



Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication Sharing National Experiences on Frameworks for Action

Side Event Summary

Thursday, 22 March 2012

18:15 – 19:45, followed by Reception

**Venue: Conference Room 2 in the North Lawn Building,
United Nations, New York**

On Thursday, 22 March, UNEP, UNDESA, and UNDP, with funds from the Government of the Netherlands, organized a Green Economy side event discussion during the Rio+20 intercessional negotiations held at the United Nations in New York. The event, which was moderated by BBC correspondent, Laura Trevelyan, offered Member States a space for sharing experiences and knowledge about how they are creating their own approaches and shaping national agendas with regard to the concept of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. The event also highlighted links between the green economy and local sustainable development solutions for people, nature and resilient communities through the global announcement of the Equator Prize 2012 winners to be honoured in June at Rio+20.

The event was live webcast and attended by over 150 representatives of Member States, civil society, multilateral and bilateral development agencies.

Opening remarks were provided by Mr. Nikhil Seth, Director, Division for Sustainable Development, UNDESA, and Head of the Office of the Secretary-General for the Rio+20 Conference. Mr. Seth's remarks included a call to focus more on practical implementation of the green economy rather than on theoretical definitions.

The moderated panel discussion comprised remarks from five member states: Bolivia, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Morocco, and the Philippines, addressing the following questions:

- What actions have you taken in your country to drive towards a socially inclusive, low carbon, resource efficient economy?
- What opportunities and challenges do you see for your country in a green economy as a means to pursue poverty reduction strategies and social equity to advance sustainable development?
- What kind of support from the UN system is needed to support your initiatives, to achieve a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication?

Although most panelists highlighted different initiatives in their countries that represent part of what might be included in a transition to a green economy, many also noted that there are still several different perception of what is meant by the green economy concept both within and across countries and regions.

René Orellana, former Vice Minister of Environment, Bolivia, suggested that the green economy is one of many important approaches, tools, and visions for achieving sustainable development to be considered by each Member State. In Bolivia, the green economy approach is still an emerging concept involves issues of

consumption and production, more equitable access to natural resources, reducing the wealth gap, and ensuring that the necessary legal and institutional frameworks are in place.

Dana Kartakusuma, Assistant Minister of Environment, Indonesia, explained that while the green economy concept is relatively new, environmental and related sustainable development programming has been implemented for more than fifteen years. In Indonesia, this work includes three pillars: low-carbon growth; resources sufficiency; and social inclusiveness. The country has already introduced a business environment performance rating system, and is seeking technical expertise to develop a green development index.

Ndonye Parkinson, Deputy Director, Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, Kenya, explained that his government does not have a formal green economy policy, but like Indonesia and other countries, has pursued green environmental development programming for several years. This work includes a focus on renewable energy, including geothermal; green cities; a phasing out of kerosene lamps in rural areas in favor of solar panels; forest protection; and policies targeting pastoral communities and livestock livelihoods.

Mohamed Nbou, Director, Ministry of Energy, Mining, Water and Environment, Morocco, spoke about the three areas forming the basis of his country's transition to a green economy: technology and infrastructure; social, and economic. He highlighted the need for legal frameworks, and shared examples of pilot programmes around water and waste management, as well as initiatives to empower women and girls, through micro-financing and sanitation for schools.

Sheila Marie Encabo, Director, National Economic and Development Authority, the Philippines, reflected on the challenges involved in linking national poverty reduction efforts with the transition to a green economy, including the potential for trade barriers, green jobs and livelihoods, peace and security, and other social dimensions of the transition.

In the ensuing discussion, audience participants and panelists continued to speak about the green economy, including: the different interpretations of the concept; the challenges and opportunities associated with a transition to a green economy and links with poverty reduction, women's empowerment, and the evolving sustainable development goals; the need for more rigorous, focused indicators to assess progress towards a green economy; and the need for a change in mindsets.

Charles McNeill, Senior Policy Advisor with the Environment & Energy Group of UNDP's Bureau for Development Policy concluded the panel by highlighting the links between national strategies for green economies, and the community-level work of local and indigenous communities, including those announced during the event as winners of the Equator Prize 2012.

This panel discussion was one in a series of events being organized at the global, regional and country level under the Netherlands-funded Joint Programme on Green Economy designed to support Member States and partners prepare for and influence Rio+20 negotiations, as well as post-Rio policy-making and programming.

IISD coverage of the event is available here: <http://www.iisd.ca/uncsd/ism3/enbots/pdf/enbots2720e.pdf>

Additional links and resources include:

www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2011/09/09/helen-clark-informal-meeting-of-the-executive-board-on-rio-20.html

www.unep.org/greeneconomy/

www.equatorinitiative.org/

For more information on the event and the Joint Programme, please contact Mr. Tim Scott, UNDP (tim.scott@undp.org); or Mr. Jim Sniffen, UNEP (sniffenj@un.org).