

Summary Paper – Forests in the Sustainable Development Goals

The UK Perspective

Building on the Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) created an unprecedented international consensus and commitment to a global anti-poverty agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) now present us with an opportunity to build on and go beyond the momentum and achievements generated by the MDGs, whilst providing an opportunity to augment the goals to address newly emerging priorities.

The UK believes that the SDGs should present a single, compelling set of goals centred on eradicating extreme poverty through sustainable development. They should include pertinent issues that are absent from the MDGs and strongly incorporate the essential building blocks of development, namely peace and security, good governance, effective institutions, economic growth, the rule of law, property rights, and the better integration of environment and development. This includes rights of access and sustainable use of living natural resources by those most dependent on them. The UK strongly believes that the new development framework should primarily target the poorest and most marginalised and guarantee that no person regardless of age, sex, gender or disability is left behind.

Forests in the SDGs

Forests are a key component of the natural resource goal as proposed by the High Level Panel, through a specific target calling for a reduction in the rate of deforestation and an increase in the rate of reforestation. The UK sees deforestation and reforestation as essential to support the estimated 1.6bn people who depend on forests for subsistence and income as well as for medicines and fuel, and for national sustainable development. We know that where this is not addressed deforestation can undermine livelihoods, and often strikes disproportionately at the world's poorest communities and most marginalised groups, including indigenous people, the extreme poor and women. Deforestation also results in the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services that support livelihoods and economic growth, and it accounts for a significant proportion of global greenhouse gas emissions, the second-largest source after electricity generation.

It will be important that issues associated with forest protection and reforestation are carefully considered to ensure that any future framework not lead to perverse incentives which may have a negative impact on existing natural ecosystems.

We encourage the workshop of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the FAO European Forestry Commission to consider how best to capture, integrate and communicate forestry within the next set of development goals. We also encourage workshop participants to consider opportunities for forest

conservation and sustainable management to be incorporated into other relevant goals, for example using those described by the High Level Panel as a basis:

- Goal 1. End Poverty. Specifically, 1d. to build resilience and reduce deaths from natural disasters. Forests can be an effective strategy to mitigate the impact of natural disasters, such as flooding and landslides;
- Goal 5. Ensure Food Security and Good Nutrition. 1.6bn of the world's poorest people are dependent on forests for their livelihoods and food security;
- Goal 6. Achieve Universal Access to Water and Sanitation. Forests provide natural filtration and storage systems which ensure clean safe water, estimated to be worth US \$2.3 trillion per year globally;
- Goal 7. Secure Sustainable Energy. Biomass from sustainably managed forests can be used as a sustainable source of energy.
- Goal 8. Create Jobs, Sustainable Livelihoods, and Equitable Growth. Over 10 million people are employed in the formal forest sector with many more employed informally, and 60 million indigenous peoples are wholly dependent on forests. Securing these livelihoods through the sustainable use of forest resources is therefore crucial to achieving this goal.

Lastly, we encourage the workshop to consider how best to place forests within the overall set of SDGs currently being discussed. The 12 goals articulated in the High Level Panel report could be used as the basis for this discussion.