
Subject: Recommendations for UN Stocktaking Conference, Jan 19-21.

From: UN Major Group Commons Cluster (glansvanessen@gmail.com)

To: glansvanessen@yahoo.com;

Date: Wednesday, January 7, 2015 11:52 PM

Letter to Heads of State and Government and UN Ambassadors, addressing the value and need to fully include civil society in implementing the UN's Post 2015 Development Agenda

Issued by the NGO Major Group Commons Cluster

Dear Mr. Emile,

From January 19-21 the UN Member States will participate in an intergovernmental negotiating session on stocktaking in preparation for the rest of the Post-2015 negotiations. We strongly suggest that this session should include a focus on where we stand with regard to sustainable development and the steps that humanity must take to survive and thrive past 2030. As United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon stresses in his Synthesis Report "*we are on the threshold of the most important year of development since the founding of the United Nations itself*".

The Commons Cluster consists of ECOSOC accredited NGOs and others. It was formed to support the UN and its Member States in their search to build a future centred on the well-being of all people and nature and continues to play an active role in the proceedings at the UN relating to sustainable development. The Commons Cluster would like to draw attention to a few critical ways in which Member States can—and must!—build on the participation of civil society as, together, we seek to develop sustainably. ***As we are coming to realize, the actions of all people combined will determine whether or not we succeed in creating a sustainable future for humanity on Earth.***

Individual people and the various communities and organizations of which they are a part tend to be the first to experience and to respond to challenges that require an immediate response. Governments and the UN are discovering that individual people and their associated communities already provide answers to critical questions being wrestled with by the UN and Member States in the context of the Open Working Group, the Experts Group on Financing for Sustainable Development, the SG's Synthesis Report and the Committee working on the development of a Technology Facilitation Mechanism.

By fully empowering and supporting the efforts of all members of civil society

at all levels, including in decision-making and in the implementation of sustainable development, the UN and its Member States will achieve the following:

1. **All 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) can and will be implemented to the degree and in the way required in every community in an integrated manner.** While the SDGs are universal, the challenges each of the 17 goals presents come together differently in every individual and community. Only by unleashing the unique potential of each person, each community and each organization can these goals be implemented ubiquitously. As a consequence:
2. **The gaps not yet covered by existing agreements on sustainable development will be filled in.** By empowering civil society as a full partner in decision-making and implementation, gaps in existing agreements—along with appropriate remediating solutions—can be more easily identified and integrated into national sustainable development strategies and plans to carry out and achieve the SDGs.
3. **The Means of Implementing the programme of the High Level Political Forum (MoI) will become increasingly accessible and flexibly adjusted to meet a variety of diverse situations.** The many as yet unknown challenges that will arise from overstepping planetary boundaries can thus be addressed by people everywhere and applied as needed.
4. **The UN and Member States can build more reliably on the socio-economic paradigm shift that is now taking place.** This is a shift *away from* what Riane Eisler has termed a **Culture of Domination** to a **Culture of Partnership**. The latter is already providing means of implementing sustainable development and solutions to many diverse problems.

This culture is based on sharing, caring and cooperation at all levels worldwide. One of the principles of the new sharing economy is that the more people are willing to share without expectation, the greater the abundance that becomes available to the larger commons, or, in other words, to the world's people.

Aspects of this culture are referred to variously as *commons with their business sector, cooperatives, the collaborative zero marginal cost economy (Jeremy Rifkin), solidarity or social economy (France, Slovenia, Rencontres Du Mont Blanc), or shared societies (Italy, Slovenia, the Club of Madrid)*. It has been estimated that the equivalent of trillions of dollars worth of free information, education on every conceivable topic and at all levels, best practices and technological expertise on how to build almost anything, including renewable energy

installations is available for free on the internet. With support for and dissemination by the UN, the international community can take better advantage of these resources.

With financial support and other assistance these initiatives can be scaled up and spread much more rapidly throughout the world; without it they will much more slowly emerge and in a much less effective and productive manner.

This treasure trove of resources can be used to implement sustainable development by those who are willing to become a part of and/or to support this culture of sharing, including Governments who provide the means for their peoples to partake. In paragraph 125 of his Synthesis Report, the Secretary-General calls for an online platform for technology transfer, which points in part to this opportunity.

Below please find a list of steps that can be taken to build on the above opportunities. Attached please also find information on various aspects of our proposals. As well, We are once more attaching the 70-page document with Financing Mechanisms ***Unleashing Financing and Other Resources for Sustainable Development*** for you to use as you see fit. ([link to the attachments page](#)).

In the context of the upcoming UN Conference on Stocktaking in the context of the High Level Political Forum, we respectfully suggest the courses of action listed below. **We should be most grateful if your Excellency and Ambassadors would kindly bring this letter to the attention of, and pass it on to, others in your UN delegation and to anyone else in your government who could put the enclosed information to good use.**

We look forward to hearing Your Excellency's response to our recommendations and look forward to suggestions for how these can be further developed to better meet global needs.

Yours respectfully,

Members of the Commons Cluster. The following requested a special mention:

All Win Network
Association of World Citizens
The Institute for Planetary Synthesis
The Earth Rights Institute
Global Ecovillage Network
Share the World's Resources
World Sustainability Fund
Commons Action for the United Nations

Further recommendations for actions to be taken by the United Nations and its Member States, including during the upcoming Post 2015 Intergovernmental Negotiations on Stocktaking later in January.

- 1.** All Member States (including in developed countries) provide universal access to the Internet **with the help of professionals in each community who understand deeply the challenges faced by members of their communities** and can enable those who are (Internet) illiterate to locate the resources they need for the development of their individual potential along with that of their families and their communities. The possible use of ODA to this end should be an option made available to Member States who are recipients of ODA; by providing this type of support, all forms of poverty can be alleviated, both material and spiritual.
- 2.** Individuals worldwide (even the poorest and most marginalized) are given an opportunity to have a say in matters being discussed and decided at the UN, including via UN Conferences. Here the UN Secretariat is fast gaining impressive skills, including through the use of ICT. The UN Secretariat should be given all the help it needs to further improve its already impressive record so far in involving all stakeholders worldwide in the steps that must be taken if we are to develop sustainably.
- 3.** The suggestions made by civil society including by the NGO Major Group on how civil society can participate in the UN meetings relating to sustainable development should be implemented, including for the meetings of the High Level Political Forum. Civil society suggestions are based on a broad and long-term history of participation and important experience in what has been effective.

All people are given an opportunity to participate in planning, decision making and implementation of sustainable development at all levels of government and are provided with the educational opportunities required to be able to productively and constructively do so.

- 4.** Government and UN support should be provided for civil society initiatives, capacity building and efforts to fulfill the UN agreements on sustainable development and to implement the SDGs in an integrated, coherent and effective manner. There are thousands of such initiatives deserving of such support running from those addressing a particular issue area to those that are cross-sectoral in nature. They include efforts to improve community planning processes and improve community life such as the Millennium Villages or Transition Towns projects.

Thousands of ecovillages around the world are also demonstrating how relatively small local communities can adopt sustainable practices in a fully integrated manner. The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) has developed an Ecovillage Design Education

curriculum that can be downloaded for free at www.ecovillage.org/en/ede and www.gaiaeducation.net. However, GEN and GAIA Education also provide training programs and classes in permaculture and in community development and design which could be much more widely shared and provided around the world with UN and governmental support.

5. Support for New and Innovative Means of Finance such as the Commons Cluster has suggested in our paper entitled, *Measures to Finance the Shift to a Commons Based Economy*, can provide one of the best means to develop and provide the resources needed to support all of these recommendations and to assist with implementation.

6. The important suggestion made in the SG's Synthesis Report paragraph 125 should be expanded. At present it reads "*an online platform to map existing technology facilitation initiatives, needs and gaps, enhance international cooperation and coordination in the field and promote networking information, sharing, knowledge transfer and technical assistance to advance the scaling up of clean technology initiatives.*" An expanded version would contain the following characteristics:

a. **A market place** where all individual, community, national and global needs are mentioned and best practices are listed and an immediate connection is made between needs and existing best practices, similar to what is now done by existing Internet Search Engines like Google. This should be done as soon as needs and/or best practices are listed and should provide an approximate geographic location of where the need exists and where the best practice is located. (Please find attached 1-page brief on Unleashing Financing and Other Resources for Sustainable Development which provides a brief overview of what a more expanded platform might look like.)

b. **A place of learning** so that all people can become conscious of their individual impact on the Earth System and find ways of making their actions more sustainable. One means of doing this would be through a series of steps in which:

- i. All are encouraged to measure and (where necessary) to decrease their footprint (including water, carbon, biodiversity, ecological, global and other.)
- ii. All are encouraged to reflect on the consequences of their impact on the Earth System and the positive outcomes possible from a change of behavior. For some organizations and corporations, positive outcomes may include using their small(er) footprint as a way of advertising their desirability.
- iii. The impact of individual people, corporations and governments can be accompanied by incentives and disincentives.

c. **A mechanism for the UN and the Governments of Member States at all levels to gain support and help** from fellow Governments, local communities and people worldwide with implementation of their local, national, regional and global

sustainability strategies. This could be accomplished in part through the use of the online marketplace and expanded online platform described above in Recommendation 4a. In addition, existing sectoral networks and associations can help other countries and regions develop means of implementation within the same sector, as with networks like Green Building Councils or Sustainable Business Associations, etc.

d. A modality for monitoring *as constructively as possible* how other people, corporations, governments are performing in their attempts to live sustainably. The monitoring can be put into place in easy steps:

- i. All people learn how to measure and become aware of sustainable and non-sustainable behaviours and how each can be altered for maximum impact on sustainable living;
 - ii. Corporations learn how to redesign and change production and consumption practices so that they become more sustainable in nature.
 - iii. All people are encouraged to make an (annual) report of their impact on the Earth System (possibly by using the “footprint” as measurement) and can be provided with incentives to do so, such as by receiving a tax rebate or having to pay a lower fee for natural resource use.
 - iv.. People, corporations and Governments are also provided with incentives and disincentives to behave more sustainably.
 - v. Each person, community, country would have an individual page as they join the system.
 - vi. Countries would enumerate the (international) agreements in the area of sustainable development they have signed and/or ratified, where further action is needed to achieve or fulfill them, and where areas of implementation can use assistance from people worldwide;
- They would show the correlation between national policy and what is happening at local levels; enumerate best practices and financing mechanisms that can be adopted by others, including practices that tax what needs to be controlled and managed (scarce or depletable natural resources, destructive emissions that result in climate change; and removes taxes from activities that enhance a sustainable economy such as labour);

e. A section for each of the SDGs enumerating best practices and Means of Implementation for each that can be added to by anyone worldwide.

7. A Panel of Sustainable Development Experts are commissioned to develop a way of managing the Earth System as the integrated whole it is and to find ways to correlate individual actions with the planetary boundaries that must be observed if Mother Earth is to provide conditions to support human life. This panel should work with input from people worldwide and could devise ways in which the Earth System together with other global commons already being administered by the UN can be

administered jointly possibly under the auspices of a new version of the trusteeship Council which has completed its present task.

8. To build an integral vision on actual social and economic influences and how they can be integrated in the Post 2015 Agenda, WSF - World Sustainability Fund - published in 2014 two documents named "[The global Agenda Shift](#)" and "[The New Wealth Architecture](#)", which relates to all 17 SDG's.

In 2006 WSF-founder Emile van Essen published [A Marshall plan for All](#) to end poverty. After the publications in 2014 a new insight growth, which is now called "[160% Wealth](#)", based up on decoupling labor value from inflation. [160% Wealth](#) has the power to end poverty in the next 15 year. It adds 30% extra economically growth before 2030 and 50% by 2050. See also the attached handout.

- - -

Attachments links - [click this link to go to the attachments web page containing:](#)

1. [UNLEASHING FINANCING AND OTHER RESOURCES 2014 10](#)
2. [2-page Unleashing commons resources jan 7 2015.doc](#)
3. [WSF_Handout_-_160%_Wealth_to_SDGs.docx](#)