Results from the public consultation of the draft SDSN report
“An Action Agenda for Sustainable Development”

From 7 to 22 May 2013, the SDSN held a public consultation of its draft report. During this period, the draft was posted on the SDSN website and circulated extensively through many email lists and contacts. The SDSN Secretariat received detailed written comments on the draft from over 150 organizations and many individuals (list in the Annex). We are grateful for these comments, which have helped us improve the report substantially. This document highlights the main comments that were made with regards to the draft report and how they have been addressed. It does not attempt to summarize the richness and diversity of all comments received. Any remaining errors or omissions in the final report are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Comments that have been incorporated:

- General and introductory sections:
  - Clarify the role of the SDSN in the post-2015 processes
  - Avoid the impression that the proposed additions to the MDG agenda (environment, social inclusion, planetary boundaries) crowd out the focus on the need to finish the jobs on the MDGs: We now highlight this as the first of the five shifts in Section II
  - Clarify that the “four dimensions” of sustainable development are not referred to as such in the Rio+20 document (which refers to three dimensions and highlights the governance challenges separately)
  - Ensure an adequate balance between the four dimensions (some felt the focus was weighted too heavily on environmental challenges, while others saw too much focus on ending extreme poverty)
  - Ensure balance between the rights and responsibilities of developed and developing countries
  - Strengthen the cross-references and linkages between the ten priorities
  - Explain that BAU is also marked by poor national policies—not just a failure of international cooperation and coordination

- Table 1:
  - Explain how these assessments were determined
  - Align better with the ten priorities
  - Include the responsibilities of rich countries for approaching planetary boundaries

- Business:
  - Need to distinguish more clearly between small and larger businesses
  - Businesses respond to prevailing market incentives; explain that governments are responsible for setting the rules for business but in cooperation with business—business cannot do this on its own

- Poverty and hunger:
  - Explain the term hunger (as comprising malnutrition, stunting, and food insecurity)
  - Explain the links between hunger and sanitation/hygiene/child health
  - Describe key strategies for reducing hunger

- Peace and security:
  - Strengthen references to peace and security: now included explicitly under the fourth dimension of SD and throughout the document
  - Underscore that many proposed goals address the structural causes of conflict

- Economic development within planetary boundaries:
o Clarify how countries can address planetary boundaries and the need for better measures of economic progress; clarify the meaning of target 2b
o Clarify what the report means by “decoupling” and clarify the language on “sustainable consumption and production” patterns: done in revised FAQs (Annex III) and throughout the report
o Strengthen the focus on sexual and reproductive health rights; avoid the impression that a fertility target might induce governments to promote coercive means to reduce fertility rates or not respect sexual and reproductive health rights in any other way [some comments have called for deleting a goal on fertility rates – even if framed in the context of realizing SRH rights]

- **Education:**
  o Broaden the education section by explaining the non-economic benefits of education and the fact that good education is an essential human right
  o Describe more clearly what children need to learn at school
- **Gender equality, social inclusion, human rights:**
  o Strengthen the focus on human rights: now referred to as one of the four normative concepts underpinning an SD trajectory (Section III)
  o Do not limit human rights to economic and social rights only
  o Explain the connection between inequality and peace/security
  o Refer to gender equality more systematically throughout the report; strengthen discussion of gender equality under priority 4; and in particular, strengthen the discussion of violence against women
  o Discuss child protection, including child marriage, child labor, and children living in conflict settings
  o Strengthen the language on ending violence (now “prevent and eliminate”)
- **Health:**
  o Underscore the need for affordable health care as the vital complement to access
  o Explain the logic behind the mortality targets (absolute mortality targets vs. percentage reductions)
  o Refer to immunizations in the targets
  o Explicitly refer to HIV/AIDS, TB, & Malaria (the infectious diseases named under the MDGs)
  o Explain what is meant by measuring “subjective wellbeing and social capital”
  o Strengthen the focus on promoting healthy behaviors
- **Food and agriculture:**
  o Expand the section to cover fisheries and livestock as a core part of the global food production system
  o Refer to the link between biofuels and food production
  o Explain how access to land contributes to food insecurity
  o Highlight the important role that women farmers play in agriculture, particularly in Africa
  o Explain the importance of reducing food losses
  o Cross-reference nutrition with sanitation/hygiene/health
- **Cities:**
  o Refer to violence
  o Include Disaster Risk Management
- **Climate change:**
• Call for **emission reductions by 2020**
• Clarify the language on biofuels (links with food production)
• Describe the role of short-lived climate forcers
• Address **climate change adaptation** more systematically throughout the report
• Include stronger references to **disaster risk management (DRM)**

**Ecosystems and biodiversity:**
• Explain how Goal 9 and its targets relate to the **Aichi Biodiversity Goals**
• Strengthen the links between ecosystems and **human well-being**
• Refer to marine protected areas
• Describe in greater detail the crosscutting nature of **water**

**Governance:**
• Explain that governance is also an end in itself, not just a means to an end, and describe its components in more detail
• Underscore the positive contribution business is already making to sustainable development
• Provide more details on the financing part (domestic resource mobilization, PPPs, innovative financing, timeline for 0.7 percent)
• Explain how the roles of multi- and bilateral development agencies might need to evolve if the world pursues SDGs along the lines outlined in the document

**Framing the SDGs:**
• Many comments called for a stronger focus on water and water resources management. In response, the wording of Goal 9 has been expanded, and the narrative has been revised in many places (see in particular Question 25 in Annex 2).
• Describe data needs and how indicators will be developed
• Describe in detail accountability mechanisms (including the role of NGOs)
• Explain the logic for the structuring the goals and targets; why are some geographic, others thematic, and still others “crosscutting”?**

**Structural comments that could not be fully accommodated:**
• Several comments suggested a reordering of the proposed goals (e.g. make SDG 4 the third goal, move up climate change, etc.). We underscore that the ordering of the goals does not imply any prioritization or hierarchy. To avoid any misunderstandings we suggest staying as close as possible to the ordering of the MDGs.
• Many comments emphasized the need for additional stand-alone goals for several issues, including: gender equality, peace and security, jobs, disaster risk management, trade, the financial system, and science and technology. These issues are all covered to varying degrees in the report. The Leadership Council feels that it is important to limit the number of goal and targets to no more than 10 and 30 respectively.
• Other comments called for fewer goals and targets. The Leadership Council does not see how the number of goals and targets can be reduced without leaving out issues that are important for operationalizing sustainable development.
• Several comments suggested that hunger should be included under Goal 6 on agriculture. The reasons for keeping hunger under the proposed SDG 1 are explained in a new FAQ.
Annex: List of organizations that sent detailed comments on the draft SDSN report

ACSMP/UNSW Australia
ACTION
Action Aid
African Food Security Urban Network
African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town
African Monitor and Voice African Future Initiative
Amnesty International
AquaFed
ASIES
Association pour l'Intégration et le Développement Durable au Burundi-AIDB
Atkisson Inc.
Australian Federation of Graduate Women
BOND Disability & Development Group
Brazilian Society of Ecological Economics - ECOECO
Business in the Community
CAFOD
CEBDS
CEEweb for Biodiversity
Center for Social Responsibility in Mining (Queensland University)
Center for Universal Education
Brookings Institution
ChildFund Alliance
Christian Aid
CIRAD
Cities Alliance
Columbia University
Conservation International
Coordinator Commons Cluster and Commons Action for the United Nations
UN Rep. Association of World Citizens
Institute for Planetary Synthesis
All Win Network
CTS EMBARQ Mexico
Danish National Committee for IGBP / University of Copenhagen
De Dierencoalitie
Deutsche Gesellschaft für international Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Development Alternatives Group
Development Initiatives
Disability and Development Cooperation
econsense - Forum for Sustainable Development of German Business
EcoSense
Ethical Markets Media
EuroNGOs and Countdown 2015 Europe Networks
Fair Trade Advocacy Office
FAO
Federal University of Mato Grosso
Forum of NGOs Tuberculosis Rio de Janeiro Brazil
German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE)
Global Alliance for Tax Justice Coordinator Committee
Global Compact
Global Ecovillage Network
Global Footprint Network
GlobalFootprintNetwork.org
Graduate Institute Geneva
Greenpeace
Groupe Solidarité Justice SHJM of Québec
Harvard University
HDS Systems Design Science
High Level Task Force for International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)
Home Planet
Human Rights Watch
ICLEI (Secretariado para México Centroamérica y el Caribe)
IDRC
IGES
Initiative for Equality
Instituto de Políticas para el Transporte y el Desarrollo (ITDP)
Interact Worldwide/Action for Global Health
Integrative Strategies Forum
Interact Worldwide/Action for Global Health International Christian University
International Council for Science Secretariat
International Crisis Group
International Federation of University Women
International Presentation Association
International Presentation Association of the Sisters of the Presentation
International Union of Geological Sciences
International Women's Health Coalition
International-Lawyers.Org
IRRI
IUPAC
Joint Institute for Strategic Energy Analysis
Kathmandu University
LEAD Southern and Eastern Africa
National Assembly of Nigeria
Leonard Cheshire Disability
Lund University
Lyon Arboretum
University of Hawai’i
Madjulla Inc.