

## **UK response to questionnaire on scope and methodology of a global sustainable development report of the UN Division of Sustainable Development**

### **1. General remarks**

This response complements that provided by the European Union and its Member States.

The UK welcomes the work being done to further elaborate the role of the proposed Global Sustainable Development Report. We believe the report has the potential to make a useful contribution to the monitoring and accountability framework for the post-2015 development goals, with a focus on poverty eradication and with sustainable development at the core.

The role of the report should be a synthesising one, bringing together a range of assessments to report on progress on the post-2015 development goals. In that respect, it should be seen as one of a number of contributions to the future accountability and monitoring process. The report should provide policy-relevant advice but not itself make recommendations. It is for the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) to make policy decisions, drawing on the evidence presented by the report and other inputs.

### **2. Questionnaire responses**

#### **1. *In your view, what would be the scope of future editions of the GSDR, in terms of issue focus, geographic coverage, time horizon, and scientific knowledge?***

It is too early to tell exactly what the scope of future editions of the Report should be. As stated in the general remarks, the report should play a synthesising role, bringing together a range of scientific assessments relevant to the implementation of post-2015 development goals. There would be value in it contributing to an assessment of progress against the post-2015 development goals. However, if its remit is too broad, its output will lack value. It is also important to ensure that the report does not duplicate the work of other assessments.

The HLPF could usefully articulate the role of the Report in the broader accountability and monitoring framework for the post-2015 development agenda.

#### **2. *What are the key national, regional and global priority issues that you would like to see reflected in the global report***

It is important that the remit of the Report is not too broad. As such, we would advocate that it focus predominantly on the implementation of the post-2015 development goals to allow it to assess properly the full range of issues captured within them. Issues worthy of particular attention would include safe and peaceful societies, good national governance and institutions, gender equality and women's empowerment and those relating to sustainability and climate (which may be integrated into the report through areas such as sustainable energy for all, water security, food security and nutrition and natural resource management).

#### **3. *Should the report have a role in identifying new and emerging issues? If so, how to identify these issues?***

The report could usefully highlight barriers to progress in delivering the post-2015 development goals and, as such, would have a role in identifying new and emerging issues. However, as an ‘assessment of assessments’ it would not be in a position to conduct primary research in these issues.

Cross-cutting issues captured within the post-2015 development goals may include important issues such as leaving no one behind, climate change and the sustainable management and use of natural resources, and as such these could be captured within the Report’s assessment.

***4. Should it report on past and future trends, report on policy lessons learnt, and/or report on scientific findings indicating potential areas for policy action?***

Outlining past and future trends, together with a report on scientific findings, could provide a helpful assessment of progress. However, as stated in the general remarks above, the report should provide policy-relevant advice not policy recommendations, per se.

***5. Should the report be part of the monitoring and accountability framework for sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda?***

It is too early to decide what role the Report could play in contributing to the monitoring and accountability framework for the post-2015 development goals. The Report could certainly usefully serve to engage a broad range of stakeholders. However, it should not look to develop indicators, as these will be agreed as part of the post-2015 development goals.

***6. What should be the periodicity of the report?***

We would suggest a report every 4 years, coinciding with the meeting of HLPF under UNGA, would be the right periodicity to have the maximum political impact. The administrative and financial costs associated with annual reporting should be avoided.

***7. How should the preparation of the global report be organised? How should the thematic focus of a given edition be decided? What would a preparation process look like? Who should be involved and how?***

A thematic focus related to the proceedings of the HLPF and the outcomes of the post-2015 summit would be sensible but no decisions have been made on thematic focus in each edition of the report. In line with the UK view that the Report should be a synthesis of assessments, its preparation could be a good opportunity to bring together the relevant UN agencies, including through the network of Chief Scientists, to encourage more collaboration and joint working in the implementation of the post-2015 development goals.

***8. Which principles and scientific methods should be employed in preparation of future editions of the global report?***

The Report should reflect the agreed post-2015 development goals, indicators and monitoring methodology. The Report should not seek to establish a separate set of indicators and reporting mechanism.

***9. What would be the best way to organise national and regional contributions to the global report? Would a network of national and regional focal points and regular consultations with them be useful?***

The Report should make use of existing structures, avoiding the creation of any new regional and national focal points and preparatory processes. The independent nature of the reporting process must also be ensured.

***10. What concrete steps do you propose to involve scientists from your country and region in a global report? Which institutions, communities or networks should be mobilised? Should a scientific advisory group be constituted?***

The primary purpose of the report is to synthesise a range of relevant assessments. Scientists will therefore be already involved in the collection and analysis of primary data. The existing network of National Academies (such as the Royal Society) would be the appropriate mechanism to peer review the Report and, as such, the establishment of a new scientific network would not be necessary.

***11. Should all countries institute a national sustainable development report process? If so, how?***

It would be for individual countries to decide whether or not they wish to implement their own national sustainable development reporting process. We do, however, support the notion of a streamlined reporting mechanism for all countries at global level, facilitating the collation and analysis of data.

***12. How should the report inform the work of the High-Level Political Forum? In agenda setting? In providing scientific analysis of issues in the HLPF agenda? In follow-up analysis of implementation of decisions taken?***

It should be for the High Level Political Forum to consider how to respond to the Report and to decide what role and follow-up it would see for the future Reports. Whilst the assessments contained in the report will likely be relevant to the HLPF's agenda, the report will only be one of a number of inputs into the HLPF and would not be the sole determinant of what the forum would discuss.