



House of Commons  
Environmental Audit  
Committee

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**The World Summit on  
Sustainable  
Development 2002: A  
UK Progress Report**

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**Third Report of Session 2004–05**





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Environmental Audit  
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# The World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002: A UK Progress Report

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**Third Report of Session 2004–05**

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minutes*

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## The Environmental Audit Committee

The Environmental Audit Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to consider to what extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development; to audit their performance against such targets as may be set for them by Her Majesty's Ministers; and to report thereon to the House.

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A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Parliament is at the back of this volume.

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### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to The Clerk, Environmental Audit Committee, Committee Office, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general inquiries is: 020 7219 6150; the Committee's e-mail address is: [eacom@parliament.uk](mailto:eacom@parliament.uk)

### References

In the footnotes of this Report, references to oral evidence are indicated by 'Q' followed by the question number. References to written evidence are indicated by page number as in 'Ev12'. number HC \*-II





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# The World Summit on Sustainable Development: a UK progress report

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1. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which took place in Johannesburg for two weeks in August and September 2002, was “the largest and most important gathering on sustainable development since the landmark Rio Summit” in 1992.<sup>1</sup> We reported on the preparations for the Johannesburg Summit in March 2002, and were fortunate to be able to send a small delegation to the Summit.<sup>2</sup> We published the report from that delegation in December 2002.<sup>3</sup> We also began an inquiry into the outcome of the World Summit in October 2002 and agreed a report on that subject in September 2003.<sup>4</sup>

2. In our Report on the outcome of the Summit, we laid great stress on the importance of implementing WSSD commitments within the UK not through any distinct or separate programme but by mainstreaming “follow-up actions into departments’ existing work programmes” and using “existing implementation mechanisms such as delivery planning for Public Service Agreements (PSA) targets”.<sup>5</sup> We also expressed the hope, recently reiterated in our Report on the Sustainable Development Strategy,<sup>6</sup> that the new Sustainable Development Strategy to be rolled out shortly by Government will embrace and take forward both the domestic and international commitments of the World Summit.<sup>7</sup>

3. We likewise singled out the vital need for progress towards implementation of commitments from the Summit to be audited. We suggested that the National Audit Office (NAO) should initiate discussions with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) “to explore how they could work together to report UK progress against the Johannesburg commitments”.<sup>8</sup> The Government responded positively to this recommendation, stating in January of 2004, in its formal response to our Report, that DEFRA, the NAO and the SDC had “begun discussion to explore the Environmental Audit Committee’s suggestion that three bodies should work together to report progress against the Johannesburg commitments to Parliament, EAC and to the public”.<sup>9</sup>

4. As part of its work in reporting this progress, the NAO has been examining the UK Government’s follow-up to the World Summit, looking in particular at “the extent to

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1 World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002—From Rhetoric to Reality, Twelfth Report of Session 2002-03, HC98-I, para 1

2 UK preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Third Report of Session 2001-02, HC 616

3 Johannesburg and Back: The World Summit on Sustainable Development—Committee Delegation report on proceedings, Second Report of Session 2002-03, HC169

4 HC98 (2002-03): the Government Response to this Report was published as the First Special Report of Session 2003-04, HC232

5 HC98 (2002-03), para 53

6 The Sustainable Development Strategy: Illusion or Reality?, Thirteenth Report of Session 2003-04, HC624-I, para 110

7 HC98 (2002-03), para 62

8 *ibid.*, para 86

9 HC232 (2003-04), para 29

which there are delivery mechanisms for achieving WSSD commitments—i.e. mechanisms to enable progress to be planned, co-ordinated, tracked and demonstrated”. A briefing from the NAO, representing the first part of its work, has been received by us, which we attach as an Appendix to the Report.<sup>10</sup> We are very grateful to the NAO for its work in this area, and for the briefing which represents a second *tranche* of NAO work carried out for us.<sup>11</sup> In the light of the Government’s refusal following the 1997 General Election properly to support EAC in a formal way from within NAO, the increasingly productive relationship between our Committee and NAO is a matter for great satisfaction.

5. The attached NAO briefing, which represents the initial stage of a more detailed examination of actual progress towards achieving the WSSD commitments, sets out a patchy and uninspiring picture of Government action. Whilst it contains some good things, such as DEFRA’s explicit incorporation of whole UK WSSD commitments into its 2004 PSA targets,<sup>12</sup> there are also some unfortunate absences, such as the failure of the Department for Transport to be included in the list of departments taking forward the sustainable consumption and production commitment (transport is clearly included in this section of the WSSD Plan of Implementation<sup>13</sup>), which demonstrate a level of lethargy in a number of areas of Government which gives cause for concern.

6. The key findings set out within the NAO paper are:

- “WSSD did not provide the international community with a clear framework for delivery”
- “The UK Table of Commitments has been used to present the UK WSSD commitments, but it has limitations”
- “UK WSSD commitments have been reflected in 2004 Spending Review Public Service Agreements to varying degrees”
- “Key departments have incorporated UK WSSD commitments into delivery planning to varying degrees”
- “Government has produced two brief annual reports on progress and proposes changes in how progress will be reported”
- “Formal delivery mechanisms understate the extent to which departments are working towards WSSD goals”
- “The review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy provides a new opportunity to incorporate WSSD commitments”.<sup>14</sup>

7. Against a background of growing concern about the environment, particularly with regard to the impacts of man-made climate change, and taking into account the habitual

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10 Appendix, Executive Summary

11 The NAO provided EAC with analysis which formed the underpinnings of its Greening Government 2004 Report, 8<sup>th</sup> Report of Session 2003-04, HC881

12 Appendix, para 44

13 *ibid.*, para 21

14 *ibid.*, Executive Summary

slowness with which Government acts, *some* work is at this stage clearly not enough. This is especially the case when the impressive work done in some areas by DEFRA is offset by the lack of work taken up by other departments, singly or working together, in other areas, such as DfID's seeming avoidance of Table of Commitments follow-up (in favour of partially overlapping work on the Millennium Development Goals).<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Spending Review 2004 was not properly exploited "to embed UK WSSD commitments into departmental planning".<sup>16</sup>

8. The pace of mainstreaming and acting upon WSSD commitments needs to be accelerated within Government. Those areas requiring joint leadership—such as sustainable consumption and production patterns, renewable energy and energy efficiency—where cross-departmental activity and liaison are key—perhaps need most careful scrutiny, alongside the work of those departments which seem yet not fully to have engaged with some of their WSSD objectives. Many of the UK WSSD commitments are currently expressed in nebulous language that makes it difficult for departments to focus effectively on them and easy for less enthusiastic departments to sidestep them. We hope that the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy will give renewed momentum to these commitments, and enshrine them in a clearer form against which performance can more readily be measured. We fully expect our successor Committee in the next Parliament to launch an inquiry into progress under WSSD as a matter of priority.

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15 *ibid.*, para 20

16 *ibid.*, para 40

## NAO Briefing prepared for the Environmental Audit Committee

### Mechanisms for UK delivery on commitments arising from the World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002)

#### Executive summary

The National Audit Office has examined the UK government's follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002, in response to a recommendation from the Environmental Audit Committee of the House of Commons<sup>17</sup>. We looked at the extent to which there are delivery mechanisms for achieving the UK WSSD commitments—i.e. mechanisms to enable progress to be planned, co-ordinated, tracked and demonstrated. Assessing actual progress towards achieving the commitments, which is a much larger task for the longer term, could be addressed in future work. This briefing is structured into four sections:

- Introduction.
- The value of the UK Table of Commitments as a delivery mechanism.
- The extent to which UK WSSD commitments have been reflected into key government-wide delivery mechanisms.
- The extent to which key government departments have reflected UK WSSD commitments in their delivery mechanisms.

Our key findings are set out below.

#### 1. WSSD did not provide the international community with a clear framework for delivery

The WSSD Plan of Implementation emphasised delivery and partnerships, encompassing and reinforcing several pre-existing agendas, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Doha Development Agenda. The WSSD Plan of Implementation positioned these existing agendas within a broader framework of sustainable development, rather than treating sustainable development as a new or separate, specialist issue.

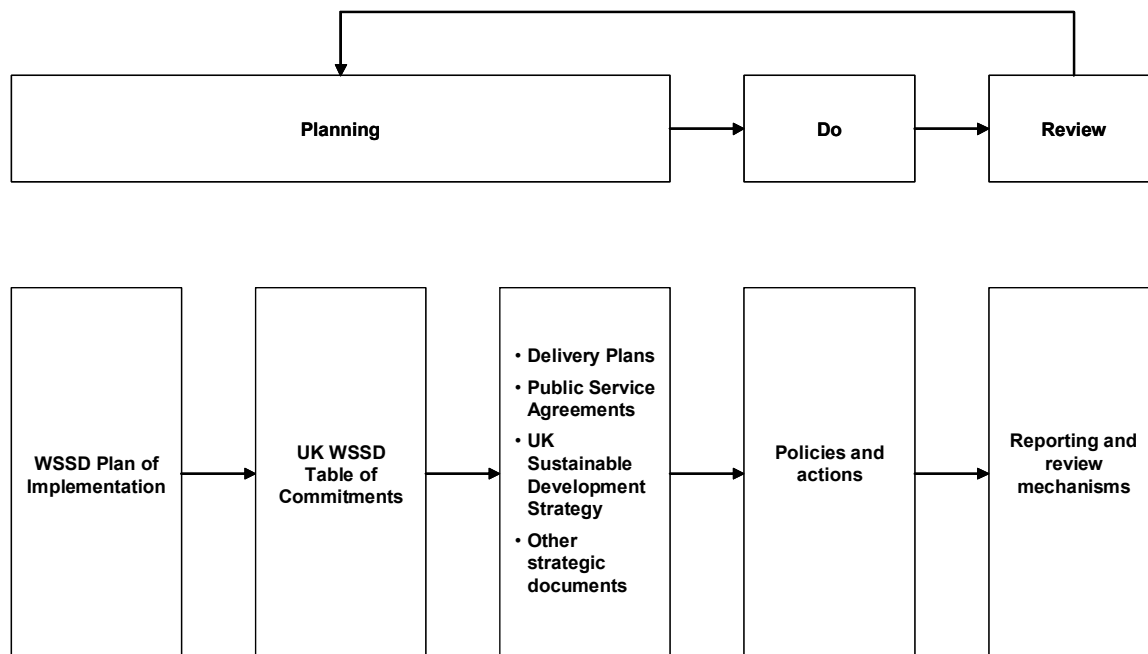
The WSSD Plan of Implementation also set out a range of specific commitments. However, despite the efforts of the UK government and like-minded states, the Plan is not sufficiently robust in terms of targets and delivery goals to provide a basis against which progress by the international community can be properly monitored, reported, and audited. In addition, whilst the 11th meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD11) negotiated a stronger international follow-up process, it generated no guidance of how national governments might track their own progress, nor was it expected to.

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17 World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002 – From Rhetoric to Reality, 23 October 2003, House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmenvaud/98/98.pdf>

Further elaboration of the framework provided by the WSSD Plan of Implementation is therefore needed, and the role of follow-up action at both EU and UK level is important in this respect. The framework applying in the UK is illustrated below in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: The mechanisms for delivering UK WSSD commitments**



*There are a range of mechanisms by which UK WSSD commitments can be delivered*

*Source: National Audit Office*

## 2. The UK Table of Commitments has been used to present the UK WSSD commitments, but it has limitations

As the Environmental Audit Committee has noted, it is very difficult to effectively audit UK progress on delivering the WSSD commitments without the UK government translating the WSSD Plan of Implementation into intermediate, measurable, targets.

The UK government has transposed the WSSD Plan of Implementation into a set of national commitments, which it produced as the UK Table of Commitments, available on the government's sustainable development website<sup>18</sup>. All relevant government departments were consulted on the Table, which has been formally agreed across government. Whilst the UK Table of Commitments was originally intended as an internal document to elicit interdepartmental agreement on some of the broad issues to be addressed in the UK's follow-up to WSSD, it has been used to provide some focus, direction, and accountability. At the same time, the current UK Table of Commitments has some key weaknesses:

- The UK Table of Commitments does not provide a comprehensive view of the UK's WSSD response but aims to set out sixteen key commitments in response to the Summit. Defra's intention was to use the Table to highlight the priority areas where UK WSSD commitments will prompt new and additional work—above and beyond existing commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals. However, this rationale for choosing the priorities is not clear from the UK Table of Commitments.

18 <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/wssd2/02.htm>

Notably, education for sustainable development and health are omitted, whilst some of the commitments which are included do not establish any new direction, for example on trade and corporate social responsibility. The Table is therefore a mix—it contains some areas such as fisheries, where UK WSSD commitments established new and additional work, and also some of the main ongoing WSSD areas, such as corporate social responsibility.

- There is less clarity over overall ownership and co-ordination for two commitments in the Table—‘Renewable energy and energy efficiency’ and ‘Finance’. However, this does not imply a lack of progress on these commitments, where UK government has much work underway. The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, which forms a significant part of the commitment, is an initiative to which the UK government is clearly committed.
- The Table’s lack of targets, and the unspecific nature of most commitments, means that its usefulness for monitoring, reporting and audit of UK’s contribution to international progress is limited.

### **3. UK WSSD commitments have been reflected in 2004 Spending Review Public Service Agreements to varying degrees**

The extent to which UK WSSD commitments have been reflected in the new 2004 Spending Review Public Service Agreement targets has varied. Defra was the only department to explicitly incorporate whole UK WSSD commitments into its new Public Service Agreement. FCO, DTI and HMT have to an extent made their UK WSSD commitments partly explicit in their new Public Service Agreements. DfID’s UK WSSD commitments have not been explicitly reflected in its new Public Service Agreement, but DfID consider that WSSD follow up is implicit within its existing programme. However, the Service Delivery Agreement for DfID’s 2002 Spending Review Public Service Agreement does include the development of work to support one of the UK WSSD commitments for which DfID has lead responsibility<sup>19</sup>.

### **4. Key departments have incorporated UK WSSD commitments into delivery planning to varying degrees**

Departments have responded differently to the challenge of delivery planning. Some departments have produced stand-alone Delivery Plans for the UK WSSD commitments on which they lead, whilst others have tried to embed WSSD follow-up in new or existing strategic documents.

Defra has shown strong leadership in its follow-up to WSSD, by maintaining direct accountability for the seven UK WSSD commitments on which it leads and by facilitating the WSSD follow-up process for government as a whole. Defra has also encouraged government departments to produce detailed Delivery Plans for the UK WSSD

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<sup>19</sup> The Service Delivery Agreement for DfID’s 2002 Spending Review Public Service Agreement included the development of “analytical methods to integrate poverty-environment issues into poverty reduction strategy processes and other development plans”. This covers the period 2003-2005, and has supported the UK WSSD commitment on the “continued integration of environmental issues into country led poverty reduction processes”.

commitments on which they lead, breaking down the commitments into more specific steps and milestones. To date, only Defra has published UK WSSD Delivery Plans. In the case of the other four lead departments:

- FCO is revising its Delivery Plans and will publish them in March, alongside its new Departmental Sustainable Development Strategy;
- DfID has a primary focus on the Millennium Development Goals. Although WSSD brought additional commitments which went beyond the Millennium Goals, it also served to reinforce the Millennium Development Goals. DfID therefore sees no need to produce separate Delivery Plans.
- DTI has UK WSSD commitments which are largely covered under existing strategy documents and sees no need to produce separate Delivery Plans.
- HMT has a generally supporting role with respect to WSSD follow-up. Though HMT is listed as a joint lead with DfID on the ‘Finance’ commitment, HMT consider that this policy area is essentially led by DfID. There is no separate Delivery Plan for the ‘Finance’ commitment.

## **5. Government has produced two brief annual reports on progress and proposes changes in how progress will be reported**

To date, the government has produced “one year on” and “two year on” summary progress reports on UK WSSD commitments, which have been structured around the UK Table of Commitments. In addition, brief updates on WSSD progress have been included in the annual reports on the 1999 Sustainable Development Strategy, *A Better Quality of Life*, which the government has used as the main vehicle for reporting on international sustainable development commitments to Parliament, the public and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

For the future, government proposes that UK WSSD commitments will be incorporated into the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy. Thus annual reporting on the new Strategy could form the main vehicle for regular reporting on WSSD progress—though it is not clear at present what the reporting provisions or frequency will be.

## **6. Formal delivery mechanisms understate the extent to which departments are working towards WSSD goals**

There is much work underway to deliver UK WSSD commitments even though it may not feature in delivery mechanisms explicitly linked to WSSD:

- WSSD included many commitments on which the UK and key departments were already working, and some new commitments which required changes or shifts in UK policy.
- Some departments have subsequently remapped or reoriented their programmes to match UK WSSD commitments and to include them in delivery mechanisms. Some have chosen to identify WSSD as context for pre-existing policies, whilst for others the WSSD context is not explicitly recognised. Defra, as might be expected, has done most to align its work and delivery mechanisms with WSSD. DfID has continued to

structure its work and delivery mechanisms around the framework of the Millennium Development Goals.

- There are some other areas of policy which, although part of the WSSD Plan of Implementation, were not included in the UK Table of Commitments. For example, poverty, health, education, and a focus on Africa - key issues at WSSD—are areas where UK government has much work underway, but these have been given limited coverage in the UK Table of Commitments. In addition, there are some more specific policies that have not been mentioned in the UK Table of Commitments but are clearly relevant. Examples include the creation of the International Finance Facility by DfID and HMT aimed at increasing aid flows, the work of the Global Opportunities Fund by FCO, and the government's contribution to creating the Commission for Africa.

## **7. The review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy provides a new opportunity to incorporate UK WSSD commitments**

- The current review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy offers a significant opportunity to embed WSSD commitments into UK policy. An inter-departmental group on international sustainable development has worked to help make best use of this opportunity. The new strategy could be a key mechanism for linking the UK WSSD commitments to key targets, which would enable more effective monitoring, reporting and auditing of UK WSSD follow-up.
- The government's review consultation on the new Strategy had a primarily domestic focus with relatively little attention given to integrating the international development concerns that were central to WSSD. However, the consultation document is not necessarily a reliable guide to the prominence WSSD might enjoy in the new Strategy—this can only be assessed once the Strategy is produced in Spring 2005.
- At that time it should also be possible to see whether the new Strategy, supporting documents and associated progress reports, if they are to become the main vehicle for recording WSSD commitments and progress against them, incorporate a greater range of more specific and measurable targets than the UK Table of Commitments which preceded them.

# **Part 1: Introduction**

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## **The WSSD did not provide a clear framework for delivery**

1. The UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was held in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002. The three key outcomes of the Summit were a political declaration, a detailed plan of implementation and agreements on a range of partnership initiatives:



- The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development<sup>20</sup> reaffirmed the international commitment to sustainable development. The declaration contains no specific commitments beyond a commitment to the WSSD Plan of Implementation.
- The WSSD Plan of Implementation<sup>21</sup> is a lengthy and detailed description of how sustainable development might best be achieved at the international, national and local levels. It calls on governments to take action on a wide variety of issues at all levels but, despite the efforts of the UK Government and like-minded states, sets few new targets.
- WSSD also resulted in the creation of over 200 voluntary ‘partnerships for sustainable development’, bringing together governments, businesses, and other non-governmental stakeholders.

2. The Summit reaffirmed existing international agreements and in particular emphasised policy integration on two fronts—vertically, between the local, national, regional and global levels of governance, and horizontally—across a wide range of diverse policy contexts, including trade, social development, and environmental protection. The WSSD Plan of Implementation emphasised delivery and partnerships, encompassing and reinforcing several existing agendas, including the Millennium Development Goals<sup>22</sup> and the Doha Development Agenda<sup>23</sup>. The WSSD Plan of Implementation positioned these existing agendas within a broader framework of sustainable development, rather than treating sustainable development as a new or separate, specialist issue.

3. The Summit agreed a number of general ‘activity’ commitments without targets, such as the commitment to develop “integrated water management plans by 2005”. It also agreed a range of commitments without dates or quantified targets, such as the commitment to “urgently and substantially increase the global share of renewable energy”. In terms of specific outcomes rather than activity, the key new targets with dates set by the Summit were as follows:

- halve the number of people without access to sanitation by 2015
- restore fisheries to maximum sustainable yields by 2015
- establish a network of marine protected areas by 2012
- significantly reduce rate of biodiversity loss by 2010
- use and produce chemicals in ways that do not lead to significant adverse effects on human health and the environment by 2020

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20 [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD\\_POI\\_PD/English/POI\\_PD.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POI_PD.htm)

21 [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD\\_POI\\_PD/English/POIToc.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POIToc.htm)

22 See: <http://www.developmentgoals.org> The Millennium Development Goals are: (1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (2) Achieve universal primary education, (3) Promote gender equality and empower women, (4) Reduce child mortality, (5) Improve maternal health, (6) Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, (7) Ensure environmental sustainability, (8) Develop a global partnership for development

23 The 'Doha Development Agenda' was the key outcome of the World Trade Organisation's Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar, in 2001. This round of trade talks was underpinned by a commitment to substantially strengthen assistance to developing countries in pursuit of economic growth and poverty reduction. The Doha Development Agenda included negotiations on agriculture, trade and environment, and trade liberalisation.

4. In general though, despite the efforts of the UK government and like-minded states, the WSSD Plan of Implementation is not sufficiently robust in terms of targets and delivery goals to provide a basis against which progress by the international community can be properly monitored, reported, and audited.

5. In addition, there is a lack of enforcement capacity at an international level. The UN has a monitoring role with respect to the follow-up to international agreements, but the mechanisms by which non-compliance can be penalised are limited. Whilst the 11th meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD11) negotiated a stronger international follow-up process, it generated no guidance of how national governments might track their own progress, nor was it expected to.

6. Nonetheless, Defra has publicly stated that: “We will not achieve what we promised in Johannesburg, unless there is some means by which we can review and monitor progress towards meeting our commitments. Governments need to be held to account”<sup>24</sup>. Further elaboration of the framework provided by the WSSD Plan of Implementation is therefore needed, and the role of follow-up action at both EU and UK level is important in this respect. As the Environmental Audit Committee has noted, without the UK government translating the WSSD Plan of Implementation into intermediate, measurable, targets, it is very difficult to effectively audit progress on delivering the WSSD commitments<sup>25</sup>. WSSD itself did not provide national governments with a clear framework for delivery.

### **This analysis focuses on delivery mechanisms**

7. The UK’s implementation of its WSSD commitments has been monitored by the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee. In September 2003, EAC published a report titled ‘World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002—From Rhetoric to Reality’. The report made 16 recommendations relating to WSSD follow-up, which the government responded to in January 2004. The recommendations covered several areas in relation to WSSD follow-up, ranging from Spending Round 2004 and the UK Sustainable Development Strategy review, to developing a strategy on sustainable consumption and production.

8. One of the recommendations within the EAC’s report was for the National Audit Office to initiate “discussions with Defra and the Sustainable Development Commission to explore how they could work together to report UK progress against the Johannesburg commitments. Any such arrangements should take account of the need to keep Parliament informed, preferably through regular reporting to the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee.”<sup>26</sup>

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24 The Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Commission for Sustainable Development, New York, April 2003

25 The UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Margaret Beckett MP. Paragraphs 79 – 81, page 30, World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002—From Rhetoric to Reality. 23 October 2003, House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee

26 Paragraph 86, page 31, World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002 – From Rhetoric to Reality. 23 October 2003, House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee

9. In light of the EAC recommendation, this briefing focuses on examining the extent to which there are delivery mechanisms for achieving the UK WSSD commitments – in the form of clear responsibilities and mechanisms for monitoring, reporting, and implementation. We have not assessed actual progress towards achieving the commitments, which is a much larger task for the longer term. Our analysis is based on the Table of UK WSSD Commitments agreed cross-departmentally by all government departments. The Table identifies the “main sustainable development commitments originating from WSSD” as seen by government and allocates areas of responsibility and the work to be carried out by various departments.

10. The government has stated that it has deliberately not set up a separate WSSD delivery apparatus, which risked fragmenting WSSD from pre-existing, strongly related, work programmes<sup>27</sup>. Rather, the government has committed to incorporating WSSD commitments within the mainstream of existing departmental work programmes.

11. This briefing therefore looks at how Defra and other government departments have mainstreamed UK WSSD commitments into their operations—for example, through PSA targets, Treasury spending reviews and delivery plans. It also looks at government-wide mechanisms for monitoring and reporting progress.

### Our approach and structure to the analysis

12. We developed a framework of key questions to structure analysis of the potential delivery mechanisms. The questions were designed to investigate the following three themes, which form the structure of the remainder of this briefing:

- **The value of the UK Table of Commitments as a delivery mechanism**—the Table’s role in relation to the WSSD Plan of Implementation, assignment of departmental responsibilities, and monitoring and reporting.
- **The challenge of embedding UK WSSD commitments into key government-wide delivery mechanisms**—i.e. the challenge of embedding UK WSSD commitments into the review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, the 2004 spending review, and the Sustainable Development Task Force.
- **The response of different government departments to embedding WSSD commitments in established delivery mechanisms**—specifically the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Department for International Development (DfID), and the Treasury (HMT) as the five designated lead departments.

13. Our analysis was based on structured and semi-structured interviews with key officials across Defra, DTI, FCO, DfID, and HMT—the five government departments identified as leading UK WSSD delivery—combined with a review of documentary evidence.

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27 Paragraph 6 at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmenvaud/232/232.pdf>

## Part 2: The UK Table of Commitments as a WSSD delivery mechanism

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14. The government set out its main commitments from WSSD in the form of a UK Table of Commitments, summarised by topic. Defra consulted all relevant government departments on this Table, which has been agreed across government and is now available on the government's sustainable development website<sup>28</sup>. This section considers the value of the UK Table of Commitments as a delivery mechanism, and its role in relation to the WSSD Plan of Implementation, assignment of departmental responsibilities, and monitoring and reporting.

### The UK Table of Commitments has provided some focus and accountability

15. The government set out its main commitments from WSSD in evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee in February 2003. This evidence was in the form of a UK Table of Commitments, identifying responsibility for follow-up on each UK WSSD commitment to specific government departments. UK follow-up to WSSD is based on this UK Table of Commitments.

**Figure 2: Assignment of departmental responsibilities**

UK WSSD commitments, as set out in the UK Table of Commitments	Lead Department
Chemicals, Agriculture, Partnerships, Biodiversity, Fisheries, Marine Issues	Defra
Continued Integration of Environmental Issues into Country-led Poverty Reduction Processes, Water and Sanitation, Access to Energy	DfID
Corporate Social Responsibility, Trade	DTI
Human Rights	FCO
Finance, International Sustainable Development Governance, Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency	Joint lead

Source: HM Government

16. The establishment of the UK Table of Commitments has played a key role in the UK, demonstrating the government's drive to follow-up on WSSD. The WSSD Plan of Implementation—from which the UK Table of Commitments was derived—is diverse and global in scope, reflecting the priorities of developed and developing nations, and states in

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transition. The decision by the UK to create the UK Table of Commitments is therefore consistent with the principle that WSSD called for a focus on delivery.

17. Whilst the UK Table of Commitments was originally intended as an internal document to simply elicit interdepartmental agreement on some of the broad issues to be addressed in the UK's follow-up to WSSD, government has used the Table to provide some:

- **Focus**—by determining sixteen priority areas for action, designated as the “main sustainable development commitments arising from WSSD”
- **Direction**—by listing the processes to be used to achieve progress
- **Accountability**—by listing which departments are involved in the delivery against each commitment

### The rationale for choosing the priorities is not clear from the UK Table of Commitments

18. The disadvantage of focusing UK WSSD follow-up on the UK Table of Commitments is that annual UK reports on WSSD progress do not effectively consider the advances made by government towards international sustainable development that fall outside the scope of the Table—such as the creation of the International Finance Facility by DfID and HMT, the work of the Global Opportunities Fund by FCO, or the creation of the Commission for Africa by HM Government. However, this is not to imply that government considers such issues as unimportant. In terms of delivering UK WSSD commitments, FCO considers that the Global Opportunities Fund has been most useful in supporting good governance, human rights, and renewable energy and energy efficiency projects worldwide. The government also attaches great importance to Africa, evidenced by its inclusion as one of the key topics for discussion under the UK's G8 presidency.

19. Defra's intention was to use the UK Table of Commitments to highlight the priority areas where UK WSSD commitments will prompt *new and additional* work—above and beyond existing commitments such as the Millennium Development Goals. However, this rationale for choosing the priorities is not clear from the UK Table of Commitments. Notably, whilst education for sustainable development and health are omitted, some of the commitments which are included do not establish any new direction, for example on trade and corporate social responsibility. The UK Table of Commitments is therefore a mix—it contains some areas such as fisheries, where UK WSSD commitments established new and additional work, and also some of the main ongoing WSSD areas, such as corporate social responsibility.

20. The basis on which ongoing WSSD areas (those which do not establish any new direction)—such as trade, corporate responsibility, poverty and health—are included or excluded from the UK Table of Commitments is not clear. Notably, the omission of health from the UK Table of Commitments is despite an entire section within the WSSD Plan of Implementation on health<sup>29</sup>, plus 37 other references throughout the document. More broadly, there is recognition within the UK Table of Commitments on the importance of

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29 Section VI of the WSSD Plan of Implementation:  
[http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD\\_POI\\_PD/English/POIChapter6.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/WSSD_POI_PD/English/POIChapter6.htm)

integration of environmental issues into poverty reduction processes, but very limited mention of the Millennium Development Goals, even though these provide the central focus of DfID's activities and are also part of the WSSD Plan of Implementation. Similarly, a focus on Africa<sup>30</sup> was a key issue at WSSD, but has been given limited coverage in the UK Table of Commitments. This is particularly surprising, given the UK's new and additional commitment to African development, as demonstrated by the creation by UK government of the Commission for Africa in 2004<sup>31</sup>.

## Responsibilities could be more clearly assigned

21. The current version of the UK Table of Commitments has two key weaknesses in relation to the assignment of responsibilities to government departments:

- In some cases it is not clear why certain departments are included or excluded from the list of departments taking forward the UK WSSD commitments. For example, DWP are in practice involved in taking forward the WSSD corporate social responsibility commitment, though are not listed as such in the UK Table of Commitments. Similarly, it is not clear why DfT is excluded from the list of departments taking forward the sustainable consumption and production WSSD commitment, given the clear inclusion of transport in the sustainable consumption and production section of the WSSD Plan of Implementation, the recognition of the need to address transport within the government's own Framework for Sustainable Consumption and Production, and the commitment from the DfT to take account of all the government's international agreements on sustainable development. On agriculture, inter-departmental liaison is wider than stated in the UK Table of Commitments, with DfID, FCO, HMT and Cabinet Office also being involved as key departments. In contrast, on the WSSD biodiversity commitment, ODPM is listed in the UK Table of Commitments, but there is no evidence of ODPM involvement. However, government departments do consider that the risk of reflecting too much detail in the UK Table of Commitments is that it would confuse rather than clarify.
- There is less clarity over co-ordination for two of the UK WSSD commitments—renewable energy and energy efficiency, and finance—though this does not imply a lack of progress on these commitments, where UK government has much work underway. The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), which covers a significant part of the overall renewable energy and energy efficiency UK WSSD commitment, is an initiative to which the UK government is clearly committed. In the case of the WSSD finance commitment, there is no evidence of responsibilities being clearly assigned to enable the specific commitments on the Monterrey Consensus to be integrated in the wider context of WSSD. At the same time, this WSSD commitment simply underlined the importance of the Monterrey Consensus issues (e.g. untying of aid and on aid volume), to which DfID is committed.

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30 Part VIII of the WSSD Plan of Implementation is devoted to sustainable development in Africa. Significantly more attention is given to Africa than any other regional initiatives.

31 Department for International Development (2004). Commission for Africa. Available at: <http://www2.DfID.gov.uk/news/files/pr-africacomm2july04.asp>

## Part 3: Embedding WSSD commitments in government-wide delivery mechanisms

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22. This section considers the challenge of embedding WSSD commitments into key government-wide delivery mechanisms—namely the review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, the 2004 spending review, and the Sustainable Development Task Force.

### The review of UK Sustainable Development Strategy offers some potential to embed WSSD commitments

23. The UK is currently in the process reviewing the UK Sustainable Development Strategy. Government has stated that the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy, expected in Spring 2005, will aim to set out a vision, priorities for UK action, international activity, and key performance indicators.

24. The current UK Sustainable Development Strategy, *A Better Quality of Life*, was published before WSSD, at a time when devolution was beginning to come into force<sup>32</sup>. Since then, approaches to sustainable development have evolved at the local level, wider devolved level (e.g. National Assembly for Wales and Scottish Executive) and international level (e.g. WSSD). Significantly, the consultation on the review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy has highlighted the aim of building a UK strategic framework which for the first time looks ahead to 2020<sup>33</sup>. As such, there is a clear opportunity for substantive development of the UK Strategy, which could also take on board WSSD commitments. Notably, an inter-departmental group on international sustainable development has worked to help facilitate this.

25. There may be significant scope for incorporating WSSD commitments in the Strategy review. Two sections within the consultation<sup>34</sup>—on (i) sustainable consumption, production and use of natural resources and (ii) sustainable development in Europe and internationally—mentioned the general WSSD context, highlighting the WSSD Plan of Implementation, the launch of over 300 multi-stakeholder partnerships at WSSD, and the specific WSSD commitment to address sustainable consumption and production. In order to bring the international perspective into the strategy review, UK government held a workshop to consider the perspectives of stakeholders with international interests<sup>35</sup>. In addition, the UK government took the opportunity at the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development to solicit the views of those states and interest groups present<sup>36</sup>.

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32 *A Better Quality of Life—A strategy for sustainable development for the UK*. 1999, Cm 4345, The Stationary Office, London

33 Page 5, Introduction. *Taking It On—Developing a UK Sustainable Development Strategy together*. A consultation paper. Defra, April 2004

34 *Taking It On—Developing a UK Sustainable Development Strategy together*. A consultation paper. Defra, April 2004

35 Consultative workshop summary: UK SDS—The international dimension. Green Globe Network, 12 July 2004. Available at: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/pdf/uksds.pdf>

36 12<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Commission for Sustainable Development, New York, April 2004. Details available at: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/csd12.htm>

26. It is not possible to comment on the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy, as this is not expected to be available until spring 2005. However, the structure of the review consultation was not ideally suited to taking on board the UK WSSD commitments. Most of the government's main UK WSSD commitments as identified in the UK Table of Commitments were only mentioned very briefly in the consultation, some (e.g. human rights, marine, and integration of environmental issues into poverty reduction processes) were not mentioned at all, and none of the questions posed invited responses on mainstreaming WSSD commitments, or indeed mentioned WSSD at all.

27. More broadly, although key international environment issues were factored into the UK Sustainable Development Strategy consultation exercise, there has been limited integration of the international development concerns central to WSSD. These are addressed in a separate chapter (section 10)<sup>37</sup>. The questions in the four central sections—climate change and energy, sustainable consumption, production and use of resources, environment and social justice, and helping communities to help themselves—illustrate the primary focus on domestic sustainable development and international environment issues, rather than international development concerns. In addition, the workshop and consultation on international perspectives, though useful, was limited by the poor representation from developing countries.

28. The review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy also provides an opportunity to revisit the issue of international performance indicators in light of WSSD. The existing 1999 UK Sustainable Development Strategy<sup>38</sup> contains seven international indicators—five contextual and two specifically relating to the UK's contribution to international sustainable development (UK Net Official Development Assistance, and UK public expenditure on global environmental protection). As Defra recognises, it is very difficult to see how this existing set of indicators could be used to properly assess the extent of WSSD delivery<sup>39</sup>. This is because the existing international indicators tend to measure long-term global changes, and are therefore rarely able to show the impact of UK action—which encompasses many aspects, including investments by UK companies as well as bilateral and multilateral development aid and co-operation—on a year by year basis. International indicators were not mentioned in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy consultation review document. However, the consultation document is not necessarily a guide to whether this issue will be addressed in the new Strategy.

29. The value of the Strategy review in delivering the UK WSSD commitments also depends heavily on the extent to which the UK Sustainable Development Strategy can influence activity and policy in departments other than Defra. This theme has been identified by the Environmental Audit Committee<sup>40</sup>.

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37 <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/consult/document/pdf/consult.pdf>

38 Section 13: Measuring our progress. Taking it on. Developing UK Sustainable Development Strategy together. A consultation paper. 2004

39 The 7 international SD indicators are: (i) Global poverty, (ii) Net Official Development Assistance, (iii) Global population, (iv) UK public expenditure on global environmental protection, (v) International emissions of CO2 per head, (vi) world and material consumption levels per head. See: <http://www.Defra.gov.uk/corporate/busplan/tn.pdf>

40 Paragraph 84. The Sustainable Development Strategy: Illusion or Reality? Environmental Audit Committee, 8 November 2004. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmselect/cmenvaud/624/624.pdf>



30. In summary, the review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy offers a significant opportunity to embed WSSD commitments, though the structure of the review consultation was not ideally suited to taking on board the UK WSSD commitments. At the same time, the consultation document is not necessarily a guide to the prominence WSSD might enjoy in the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy. The publication of the new Strategy in 2005 and subsequent annual reports on progress will show whether sufficient attention has been given to UK WSSD commitments.

### **Treasury 2004 Spending Review guidance highlighted sustainable development, but did not mention WSSD**

31. Spending Reviews set departmental expenditure limits and are used to define the key improvements that the public can expect from the resources allocated, with the highest priorities set out in Public Service Agreement targets. The first opportunity for the WSSD commitments to be considered in the delivery planning process was the 2004 Spending Review. This section considers the extent to which the 2004 Spending Review guidance was used to guide departments towards incorporation of the WSSD commitments.

32. In commenting on UK mechanisms for WSSD follow-up, the Environmental Audit Committee made the following recommendation: “As part of their bids for Spending Round 2004, departments will be required to submit a Sustainable Development Strategy. We recommend the Treasury ensures that these strategies set out how each department is intending to implement any identified Johannesburg commitments even if these are not reflected in formal targets”<sup>41</sup>

33. Responding to this recommendation in January 2004, the government described Spending Review 2004 as “an opportunity to assess our formal delivery targets, including whether as a whole they reflect the breadth of commitments made at WSSD and consider how best to direct the resources needed to achieve them”<sup>42</sup>. Government further commented that: “sustainable development is one of a number of cross cutting themes which will be considered as part of Spending Review 2004. Departments will be required to submit their Spending Review proposals to the Treasury, which will evaluate the various sustainable development components along with other horizontal government priorities.”

34. The Environmental Audit Committee has expressed concern that Spending Review 2004 gave sustainable development less prominence than in the 2002 Spending Review<sup>43</sup>. Treasury does not agree with this view. Treasury have highlighted that sustainable development was positioned alongside seven other ‘thematic issues’: social exclusion and deprivation, the regions, rural proofing, regulatory performance, risk management, and counter terrorism; and that its Spending Review 2004 guidance issued to spending departments sets out how thematic issues, including sustainable development, should be

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41 Recommendation 9, Environmental Audit Committee ‘From Rhetoric to Reality’ report, 23 October 2003

42 Para 17, Government response to the Environmental Audit Committee ‘From Rhetoric to Reality’ report. 7 January 2004

43 <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/taskforce/sdtf6-0715-1.htm>— “The Environmental Audit Committee has challenged us on whether the move from discrete sustainable development reports constitutes a weakening of policy” HM Treasury, 5 July 2004. Sustainable development and the Spending Review, SD Task Force paper SDTF6 0715-1

addressed in a targeted manner in order to achieve the right focus and to deliver real impacts on outcomes.

35. The 2004 sustainable development guidance issued by the Treasury to spending departments did not mention the UK WSSD commitments, or WSSD more generally. Instead, the guidance stated that “The UK Sustainable Development Strategy should provide the basis for departmental consideration of sustainable development in the 2004 Spending Review”. As the 1999 UK Sustainable Development Strategy—which was in place at the time of the spending review—has a primarily domestic focus and predates WSSD, it is clear that the Spending Review 2004 guidance was not used to guide departments towards incorporation of the UK WSSD commitments.

36. To assist with the evaluation of sustainable development in departmental bids, a sustainable development expert was seconded to the Treasury for six months to help provide technical advice and guidance. Treasury have assured us that the sustainable development expert made the link with the UK Table of WSSD Commitments on an informal basis as one of the points of reference for identifying key sustainable development issues with departments. The longer term approach to embedding WSSD within the Treasury remains unclear.

37. The Treasury has stated that “we were signalling that we did not want departments to set aside the sustainable development issues but to address them as part of their mainstream work in a fully integrated way”<sup>44</sup>. Nevertheless, Spending Review 2004 gave sustainable development less prominence than in the 2002 Spending Review, the Spending Review 2004 guidance was not used to guide departments towards incorporation of the WSSD commitments.

### **Spending Review 2004 bids did not focus on embedding WSSD**

38. The consideration of WSSD within departmental spending bids constitutes a potential delivery mechanism. This section considers the extent of the Spending Review 2004 efforts to embed UK WSSD commitments into departmental planning.

39. The assessment of sustainable development and WSSD by departments in their Spending Review 2004 bids was generally limited, with the notable exception of Defra, and to some extent FCO. Figure 3 sets out the key features of department’s bids with respect to WSSD:

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44 <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/taskforce/download/sdtf6-0715-1.doc>

Figure 3: Consideration given to UK WSSD commitments within Spending Review bids

Department	Consideration given to UK WSSD commitments within Spending Review bid
Defra	Defra's bid provided an explicit consideration of all its lead responsibilities listed in the UK Table of Commitments.
DfID	Poverty reduction was central to DfID's sustainable development assessment. Poverty eradication, though not listed as an overall UK WSSD commitment in the UK Table of Commitments, is central to the WSSD Plan of Implementation. WSSD generally was briefly mentioned within a short section on sustainable development. No explicit mention was made of the specific UK WSSD commitments on which DfID is noted as a lead department, though the key issues within the UK WSSD Finance commitment were central to DfID's bid.
DTI	The DTI submission included a short section on sustainable development, which briefly mentioned delivering the Energy White Paper and improving the business contribution to sustainable development. No mention was made of WSSD generally, or the UK WSSD commitments on which DTI is noted as a lead department.
FCO	FCO's bid included a short overview of FCO's contribution to sustainable development. This included mention of the general WSSD context and the WSSD issues on which the department leads.
HMT	HMT's bid included a short overview of HMT's role with respect to sustainable development. There was no mention of WSSD generally, or the WSSD Finance commitment, on which HMT is a joint lead.

Source: Meetings with officials and spending bids supplied

40. In conclusion, the consideration of WSSD in departmental spending bids does constitute a potential delivery mechanism but Spending Review 2004 was not much used to embed UK WSSD commitments into departmental planning.

### **A good start has been made on embedding WSSD into Public Service Agreements, but there is still some way to go**

41. The Spending Review Public Service Agreements (PSAs) set out the government's "highest priorities and ambitions for delivery"<sup>45</sup>. This section considers the extent to which the main UK WSSD commitments have been embedded into Public Service Agreements.

42. Whilst the format of Public Service Agreements varies between departments, they generally state an overarching departmental aim, and a series of objectives under which specific, measurable and time-bound targets are defined. To ensure accountability, PSA targets require the establishment of monitoring mechanisms so that progress towards the targets can be reported<sup>46</sup>. To facilitate effective monitoring, quantifiable PSA targets are

45 HM Treasury (2004) Spending Reviews. Available at: [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending\\_review/spend\\_index.cfm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_index.cfm)

46 NAO (2004). Validation of Public Service Agreement Data Systems. Unpublished

preferable to broad qualitative objectives. The Environmental Audit Committee noted that specific PSA targets which take on board the steer from WSSD would be helpful in ensuring effective follow-up across all of the government's UK WSSD commitments. The inclusion of the UK WSSD commitments in any format, however, represents recognition of the importance of the issue within the department.

43. The government set out its overall approach to embedding UK WSSD commitments into Public Service Agreements in its response to the Environmental Audit Committee's 'From Rhetoric to Reality' report<sup>47</sup>. Specifically, the government commented that "We remain committed to the approach set out in the Memorandum to the EAC's inquiry (February 2003): to incorporate, where appropriate, UK WSSD commitments into HM Government's formal delivery planning system, Departmental Public Service Agreements, Service Delivery Agreements and associated targets."

44. In practice, the extent to which UK WSSD commitments have been reflected in the new 2004 PSA targets varies. Some UK WSSD commitments are wholly explicit in the new 2004 PSA targets, some are partly explicit, and others are not explicit. Defra was the only department to explicitly incorporate whole UK WSSD commitments into its 2004 PSA targets<sup>48</sup>. Key elements of WSSD-related issues have been addressed by other departments' new 2004 PSA targets. An example of this is the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's new PSA8 (2004) which relates to international sustainable development governance, and builds on the FCO's existing PSA7 (2002), which has a delivery plan and scorecard that explicitly links international sustainable development governance to the WSSD Plan of Implementation.

45. Where UK WSSD commitments have not been highlighted in PSA targets, action to progress the issues is often implicit within PSA targets. For example, water and sanitation is key to delivering DfID's PSA target on Under Five Mortality. DfID's existing Service Delivery Agreement for its PSA also includes the development of "analytical methods to integrate poverty-environment issues into poverty reduction strategy processes and other development plans". More broadly, DfID consider that the majority of the UK WSSD commitments on which it leads are implicit within the Millennium Development Goal based focus of its PSA. As Figure 4 below shows, a majority of the UK WSSD commitments have been made wholly or partly explicit in departmental PSAs.

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47 Paragraph 16, Government response to the Environmental Audit Committee 'From Rhetoric to Reality' report. 7 January 2004

48 Defra's PSA 1 (2004), <http://www.Defra.gov.uk/corporate/busplan/tn.pdf>

Figure 4: Reflection of UK WSSD commitments in Departmental PSAs

Reflection in PSA targets	UK WSSD commitments (and lead government departments)
Wholly explicit (6 commitments)	Sustainable production and consumption (Defra, DTI), Biodiversity (Defra), Fisheries (Defra), Marine issues (Defra), Agriculture (Defra), Chemicals (Defra)
Partly explicit (5 commitments)	Finance (DfID, HMT), Trade (DTI), International sustainable development governance (FCO, Defra), Human rights (FCO), Renewable energy and energy efficiency (FCO, DTI, Defra)
Not explicit (5 commitments)	Integration of environmental issues into country led poverty reduction processes (DfID), Water and sanitation (DfID), Access to energy (DfID), Partnerships (Defra), Corporate social responsibility (DTI)

Source: NAO analysis

46. On the extent to which WSSD targets can be made “SMART”<sup>49</sup>, the government stated, in response to the Environmental Audit Committee’s “From Rhetoric to Reality” report, that “direct transposition of all the WSSD targets, goals and commitments into departments’ PSA targets” was “not expected”, and that “Given the wide ranging, and long-term, nature of the WSSD targets, and the need for PSA targets to be “SMART”, such an approach would not be practicable”.

47. As Defra’s commentary<sup>50</sup> in relation to its new PSA1<sup>51</sup> indicates, developing “SMART” PSA targets in the context of the UK WSSD commitments is challenging, but not impossible. Several of the UK WSSD commitments, either directly or indirectly, are linked to the targeted introduction of policies and measures, e.g. marine protected areas or an internationally agreed system to measure biodiversity loss. Many WSSD related success measurements for Defra’s PSA1 are therefore likely to be more *process based*. Nevertheless, success measures can be determined, and the move towards incorporating UK WSSD commitments into “SMART” PSA targets is useful in enabling effective monitoring and reporting. Other government departments could learn from Defra’s experience of working to develop “SMART” PSA targets for the specific UK WSSD commitments on which they lead.

### The Sustainable Development Task Force is an advisory body, with a primarily domestic focus

48. Defra established a Sustainable Development Task Force in February 2003, chaired by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and supported by an

49 Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound.

50 <http://www.Defra.gov.uk/corporate/busplan/tn.pdf>

51 Defra PSA1: “To promote sustainable development across Government and in the UK and internationally, as measured by: (i) the achievement of positive trends in the Government’s headline indicators of sustainable development; (ii) the UK’s progress towards delivering the World Summit on Sustainable Development commitments, notably in the areas of sustainable consumption and production, chemicals, biodiversity, oceans, fisheries, and agriculture – and (iii) progress towards internationally agreed commitments to tackle climate change”. See: <http://www.Defra.gov.uk/corporate/busplan/tn.pdf>

inter-departmental working group of officials. The Task Force, set up to be an advisory rather than executive group, is made up of representatives from each major government department, alongside eight representatives from business, local government and the not-for-profit sector. Other stakeholders are invited as relevant to the agenda under discussion but it is not intended to be a fully representative body. This section considers the extent to which the Task Force has contributed to the delivery of the UK WSSD commitments.

49. The Task Force's terms of reference include "providing a forum for dialogue between key stakeholders and Ministers on how, in the light of WSSD commitments, the delivery of sustainable development can be best achieved"<sup>52</sup>. Some aspects of WSSD follow-up—including the integration of environmental issues into poverty reduction processes and water and sanitation—have been discussed in most meetings. The Task Force has played a useful role in three principal respects:

- **Facilitating dialogue** between departments and key stakeholders in the sustainable development debate, enabling improved shared understanding. Attendance has generally been good.
- **Enabling public disclosure and raising the profile** of key action on sustainable development issues (in contrast to the private proceedings of the Cabinet Committees, the outcomes of the Task Force meetings are made publicly available on the government's SD website)
- **Providing a forum focused on all three pillars of sustainable development** (environment, society, and economy), in contrast to the more environmentally focused remit of ENV and ENV(G)<sup>53</sup>

50. At the same time, the Task Force's ability to progress WSSD follow-up has been limited by the following:

- The Task Force has had no remit to make binding decisions – it is an advisory body.
- The Task Force Terms of Reference have set a focus on domestic delivery<sup>54</sup>.
- The Task Force has been primarily focused on the review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy. The statement on Task Force working practices states that "the Task Force will be a time-limited body ... operating no later than publication of the revised Strategy, which is due for completion in 2005", and (ii) the statement on Task Force output that: "The output of the Task Force will be the generation of ideas, and debate, on priorities, practical actions and delivery mechanisms—which will feed into the review of the Strategy"<sup>55</sup>. Whilst WSSD has been considered in the context of the review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy, it has not provided the Task Force's over-arching focus.

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52 <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/taskforce/remit.htm>

53 ENV and ENV(G) are key cabinet committees that have responsibility for addressing sustainable development, in particular the integration of environmental sustainability considerations into public policy.

54 "While the UK Sustainable Development Strategy will continue to define the UK role in working with others to achieve sustainable development internationally, the Task Force will focus on effective domestic delivery". SD Task Force role, available at: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/taskforce/remit.htm>

55 <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/taking-it-on/taskforce/remit.htm>

- The Task Force has had limited time for round table discussion. Meetings held every few months (there have been seven meetings between February 2003 and November 2004) addressing four (often disparate) topic areas within one hour have meant that there has been little time, following presentations on each area as appropriate, for subsequent round table discussion.

51. Although the Task Force will cease to operate with its present remit once the new UK Sustainable Development Strategy is published, the Strategy review process provides the opportunity to consider governance arrangements for WSSD follow-up once the new Sustainable Development Strategy is in place. Overall, the Task Force has provided a high profile forum for interdepartmental discussion on sustainable development issues between departments and key external opinion formers. However, the Task Force has been focused primarily on domestic delivery and the review of the Sustainable Development Strategy rather than WSSD delivery.

### **Government has produced two brief annual reports on progress, and proposes changes in how progress will be reported**

52. To date, the government has produced “one year on” and “two year on” progress reports on key developments in WSSD follow-up, which have been structured around the UK Table of Commitments. These anniversary reports, made available on the government’s sustainable development website, have been valuable in summarising progress against the main UK WSSD commitments.

53. However, the quality and robustness of the “one year on” and “two year on” reports is limited by the lack of fixed targets or goals within the UK Table of Commitments, Delivery Plans and equivalent documents. For example, the UK WSSD renewable energy and energy efficiency commitment refers to the need to “urgently and substantially increase the global share of renewable energy” but—like the WSSD Plan of Implementation—does not specify any target or means by which progress can be objectively assessed. Similarly, under agriculture, there are no targets or goals within the UK Table of Commitments to ensure “Delivery of Doha Development Agenda commitments on subsidy reform”.

54. Annual reporting on the basis of the UK Table of Commitments provides a useful overview and update, but does not enable progress against the UK WSSD commitments to be comprehensively audited. For such reporting to be effectively audited, the UK Table of Commitments—and associated Delivery Plans or equivalent documents—would need to be carefully revised, with targets and responsibilities more clearly defined.

55. In addition to the ‘WSSD—1 year on’ and ‘WSSD—2 years on’ anniversary reports, government has incorporated updates on progressing WSSD commitments within the annual reports on the 1999 Sustainable Development Strategy, *A Better Quality of Life*. To date, government has used these annual reports as the main vehicle for reporting on international sustainable development commitments to Parliament, the public, and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. As well as covering key developments each year across the whole spectrum of UK sustainable development interests, the annual reports highlight UK performance on the government’s 15 headline indicators of sustainable development. Such annual reporting has been helpful in providing snapshot updates on overall WSSD progress.

56. Government has stated that reporting on the new Sustainable Development Strategy will be the main vehicle for regular reporting on progressing WSSD, substituting for the ‘WSSD—1 year on’ and ‘WSSD—2 year on’ type reports. However, it is not clear at present what the reporting provisions or frequency will be, and there are some challenges with this approach:

- The annual sustainable development report has, to date, been primarily focused on domestic sustainable development. The new Strategy in 2005 and subsequent annual reports therefore provide an excellent opportunity to give more attention to UK WSSD commitments.
- The monitoring of sustainable development performance has been based on quantified targets and outcomes. However, for most of the UK WSSD commitments, such as biodiversity, UK inputs are directed at a global playing field—and so outputs cannot easily be measured. Some of the UK WSSD commitments (notably those on agriculture and trade) detail the advocacy role to be played by the UK at a European and International scale. Goals such as these do not easily lend themselves to the use of performance indicators.

57. The above points illustrate that the present UK Sustainable Development Strategy annual reporting methodology has some scope for contributing towards a reporting mechanism for UK WSSD commitments, but is not ideally suited to doing so. However, the review of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy provides an opportunity to ensure that the new Strategy in 2005 and reports on progress provide a sufficiently comprehensive, structured and accessible means for Parliament to view progress against the full range of UK WSSD commitments. Annual reporting on the new Strategy could form the main vehicle for regular reporting on WSSD progress—though Defra has not yet decided what the reporting provisions or frequency will be. In addition, WSSD is only part of the wider international sustainable development policy context and Defra has not yet decided whether there will continue to be separate reports on WSSD progress.

## Part 4: Progress of government departments in embedding UK WSSD commitments

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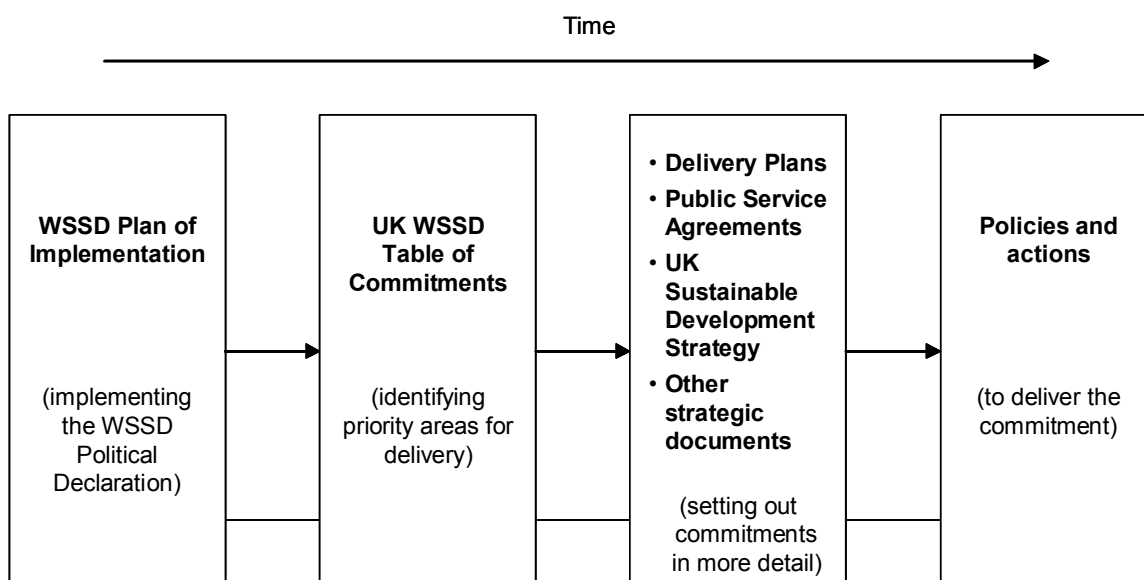
58. This section considers the progress different government departments have made in embedding UK WSSD commitments into their own delivery mechanisms (such as stand alone delivery plans, White Papers, and other strategic documents). Defra, DTI, FCO, DfID, and HMT are considered as the five designated lead departments within the UK Table of Commitments. Importantly, whilst departments have responded differently to the challenge of embedding UK WSSD commitments, all consider that delivery is more important than delivery mechanisms.

59. Over time, departments are working the high level generic aims contained within the WSSD Plan of Implementation into specific deliverables that can be measured, targeted, and audited. This process of embedding UK WSSD commitments in government



mechanisms enables progress to be planned, co-ordinated, tracked and demonstrated—which is valuable from the perspective of keeping Parliament properly informed. Figure 5 below illustrates the process of embedding WSSD follow-up in key delivery mechanisms over time.

**Figure 5: The process of elaborating the WSSD Plan of Implementation**



Source: NAO

## The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has shown strong leadership

60. Defra has shown strong leadership on prioritising follow-up to the UK WSSD commitments. WSSD remains on Defra’s agenda, showing its desire to push for implementation. Defra is involved in all sixteen of the UK WSSD commitments, and leads on seven, as set out in the UK Table of Commitments.

61. Defra has also shown leadership within Europe on behalf of HM government. The Department communicated the rationale behind the UK Sustainable Development Strategy review to all 24 of its European counterparts, noting the importance of incorporating international activities into the new strategy. In addition, the UK has sought to contribute to the EU Sustainable Development Strategy review, in particular at the 2003 Spring Council, which focused on embedding WSSD follow-up. The priorities identified by the European Commission at the 2003 Spring Council<sup>56</sup> in this respect are notably similar to the UK priorities as set out in the UK Table of Commitments.

62. Overall, Defra has set an example and has encouraged other departments to follow suit. Figure 6 below illustrates Defra’s overall approach in terms of inter-departmental liaison, delivery plans, reporting, and responsibilities. However, whilst Defra’s role includes acting as a facilitator for taking forward WSSD follow-up, all five government departments are accountable for progress against WSSD in their respective areas—not just Defra. Notably,

<sup>56</sup> COM(2003) 829 final. Page 5, Communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The World Summit on Sustainable Development one year on: Implementing our commitments. See: [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003\\_0829en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2003/com2003_0829en01.pdf)

only Defra has published WSSD Delivery Plans to date, even though Defra has encouraged all government departments to produce Delivery Plans for the UK WSSD commitments on which they lead.

**Figure 6: Follow-up on UK WSSD commitments for which Defra leads / coordinates**

WSSD COMMITMENT	Partner-ships	SCP <sup>1</sup>	Biodiversity	Fisheries	Marine issues	Agriculture	Chemicals
Departments listed in UK Table of Commitments (leads in bold)	<b>Defra</b> DfID, FCO, DTI, HMT, ODPM	<b>Defra</b> , DTI HMT, FCO, PMSU, OGC, ODPM	<b>Defra</b> DfID, FCO, ODPM	<b>Defra</b> FCO, DfID, DTI, DFT	<b>Defra</b> FCO, DfID, DTI, DFT	<b>Defra</b> DTI	<b>Defra</b> HSE, DTI
<b>INTER-DEPARTMENTAL LIAISON</b>							
Is it clear which department is coordinating?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Which department?	Defra	Defra	Defra	Defra	Defra	Defra	Defra
Can the department identify the contacts for other departments?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Are all the correct departments listed for this commitment? <sup>2</sup>	✓	x	x	✓	✓	x	x
Is liaison formal rather than ad-hoc?	x	x	✓	✓	x	x	x
<b>PUBLISHED DELIVERY PLANS</b>							
Is there a published delivery plan?	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Does it address the key issues in the UK Table of Commitments?	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Does the plan identify milestones for action?	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>REPORTING</b>							
Is a formal reporting mechanism in place?	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
How often is there reporting?	Has been annual	As required by PSA(1)	As required by PSA(1)	As required by PSA(1)	As required by PSA(1)	As required by PSA(1)	As required by PSA(1) <sup>3</sup>
<b>RESPONSIBILITIES: Is there an individual responsible for...</b>							
Delivery?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Monitoring and reporting?	x	✓	✓	✓	[✓]	[✓]	[✓]
Accountability?	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

1 Sustainable production and consumption

2 As perceived by the departmental lead

3 Defra Public Service Agreement 1 – incorporates the six Defra UK WSSD commitments, and is subject to standard PSA reporting

Note: x - No [✓] – partly ✓ - Yes

Source: National Audit Office

## **Defra has published Delivery Plans to help drive delivery**

63. Defra has published Delivery Plans for six of the main UK WSSD commitments for which it leads, on the government's sustainable development website. Defra's Delivery Plans are helpful, given the long-term focus of the UK WSSD commitments. These delivery plans formally record intended progress and milestones for action, as well as serving to raise the profile of WSSD within the department.

64. Defra's Delivery Plans clarify a long-term departmental strategy and set a framework for future action in a level of detail that may be otherwise lacking in the department's overall strategy. In particular, the publication of Delivery Plans is especially beneficial for those areas which did not already have a strategy or plan outlining the intended progress, such as on fisheries, where WSSD led to a new commitment by governments to restore fisheries to maximum sustainable yields by 2015. At the same time, the Delivery Plans generally follow the approach of the UK Table of Commitments and indeed the WSSD Plan of Implementation in terms of a lack of robust, auditable targets.

65. Defra has also progressed much work to advance delivery. For example, in relation to the WSSD agriculture commitment, Defra has helped to progress EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform. In April 2004, the EU extended its major reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to cover cotton, tobacco, olive oil and hops. These reforms give the CAP a more market oriented focus, reduce environmental damage, promote wider rural development and reduce the trade distorting nature of the CAP.

## **Defra has embedded reporting WSSD follow-up into its mainstream delivery mechanisms**

66. The incorporation of WSSD follow-up into Defra's PSA targets has been helpful in creating a mechanism for ensuring effective monitoring and reporting of progress, both for Defra's own UK WSSD commitments and as a positive example to others. The accountability required in progressing PSA targets should ensure that progress towards the six UK WSSD commitments detailed in Defra's PSA 1 (2004) will be monitored and reported on a regular basis. However, Defra are still in the process of determining the detailed monitoring and reporting arrangements.

67. For the UK WSSD commitments on which Defra leads, overall accountability and responsibilities for delivery, monitoring and reporting have generally been clearly assigned. On the marine, agriculture, and chemicals UK WSSD commitments, individuals have clearly been identified for the purpose of the "1 year on" and "2 years on" overall progress reports. However, responsibility for monitoring and reporting on these commitments could still be more formally assigned (for example, through incorporation into job descriptions), as is already the case on some other of the UK WSSD commitments.

## **The approach to inter-departmental liaison on Defra led commitments has varied**

68. The nature of inter-departmental liaison on Defra's UK WSSD commitments has varied. For some commitments, liaison between departments has been formal rather than ad-hoc, for example by mainstreaming WSSD follow-up into the remit of an official committee. A more formal approach helps to ensure that the links between issue areas and

UK WSSD commitments are mainstreamed, rather than the specific areas being pursued separately and independently of the WSSD context. In the case of agriculture, where WSSD merely served to underline delivery of the existing Doha Development Agenda commitments on subsidy reform, Defra considered that making the links with the WSSD context could be helpful to pursuing UK objectives, because WSSD strengthened the commitment to the Doha agenda in some other states. Biodiversity is a good example of where liaison on WSSD follow-up has been mainstreamed into the remit of an existing official committee on biodiversity and, more recently, a new Ministerial committee. The former meets every 3-4 months and the latter every 6-9 months (though has only met once as at 31 August 2004, as it is a new committee).

69. For some other UK WSSD commitments, liaison between Defra and other government departments is currently more ad-hoc. For example, on sustainable consumption and production, Defra considered that while *Changing Patterns—the UK government framework for sustainable consumption and production*—was in development, interdepartmental liaison was regular, but since publication it has become more ad-hoc. On the other issue areas—marine issues, agriculture and chemicals—there is substantial work underway, much of which pre-dates WSSD and much of which overlaps with the relevant UK WSSD commitments. However, in these cases, there is no evidence of a specific group or mechanism to ensure that links between these broad issue areas and their relevant UK WSSD commitments are mainstreamed on an ongoing basis. Defra believe that ad-hoc liaison can be as effective as formal liaison. However, it is not possible for us to test the strength of this assertion.

### **The WSSD commitment on partnerships is unique**

70. The UK WSSD commitment on partnerships, on which Defra leads, is unique. The stakeholders within each partnership are together responsible for the performance of the partnership, rather than government alone. Accordingly, each partnership has its own delivery mechanisms. As government has stated, partnerships are essentially voluntary, self organising and self regulating and an over-burdensome, over-prescriptive and inflexible framework might deter partnerships from engaging with, and reporting to, the UN system, depriving the UN of a valuable source of ideas, innovation and information.

71. Nevertheless, continued monitoring and reporting on the progress of partnerships will help ensure the quality and credibility of partnerships as a means of implementation. Moreover, given the investment of public money into these partnerships, government has a role in monitoring and reporting on progress, and in considering whether value for money is being provided. For those partnerships where the UK has contributed funding, the government has been involved in the monitoring and reporting of the partnerships to the UN. As the Environmental Audit Committee has noted, this monitoring process will be crucial in maintaining the credibility of these projects—and it is important that the UK government maintains pressure at UN level to ensure that this process is sufficiently resourced and rigorously followed-up.

72. In addition, at UK level, the government has published annual progress updates alongside the overall “WSSD—1 year on” and “WSSD—2 years on” reports, which has been helpful in providing an overview. At the same time, more detailed and robust monitoring and reporting arrangements could usefully be put in place to enable the UK to

effectively deliver on its commitment to “continued monitoring and implementation of the UK’s partnership commitments”<sup>57</sup>, and to ensure that proper consideration can be given across the relevant partnerships to whether UK public money is being effectively spent.

### **There has been a mixed response by other government departments**

73. Other government departments have responded differently to the challenge of delivery planning. FCO has produced but not yet published Delivery Plans for the UK WSSD commitments on which it leads. The other departments have not produced Delivery Plans, and progress with embedding the UK WSSD commitments has been variable. DTI, for example, has succeeded in covering its UK WSSD commitments through existing strategic documents. DfID has maintained a focus on the Millennium Development Goals, and in doing so there may be a risk that it fails to address the additional commitments that WSSD brought beyond the Millennium Goals. However, DFID has now set up a Sustainable Development Group, including teams relating to WSSD themes in its Policy Division, to help minimise the risk. Figure 7 illustrates the different approaches in terms of inter-departmental liaison, delivery plans, reporting, and responsibilities.

### **Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

74. FCO has produced delivery plans for its UK WSSD commitments, but these have not yet been published. These are currently being revised and will be published, alongside the FCO’s new Sustainable Development Strategy, in March 2005.. The Strategy will set out for the first time how the FCO helps deliver the Government’s international sustainable development priorities, and will flow from the UK’s sustainable development strategy. In addition, FCO is now in the process of developing a new Departmental Business Plan, and the draft refers specifically to the two UK WSSD commitments—on international sustainable development governance and human rights—where the FCO is clearly leading.

75. FCO has also been taking significant steps to progress action on the ground. For example, FCO has funded projects worth £100,000 to promote projects under the Partnership for Principle 10 (a WSSD partnership to promote environmental democracy). It has also included environmental democracy and broader issues of environmental governance among the themes for the new Sustainable Development Programme under the Global Opportunities Fund that will start in April 2005.

76. Inter-departmental liaison for the specific UK WSSD commitments on which FCO leads has been frequent but informal. More formally, FCO has been making use of the general inter-departmental group on international sustainable development, which is chaired by Defra and has discussed overall WSSD follow-up (such as incorporation into the new UK sustainable development strategy) alongside wider issues<sup>58</sup>. This group covers the broad range of international sustainability issues rather than focusing on specific UK WSSD commitments, and does not presently include ODPM. On the UK WSSD international sustainable development governance commitment, there is currently no

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57 As set out in the partnership commitment of the UK Table of Commitments. Available at: <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/wssd2/11.htm>

58 Draft terms of reference that included overall WSSD follow-up were circulated to the inter-departmental group on international sustainable development for a meeting on 3 December 2004. Defra plan for these draft terms of reference to be adopted at the next meeting.

evidence to suggest HMT and ODPM involvement. However, FCO have assured us that HMT are involved on relevant key sub-issues – such as international financial institutions—and that whilst ODPM have not been involved to date, they would be brought into discussions if necessary.

77. In terms of reporting on the international sustainable development governance commitment, there are quarterly public reports for key aspects of the commitment in relation to FCO's existing 2002 PSA7 targets and comprehensive quarterly internal reporting against FCO's internal Sustainable Development and Commonwealth Group business plan. In addition, the government wide "WSSD—1 year on" and "WSSD—2 years on" overview reports have briefly considered international sustainable development governance alongside all the other UK WSSD commitments. Responsibility for monitoring and reporting could be more formally assigned (for example by incorporation into a job description), although an official has clearly been identified for the purpose of the "1 year on" and "2 years on" overview progress reports. Whilst human rights is considered alongside all the other WSSD issues in the government wide "WSSD—1 year on" and "WSSD—2 years on" overview reports, more in depth reporting specifically on the WSSD human rights commitment has to date been less well established. Notably, the UK's 2003 Human Rights Annual Report makes some specific reference to WSSD<sup>59</sup>, whilst the 2004 Human Rights Annual Report covers some of the key issues but with no explicit link made to WSSD. This serves to illustrate that whilst FCO's overall approach to human rights is reported on every year in a substantial annual report, there is no established mechanism to ensure that UK human rights reporting maintains the links to the WSSD context on a regular, ongoing basis.

### ***Department for Trade and Industry***

78. DTI has sought to embed WSSD in its existing work, and DTI's UK WSSD commitments are essentially covered under existing strategic documents, including the draft international strategic framework for CSR<sup>60</sup> and the Trade and Investment white paper, which set out intended progress. DTI has not produced stand alone Delivery Plans.

79. Inter-departmental liaison on the UK WSSD commitments for which DTI leads has been wider than stated in the UK Table of Commitments. In practice, DWP are also included on corporate social responsibility and HMT are also included on trade. At the same time, DTI consider that the risk of reflecting too much detail in the UK Table of Commitments is that it would confuse rather than clarify. Overall accountability and responsibilities for delivery, monitoring and reporting have been clearly assigned. However, reporting to date has been ad-hoc, rather than formalised.

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59 P159-160, Human Rights Annual Report. P160 reports that the UK attended the first meeting of the PP10 partnership, in Lisbon, April 2003. See: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1063631521830>

60 <http://www.csr.gov.uk/pdf/e2draftframework.pdf>

## **HM Treasury**

80. HMT has a generally supporting role with respect to WSSD delivery. For example, HMT provides advice on the cost effectiveness of regulatory and fiscal instruments to advance sustainable consumption and production, and has provided DfID with increased funding for its international aid and development programme. HMT does not have sole lead responsibility for any of the UK WSSD commitments.

## **Department for International Development**

81. As shown by its Public Service Agreement, DfID has continued to structure its work and delivery mechanisms around the framework of the Millennium Development Goals. DfID consider that WSSD follow-up forms an integral part of its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, and that WSSD reinforced the Goals. Although DfID has produced a Water Action Plan—which includes the WSSD target to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation—it does not believe that delivery plans or other summary documents are necessary for the other commitments for which it is listed as a lead department. DfID consider that the UK WSSD commitments are largely covered by existing processes and that it aims to incorporate UK WSSD commitments into its existing delivery planning system. In addition a Sustainable Development Group has been set up within Policy Division which includes two teams (Water, Energy and Minerals and Environment for Sustainable Development) addressing the UK WSSD commitments.

82. Despite DfID's focus on the Millennium Development Goals, there is no specific Public Service Agreement target for the Millennium Development Goal relating to 'ensuring environmental sustainability'. Such a target could contribute to progressing DfID's UK WSSD commitment on Integrating environmental issues into country led poverty reduction processes. DfID further commented that they were not pursuing a dialogue on energy sector restructuring and a level playing field for renewables and energy efficiency, distributed and decentralised energy, listed as an action within the WSSD Access to Energy commitment.

83. The lack of separate DfID delivery plans does not imply a lack of activity on the DfID led UK WSSD commitments. There is much work underway. For example, DfID is working with four developing countries (Ghana, Honduras, Uganda, and Vietnam) to address poor environmental information available to the poverty reduction strategy process and the limited involvement of stakeholders who depend most upon the environment<sup>61</sup>. In addition, DFID is providing support to the Global Village Energy Partnership and the EU energy initiative. Both of these are examples of innovative type II WSSD follow-up activities. DFID also continues to lead on the partnership launched by the Prime Minister on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. At the same time, the UK WSSD commitments on which DfID leads pose substantive new issues to be mainstreamed (e.g. the commitments to halve the number of people without access to sanitation by 2015 and to integrate environmental issues into poverty reduction strategies). In this context, more explicit incorporation of the UK WSSD commitments into existing

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61 <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/wssd2/14.htm>



delivery plans—establishing intended progress towards such commitments—could be beneficial.

## **The Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and Finance UK WSSD commitments**

84. The UK Table of Commitments states that the UK WSSD renewable energy and energy efficiency commitment is led jointly by FCO, Defra, and DTI. In practice, FCO co-ordinated the WSSD renewable energy and energy efficiency commitment area in the run up to WSSD and in its aftermath, up to Summer 2003, but since then it has been less clear as to who is coordinating overall<sup>62</sup>. Currently, there is no overall delivery mechanism in place for this commitment—delivery planning is being managed through a combination of the international Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency WSSD Partnership (REEEP) and the UK Energy White Paper follow-up process.

85. FCO has shown strong leadership on the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), which covers a significant part of the overall UK WSSD commitment, and is an initiative to which the UK government is clearly committed. Currently, the FCO's Global Opportunities Fund Climate Change and Energy Programme is supporting 15 REEEP projects around the world at a cost of £500,000. The REEEP documents intended progress towards delivery and is a vehicle for delivering action on the ground, and progress will be reported through the REEEP partnership. Though REEEP does not contain milestones for action, FCO have established such milestones within their internal Climate Change and Environment Group Business Plan. The FCO led the preparatory work resulting in the establishment of REEEP as a WSSD partnership, and provided the bulk of REEEP's initial funding. As REEEP gained in international support, and its corporate governance structure took shape, the lead role within government passed to Defra on the appointment of a senior Defra official as Chair of the Governing Board.

86. The issues within the renewable energy and energy efficiency commitment at a national level are broadly covered by the UK Energy White Paper, led by DTI. The Energy White Paper mentions WSSD, but does not explicitly document intended progress towards this UK WSSD commitment<sup>63</sup>. To help deliver the Energy White Paper, FCO, Defra and DTI have jointly produced “UK International Priorities—The Energy Strategy”, working through the DTI led Sustainable Energy Policy Network. Whilst this international energy strategy mentions REEEP, it also does not explicitly document intended progress towards the overall UK Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency WSSD commitment<sup>64</sup>. In addition, whilst the Energy White Paper commits the government to a range of milestones and actions, there are no specific milestones explicitly linked to this UK WSSD commitment. However, this is not to imply a lack of progress on this UK WSSD commitment, where the UK government has much work underway.

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<sup>62</sup> As the FCO has highlighted in comments on a draft of this briefing, the FCO's new draft Departmental Business Plan refers to the two UK WSSD commitments on which the FCO clearly leads (namely international sustainable development governance and human rights) - and not the UK WSSD renewable energy and energy efficiency commitment, which the UK Table of Commitments states is jointly led by FCO, Defra and DTI. Similarly, there is no mention of the UK WSSD renewable energy and energy efficiency commitment in the FCO Spending Review 2004 Public Service Agreement.

<sup>63</sup> For example para 8.12, Energy White Paper. Available at: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/whitepaper/index.shtml>

<sup>64</sup> Page 19, UK International Priorities—The Energy Strategy, 28 October 2004

87. There is a lack of clarity over co-ordination of the UK WSSD Finance commitment. However, this does not imply a lack of progress, where UK government has much work underway. HMT is listed as a joint lead with DfID on the UK WSSD Finance commitment, and has progressed UK proposals for an International Finance Facility aimed at increasing aid flows. At the same time, HMT consider that this policy area is essentially led by DfID. The commitment focuses on issues such as aid volume and untying of aid, and hence is more central to DfID's remit. There is no separate Delivery Plan for the UK WSSD 'Finance' commitment and, whilst specific sub-issues—such as delivering commitments on aid volume and the untying of aid—are being taken forward, it is not clear how this commitment overall is being co-ordinated or reflected into delivery planning.

88. Notably, there is no evidence of responsibilities being clearly assigned to enable the UK government's programme of action on the Monterrey Consensus to be integrated in the wider context of WSSD. At the same time, however, the UK WSSD Finance commitment—considered on its own—simply underlined the importance of the Monterrey Consensus issues (e.g. untying of aid and on aid volume), to which DfID is committed.

Figure 7: Follow-up on UK WSSD commitments for which other departments lead /coordinate

WSSD COMMITMENT	Env. and poverty <sup>1</sup>	Water and sanitation	Access to energy	Finance	CSR <sup>2</sup>	Trade	ISDG <sup>3</sup>	Human rights	RE and EE <sup>4</sup>
Departments listed in UK Table of Commitments (leads in bold)	<b>DfID</b> Defra, FCO, HMT	<b>DfID</b> Defra, FCO, DTI	<b>DfID</b> Defra, FCO, DTI	<b>DfID</b> HMT Defra, FCO, ODPM	DTI DfID, HMT, Defra, FCO	DTI Defra, DfID, FCO	<b>FCO</b> Defra DfID, HMT, ODPM	<b>FCO</b> Defra, DfID	<b>FCO</b> Defra DTI, ODPM, DfID, PMSU
<b>INTER-DEPARTMENTAL LIAISON</b>									
Is it clear which department is coordinating?	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Which department?	DfID	DfID	DfID	-	DTI	DTI	FCO	FCO	-
Can the department(s) identify the contacts for other departments?	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Are all the correct departments listed for this commitment?	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓
Is liaison formal rather than ad-hoc?	x	x	✓	x	✓	✓	x	x	x
<b>ALTERNATIVES TO PUBLISHED DELIVERY PLANS</b>									
Is there a mechanism in which intended progress is set out?	[✓ ]?	✓	✓?	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	[✓ ]
Was it created specifically in response to WSSD? What is it?	No. Internal Directors Delivery Plan	No. DfID Water Action Plan	No. The SEPN EWP <sup>5</sup> Delivery Plan	N/A	No. Draft intl. strategic framework for CSR	No. Trade and Investment White Paper	Yes. WSSD delivery plan unpublished	Yes. WSSD delivery plan unpublished	No Yes EWP REEEP <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup>
Does it address the key issues in the UK Table of Commitments?	?	✓	[✓ ]?	N/A	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ✓
Does the plan identify milestones for action?	?	x	✓ ?	N/A	x	x	✓	✓	x ✓
<b>REPORTING</b>									
Is a formal reporting mechanism in place?	x	[✓ ]	x	x	x	x	[✓ ]	x	[✓ ]
How often is there reporting?	Ad-hoc	Annual reporting emerging	Ad-hoc	Ad-hoc	Ad-hoc	Ad-hoc	Quarterly for some aspects	Ad-hoc	Quarterly for some aspects
<b>RESPONSIBILITIES: Is there an individual responsible for...</b>									
Delivery?	✓	✓ ?	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	[✓ ]
Monitoring and reporting?	[✓ ]	[✓ ]	x	x	✓	✓	[✓ ]	[✓ ]	[✓ ]
Accountability?	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓	[✓ ]

<sup>1</sup> Integration of environmental issues into country led poverty reduction processes<sup>2</sup> Corporate social responsibility<sup>3</sup> International sustainable development governance<sup>4</sup> Renewable energy and energy efficiency<sup>5</sup> Energy white paper<sup>6</sup> Renewable energy and energy efficiency partnership.

Note: : x - No [✓] – partly ✓ - Yes ? – data not provided

Source: Interviews with departmental officials, documents, and NAO analysis

## **Annex A: Abbreviations**

### ***Department names***

Defra –	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfID –	Department for International Development
DfT –	Department for Transport
DTI –	Department of Trade and Industry
DWP –	Department for Work and Pensions
FCO –	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
HSE –	Health and Safety Executive
HMT –	HM Treasury
ODPM –	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OGC –	Office of Government Commerce
PMSU –	Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit

# Formal Minutes

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**23 February 2005**

Members present:

Mr Peter Ainsworth, in the Chair

Mr Colin Challen  
Mr David Chaytor  
Mrs Helen Clark  
Sue Doughty

Mr Paul Flynn  
Mr Mark Francois  
Mr Simon Thomas

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report (World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002: a UK progress report), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

*Ordered*, That the Chairman's draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 8 read and agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Third Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That The Chairman do make the Report to the House.

A paper was ordered to be appended to the Report.

*Ordered*, That the Appendix to the Report be reported to the House.

[Adjourned till Wednesday 2 March 2005 at 3pm.]

# Past reports from the Environmental Audit Committee since 1997

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## 2004-05 Session

First	Housing: Building a Sustainable Future, HC 135
Second	Corporate Environmental Crime, HC 136

## 2003-04 Session

First	Annual Report 2003, HC 214
Second	GM Foods – Evaluating the Farm Scale Trials, HC 90
Third	Pre-Budget Report 2003: Aviation follow-up, HC 233
Fourth	Water: The Periodic Review 2004 and the Environmental Programme, HC 416 ( <i>Reply, HC 950</i> )
Fifth	GM Foods – Evaluating the Farm Scale Trials, HC 564
Sixth	Environmental Crime and the Courts, HC 126 ( <i>Reply, HC 1232</i> )
Seventh	Aviation: Sustainability and the Government Response, HC 623 ( <i>reply, HC1063</i> )
Eighth	Greening Government 2004, HC 881 ( <i>Reply, HC 1259</i> )
Ninth	Fly-tipping, Fly-posting, Litter, Graffiti and Noise, HC 445 ( <i>Reply, HC 1232</i> )
Tenth	Budget 2004 and Energy, HC 490 ( <i>Reply, HC 1183</i> )
Eleventh	Aviation: Sustainability and the Government's second response, HC1063
Twelfth	Environmental Crime: Wildlife Crime, HC 605
Thirteenth	Sustainable Development : the UK Strategy, HC 624

## 2002-03 Session

First	Pesticides: The Voluntary Initiative, HC100 ( <i>Reply, HC 443</i> )
Second	Johannesburg and Back: The World Summit on Sustainable Development–Committee delegation report on proceedings, HC 169
Third	Annual Report, HC 262
Fourth	Pre-Budget 2002, HC 167 ( <i>Reply, HC 688</i> )
Fifth	Waste – An Audit, HC 99 ( <i>Reply, HC 1081</i> )
Sixth	Buying Time for Forests: Timber Trade and Public Procurement - The Government Response, HC 909
Seventh	Export Credits Guarantee Department and Sustainable Development, HC 689 ( <i>Reply, HC 1238</i> )
Eighth	Energy White Paper – Empowering Change?, HC 618
Ninth	Budget 2003 and Aviation, HC 672 ( <i>Reply, Cm 6063</i> )
Tenth	Learning the Sustainability Lesson, HC 472 ( <i>Reply, HC 1221</i> )
Eleventh	Sustainable Development Headline Indicators, HC 1080 ( <i>Reply, HC 320</i> )
Twelfth	World Summit for Sustainable Development – From rhetoric to reality, HC 98 ( <i>Reply, HC 232</i> )
Thirteenth	Greening Government 2003, HC 961 ( <i>Reply, HC 489,2003-04</i> )

## 2001-02 Session

First	Departmental Responsibilities for Sustainable Development, HC 326 ( <i>Reply, Cm 5519</i> )
Second	Pre-Budget Report 2001: A New Agenda?, HC 363 ( <i>HC 1000</i> )

Third	UK Preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, HC 616 ( <i>Reply, Cm 5558</i> )
Fourth	Measuring the Quality of Life: The Sustainable Development Headline Indicators, HC 824 ( <i>Reply, Cm 5650</i> )
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