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Rio+20¹: A new beginning

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1. A beginning in the shadow of political realities

All the sustainable development conferences, Stockholm, Rio, Johannesburg and now Rio+20 have happened during difficult political times. The follow-up to Stockholm took place in the shadow of the 1973 oil crisis caused by the Yom Kippur war and the OPEC oil embargo; Rio 1992 occurred in the aftermath of the first Gulf War and the costs of democratization of the former Soviet bloc; Johannesburg happened shortly after 9/11; and most recently, Rio+20 was confronted with the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis.

Many developed countries engaged in the Rio+20 process were doing so with more than one eye on the crisis within the Eurozone rather than focusing on the way we might tackle current overconsumption and production patterns and structurally transform our economies to live within the limits of nature. The right wing in a number of countries has been portraying environment, climate change and sustainable development as a 'left wing' global plot. The meeting of the G20 (18-19th June 2012), focused almost entirely on short-term measures to prop up a broken economic system, appeared to be more important than Rio+20. Important political leaders such as Barack Obama, John Cameron and Angela Merkel did not even show up at Rio+20.

Many of the developed countries had to be dragged to the table to even participate. While the developing countries Group of 77 had originally tabled the resolution for a Rio+20 in November 2008, it took ten months before the European Union agreed to the Summit in late September 2009. The original mandate of the CSD in the third cycle had the chance to break the 15 year cycle. Brazil recognised this and led the process to stop the CSD with a new Summit in 2012.

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¹ Rio+20 is the short hand for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

Views on the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference and its relative success or failure vary depending on what people had thought was possible in these difficult times. It marked however a definite turning point in the balance of power and initiative in the world of sustainable development. What was clear from the beginning is that the leadership for Rio+20 was coming from the BASIC countries [Brazil, South Africa, India and China]. From 2008 Brazil ensured they were working with other BASIC countries to support their call for a new Summit. The strongest support came from South Africa as the host of the 2002 Summit. Rio started to show what that new world might look like. At times it seemed as if the European Union in particular did not know how to deal with the new authority that Brazil and other BASIC countries showed. The immediate impact seemed that the European negotiators retreated into even more private conversations and co-ordination between themselves, which removed them from productive contact with other delegations and often seemed to leave them behind the state of affairs by the time they came back into the negotiations.

However, for much of the negotiations the overall tone was antagonistic making progress elusive particularly on aspects of finance, trade, technology transfer and aid. There were heated deliberations for example on principles of 'common but differentiated responsibility' (CBDR) proposed by the G77 and references to 'voluntary and mutually agreed' aspects of technology transfer by various JUSCANZ members².

After a two-year process that seemed to lack any coherence, Brazil showed considerable leadership by completing the negotiations over the weekend one day before the Heads of State arrived, a record for a UN Summit that rescued the UNCSD from failure. This paper will review the key outcomes from Rio+20 both the positive and the negative ones. It will also look to the future and the process that has come out of Rio+20 and its possible impact on the Beyond 2015 process.

2. The Bad News

Some battles were lost. The campaign undertaken by Greenpeace, Pew Environment Group and others including Brazil, South Africa, India and Monaco for an agreement to immediately set up a process to deal with a **high seas biodiversity agreement** to protect our oceans was opposed by the US, Russia, Canada and Venezuela. The US had once again tabled the ratification of the Convention on the Law of the Sea in the US Senate so they were resistant to start negotiations on a new international oceans treaty until the US had ratified the Law of the Sea Treaty.

Instead Rio+20 will allow the UN General Assembly in 2014 to take "a decision on the development of an international instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea". This puts off the decision to set up negotiations for a new treaty on the high seas, for another two years, without a firm commitment.

On another issue Rio+20 still could not agree to any plan for eliminating **environmental harmful subsidies** (such as fossil fuels) after 20 years of talking about it. If governments had agreed to act on these subsidies then there could have been a shift to help finance the transition to a sustainable world.

The lack of recognition of **reproductive rights** as essential to sustainable development was especially disappointing. While the outcome document reaffirmed the ICPD and

2 JUSCANZ is Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Liechtenstein, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, and the United States



the Beijing Platform for Action as well as their subsequent review outcomes, women worldwide were outraged that governments failed to recognize women's reproductive rights as a central aspect of gender equality and sustainable development in the Rio+20 Outcome Document.

As the third world feminist network, DAWN – Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era – stated:

“In sharp contrast to twenty years ago at the historic Earth Summit when linkages between gender and all three pillars of sustainable development were substantively acknowledged, the Rio+20 outcome document has relegated women's rights and gender equality to the periphery without recognition of a wider structural analysis. For example, there is a reference to women's “unpaid work” but without recognizing the unequal and unfair burden that women carry in sustaining care and wellbeing (para 153). This is further exacerbated in times of economic and ecological crisis when women's unpaid labour acts as a stabilizer and their burden increases. Development is not sustainable if care and social reproduction are not recognized as intrinsically linked with the productive economy and reflected in macroeconomic policy-making.”

As a result of the Women's Major Group engagement with other Major Groups and sustained work with the media, a number of organizations stated positions on women's rights, reproductive rights, youth and adolescent health and rights that traditionally had not been as vocal on these issues. For example Mr. Kumi Naidoo of Greenpeace noted in his speech that:

“[the deletion of reproductive rights is] scandalous, that again a male dominated gathering wants to dictate to the women of the world how they should control their bodies” and that “we need to “understand that it cannot be activism as usual. We will be investing more in strengthening, crossing silos and will ensure that we take the struggle to every capital and boardroom and mobilize³”.

During the Summit's closing plenary, a number of governments also strongly voiced their concern about these grave omissions, including Bolivia, Peru, Switzerland, USA, Norway and Iceland.

3. Mixed Reviews

There was a firm commitment to establish a new set of universal Sustainable Development Goals for the world. New methods of measuring progress in the world (Beyond GDP, natural capital accounting, sustainability indicators) are also to be trialled and pushed forward more vigorously. Divergent views on the concept of ‘green economy’ were extensively deliberated and eventually reflected in the outcome document. Reporting on the sustainability impacts of large companies and businesses is also to be pushed forward.

a) Sustainable Development Goals

The concept of Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] originally put forward by the governments of Colombia and Guatemala in July 2011 has led to the creation of a thirty

3 www.dawnnet.org/advocacy-cso.php?id=254



country open working group intended to conclude initial thoughts in time for the 2013 UN General Assembly as part of a two year process that should enable the process on SDGs and MDGs [Millennium Development Goals] to merge into one process thereafter.

Alison Doig, Senior Advisor on Sustainable Development, Christian Aid, stated:

“There is some hope that Rio will yet have a positive legacy, because leaders have committed to create a new set of sustainable development goals (SDGs) which will set the direction of global development work from 2015. The SDGs could help make global food production more sustainable and ensure that many millions more people can enjoy clean water and sustainable, modern energy. But this will only happen if citizens keep up the pressure, as work to shape the goals continues.”

b) The Green Economy

While a contested term for many, the term “green economy” was accepted for the first time into a UN Summit agreement. The European Union had promoted a roadmap with targets and indicators yet it lacked any clear definition of what is the green economy. Many particularly those from the developing countries recognized that there isn’t one ‘green economy’ as affirmed in the text of the outcome document:

“Different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country, in accordance with its national circumstances and priorities, to achieve sustainable development in its three dimensions” (paragraph 56).

While this recognition of policy space is important, many NGOs called for a deeper questioning of the current development model that is based on extractivism and that fails to take into account social and ecological costs.

Friends of the Earth UK concluded in their analysis:

“This is critically important given attempts by some to define a “one size fits all” model of the so called “green economy” which promoted unsustainable business as usual. There is also welcome recognition that policies should be “guided by and in accordance with all Rio principles, Agenda 21, and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation” (paragraph 57).

This is a significant victory for civil society, because it allows communities and countries to define their own vision of what a truly fair and sustainable economy might look like.”

The Summit also formally agreed to trial out alternatives to Gross Domestic Product [GDP] to assess the progress of national and global economies in a more sustainable way, and to press forward with natural capital accounting and sustainability indicators.

c) Global Framework for Corporate Sustainability Reporting

A coalition of industry groups from the finance and banking sector (AVIVA, HSBC) and some NGOs promoted an agreement on a global framework for corporate sustainability reporting (para 47of the outcome document). This was opposed by the International Chamber of Commerce and a few key countries including India and the US.



In the end with strong push from the EU, Norway and Switzerland and supported by Mexico a version was agreed on which was based on developing best practice which could develop into a global framework in the coming years.

Friends of para 47 was launched under the leadership of Brazil, South Africa, Denmark and France and is expected to bring this issue back to the table in 2013 and 2015.

A complementary initiative can be seen in the Green Industry Platform, launched on the margins of the Rio +20 Conference by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and UNEP. This multi-stakeholder platform is a voluntary initiative that can have the same leverage - amongst other reasons because its creation preceded the final phase of the negotiations and was not dependent on any decisions coming out of the Conference.

d) Energy

The UN Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All initiative focuses on driving actions and mobilizing commitments towards three objectives, all to be achieved by 2030 – ensuring energy access, doubling energy efficiency, and doubling the share of renewable energy. However the Rio+20 outcome document does not give governments the urgently needed framework to shift financial resources away from unsustainable and inequitable energy systems to necessary investments in decentralized renewable energy systems. In the Global South, investments should be prioritized for access to safe and clean energy in rural areas with a focus on women and household energy consumption.

4. Hopeful Signs

On the governance side there was agreement to establish a new high-level body on sustainable development to replace the CSD, and to strengthen UNEP by giving it universal membership and other support.

The wealth and richness of the parallel side events organised by civil society representatives, subnational and local authorities and stakeholders at large demonstrate that action keeps transitioning from top-down to bottom-up and that the only realistic way forward to improve sustainable development multilateralism must be one embedded both in multi-level governance and in the full engagement with civil society and stakeholders.

a) Strengthened Sustainable Development Governance

There was universal agreement that the UN Commission on Sustainable Development had run its course and a new higher level body was needed to take its place drawing in Heads of Government, Economics and Finance Ministers and other leaders with the powers and capacity to take the decisions needed to guide the world's economies in a more sustainable direction that will be needed in the future. The new body will need to build on the best practice and achievements of the CSD, which included for example a number of important decisions and deliverables made during its first seven years (1994-2000):

- 1994 CSD: called for the development of "effective legally binding instruments concerning the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) procedure on the importation of chemicals"



- 1995 CSD: established the United Nations Inter-government Panel on Forests (later renamed the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, see below)
- 1996 CSD: set out the requirements for the establishment of the institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
- 1997 UNGASS: called for by the year 2002, the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development, the establishment of the UN Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) for three years (1997-2000), and the establishment of multi-stakeholder dialogues with governments within the UN CSD.
- 1998 CSD: called on UNCTAD, UNEP and UN DESA to help develop a vulnerability index for the quantitative and analytical work on the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States and the establishment of a review of voluntary initiatives within industry.
- 1999 CSD: established an expansion of the United Nations guidelines on consumer protection to include sustainable consumption. It also established an open-ended informal consultation processes on oceans and seas under the UN General Assembly.
- 2000 CSD: set out the terms of reference for a new permanent body – the United Nations Forum on Forests.

By 2011 the CSD had run its course and the Solo meeting (July 2011) of governments hosted by Indonesia had suggested the upgrading of the UNCSD into a Council of the United Nations General Assembly. At Rio+20 countries first focused on what functions needed to be addressed for sustainable development to be strengthened and came forward with an extensive list which will be discussed by the UNGA during its coming sessions. A final decision on the shape of the new body and how it should relate to the GA and ECOSOC is still to be agreed but it is clear that the intent is to strengthen sustainable development throughout the UN system, and to bring progress on sustainable development more directly onto the regular agenda of heads of government, economics and finance ministers and other key decision makers, rather than letting it languish in an environmentalists ghetto.

b) UNEP - strengthened and upgraded

The European Union and the African Union had been the main driver to upgrade UNEP into a United Nations Environment Organization (UNEO) or a World Environment Organisation which did not bear fruits at RIO+20 as such.

However a decision was taken to upgrade and strengthen UNEP through the following:

- (a) Establish universal membership in the Governing Council of UNEP, as well as other measures to strengthen its governance as well its responsiveness and accountability to Member States;
- (b) Have secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN and voluntary contributions to fulfill its mandate;
- (c) Enhance UNEP's voice and ability to fulfill its coordination mandate within the UN system by strengthening UNEP engagement in key UN coordination bodies and empowering UNEP to lead efforts to formulate UN system-wide strategies on the environment;



- (d) Promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including the Global Environmental Outlook, as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making;
- (e) Disseminate and share evidence-based environmental information and raise public awareness on critical as well as emerging environmental issues;
- (f) Provide capacity building to countries as well as support and facilitate access to technology;
- (g) Progressively consolidate headquarters functions in Nairobi, as well as strengthen its regional presence, in order to assist countries, upon request, in the implementation of their national environmental policies, collaborating closely with other relevant entities of the UN system;
- (h) Ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society.

UNEP will have universal membership which builds on the approach taken in the 2000 Malmö Declaration which provided for a GA decision to set up the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF), which cannot / could not take legally binding decisions. This will now make UNEP a truly global authority on the environment giving it more weight similar to other intergovernmental bodies. It will provide capacity building as well as facilitate access to technology. Rio+20 gave UNEP the chance to provide this directly to countries. How this will impact on UNDP's role is unclear.

In addition the support at Rio+20 for «secure, stable and increased financial resources from the regular budget and voluntary contributions» will enable it to better fulfil its mandate.

The support for one of a strong science-policy interface has been part of UNEP's mandate from the beginning. Rio+20 strengthened this and this can build on the excellent products UNEP produces such as the Global Environment Outlook reports.

The move to accelerate the clustering of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, which enable synergies through cooperation and strengthen the clustered area considerably will be an important development over the next five years. The work on chemicals has shown that it can be done and now the expectation is for a much closer clustering of the biodiversity conventions.

The call at Rio+20 for enhanced stakeholder engagement in UNEP is bringing to the table a need for a new partnership between stakeholders, governments and UNEP. This should not only mean new mechanism for participation in the decision making but more clear guidelines on partnerships between UNEP and stakeholders in helping to deliver the UNEP work programme.

c) Principle 10 — Goes Regional

There was a campaign supported by the NGO thematic cluster on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration organized by WRI calling for a global convention on access to information, public participation and environmental justice. As Lalanath de Silva of WRI reminded us:



“Since 1992, Principle 10 has spawned laws providing access to environmental information in more than 100 countries, public participation provisions in more than 120 countries, and environmental courts and tribunals in more than 44 countries.”

Although Rio+20 did not agree to a global convention on Principle 10, paragraph 99 expressly “encourages action at the regional level,” which has opened the possibility to negotiate regional conventions on Principle 10. Again from Lalanath de Silva:

“Soon after the outcome text was revealed, Ambassador Jose Luis Balmaceda of Chile made a public announcement at the “Choosing our Future” event in Rio calling for a Latin American and Caribbean Convention on P10.”

A number of countries in Latin America have joined the government of Chile and announced their intent to go forward with the second regional convention on Principle 10 following the lead Europe has taken with the UN ECE Aarhus Convention. Paragraphs 85(h) and 88(h) also expressly opens the door to enhancing the consultative status of Major Group participation in the new high level forum and mandates UNEP to “ensure” that Principle 10 is implemented, including through the exploration of ‘new mechanisms’. As Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP commented at the “Choosing our Future” event, “this includes exploring regional and global mechanisms for the implementation of Principle 10.”

d) Sustainable Consumption and Production

There was at last an agreement to formally adopt the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production first agreed to in the 2002 Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and negotiated, but not finalized, at the United Nations’ 19th Commission on Sustainable Development in 2011. It will be the United Nations General Assembly at its 67th session to decide which UN body or bodies take this forward and coordinate the development of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns.

In the meantime, the Global Research Forum on Sustainable Production and Consumption successfully launched at Rio +20 as an independent [non-governmental] initiative which brings together research institutions, networks and others from all regions of the world engaged in sustainable production and consumption research and in exploring the use of research-based knowledge in policy and practice. An early challenge will be to define appropriate goals for sustainable production and consumption to include in the new global SDG’s.

These will need to set demanding objectives for ensuring sustainable lifestyles, greater resources efficiency and sufficiency, and waste and pollution reductions in the developed world to complement development-oriented objectives for poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods prioritized by developing countries.

It is clear that the last twenty years have seen virtually nothing happen to promote sustainable consumption and production in a coordinated way. There are many experiments in resource minimization but very little real impact or focus on changing consumption patterns or reducing overall global resource use. Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production is one of the three overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.



As UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said:

“The solution is sustainable development, a model that helps the planet and its people. This demands a revolution in the way we think and act. No more reckless consumption of scarce resources. No more careless pollution of fragile ecosystems. No more mortgaging our long-term future for our short-term needs. We are here at Rio to advance a new global mode.”

e) Oceans and Seas

Rio+20 devoted much attention to oceans and the outcome document records some advances although some key objectives were missed. The lack of a date to address the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction was one of the big disappointments at Rio+20. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is however to agree to initiate as soon as possible, the negotiations, in the framework of the UNGA of an implementation agreement to UNCLOS. If the US Senate agrees to ratify UNCLOS this year then this may come forward again very soon.

There was also a move forward on many other issues dealing with oceans including: ocean fertilization, acidification, marine debris, illegal fishing and reaffirming the World Summit for Sustainable Development [WSSD] target for restoring fish stocks. In the oceans section there was a global consensus against ocean fertilization, as Elenita Daño of ETC said:

“It is a theoretical climate change techno-fix. While a moratorium on ocean fertilization was already won at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 2008, reinforcement of concerns raised by this geo-engineering proposal through the intensely-political Rio+20 process means that the high seas venture capitalists hoping to sell carbon credits are now dead in the water.”

Rio+20 also stressed the importance of technology assessment (Ch. 34 of Agenda 21 did the same but this never been implemented) taking explicit note of the potential unintended negative impacts and unforeseen consequences of new technologies; this was even supported by the US. This is very important since there is no other UN document that gives importance to the assessment of new technologies, thus this would be a very strategic springboard for work at the local, national, regional and global levels in this area.

f) Food Security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture

Strong language and support for existing work on sustainable agriculture was another important gain in parts of the section of the outcome document dealing with Food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture. The declaration sees sustainable agriculture and food chains as a key element for the fight against hunger in our world and for keeping our planet habitable for future generations. After the initial draft did not appropriately reflect the subject of sustainable agriculture, civil society and countries managed to get their wording into the draft during pre-negotiations. Although these passages were somewhat weakened in the final negotiations in Rio, a commitment to the need to support more sustainable agriculture survived the strong attacks of various interest groups.

The result on food and agriculture contains a clear commitment to strengthening sustainable agriculture and small-scale farming, which is responsible for feeding the



vast majority of the world's population. The Committee for World Food Security (CFS) is supported in its mandate of working towards the implementation of food and nutrition security. An important element of the concrete steps for implementation decided in Rio+20, are "assessments on sustainable food production and food security" to be facilitated through the CFS.

Reference is also made to the critical role that rural women play in food security through traditional sustainable agricultural practices including traditional seed supply systems (para 109). However these are under severe threat without government commitments to urgently transform the world's agricultural policies, protect small-scale farmers from trade liberalization, and stop prioritising export oriented agribusiness, all of which they failed to do at Rio+20.

The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) shows clearly, that the industrial approach to producing food is not compatible with a healthy environment and robs rural populations in regions across the globe of their means of existence. But the text is a clear mandate for the international community to implement a more sustainable agriculture.

Another boost for sustainable and small-scale agriculture came from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, when he presented his vision of a world without hunger today. Titled 'Zero Hunger Challenge', the vision stresses the key role of sustainable agriculture in fighting hunger. Ban Ki-moon urged that all food systems had to become sustainable and demanded greater opportunities for smallholder farmers – especially women – who produce most of the world's food, to empower them to double their productivity and income. The UN Secretary General announced at Rio+20 the 'Zero Hunger Challenge' which has five main objectives:

- to achieve 100 per cent access to adequate food all year round;
- to end malnutrition in pregnancy and early childhood;
- to make all food systems sustainable;
- to increase growth in the productivity and income of smallholders, particularly women⁴; and
- to achieve a zero rate of food waste.⁵

The initiative is supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank and Biodiversity International.

g) Water

Recognising water and sanitation as a basic human right NGOs will now use the commitment in Rio together with earlier texts to help craft a new universal sustainable development goal aiming at ensuring equal, safe, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

h) A future generation's ombudsperson?

The World Future Council with the Major Group for Children and Youth Major Group and many other NGOs supported the call for an Ombudsperson for Future Generations and although that did not succeed it was agreed to call for a report by the UN Secretary General which might then include the recommendation for such an office.

4 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=42304#.UG9mdE3Ad8E>

5 www.un.org/



Germany has indicated they might be prepared to fund a Special Representative for Future Generations. As we go to print-, it is unclear if this will be supported. Some governments (EU, Mexico, Norway, and Switzerland) and civil society are committed to making this process have a meaningful impact so that new expertise on long-term trends and calculations as well as active advocacy can help overcome narrow-minded and short term economic cost arguments blocking progress on sustainable development and intergenerational solidarity.

5. Inadequate Means

a) Means of Implementation

Most donors had come to Rio+20 without a willingness to contribute substantial new funds for implementation. No new country had reached the 0.7% GDP for overseas aid in the last ten years. The club of Sweden, Luxembourg, Norway, Netherlands and Denmark may however have a new member as the UK is on track to join the club by 2013. Only two days after Rio+20 finished Andrew Mitchell, UK Overseas Development Minister said:

“The key thing is we are standing by our commitments and from 2013 we will reach 0.7% - that’s the absolute commitment.”

b) Rio+20

Other Government financial commitments made at the conference included:

- Australia committed by doubling their support of the Coral Triangle Initiative, US\$8.14 million (AUS) plus an additional US\$25.4 million in funding for fisheries and climate change adaptation on the Pacific.
- Brazil US\$6 million for UNEP and US\$10 million towards climate change challenges in Africa, least developed countries, and small island developing states.
- China US\$6 million for UNEP
- European Commission (EC), announced US\$521 million to support sustainable energy
- Japan, announced funding for a three-year programme of disaster risk reduction (no figure yet),
- Norway announced US\$140 million over 5 years to scale up access to sustainable energy in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Liberia
- UK announced US\$241 for the International Fund for Agricultural Development’s Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Program
- US announced a partnership between the US and African nations, with US\$20 million in funding, for clean energy projects in Africa
- Eight multilateral development banks pledged to invest US\$175 billion over the next 10 years to support the creation of sustainable transport systems.

If we compare this to ten years ago at WSSD a Summit held in the long shadow of 9/11 it makes an interesting comparison. The commitments made at Rio+20 are much larger than those at WSSD.



c) WSSD Pledges

- Asian Development Bank: US\$5 million to UN Habitat and US\$500 million in fast-track credit for the Water for Asian Cities Programme.
- European Union:
 - US\$700 million Partnership Initiative on Energy
 - US\$80 million committed to the replenishment of the GEF
- United States
 - US\$970 million over the following three years in sanitation and water projects
 - US\$43 million to be invested in energy in 2003
 - US\$2.3 billion through 2003 on health
 - US\$90 million in 2003 for sustainable agriculture programmes
 - US\$53 million for forests between 2002-2005

While there had been talk in the run-up to Rio of the possibility of the Eurozone introducing a tax on financial transactions within the Eurozone, that idea has receded into the long grass as the Eurozone has focused on Greece and Spain bailouts. However, Germany, France, Italy and Spain are still in favour of introducing such a tax.

There were some other developments which were important such as the G77's proposal that an intergovernmental process under the UN General Assembly (UNGA) be set up to "propose options on an effective Sustainable Development Financing Strategy". This is similar to an approach that was inspired by discussions of Rio+5 which were built into the 'Financing for Development' process. This Intergovernmental Panel on Finance Mobilization will be critical to putting together the funding options for the post 2015 sustainable development goals.

The support for new, additional and predictable resources at a time when finances are more available for the UN development system to address the Rio+20 outcomes is to be welcomed.

One important outcome was the agreement to address illicit financial flows. It is certainly time that the billions in illegal tax-paradises are regulated and made to contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

Several paragraphs of the outcome document also addressed the crucial subject of technology transfer or facilitation. Para 273 requests relevant United Nations agencies to identify options for a facilitation mechanism that promotes the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies by, inter alia, assessing the technology needs of developing countries, options to address those needs and capacity-building and requests the Secretary-General, on the basis of the options identified and taking into account existing models, to make recommendations regarding the facilitation mechanism to the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly.



6. Interesting ideas — from other mini-Summits at Rio+20

Although primary attention focused on the inter-governmental negotiations and conclusions at Rio many other international community's representing the Major Groups and other groupings simultaneously came together in Rio to debate and formulate their own programmes of action and commitments for sustainable development.

All of these new commitments should be seen as much a part of the Rio+20 outcome as the actions and decisions of Governments themselves. The following notes record just a few of these processes that we feel could have an impact in the future.

a) Parliamentary Action for Sustainable Development

Parliamentarians of the world meeting under the auspices of GLOBE shared ideas and developed strategies for scrutinising national progress on sustainable development more closely and holding their governments to account more vigorously. This could develop into a powerful means of impelling governments to take more effective action in future.

b) Subnational and Local Governments

Rio+20 saw an unprecedented recognition of local and subnational levels as governmental authorities (ex. Federated States, Regions, Provinces or Counties). Agreed text highlights the importance of multilevel governance (paras 76, 98, 253) and distinguishes the role of such governmental authorities from civil society actors (paras 12, 22).

Three co-organising partners of the Local Authorities Major Group – ICLEI Local Governments for Sustainability, nrg4SD Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development and UCLG United Cities and Local Governments – accredited over 1000 participants to the Rio +20. At the Global Town Hall of ICLEI, the World Summit of Federated States and Regions co-organised by nrg4SD and the State of Rio de Janeiro and partners or the World Urban Summit organized by UCLG; subnational and local governments renewed their commitments to implementing sustainable development in their respective territories and formed new partnerships to carry this work forward with other levels of government, the private sector and academia.

The final outcome text also refers to 'human settlements' not just to cities (paras 134-137) and acknowledges the importance of integrated planning and partnerships between cities and communities. Policy-making and implementation of these agreements will entail, close collaboration between the municipal/local and the subnational/regional levels. This will guarantee that issues are tackled beyond the administrative borders of cities and human settlements and allow synergies between cities and regions in areas in which the region may be the most adequate scale for action.

c) National Sustainable Development Councils and Economic and Social Committees

National Economic and Social Committees from around the world came together to commit themselves to making sustainable development a central over-arching theme of their work. National Sustainable Development Councils from around the world also



came together to make a similar commitment and to launch a new network intended to bring together both types of body in sharing knowledge and information about their activities and identifying areas for collaborative action.

d) Science

Future Earth was launched at Rio+20 and is a new 10-year international research initiative that will develop the knowledge for responding effectively to the risks and opportunities of global environmental change and for supporting transformation towards global sustainability in the coming decades. Future Earth will mobilize thousands of scientists while strengthening partnerships with policy-makers and other stakeholders to provide sustainability options and solutions in the wake of Rio+20.

e) The Arctic

Greenpeace launched with many others a call for an Arctic sanctuary supported by celebrities including Richard Branson, Sir Paul McCartney, Penelope Cruz, Jude Law and particular the Indigenous Peoples who are impacted most. This is intended as a major new drive to halt oil drilling and unsustainable fishing in that region.

f) Education and Training

Nearly 300 institutions of higher learning endorsed a plan to place sustainable development at the heart of college and university curricula. There was also a series of events featuring the eight special initiatives from the Eye on Earth Summit held in Abu Dhabi in December 2011. The Government of Abu Dhabi has committed to establishing a secretariat with UNEP to move these special initiatives forward. Among them are initiatives of Oceans and Biodiversity. There are also two important cross cutting initiatives – one of access for all (Principle 10) and developing a network of networks to ensure that information technology serves the future we want.

g) Supreme Judges

The first ever meeting of the chief justices of the world's supreme courts was organized by UNEP. This World Congress on Justice, Law and Environmental Sustainability has asked UNEP to continue a network of Chief Justices, Attorneys General, Heads of Jurisdiction, Chief Prosecutors and Auditors General. This network will focus on providing information, the development and implementation of environmental law and capacity building.

h) The people take charge

The fourteen Peoples' Sustainability Treaties, evolved through a consultative process with hundreds of civil society organizations, converged at the Rio+20 to launch a Manifesto on the final day of the summit. They declared that another world is possible after Rio+20 and pledged their commitment to a transition toward increasingly sustainable futures on earth. It was based on the view that another failure of governments to provide hope for a sustainable future for all is no longer acceptable. They announced their own responsibility for undertaking actions, inviting and encouraging similar actions and commitments by other rights holders and stakeholders, communicating a vision for healthy communities, sustainable and equitable human well-being and its associated strategies, and coming together in the form of a global citizen's movement to shepherd the transition to a sustainable, equitable, and democratic future.

The initiative links to another process called 'The Widening Circle'. The Widening Circle (TWC) is an action campaign to advance a global citizens movement for a Great



Transition. Launched in Rio it recognizes that global civil society should continue its independent efforts to build the future we want as the individuals and organizations committed to TWC recognize that the times call for a higher order synergy. The complexity and scope of this undertaking requires a sustained effort and an adaptive strategy, as the campaign that evolves and spreads across regions and issues in “widening circles”.

i) The Peoples Summit

In addition there was a Peoples Summit which focused on bringing together the citizens and organisations of civil society, i.e. social movements, multiple networks and thematic or socio-professional organisations, among them migrants, religious and spiritual leaders, social leaders, artists, journalists, urban planners, fishermen, lawyers, elected politicians and parliamentarians, the military, unions, educators and teachers, municipalities and cities... to name a few.

They to engage in the space called a “Peoples Summit”. It was not a parallel summit nor a counter summit, but rather a fundamental actor for Rio+20. It organized sets of meetings around the following themes:

- Ethical and philosophical fundamentals: subjectivity, domination, and emancipation
- Human rights, peoples, territories, and defense of Mother Earth
- Political subjects, the architecture of power, and democracy
- Production, distribution and consumption, access to wealth, common goods, and economies in transition

Out of many of these meetings came processes that have their own focuses and will deliver often at the community level.

7. Sustainable Development Stakeholder Dialogues

Initiated by the Brazilian Government with the support of the United Nations was a set of ten Sustainable Development Dialogues including Major Group representatives, held between June 16 to 19, prior to the High Level Segment:

1. Unemployment, decent work and migrations
2. Sustainable development as an answer to the economic and financial crises
3. Sustainable development for fighting poverty
4. The economics of sustainable development, including sustainable patterns of production and consumption
5. Forests
6. Food and nutrition security
7. Sustainable energy for all
8. Water
9. Sustainable cities and innovation
10. Oceans

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a Dialogues platform prior to Rio+20 in order to provide the wider public a democratic space for discussion.



The on-line debates on each of the ten themes of the Dialogues were facilitated by researchers from renowned academic institutions around the world, they resulted in ten concrete recommendations that were viewed and voted for in a public website (<http://vote.riodialogues.org>).

The ten recommendations in each theme, ranked by the support received inside the platform and by the votes received in the public site were then discussed in half day sessions and the top three recommendations emanating from each of the Dialogues were conveyed directly to the Heads of State and Government present at the Summit. This was an attempt at an innovative bridge between civil society and Heads of State and Government. It did not however have any impact on the negotiated text and was widely criticized by Brazilian social movements who were not engaged in framing the debates, process or participants.

8. Following up Rio+20 and preparing for 2015

Within days of Rio many stakeholders were already having to engage in preparations for the 2015 Summit which will set the new development goals.

a) The 2015 development goals landscape

This is possibly the most important period for development since the adoption of the MDGs in 2000. Unlike 2000 where the MDGs were predominately brought forward by developed countries, the UN has set up a process to enable all countries and stakeholders to participate.

The post-2015 development agenda will look far different from the one we have at the moment. The emergence of the SDGs from Rio has changed the current landscape, and the Arab Region needs to ensure that their concerns are reflected in: country and thematic consultations; input to the High-level Panel; in the intergovernmental working group; and committee on SDGs and Resource Mobilization.

b) Country consultation

The UN Development Group is overseeing the national consultations which are in 50+ countries. Within the Arab Region, the countries are so far: Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Sudan and Algeria. The consultations are focused to stimulate a debate on the post-2015 development agenda, from June 2012 to early 2013. They should also complement the formal consultations on the development of Sustainable Development Goals. These talks will input to the UN Secretary-General's Eminent Persons Panel and to the Secretary-General directly. In turn, this will inform the UN Secretary-General's paper to the 2013 UN General Assembly.

c) Thematic Consultations

The UN is organizing thematic consultations with stakeholders (including academia, media, private sector, employers, trade unions, civil society and decision makers), held between May 2012 and February 2013.

Themes of global meetings include:

- Inequalities (across all dimensions, including gender);
- Health (including issues covered by MDGs 4, 5, 6, plus non communicable diseases);



- Education (primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational);
- Growth and employment (including investment in productive capacities, decent employment, and social protection);
- Environmental sustainability (including access to energy, biodiversity, climate change), Food security and nutrition;
- Governance (at all levels);
- Conflict and fragility (including post-conflict countries, and those prone to natural disasters);
- Population dynamics (including ageing, international and internal migration, and urbanization).

Each of these consultations will be hosted by two governments, from one developed and one developing country.

d) Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post 2015 Development Agenda

The Secretary-General has appointed three co-chairs for the High-level Panel: President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia; and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom. This is a bold and at the same time practical development agenda for beyond 2015. Recommendations regarding the vision and shape of a post-2015 development agenda will help respond to the global challenges of the 21st century, building on the MDGs with a view to ending poverty. They will include recommendations on how to build and sustain broad political consensus on an ambitious yet achievable post-2015 development agenda. Recommendations will focus around the three dimensions of economic growth, social equality and environmental sustainability; taking into account the particular challenges of countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

e) Sustainable Development Goals

As mentioned, the SDG process is an 'intergovernmental process.' A set of SDGs will emerge, possibly accompanied by targets, and maybe with the UN Statistical Division and UN Agencies and Programmes a basket of indicators. It will feed into the 2013 UN General Assembly and hopefully contribute to one set of comprehensive goals.

f) Resource Mobilization Committee

Rio+20 also agreed to establish an intergovernmental process under the auspices of the General Assembly to assess financing needs; to consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks; and to evaluate additional initiatives with a view to proposing an effective sustainable development financing strategy which would effectively mobilize sustainable development objectives.

g) How stakeholders from the region might participate

There are a number of entry points to this global discussion:

- Country consultations:
- Thematic consultations: The "Beyond 2015 Civil Society Coalition" is coordinating all but industry consultations in these consultations.
- SDGs: UNDESA's Division on Sustainable Development has a process called the Major Groups Organizing Partners (the nine major groups from Agenda 21) and stakeholders should work through these OPs (SF proposal).



- Resource Mobilization Committee: Division on Sustainable Development has a process called the Major Groups Organizing Partners (the nine major groups from Agenda 21) and stakeholders should work through these OPs (SF proposal).

The ultimate aim over the next two and half years for the post-2015 and SDGs process must be to ensure that a single set of global goals which are action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universal in application are agreed in the year 2015.

The Future - we need to work to realise the one we want

Rio+20 did not put us on the path to 'the future we want' but it did something to strengthen the machinery for getting us there in due course, and to identify priorities for further work.

Governments were too cautious to deliver more – and other stakeholders did not do enough to build up overwhelming pressure for change. Both sides need to up their game in the follow-up to Rio and in particular as they prepare for the next major Summit in 2015 which is to put bones and measurement on the overall goals for the next two decades.

NGOs condemned the outcomes from Stockholm in 1972. In the last NGO ECO newsletter the NGOs said the Stockholm conference should be judged by four questions:

1. *Can populations go on growing indefinitely?*
2. *Is there an infinite supply of non-renewable energy?*
3. *Are ecosystems infinitely flexible, infinitely resilient? And*
4. *Does the socio-economic systems they support provide optimum satisfaction for all its members?*

The answer to all four, of course is no – yet invariably politician decisions rest on the assumption that it is yes.

If we accept ecological reality, we must also accept a fundamental reform of society and economic system which drives it. If everyday decisions begin to be taken in light of these conditions, this conference will be partly responsible. And that's quite an achievement." (ECO,1972)

They condemned Rio in 1992 as well. Greenpeace from 1992 said:

"The questions UNCED (1992) has not bothered to ask, much less answer, are in the end quiet simple ones. They are questions such as: Who is destroying the environment and why? and how can they be stopped? UNCED avoids these questions because the answers could endanger entrenched interests."

It is perhaps not surprising that a number of NGOs have done the same after Rio+20. Much now needs to happen to take forward the outcomes from Rio+20 but ultimately the challenges that face us need a strong multilateralism not a weak one to deliver sustainable development. After Copenhagen and the failure of the Commission on Sustainable Development [CSD] the issue of sustainable development seemed to be moribund at the international level.



Rio+20 has reinvigorated sustainable development and most people left Rio with renewed enthusiasm and energy for the work towards 2015.

Vali Moosa the South Africa Environment Minister in 2002 at WSSD also reminds us:

“Getting heads of state to take time off to think about these issues has spin offs that are not easy to calculate because they tend to be indirect.”

At Rio+20, governments had a historic chance to take bold steps to end poverty and environmental destruction, to protect the rights of the most vulnerable members of our societies, to take concrete measures to fully implement women’s rights and women’s leadership and to recognise the rights of indigenous peoples. We now risk increased poverty, inequities and irreversible environmental damage if the implementation of the Rio+20 outcomes are not vigorously championed by civil society with all stakeholders.

A new climate regime and sustainable development goals are now on the table. It is surely a time for boldness, for passion, for vision and for commitment to create a better and more sustainable future.

The work to deliver a substantive agreement in 2015 and to implement Rio+20 starts in our communities and in our countries. This work needs to start today... everyday.

Felix Dodds has been a designer and promoter of stakeholder engagement at the local, national and global level. He chaired the UN DPI 64th NGO Conference (2011) Sustainable Societies Responsive Citizens and from 1997 to 2001 he chaired the NGO Coalition at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and helped to facilitate the space to enable the agendas for both the 2002 Johannesburg Summit and the 2012 Rio Earth Summit come together. He has more than 20 years of extensive experience in the field of the international sustainable development arena with a focus on participatory processes for civil society. His strong leadership in the Stakeholder Forum as Executive Director has put the topic of stakeholder engagement on the international agenda on the way to RIO+20. He has edited or written nine books the latest being ‘One Only Earth with Michael Strauss and Maurice Strong. He is now a Fellow at the Tellus Institute.

Anita Nayar is a feminist activist and scholar presently engaged in research on the social and ecological consequences of the commercialization of indigenous medicine in India. For the past 15 years she has worked with women’s movements, governments and UN agencies to bring a gender perspective on environmental, social and economic issues to bear on inter-governmental negotiations and agreements, as well as national and local policies. She is presently an Executive Committee member of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) and coordinates their research and advocacy work on political ecology. She was highly engaged in the entire preparation process towards RIO+20 with the women’s major group.





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