

Side event of the Second Committee
“Advancing Sustainable Development: What Should Rio+20 Achieve?”
Friday, 29 October 2010

Summary of the meeting

The Chair of the Second Committee, H.E. Ms. Enkhtsetseg Ochir, in her introductory remarks reminded the audience that the Member States have decided to hold the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in 2012 in order to secure a renewed political commitment for sustainable development. She added that the Conference will assess progress and remaining gaps in implementation of commitments made at major summits on sustainable development in addition to addressing new and emerging challenges.

Professor Rehman Sobhan examined the linkages between poverty eradication and sustainable development. He argued that social inequities in the societies impede progress on sustainable development. In this regard, he mentioned that lack of access to water and energy, inequitable land ownership and individual instead of collective ownership of minerals are all sources of inequity and poverty. The issue of inequality could be addressed by making local population part of the decision making processes. The decision making processes and accompanied institutional arrangements should take into account the threats social or

Dr. Soogil Young

_____ ¹ underlined that green economy is a useful framework for capturing synergies among three pillars of sustainable development. He argued that there is no readily available or one-size-fits-all policy package for green growth development. Green growth policies may differ from country to country, and be tailored to the unique local circumstances and conditions. Also, green growth requires technological development and commercialization of new technologies. Incentives can play an important role in encouraging the private sector to follow green growth models. For a green growth strategy to be successful, a coherent vision as well as political leadership and commitment is needed. He underlined that leapfrogging the grey/brown economies is important, and so is learning from the past mistakes by correcting them through new set of green growth policies. Reforming existing institutional environment will be important for promoting green growth. He cited a number of examples of how green growth works in the Republic of Korea.

Professor Adil Najam reflecting on the state of current institutional framework for sustainable development mentioned that institutions are being asked to deliver on more functions than they were originally established for. The problem of global system is that it is a multiplicity of leadership. Enhancing coherence and complementarities should be an important feature of the reform process. Rio+20 needs to push for a less cluttered system and it may be accomplished in incremental steps: having less treaty bodies than we have now, strengthening of UNEP, and revitalizing CSD as implementation and review forum for sustainable development. There is also a link between the green economy and institutional framework since green economy will need institutions to advance its agenda forward.

¹ Please see Dr. Young's presentation and power point

Felix Dodds² presented stakeholders perspectives on possible ways to bridge the gaps in implementing sustainable development. These, for example, included: establishment of a framework convention on corporate accountability developed from the new ISO 26000; a global convention on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration – access to information, public participation and environmental justice; and a global framework convention on Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration on the Precautionary Principle. Such measures will allow addressing issues like nano technology, geo engineering and cloning. He emphasized the need to re-launch local Agenda 21 programs around the concept of green economy for which local authorities can play an important role. Industries should be encouraged to adopt green technologies, including greening of the work place. He reminded the need to recognize inter-generational responsibilities by enabling the young people to have green, post-carbon economy during their lifetimes. With regard to the institutional framework for sustainable development, he called for transforming the Trusteeship Council into Sustainable Development Council.

In the ensuing discussion³, some delegations considered the green economy to be a useful