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Santiago, 7-9 September 2011

RIO+20: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

**PROPOSAL BY THE GOVERNMENT OF COLOMBIA FOR CONSIDERATION
BY THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES**

Note by the secretariat

By a note dated 5 August 2011 addressed to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia presented the proposal entitled “Rio+20: Sustainable Development Goals” for consideration in the framework of the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting Preparatory to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.

The secretariat is accordingly transmitting herewith the text of this proposal to the participating countries for consideration.



UNITED NATIONS





RIO + 20: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

A Proposal from the Government of Colombia

I. INTRODUCTION

The definition of the scope and outcome of Rio + 20, in particular with regards to “Green Economy”, has become increasingly complex and thorny as the debate advances, and threatens to become a progressively rhetorical exercise through which diverse positions become more entrenched and polarized.

The Government of Colombia considers that Rio + 20 constitutes a critical opportunity for the international community to agree on a concrete approach that transcends intellectual debates and delivers means for measuring – in accordance with the contexts and priorities of each country – both advances as well as bottlenecks in efforts to balance sustained socio-economic growth with the sustainable use of natural resources and the conservation of ecosystem services. There are experiences, such as the MDGs, that indicate that when there are objectives to guide the international community’s efforts towards a collective goal, it becomes easier for governments and institutions to work together to reach them. **A key outcome of Rio+20 is that of “securing political commitment to Sustainable Development”.** However, concrete ways of grounding that commitment are needed.

Therefore Colombia is proposing that a key outcome of the Rio + 20 process be the definition and agreement of a suite of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, equivalent to the MDGs. These SDGs would translate the Green Economy/Sustainable Development debate into tangible goals, which would focus the broad debate at a practical level, and enable the preparatory process to productively address key issues for which measurable progress would be welcome. Moreover, the SDGs approach would generate a series of additional benefits:

- Objectives agreed to internationally could be underpinned by targets – as is the case with the MDGs - and could also subsequently be translated into a suite of indicators that reflect the realities and priorities at national levels. They would thus be fully aligned with national contexts and could therefore be a useful tool for guiding public policies.
- The SDGs would play an important role in the identification of gaps and needs in countries, for example in terms of means of implementation, institutional strengthening, and capacity building to increase absorptive capacity for new technologies. Defined internationally, like the MDGs, these would serve both for comparing results as well as furthering opportunities for cooperation, including South-South cooperation.
- The definition of the SDGs would contribute to focusing the preparatory process towards Rio+20, thus achieving more substantive and concrete results.
- A process framed along these lines would build upon the Johannesburg WSSD Plan of Implementation as well as Agenda 21.
- The SDGs would contribute to positioning the three pillars as cross-cutting building blocks for development throughout the UN system.



II. THE PROPOSAL

The process of defining the SDGs should be rich and challenging, an exercise through which the international community can sort through a wide range of issues and concerns in order to prioritize those which are considered to be most indicative of current needs to balance socio-economic growth with responsible environmental stewardship. The process should result in the definition of a small number of key Objectives that could be further elaborated through a suite of targets, much like the MDGs.

The SDGs would be based on Agenda 21 given that it already maps our requirements for sustainable development. This would also avoid reopening debates as Agenda 21 does not need to be renegotiated.

The SDGs could provide a logical sequence and structure to the process launched almost 20 years ago: in 1992 the guiding principles were agreed to as well as a road map for sustainable development; in 2002 a Plan of Implementation was defined; and now in 2012 we could consider identifying goals in order to better identify gaps and needs and provide for more structured implementation of the principles and goals defined 20 years ago.

Where relevant, given that Agenda 21 addresses socio-economic issues, MDGs could be updated and adopted as SDGs. The two sets of objectives should be fully complementary. It is worth noting that while the MDGs applied only to developing countries, the SDGs would have universal application.

In principle, a suite of no more than 10 – possibly less – Objectives would be agreed to.

However, it would be necessary to cluster some of the Agenda 21 chapters given that:

- It was adopted 20 years ago and key issues, such as climate change, were not priorities then; and,
- The SDGs should focus on a small suite of key issues, not on all 21 thematic chapters.

Proposed initial refocusing, clustering and additions to the Agenda 21 chapters would be as follows:

- Chapter 9 on Atmosphere, to focus on Climate Change Mitigation, including energy issues
- New chapter on Climate Change Adaptation, including Disaster Risk Management, which would include improved climate resilience of infrastructure
- Chapter 12 to focus more comprehensively on Land Degradation
- Chapter 13 on Mountain Ecosystems to be eliminated as issues related vulnerability would be covered under the new Adaptation chapter
- Chapter 14 on Sustainable Agriculture, to explicitly include food security
- Chapter 16 on Biotechnology, could be eliminated as this is a complex issue being addressed in other, more appropriate, fora
- Chapters 19 -22 which deal with various types of waste could be clustered into a single objective which could have specific targets for each type of waste



To help jump start the discussion and focus the debate, a suite of potential SDGs are described below as simple examples. The process of actually defining and agreeing on these Objectives would demand a robust negotiating process....

Chapter 2 - Commodity Markets and Policies

- Commodity policies at national and international levels enhance the contribution of the commodity sector to sustainable development, taking into account environmental considerations

Chapter 3 - Combating Poverty

- Community-based mechanisms improve access to resources needed to enhance livelihood options
- *MDG 1 - Halve, between 2012 and 20___, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1 a day*

Chapter 4 - Changing Consumption Patterns

- Public policies that discourage unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are under implementation by 20__

Chapter 5 - Demographic Dynamics & Sustainability

- Appropriate policies and programmes are in place to address migrations resulting from environmental disruptions, with special attention to women and vulnerable groups.

Chapter 6 - Protecting & Promoting Human Health

- The burden of environmentally triggered diseases on GDP is reduced by __% by 20__
- National strategies to strengthen environmental health in order to reduce health burdens resulting from negative environmental conditions are under implementation by 20__
- *MDG 5- Achieve universal access to reproductive health*
- *MDG 5 – Reduce by three fourths the maternal mortality ratio*

Chapter 7 Promoting Sustainable Human Settlement Development

- Living conditions in urban and peri-urban areas include adequate incomes, diets, housing and services by 20__
- Environmentally sound urban development and expansion, and land utilization, promoted through public policies

Chapter 8 - Integrating Environment & Development in Decision-Making

- Metrics for measuring GDP include impacts due to loss of ecosystem services and progressive environmental degradation by 20__
- Progressive identification and elimination of all subsidies that promote the unsustainable use of natural resources or which contribute to negative environmental impacts by 20__
- Environmental education policies that promote understanding of the value of ecosystem services, the scope of environmental impacts, and the need for risk strategies are place for at least primary and secondary schooling by 20__

Chapter 9 – [Protection of the Atmosphere] Climate Change Mitigation

- __% of national energy needs are met from renewable sources by 20__



- Energy efficiency standards are in place and under implementation at national level
- National low carbon development strategies are designed and under implementation by 20__

NEW Chapter – Climate Change Adaptation

- 100% of new large infrastructure investments have undergone a climate resilience analysis by 20__
- National adaptation to climate change plans are designed and under implementation by 20__
- Appropriate land-use planning and management strategies for both arable and non-arable land in mountain-fed watershed areas developed to prevent soil erosion, and maintain ecosystem service functions throughout watersheds

Chapter 10 - Integrated Approach to the Planning & Management of Land Resources

- Integrated watershed management is a basis for land use planning by 20__

Chapter 11 - Combating Deforestation

- Negative changes in forest cover are not registered and forest conditions are stable by 20__

Chapter 12 – [Managing Fragile Ecosystems:] Combating Desertification & Drought

- Measures are in place to maximize the sustainable use of existing land suitable for agriculture and address land degradation trends, as well as to halt deforestation caused by the expansion of the agricultural frontier

[Chapter 13 - Managing Fragile Ecosystems: Sustainable Mountain Development

- Deleted and vulnerable ecosystems addressed under new chapter on adaptation]

Chapter 14- Promoting Sustainable Agriculture & [Rural Development] Food Security

- Food security is enhanced through sustainable exploitation of natural resources and sound agricultural practices
- __% of the population, in particular rural communities, children and inhabitants of urban slums, has access to sufficient and healthy food by 20__

Chapter 15 - Conservation of Biological Diversity

- 17% of each terrestrial biome and 10% of each marine biome in the respective EEZ , in each country, is effectively protected (*in accordance with the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2021*)

[Chapter 16 - Environmentally Sound Management of Biotechnology]

Chapter 17 -Protection of the Oceans, all Kinds of Seas, Including Enclosed & Semi-enclosed Seas, & Coastal Areas & the Protection, Rational Use & Development of their Living Resources

- Populations of marine species are maintained at levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield as qualified by relevant environmental and economic factors, taking into consideration relationships among species and reducing impacts on non-target species

Chapter 18 - Protection of the Quality & Supply of Freshwater Resources: Application of Integrated Approaches to the Development, Management & Use of Water Resources

- Sectoral water use efficiency plans are in place by 20__.



Chapters 19 – 22 – could be merged

[19- Environmentally Sound Management of Toxic Chemicals, Including Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Toxic & Dangerous Products

20 - Environmentally Sound Management of Hazardous Wastes, Including Prevention of Illegal International Traffic in Hazardous Wastes

21 - Environmentally Sound Management of Solid Wastes & Sewage-Related Issues

22- Safe & Environmentally Sound Management of Radioactive Wastes]

- **A specific target to be defined for different types of waste**, for example:

- Sufficient financial and technological capacities at the regional, national and local levels, as appropriate, to implement waste reuse and recycling policies and actions promoted by 20__
- National programs with targets for efficient waste reuse and recycling in place by 20__