



United States Department of State
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The Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

**Remarks by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Lawrence J. Gumbiner
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We in the United States believe it is essential to highlight the broader context of sustained and sustainable development, giving full consideration to each of the three pillars: economic, social, and environmental. It is necessary to take a long-term view, develop a strategic approach, and involve all levels of government and elements of civil society.

As a part of this, governments need to invest in science and innovation, enhance resilience and human capacity, take country ownership of domestic sustainable development, promote frameworks and incentives for sustainable economic activities, promote transparency and inclusiveness, set ambitious yet realistic targets, and measure progress towards those goals.

Sustainable development should not be just the purview of environment ministers – all domestic sectors must be involved in sustainable development activities

because it is attention to the three pillars together that will produce long-term results. This depends on government priorities, domestic governance in all sectors, and domestic coordination. It must also take place at all levels for it is at the state, regional and local levels that many of the decisions will be taken that determine the sustainability of development activities.

Moving forward, the will and priorities of individual governments will be essential. We must recognize, however, that we cannot create political will by creating new multilateral institutions. Nor do new institutions guarantee greater efficiencies. What is essential is a commitment by governments to a sustainable future, in which a strengthened and streamlined institutional framework supports our sustainable development efforts.

“International Environmental Governance” (IEG) is a small, but important, component of our larger sustainable development efforts. We are pleased to consider UNEP’s work in this context. We also welcome an analysis of the financial, structural, and legal implications of the options from the UNEP discussion. We agree that some reforms are needed to make the IEG and sustainable development systems more efficient or effective. We must find a way to reduce the number of meetings and enhance as well as streamline monitoring

and reporting systems. We are ready to explore options to achieve better overarching coordination for sustainable development using existing institutions in our efforts.

We believe that efforts to improve governance should focus on enhancing implementation. We support improved efficiency and effectiveness of international organizations working on sustainable development components, and we particularly support greater cooperation among these actors. In this context, we highlight the role and importance of the Environmental Management Group and encourage them to examine the use of environmental and social safeguards for UN activities. We must also go beyond environment and seek more effective coordination in the UN for efforts addressing all three pillars of sustainable development .

We strongly encourage integrating the three pillars in national development efforts including the mainstreaming a sustainable development approach into economic and sectoral planning. Public participation in decision-making, and transparency and open communication regarding development activities, governance mechanisms, and reporting – at all levels – are essential.

We believe that the ability of our national governments, academic institutions, and stakeholders, to measure progress is paramount. In that context we support a dialogue on how we can improve our abilities to evaluate the impact of policies and programs and report on results. We should incorporate relevant analysis from other institutions, assure that the information delivered to policymakers is fact-based and grounded in sound science.

Another element to consider is for the international system to reflect government priorities. The UN secretariat cannot control mandate creep, the proliferation of meetings, or growth in institutions. Governments must take responsibility for these decisions and we would like for this to be a component of our IFSD agenda. We do not believe that one, larger UN organization or specialized agency will control this or other problems.

We look forward to continued discussions on IFSD, to hearing others' thoughts, and to introducing our ideas as preparations for the 2012 Conference continue.

Thank you.