



DRAFT: SCP Governance:

Sustainable Consumption and Production Governance: A Guide towards Rio+20

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SDG 2012 is Stakeholder Forum's Programme on Sustainable Development Governance towards the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (UNCSD), also known as 'Rio+20' and 'Earth Summit 2012'. The programme consists of the following activities:

- **Thought Leadership** – writing and commissioning think pieces on issues relating to sustainable development governance, to stimulate and inform discussion on this issue towards Rio+20
- **Sustainable Development Governance 2012 Network (SDG2012 Network)** – co-ordinating a multi-stakeholder network of experts to produce and peer review think pieces, discuss and exchange on issues relating to the institutional framework for sustainable development, and align with policy positions where appropriate
- **Information and Resources** – publishing informative guides and briefings and hosting an online clearing-house of information and updates on international environmental and sustainable development governance – 'SDG dossier'
- **Submissions** – making official submissions to the Rio+20 process based on think pieces and dialogue.

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GLOSSARY

CSD	Commission for Sustainable Development
NCSD	National Council for Sustainable Development
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
10YFP	Ten Year Framework of Programmes

An Overview

Sustainable Consumption and Production Governance (SCP Governance) is currently a loosely defined, cautiously discussed, sparingly adopted and strategically ignored concept.

Nineteen years since identifying the need for SCP at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED 1992), nine years work on a framework of programmes since the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD 2002), and a year since the commencement of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD 2012) preparatory process, no concrete measures have been taken towards strong SCP Governance through the UN lead intergovernmental system. It is the expectation that the upcoming UNCSD2012 (Rio+20 Summit) will include SCP Governance in a more concrete and significant manner.

Why is SCP governance not a serious focus on the international agenda?

One main reason is that the focus of SCP Governance in the international governance regime, or more specifically within the UN system, has been on formulating and managing a 'Ten year Framework of Programmes (10YFP)'. This too is promoted as a collection of voluntary commitments evolved through an expert consultation process, but which, in reality, has seriously failed in engaging governments and stakeholders. Therefore, SCP Governance in the context of the current UN initiative is not a policy process that attempts to govern the behaviour of nations, business and consumers; SCP Governance is just an attempt to put voluntary commitments under a global framework of programmes.

Another reason is that only a limited number of governments, organizations, and individuals are truly knowledgeable and aware of what SCP means. This is due to the fact that SCP dialogue continues to remain within a small group of individuals, organizations and governments. The limitations provided by the interests of these individuals, organizations and governments have caused SCP Governance to remain a limited and narrow process.

It is timely that the global focus moves towards addressing the key warning identified nineteen years ago in the UNCED Agenda 21: "the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances". It is time to question the fundamental challenges of unsustainable consumption and production that is triggering climate change and keeping poverty alive on earth.

It is time that the UNCSD2012 agenda address SCP governance from a two tiered track.

Firstly, UNCSD2012 should establish the principles of a Green Economy based on the fundamentals of ensuring sustainable consumption and production. The core idea of a Green Economy should be to enforce sustainability, in relation to the wellbeing of all people, and to create an economic system that ensures social equity, protects the ecological balance and creates economic sufficiency. The foundations of SCP Governance are the same.

Secondly, UNCSD2012 should make SCP Governance the cornerstone of the [institutional framework for sustainable development](#). The worsening conditions of climate and poverty needs to be addressed in the institutional reforms. The idea is not to simply reform the UN agencies to manage global sustainability projects and programmes, but to reform the institutional approaches that are failing to address the worsening conditions on earth.

Everyone is guessing as to what could come out of UNCSD2012.

The outcomes of UNCSD2012 should be to ensure the determinations made in Agenda 21 and JPOI on sustainable consumption and production. A possible outcome of UNCSD2012 could be a **Global Sustainable Development Agreement; an extension of the Rio Declaration in 1992**. Another outcome could be to write a **Blueprint for a Transition towards Sustainable Living on Earth**; a progression from Agenda 21. Within this agreement, and the blueprint for action, is an ideal place to embed an **Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production**.

This raises the question of who will be responsible for implementing such an agreement and how will they implement it? In other words, "What is the institutional arrangement for SCP Governance?"

Some elements of an institutional mechanism for SCP Governance could include:

1. Establishing a Global Forum on SCP
2. Establishing National Committees on SCP
3. Establishing an Intergovernmental SCP Committee
4. Establishing an International Secretariat for SCP Governance
5. Establishing a coordination office for the 10YFP on SCP

This paper is intended to provide some insight and guidance towards making SCP Governance a more central focus of UNCSD2012. The paper will propose that the responsibility of SCP Governance should not be transferred to political and bureaucratic representatives, but to ensure that ultimate power of governance is retained within the peoples' supremacy.

Introduction to the Issue

SCP Governance and UNCS2012

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (referred to as UNCS2012 or Rio+20 Summit) to be held in the year 2012 will focus on two themes: (a) a [green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication](#); and (b) the [institutional framework for sustainable development](#).

Sustainable Consumption and Production Governance (SCP Governance) is herewith proposed as a key focus of UNCS2012 under the Institutional framework for Sustainable development.

SCP will presumably become a discussion topic under a [green economy](#). However, if the SCP dialogue is to provide a tangible outcome in 2012, it should be positioned as a governance discussion. Therefore, SCP Governance now needs to emerge in the UNCS2012 agenda with discussions framed under the [institutional framework for sustainable development](#) theme.

History of SCP Governance

Agenda 21 (Chapter 4.3), which is an outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED 1992), states that "the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries, which is a matter of grave concern, aggravating poverty and imbalances". As one of the main obstacles towards achieving sustainable development, enabling SCP should become a key focus of any newly emerging international governance outcome.

Sustainable consumption and production is referenced in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) as one of three overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development, together with poverty eradication and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development (JPOI, I.2). The JPOI, which is an outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD 2002), states that fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development. The Plan calls for the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns by all countries, with developed countries taking the lead, while ensuring that all countries benefit from the process. To that end, the Plan calls on countries to take into account the Rio principles, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Furthermore, it enjoins governments, relevant international organizations, the private sector and all major groups to play an active role in changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

What is SCP?

After two decades of official dialogue within the international governance systems (particularly the United Nations), SCP still does not have a commonly accepted definition.

Among existing definitions, the one adopted at the CSD International Work Programme in 1995 (borrowed from the Sustainable Consumption Conference in Oslo, Norway; 19-20 January 1994) is: "SCP is the use of services and related products which respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life while minimizing the use of natural resources and toxic materials as well as the emissions of waste and pollutants over the life-cycle so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations."

The Integrative Strategies Forum in the USA defines SCP as "a system that provides for human needs, improves social and economic security and quality of life for all people, including future generations, while protecting the ecosystems upon which human life depends".

Author's Definition for SCP

SCP is a systemic process of lifestyle and livelihood behaviours that ensures the wellbeing of all people in an equitable manner while conserving the ecology for current and future generations.

Author's Definition for SCP Governance

SCP Governance is the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage a systemic process of lifestyle and livelihood behaviours that ensures the wellbeing of all people in an equitable manner while conserving the ecology for current and future generations by way of suitable mechanisms, processes and institutions through which individuals and groups articulate their aspirations, exercise their natural and legal rights and obligations, and mediate their differences.

State of Play: A review of the Marrakech Process

Sustainable Consumption and Production Governance (SCPG) is currently not a seriously addressed issue in the United Nations system or in the international governance forums. Apart from formulating a Ten Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on SCP, the official international process has not taken any significant initiative towards SCP Governance. There is no regional governance mechanism or solid national mechanism that has been established by any single country that is exclusive for SCP governance. Just like the UN Marrakech Process for a 10YFP, all other programmes across the world are loosely governed or not governed in a structured way.

Known as the Marrakech Process, the only official intergovernmental SCP process with any governance aspects involved has been a rather loosely coordinated programme. Jointly managed by UNEP and UNDESA, it was launched in 2003 to build political support for the implementation of SCP and to prepare input for negotiations at CSD 18-19. The main objective has been to support the elaboration of a 10-Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on sustainable consumption and production, as called for by the WSSD Johannesburg Plan of Action.

The stated aim of the 10YFP on SCP, as set out in the JPOI, is to: "support regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production to promote social and economic development within the carrying capacity of ecosystems by addressing and, where appropriate, delinking economic growth and environmental degradation through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes and reducing resource degradation, pollution and waste".

The secretariat had defined its goal as to assist countries in their efforts towards sustainability, to green their economies, to help corporations develop sustainable business models, and to encourage consumers to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. UNEP and UNDESA, as the lead agencies of this global process, were expected to engage in active participation with national governments, international organizations, development agencies, business and civil society.

During the the past nine years the secretariat has not been able to motivate many governments to initiate strong commitments towards sustainable consumption and production or establish National or Regional SCP Councils. The current draft of a 10YFP on SCP remains an underrepresented thought on SCP and a weak collection of initiatives on furthering SCP on earth.

The failure of the secretariat to engage stakeholders in a transparent and equitable manner has lead to the lack of global interest and the low expectation levels currently demonstrated.

After many extensive and expensive series of expert meetings, workshops, and consultations in the different regions and countries, most developing country governments and their stakeholders, even today, are not aware of the Marrakech Process, 10YFP or what SCP means in the international dialogue. Other than some environment ministry officials in developing countries, most national leaders and authorities are not aware of SCP as an international dialogue that may have the potential to aid in regulating their consumption and production behaviour in the future. Those who understand the process are sceptical and somewhat hesitant to support it in fear of having to compromise their economic development. The absence of an inclusive and extensive dialogue has resulted in SCP Governance being viewed with apprehension and suspicion as a move to regulate growing higher consumption levels of the rapidly developing economies.

SCP has generated some international interest and awareness mainly due to some exciting vision and action initiatives from different stakeholder groups. Civil society has been working for more than two decades in bringing SCP to the international agenda, even though they continue to be ignored and marginalised in the process. However, even civil society activism and engagement in the field of SCP is limited to a few groups and networks. They too have failed to create widespread awareness and have lacked the capacity to form a global outreach to enable a more inclusive dialogue on SCP.

Large corporations and the international business councils that represent them have been active in providing some direction to the 10YFP. Efficiency has been a 'mantra' of the Marrakech process that has focused solely on making production and consumption of resources less wasteful. Most of these corporate representatives from the rich industrialised nations are promoting greener growth and green profits, which appears to be the same approach of the Marrakech secretariat. Some civil society and academic sector experts on SCP argue that the 10YFP has been largely influenced by the interest of these large corporate entities through their funding of many international programmes.

Others who have been active are those such as international trade union associations and local government associations who have provided input into a growing dialogue and making the limited forums somewhat representative. Clean, green and sustainable cities have become better understood by the exposure of those cities that are in the forefront providing case studies. In most of these cases, strong political will has been supported by interest of the business sector to evolve greener markets and educators' capacity to create awareness amongst city consumers to utilise green public utilities to the maximum. Other major groups such as youth, indigenous people, farmers or fishermen have had little association or engagement in the Marrakech process.

The outcome or the final result of a 10YFP is to be seen soon. But even at this stage, the beginning of SCP Governance is yet to be seen.

Options for Reform and Why

SCP Governance is a relatively new and neglected subject that needs to be deeply analysed, dialogued, researched and policy framed. The foundations of SCP Governance need to be clearly established in creating an operational framework.

Governments and the UN system should establish a set of criteria to set up the institutional arrangement for managing the 10YFP on SCP. These criteria should be based on principles and guidelines for good governance. The institutional mechanism should address good governance criteria such as responsibility towards the mandate & representation, accountability & responsibility, participation & engagement, transparency & reporting, effectiveness & productivity, and coherence & honesty.

A Holistic Vision on SCP Governance

SCP Governance first and foremost needs to have a conceptual framework as a base if it is to become meaningful to the vastly diverse communities in the world and maintain the interest of the stakeholders. The following could provide SCP Governance with the foundations to build a conceptual framework.

1. Enhance from 'Smart Consumption' to 'Equitable Consumption'

Smart consumption is promoted as a strategic approach to changing wasteful consumerist behaviour. The approach attempts to green the consumption habits of the consumerist society especially in the industrialized rich countries. Smart consumption does not provide hope for half of the world's poor who lack adequate access to resources, goods and services. They need equitable opportunities to consume at least their basic needs before consuming smartly. Providing equitable consumption opportunities to all must become a key priority of SCP governance.

2. Evolve from 'Efficiency' to 'Sufficiency'

Efficiency is promoted to minimise waste and maximise productivity in the production processes. Efficiency, however, does not ensure equitable access to resources and does not prevent exploitation of the resources. It assumes that maximizing the utilities and minimizing the waste will enable sustainable production. While efficiency is important in a transition towards a sustainable system of consumption and production, sufficiency needs to be the broader goal. Sufficiency can guide nations and communities towards self-reliance and contentment in their wellbeing.

3. Extend the 'Green Growth based Green Economy' approach to 'Wellbeing based Sustainable Economies'

The approach towards creating a green economy should be the replacement of the current economic order of inequity, destruction and greed that has kept half of the global people in poverty and created a potential climate catastrophe. A true green economy, which is a Sustainable Economy, should be an economic system that ensures social equity, protects the ecological balance and creates economic sufficiency. In other words, the core idea of a green economy should be to enforce sustainability, conceived of as the wellbeing of all people and the diverse arrays of non-human life. The growth-and-accumulation approach therefore needs to be extended towards distribution and sharing to ensure equitable consumption and production opportunities, which in turn will enable sufficiency.

A Decentralised Approach to SCP Governance

The focus of an institutional framework for sustainable development needs to be approached beyond the reformation of the UN agencies currently handling over five hundred Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA). That is more or less an in-house clean-up job that should instead be the outcome of a broader view on setting up governance frameworks. The following could provide UNCS2012 a more holistic approach towards building the foundations for SCP Governance.

1. Shift the focus from 'Coordination of Voluntary Commitments of a 10 Year Framework of Programmes on SCP' to a 'Commitment to a Strong International Framework on SCP'

The governance challenge of a new world order needs to ensure a future of equitable opportunities for wellbeing and happiness of all. Managing a set of voluntary initiatives on SCP will not be able to make the large shifts of behaviour to face the multiple crises emerging from climate change or eradicate poverty on earth. The UNCS2012 should investigate all possible avenues to strengthen the international commitment towards SCP and reform the current institutional framework towards a responsible global governance system. An international agreement on SCP towards making strong commitments by governments will prove to be helpful. Such an international agreement made by governments, nations and their stakeholders, especially business and industry, will mandate them to act with responsibility towards ecological and social capital and make serious contributions towards mitigating climate change and eradicating poverty.

2. Decentralizing SCP Governance approach from a Multilateral Coordination to National and Social Level Coordination

Sustainable Development Governance (SDG) discussions appear to be focused on reforming the International Governance frameworks and mechanisms. This is a narrow approach that tries to place sustainable development under the care of multilateral agencies. Governance

of sustainable development essentially needs to be viewed as a decentralized process of action. While policy can be made and rule of law be established at the international, regional and national levels, the implementation of sustainability will remain a make-or-break reality at the community levels. While global economies and national economies define themselves in terms of "growth" or "green", communities that are not in the compulsion of consumerism will determine sustainability. SCP governance essentially needs to be viewed from a locally or nationally driven exercise, rather than a mechanism of control at the international level.

3. Focusing on the role of International SCP Governance as a facilitator towards creating an equitable world order

The United Nations Organization should not be perceived as a super-nation or aspiring to become a world government. The current imbalances in global negotiations, whether WTO trade talks or UNFCCC climate talks, do not allow for the fullest manifestation of the capacity of the UN or the multilateral governance mechanisms to act in accordance with principles of justice towards building an equitable world order. SCP Governance at the international level is a facilitator of the creation of opportunities for all nations and communities to have equitable consumption opportunities. While the responsibilities of SCP Governance are rolled back to national governments, the UNO and International Governance mechanisms should strive towards evolving into neutral and unbiased facilitators.

4. The emphasis on the commitment of SCP should be stressed to be of democratic national governments

The nation state, for better or worse, remains in the present and near future as the realistic guardians of the wellbeing of people. Responsibilities of nations to act democratically towards the equitable consumption and production opportunities should be facilitated by the international governance mechanisms. SCP Governance through democratic national governments should be ensured by empowering the lowest denomination of community governance.

5. SCP Governance should re-establish the responsibility of the individual towards sustainable consumption and production behaviour

The unsustainable consumerist behaviours need to be governed at the individual level to ensure greater wellbeing of the society. SCP Governance should reinforce the notion of collective decision making for the greater good of society and regulate behaviour of wasteful and exploitative individual behaviour that prevents the exercise of others' rights to sustainable consumption and production.

Elements of an Institutional Mechanism for SCP Governance

Finally, what should be the institutional mechanism for SCP Governance that could have a bottom-up and top-down synergy and integration? Taking into consideration all the above concerns and criteria, the actual institutional mechanism for SCP Governance needs to be less linear and more dynamic in its design. The following five institutional mechanisms need to be established in an integrated global mechanism for SCP Governance to make the required impact.

1. Establish a Global Forum on SCP (as a Stakeholder Mechanism) with a mandate to select representation on the Global SCP Mechanism:

SCP governance needs to evolve with the broadest possible global community participation. For this to happen, a proper stakeholder-lead Global Forum on SCP needs to be created. This was a seriously missing element in the Marrakech Process towards the 10YFP on SCP. While the Marrakech Process Secretariat did not attempt to create such a broad global forum, the stakeholders were similarly too divided to build it. The missing collective dialogue needs to be created through a Global Forum on SCP (like the World Economic Forum, World Social Forum, World Resources Forum, etc.). The responsibility of setting such a global forum will be on the stakeholders themselves, as the governments may not be too interested in empowering the major groups to that extent. While civil society can take the lead in establishing the Global Forum on SCP, they must also ensure that key stakeholders such as business and industry, trade unions, local governments, researchers and academics, and all other major groups such as indigenous people, women, and youth are strongly integrated into the process by design. The global forum should also ensure equitable regional and gender balance to enable true global aspirations to emerge. The global forum should democratically select, through a process of constituent committees, representatives (?) to present the interests of the stakeholders in an emerging international SCP Governance mechanism. The UN needs to recognise this global forum and its democratically selected representatives as a legitimate body with a mandate and integrate them with equality into the emerging governance mechanism for SCP.

2. Establish National Committees on SCP (operated within the National Council for Sustainable Development) with a mandate to advise all national agencies working on SCP and national representatives on the Intergovernmental SCP Mechanisms.

Governments need to be seriously engaged in the SCP dialogue, policy and governance. The best mechanism would be to encourage the establishment of National Committees for SCP (NCSCP). Creating separate mechanisms for all emerging sustainability issues would be too expensive and untimely and would create coordination lapses. Therefore, the ideal plan would be to integrate them into the existing National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD). In other words, NCSD's should be mandated to act as the national focal point for SCP governance. This will also raise the need to revitalise and reform the NCSD's across the world. In most countries the NSDC do not function well or at all. The global SCP Governance mechanism should therefore enable and empower the revitalization or reestablishment of

NCSOs across all nations through all necessary resource and policy support. The key focus of each NCSO should be to be organised as an inter-ministerial body and headed by the highest authority in government. This will empower the NCSO with the correct authority to enable SCP through all relevant channels and modes. This NCSO will also provide expertise to the national missions in the international SCP mechanisms.

3. Establish an Intergovernmental SCP Committee (operated within the annual CSD member states and Bureau mechanism) to lead and oversee the global SCP governance process

The UN dialogue on institutional arrangement for sustainable development is too focused on reforming the UN agencies which are handling the five-hundred-odd Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA). It should be broad-based beyond the interest of empowering the CSD from a commission to council or empowering UNEP from a programme to an organization. While these are important aspects of a new institutional arrangement, the UN system needs to recognise that governance is a primary role of governments at national and local levels. Therefore, SCP Governance needs to be united with direct representation by the governments; the role of the UN needs to be to empower governments to enforce democratic and good governance practices. In housing the SCP Governance mechanism within the UN system, the CSD may provide the most flexible model with a rotating membership and bureau in which the governments could ensure a balance of interests within the scope of SCP. The institutional arrangement for SCP Governance should essentially become an intergovernmental operation and not a UN staff-lead and -managed programme such as the Marrakech Process. SCP Governance needs to evolve beyond managing a simple collection of programmes and initiatives. While the best way to ensure continuity of the current work (10YFP) and to ensure that resources are efficiently utilised will be to establish an Intergovernmental SCP Council (ISPC) within the CSD to oversee the vision and due enforcement of the decisions on progressing SCP in the world. An empowered CSD (perhaps being elevated itself to a council status) will therefore have an extended role in foreseeing the governance of the global SCP programme that includes the 10YFP on SCP.

4. Establish an International Secretariat (under leadership of the CSD) and mandate UNDESA to manage it.

The role of an international secretariat should be to facilitate the decisions of the ISPC under an empowered CSD. The secretariat should have a clear mandate to exercise their duties with authority and in fairness and equity towards all parties. Parties in SCP governance will include governments, intergovernmental agencies, stakeholders and major groups. An ideal secretariat will be represented by the chairs or co-chairs of the ISPC (under the CSD), rotating membership of NSPCs (under NCSO) from a select number of nations, Co chairs of the Global SCP Forum, and a number of invited SCP experts from developed and developing countries. As the agency that has a natural mandate to coordinate the CSD, UNDESA will then become the legitimate secretariat for SCP Governance.

5. Establish a coordination office for the 10YFP on SCP (under the management of UNEP) and appoint UNDESA to oversee the overall governance aspects.

The end of a Marrakech process will lead to the emergence of a 10YFP on SCP. The joint secretariat may also end, paving the way to a new organization with the authority of managing the 10YFP. The current debate and divide if UNEP or UNDESA should become the lead agency creates a narrow and unhealthy environment to further the objectives of SCP. While the past performance on formulating a 10YFP by the joint partners have been nothing close to being productive and encouraging, these two agencies remain the most experienced and capable within the UN to continue with the job. However, UNEP during the past nine years has made most effort and evolved greater internal capacity to manage a 10YFP. Therefore, UNEP assuming the central coordination role of the 10YFP may also become the logical choice. However, this does not mean that UNDESA or any other UN agency needs to be removed from the association or responsibility of the 10YFP. On the contrary, the mandate of UNEP as the UN focal point in managing the 10YFP should be towards coordinating the engagement of all relevant UN line agencies, governments and stakeholders in implementing the programmes with the 10YFP. This would mean that UNEP's role is not as an implementer but as a coordinator, facilitator and manager of the 10YFP. The responsibility of implementation will fall on the relevant agencies committing to programmes within the 10YFP. This brings us to the question of the role of UNDESA in the 10YFP. UNDESA should become the overall focal point of SCP Governance in UN system. They should coordinate the Intergovernmental SCP Committee and the Secretariat to ensure that interests of all parties are ensured by the 10YFP and also to ensure that all relevant parties, stakeholder, major groups and experts are integrated into the implementation of the 10YFP. UNDESA will therefore also perform the role of the auditor of the 10YFP to ensure good governance principles are adhered to during the implementation of the 10YFP.

SDG2012 – Stakeholder Forum's Programme on Sustainable Development Governance towards the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012.

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