

# Stockholm+40 – Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development

25 April 2012



## Partnerships for Sustainable Development – The Stockholm Call for Action

*The following is a summary of recommendations offered by participants of the Stockholm+40 Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development on how governments, businesses, organisations and individuals can promote and contribute to sustainable development. It is issued by the chairs Ministers Lena Ek and Gunilla Carlsson.*

In 1972 the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm. It signalled a new chapter in international development by acknowledging that protection of the environment is a major issue which affects the well-being of people and economic development throughout the world. In 1987, the Stockholm agenda was taken forward by the Brundtland Report, which defined the concept of sustainable development and its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental. At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, a plan of action for international and national efforts was established through Agenda 21. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, a comprehensive framework for development was established that also acknowledged the role of business. In the course of these forty years, it has become increasingly evident that sustainable development cannot be ensured

by governments alone. Partnerships involving businesses, non-governmental organisations, international organisations and governments contribute greatly to this common undertaking. The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio de Janeiro on 20–22 June 2012 provides world leaders and stakeholders with an opportunity to renew and reinforce their commitment to work together for a sustainable future for our planet and its present and future generations.

Since 1972 the world has changed substantially. Economic growth has lifted millions of people out of poverty and democracy has become the predominant form of government in the world. Advances in science have given us a better understanding of the state of our ecosystems and increased knowledge of how we can use our rich but limited natural resources in a sustainable manner. At the same time, we are facing numerous challenges and crises such as persistent poverty in many parts of the world,



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remaining inequalities between and within countries, between women and men and severe human rights abuses. By failing to act upon scientific findings on climate change, depletion of biological diversity, chemical pollution and malfunctioning ecosystems, we risk triggering tipping points with abrupt and irreversible consequences for human communities and ecological systems.

In order to achieve sustainability we need to enable people, markets and governments to make sustainable decisions. We need to create enabling conditions and smart incentives that promote sustainable innovation and production and empower people to shape their own lives, reduce poverty and promote growth without unsustainable use of natural resources. We need to explore how sustainable living can be promoted so as to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and how planetary and social boundaries can be respected. While the solutions will differ among governments, organisations and business, we know that business as usual is not an alternative, and that all actors benefit from early action. We need to explore and establish new forms of collaboration between governments, academia, business and civil society.

Forty years after the first major UN conference on sustainable development, 42 ministers and deputy ministers, 35 international leaders from businesses and organisations and around 700 stakeholders including young people, civil society organisations, researchers and businesses from 72 countries met in Stockholm on 23–25 April for the Stockholm+40 Partnership Forum for Sustainable Development. The forum was hosted by the Swedish Government. It was attended by H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf, H.E. Fredrik Reinfeldt, Prime Minister of Sweden, and H.E. Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China. The participants discussed solutions in the areas of sustainable innovation, production and living: three areas of fundamental importance for the Rio+20 theme “Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication”. The deliberations resulted in a number of recommendations on how governments, businesses, organisations and individuals can promote and contribute to sustainable development.

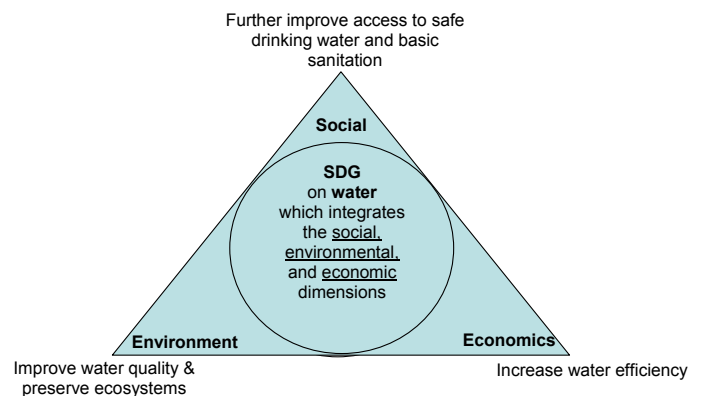
## Main messages from Stockholm to Rio and beyond

1. There is agreement on what we need to do to implement commitments. Now it is time to stop talking and start acting. Clear actions and targets are necessary.
2. Democratic governance and human rights lay the very foundation for sustainable development, including poverty reduction. Women’s equal rights and opportunities

are essential not only for achieving justice and equality but also for economic growth and prosperity. Similarly, including young people will bring new ideas, social and technical innovations, stability and social cohesion. Governments must ensure democratic governance and human rights, repeal discriminatory laws and promote equal opportunities for women and young people to participate in political decision-making processes, in the labour market and as entrepreneurs in the economy.

3. A common direction is needed for the sustainability efforts. Building on the positive experience of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which have focused the international development agenda on progress and results in well-defined areas, the proposal for Sustainable Development Goals by the Governments of Colombia, Guatemala and Peru was welcomed as very valuable in this context. Such goals should be universal, serve as a valid development instrument for all countries, integrate common social, economic and environmental challenges in a balanced way and contribute to poverty eradication. Based on the review of the MDGs, an integrated framework should constitute the post-2015 agenda.

4. There is a need to speed up the integration of the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainable development in the management of key resources such as water. Improving water efficiency (economic dimension) as well as water quality (environmental dimension) will improve access to clean and safe water and sanitation (social dimension).



5. Governments need to ensure basic preconditions to enable a transition to an inclusive green economy leading to sustainable growth. These include the rule of law, protection of property rights, macroeconomic stability and free competition. The full implementation of WTO agreements and conclusion of the Doha round of trade negotiations are important, as well as fair and equal access to markets, removal of trade and non-trade barriers, and prevention of green protectionism. With these fundamental conditions in place, targeted measures towards an inclusive green economy are more likely to pay off.

6. Governments should set up conditions and incentives that promote sustainable innovations and production practices and stimulate investments in sustainable development. It should be simple and profitable to choose sustainability. Through measures such as integrating sustainability criteria in cost-effective procurement, the public sector can stimulate the development of sustainable products and services. By using emissions trading systems and environmental taxes and by eliminating environmentally harmful and trade-distorting subsidies, environmental externalities can be included in the price of products. The value of natural resources and ecosystem services needs to be made more visible, and to the extent possible factored into decision-making and accounted for to promote sustainable use of natural resources. Markets for ecosystem services could also generate incomes for rural and indigenous populations directly dependent on natural resources.

7. Businesses must be the engine for inclusive and sustainable growth. A sustainability perspective should be fully integrated into core business management and throughout the value chain. Innovative business models should be developed. At the same time, the private sector needs to take responsibility for how business practices might impact future development. This can be done by implementing internationally recognised sustainable development standards and responsible business practices such as the 10 principles of the UN Global Compact, as well as by reporting on sustainability performance in line with the Global Reporting Initiative or similar frameworks and making this information available to the general public. National and international financial institutions should apply sustainable development criteria in their investment decisions.

8. Empowering people requires inclusive growth which all people can participate in and benefit from, and the recognition of all people's right to development. In order to provide people with relevant skills for the labour market, governments need to increase investments in education and create incentives to stimulate close cooperation between education providers and labour market actors. Governments and businesses should facilitate entrepreneurs' access to finance, markets and advisory support, and ensure decent work by adhering to the ILO decent work agenda, with its focus on creating jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection and promoting social dialogue.

9. Individuals can make a difference. Living sustainably needs to be simple, affordable and attractive. Practices should be developed that enable individuals to meet their needs and aspirations while acting responsibly towards present and future generations, taking into

account environmental and social impacts. In addition to getting prices right, sustainability labelling of products and services is one way to make it easier for consumers to make informed choices. To strengthen global collaboration on sustainable living and to engage stakeholders, governments should adopt the global framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production.

10. Science has a key role in enabling governments to take informed decisions that improve the well-being of people and stimulate sustainable natural resource management. Meeting the challenges of a growing world population that will need more food, water, energy and investments, and doing this sustainably in a finite biosphere will require new thinking. Investment in research and development, capacity-building and technology transfer by governments, businesses and financial institutions is essential to allow development to leapfrog to sustainable innovation, production and living.

11. A sustainable urban development is fundamental to enabling and promoting sustainable living. Cities are now home to half of humankind and urbanisation should be used as an opportunity to build in sustainable practices by citizens and businesses. Governments at all levels need to adopt a holistic approach to city planning, and manage and ensure integrated access to transportation, infrastructure, energy solutions, ecosystem services waste treatment and living standards. Collaboration between cities should be enhanced on a global or regional level with a view to learning from each other's experiences.

12. Partnerships between governments, businesses and organisations are often the most efficient solution to sustainability challenges. Governments, businesses and organisations need to build strategic, transparent partnerships in order to address systemic issues and utilise the core competences of partners, such as convening power, resources and technical expertise.

13. Showing by example is a powerful tool for furthering sustainable development. The Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants is a valuable example where a number of actors have decided on joint actions to raise awareness, develop measures and improve the scientific understanding of short-lived climate pollutants. Another example is the 8 years and 8 Actions Initiative for Sound Chemicals Management that was launched at Stockholm+40 by a broad range of stakeholders. It aims at accelerating progress towards the 2020 goal on sound management of chemicals, adopted in Johannesburg in 2002, by enhancing efforts in eight selected areas in the coming eight years through strengthened implementation and cross-sectoral cooperation.

In an interconnected and environmentally constrained world, global sustainability is a precondition for poverty eradication, social justice and economic development. Sustainable development can only be achieved when all actors – governments, business, financial sector actors, researchers, young people, organisations and other stakeholders – contribute their ideas, capabilities and resources. During the Stockholm+40 Forum, stakeholders underlined that early action is profitable and brings competitive advantages for both governments and businesses. Quantum change is necessary and possible when willing actors join hands in implementing concrete actions and through forward-looking coalitions take the lead in contributing to sustainable development – in the run-up to Rio+20 and beyond.

*Signature*



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