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Summary of Session 3 and 4

Measuring Sustainable Development:
How Can Science Contribute to Realizing the SDGs?

23 – 24 April 2015, New York City



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Measuring Sustainable Development: How Can Science Contribute to Realizing the SDGs?

Session 3: Synergies and Tough Choices (I)

Chair: Jakob Rhyner; **Talks:** Anthony Addison, Roberto Sánchez-Rodríguez

Panelists: Arun Agrawal, Shuaib Lwasa, Youba Sokona, Ernst Ulrich von Weizsäcker

- Synergies and Trade-offs are always context specific, so there is no robust ex ante knowledge how to exploit synergies or deal with trade-offs.
- We don't have a theory of tradeoffs and synergies (yet); we don't know whether an intervention will consistently produce the right outcome across different contexts
- We therefore have to be pragmatic and embark on a continuous learning process. Science has to play a pivotal role here. And it CAN DO:
- Compare cases at different levels (e.g. detailed analysis of winners and losers compared to starting position); conceptual and analytical framework

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Session 3: Synergies and Tough Choices (II)

- Many short vs. long term trade-offs between goals can be handled by intelligent incentives and/or focused temporary support. Other trade-offs can be approached by increased resource efficiency, which often involves behavioral change
- A multistage approach to indicator development should be envisioned, from a goal-related to a policy-related indicator framework (5 years from now), which should take into account possible trade-offs.
- Discussion about the question, whether the SDGs should be attributable to policies or not (problem of causality); example CO₂ emissions (lower level attributable to economic crisis, not so much policies) versus air pollution

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Session 4: Ownership (I)

Chair: Anita Engels; **Talks:** Markus W. Gehring, Michael Kahn

Panelists: Marianne Beisheim, Saran Kaba Jones, Norichika Kanie, Thomas Pogge

- Ownership on SDGs as global issue: some form of control over the process and its outcomes (“real” ownership vs window-dressing, façade management)
- Different kinds of ownership / different actors / phases: building ownership is a continuous process (country ownership improved; other forms of ownership still much wanted, in particular NGOs, local communities, business world, lower administrative levels)
- co-ownership is the most promising way of looking at this

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Session 4: Ownership (II)

- Potentially reinforcing loop of the international legal framework of the SDGs and ownership (e.g., gender: a framework of international law that can be used in domestic settings to reinforce)
- Tension between recognizing the potential contribution to building real, long-lasting ownership through local communities, and the empirical evidence of lack of resources / capacities to do so at a large scale
- Distinction between Ownership and Capture
- What about scientific ownership of the SDGs? Developing new interfaces / reorienting existing science-policy interfaces; scientists can bring the norms of science to this process