

5th Meeting of the United Nations Expert Committee on
Environmental-Economic Accounting
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United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012

Matthias Bruckner

Division for Sustainable Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations



Outline

1. UNCSD 2012 (aka Rio +20)
2. Linkages between SEEA and UNCSD
3. Possibilities for UNCEEA inputs into UNCSD process

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

- The United Nations General Assembly agreed in December 2009 to organize the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.
 - The UNCSD will be hosted by Brazil, as was the original UNCED in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.
 - Exact dates not yet confirmed.
 - UNCSD will be at the highest possible level, including Heads of States and Government.

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

- Objective:
 - To secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges.
- Two themes:
 - Green economy within the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication
 - Institutional framework for sustainable development

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

- Outcome: Focused political document
- Active participation of major groups and international organizations.
- Mr. Sha (USG of DESA) is Secretary-General of UNCSD, supported by two executive coordinators.
- Secretariat within DESA, with secondments from other agencies.

United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development – Preparatory Process

- Preparatory Committee established within the framework of the Commission on Sustainable Development
 - First PrepCom: 17-19 May 2010.
 - Second PrepCom: 7-8 March 2011
 - Third PrepCom 3 days directly before UNCSD
 - In addition, three intersessionals will be held.
 - First intersessional probably 17-18 January 2011.
- <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/rio20/>

Linkages between UNCSD and SEEA

- Agenda 21

- Agenda 21 provides mandate for SEEA.
 - Within Chapter 8 of A21 on Integrating environment and development in decision-making, programme area D) is 'Establishing systems for integrated environmental and economic accounting'.
 - Progress on SEEA is progress in the implementation of Agenda 21.
 - Assessing progress on SEEA helps achieving the objective of UNCSD.

Linkages between UNCSD and SEEA

- Assessment of progress

- The SEEA can be a tool for assessing progress in achieving sustainable development goals
 - The SG report for the First PrepCom notes limited convergence (and even overall divergence) of environmental improvement with economic and social progress.
 - SEEA allows for detailed assessments at the national level on convergence of economic and environmental progress.

Linkages between UNCSD and SEEA

- Green economy (1)

- The SEEA can also contribute to the discussion on the UNCSD theme of the green economy
 - Currently there is no broad consensus on the meaning of the green economy.
 - Decoupling of economic growth from resource use and environmental degradation often seen as key feature.
 - Valuation of ecosystems and their services also cited, but criticized by some countries if this means “marketization”.

Linkages between UNCSD and SEEA

- Green economy (2)

- Other key issues of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication requiring definitions and measurement include:
 - Job creation and destruction
 - Sustainable livelihoods, including for poor people in rural areas
 - Agricultural methods and technologies
 - Green protectionism
 - Ecological tax reform
 - Investment in sustainable infrastructure
 - Public support to green innovation and R&D
 - Sustainable public procurement

UNCEEA inputs to UNCSD

- Areas where inputs could be especially important include
 - Data collection and management
 - Green economy indicators
- Outputs of the UNCSD preparatory process where inputs are valuable include
 - Synthesis report on national experiences to be prepared for First Intersessional
 - SG Report for PrepCom 2 on the objective and themes of UNCSD

UNCEEA inputs to UNCSD

- Governing bodies of relevant UN system organizations are asked to transmit relevant outcomes.
- Ongoing information exchange between Secretariats of UNCSD and UNCEEA.
- Contributions by National Statistical Offices to national preparatory processes.
- Contributions by UNCEEA members to inputs by international organizations.

Thank You

Contact: Matthias Bruckner
Division for Sustainable Development
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations

email: brucknerm@un.org
<http://www.un.org/esa/dsd>