate commitments into the post-2015 structures.

Commitment	Commitment-makers	Deliverables and Targets	Status	Transparency and Accountability
Sustainable Transport- SLoCaT/MDBs	8 Multilateral Development Banks	US\$175 billion over 10 years of investments in sustainable transport systems in developing countries	On track. <i>10% of total funding disbursed. MDB working group established.</i>	SLoCaT Action Network first annual progress report on all of its 17 commitments included this one. MDBs will produce first progress report in late 2013.
Sustainable Energy- Microsoft	Microsoft	Carbon neutrality for company’s operations by July 1, 2013	Achieved.	Microsoft has internal structures to support/monitor the commitment and to engage with outside parties. Company will release a report to verify carbon neutrality claim by end of the year.
Sustainable Energy- Brazil	Brazil	Universal energy access within the country by 2014 and US\$235 billion investment in renewable energy over the next ten years	Good progress.	No information available on public platforms, even the SE4All. Brazilian government was receptive to our request for information.
Sustainable Energy- BoA	Bank of America	Investments of US\$50 billion in projects in renewable energy, energy access and energy efficiency over the next 10 years	Initiative just launched at start of 2013. <i>Some investments have been made, but too early to assess whether or not commitment is on track.</i>	BoA to publish commitment progress report in January 2014. BoA was responsive to request for information and appear willing to engage with outside stakeholders.

Commitment	Commitment-makers	Deliverables and Targets	Status	Transparency and Accountability
Cities-C40	C40 Cities network	C40 Municipal Solid Waste Initiative to help cities reduce methane emissions, improve waste management and conduct impact assessment on 5,000 climate change commitments	In progress. <i>Climate change commitments and some C40 Municipal Waste Initiative projects are underway.</i>	C40 commitment platform provides readily accessible information on all commitments.
Forests-TFA 2020	Consumer Goods Forum, U.S.	Make key supply chains deforestation neutral by 2020	Too few concrete actions to inspire confidence that they will meet their goals in the next seven years.	Involvement of wide range of stakeholders.
Oceans-OA-ICC	U.S., U.K., Spain, Norway, New Zealand, Italy, France, Australia, China	IAEA to establish the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Center to facilitate ocean acidification monitoring and research	Achieved, <i>but need for additional funding to maintain the Center beyond the first three years.</i>	Information on IAEA website, but OA-ICC still constructing its own site.
Oceans-Australia	Australia	Add 33 marine reserves to its network to create world's largest network	Achieved.	Information easily accessible on Australian Department of Sustainability website and from other sources.
Oceans-Cabo Pulmo	Mexico	Cancellation of the Cabo Cortés project that posed threat to Cabo Pulmo National Park	Achieved, but other potential threats to the park remain.	Continued engagement by Mexican and international civil society groups to protect Cabo Pulmo.
Governance-Principle 10	Ecuador, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay	Establish a process to develop an agreement for the Latin American and Caribbean region on Principle 10 on environmental governance	Underway. Meeting in April 2013 established work plan.	Little information online about implementation. Broad engagement of stakeholders.
Maternal and Child Health- GHI	United States	Approximately US\$12 billion assistance in more than 40 assisted countries with performance targets, such as reducing maternal mortality by 30%	Gradual improvements in outcomes. <i>Spending is less than US\$2 billion to date, indicating it is unlikely U.S. will meet its goals by 2015.</i>	Detailed information on U.S. foreign aid appropriations available online. Global Health Initiative website tracks progress toward outcomes. Value of this commitment is incorrectly registered with the UN as US\$63 billion. This is total for GHI; less than US\$12 billion is devoted to maternal and child health.

CONCLUSION

Since Rio+20 took place over year ago, significant progress has been made toward some of the key negotiated and voluntary commitments made at the Conference.

The process to develop a new set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is now well underway and will serve as a critical part of shaping the UN's agenda for sustainable development post-2015. A new high-level political forum for sustainable development has been established at the UN, and a process to develop an effective and ambitious financing strategy for sustainable development has begun; both of which will be crucial to the implementation of the SDGs framework. Good progress has also been seen in the preparations for the Third Conference on Small Island Developing States that will be held in 2014 in the strengthening of the UN Environment Programme and in the process to develop broader measures of progress that go beyond GDP.

However, the negotiated outcomes made at Rio+20 for the most part represent the starting point of new processes and there remains much to be done to ensure that these commitments truly make a difference for sustainable development. Stakeholders have a responsibility to maintain the momentum initiated at Rio+20 and to hold governments to account on the fulfilment of their promises.

Going beyond the decisions made in the negotiating room, Rio+20 highlighted more than ever the significance of voluntary commitments by individual actors, including governments, civil society and private companies, as a means of achieving the goals set forth by globally negotiated agreements. We have seen significant advances in the development of new structures and registries to support voluntary commitments made at the conference, as well as steady and, in some cases profound, progress toward some of the individual voluntary commitments. We've seen Microsoft fulfill their commitment to become carbon neutral just one year after Rio+20 and progress toward the MDBs' US\$175 billion commitment to sustainable transport is well on track. Brazil's ground-breaking US\$235 billion commitment to Sustainable Energy for All is spurring huge investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy access and Australia has nearly tripled its marine reserves, fulfilling its commitment to create the world's largest network of marine reserves.

Yet, like the negotiated outcomes, many of the commitments are still at a very early stage of implementation and much work remains in order to fulfil these promises.

Acting together with globally negotiated agreements as an integrated instrument for action, these voluntary commitments are critical to forging a "new global partnership"—an approach in which all global stakeholders contribute to action toward a sustainable future—called for by the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Agenda. Action through just one of these approaches—globally negotiated agreements or voluntary commitments—is not sufficient if we are to address the myriad of environmental, social and economic issues we face today.

Rio+20 raised hopes globally that we can move toward a sustainable future. As Ban Ki-moon appropriately said of the Rio+20 promises, "the world is watching and will hold us all accountable to the commitments made in Rio." We hope this report contributes to an understanding that we now must all work together to ensure that the promises at Rio+20 are indeed fulfilled.

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- 86 <http://roadlogs.rio20.net/tough-fight-over-means-of-implementation/>.
- 87 http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/67/348&Lang=E.
- 88 Neth Daño: Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group), Philippines, pers. comm. 06-08-13.
- 89 General Assembly Resolution 67/203 (21 December 2012). Workshops 1 and 2: April, 30th - May 1st, Workshops 3 and 4: May 30th - May 31st. Combined workshop summary: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/1884summarytech.pdf>.
- 90 <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1632>.
- 91 It should be noted that for the assessment we chose to represent the outcomes addressed collectively under "Promoting the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Oceans and Seas" in the previous section as three separate commitments. There are therefore 16 commitments assessed in Table 3.

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Chapter 2- Sustainable Transport

SLoCaT Report: Creating Universal Access to Safe, Clean and Affordable Transport

Rio+20 Voluntary Commitments to Create Universal Access to Safe, Clean and Affordable Transport on Track

MDB Commitment to Sustainable Transport

EMBARQ: Scaling Up Sustainable Transport Solutions Worldwide

Chapter 3- Sustainable Energy

Press Release: UN Secretary-General Announces Significant Commitments to Action in support of Achieving Sustainable Energy for All About Us - SE4ALL

Interview with Ryan Hobert

Interview with Sujeesh Krishnan

UN DESA Report on Voluntary Commitments and Partnerships

Microsoft

Microsoft's Carbon Neutral commitment white paper

Microsoft's Energy-Smart Buildings white paper

Microsoft leading the way with an internal carbon fee

Interview with TJ DiCaprio, Sr. Director of Environmental Sustainability at Microsoft

Guardian article by TJ DiCaprio

Disney, Microsoft and Shell opt for self-imposed carbon emissions taxes by Marc Gunther

Microsoft's reports to the Carbon Disclosure Project

Brazil's \$235 Billion Commitment to Sustainable Energy for All

Brazil Lowers Wind-Energy Prices by 20 Percent in August Auction

Brazil's CPFL Renovaveis raises US\$400 million for solar and wind

Voltaia to build 90 MW wind energy project in Brazil

GE Accelerates Wind Energy Development in Brazil with Opening of New Services Center

Brazil Biggest State to Get 69 Percent of Power From Renewables

Rousseff Aims \$2.85 Billion at Energy Research: Corporate Brazil

Sustainable Energy for All—Commitments made by Brazil

Nara Gomes, Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations

Bank of America - US\$50 billion for renewable energy, energy access and energy efficiency

Bank of America Announces New \$50 Billion Environmental Business Initiative

Bank of America - Transformational Finance

Bank of America - Environmental Sustainability Operations

Bank of America 2012 Corporate Responsibility Report

Chapter 4- Cities

Sarah Potts, Deputy Director, Regions & Initiatives, C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

C40 Cities Press Release—"Mayors of the World's Largest Cities Demonstrate Progress in Greenhouse Gas Reductions and Launch Two New Initiatives"

<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2013/03/21/cities-vow-to-tackle-municipal-solid-waste-at-vancouver-conference/>

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<http://c40.org/careers>

Press Release: C40 Welcomes Oslo, Vancouver, Venice and Washington, DC as New Members

C40 Leadership

Mayors of the World's Largest Cities Demonstrate Progress in Greenhouse Gas Reductions and Launch Two New Initiatives

An 'Alternative Approach for Cities'. C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group Submission to Rio+20

Rio+C40: Megacity Mayors Taking Action on Climate Change

Cities Vow to Tackle Municipal Solid Waste at Vancouver Conference

Why Cities?

Carbon Disclosure Project: Cities 2013

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Mayors of the World's Largest Cities Demonstrate Progress in Greenhouse Gas Reductions and Launch Two New Initiatives

Chapter 5- Forests

See for example: Union of Concerned Scientists, The Root of the Problem: What's driving tropical deforestation today?, available at: http://www.ucsusa.org/assets/documents/global_warming/UCS_RootoftheProblem_DriversofDeforestation_FullReport.pdf

For more information on the initiative see TFA website: www.tfa2020.com

See: <http://www.usaid.gov/climate/tfa2020>

See: <http://sustainability.mycgforum.com/deforestation.html>

See TFA press release on the workshop available at: http://www.theconsumergoodsforum.com/PDF/PressReleases/2013-07-15-First_TFA_2020_Workshop_Catalyzes_Action_to_Reduce_Global_Tropical_Deforestation.pdf

See: http://www.theconsumergoodsforum.com/PDF/Pulp_Paper_and_Packaging_Guidelines_June_21.pdf

This will reportedly use a common methodology and build upon the commitment made by Golden Agri-Resources and Nestlé.

See: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/image/president27sclimateactionplan.pdf>

See President Yudhoyono speech to the TFA workshop available at: <http://www.presidentri.go.id/index.php/eng/pidato/2013/06/27/2136.html>

See U.K. announcement from Minister Barker on joining the TFA: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-uk-joins-partnership-to-tackle-deforestation>

See report from Climate Advisers, Environmental Investigation Agency, National Wildlife Federation,

Natural Resources Defense Council, Rainforest Action Network, Rainforest Alliance, Solidaridad Network, and Union of Concerned Scientists: <http://www.climateadvisers.com/pdf/Breaking.pdf>

For example, the Norwegian Government has dedicated significant resources towards efforts to halt deforestation and several of these efforts are aimed at supply-chains (see: <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/md/Selected-topics/climate/the-government-of-norways-international.html?id=548491>). Similarly the U.K. government has dedicated significant resources towards helping address deforestation (see: https://whitehall-admin.production.alpha.gov.co.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/70092/7050-discussion-paper-deforestation-event.pdf) and recently made a commitment to only purchase “sustainable” palm in their government supply-chain by 2015 (see: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130109092117/http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2012/10/30/sustainable-palm-oil/>)

Chapter 6- Oceans

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Lisa Suatoni, NRDC

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Helen Seidel, Public Affairs Counsellor, Australian Embassy, Washington
Imogen Zethoven, Director of Global Ocean Legacy—Australia, The Pew Charitable Trusts

Krista Singleton, Senior Advisor for Global Development Policy, The Nature Conservancy

Mexico’s commitment to protect Cabo Pulmo coral reef marine park

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