

Global Agenda Council on Governance for Sustainability 2012-2014



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Understanding/Context

The global environmental landscape has become increasingly complex, particularly as a greater dependency on resources for economic growth exerts constant pressure. Studies suggest that over 1.4 billion people have no access to either electricity or decent water, 870 million people still go hungry and 600 million jobs will be needed within the next 10 years.

In addition, the international community is facing issues such as the definition of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) that will contribute to the UN development agenda beyond 2015. At the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change held in 2011 in Durban, South Africa, an understanding was reached to negotiate a new, legally enforceable and universal International Climate Change Agreement, to be implemented by 2015. This offers a significant opportunity to explore how the multilateral climate-governance architecture could become more effective, acknowledging the limits of the current nation-driven negotiation mechanisms.

A multilateral process remains essential to addressing today's challenges. Decision-makers also recognize that complementary governance models could help to tackle some of these issues faster. Governments must define the goals, policies and laws needed to move towards sustainable development. However, given the urgency and complexity of the challenge, governments are encouraged to embrace multidimensional approaches that will lead to speedier action.

Shaping the Agenda

To promote effective governance structures that will spur sustainable development worldwide, the Global Agenda Council on Governance for Sustainability is publishing Green Lights, a series of brief reports that showcase scalable

and replicable ideas for multistakeholder cooperation. The Council also has initiated a task force of selected Members of the Network of Global Agenda Councils – led by Ricardo Melendez-Ortiz, Chief Executive of the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and Ida Auken, Denmark's Minister for the Environment – to provide targeted and actionable input to the global effort to define the SDGs by 2015.

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During the next year, the Council will continue to circulate best practices of bottom-up dynamics for sustainable development, conceptualize new governance models for sustainability, and promote understanding and leadership to enable the necessary shifts in governance. The idea is to stimulate wider debate by examining ways to articulate a new kind of possible global architecture for sustainability governance that reflects multilateral and multidimensional attributes. At the same time, the Council will continue its efforts to highlight successful partnerships through the Green Lights reports, and will contribute through the task force to the post-2015 development agenda. Building on this experience, the Council aims to develop practical recommendations to guide and add input to the official process working towards developing a new Climate Change Agreement to be negotiated by 2015.

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