

Integrating Climate Change into National Sustainable Development Strategies

**Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development
Expert Group Meeting
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Concept Note

It is increasingly recognized that climate change is fundamentally a pressing sustainable development challenge. On the one hand, climate change impacts could erase the progress made in achieving the goals of sustainable development. On the other, controlling greenhouse gas emissions will depend ultimately on underlying economic and technological development pathways. Increased integration of adaptation and mitigation actions into holistic and comprehensive sustainable development strategies is essential to combating climate change.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Summit) recognized the linkages between climate change and sustainable development, which was reinforced by the Delhi Declaration adopted at COP-8 in New Delhi in 2002. More recently, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development, at its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions, also addressed climate change and sustainable development. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has also covered sustainable development as a cross-cutting issue in its Fourth Assessment report.

The Expert Group Meeting, organized by the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, examines the effective modalities of addressing climate change through national sustainable development strategies. Its objective is to strengthen sustainable development as the most effective framework within which to tackle climate change. The meeting will, therefore, highlight key conceptual linkages between climate change and sustainable development and explore practical approaches and good practices for integrating climate policy actions into national sustainable development strategies.

National sustainable development strategies are participatory, country-driven, integrative, inter-sectoral and comprehensive. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, calls on governments to develop national sustainable development strategies and to begin their implementation by 2005. The goal of such strategies is to “ensure socially responsible economic development while protecting the resource base and the environment for the benefit of future generations”, as originally stated in Chapter 8 of Agenda 21.

While fully acknowledging the international dimension of climate change, the focus of the Expert Group Meeting is on national experience in implementation. For climate change policies to be effective, they should be pursued in conjunction with social and economic development, including in such areas as poverty eradication, job generation and public health. Therefore, climate change-related policies can produce the expected results in the long run only if they are fully integrated into national sustainable development strategies. This approach will also ensure that climate change policies would yield various co-benefits for sustainable development objectives.