



## Concept Note: E-Discussion on for HDR 2020 hosted on the South-South Global Thinkers Network, deadline extended to 30 April 2020

### **"Sustainable Human Development Pathways"**

*A 3-week e-discussion, followed by an UNOSSC- UNDP HDRO side event with select participants*

#### **I. Background:**

In 1990, the Human Development Report introduced a new way to consider progress: one that was centered on people. The human development approach considers whether people around the world have the capabilities to be and do what they aspire to in life. The Human Development Index (HDI) introduced in the first report, provides a basic measure of this progress. The HDI was meant to capture the “human development journey” of countries: how much of the road to human development has been covered by a given country.

Today, 30 years later, the aspirations for many have changed, as have the capabilities needed to thrive (consider for example access to technology). At the same time, environmental degradation, and the occurrence of natural disasters of increasing intensity and frequency, are becoming hard to ignore. There is a fast-growing realization that social choices must be contained to recognize the planet’s limits that are already stretched to breaking point. What sustainable human development is today, and how it should be measured, needs to be considered in light of these new realities. Even if its original ideals - such as a long and healthy life, knowledge, adequate living standards - remain as valid as they ever were, the path to achieving them might need to change.

This reassessment is an urgent task, to avoid reaching a stage of inevitable tradeoffs and tragic choices. On top of direct consequences of environmental backlash, an ill-managed climate crisis could jeopardize many of the hard-fought human achievements up to this point. In this 30th Anniversary, the 2020 Human Development Report will assess the pathways for sustainable human development, upgrading both its analytical framework and measurement tools, including the HDI. Given the importance of hearing from a diverse set of thinkers and change makers, the UNOSSC & UNDP Human Development Report Office are organizing this e-consultation, hosted on the South-South Global Thinkers Network.

#### **II. E-Discussion:**

The e-discussion intends to elicit inputs and stimulate discussion that can enrich the HDR 2020 and ensure that it represents diverse views and expertise, especially from the South. In particular, it is recognized that countries in the South are some of the most impacted by climate change and overshooting of other planetary boundaries. Moreover, developing countries are at the forefront



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of domestic policy making, and global coordination efforts, to find solutions to the challenges in achieving sustainable development. The e-discussion will welcome responses to the following questions:

1. How can the human development approach bring new light to the sustainability debate? Are dominant sustainability debates focusing narrowly only on income growth versus sustainability? In the paradigms of green growth, and de-growth, is there recognition of the need for people-centered policies?
2. In different regions of the developing South, what are the regional, sub-regional and country level environmental issues that impact human development?
3. What initiatives are being implemented to mitigate and adapt to these harms? How do these efforts tie in with the achievement of SDGs? What are the main tradeoffs and the main synergies with SDGs? What are the lessons learnt?
4. How are different countries leading on mitigation policies, norm setting and paradigm shifting? What are some national and regional perspectives being brought to global negotiations and processes on climate change and sustainability?
5. What methodologies can be used to facilitate the “Greening of the HDI”? What are the main indicators, and how will they be selected? What are the practical challenges in applying this methodology to the country level? What are some effective methods to advocate for data collection on these indicators, at the country level?

### **III. Moderation:**

The e-discussion will be moderated by 1) For contributions in English— Dr. Jacob Assa, Policy Specialist; and Dr. Shivani Nayyar, Research Specialist; 2) For contributions in Spanish— Ms. Christina Lengfelder and Ms. Carolina Rivera from UNDP Human Development Report Office and facilitated by UNOSSC.

### **IV. Follow-Up Side Event:**

The e-discussion may be followed by in-person consultation with selected think tank participants on the sidelines of upcoming events. The aim of this consultation is to build on some of the issues discussed in the e-discussion to further gather the perspectives and experiences from the Southern-based think tanks on the issue of sustainable human development. More details to follow.



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