



RIO+20
United Nations
Conference on
Sustainable
Development



A GENERATION OF WE CAN

Media as partners for sustainable development

World Environment Day: 2 weeks for Rio, Mediterranean call for action

I- Key possible outcomes

(Barcelona, 4th-5th June 2012) - Many people in the world still describe and feel the warmth, novelty and power generated by the United Nations Conference on Human Environment (UNCHE, Stockholm 1972). It was a major move for the cause of human rights and sustainable development throughout the world. States and non-states actors generated a powerful process in the global agenda. UNCHE was to agree on a wide-ranging of commitments at national, regional and international scopes to obstruct the deterioration of the human environment and continue to find out how “to govern better together only one Earth”.

2 weeks for Rio, with time running out, it is now up to us -knowledge activists and Media- to build a greater sense of urgency and ambition to make the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or RIO+20) a success with a substantial agreement and concrete outcomes worthy of taking forward the work started at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or Earth Summit) in Rio 20 years ago. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD- Johannesburg 2002 or RIO+10) confirmed the importance of education, media and communication for sustainable development and recommended a decade of education for sustainable development starting in 2005 (UNDESD, 2005-2014).

Indeed, if governments had implemented the many conventions, treaties, declarations, thematic decades they have negotiated and decided from Stockholm in 1972 via Rio to Kyoto to Johannesburg we would be well along the road to sustainability. “We knew the problems, we knew most of the answers - but we failed to scale them up to deliver what was needed”. Our challenge now is to look at the possible outcomes from Rio+20 and continue to drive discussions around them, ensuring a decisive and actionable agreement.

The key possible outcomes that we would like to highlight are in spread across the following key areas:

1. Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty

Eradication and the focus on new ways of measuring socio-economic progress which goes beyond GDP (the enhancement of education and communication on green economy concept among society, while avoiding empty talks and general concepts)

2. Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (or Sustainable development governance) and the idea to upgrade UNEP (United Nations Environment Program) and increase at regional-local levels the Councils for sustainable development to address Sustainable Development goals implementation and emerging critical issues.

3. Possible Conventions and the idea to build a dialogue for a global convention for Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration (access to information, public participation in decision-making and environmental justice), to deal with environmental governance, right to know, and citizens as partners for sustainable development, and for a convention on Corporate Sustainability or better a Convention on Corporate Social Responsibility and Accountability.

II - Rio+20: Civil Society Engagement and Corporate Sustainability

Civil Society Engagement - Redefining the Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Contract:

Recent grassroots events such as the Arab Spring, *Los Indignados* and the Occupy Movements have given expression to the feelings of frustration and even anger with the status quo. More significantly, these events demonstrate the power of people when unified and mobilized, as well as the growing importance of information technology and social media in enabling this mobilization.

At a time of increasing global problems and disillusionment with government and the prevalent economic systems, stakeholder democracy offers a platform that could lend greater moral and political strength to the governments addressing the difficult decisions that need to be taken now and in the near future to ensure the viability, equitability and sustainability of life on this planet.

Stakeholder democracy is the idea that involving all participants, at every level, will result in better informed, and more thoroughly deliberated, decisions being taken. It means that all stakeholders will thereby take greater ownership of the outcome and then be active in the delivery of policy on the ground, optimally in partnership with governments and other stakeholders.

To this end, Rio+20 marks an opportunity to rethink and redefining the way in which all stakeholders engage, participate and shape decisions at all levels of government processes.

Corporate Sustainability - Enhancing transparency and reporting at Rio+20 as a first step to accountability:

In twenty years since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, there have been numerous calls by the United Nations and Governments for the corporate sector to adopt voluntary reporting on what steps they are taking to make a long-term transition to sustainable development. Despite these suggestions by the United Nations and Governments, recent research has shown that **fewer than 15% of the publicly traded firms in the world regularly publish such environmental, social and governance reports.** It is therefore appropriate that Governments help move the process beyond voluntary corporate sustainability reporting by creating a system that formally encourages the production of annual sustainability reports as an integral component of corporate governance.

More precisely, we believe that the Rio+20 should call for a process to prepare for Governments' consideration a package of policy tools on how all the publicly listed and globally large firms could be expected to publish annually their sustainability reports, if this is not deemed appropriate, provide an explanation as to why they have chosen not to do so. We call this policy "report or explain." It does not require complex or excessively prescriptive regulation and is fully consistent with current company financial reporting requirements, already mandated in most countries. It can be implemented at national level by Governments and public authorities through regulation, market actors, such as Stock Exchanges requiring listed companies to report or explain.

Rio+20 zero draft offers an opportunity to address these issues by calling governments to agree on a "Global Policy framework requiring all listed and large companies to consider sustainability issues and to integrate sustainability information within the reporting cycle".

III- 2 weeks for Rio, Mediterranean call for action

At regional Mediterranean level [Barcelona convention (UNEP-Regional Seas Program, 1975) and Barcelona Process (EU Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, 1995)], we claim the need for a deeper, wider and better coordinated activities through the region for partnership closer to people (Citizens as partners for sustainable development, environmental governance). The Mediterranean Sea "eco-region" requires sustained, interactive, integrated communication approach that, over time, will correct information deficit and ensure visibility not just among decision-makers in the region but also across the wide spectrum of scientific community, Media and communication bodies, Trade unions, civil society organizations and business community. We need to consolidate and promote cooperation with pluralistic, independent Media and communication senior professionals (Media as partners for sustainable development, environmental governance)

In the Mediterranean region, we need to realise the human potential building on global, and translating global talks to local action: a program of commitments, actions

and implementation. The future we want in the Mediterranean: Integration, Implementation, and Coherence at political commitments, at (sustainable) economic development, at institutional development and governance, and at tangible frameworks for action and follow-up.

Mediterranean “Glocal” themes and critical issues:

- Participation & stakeholder democracy
- Capacity Building, Advocacy and Access to information
- Governance (SDA and MEAs)
- Local and regional governments
- Green jobs / decent work
- Corporate Sustainability (transparency, accountability, etc.)
- Sustainable Production and Consumption
- Ethical and sustainable finance
- Water-Energy-Food Nexus
- Regionalism and regional integration
- Social cohesion and well-being of Mediterranean people
- Sustainable Economic Development and Mediterranean green economy and growth opportunities

We launch of a new initiative in the Mediterranean,

- to promote Participation & stakeholder democracy.
- to increase the awareness of the themes of Stockholm +40 and Rio+20, in particular, sustainable development governance, green growth and corporate sustainability.
- to work towards the agreement, adoption and implementation of Capacity Building, Advocacy and Access to information.
- to build the capacity of media and knowledge activists to engage with sustainable development preparatory processes, RIO+20 itself and its forthcoming outcomes.

Place

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