

Towards an Integrated and Inclusive Follow-up and Review of Natural Resources



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Based on the crosscutting role that natural resources will play in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this document outlines 2 recommendations for the zero draft of the outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda: 1) thematic reviews of natural resources as a crosscutting issue, from tenure to their use, should be carried out under the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and 2) national multi-stakeholder and rights-holder initiatives for follow-up and review, within the context of a renewed global partnership for development, should be established or strengthened.

The zero draft outcome document for the UN Summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda¹, outlines core principles for robust follow-up, and review mechanisms and processes. We welcome section 3 of Part III of the zero draft that outlines the guiding principles for effective follow-up and review processes. In particular, we support language that calls for the follow-up and review of the goals and targets, including the means of implementation to *“address progress in a manner which respects their integrated and inter-related nature”*; and *“be open and inclusive, supported by an enabling environment for the participation of all people and stakeholders”*.

We need to live up to the challenge to develop a transformative and integrated post-2015 agenda. The principles of integration, participation and inclusion are necessary to review and follow-up on the progress of cross-cutting issues. Otherwise, these issues could be at risk of falling between the cracks. Many of the SDGs are heavily reliant on natural resources, such as land, water, and biodiversity, for their achievement. This means that addressing their governance, management and tenure rights, in order to balance competing uses will be crucial. The responsible governance of land tenure is especially important in this case to ensure pro-poor and gender-sensitive approaches that work in favour of poor populations and marginalized groups, including indigenous peoples. In many regions, responsible land governance means emphasizing the commons, in particular.²

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7261Post-2015%20Summit%20-%20202%20June%202015.pdf>

² Action Aid International, Biovision, Forest Peoples Program, et al. (2015): *Secure and Equitable Land Rights in the Post-2015 Agenda. A key issue in the future we want*

The Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS), together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Biovision Foundation and the Millennium Institute, held a High-Level Event on “*Follow-Up and Review Mechanisms for Natural Resource Management and Governance to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*”.³ The event took place in New York on 12 – 13 May with 65 participants from governments, permanent missions to the UN, UN agencies, civil society, and academia. Based on the main conclusions, we suggest the following 2 options to ensure the effective follow-up and review of natural resources in the post-2015 development agenda that is aligned with the principles of integration, participation and inclusion:

1) Thematic reviews of natural resources as a crosscutting issue, from tenure to their use, should be carried out under the High Level Political Forum (HLPF)

Current text	Suggested language amendment
<p>III.10 Thematic reviews of progress may also take place at the HLPF and in other inter-governmental forums, including the ECOSOC functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies and mechanisms. These reviews will be aligned with the cycle and work of the HLPF, where possible.</p>	<p>III.10 Thematic reviews of progress may also take place at the HLPF and in other inter-governmental forums, including the ECOSOC functional commissions and other relevant subsidiary bodies and mechanisms. <i>These will include reviews that address cross-cutting issues, such as natural resources and tenure rights, which are critical to the effective implementation of the SDGs.</i> These reviews will be aligned with the cycle and work of the HLPF, where possible.</p>

At the global level, the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is expected to “*follow up on the implementation of sustainable development*” (Para 84 of A/RES/66/288: The Future We Want). Under the auspices of ECOSOC, the HLPF is mandated to carry out regular follow-up and review of progress in line with Resolution 67/290. However, the HLPF will likely be unable to conduct thorough reviews of all aspects due to the limited time available, and the time-intensive challenge presented by 17 SDGs, 169 targets and the currently envisioned 100 indicators.

In view of the objective to leave no one behind; and in light of conflicting uses and the need for protection of the same natural resources across and among different goals and targets, there is a need for an inclusive, participatory and integrated approach. Such an approach would help identify synergies and actions that support the achievement of multiple goals and ensure debates on the priorities of natural resource management and governance. One way to achieve this is through thematic reviews. Thematic reviews for crosscutting issues have already received support from Member States. During the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda on follow-up and review in May 2015, Switzerland⁴ made a statement that included a suggestion for “*annual meetings of the HLPF to be used to review global thematic progress, focusing on the nexus between goals or a cluster of goals.*”

³ <http://www.iisd.ca/post2015/nr-mechanisms/>

⁴ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14337switzerland.pdf>

Also during this session, Turkey suggested that thematic reviews could be a solution to the heavily loaded agenda of the HLPF but *“this approach should not lead us to fall into the silos trap. We should ensure the review of the agenda as a whole”*. In addition, the informal “group of seven”, i.e., Egypt, Liechtenstein, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, the Republic of Korea, and Switzerland stated that the, *“HLPF should promote knowledge exchange on SDG implementation through national and thematic reviews.”*⁵

Including thematic “nexus/crosscutting reviews” at the HLPF would further help address of the questions outlined in the UNDESA Discussion Paper⁶ on Follow-up and Review of the post-2015 development agenda published on 12 of May 2015: *“What steps can be taken to support coherence and complementarity across the UN follow-up and review architecture?”*. A thematic review for natural resources at the global level would require the collaboration of UN agencies working on the relevant environmental, social and economic aspects such as UNEP, UNDP, UNCCD, UNCTAD, FAO, IFAD, etc.⁷ This thematic review should also build on the outcomes of periodic reviews carried out by other intergovernmental forums and ECOSOC functional commissions. For example, the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) should play a role in the follow up and review of SDG 2, touching upon related cross cutting aspects such as tenure of land and natural resources (e.g. land, water and biodiversity). Progress measured in that context could then be fed into the HLPF. Here, inputs related to other SDGs and relevant to natural resources can be addressed in an integrated manner, to highlight trade-offs, capture wider global trends, and recommend policies that are needed to deliver the post-2015 agenda in a comprehensive and integrated manner.

2) National multi-stakeholder and rights-holder initiatives for follow-up and review, within the context of a renewed global partnership for development, should be established or strengthened

Current text	Suggested language amendment
<p>III.4 Building on existing reporting and planning instruments, such as national sustainable development strategies, we encourage all member states to develop ambitious national responses to the SDGs and targets as soon as possible.</p>	<p>III.4 Building on existing reporting and planning instruments, such as national sustainable development strategies, we encourage all member states to develop ambitious national responses to the SDGs and targets and to establish or strengthen national multi-stakeholder and rights-holder initiatives for follow-up and review, as soon as possible.</p>

The national level, as highlighted by the UN Secretary General’s report on the post-2015 development agenda (Para 149.i – “The Road to Dignity” by 2030), *“should be the most significant”* since it is the *“closest to the people”*. This is the level where progress will be measured and it is crucial to ensure there are effective follow-up and review mechanisms in place.

⁵ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/14336Go7.pdf>

⁶ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7132Discussion%20paper%20on%20Follow%20up%20and%20Review%2012%20May%202015.pdf>

⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

To ensure that progress on some goals does not limit or challenge the achievement of others, an integrated and inclusive approach that considers and analyses the combined impacts on natural resources and users is necessary. An example of this is managing the demand for food and energy while protecting the tenure rights of women, men, local communities and indigenous peoples; and while maintaining ecosystems and the quality of their soils and land.

A national participatory follow-up and review approach should be a central feature of the post-2015 development agenda. This approach is in line with the voluntary and state-led follow-up and review requirements that will characterize the post-2015 development agenda. Such an approach has been supported by civil society groups and networks who are actively engaged in the post-2015 process, including the Women's Major Group (Paras 23, 24, 26), the Major Group for Local Authorities (Para 179) and the TAP Network (Paras 149, 164.a.i).⁸ At the national level, a participatory and inclusive follow-up and review can empower people to articulate their priorities to their national governments. The empowering effects of multiple-stakeholder and rights-holders⁹ platforms will be particularly important when current mechanisms for natural resource governance do not sufficiently address the needs of the poor and vulnerable groups. We see national governments taking the lead in establishing or strengthening national multi-stakeholder initiatives for follow-up and review that are inclusive and offer perspectives from different actors (i.e. government, civil society, academia, business) and legitimate rights-holders, within the context of a renewed global partnership for development.¹⁰

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⁸ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/7219MGOS%20discussion%20papers%20%5Badvance%20unedited%5D.pdf>

⁹ *Individual and group rights-holders in the context of natural resources should be included in follow-up and review (e.g. smallholders, communities, women, youth, indigenous groups and the disabled) to ensure implementation is people-centred and planet-sensitive.*

¹⁰ *Report of the UN System Task Team on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda: A Renewed Global Partnership for Development*

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