

INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF ALL MAJOR GROUPS
AT THE BRIEFING ON UNCSD (UNEP/GMF - Feb, 21st, 2012)

Thank you Ms. Chair and authorities for your clarification,

I speak on behalf of all major groups.

Before presenting our questions, let us say that we are extremely pleased with the initiative to create a dialogue process over the next few months leading to 4 days of meetings just before the Rio+20 high-level gathering. This process is expected to stimulate and gather initiatives, perspectives, experiences, proposals and commitments from global civil society.

We are grateful for the leadership of the Brazilian government on this, and that you are inviting recommendations for the design of this process from civil society, as stated by Ambassador Andre Lago to the UNCSD plenary and Major Groups in New York informals meeting in January 2012, Where he said that “Rio+20 must engage and empower civil society organizations to ensure their effective participation in the debate and the implementation of sustainable development”. We want to work with the dialogue organizers to ensure that the Dialogues process will fulfill this commitment.

We have met over the weekend during the MGS Global Forum, have discussed this and, despite our positive impressions, we have identified a set of key-questions that should be answered to enable MGs to decide on their support for or engagement with these “Dialogues”. These are:

1. How do the organizers expect these dialogues to be taken into account within the negotiation of the “Future We Want” document and other Rio+20 outputs?
2. What are specific outcomes and outputs of the dialogues? Could these be, for instance, recorded in the compendium of commitments as provided for in para 128 of the Zero Draft?
3. What will be the role of governments in the Dialogues?
4. How and how effectively is Brazilian civil society participating in this process?
5. What are the proposed themes? How can MGs proposals on that be tabled?
6. What is the proposed venue? Are there any access restrictions that could hamper civil society participation?
7. How will participants and speakers/facilitators be selected, and what is the voice of MGs and stakeholders on that?
8. How is the media participation envisaged, so as to contribute with reaching out to wider society, while, at the same time, not transforming the Dialogues into merely a “talk show”?

Beside formulating these questions, we would like to share with the “Dialogues” organizers our expectations on them, both in terms of process and outcomes. These are the key expectations we identified:

<<AS DELIVERED>>

- 1- Overall, we envisage the “Dialogues” process as an opportunity to channel and build on the willingness of various stakeholders, worldwide, to develop positive and constructive cooperation to find solutions for the urgent transition towards a fair and sustainable society.
- 2- Despite not being part of the negotiation process of “The Future We Want” declaration, these Dialogues should have a clear entry point to influence the negotiations.
- 3- The “Dialogues” should create a real opportunity for convergence and interactions among the many processes in progress throughout civil society and MGs, to effectively engage in discussions with governments.
- 4- The processes leading up to the Dialogues in Rio should be clear, transparent, inclusive, focused and action/result oriented. It should be steered by a group that is both representative and effective, including MGs, Brazilian civil society and the dialogue organizers.
- 5- The themes to be addressed and the specific sub-topics should be defined jointly with MGs and Brazilian civil society. We note that some of the themes announced at the UNCSD section in New York may not be the right ones, and that issues such as governance and equity are essentials, and thus should be featured as themes in the dialogues.
- 6- Regardless the webcasting and IT interaction possibilities, the definition of who will be invited to attend the Dialogue sessions in Rio should provide for balance at least in terms of gender, region, age, MGs and stakeholders. The relevant processes in progress throughout civil society and MGs should also be taken into account.
- 7- The venue should not be an obstacle for broad participation, thus, the possibility of using the UNCSD Riocentro venue should be balanced against the possible implications for access and the possibility of spreading the dialogues in different locations.

We acknowledge the great challenge of organizing a process like this. At this point, it is critical that the Brazilian government provide clarity to this process as soon as possible. We are concerned that the current uncertainty is already jeopardizing the very feasibility of these dialogues. For that purpose, we invite you to – here in Nairobi - join a group of interested MG representatives to explore concrete possibilities on how to cooperate, so as to speed up and strengthen this important process.

Thanks for your attention,

ENDS