



UN High-level Panel on UN System-Wide Coherence
In the areas of Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Environment

Consultation with Civil Society Organisations

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1. Trade unions welcomes the opportunity to provide its views for improving and revitalising UN system-wide coherence. It is imperative that this process serves to reinforce the UN as a universal multilateral framework for promoting democratic decision-making and to this end, civil society organisations, including trade unions, can contribute in energy, expertise and direction.
2. Coherence must begin at the national level and energised, active civil society organisations, including worker organisations, are a key to achieving this goal.
3. The United Nations must renew its commitment to the primacy of standard-setting and enforcement at the national level for implementing policies and measures. The current trends at the UN of voluntary measures must be placed within a standard-setting framework Environmental, social and labour international standards must be promoted as the key to coherence in this regard, and must form the basis for national rules for all issues subject to this *Panel's* review. Moreover current programmes for promotion and ratification of UN Instruments through technical cooperation and financial assistance need to be given higher priority.
4. Since the UN's influence for directing change to sustainable development in a coherent manner is derived through the ratification by its members of its Conventions, instruments and measures regional development banks, bilateral aid and the international economic institutions must assist to promote these purposes in a direct fashion, and with direct implications for agencies such as the international financial institutions. International Standards as ILO core labour standards or Multilateral Environmental Agreements must be promoted as the key to coherence in this panel.
5. Given the increasingly important role of international trade, more direct linkage between UN agencies and the activities of the WTO has become imperative. Its policies must be consistent with the MDG's and broader sustainable development goals.
6. The various causes of current incoherencies between governmental actions in different UN fora must be analysed and addressed separately. National governments project their own lack of coherence at the international level. One solution to national incoherence lies in enhanced engagement of relevant actors and oversight at the national level, particularly

with the involvement of Major Groups in *National Sustainable Development Strategies* (NSDS), linked to poverty reduction.

7. The CSD could make an effective linking between the UN and the national governments for the purposes of mainstreaming sustainable development. This would require a radical transformation of the current commission into one that could guide national action.

8. Structural and policy issues in the UN itself may contribute to such lack of coherence. Placing a higher priority on the target-setting, monitoring and reporting obligations of governments could be a first step to address this problem, as it would serve to identify duplication, and contradictions. For example, ILO compliance reporting on chemicals should be consistent with both UNEP or FAO requirements.

9. A key challenge to a coherent role for the UN at the country level is to link implementation of international and national sustainable development goals with the activities at the local level, as linked to local production and consumption patterns. There can be no coherence without concrete linkage to the workplace.

10. Workplace approaches to environmental protection, for example, can improve the use of resources, deal with environmental pollution and improve the quality of life for communities, by linking occupational and public health.

11. Towards the end of coherence, we draw attention to the first world *Trade Union Assembly on Labour and the Environment*, organised in Kenya in January 2006 by UNEP with the ILO and WHO, which was attended by 168 delegates from all parts of the world¹. The Assembly provided the basis for a new and broader platform for action by the global trade union movement on the environment and sustainable development, which has direct implications for this UN Review. Participants agreed on the need:

“To strengthen the link between poverty reduction, environmental protection and decent work. Decent and secure jobs are essential for people to have a sustainable livelihood. Creating decent and secure jobs is only possible, however, if environmental sustainability is attained.

12. The Review should take note of the manner in which the Trade Union Assembly brought together labour and environmental concerns in favour of sustainable development and promoted a common platform between the ILO, WHO and UNEP.

13. A United Nations system which mainstreams sustainable development will provide effective frameworks for democratic governance, reinforce the role of national public authorities, establishes rules to govern global markets and enterprises, and ensures

¹ **The Resolution of the Trade Union Assembly is available at:**

English: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_6d.EN.pdf

Français: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_6d.FR.pdf

Español: http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_6d..SP.pdf

accountability and compliance to law, and regulation concerning environmental and social issues.

14. Trade Unions recognised and appreciate the role that UNEP plays in the protection of environment and believe that this role must be strengthened to allow it to contribute to a coherent global sustainable development.

15. We look forward for a strengthened UN and a strengthened ECOSOC. ECOSOC could be the coordinating point for improving coherence.