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Reflecting the environmental dimension in the future SDGs

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Overview

- Context: Decision to establish SDGs
- Swiss interest and existing groundwork
- Conclusions



Decision to establish Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- International community at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development 2012 (Rio+20 Conference) decides to establish SDGs:
 - Recognising the usefulness of the Millennium Development Goals.
 - Agreement on the importance and utility of a set of sustainable development goals.
 - Agreement on a process for the establishment of SDGs: intergovernmental process, working group consisting of 30 experts, involvement of civil society and **expertise from scientific community**, proposal for consideration of the UN GA.



Main characteristics of the SDGs

- Agreement on some of the main characteristics of the SDGs. They should:
 - be action oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable;
 - be coherent with and integrated into the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015;
- address and be focused on priority areas for the achievement of sustainable development;
- **address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development** and their interlinkages.



More thought needed on how to reflect the environmental dimension

- Reflections are ongoing on how to best incorporate the economic, social and environmental dimension of SD in a balanced manner in the SDGs.
- Of particular interest for FOEN: How is the environmental dimension best reflected in the future SDGs.
- More consideration needs to be given by policy-makers.
- Expertise from the scientific community is also needed.

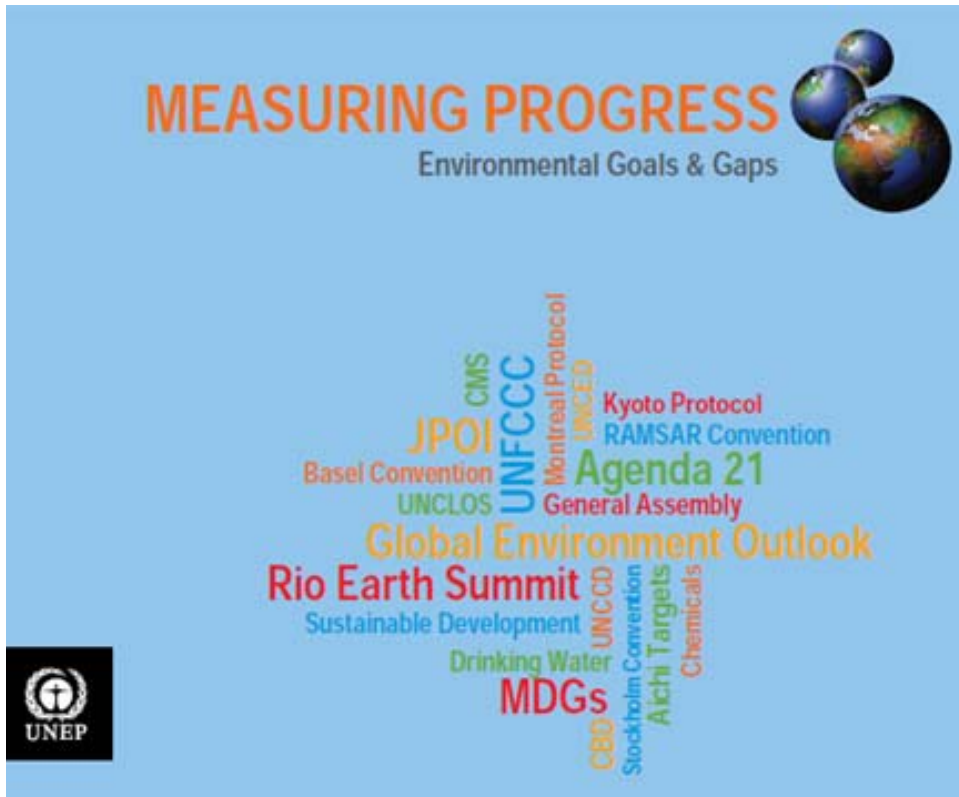


Build on existing groundwork

- Issue of environmental goals has been a political priority for Switzerland for many years.
- Collaboration with interested governments and with UNEP resulted in important groundwork:
 - Intergovernmental expert meeting on compilation of internationally agreed environmental goals.
 - GEO 5 report has a particular focus on environmental goals.
 - Publication „Measuring progress – Environmental goals & gaps“.
- The partnership with UNEP GRID and the University of Geneva played a major role in this.



Publikation „Measuring Progress – Environmental Goals & Gaps“



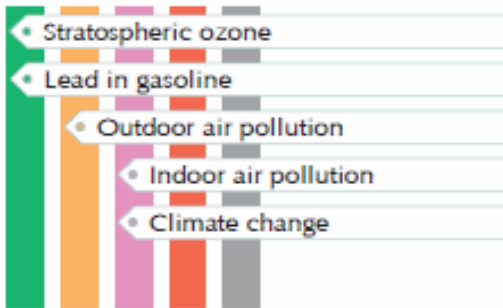
<http://www.unep.org/geo>

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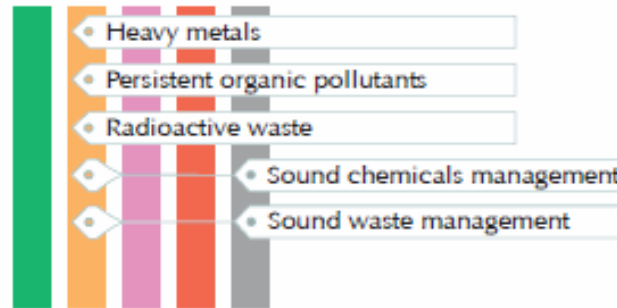


Environmental scorecard

ATMOSPHERE



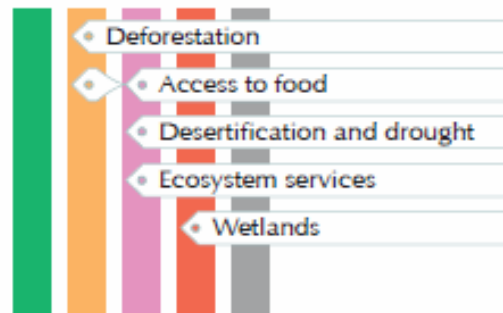
CHEMICALS & WASTE



BIODIVERSITY



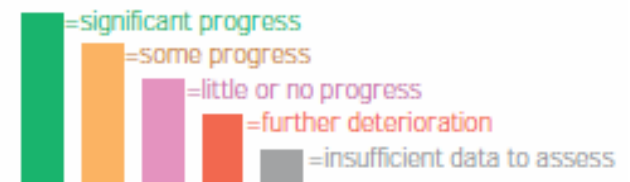
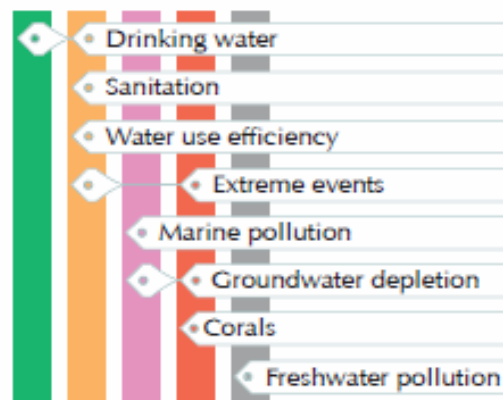
LAND



POLICIES & PROGRAMMES



WATER





Example: Global environmental goals on water (1)

Drinking Water

Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water

Millennium Development Goal 7, Target C



significant progress
more progress in urban than in rural areas

The MDG target for 2015 was already met, but more than 600 million people will still lack access to safe drinking water in 2015.



Example: Global environmental goals on water (2)

Water Use Efficiency

Improve the efficient use of water resources and promote their allocation among competing uses in a way that gives priority to the satisfaction of basic human needs...

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, para. 26(c)



some progress

Some regions have made significant gains in water-use efficiency, but these have been outstripped by increasing demand.



Example: Global environmental goals on water (3)

Groundwater Depletion

To stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources by developing water management strategies at the regional, national and local levels, which promote both equitable access and adequate supplies

Millennium Declaration, General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 18 September 2000, para. 23



little or no progress on groundwater pollution and monitoring
further deterioration on groundwater supply

Eighty per cent of the world's population lives in areas of high threat to the freshwater supply, with nearly half of the world — 3.4 billion people — living in areas under the most severe threat.



Example: Global environmental goals on water (4)

Freshwater Pollution

Intensify water pollution prevention to reduce health hazards and protect ecosystems by introducing technologies for affordable sanitation and industrial and domestic wastewater treatment, by mitigating the effects of groundwater contamination and by establishing, at the national level, monitoring systems and effective legal frameworks

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, para. 25(d)

insufficient data to assess

Water quality in at least parts of most major river systems still fails to meet WHO drinking water standards.



Conclusions

- Important groundwork exists regarding goals, targets and indicators on the environmental dimension of sustainable development goals.
- The compilation of internationally agreed environmental goals, the findings of GEO-5 and the publication on measuring progress are important contributions for the establishment of SDGs.
- A selection of the GEGs could form an essential building block of potential SDGs.
- To enhance the potential and impact of the GEGs, the selection could be further refined by specific targets that are measurable and time-bound.



Conclusions (2)

- Upon their refinement, the selected GEGs could form targets under the proposed sustainable development goals.
- Gaps where no internationally agreed goals exists could be closed in the development of SDGs.
- More thought and scientific expertise needed on how to best reflect the environmental dimension.
- Looking forward to collaborate on this matter at the science-policy interface!