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European Sustainable Development Network



*ESDN Conference 2010*

## **Conference Proceedings**

**“Towards an Economy compatible  
with Sustainable Development Principles:  
‘Green’ Strategies in the context of Sustainable Development”**

**4 - 6 July 2010 in Ghent, Belgium**

**Hosted by the Belgian EU Presidency**

**prepared by**

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## Introduction

The European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN) Conference 2010, “Towards an Economy compatible with Sustainable Development Principles: ‘Green’ Strategies in the context of Sustainable Development”, took place in Ghent on 4-6 July 2010. It was hosted by the Belgian EU Presidency.

The aim of the annual ESDN conferences is to facilitate the exchange of experiences and knowledge between public administrators responsible for sustainable development strategies and policies at the EU, national and sub-national levels, experts from National Sustainable Development Councils, members of the SD working group of the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils (EEAC), members of the SD Observatory of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), members of OECD’s Annual Meeting of Sustainable Development Experts (AMSDE), NGO representatives as well esteemed experts and researchers. In total, exactly 100 participants from 25 countries attended the ESDN Conference 2010 (the list of participants can be found in the [ESDN Conferences section](#) at the ESDN website).

This year’s conference was the 9<sup>th</sup> in a series of similar events. Previous ESDN conferences were held in Prague/Czech Republic (2009), Paris/France (2008), Berlin/Germany (2007), Salzburg/Austria (2006), Windsor/UK (2005), Kinsale/Ireland (2004), Vienna/Austria (2003), and The Hague/Netherlands (2002). For a full documentation of all ESDN conferences, please also go the [ESDN Conferences section](#) at the ESDN website.

The ESDN Conference 2010 explored three themes:

- Linking economic growth and sustainable development – addressing environmental and social challenges
- From green growth towards an economy compatible with sustainable development principles
- Moving towards a sustainable economy – governance perspectives

The main focus of the conference was on the link between economic growth and sustainable development. In so doing, it continued the work of ESDN on this topic which comprises the [ESDN Quarterly Report December 2009](#); an [ESDN Case Study](#) on strategies, initiatives and activities that aim to foster this link; and the [5<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop](#), “From Green Growth towards a Sustainable Economy?”, which took place in Madrid on 25-26 March 2010.

Similar to previous ESDN conferences, the 2010 event dealt with the conference themes in different formats: Keynote presentations highlighted general issues and key aspects of the conference themes; panel discussions provided an overview of experiences and standpoints of different actors and institutions; parallel working groups discussed specific aspects of the conference themes in-depth; and summaries of the results of the working group discussions were used for immediate reactions and further discussions during the conference.

The full documentation of the ESDN Conference 2010 can be found at the [ESDN homepage](#) and includes

- the Conference Programme,
- the Conference Discussion Paper,
- the Conference Proceedings,
- the PowerPoint slides of the keynote presentations and all other presentations,
- the list of participants, and
- a photo documentation.

## Welcome address

**Cedric van de Walle**, Cabinet of Belgian Federal Minister of Climate and Energy, welcomed the participants of the ESDN Conference 2010 on behalf of the Belgian Minister of Climate and Energy and mentioned that the conference was one of the first events of the Belgian EU Presidency. At the beginning, he stressed the timely occasion of the conference to talk about the relationship between economic growth and sustainable development. He also pointed out that sustainable development has a long tradition in Belgium, starting with the first federal strategy in 1997, and continues well into the 2000s, including the support of the United Nation's Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 (Rio +20). Mr. van de Walle argued that high level political commitment is crucial for sustainable development. In order to foster the implementation of the EU SDS and to increase commitment at all political levels, the review of the strategy should already start in 2010.

Mr. van de Walle then outlined the priorities of the Belgian EU Presidency in the context of sustainable development:

- (a) Current socio-economic situation in Europe: continuing the fight against the economic crisis. In this context, the "Europe 2020" strategy will have to play a vital role and the Belgian EU Presidency expects the strategy to deliver good results. A link between the "Europe 2020" strategy and the EU SDS should be made and the social dimension should gain prominence.
- (b) Climate and environmental policy: the main objective is to achieve a low carbon economy. A low carbon and sustainable economy should also include fair conditions for workers and communities. Therefore, a "just and fair transition" has to be achieved, i.e. not only green jobs, but decent jobs.
- (c) Strengthening the social dimension: this includes issues like fighting poverty and policies for an aging population. The social dimension is addressed in the "Europe 2020" strategy, but efforts need to be increased also on issues like pensions, public health and gender.

He concluded his welcome address by stressing that change is now necessary and possible. The transformation of the economic system should lead to a development trajectory that is more sustainable.

## Session 1: Linking economic growth and sustainable development – addressing environmental and social challenges

Session 1 of the ESDN Conference 2010 included (a) a recap of the 5th ESDN Workshop in Madrid (“From Green Growth towards a Sustainable Economy?”) and an overview of several principles of a sustainable economy, (b) keynote presentations on the environmental and social challenges in strategies and policies that aim to link economic growth and sustainable development, (c) presentations of representatives of the European Commission, UNEP and OECD on their strategic efforts to ensure coherence between economic, environmental and social challenges, and (d) plenary and panel discussions. We summarise the presentations and discussion below. The PPT slides of the keynoters can be found in the [ESDN Conferences section](#) of the ESDN homepage.

### ***Objectives of the conference, recap of 5<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop and principles of a sustainable economy***

**Elisabeth Freytag**, Austrian Ministry of Environment and ESDN Co-chair, presented the main objectives of the ESDN Conference 2010:

- Reflecting on the link between economic growth and sustainable development
- Addressing environmental and social challenges in strategies/initiatives
- Focussing on 3 strategies/initiatives
  - EU: “Europe2020” strategy
  - UNEP: Green Economy Initiative & preparation of UNCS D2012
  - OECD: Green Growth Strategy
- Discussing innovative approaches of sustainable development, how to achieve coherence among policy sectors & reflecting on governance perspectives

Ms. Freytag mentioned that the ESDN aims to keep the EU SDS and its objectives alive. This involves making clear to everybody why the EU SDS is important, what its added-value is and why it needs to compliment the “Europe 2020” strategy. Moreover, the ESDN aims to contribute to the EU’s preparation for the UNCS D conference in 2012.

Ms. Freytag then referred to the work of ESDN that has been done in relation to the conference objectives, including the ESDN Quarterly Report of December 2009, the first ESDN Case Study and the 5<sup>th</sup> ESDN Workshop in Madrid. She shortly outlined some results of the workshop discussions in Madrid:

- the current economic crisis should be seen as an opportunity for transition of traditional economic systems (but crisis recovery is not necessarily a sustainability transition!);
- integrated policy toolkits and policy-relevant measurement tools and indicators are needed;
- risk exists that sustainable development is redefined or downgraded to the quick fixes of “green jobs” and “eco-innovation”;
- a definition of the social pillar of sustainable development going beyond jobs is needed; and

- explorations of (i) the criteria for a sustainable economy, (ii) governance mechanisms necessary for the transition process, and (iii) policy tools to achieve the transition are required.

**Michael Sedlacko**, ESDN Office at the Research Institute for Managing Sustainability (RIMAS), presented ideas and background on how to define principles for a sustainable economy. He began by arguing that we are just learning to measure what counts and delivered several examples for this, e.g. questioning of GDP as the only measurement of growth and/or development; no dedicated system of measurement of natural capital; income is usually de-contextualised; material well-being just a component of quality-of-life and of low importance once basic material needs are satisfied; and we measure flows rather than stocks. *Principle 1, therefore, is that a sustainable economy redefines 'good' development:* whereas green growth does not put growth and material consumption into question, a sustainable economy "provides an opportunity to flourish" (Tim Jackson, "Prosperity without Growth", 2009) and puts human well-being and social equity at its centre.

Mr. Sedlacko argued that our economic systems are built on a wrong understanding of human nature, including an orientation towards the homo oeconomicus, the 'holy cow' of consumer sovereignty, equating optimal processes with efficiency and providing incentives to behave in ways not consistent with natural moral behaviour. *Principle 2 of a sustainable economy is a realistic conception of human nature.* While green growth does not seem to challenge the dominant understanding of humans' economic behavior, a sustainable economy acknowledges that the economic structure cannot be fixed without the social system.

Thirdly, Mr. Sedlacko argued that the world's natural resources have been extensively depleted over the last decades by an economy driven by growth and consumption. The realization that we live on a planet with finite resources is increasingly important and puts challenges on current economic systems and behavior. *Principle 3 of a sustainable economy is to stay within 'ecological limits'.* Green growth considers 'ecological limits' to a limited extent and scale as such is not much taken into account. In contrast, in a sustainable economy (a) consumption of resources is kept in line with resources' natural regeneration or generation through investment, (b) production of waste stays within waste-assimilation capacity and irreversible damage is avoided, and (c) non-negotiable baselines are applied. *Principle 4 refers to social concerns that are addressed in a sustainable economy.* Whereas in green growth social concerns are mostly expressed in terms of jobs and education & training (competitiveness rationale), a sustainable economy is concerned about access to resources, poverty, 'environmentalism of the poor', well-being/quality-of-life/happiness, global responsibility, etc.

Mr. Sedlacko pointed out that the concept of 'resilience' is crucial in how economic systems are structured and how development is approached. He presented several examples: in the current economic systems, risks are higher and with larger impacts ('too big to fail', drilling in vulnerable and inaccessible areas, Gulf of Mexico leak, GMOs, chemicals); ever shortening time scales/cycles; we need to answer the questions whether increasing complexity of economy has made it more vulnerable; speculative bubbles or fads represent threats to resilience; a concentration of activities, expectations or beliefs which locks the system into a particular technology or set of preferences. *Principle 5 refers to sustainable economy as resilient.* He argued that green growth was not successful in post-crisis restructuring. Sustainable economy

aims at resilience and quick recovery through structural design. Moreover, it refers to several other structural changes of economic systems, including decentralisation, diversification, self-sufficiency, limitations of scale, local currencies, etc. The question remains, however, whether a sustainable economy would thus be in contradiction to the open economy concept? *The final Principle 6 is that a sustainable economy is based on respect to human rights.* A sustainable economy takes into account the protection of rights across value chains, dignified jobs and pay, protection of livelihoods, meaningful participation in economic life and institutions that govern it.

At the end of his keynote, Mr. Sedlacko outlined some green growth challenges and enabling conditions: (i) international frameworks and post-crisis architecture; (ii) will to initiate national policy reforms; (iii) shifts in financing priorities; (iv) institutional capacity; and (v) mobilisation of interests.

### ***Addressing environmental and social challenges in strategies that link economic growth and sustainable development***

**Robert Gee**, Senior Advisor on Science, Policy and Emerging Issues at the European Environment Agency (EEA), keynoted on environmental opportunities in times of the triple crises in financial, energy and ecosystems. Mr. Gee started by pointing out that the “Europe 2020” strategy, UNEP’s Green Economy Initiative and OECD’s Green Growth Strategy are all responses to the financial crisis. He argued that it is, therefore, crucial to understand what has happened and what caused the financial meltdown: there are 3 crises (financial, energy, ecosystems) that are interconnected, but often dealt with in separate worlds; environment can reach across to finance with common concepts/language; there is a need to identify and understand underlying causes to design and implement effective measures; and mutual learning about how to live with complex socio-ecological systems is crucial.

Mr. Gee then presented some historical data and pointed out that it takes usually a long time to react to environmental degradation and for measures to become effective. He argued that a lot of knowledge is available, but it would take society a long time to respond to this knowledge. Mr. Gee then presented 12 common causes for the three crises and went through nine of them more in-depth:

- 1) *The free market, deregulatory ideology that failed*: financial deregulation in 1980-1999, especially in the US, created to deal with malign banking activities (e.g. US Financial Modernisation Act 1999).
- 2) *Early warnings ignored – financial crisis 2003-06*: early warnings in all three topics (financial, energy, ecosystems) have been ignored. There are several reasons for this, e.g. powerful economic/political stakes in status quo, “We don’t want to know”/“Don’t spoil the party” approach, early warners sidelined or silenced, short-term thinking/decision-making, limited use of scenarios, etc.
- 3) Debt driven consumption in US/Europe, excess savings in Asia.
- 4) *Imbalances between stocks & flows*: Finance: focus on flow indicators, e.g. interest rates and inflation not on quantity/quality of financial assets (led to “Troubled Asset Relief” etc.); Energy: focus on stocks of fossil fuels not on flows of renewable; Ecosystems: focus on flows of food & fibre not on environmental assets.
- 5) Socially malign private incentives.

- 6) *Misleading market prices*: low interest rates and low apparent risk created strong incentives for financial institutions to become highly geared; energy and ecosystems externalities not in market prices.
- 7) *Misplaced faith in models, financial*: Too large a proportion of mathematical economics are a mere concoction, as imprecise as the initial assumptions they rest on which allows authors to lose sight of the complexities and interdependences of the real world (Keynes, 1936).
- 8) *Intransparent products and impacts*: complex and ill understood financial products; full costs of energy and ecosystem products not visible at point of purchase.
- 9) *Poorly understood complex systems*: complex financial, biological & ecological systems: indeterminacies, uncertainties and ignorance, thresholds, tipping points, and unstable, non-linear dynamics.
- 10) Lack of knowledge of tipping points and systemic risk.
- 11) *Debts/risks passed on to 'distant others'*: 'toxic' financial debts passed on and on within complex products; ecological debts and risks largely passed onto to the poor and future generations.
- 12) Not accounting for what really matters.

Mr. Gee also pointed to some key differences between the three crises:

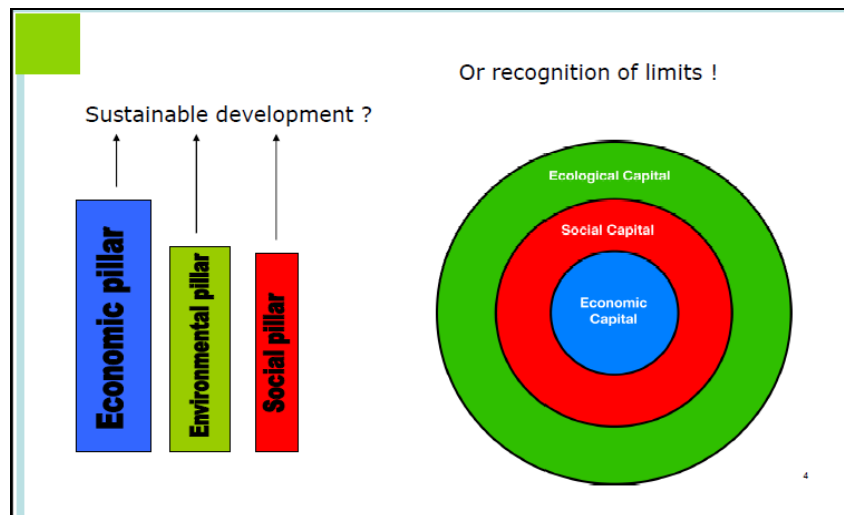
- Financial and energy systems are (hu)man made, the biosphere is not.
- Financial crisis is visible; short term; largely reversible. Climate and biodiversity crises are not so visible; longer term; mostly irreversible.
- Financial systems are more volatile: perceptions, expectations and behaviour rapidly change the systemic risks – a lesson for energy and ecosystems.
- Financial, energy, and social systems depend on ecosystems, not vice-versa.

At the end of his presentation, Mr. Gee outlined some common avenues for action for the three crisis systems and which governance mechanisms could be applied. Please see his [PPT slides](#) for more details.

**Leida Rijnhout**, Executive Director of the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPEC), gave a keynote on social challenges in green growth and sustainable development. She started by arguing that the main objective should be to move towards a fair and sustainable economy. Looking at it from a sustainable development perspective, green growth seems debatable: why green and not social/fair as well? Why growth when acknowledging finite resources of the planet and growth for whom?

Ms. Rijnhout argued for a development approach that recognizes and acknowledges limits, thus 'development within limits' was suggested as framework for discussion. She criticized the pillar approach to sustainable development and argued for a capital approach which would allow recognizing limits (please see Graph 1 below).





Graph 1: Development within limits (Rijnhout, 2010, [PPT-slides](#))

Ms. Rijnhout pointed out that 'Green Economy' and 'Green Growth', as proposed by UNEP, OECD and the 'Europe 2020' strategy, claim to define a way out of ongoing economic, climate, water and food crises by restructuring our economies to simply encourage and sustain green energy, green growth and green jobs. She argued that a 'Green Economy' is generally an important step forward, but will ultimately not solve on its own problems of inequity in incomes, access to resources and quality of life, nor tackle pollution from existing industry and environmental degradation: promoting 'Green Growth' is not the same as changing the economy towards sustainable development.

She, thus, called for the need of a systemic change, which calls for a sustainable society not only 'green consumers'. The main challenge is how to organize a transition towards a sustainable economy. Ms. Rijnhout argued that the global economy is already going far beyond the limits of the carrying capacity of the planet: environmental problems are caused mostly because of this; too much natural capital is used; there is an urgent need to cut down the use of natural resources in absolute amounts. Generally, technical solutions (eco-efficiency) will not be enough. To achieve a balanced living for most people, she stressed the need to jointly address: (a) overall and limited levels of consumption and (b) the need for more social equity and fair distribution.

After outlining social challenges in the north-south dimension and in OECD countries, Ms. Rijnhout outlined suggestions for a transition towards a sustainable economy:

- dismantling the culture of consumerism: instead of promoting (green) consumerism, sharing available work;
- urban planning which allows sustainable transport, local shops and food production, open spaces (Local Agenda 21);
- education: integrating sustainable development in curricula at all levels;
- allowing real civil participation (not consultation after the decisions are made); and
- putting human values at the heart of every policy: showing leadership and design long-term visions, go beyond single and end-of-pipe solutions.

## ***Plenary discussion***

The conference moderator, Alan AtKisson, introduced the ‘buzz-session’ format for short 5-minute-discussions among conference participants. Questions and inputs from the participants were collected and discussed with the two keynoters on environmental and social challenges.

The first couple of questions related to the characterization of sustainable development along the three pillar approach or the capital approach as well as how society can learn from past failures. Leida Rijnhout said that moving away from the pillar approach to sustainable development will be difficult because it has been used for a long time and people are used to it – they recognize it when they see it. However, the capitals approach has a major benefit as it makes people aware of the loss of capitals. On society learning from history, she said that society usually only learns and takes appropriate action when the problems are big and danger is felt beyond expert communities. David Gee argued that society’s capacity for learning depends on the topic, e.g. the story about tackling ozone depletion is considered as success story, however, the problem was comparatively easy to solve. One striking issues was how the Y2K computer bug was approached: this was a highly complex issue but early warnings have been taken seriously and the precautionary principle was applied. Generally, he argued that awareness of problems helps tackling them, especially when early warnings are taken up by the media and mass publications. About the characterization of sustainable development, he argued that the environmental and natural resources should be considered as the basis for all other human activities.

The next couple of questions were related to the concept of growth that should be adopted for a sustainable economy and how societies can move away from pure GDP measurement. Leida Rijnhout argued that there are different kinds of growth, e.g. nature grows, but also stops growing at certain points in time. She said that internal and psychological growth would be important for industrial societies. Overconsumption is mainly a problem in the north, other parts of the world should have still the right to grow. Davie Gee mentioned that there are physical limits to growth that need to be accepted: it would be more important to have quality of growth rather than a quantity of growth. He also pointed out that currently, innovation determines which parts of the economy grow and that there would be not enough governance for innovation.

## ***Presentation of strategies that link economic growth and sustainable development***

After the plenary discussion, representatives of the European Commission, UNEP and the OECD presented their respective strategic efforts in linking economic growth and sustainable development.

### **European Commission: “Europe 2020” strategy**

**Tonnie De Koster**, Policy Coordinator at the Secretariat-General of the European Commission, argued that the “Europe 2020” strategy is not only an economic strategy, but a strategy that aims to integrate economic, social and ecological issues. The timeframe for the strategy is already in its title, the year 2020. The rationale for this is that Europe cannot only focus on short-term issues, but also needs to address long-term issues. Mr. De Koster mentioned that

what is needed in the current situation of a recent economic and financial crisis is a holistic approach. The first objective in the EU is to stabilise the economy and to consolidate financial markets. While reducing expenditures, the aim is to return to growth in the future, thus to recreate conditions for growth. Very importantly, structural reform needs to accompany the fiscal consolidation.

Mr. De Koster then outlined the main features of the new strategy: when conceptualizing the “Europe 2020” strategy, the European Commission looked at what worked and didn't work in the Lisbon Strategy. Some of the main objectives of the Lisbon Strategy, i.e. increased employment rate and rate of R&D investment, have not been reached. Throughout the five years since the re-launch of the Lisbon strategy in 2005, a consensus could be reached in the EU of the development trajectory for Europe: research, education, labour market, business environment, etc. Mr. De Koster argued that with “Europe 2020”, the European Commission aims to return to growth, but to a different kind of growth (smart, sustainable, inclusive growth). Previous growth was unsustainable – not only environmentally, but also economically and socially.

Mr. De Koster argued that a major shortcoming of the Lisbon Strategy was its lack of ownership. It is, therefore, important for the “Europe 2020” strategy to create high-level ownership. In addition, strategy implementation needs to be continuously monitored. He pointed to the 5 headline targets which are included in the new strategy. Moreover, the EU targets need to be translated into national targets in the form of National Reform Programmes (NRPs) in each EU Member States. Equally important is to align fiscal programmes with the NRPs at the national level. At the European level, strategy implementation will be supported with 7 flagship initiatives.

The “Europe 2020” strategy has been adopted by the heads of state in June 2010 at the European Council meeting in Brussels. Now that the strategy is formally adopted, efforts have to be made for its implementation. It is planned that all EU Member States draw up the first draft of their NRPs in October 2010 and submit a final version of the NRP in spring 2011. To increase ownership of the strategy, a broad range of stakeholder should be involved (including sub-national stakeholders). Finally, Mr. De Koster mentioned that the European Commission will make use of new governments instruments available under the Lisbon Treaty, such as policy warnings in case a Member State is not delivering objective of the “Europe 2020” strategy.

### **UNEP: Green Economy Initiative**

**Christophe Bouvier**, Director of UNEP's Regional Office for Europe, started his presentation by arguing that if we continue the current growth path, by 2030, the global energy demand will increase by 45%, GHG emissions will increase by 45%, and that sustained losses equivalent to 5-10% of global GDP will occur as compared to the 3% of GDP loss from the current financial crisis. He, therefore, called for action at all political levels, mentioning an urgent need for reflecting economic variables and solutions in environmental governance at all levels, current models are unlikely to allow for achieving international commitments such as Agenda 21 and Millennium Development Goals, and the status quo is not an option: the current economic and financial crises, and other ‘silent’ crises, such as food, are severe. Similar to David Gee (see above), he mentioned that the society is currently, and will in the future, face multiple crises,

e.g. food crisis (one billion people worldwide at risk of hunger and malnutrition by 2050), financial and economic crisis (threatening jobs worldwide; poverty reduction gains), 200 million jobs lost between 2007 and 2009, and the climate crisis which is exacerbating all the others.

Mr. Bouvier, however, also mentioned several emerging opportunities of this crises situation: collective global 'rethink' of development and business models; governments trying to stimulate economic activity, create jobs and reduce public deficit; and significant international awareness on benefits of transition to a green economy, for developed as well as developing countries. In this context, he presented the UNEP's "Green Economy" approach and defined it as "an economy that results in improved human well-being and reduced inequalities over the long term, while not exposing future generations to significant environmental risks and ecological scarcity" (UNEP's working definition). The key features of a Green Economy would be:

- An economy characterized by substantially increased investments in economic sectors that build on the earth's natural capital, or reduce ecological scarcities and environmental risks.
- Main sectors: renewable energy, low carbon transport, energy efficiency, clean technologies, waste management, freshwater provision, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, forest management, etc.
- Entails: policy reforms at national level; development of international enabling conditions including market and trade infrastructures.

After outlining the 'green share' of stimulus packages and examples in energy and sustainable buildings as models for a new economy, Mr. Bouvier outlined several enabling conditions for moving towards a Green Economy, e.g. placing green investment at core of fiscal stimulus, including green investment in regular budgets, creating domestic conditions (fiscal/pricing policy, standards, education & training), climate and environment proofing of investments in other sectors, creating enabling national and international conditions, building on country/local specificity, etc. Moreover, he argued in favour of a clear and sustainable legislative framework: (i) to give clear signals to investors and private sector actors sustained in the long-term; (ii) responsibility of legislators (including the EU level) to make sustainable choices when deciding on budget (agriculture, fisheries, social fund, structural funds, etc).

### **OECD: Green Growth Strategy**

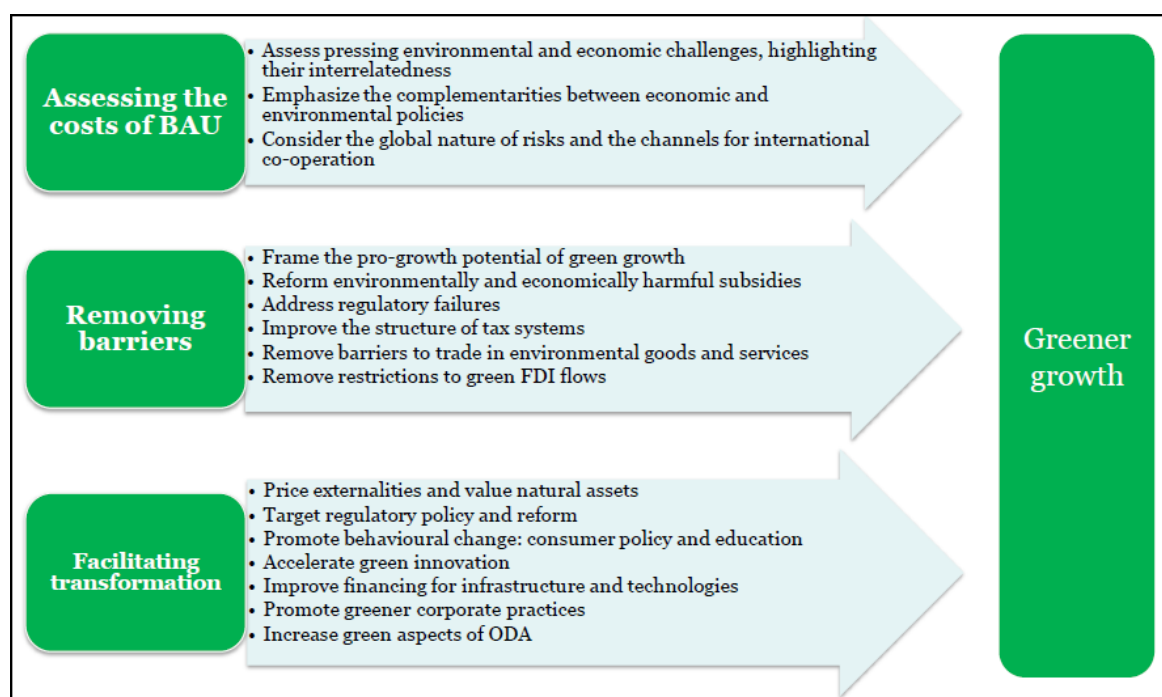
**Robert Visser**, Deputy-Director of OECD's Environment Directorate, said that the Green Growth Strategy (GGS) was requested by the Ministers of Finance, Economy & Trade of the OECD member countries at the 2009 OECD Ministerial Council Meeting (MCM). The development of the strategy involves 25 OECD committees and has two major deliverables: the Interim Report (due for the 2010 MCM) and the Synthesis Report (due for the 2011 MCM). The key drivers for developing the GGS are: (a) the fact that current sources of economic growth are placing unsustainable pressure on the natural resource base, and (b) the opportunity of the economic crisis to replace stranded capital with cleaner alternatives (e.g. green stimulus packages).

Mr. Visser argued that although neither a single definition of “green growth” exists nor is there a clear end point for reaching green growth (the aim is to have a “greener growth”), the OECD has developed a working definition: “Green growth can be seen as a way to pursue economic growth and development, while preventing environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable natural resource use.” This definition has two assumptions: (i) investing in the environment can be a driver for economic growth, and (ii) maximising the exploitation of cleaner sources of growth leads to further “decoupling” of environmental pressures from economic growth.

Mr. Visser argued that the GGS makes a difference compared to what has been done before regarding sustainable development. One of the major advantages with the GGS is that ownership is extended to other key ministries (Ministries of Finance, Economy, etc). Moreover, GGS has several other advantages: (1) an actionable and achievable policy package; (2) it goes beyond visionary discourse to catalyze the shift and break unsustainable growth trend lines; (3) it emphasizes that investing in the environment can be a source of growth; and (4) it addresses social aspects of the transition, e.g. employment, distributional effects, pro-poor growth, measuring well-being.

Another issue addressed by Mr. Visser was green jobs and skills development: he argued that recent measures in stimulus packages could have a significant short-term, positive impact on employment, however, the long run impact on net employment is uncertain (more on this is expected in the 2011 Synthesis Report). He furthermore pointed out that the reallocation of labour across sectors, firms and regions is likely to be considerable. Therefore, dedicated training policies should be established and should help workers adapt to new skill requirements. Nevertheless, the feed for pro-active short-term labour policy initiatives is crucial to jumpstart job creation and accelerate the transition to green growth.

Mr. Visser went on to present the key pillars of the GGS 2011 Synthesis Report:





At the end of his presentation, Mr. Visser invited the participants to share their views on the GGS in the International Green Growth Dialogue at [www.oecd.org/greengrowth](http://www.oecd.org/greengrowth).

### **Panel discussion**

All keynoters were invited to join the panel discussion on how to ensure coherence between economic, environmental and social issues in strategies that aim to link economic growth and sustainable development. The moderator collected several questions from the audience after another 'buzz session' and invited the panelists to reflect on those questions as well as on the presentations of the other keynoters.

#### ***Political will is important to move towards a sustainable economy: What grabs the interest of the heads of state?***

Elisabeth Freytag: Currently, most heads of state do not support sustainable development, but growth instead. However, green growth is not sustainable development; sustainable development is not even mentioned in the green growth strategies.

Robert Visser: Crises usually drive politicians; they are not so much interested in certain terms and concepts, but in how to overcome a problem or a crisis situation. Developing strategies on a specific topic are helpful to act in a more strategic and structured way.

Tonnie De Koster: The crisis made the politicians realize that it is necessary to act, because the sustainability of our socio-economic system is at stake. The risk would be inaction, i.e. low growth, high unemployment, etc. A strategy to return to growth is necessary – but a different

kind of growth needs to be approached, one that takes sustainable development into account. In 2011, the “Europe 2020” strategy will be reviewed regarding its achievements for sustainable development.

***What means are available for concrete changes of the current economic systems and growth paths?***

Tonnie De Koster: Structural and fiscal measures are equally important. The European Commission aims towards a holistic approach. The “Europe 2020” strategy is an integrated strategy and a first step towards the transition; it will be continuously monitored whether it achieved its objectives. Moreover, the national level has also responsibility for the implementation of the strategy.

Leida Rijnhout: Generally, sustainable development needs high-level political commitment and should be placed high on the political agenda. Moreover, high-level political institutions should debate and decide about sustainable development issues. Sustainable development experts in all policy sectors are necessary.

Christophe Bouvier: Transition is the only way forward. One major problem is that political terms are short and, therefore, politicians oriented towards short-term success. It is difficult to convince them to develop long-term perspectives and approach long-term objectives. It would be important (a) to engage parliaments more intensively in sustainable development issues which would also increase media attention and societal debates, and (b) to achieve a stronger involvement/commitment of other sectoral government ministries apart from Ministries of Environment which are usually not very well-resourced ministries.

**What is the role of businesses in the transition process? Are businesses ahead of politicians?**

David Gee: Businesses are generally interested in sustainable development since the 1992 Rio Conference and have made interesting inputs and innovations. Politicians need to provide a framework in which companies can work. Companies are still waiting for a clear framework, some move ahead despite of the fact that politicians fail to deliver this framework.

Michal Sedlacko: Businesses are increasingly taking up the challenge to address sustainable development, e.g. CSR which should be strategically integrated in the whole operational process of a company. The current green growth strategies are not very realistically looking at those actors who are responsible for the transition process and for delivering objectives.

Elisabeth Freytag: Many businesses are ahead of governments. The social partners often represent the smallest common denominator and are not leaders in terms of transition. Generally, natural resource input needs to be reduced and for this, consumers are as important as governments with their regulations.

**Are the key drivers for growth (e.g. health costs, aging society, pensions, etc) reflected in the transition process?**

Christopher Bouvier: Much depends on how to measure growth, well-being, etc. There are different kinds of growth and not all are generally negative. Defining its relationship to different kinds of growth in society is a major challenge for sustainable development.

David Gee: Green taxation will be one of the future necessities, mainly because of the fact that the pension population will grow and we need to finance this. The world is not short of labour, but short of resources, so taxation has to be adjusted accordingly.

Robert Visser: Agreed that taxation needs to be adjusted to current challenges.

Tonnie De Koster: The role of civil society and businesses is important and they need a clearly specified role in the transition process. The transition process may entail taxation, but generally, the move is “incredibly complicated”.

Leida Rijnhout: The current system is addicted to growth and it is difficult to speak to “junkies”. We need to face the reality that infinite growth is not possible.

**Each panelist had the opportunity to mention one important issue at the end of the discussion:**

David Gee: Suggested a meeting of the EU, OECD and UNEP with the IMF before the Rio+20 conference.

Michal Sedlacko: The transition process should enable to reestablish trust in public institutions and the businesses.

Elisabeth Freytag: The participants may want to think about what the ESDN can do in the Rio+20 preparation phase.

Leida Rijnhout: Suggested to calculate the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for implementing the “Europe 2020” strategy.

Christophe Bouvier: Transformation of society is important and cooperation the key. We need to look out of the box for developing a vision for sustainable development until 2050.

Robert Visser: Integration of all societal stakeholders in the transition process is necessary.

Tonnie De Koster: Integration of policy sector is important to achieve coherence, not the three pillar approach. It is time to act now and work together with OCED and UNEP for global solutions.



## Session 2: From green growth towards an economy compatible with sustainable development principles

In Session 2 of the conference, the participants had ample time to discuss and reflect on issues that have been addressed in the various presentations in Session 1.

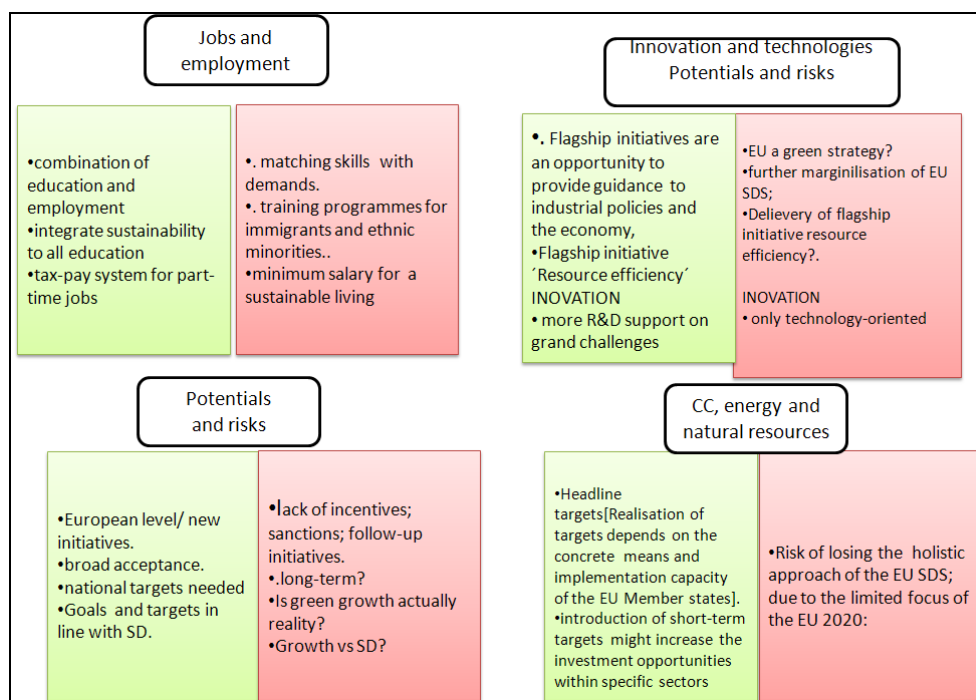
### *Parallel working groups*

The participants split into three working groups (Working Group 1: Europe 2020; Working Group 2: Green Economy Initiative; Working Group 3: Green Growth Strategy). The working group moderators (ESDN Office members) prepared a collection of references from the respective strategy document on **four sustainable development challenges that are referred to in all three strategies**: (a) innovation and technologies; (b) jobs and employment; (c) poverty and social inclusion; (d) climate change, energy and natural resources. This helped the working group participants to get some background information on how the topics are addressed in the respective strategy. The fifth group discussed **general potentials and risks of the respective strategy to move towards a sustainable economy**.

Each working group reflected, firstly, on how the three strategies address economic, environmental and social challenges and, based on this, came up with important messages for the respective strategy. The results of the working group discussion were presented by the moderators to the plenary.

### *“Europe 2020” strategy*

Reflection on opportunities (green) and challenges (red) of economic, environmental and social challenges addressed in the strategy: The working group decided to leave out one topic, namely poverty and social inclusion.

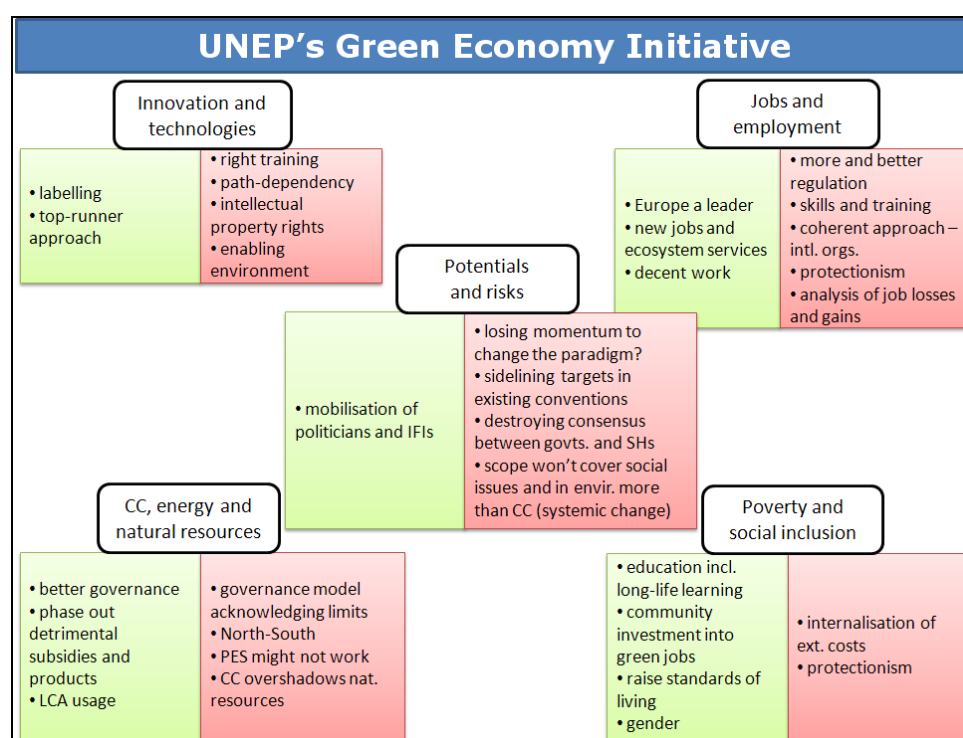


### Four key messages:

- Headline targets should fit to the holistic approach of the EU SDS.
- Should the “Europe 2020” present a holistic answer to Europe’s challenges (different opinion in working group)?
- The link between the “Europe 2020” and the EU SDS should be made clear.
- Missing policy instruments for implementation in EU Member States.

### UNEP: Green Economy Initiative

Reflection on opportunities (green) and challenges (red) of economic, environmental and social challenges addressed in the strategy:

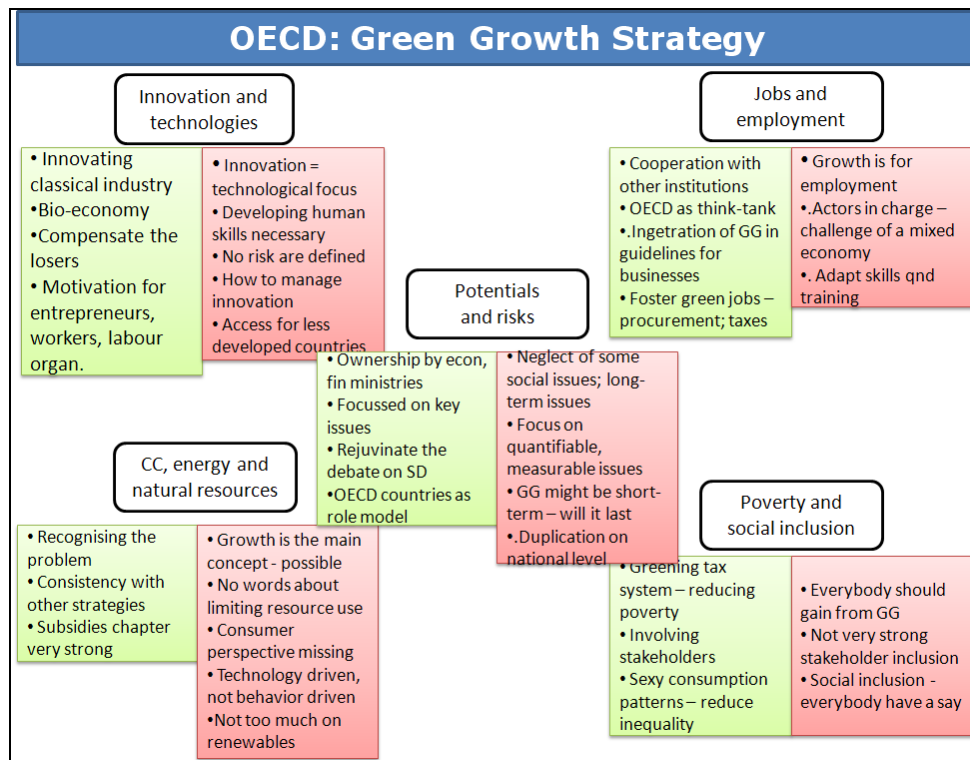


### Three key messages:

- The Green Economy Initiative (GEI) might be useful if it leads to a transition to a sustainable economy. It will become counterproductive if it leads to a continuation of the current growth paradigm.
- GEI is missing a number of social aspects and environmental issues beyond climate and energy. There is also a risk that existing environmental targets (CBD, IPCC) are going to be sidelined.
- Effective knowledge-sharing mechanisms among all societal stakeholders to encourage the transition should be part of the strategy.

### OECD: Green Growth Strategy

Reflection on opportunities (green) and challenges (red) of economic, environmental and social challenges addressed in the strategy:



### Five key messages:

- The GGS brings Green Economy to the attention of Ministries of Finance/Economy.
- Green taxation as means to address social issues, BUT green taxes could hit hard on not-so-well-off part of society (design of tax system important).
- Subsidies system – remove perverse subsidies.
- GGS is good start, but needs inclusion of more sustainable development issues (too technological; global issues should be added).
- GGS should reflect on opportunities/challenges (e.g. risks, workers, etc) in the context of a 'green transformation'

### Plenary discussion

The moderator invited the conference participants to yet another “buzz session”: they discussed in small groups the results of the working groups on the sustainable development challenges addressed in the three strategies and their potential to move towards a sustainable economy. **Main question: Is the glass half full or half empty?** The discussion groups were then asked to share their views with the other participants. We present below a selection of responses:

- Glass is empty: because no political commitment for sustainable development; strategies are not the basis for political decisions.
- Glass is full of ideas, but empty of water: it is still unclear how the transition process could be successfully achieved and how Europe answers to international challenges.
- Glass is full of hot air: the strategies include a lot of promises, but they are not promising. It is not acknowledged that growth cannot be an objective any longer.

Quality challenges are not often enough addressed. Moreover, the strategies do not have enough sense of urgency, they are too optimistic in terms of projections.

- Mainstreaming green economy issues in the three strategies may be useful now, but could be counterproductive in the future. There needs to be more space for critical and alternative views, e.g. the ideas presented in the book “Prosperity without Growth” by Tim Jackson.
- It seems that we are not learning from the past: the discussions about growth and sustainable development are around for a long time and nothing has changed yet.
- The difference between sustainable development and growth needs to be made clear and addressed in the strategies.
- There is at least a glass on the table ...

### **Session 3: Moving towards a sustainable economy – governance perspectives**

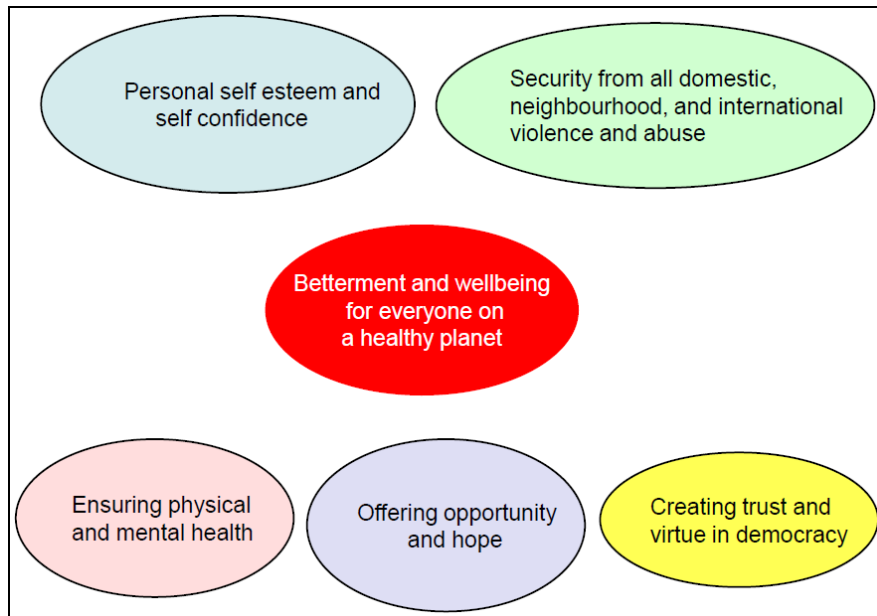
In Session 3 of the conference, the participants discussed governance perspectives in the context of moving towards a sustainable development. The session was kicked-off by a keynote presentation and followed by intensive working group discussions. After the presentation of the working group results and a plenary discussion of lessons learned and requirements for implementation, the ESDN co-chairs led a discussion on further steps regarding the issues that have been addressed.

#### ***Keynote presentation***

**Tim O’Riordan**, University of East Anglia, co-chair of the EEAC Sustainable Development Working Group & former Commissioner of the EU Sustainable Development Commission, keynoted about the switch to a sustainable society and economy in the wake of the financial crisis and related governance perspectives. He began by arguing that green growth is not a solution for moving towards a sustainable society as it is going to use up resources and to drive a technological orientation that will not help to be sustainable in the long-term. Moreover, he believes that a large number of people will not benefit from green growth. He presented several examples to underline his argument: the financial turbulence may lead to 15 million young adults in the EU unemployed by 2015 (10 million now); lower public sector pay plus delayed and reduced pensions may slow EU economic growth by around 1.5%; any new conventional growth will have to come primarily from exports and innovation, not consumption nor financial services, nor endless financial stimulus; and green growth may absorb one quarter of this potential, but it requires plenty of start-up investment funds.

Professor O’Riordan also argued that a proper sustainable development audit of green growth would be necessary. Several issues that seem obvious at current are: renewables energy availability for super smart grids and electric cars will absorb huge new infrastructure costs; materials availability for PV and long life reusable batteries may involve tricky geo-security considerations; training of a new green technology workforce will be slow and costly. Generally, he said that “green growth will be a shallow island in the turbulent waves of non-sustainable development economies and societies with no audits”.

Professor O’Riordan went on to present two initiatives in the UK that would go in the right direction of a sustainable society: the Young Adult Citizenship Initiative and the EU Network of Sustaining Landscapes (more details in his [PPT slides](#)). Finally, he pointed out that a new language to explain sustainable development is needed and summarized it in a graph:



In the discussion after his presentation, Professor O’Riordan mentioned that pilot schemes would be necessary to test the feasibility of proposed measures.

### ***Parallel working groups***

After the keynote presentation, the workshop participants split again in three parallel working groups (Working Group 1: Europe 2020; Working Group 2: Green Economy Initiative; Working Group 3: Green Growth Strategy). The moderators (ESDN Office members) prepared a collection of **references from the respective strategy document about relevant governance mechanisms and tools of delivery**. This helped the working group participants to get some background information on governance perspectives in the respective strategy.

Each working group discussed on four tables some selected **governance issues, namely (1) conflicts and actors; (2) policy coordination; (3) policy tools; and (4) coordination with other strategies**, and came up with recommendations for each governance issue for the respective strategy. The working group results were presented by the moderators (ESDN Office Team members) to the plenary.

Europe 2020 Strategy	
<h2>Key recommendations</h2>	
<b>Conflicts and actors:</b>	<b>Policy coordination:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Citizens and civil society should be actors</li><li>• Bring in the citizens needs and creative ideas</li><li>• Look for a partnership with citizens and civil society</li><li>• Adequate information to citizens and options for participation</li><li>• Skip the October date and take a year for a broad national/regional debates on NRPs</li><li>• Formulate conclusions in the national parliaments</li><li>• Conflicts between different sectors can be expected</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Creating of a coordinating commissioner for sustainability</li><li>• Improve/strengthen the “OMC” (<i>controversial</i>)</li><li>• Push forward the evaluation of the EU SDS and use the results for Europe 2020 (<i>controversial</i>)</li></ul>

Europe 2020 Strategy	
<h2>Key recommendations</h2>	
<b>Policy tools:</b>	<b>Coordination with other strategies:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cohesion policy for next period needs very strong focus on SD policies</li><li>• Cohesion fund support for national targets</li><li>• “Warning mechanisms” should have policy “consequences”</li><li>• “Warning mechanisms” could be combined with the scoreboard, which should be based on EU SDIs</li><li>• Stronger links between NSDSs and NRPs (although keeping them separated)</li><li>• Flagship initiative “Resource efficient Europe” should have same attention as the others</li><li>• Institutional imbalance – need of environmental policy committee for Europe 2020</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long term vision of what the EU should look like in 40 years (involving stakeholders and coordinated by the Council)</li><li>• “Thematic/Sectoral” strategies (including EU 2020) should be reviewed regularly to be in line with vision and emerging issues</li><li>• Financial perspectives should not only reflect EU 2020, but also link to vision based on SD</li><li>• Global SDS is needed + strong government mechanism(s) for its implementation</li></ul>

UNEP's Green Economy Initiative	
<h2>Key recommendations</h2>	
<p><b>(1) Conflicts and actors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WTO must be involved in the GEI to address the free-trade concerns of developing countries.</li> <li>An accounting for winners and losers and the real costs of business-as-usual is necessary (c.f. the Stern Report).</li> <li>There are still many national and sub-national stakeholders who are not involved. Better participation strategy is needed, as well as a communication strategy to inform on the different processes and improve coordination.</li> </ul>	<p><b>(3) Policy tools:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The provided common baseline should enable tailoring of tools according to national and regional needs.</li> <li>Policy Analysis is the most important of the three UNEP's delivery mechanisms, but it needs to have strong mechanisms of quality control.</li> <li>UNEP can not deliver GEI alone. It should search for strong partners within the UN system and form partnerships which eliminate the barriers for the take-up of its Policy Analysis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>(2) Policy coordination:</b></p>	<p><b>(4) Coordination with other strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use Rio+20 PrepComs to involve EU/EC and OECD.</li> <li>Coordination with/involvement of the Bretton Woods institutions is critical.</li> <li>Learn from existing initiatives on the local and regional levels (sustainable livelihoods etc.).</li> <li>Use dynamics and energy of the people at the local level for streamlining the strategy ('transition towns').</li> <li>Support coordination within national governments on GEI, GGS and EU2020.</li> </ul>

OECD: Green Growth Strategy	
<h2>Key recommendations (1)</h2>	
<p><b>Conflicts and actors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Losers in short-term –therefore, compile social measures-i.e possibility of safety net of retraining;</li> <li>Address the short-term cost;</li> <li>Create ownership -involvement of the actors who are active in the field; involvement of local level and civil society identify 'friends of the strategy';</li> <li>Look at the business vanguard; as it could influence mainstream business;</li> <li>Bridging the gap North-South{ i.e <u>global equity</u>; strategy should restrain these issues and clarify better}</li> </ul>	<p><b>Policy coordination:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>international level</u>: SIA for the OECD strategy. Continue the coordination of developing the SIA {i.e look at the interim report and other exercises and see how to develop further the SIA tool}</li> <li>At the OECD level: policy coordination at the OECD level with other strategies in bringing in SD aspects in the strategy, with the aim of making it more compatible with SD principles and not necessarily broaden it;</li> <li><u>Country level</u> : sectoral coordination. Identify the coordinators at the country level as one responsible national coordinator;</li> <li>Regional level/ regional representation in terms of implementation.</li> </ul>



## Key recommendations (2)

### Policy tools:

- ...
- ...
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### Coordination with other strategies:

- Coordination for more coherence in objectives and indicators between the OECD GG strategy with UN-GEI and EU 2020;
- National level: Integrate GG initiatives in SD strategies, make sure that MoE and MoF are better integrated in the process of SD implementation. OECD should also monitor if GG is implemented at the national level;
- EU level: to consider the GGS when reviewing the EU SDS;
- Develop a SD Audit.

An additional working group was spontaneously established by Tim O’Riordan with some other colleagues. Their reflections were presented by Professor O’Riordan (who was kind enough to send the group results in written form):

- The “Green New Deal” (GND) should not be dismissed just because it is not entirely consistent with sustainability. It is a sincere contribution to ‘smart’ technology and should be encouraged by sensitive and robust sustainability assessments and reshaped, but not discarded.
- In any case GND is a growth orientated objective, and as such very much wished for by politicians and markets. So it would be a shame and would create an “image problem” if the sustainable development community were to be too critical.
- Nevertheless, it has to be said that there are many features of GND as being proposed, which add cause for alarm:
  - One is the lack of training for nationals and especially unemployed nationals. Thus can give rise to the need to entice immigration of suitable qualified workforces from outside the EU, and especially China and India. Such outcomes have important implication for the politics of immigration in Europe and the need to be much more proactive in preparing the workforce. So the GND must be accompanied by a suitable training programme across Member States.
  - A second is the loss of possible suitable workforce as a result of austerity measures, recession and increasing unemployment. Just as there is a need for a newly qualified workforce, so some of that potential workforce emigrates. This seems to be the case in Ireland, and may be happening elsewhere. It is vital that a labour force audit is conducted in the framing of the GND initiatives at Member State levels as well across the EU.
  - A third is the possibility or material shortages for the new renewables technology in the light of a possible surge in investment across the EU, spurred by both EU directives for a low carbon society as well as GND policies at a



Member State level. At the very least there should be materials security and markets audits conducted in parallel with GND initiatives.

- The basis for a sustainable development assessment of both fiscal policies (stimulus and retrenchment) needs to be secure in the new governance of the EU and the Commission. There is a real need for a central auditing office here, not some marginal and peripheral role by a minor office, as is usually the case. The sustainable development community should look for ways to judge the most appropriate locale for any sustainable development accounting office both at the level of the Commission as well as at the level of the Member States. This should not be confined to the GND process. It needs to take into account societal transformation, as is no being canvasses by the sustainable development community.
- There is a very strong need for sustainable development variants of GNDs being prepared for the local level, namely the municipalities. In the light of the forthcoming Rio +20 conferences, it is timely to re-stimulate the LA 21 process. But the outcome should not be labelled LA 21 as this is outmoded. Something to do with betterment and well-being should be the theme and focus.
- All of this needs a wider international dimension. It is vital that the scope for transforming the GND process should be placed in the full developmental context.
- There is an urgent need for a series of pilot schemes to test out the new worlds of ecosystems valuation and social betterment. These should be EU-wide. The suggested network of sustaining landscapes which is in the draft of the EEAC sustainable land use statement would be one possibility.

### *Plenary discussion*

After the presentation of the working group results, the conference participants reflected on lessons learned and requirements for moving towards a sustainable economy. Below, we present a selection of issues raised during the plenary discussion:

- For sustainable development to be successful, long-time processes are necessary rather than short-term projects. It seems that governments do not fund long-time processes any more.
- Sustainable development needs to be redefined and include those issues that are important for citizens in their daily lives, e.g. health issues, housing, security, etc. With a more practical approach, sustainable development would be better understood by society.
- Some participants argued that in order to make the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) to implement the “Europe 2020” strategy at the Member States level more sustainable, social and environmental issues have to be fully taken into account. In order to do that and to involve stakeholder groups in the national debates about the NRPs, more time is required. It was suggested to postpone the deadline for the first draft NRPs from October 2010 to sometime in 2011.
- Other participants pointed out that three issues would be important: (i) to appreciate the value of bottom-up processes; (ii) to view sustainable development as a long-term vision for the next 50 years; and (iii) to not duplicate existing instruments and tools (e.g. impact assessments).

- Finally, it was considered as important to find the right communication tools to convey the sustainable development agenda to the politicians and policy-makers in fields like energy, economy, finance, etc.

### ***Concluding discussion & further steps***

**Elisabeth Freytag**, Austrian Ministry of Environment and ESDN Co-chair, concluded the ESDN Conference 2010. She first gave an overview of the ESDN activities over the last year: the number of both, ESDN members and associates partners, has increased over the last year – currently, the ESDN has a total of 241 members and partner; the number of visitors of the ESDN homepage is constantly increasing (currently about 3,500 visitors per month), while the page views are slightly decreasing (to about 22,500 per month) which is, however, not a negative development – it only shows that the homepage is increasingly well-known and that visitors know what they are looking for and use it for more targeted information; the visitors of the ESDN homepage stem from a large number of countries, but mostly from the USA (11 %, due to the high number of US internet users and the high ranking of ESDN at google.com), Germany and UK (both 8 %), Austria (7 %), France (6 %) and Belgium (4 %); on the ESDN homepage, the “country profiles” section is the most frequently visited, followed by the sections “ESDN quarterly reports” and “ESDN conferences”.

Ms. Freytag informed the conference participants that an invitation will go out to the EU Presidency countries of 2011, Hungary and Poland, to join the ESDN Steering Group; moreover, there have been talks during the conference that a new sub-group will be established in the ESDN Steering Group with countries from the Western Balkan (initiative from Montenegro and Serbia); finally the Secretariat-General of the European Commission will be invited to have an observer role in the ESDN Steering Group (currently, only DG Environment has an observer role) as Sec-Gen is responsible for the EU SDS. Ms. Freytag also informed the conference participants that the ESDN Steering decided in its pre-conference meeting to collect arguments and inputs from the ESDN members on (a) the added-value of the EU SDS and (b) the start of the EU SDS review already in 2010. The invitation to send arguments was extended to the conference participants who should send their inputs to the ESDN Office until the end of August 2010. The submitted arguments will be discussed with representatives of the Secretariat-General of the European Commission, the cabinet of Council President van Rompuy and the European Parliament in early October 2010 in Brussels.

Ms. Freytag informed the participants about future ESDN events: the next ESDN workshop on “beyond GDP” will take place in early December 2010 in Berlin; the ESDN Conference 2011 will be organized in cooperation with the incoming Hungarian EU Presidency; and another ESDN workshop is planned in autumn 2011 in cooperation with the Polish EU Presidency. More information and updates about these events will be distributed as soon as possible.

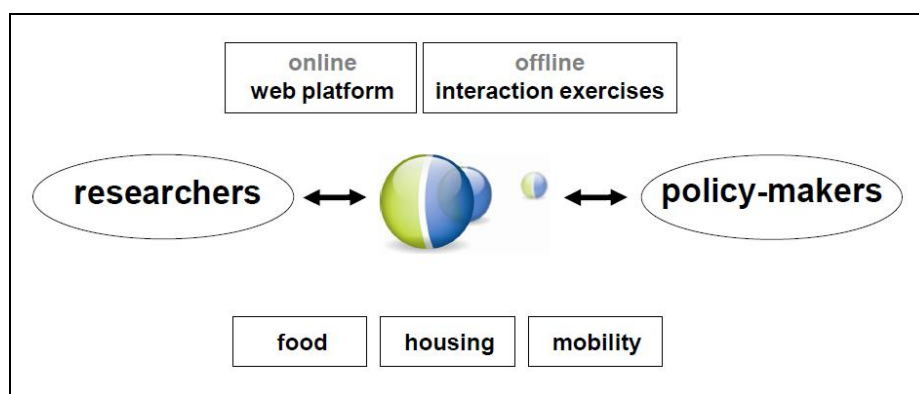
Finally, Elisabeth Freytag thanked the Belgian EU Presidency for hosting the ESDN Conference 2010. She thanked Dieter Vander Beke and Tim Bogaert (Belgian Federal Public Planning Service for Sustainable Development) and the ESDN Office for organising the conference. Ms Freytag invited all participants to regularly visit the ESDN homepage and attend the forthcoming ESDN events.

## Knowledge brokerage in sustainable consumption – fostering exchange between policy-makers and researchers

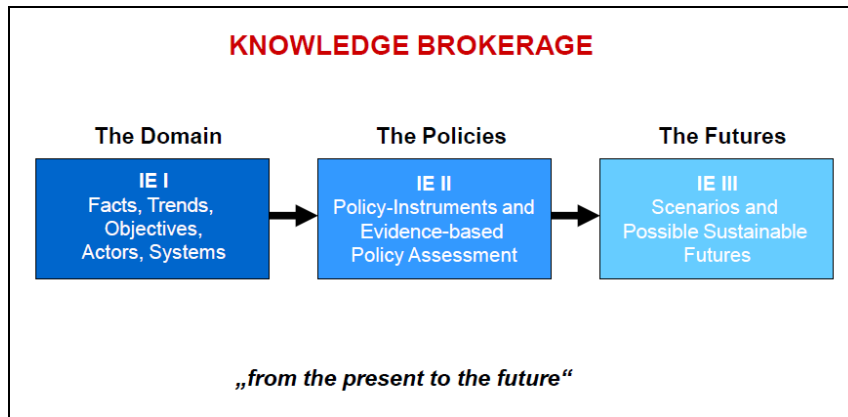
The extended session of the ESDN Conference 2010 was dedicated to two research projects (RESPONDER and CORPUS), both funded under the European Commission's 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research (FP7), that are closely related to the ESDN. Both projects are about knowledge exchange between researcher and policy-makers in sustainable consumption. ESDN Steering Group members are project partners and ESDN members are invited to get actively involved and participate in events organized by the projects.

**Gerald Berger**, ESDN Office at the Research Institute for Managing Sustainability (RIMAS), introduced the RESPONDER project which will start in January 2011 and run for 3.5 years. The project will be coordinated by RIMAS and has a consortium of top researcher and policy-makers (including two ESDN Steering Group countries, Germany and Switzerland). RESPONDER is about promoting sustainable consumption by exploring novel ways of knowledge brokerage to improve the management of potential political, social and economic contradictions in the context of economic growth. There are two knowledge brokerage (KB) tools that will be used in RESPONDER: (i) a web-based information platform; and (b) exchange events, namely 3 EU Dialogues (back-to-back with ESDN Conferences) and a European Conference on Sustainable Consumption and Economic Growth as well as regional KB events in 5 policy fields (bringing in national and regional contexts): housing (Barcelona), energy (Copenhagen), financial policies (London), mobility (Bratislava), and agriculture (Lisbon).

**Gerd Scholl**, Institute for Ecological Economy Research (IÖW), introduced the CORPUS project that aims to enhance evidence-based policy-making through innovative forms of knowledge brokerage activities in three fields of sustainable consumption: food, mobility and housing. The project started in January 2010 and will run for three years. The consortium is also made up of top researchers and policy-makers (including RIMAS and two ESDN Steering Group countries, Austrian and Finland). There will also be two forms of interaction between researchers and policy-makers:



The web platform went online shortly before the conference ([www.scp-knowledge.eu](http://www.scp-knowledge.eu)). Moreover, there will be three interaction exercises in each policy field: sustainable food consumption (Vienna), sustainable mobility (Szentendre, Hungary) and sustainable housing (Helsinki). The content of each interaction exercise will have a special focus:



Mr. Scholl invited the ESDN conference participant to join the CORPUS community at the project web platform and to register for the first interaction exercise on sustainable food consumption which will take place in Vienna on 21-22 October 2010.