

## Towards a Charter Moment: Hakone Vision on Governance for Sustainability in the 21th Century

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### Introduction

The issues and political dynamics in the 21st century are different from those in 1945 when the institutions in the United Nations were founded. Today's problems are characterized by temporal, spatial, and sectoral interdependencies, complexity, as well as uncertainty. While incremental changes have enabled certain progress towards sustainability, the current system governing sustainable development is no longer sufficient given the number, impact, interdependence and complexity of problems associated with global change. Governance for sustainability requires transformative reforms with clear vision. The 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) could be a charter moment<sup>2</sup>the beginning of a reform process leading to transformative change of sustainability governance.

We propose principles and recommendations to guide this transformation clustered around three interrelated issues: Aspirations, Actors, and Architecture.

### Aspirations

We are living in a highly dynamic, human-dominated earth system in which non-linear, abrupt, and irreversible changes are not only possible but also probable. Governance for sustainability in the era of "anthropocene" requires that objectives, underlying values and norms, as well as knowledge and uncertainty be refined and operationalized.

### Actors

Governance for sustainability demands the broadening of meaningful and accountable participation and solutions from people for people.

### Architecture

The architecture for sustainability governance needs to be re-built to include better integration, as well as improved institutions and decision-making mechanisms.

Proposals for the required transformative changes in the architecture of governance for sustainability need to be assessed based on a set of criteria, including:

1. Membership: Meaningful participatory approaches that are inclusive and account for power differentials between nation states, non-state actors, and other groups in society.
2. Funding: Appropriate and stable levels of funding.
3. Authority/Mandate: Appropriate authority and efficiency.
4. Compliance and Implementation: Appropriate capacity to address compliance and implementation.
5. Adaptability: Effective adaptive approaches that could include sunset clauses and scheduled re-chartering moments in agreements, dynamic criteria to all selection and decision-making mechanisms to reflect changes in natural and social systems, and network approaches.
6. Accountability: Strong accountability and transparency safeguards

The absence of suitable arrangements on one or more of these criteria will jeopardize prospects for transformative change.

### Sustainable Development Council

Drawing on the discussion of Aspirations, Actors, and Architecture, We discussed and evaluated many of the proposals for a re-structured institutional framework for sustainable development that would improve governance and determined that proposals for a Sustainable Development Council deserve more serious consideration.

### Rio+20 and beyond

Fundamental improvements in the economic system are necessary in addition to improved governance for sustainability. Green economy should be linked up with IFSD in this regard. We see that Rio+20 is the beginning of a charter moment. Ultimately, this may involve amending the UN Charter to better reflect the challenges of the 21st century.

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