

## ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY: EU FOLLOW-UP TO RIO+20

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### **Who are you?**

In a later step you will be able to approve or reject that this information is publicized.

Your name (first and last name) \* (compulsory) **Anne Stauffer**

In which capacity are you participating in this consultation? \* (compulsory)

- as an individual
- **on behalf of an organisation**

If answering as an individual, please indicate the country where you reside\* (compulsory)

If responding on behalf of an organization, please indicate below which type \* (compulsory) and your interest representative ID number:

- national government
- regional government
- local government
- international body (other than EU institution)
- public research institution
- university
- **NGO, civil society, environmental group, charity**
- industrial interest group
- EU scientific project

Name : **Anne Stauffer**

Interest representative ID number: 00723343929-96

Organization Represented **Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL)**

and main activities of your company/organization/association:

**The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is a leading European not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union. With the support of more than 70 member organisations, which represent health professionals, not-for-profit health insurers, patients, citizens, women, youth, and environmental experts, HEAL brings independent expertise and evidence from the health community to different decision-making processes. Members include international and Europe-wide organisations as well as national and local groups.**

Location (country): **Brussels, Belgium**

E-mail address: [anne@env-health.org](mailto:anne@env-health.org)

**Do you agree to the listing of the name of your organization in the report that the Commission will draw up on the results of this public consultation? (Tick the appropriate box)**

**YES**

# ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GLOBALLY: EU FOLLOW-UP TO RIO+20

## Background

The Rio+20 world summit was held in Rio de Janeiro in June this year. It followed from previous related UN summits, in Stockholm (1972), Rio de Janeiro (1992) and Johannesburg (2002). The aim of Rio+20 was to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, by assessing progress to date, identifying remaining gaps in the implementation of past commitments and addressing new and emerging challenges<sup>1</sup>.

The Summit's focus was on two intertwined themes: "a Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication" and "the institutional framework for sustainable development". After extensive negotiations a Rio+20 Outcome document was agreed upon, with a number of actions and commitments. Even though the outcome was less ambitious than what the EU had aimed for, Rio+20 does offer a number of important opportunities for follow-up at EU and international level.

## The implications of Rio+20 outcomes for EU policies

The main outcomes of Rio can be described along five streams:

1. The inclusive Green economy, as an important tool to achieve sustainable development.
2. Action in priority areas, such as poverty eradication, sustainable agriculture, water, sustainable energy, decent work for all, oceans and fisheries, and sustainable consumption and production.
3. Agreement to develop Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
4. Agreement to develop options on an effective Sustainable Development Financing Strategy.
5. Strengthening the Institutional Framework for sustainable development.

Implementing these outcomes would lead to furthering sustainable development globally, for *all* countries (developed countries, emerging economies and developing countries). The outcomes also have implications for a range of EU policies such as economic, trade, environment, fisheries, energy, agriculture and employment and social policies. Within the EU Rio+20 offers the opportunity to review, revitalize, and re-orient a number of activities that the EU is already pursuing. An example of this is the inclusive Green economy, which is addressed in the EU by the Europe 2020 strategy<sup>2</sup> and by EU development policy.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm)

## **The aim of this public consultation**

The European Union needs to prepare for follow-up actions and what next steps have to be taken. Follow-up by the EU level will constitute an important practical step in making sustainable development a reality in the years to come.

The objective of the present public consultation is to provide input to the European Commission for the development of specific actions and measures and for its proposals for EU positions. In particular, it will serve as input to a Communication from the Commission on Rio+20 follow-up, planned for the first half of 2013. The consultation is also a complement to the Public Consultation "Towards a post-2015 development framework"<sup>3</sup>.

The Commission widely engaged with civil society, including by undertaking a public consultation<sup>4</sup> prior to Rio+20, and civil society also made important input during the conference itself. Related consultations include those which took place on the Resource Efficiency roadmap and the recently launched consultation on the 7<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Plan. The present consultation seeks stakeholder's views on five main areas from the perspective of advancing sustainable development globally. A brief explanation of each is described below, followed by a set of questions. Please try to limit your responses to one page per area. In addition, in the final section there is the opportunity to voice your views on other topics not explicitly mentioned.

### **1. The Inclusive Green Economy**

The Rio+20 Outcome document stated that the inclusive Green economy is an important tool for achieving sustainable development, that can be implemented in a number of different ways by countries in accordance with national priorities. The Green economy can contribute to sustainable growth, help create employment and decent work, contribute to eradicating poverty, while maintain a healthy environment. The document indicated that the implementation of Green economy policies can be a common undertaking by countries that wanted to do so.

Furthering the inclusive Green economy needs to be considered at three contexts:

1. action within the EU as a direct contribution to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy,
2. collaboration with developed countries and emerging economies, and
3. cooperation with developing countries, as part of development cooperation policy in particular as a means of eradicating poverty.

Likewise, a range of policy approaches are needed to stimulate the inclusive Green economy, and these may best apply in different ways in the above three contexts. Policies can include the removal of barriers or the creation of enabling conditions and may include:

- taxes and pricing systems
- improving the functioning of markets
- effective regulation

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<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/towards\\_post-2015-development-framework\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/towards_post-2015-development-framework_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/un\\_2012.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/consultations/un_2012.htm)

- a favourable environment for trade
- phasing out policy distortions such as harmful subsidies
- encouraging innovation
- appropriate labour policies and decent job creation
- green skills development

The inclusive Green economy can also be promoted through the development and application of appropriate indicators that measure progress beyond GDP. It can also be encouraged through a range of public private partnerships with aim of advancing business engagement and performance along social and environmental dimensions, and encouraging investment. Corporate social responsibility and sustainable consumption and production are also important elements.

**Questions:**

1. ***What policy tools do you think are the most effective and need to be put into place to stimulate the transformation to the inclusive Green economy within the EU? How should this complement the Europe 2020 strategy and/or its implementation?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

Greening the economy is essential to promote *'sustainable consumption and production, human health and well-being and hence eradicate poverty, providing benefits for all citizens'* according to the Council conclusions on 9 March 2012 Rio +20: Pathway to a Sustainable Future. The transition to a green economy must be fair and equitable, lift people out of poverty, respect planetary boundaries, commit to the decent jobs agenda and improve and promote people's health.

HEAL thinks those policy tools should be prioritized that will provide for the greatest health gains and promote well-being, the ones that provide best for preventing disease and ill-health. The recognition of the importance of universal health coverage and health as a precondition for and an outcome and indicator of the 3 dimensions of sustainable development as stated in the Rio+20 outcome document *'The Future We Want'* should drive EU policies towards integrating health into sustainable development targets.

Making health central to not only the Europe 2020 strategy but also sustainable development and enforcing it within strong environmental policies has shown to be cost effective and provides significant gains in providing a healthier environment for all. Reducing our consumption and moving to a green economy will create health gains in many cases.

2. ***What policy tools do you think are the most effective and need to be put into place to as part of the EUs interactions with developed countries, emerging economies, and with developing countries? How should this complement EU external policies and their implementation?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

**3. *What policies need to be put into place to further encourage and engage EU business and stakeholders?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

**4. *What specific actions could be foreseen in this area? How could such actions contribute to growth and jobs?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

## **2. Action in Priority Areas**

The Rio+20 Outcome document contains a large number of actions in the section "Framework for action and follow-up". These will address in practice specific themes of the Green economy in the context of sustainable development:

- Poverty eradication
- Food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture
- Water and sanitation
- Energy
- Sustainable tourism
- Sustainable transport and sustainable cities and human settlements
- Health and population
- Promoting full and productive employment, decent work for all, and social protection
- Oceans and seas

- Small island developing states
- Least developed countries and landlocked least developed countries
- Africa and regional efforts
- Disaster risk reduction
- Climate change
- Forests
- Biodiversity
- Desertification, land degradation and drought
- Mountains
- Chemicals and waste
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Mining
- Education
- Gender equality and women's empowerment

Following the request of the European Council<sup>5</sup>, the EU did propose goals and targets to advance the transition to the Green economy in key areas, which are essential for social and economic development.

*Questions:*

5. *Which key areas do you think are the most important and should be given the highest priority (for the EU/at global level)? Please give reasons for your choices.*

**Answer (max 200 words):**

Health is recognised as a key goal of sustainable development in the first principle of the Rio Declaration, which states that “*Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.*” In the Rio +20 outcome document we welcome the recognition that **health is a precondition for and an outcome and indicator of all 3 dimensions of sustainable development.** Health, meaning disease prevention, should be given the highest priority as sustainable development can only be achieved in the absence of a high prevalence of debilitating communicable and non-communicable diseases (one of the major challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century), and where populations can reach a state of physical, mental and social well-being.

Action on the social and environmental determinants of health, both for the poor and the vulnerable and for the entire population, is important to create inclusive, equitable, economically productive and healthy societies.

Under a disease prevention priority, tackling climate change and chemicals and waste are key as they are major environmental determinants of health. Reducing air pollution is a further key challenge. This means as well that health systems should be strengthened and multi-sectoral national policies for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases should be established or strengthened.

<sup>5</sup> Conclusions of the European Council, 1-2 March 2012 (article 28), and Environment Council Conclusions, 12 March 2012 (articles 17, 18).

6. *Are there specific ways in which an area needs to be followed up (within the EU/at global level)? Should the EU promote and enter into partnerships for action and if so, in which area specifically? Are there specific barriers to implement actions in a given area? What could be done to overcome these barriers?*

**Answer (max 200 words):**

Public health and disease prevention should be central to sustainable development policies and become a priority for the EU2020 Strategy. There are many win-win situations for health in the context of moving towards a green economy. Healthier European citizens mean less pressure on health systems, reduced public health costs and a healthier work force and employment of citizens, thus increased productivity.

7. *Do you think it is useful for the EU to develop targets to drive the inclusive Green economy? If so, what aspects do you think should be covered and how should economic, social and environmental aspects be addressed?*

Key targets should be developed to include health in all EU policies. Chronic diseases – cancer, cardio-vascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes account for over 63% of deaths globally. The number of chronic disease cases has risen in the last years and is expected to increase further. In Europe, chronic diseases are responsible for 86% of deaths. Environmental pollution is one of the key factors in the occurrence of chronic diseases.

HEAL urges the EU to consider the resolution of the UN High level meeting on NDCs in September 2011 which highlighted that ‘the global burden of non-communicable diseases constitutes one of the major challenges for development in the 21st century, which undermines social and economic development through the world’. Rio+20 focused a lot on greening the economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and thus the challenge from chronic diseases and ways to tackle them cannot be left out of the agenda.

In Europe, half a million people still die prematurely each year because of air pollution, despite many regulatory measures in place to lower pollution levels. Globally, WHO estimates that more than 2 million premature deaths each year can be attributed to the effects of urban outdoor air pollution and indoor air pollution.

**Answer (max 200 words):**

8. *What additional tools and indicators for the measurement of progress should be applied?*



**Answer (max 200 words):**

### 3. Sustainable Development Goals

The Rio+20 Outcome document outlined key principles for developing SDGs. It is stated that the SDGs should reflect all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) in a balanced way; and that they should be action-oriented, concise, easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries while taking into account different national realities, and that they should be guided by the Rio Outcome document. The Rio+20 Outcome document also states that the SDGs need to be coherent with and integrated into the UN development agenda beyond 2015, and that the process to establish SDGs needs to be coordinated and coherent with the processes for the post-2015 development agenda.

It is important to underline the universal character of the SDGs. They must simultaneously respond to the need to have global goals for all countries and the need for a specific development focus.

The EU will have to set up a process to establish its position on the scope, nature and specifics of the SDGs. This should take into account the EU 2020 targets and those being further pursued under the resource efficiency flagship, as well as the proposals for priority areas and cross cutting themes made by the EU in the run up to Rio+20. It will also be important to ensure that goals should be consistent with internationally agreed goals, such as on biodiversity, climate and social aspects.

*Questions:*

**9. In your opinion, what specific themes or topics should SDGs cover? In what way could the EU build on existing or proposed goals and targets?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

A SDG should cover health and build on targets to reduce chronic diseases. There should be a strong link between the dimensions of sustainable development and environmental health issues as one SDG.

Health aspects should be central to the SDGs for policy coherence and so they can be integrated into issues such as sustainable transport, sustainable cities, sustainable consumption and production and so forth. This would highlight the significant health benefits within these sustainable policies.

The EU Sustainable Development Strategy should be linked with the revision of the EU Health Strategy and the discussions taking place at EU level towards the post 2015 UN Development agenda.

Ambitious health policies should be included in the SDGs in an inclusive and transparent manner where health experts and medical professionals are consulted on the development of each goal and subsequently their implementation after 2015.

Health is recognised as a key goal of sustainable development in the first principle of the Rio Declaration. *“Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.”* Human being and public health should therefore be central in the development of the SDGs and their implementation after 2015.

***10. What form and structure should SDGs have? How should economic, social, and environmental dimensions, as well as the inter-linkages between them be addressed?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

***11. How can it be best ensured that SDGs and their monitoring are science based?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

***12. How can one make sure that the SDGs will be relevant and will act as a stimulus to all countries (developed, emerging, developing)? How will they contribute to mobilizing action?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

As health is a public concern globally, highlighting its importance by integrating it in the SDGs makes it relevant to developed, emerging and developing countries. Public health is interlinked within many different policy areas which affect all countries e.g. climate change, chronic diseases, air and noise pollution and chemicals.

The global burden and threat of non-communicable diseases constitutes one of the major challenges for sustainable development. The SDGs can be relevant and act as a stimulus to all countries if health is at the centre of their implementation. The SDGs should help to prevent non-communicable diseases, especially cancer, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes.

**13. In what way should the SDGs relate to stimulating the inclusive Green economy?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

**14. How do you see the relationship of SDGs to future goals following up on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are likely to be developed under the post 2015 development agenda?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

The consultation process towards the post 2015 UN Development Agenda presents an opportunity to integrate health into multi-sectoral policies and at different levels of engagement e.g. local, regional, national or internationally. HEAL recognises the link between health and the specific themes of Rio +20 for example health and education, health and sustainable cities, health and food system, health and ecosystems and health and energy.

#### **4. Financing Strategy for sustainable development**

The Rio+20 Outcome document underlined Means of Implementation as crucial to achieving sustainable development. It established an intergovernmental process under the UN General Assembly to produce options for a sustainable development financing strategy to facilitate the mobilization of financial resources and their effective use. Such a strategy should promote a single comprehensive approach to development financing, building on the Financing for Development agenda<sup>6</sup> and promote an integrated approach to the various global financing processes, including Rio+20, climate change and biodiversity financing.

It is important that financing strategies for sustainable development should consider all possible sources to be mobilized by all types of stakeholders, including by national and international, public and private, financial and non-financial actions. This includes giving due attention to public and private financing schemes, innovative financing, taxation and pricing

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/>

schemes, regulation, and to the barriers to foreign direct investment, as well as looking at the synergies and overlaps with other policy goals (development, climate change, biodiversity).

On external financing, the strategy should look beyond development aid. There is a need to recognize that the major emerging economies should no longer only be seen as recipients of aid even if they still require institutional and technological capacity building assistance. Relevant international and regional banks such (the IMF, World Bank and other Multilateral Development Banks, such as the EIB) should be involved. Also it should be noted that many of the financing and investment conditions are similar to those for fostering an inclusive Green economy.

**Questions:**

**15. What should be the main elements covered in financing strategies for sustainable development? Could, for example, thematic strategies such as the Biodiversity Resource Mobilization Strategy<sup>7</sup> be a useful starting point?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

**16. What are some of the most effective financing and resource mobilisation schemes to date, such as public or private schemes, micro-financing, climate change and biodiversity financing? How can they be scaled up?**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

**17. What are the most effective ways of encouraging investment? Where possible, link your replies to questions on the inclusive Green economy.**

**Answer (max 200 words):**

From a public health perspective investing in the Green economy makes economic sense, as there are huge health benefits to be reaped, which in many cases are much larger than the investment costs.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cbd.int/decision/cop/?id=11654>

[Empty box]

***18. How should coherence, coordination and non-duplication of efforts be ensured with regard to the Financing for Development process and other relevant processes?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

[Empty box]

### **5. Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development**

An important theme of Rio+20 was on furthering the institutional framework for sustainable development. Rio decided to strengthen the functions of UNEP. Rio also decided to establish a High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development. The EU will now have to consider how it can best contribute to implementing this outcome.

***Questions:***

***19. What measures would you see best taken to ensure that the EU effectively contributes to the implementation of these outcomes?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

The EU should take a multi-level governance and multi-sectoral approach which is transparent and involves all stakeholders and civil society. Rio+20 underscored the importance of a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development which responds coherently and effectively to current and future challenges (including many increasing health challenges) and efficiently bridges gaps in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

The institutional framework for sustainable development should integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development with health aspects at the heart of each one. There needs to be an interlink among key issues and challenges and the need for a systematic approach to all relevant levels.

HEAL believes that health needs to be central to the process and given the increasing toll on people's health of unsustainable development, special efforts should be given to increasing the participation of the health sector in the contribution of the EU in implementing these outcomes.

***20. Do you think the participation of civil society, social partners, and other stakeholders should be strengthened? If so, how internationally and within the EU?***

**Answer (max 200 words):**

Broad public participation and access to information and judicial and administrative proceedings are essential to the promotion of sustainable development as highlighted in the Rio +20 outcome document. All stakeholders can provide diverse experience, expertise and capacity, especially in the area of analysis, the sharing of information and knowledge, promotion of dialogue and support of implementation of sustainable development. At EU level and internationally, civil society, partners and stakeholders can all be better included in the development and implementation process of policies. Consultations such as this one and those towards the 2015 UN Post Development Agenda are vital for individual citizens, organisations and all stakeholders to put forward their asks towards achieving sustainable development.

**Other issues**

You may also outline your views on other issues related to the follow-up to Rio+20 that have not been mentioned above.

**Thank you for your contribution!**