



**RIO+20**  
United Nations  
Conference on  
Sustainable  
Development

inside:

Rio already a success

IFSD: Towards a global innovation system

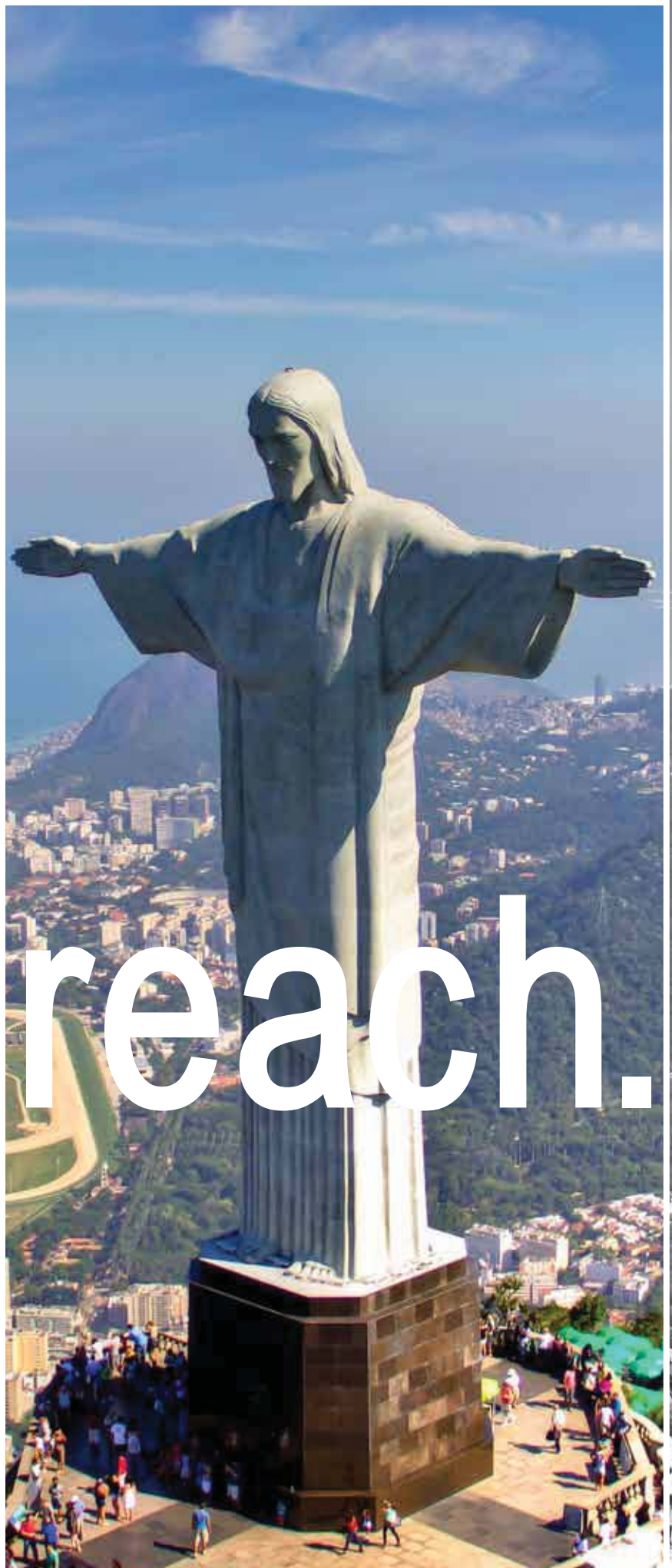
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13 June 2012



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pic: Ewar Woowar

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# The last mile of the marathon: going for gold

Derek Osborn  
Stakeholder Forum

The text that has been brought from New York to Rio, and that has been negotiated with such painstaking effort over the last few months, is a great improvement on earlier drafts. But much still remains to be done to make it into a worthy final outcome.

Some main outcomes seem now to be emerging clearly in the draft:

- the reaffirmation of the fundamental overarching global goal of transforming the world's economies so as to operate in a more sustainable way;
- the establishment of specific sustainable development goals in the key sectors of the economy, with new ways of measuring progress and setting targets;
- the promotion of green economy policy instruments that will help to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the sustainability transformation; and
- the establishment of a new High Level Forum in the UN to bring together world leaders regularly to oversee progress on the sustainability agenda and ensure the proper coordination of all international activity in this field.

But on every one of these leading themes, uncertainties remain. It is essential that in the final stages of the negotiations that the text is sharpened and clarified. Since the first Rio Summit 20 years ago, implementation has been the key challenge – and the key failure. This time, the follow-up machinery must be built more strongly.

What then remains to be done in the next ten days?

- Making sustainable development the over-arching goal needs to be at the heart of the economic recovery and growth plans which world leaders are trying to get under way. For without sustainability there can be no real economic recovery. Continuing depletion of natural resources makes it ever harder to secure the resources needed for economic activity. The only form of growth that will be possible in the future is green growth that protects the planet and its natural resources, at the same time as providing economic wellbeing and good jobs for all. The Rio conclusions must be linked to the forthcoming G20 debate and be seen, not as a constraint on growth, but as charting the path to the only form of long term growth – in human wellbeing – that is now possible for the world.

- This in turn means that a very clear mandate must be given to the UN and other bodies, to establish the format for green national accounts and for measuring wellbeing and other aspects of sustainability, and to bring them into operation within a short timescale. For too long these technical developments have been regarded as a byway for green enthusiasts. Now they must be mainstreamed as the central way of assessing global progress. Corporate reporting on sustainability also needs to be driven forward more systematically than the present patchwork of voluntary initiatives.

- The establishment of universal SDGs looks to be a central pillar of the Rio outcome. But to carry that central burden there needs to be very clear agreement as to the scope and content of the goals, the machinery for establishing and monitoring specific targets to advance them, and the way in which they should provide an overall framework for the more specific MDGs for developing countries.

- Willing the end means willing the means. If we really want to achieve SDGs and targets then the world's economies at both national and international level must be managed so as to advance and achieve these goals. The text needs to include stronger commitments to make those changes.

- Better implementation needs stronger overseeing mechanisms at national and international level. There seems to be growing support for a new High Level Forum for this purpose. But in order to make headway on this concept after Rio, Heads of Government need to give a very clear mandate as to the scope and functions of this new Forum and how it should relate to existing structures.

- As well as a high level Forum, the UN needs a champion for sustainable development to assemble scientific, and other, information about the prospects for future generations and bring these issues before the High Level Forum and other parts of the UN system. The proposals that have been made for a Commissioner for future generations ought to form part of the final outcome as an important complement to the high level panel itself.

All the main pieces of the jigsaw are there. Now they need to be refined and sharpened so that they fit smoothly together and provide a firm global strategy for 'The future we all want'. It will be a busy ten days ■



# Asia-Europe strategies for the Earth Summit 2012 report

Simon Hoiberg Olsen

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)

Findings from the just published Asia-Europe Strategies for the Earth Summit 2012 Report will be presented at a side event on Scenarios for Sustainable Development Governance, on 15th June, from 9.30am to 11.00am at Rio Centro, Room T6. The report relates closely to the Rio+20 draft Outcome Document, recommending that a reformed institutional structure, such as proposed in the paragraphs 69 through to 76, should include a High Level political body equipped with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It should undertake regular sectoral and systemic analyses on countries' development progress and its functions would be best embodied in a Sustainable Development Council. But serious reform of ECOSOC could be a plan B, if consensus for a new council cannot emerge.

Section IV of *The Future We Want* contains proposals on the establishment of a High Level Representative for Future Generations (paragraph 80) to help bring intergenerational equity to agenda setting and policy-making. Also important are the calls for ensuring participation of the International Financial Institutions (paragraph 48) in the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD), to improve both temporal and thematic coherence of development.

To advance international environmental governance (IEG), reforms should envision to upgrade UNEP into a Specialised Agency – along the lines of the International Labour Organisation and World Health Organisation – incorporating better utilisation of relevant non-state actors' expertise. To this end, Rio+20 must set the stage for a process with concrete steps to be implemented and endow UNEP with the functions currently elaborated in paragraph Pre77.

## Strengthening IFSD downstream

The IFSD includes nations and serves the nations. Its force is dependent on the collective strengths of nations and their institutional mechanisms. To start reinforcing these levels, it is necessary to clarify the functions and focus areas of coordinating mechanisms at each level. A large part of the report is devoted to analysis of existing mechanisms in Europe and Asia. One of the recommendations is to promote the subsidiarity principle (e.g. programme implementation, and resolution of localised issues and facilitation and monitoring at the regional level) that clearly articulates actors' responsibilities at the implementation level.

The research also recommends strengthening the political and administrative mechanisms for vertical and horizontal coordination. As currently only reflected in the 'old' Sustainable Development Council proposal from the 2nd Round of 'Informals' in paragraph 49 alt. bis, it would entail better access to adequate and sustained financing for National Councils for Sustainable Development, including for its non-state members. It should involve the development of the capacity of national sustainable development bodies, by strengthening technical and



substantive inputs; providing venues for the exchange of knowledge and experiences; and undertaking joint projects. This proposal should remain in the final outcome document of Rio+20.

Governments should also agree to establish platforms for coordination and knowledge sharing among sub-regions or across regions, such as those proposed paragraph 59 in Section III on the Green Economy and for the thematic areas in Section V. In the medium-term, governments should agree to provide legislative powers to strategic bodies at regional and national levels and strengthen national sustainable development mechanisms, by addressing inadequate participation of non-state actors, lack of financing and capacity.

## Participation beyond Rio+20

Participation of a broad range of stakeholders is a crucial part of sustainable development governance, as is reflected in the current draft Outcome Document Section II C (paragraphs 36-49). Non-state actor participation should be based on a simple and clear overarching framework, emphasising contributions of each sector to the larger sustainable development vision. Such a framework should include mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability, relevance, and representativeness of stakeholders. Their involvement can range from advisory roles, to voting and co-decision making in the longer term. Multistakeholder governance will require adequate and sustained resources. Private sector involvement should be considered as a source of funding.

## Goal setting beyond Rio+20

IFSD reform cannot omit a consideration of the importance of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), which embody important development topics of the 'Future We Need'. The SDGs serve as aspirational objectives and provide the goal posts for progress measurement. Their national and regional implementation would necessitate review and monitoring, as well as reporting, periodic review or publication of findings, coherent to the functions of a reformed IFSD at the intergovernmental level. This should be one of the main tasks and functions of a Sustainable Development Council/reformed ECOSOC ■



# Rio already a success

Felix Dodds  
Stakeholder Forum

Sustainable development was considered, if not dead, then on life support within five years of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

In 2006, South African President Mbeki declared sustainable development dead in his speech to the UN General Assembly when he said:

*"Precisely because of the absence of a global partnership for development, the Doha Development Round has almost collapsed...we have not implemented the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development, thus making it difficult for the majority of the developing countries, especially those in Africa, to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and have reduced the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to an insignificant and perhaps forgotten piece of paper."*

In 2007, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, speaking at the UN General Assembly, proposed a new Earth Summit and said:

*"If we want to salvage our common heritage, a new and more balanced distribution of wealth is needed, both internationally and within each country. Social equity is our best weapon against the planet's degradation"*

Sustainability is on the map as never before. More governments and Heads of State are attending Rio than any other sustainable development conference. This is a clear indication of engagement. Those governments and Heads of State will return from Rio with much more appreciation of the challenges that are facing the world and of our ability to live on this planet sustainably and fairly. It demonstrates an ever-growing level of awareness of the arguments for, and opportunities of, sustainability.

There are already an unprecedented number of stakeholders coming to Rio, including the largest number of companies attending a UN conference so far.

The 1972 Stockholm UN Conference on Human Environment was the first conference to link the economy to the survival of us on this planet. 40 years ago, Limits to Growth accurately predicted the future we are now living. Rio+20 offers the chance to have the future we want by addressing the economy at its centre. The green economy has been controversial in some places, but the making the economy sustainable is the critical issue that we must address.

Furthermore, the green economy is engaging companies globally. The emergence of a strong call by some companies for a global framework for sustainability reporting is to be welcomed, and was also recently echoed in the UN Secretary General's Global Panel on Sustainability (GSP) Report.

The conference has also already contributed a new approach to development. It has put at the centre of the discourse internationally and nationally that we need Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to help guide us whether we are developed or developing countries. The world faces critical challenges for the future in the area of water, energy, and food, and the nexus between them. A pathway guided by SDGs will help us make the right decisions in the future. Though agreement on the actual goals at Rio is still uncertain, consensus on the underpinning principles will be a positive outcome of the Earth Summit.

In line with this, the World Bank held, in April, the first ever meeting of finance ministers, with the heads of the Bank and IMF. They are now pioneering and trialing natural capital accounting in 50 countries and 50 companies. Finance ministers will now meet annually on sustainable development at the Bank's spring meetings.

The conference has already seen a move to universal acceptance of water as a human right, with Canada's reaffirmation of the right to water and sanitation on 29th May. This is something that hasn't been possible in the UN Human Rights Council.

The contribution of science to Rio+20 has been substantive, and the merging of global platforms on science into 'Future Earth' can only enhance the science-policy interface in the coming years.

It was clear from the start of the Rio+20 process that the environment and sustainable development governance processes at the global level needed to be strengthened. The eventual outcome of this discussion is still to be agreed, but what is on the table from all governments will see stronger governance institutions in the area of environment and sustainable development.

Implementation is the key to Rio+20 being seen as a success twenty years from now.

It should be remembered that what 'happens on Monday' when people return to their capitals, communities and places of work after Rio, is as important as what happens at the Summit. 'The future we want' lies in our hands and hangs on our decisions – let us work to make the legacy of Rio something we all can be proud of ■



# IFSD: towards a global innovation system

Mark Stafford Smith

Co-Chair, Planet Under Pressure Conference

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In the next decade we have a window of opportunity to stride towards a sustainable future, but we also face complex risks challenging us at an increasing rate. To provide food and energy security for nine billion people, to reduce emissions, to eliminate poverty and to improve human and planetary wellbeing, we will need ideas. And we will need systems that can more rapidly translate ideas to actions whilst simultaneously casting aside obsolete thinking and institutions. We need a *global innovation system*, and Rio+20 is the right forum to lay the foundations for such a system.

Human innovation comes from many sources – from formal public and private science, from individual innovators in all walks of life, and from think tanks and other specialised forums that allow the cross-fertilisation of ideas. Nation states increasingly recognise the concept of national innovation systems – the sum of national sources of innovation and the interactions between innovators and decision makers in industry, policy and society. National governments have a choice. They can create policies that make this innovation system work better, or they can ignore it and watch it limp along.

The challenges of global sustainability mean harnessing innovation to act rapidly. We need a *global innovation system*. What might this look like? It would have many of the same attributes as a national innovation system. However, whereas national innovation systems are supported by governments to help them compete, a global innovation system must help us all work together.

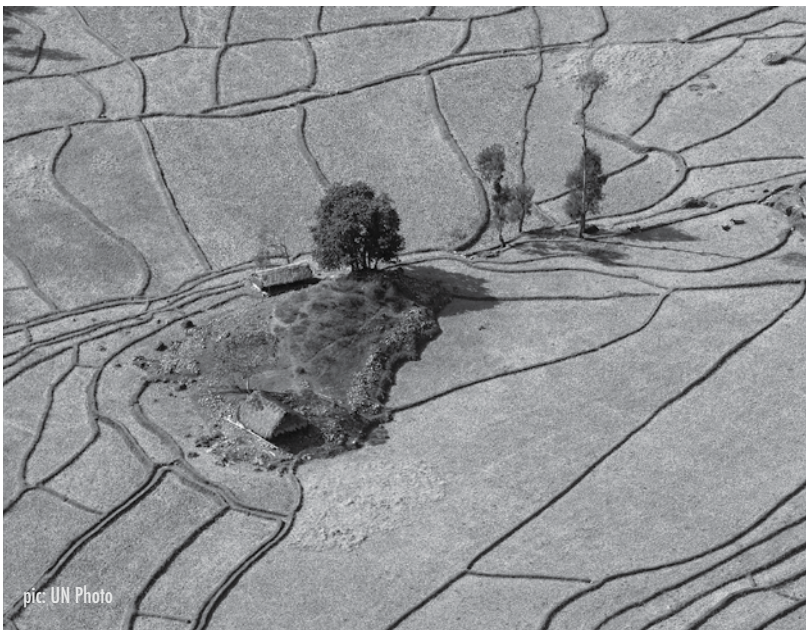
It must have at least three key characteristics to address failures in current approaches to innovation at the global level:

- it must intimately weave the environment, economy and society together, requiring expertise in all three areas to produce solutions;
- it must coordinate across levels of governance to ensure that local and regional outcomes add up to global sustainability; and
- it must speed up the delivery of analyses in a nimble and two-way flow of priorities and co-production of knowledge between decision-makers and science, rather than awaiting lengthy cycles of assessments and reports.

## A blueprint?

The Rio+20 negotiations and input documents, such as the report of the UN Secretary General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (GSP), have proposed several actions that could together lay the foundation for a global innovation system if coordinated. These include:

- Universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): providing the majority of these emphasise integrative issues towards global sustainability, these can provide the vital focus for the domains in which the innovation system must seek solutions.
- 'A periodic global sustainable development outlook report': this proposal, by the GSP and others would create an integrated picture across institutions, sectors and existing assessments. It could provide an important review of progress, but it may be better to conceptualise the same idea as a series of more nimble, short-term, focused analyses that bring decision-makers and science together, to explore policy around a specific SDGs for example.
- A new UN Sustainable Development Council (SDC): a variety of ways of establishing a stronger presence in the UN system for integrating the environment, economy and society have been proposed. A key issue is authority - the entity needs to be authorised by the whole UN, that is, the General Assembly, to act to integrate across all UN bodies, and also to help nations coordinate their activities at levels below the global. A UN SDC could commission strategic analyses of global sustainability through setting up and coordinating new decision-specific panels to work across sectors, independent from but jointly 'owned' by relevant global bodies such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- A UN Chief Scientific Advisor: the proposal for some sort of chief scientist's department or office to advise the UN Secretary General could provide a focus for thinking about coordination of the global innovation system.
- Future Earth: The International Council for Science (ICSU) and its partners are developing a ten-year international research initiative, *Future Earth: research for global sustainability*, emerging from the experience of previous international programmes, with much closer involvement of stakeholders in research that is more solution-oriented than in the past. Future Earth is an



pic: UN Photo

example of how science, funders and decision-makers could contribute better to a global innovation system. However, it requires as strong a commitment on the part of decision-makers in policy, industry, and civil society as it does from scientists for this to work effectively.

These building blocks need to be seen as a package, and implemented in a way that ensures the required characteristics of a global innovation system are achieved, else the whole will never be more than (or even as much as) the sum of the parts ■

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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United Nations Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global Sustainability (2012), 'Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A future worth choosing': [www.un.org/gsp/report](http://www.un.org/gsp/report)

Future Earth: [www.icsu.org/future-earth/home](http://www.icsu.org/future-earth/home)

### Critical features of a global innovation system

1. close and continual engagement between decision-makers and the innovation system, particularly formal science, in the co-production of knowledge
2. goal-oriented on multiple time frames, from a short term (1-3 years) solutions focus to longer term (10 year) strategic applied priorities
3. focus on complex, integrated problems that integrate environment, economy and society threads, engaging multiple areas of decision-making to do so (noting that simpler sectoral problems are often being handled adequately by current processes)
4. collaborative involvement of multiple sectors of decision-making, both across multiple UN organisations and across policy, industry and civil society
5. light-touch coordination across levels of research, analysis, policy implementation and monitoring activity from local and national to supranational and global
6. nimble enough to focus on emerging problems and co-produce the knowledge needed for responses quickly
7. draw on many sources of knowledge, across the domains of natural and social sciences and the humanities as well as other innovators outside formal science
8. play a role in ensuring new credible knowledge enters the mental models of the public, and that outmoded mental models are challenged and discarded
9. be an authoritative, inclusive and trusted process



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# Launch of the consultation on the new Sustainable Development Bill

Peter Davies

Project Development Partnership

The launch of the consultation paper on the Sustainable Development Bill on 9th May represents the latest announcement, amidst a raft of consultations and reviews, to consider the various policy and legislative developments being led through the Department for Environment and Sustainable Development in Wales, the United Kingdom. The planned programme includes the Sustainable Development Bill, Environment Bill, Planning Bill, and of course the introduction of the new single environment body.

The changes are designed to use the new legislative powers to refresh, simplify, and modernise a range of legislation that has grown through accretion since 1945. It represents a key stage in the devolution process, establishing a framework for sustainable development which is clear, connected, consistent, and providing certainty and a focus on the long term. These are all characteristics which evidence suggests are sadly lacking in the current systems and are draining the energy of entrepreneurs in our businesses and communities.

The changes set natural resource management in the context of sustainable development and focus on improving economic, social and environmental wellbeing of communities. The focus is on using the legislative powers to set the framework for improvement and investment, but ultimately it is about the opportunity of change and challenging mindsets. We should therefore focus on the nature of change rather than individual pieces of legislation and an associated consultation process.

Designing change will need to involve leadership and leaders from across the sectors, with interventions designed to shift behaviours by using a clarity of language and communication that can mobilise the goodwill and energy, which is currently frustrated. We instead need to celebrate the change we want to see and establish routes to quickly address barriers and old habits.

Visible change agents and actions will be important, such as:

- schemes which coach or place public sector staff in business and vice versa;
- the First Minister setting out the nature of change to the new leaders of local authorities; and
- the 120+ companies and organisations signed up to the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Charter adopting exemplar actions.

The evidence of early change will be important, so we will need to focus on areas where change can be seen to have happened at an early stage in the process, to ensure there constant examples of progress. The First Minister's strategic lead on energy, and the Energy Wales programme, should provide the focus for early action, mobilising energy efficiency and renewable generations capacity as a priority to create jobs, reduce fuel poverty, increase our energy security and reduce carbon emissions. If we add procurement and planning into the mix alongside energy as areas where visible change is evident over the next 12 months, then we might get people to believe the rhetoric on sustainable development.

So we need to recognise that the raft of legislation coming out of the Department of Environment and Sustainable Development for Wales will only be effective if it is part of an integrated change. We need to develop the nature of the change, designing active interventions that involve business. This will have more scope and value than the usual programme of consultation seminars, which are necessary in ensuring well framed legislation but not sufficient to create a more effective way of doing business. So for the next step: let's have views on what might be included in the change to create a distinctive and positive approach to how we do business in Wales ■

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[www.stakeholderforum.org/sf/outreach/index.php/contribute](http://www.stakeholderforum.org/sf/outreach/index.php/contribute)

To submit an article for publishing email Georgie Macdonald ([gmacdonald@stakeholderforum.org](mailto:gmacdonald@stakeholderforum.org)) and Amy Cutter ([acutter@stakeholderforum.org](mailto:acutter@stakeholderforum.org)).





# Rio+20: a conference of implementation?

Ana Barreira

Director of Instituto Internacional de Derecho y Medio Ambiente (IIDMA)

On Wednesday 6th June, UNEP launched the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-5) Report, showing that internationally agreed goals have only partially been achieved.

Over the last few decades, a great number of legally binding and non-legally binding objectives have been adopted. However, despite this growing body of norms, the global environmental situation continues to deteriorate. This is due mainly to the lack of implementation of many of these internationally agreed commitments. Rio+20 is an excellent opportunity to establish mechanisms to improve implementation, and therefore compliance with, that body of norms.

The UN has designated Rio+20 as a conference of implementation. To affirm whether such a qualification is well deserved, it is necessary to first review the work achieved so far on the road to Rio. The Zero Draft contained a subsection in the chapter entitled *Framework for Action and Follow-up* on 'Means of Implementation'. These means were the usual ones: finance, access to and transfer of technology, and capacity building. Of course these are all necessary, but a dose of real commitment and creativity is needed in light of the limited progress on implementation.

Chapter 8 of Agenda 21 stated that laws and regulations are among the most important instruments for transforming environment and development policies into action. But action comes through implementation. The same is true of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). In fact, Chapter 39 of the Agenda established the need to ensure the effective, full, and prompt application of legally binding instruments for achieving implementation. However, only a few MEAs include compliance mechanisms, and only a couple are open to the civil society. Instituto Internacional de Derecho y Medio Ambiente (IIDMA) and Justice and Environment – with the support of several European and Latin America organisations – are proposing that Rio+20 calls on the governing bodies of MEAs to take the necessary steps to establish, where they are not already in place, participatory compliance mechanisms which allow for review of any Party's compliance, to be triggered inter alia by communications from the public.

The UN has stated that 'an important part of the conference is about making and delivering commitments'. The question is: Do we really need new commitments or is it better to focus on implementing existing ones? The UN encourages all participants 'to make *voluntary* commitments to deliver concrete results for sustainable development' as a new way of ensuring implementation.

At the second intersessional meeting, the United States proposed, as the outcome for Rio+20, a short political document of five pages to be accompanied by Compendium of Commitments that would be annexed to the document. The US envisaged the Compendium as a list of voluntary, non-negotiated commitments and intended actions from governments, stakeholders, and partnerships. It would represent pledges from actors at all levels to take action to achieve sustainable development. Furthermore – as a mechanism for accountability – the commitments would be registered and announced as one part of the official outcome of the meeting, so that media and stakeholders could identify and report on the concrete outcomes delivered. The Zero Draft stated:

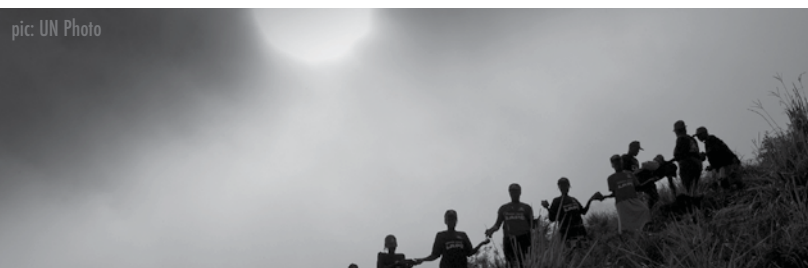
*128. We welcome the voluntary commitments made at Rio+20 and invite the Secretary-General to compile them in a registry/compendium that will serve as an accountability framework.*

At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, a similar outcome was achieved through the 'type 2 results', known as the partnerships for sustainable development and consisting of multistakeholder voluntary initiatives that contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21, Rio+5, and the JPOI. These partnerships were registered in the CSD Partnership database, however there has yet to be an evaluation on how they have contributed to sustainable development as a whole.

In light of the limited progress in delivering past commitments, the question should be: how can governments enter into voluntary commitments when they hardly implement and comply with current internationally agreed commitments? Will this compendium of voluntary commitments help us to achieve sustainable development, or is it simply a u-turn?

Voluntary commitments by governments seem like an attempt to distraction from the lack of compliance with legally binding commitments. If Rio+20 is indeed to be a conference of implementation, voluntary commitments should not be accepted unless they align and comply with the existing body of norms held by governments and stakeholders. In addition, voluntary commitments should include the establishment of institutional machinery for their follow-up, as well as sanctions for non-compliance. Without this, Rio+20 will be a waste of time and resources, both of which are now scarce ■

pic: UN Photo



# A governance package: children and youth's reflections on IFSD

major group for children and youth

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While much of the mobilisation and discussion that we have witnessed in New York - and now here in Rio - is about policy issues and themes, it should be understood that the right structures need to be in place in order for success to be created in the policy field. Frameworks are necessary to provide goals, targets and visions with an institutional home where their implementation can be played out. Form so often shapes implementation, and the present form of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) suffers from a lack of political weight, which is reflected in its inability to promote sustainable development.

Whilst a high-level body – as favoured by many States during the negotiations in New York two weeks ago – may fulfill the desire of some to have a conference every few years, a new functional body – which includes Major Groups as observers and non-voting participants in the process – is the true way forward. Such a body could help coordinate the scientific panels on sustainable development, and ensure that all UN agencies, financial institutions, and other actors, are included in the process and made accountable to the commitments and modes of implementation that are agreed upon. Settling simply for a 'show piece' tacked on the General Assembly, rather than a democratic body elected by the General Assembly, will only level us with the toothless governance that we currently have. Drastic changes and paradigm shifts, which go beyond mere reform of the CSD, are needed – changes which dwarf what the CSD has previously been mandated to do. Considering, the effort put into the Rio+20 process so far, and the stakes being as high as they are, it is understandable that yet another 'reform or new institution' is met with skepticism. What is needed for countries to believe in these reforms as realistic projects is a coherent financing plan together with mandates strong enough to pull in meaningful political clout.

The upgrade of the UNEP – whether into a specialised agency or a UN organisation – is a key component of any reform of the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD). The international governance of the environmental dimension of sustainability is by far the weakest and most fragmented. Considerable progress was made at the last informals in New York on nearing agreements on the modalities of such an upgrade, particularly on universal membership and its role in the coordination of Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEAs). While the Major Group of Children and Youth (MGCY) still advocates for a specialised agency, we consider it to be crucial for the international community to ensure that the new body possesses the adequate means to successfully implement its mandate. In particular, we are lobbying for strengthened youth participation in this upgraded body.

Furthermore, a High-level Representative for Future Generations would be the innovative, inspiring and visible figure-head to this IFSD package. The holder of this mandate would be the UN's principal advocate for the interests and needs of future generations and would provide the leadership, moral authority and vision to set an agenda in which the needs of future generations are considered *alongside* present interests. This small, streamlined office would facilitate and navigate the informed, impartial discussions and agreements of the existing (and proposed) UN organs and forums with an agenda-setting role that could support countries to overcome specific development challenges, while offering coherent long-term interconnected responses. A set of institutional safeguards would be in place to ensure that it is not dominated by any one country and does not infringe upon national sovereignty.

IFSD is a means and not an end. We believe that the following IFSD package constitutes the best institutional means to achieve the *end* we are looking for: the future we want and need.

- a High-level Representative for Future Generations;
- a Sustainable Development Council or Forum, as a democratic body elected by the General Assembly;
- a UN Environment Organisation to coordinate the environment work at the international level, with special emphasis on youth participation ■

# Rio+20 Side Event Calendar

Date	Time	Room	Title	Organisers
13/6/12	13:00 - 14:45	UNEP Pavillion Auditorium	Green Economy in Action: Success Stories from Developing Countries	UNEP
	13:50 -15:00	RioCentro -T3	People and the planet: population, consumption and the environment	The Royal Society
	15:30 - 16:00	RioCentro - P3	Press Conference by speakers from Major Groups organizations	Earth Media/ Rio+20 Civil Society-Media Liason Team
	15:30 - 17:00	RioCentro - T6	Elimination of Extremes of Wealth & Poverty in a Green Economy Context	Baha'I International Community
	15:30 - 17:00	RioCentro - T2	Peoples' Sustainability Treaties	Centre for Environment and Development
	15:30 - 17:00	RioCentro - T10	Youth led solutions to sustainable development	World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)
	17:00 - 19:00	UNEP Pavillion Auditorium	Measuring Progress Towards a Green Economy for Sustainable Development	UNEP
	19:30 - 21:00	RioCentro - P3-3	Dialogue on the 'Africa Consensus Statement'	Africa Union
	19:30 - 21:00	RioCentro - P3-6	Role of Sustainable Development Goals in the post-2015 framework	International Movement ATD Fourth World
All day	ESPM - Escola Superior de Propaganda e Marketing	Global and Regional Research on Sustainable Consumption and Production: Achievements, Challenges, and Dialogues	Global Research Forum on Sustainable Consumption and Production	
14/6/12	11:30 - 13:00	RioCentro - T9	The need for a rights-based approach to sustainable development	Centre for Ethics and Value Inquiry (CEVI)
	11:30 - 13:00	RioCentro - T3	SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLES 2050	Northern Alliance for Sustainability
	13:00 - 14: 45	UNEP Pavillion Auditorium	Driving innovation toward Green Economy: Lessons Learned and Recommendations from the Field in Asia and the Pacific	UNEP
	13:30 - 15:00	RioCentro T-6	The Technology Economy? Know-how, Know-what, Know-why	ETC Group (Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration)
	15:30 - 17:00	RioCentro T-3	Multi-stakeholder Engagement in IFSD & Compendium of Commitments	CIVICUS - World Alliance for Citizen Participation
	15:30 - 16:00	Riocentro P-3	Press Conference by speakers from Major Groups organizations	Earth Media/ Rio+20 Civil Society-Media Liason Team
	15:00 - 16:45	UNEP Pavillion Auditorium	Greening the Blue World: Green Economy Approach for Oceans, Coasts and SIDS	UNEP
	15:30 - 17:00	RioCentro - T8	Energy and Sustainable Development	Brazil
	17:00 - 19:00	UNEP Pavillion Auditorium	Progress and Barriers for meeting Environmental Goals	UNEP
	17:30 - 19:00	RioCentro - T9	Implementation of the SEEA: the international statistical standard for environmental-economic accounting	Institute of Geography and Statistics
	17:30 - 19:00	RioCentro - T10	Learning from the MDGs: SDGs within a transformative post-2015 development agenda	Ibon International
	19:30 - 21:00	RioCentro P3A	National Sustainable Development Strategies-What's Their Future Role?	Liechtenstein

# Brazil: counterculture, the fight for democracy and the devastation of natural environments

Claudia Lopes Borio

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This year marks the 50th anniversary of the publication of Rachel Carson's book 'Silent Spring', which employed both scientific and literary resources to relate the damage caused by pesticides to human and animal organisms. Similarly, it has now been 40 years since the Club of Rome report 'Limits to Growth' was published, which has since become one of the most important documents in world ecology.

During the 1960s, humanity had to face phenomena never before experienced. Large scale environmental devastation and disasters such as the use of chemical warfare in Vietnam, serious illnesses caused by industrial and atomic pollutants, and babies born with deformities as a result of chemicals produced by the pharmaceutical industry.

At the same time, society underwent a revolution in customs. Youth rebelled against formal, rigid systems of education. Humanity attempted to move closer to nature through social, mystical and scientific methods.

In Brazil, counterculture took on a libertarian character that was also a revolt against the ruling dictatorship. At the same time, the government, in its efforts to achieve development at any cost, generated environmental disasters and devastation. The 'hippies' rejected the established order in favour of democratisation. The repressive dictatorship arrested citizens who attempted to participate in music festivals, and censored songs and plays.

In 1972, the United Nations held a Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm. For the first time, the environmental situation of the Earth became a major topic of international discussion. Brazil underwent an 'economic miracle', yet both State and industrial elites continued to deny environmental responsibility. The following year, however, the SEMA – Secretaria Especial de Meio Ambiente (Special Secretary for Environment) – was created, marking the beginning of a new



Women's march for Democracy, Photo Jornal do Brasil, 1972

environmental consciousness. Political militancy continued through counter-cultural groups, the organisation of student movements, leftist factions inside the Catholic Church and even the 'Tropicalist' artists – a group which referred to itself as apolitical, yet denounced the political regime and social order through songs and festivals. The struggle for the return to democracy culminated in several significant changes.

In 1981, the promulgation of the Brazilian Law on the National Politics for Environment, was extremely significant, bringing the idea that the natural environment deserved to be protected 'for present and future generations' within the realm of the law. Another landmark legal advancement was the creation of a law in 1985 which allowed collective claims to be made in cases of environmental damage – denominated 'Ação Civil Pública'. Finally, ecological protection received constitutional recognition in Brazil, within the new 'citizen's Constitution' of 1988. Crowning the whole system was the creation of the law against environmental crimes in 1998, which introduces the possibility of inclusion and punishment of corporations as perpetrators of actions against nature. Nevertheless, the question still remains as to whether current legal structures are enough to safeguard the natural environment, already so severely damaged by our modern way of life.

For the next two weeks, the world's gaze will focus upon Brazil once more. Only with sufficient leadership and ambition will Rio+20 be able to deliver the outcomes so sorely needed by both people and planet ■

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