

inside:

A Milestone Birthday for Planet
Earth

Ombudsperson for future
generations: addressing the
growing burdens for those who
follow us

a multi-stakeholder
magazine on
climate change
and sustainable
development

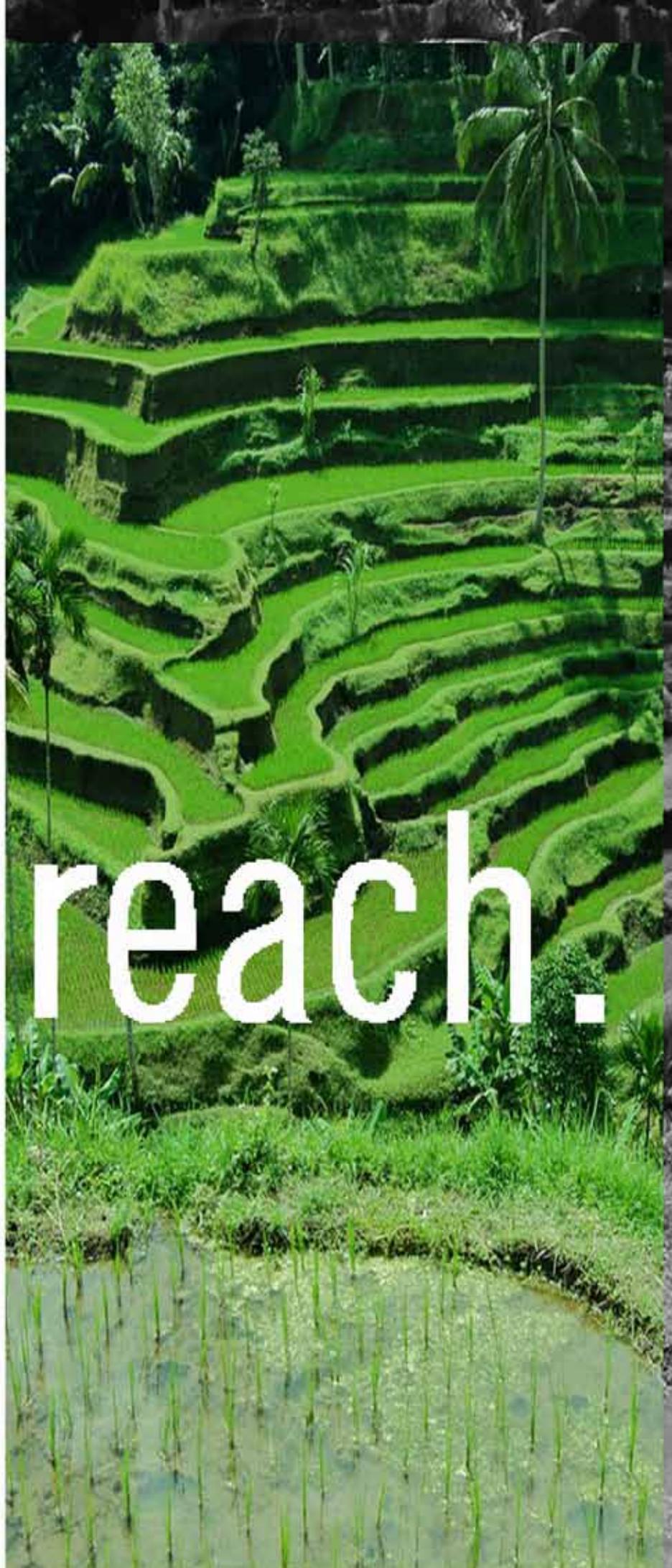
outreach.

25 january 2012



RIO+20
United Nations
Conference on
Sustainable
Development

www.outreachlive.org



Our Rio+20 Vision

Farooq Ullah
Stakeholder Forum



is powerful. It puts people at the centre of any form of development. Moreover, it means that denying anyone basic rights (including the right to water, food, energy, and education) is a violation of those rights. Therefore, environmental degradation becomes an issue of fairness and intergenerational justice as future generations will rely on the same ecosystem services we currently do.

The Zero Draft has many strong points. For example, Poverty Eradication is a major focus throughout and sits alongside sustainable development as the context for the green economy. It emphasises a 'redouble our efforts to eradicate poverty, acknowledges current challenges and recognises the context of water resources, climate change, and desertification as intensifiers/barriers to efforts for greater sustainability and well-being. Furthermore, there is an agreement to devise Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2015. An inclusive process of devising and monitoring is suggested, and it is proposed that the MDGs are to be 'complemented' and 'strengthened' by any SDGs. There is also a discussion on a 2030 (or similar) target system.

Unfortunately, there are also weaknesses. For example, Social Inclusion is associated with green jobs as a key priority/theme, broadly addressing a range of social and developmental topics, and it is specifically applied in the context of access to education; but the term social equity is not used, other than in reference to inequities faced by women and children. It is also proposed that the SDGs should include 'green jobs, decent work and social inclusion'. However, social inclusion needs greater prominence as this is about much more than just having a job. The need to provide Social Protection/Floor is stressed, and national and local floors and programmes are 'strongly encouraged', though without prescription at this stage. The green economy concept needs to link more clearly with the social dimension. At the moment, it only stresses the environment-economy relationship. The social dimension of sustainable development is, in general, underplayed in the whole draft.

Even more unfortunately, there are some glaring omissions in the Zero Draft, for example, Planetary Boundaries/Planetary Limits. While the science on such a concept needs further development, a strong acknowledgement of our finite planet and its health is missing. Carrying capacity is noted once to provide background context, and also as a clear proposal for a 'regular review of the state of the planet and the Earth's carrying capacity' to be coordinated by the Secretary-General with international organisations and the UN. However, ecological footprint, ecosystems approach, and planetary boundaries/environmental limits has no mention at all within the Zero Draft.

Given the well-understood connection between the health and well-being of Earth and our own, operating within planetary boundaries is a necessary precondition for sustainability. With that in mind, fairly sharing the planet and its resources requires strong values and concepts of interpersonal, inter-societal, inter-biological, and intergenerational justice. These concepts are paramount in the Rio+20 thinking and need development. ■

The Zero Draft of the Outcome Document represents a strong starting point for effective and successful negotiations. The UN Secretariat has synthesised an honest and fair record of the conversations to date. But there remains much to play for. Currently the Zero Draft lacks the urgency, ambition, and detail required to use Rio as an opportunity to re-imagine our socio-economic systems and the way in which they work in harmony with nature, to deliver greater well-being for all, now and into the future.

The Zero Draft provides an opportunity to take a critical look at ourselves, own up to bad practices, identify pockets of good practice and plan for a fair and resilient future for all. Key to this challenge will be in describing a Rio+20 Vision. At the moment, the Zero Draft does not achieve this. There is a need for a clear articulation of our common values and key principles. This should begin with the fundamental elements of sustainable development and how these must be considered together; that is planetary health and social justice. Together, these two elements describe a sustainable vision that respects both planetary boundaries/environmental limits and a social protection floor, which will ensure a safe and just operating space for our existence and define new pathways for inclusive growth and prosperity.

Combining a rights-based approach (both human and social) with a clear acknowledgment that the health of our only planet is absolutely fundamental to our existence

contents.

- 1 Our Rio+20 Vision
- 2 A Milestone Birthday for Planet Earth
- 3 Ecocide: a law for sustainable development
- 4 Ombudsperson for future generations: Addressing the growing burdens for those who follow us
- 6 The sustainable urban future at Rio
- 7 Towards Rio+20: how can big companies show leadership?
- 8 Food security and agriculture - the missing part of the picture
- 10 The Zero Draft, poverty and water: reflections



4



8



3



10

OUTREACH IS PUBLISHED BY:



Outreach is a multi-stakeholder publication on climate change and sustainable development. Outreach is the longest continually produced stakeholder magazine in the sustainable development arena and has been produced at international meetings on the environment, including the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and at COP15 and COP16. Published as a daily edition, in both print and web form, Outreach provides a vehicle for critical analysis on key thematic topics in the sustainability arena as well as a voice of regional and local governments, women, indigenous peoples, trade unions, industry, youth and NGOs. To fully ensure a multi-stakeholder perspective, we aim to engage a wide range of stakeholders for article contributions and project funding.

If you are interested in contributing to Outreach, please contact the team (gmacdonald@stakeholderforum.org or Sabrina@sabrinachesterman.com)

You can also follow us on Twitter: @OutreachLive

About Stakeholder Forum
Stakeholder Forum is an international organisation working to advance sustainable development and promote democracy at a global level. Our work aims to enhance open, accountable and participatory international decision-making on sustainable development through enhancing the involvement of stakeholders in intergovernmental processes. For more information, visit: www.stakeholderforum.org

OUTREACH EDITORIAL TEAM

Editorial Advisors	Felix Dodds	Stakeholder Forum
	Farooq Ullah	Stakeholder Forum
Editor	Georgie Macdonald	Stakeholder Forum
Assistant Editor	Amy Cutter	Stakeholder Forum
Sub-Editor	Kirsty Schneeberger	Stakeholder Forum
Design and Layout	Tom Harrisson	Stakeholder Forum
Online Design and Layout	Matthew Reading-Smith	Stakeholder Forum

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Peter Bosshard	International Rivers	Susanne Salz	ICLEI-Local Government for Sustainability
Daniel Hale	Progressio	Kaarin Taipale	Freelance Urban Researcher
Polly Higgins	Eradicating Ecocide	Farooq Ullah	Stakeholder Forum
Daniel Hale	Progressio		
Vicki Hird	WSPA		
Catherine Pearce	World Future Council		

A Milestone Birthday for Planet Earth

Peter Bosshard
Policy Director of International Rivers

Milestone birthdays are opportunities to take stock of our family, health and financial situation. So how is Planet Earth doing 20 years after the historic UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro? The planet's economic output has more than doubled since 1992.

Some members of the global family are doing extremely well, but the number of hungry people is increasing. And the planet's health is steadily deteriorating, with vital ecosystems nearing the point of collapse.

We can celebrate milestone birthdays with empty rhetoric, or we can use them to change course. Twenty years ago, governments adopted resolutions that aimed to bring the global community into social, environmental and economic balance. They resolved to follow basic rules of global housekeeping such as the precautionary principle, the internalisation of environmental costs, and the polluter-pays principle. They prepared a specific roadmap of global change in Agenda 21. And most of them made binding commitments by signing the conventions on biodiversity and climate change.

Looking back, we have failed to live up to our resolutions and commitments as a global community. We can't relive the past, but as we prepare for the Rio+20 Summit in June, we have another chance to take stock and change course for the better. Unfortunately world leaders have so far not risen to the challenge. Their draft document for the Rio+20 Summit is devoid of substance and ambition. Entitled "The Future We Want" it contains no honest analysis, few specific recommendations, and no binding commitments. Instead, it tries to hide its lack of ambition with vague concepts such as a new Green Economy.

In the water sector – the area I know best – there are indeed measures that could improve the planet's

economic and ecological health at the same time. We could start by dramatically improving the water efficiency of our existing infrastructure and agriculture. We could safeguard vital ecosystems and the services that they provide by protecting free-flowing rivers and restoring environmental flows. We could phase out public funding for unsustainable agricultural practices, polluting industries, and destructive dams. And we could redirect development aid towards the decentralised, small-scale technologies that strengthen the food, water, and energy security of the poorest without destroying the environment.

Unfortunately, the language of the Rio+20 draft document is so vague that it can easily be abused by the money lenders, consultants, and contractors that benefit from the current course of action. Under the motto of the Green Economy, the World Bank proposes to build more large multi-purpose dams that would clog the arteries of the planet while bypassing the poor. As the World Commission on Dams found ten years ago, these complex projects have the worst track record among all dams in terms of economic viability, poverty reduction and environmental protection – the main pillars of sustainable development.

Milestone birthdays rarely come at a convenient time. When economic strife and political drama dominate large parts of the world, it requires a lot of courage to take a long-term view. Yet we are living beyond our means and drawing down the natural capital on which the poorest people and future generations depend for their livelihoods. As a recent UN report found, 'natural systems that support economies, lives and livelihoods across the planet are at risk of rapid degradation and collapse'. Once these ecosystems have reached their tipping point, no other planet will bail us out. Will we find the courage for an honest assessment and change of course at the Rio+20 Summit?



Ecocide: a law for sustainable development

Polly Higgins
Environmental lawyer and barrister, founder of the Eradicating Ecocide campaign

Rio+20 is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create targets for sustainable development. I applaud the aspirations of Sustainable Development Goals, they are our starting point. To make these aspirations a reality, international law that places people and planet first is necessary to establish a level playing field for everyone around the world.

Achieving this requires a commitment to outlawing destructive business practices and creating laws that prioritises green, clean, and life-enhancing business. One law that does just that is my proposal to make Ecocide a crime. [<http://www.eradicatingecocide.com/thesolution/>].

In April 2010, I proposed the concept of an Ecocide law to the UN, and the law has now been drafted. An Ecocide Act was tested in a mock trial [<http://www.eradicatingecocide.com/the-trial/>] at the Supreme Court in London, England in September 2011, which allowed a team of lawyers to examine the application of the proposed law before it is enacted. The mock trial was an opportunity to iron out any issues before the Act is adopted by nations across the world. The first step is to commit to amending the Rome Statute to include a 5th crime: Ecocide. This will create a level playing field in which all companies are legally bound to ensure that the consequences of their activities are examined before deciding to act. Under the law, CEOs and Heads of State will be personally responsible for any extensive environmental damage that arises out of their decision making. A law of Ecocide is an upstream solution. By turning off the tap at source, companies stand to gain. It is far more cost effective to pre-empt damage and destruction than to shore it up in the aftermath.

The Zero Draft document for Rio+20 states: "We view the green economy as a means to achieve sustainable development, which must remain our overarching goal." Making Ecocide a law at Rio will put in place

the foundations for our global green economy. According to the most recent estimates set out in the 2010 TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) report, the cost of destruction to the planet, by the top 3,000 corporations, was US\$2.2 trillion in 2008. However, fines to defray the damage do not work. A law of Ecocide will shift corporations away from 'polluter pays' to 'polluter does not pollute'. We view the Rio+20 as the most important meeting of Heads of State for 20 years; a moment in history when world leaders can demonstrate their commitment to the Earth. Under an Ecocide law, the world can opt-in to a law that places people and planet first.

From the case of banning CFCs in the 1980s, we know that industry can quickly change direction when given the right regulatory framework. Industry resisted the Montreal Protocol because they said that it was too challenging to find a replacement for CFCs in their products – however history demonstrates that industry flourished and new solutions were found.

The aim of Ecocide law is not to punish, and indeed I advocate a period of amnesty: a time when governments work with industry to actively facilitate them turning around. This is a route-map to quickly deliver a green economy.

A responsible economic system is not the only thing an Ecocide law can deliver. It is also a viable alternative to the failing climate negotiations. The Kyoto Protocol has failed to deliver anything substantial, at the crucial time when action to reverse man-made climate change is much needed. Climate scientists tell us that to keep global warming below 2°C and thereby prevent catastrophic climate change; new laws that prohibit dangerous industrial activity are required. A law that closes the door once and for all, to the sorts of activity that places human life at risk of injury or harm due to rising emissions.

To make Ecocide law a reality at Rio is also possible. We cannot shy away from the realities that we are facing today: rising sea levels, climate change, poverty, and increasing risk of loss of human life. All of this can be rapidly abated by one amendment to the Rome Statute. To do so will enable both the transition to a green economy and the protection of people and the Earth. I wonder: Who are the leaders that will be remembered for making Ecocide a crime by our future generations?

Ombudspersons for Future Generations: Addressing the growing burdens for those who follow us

Catherine Pearce
World Future Council

Humanity and the environment faced the same problems last year, the year before that and the years before that... and they are growing exponentially. Rio+20 deliberations are running the risk of approaching the problems we face in the very same way that they have been caused. By considering each issue in isolation, without giving deeper attention to how they are interlinked or how the solutions can be mutually beneficial, we could further exacerbate this perfect storm of financial, environmental and fuel crises.

The current economic crisis is a case in point. Efforts to alleviate the huge and rising debt burden that threatens security and stability, for current and future generations, are perceived as the only game in town, Rio being merely a side show. Yet we cannot hope for sustainable and solid foundations to our global financial models unless we deliver innovative, tangible and ambitious outcomes at Rio, which recognise and place limits upon our overuse of resources and which encourage long term investment decisions. For more than twenty years, increasing voices have pointed out that our environment is intricately and fundamentally linked to all other aspects of society and life, be it our political and economic systems or our cultural

heritage. The myth that protecting the environment is a luxury to be dealt with once we have addressed the important business of securing our economy is a dangerous one and has led us to the many crises we now face. Until we have practical structures and policies in place that acknowledge that our planet's ecosystem underpins everything we depend upon for our ultimate survival, we will be making little headway.

The outcome document will serve as the basis for negotiations between now and Rio, so that the heads of governments attending Rio can adopt this text as the final outcome of the conference. Efforts must be made that this document, already awarded the title 'The Future We Want', presents the inter-linkages of our challenges and offers bold, far-reaching solutions with the urgency required.

"We borrow environmental capital from future generations with no intention or prospect of repaying... We act as we do because we can get away with it: future generations do not vote; they have no political or financial power; they cannot challenge our decisions." World Commission Sustainable Development Report Our Common Future, 1987

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the landmark Brundtland report, therefore representing an auspicious occasion to facilitate coherence between the separate pillars of government to overcome single issue, short term thinking and bring the sustainable development agenda to the heart of decision making. Establishing Ombudspersons for Future Generations at national and international levels is relevant in this regard and we welcome that this has been taken up in the first draft, Paragraph 57 "We agree to further consider the establishment of an Ombudsperson or High Commissioner for Future Generations, to promote sustainable development".

The institution can safeguard economic, environmental and social conditions for the benefit of current and future generations by undertaking their institutional representation in all areas of



decision-making. This offers a concrete proposal in response to the second theme of Rio: Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD). However we are aware that it is also acutely relevant to ensuring successful implementation of the green economy agenda and the sustainable development goals. Not least, an international Ombudsperson for Future Generations could play an effective role in ensuring a transparent and participatory process in identifying those goals.

With the mandate as citizen defenders, engaging with public concerns and safeguarding the right to a healthy environment, Ombudspersons (which could take the shape of a Parliamentary Commissioner, Guardian or Auditor depending how it fits best into each nation's governance structure) increase trust in policy formulation and its effective implementation. In addition, emerging issues of concern to the population and potential civil society solutions are easily transmitted to the core of policy-making.

With respect to existing governance frameworks and legal architecture, there can of course be no uniform approach, nor identical institutions from one country to the next. Certainly similar institutions which are already in place should be reformed or strengthened as necessary. However, for this institution to be effective, attention must be given to a core set of principles upon which it must be based:

- independent
- proficient
- transparent
- legitimate by democratic standards
- with full access to all relevant information
- widely accessible to external assessments and citizens' concerns

There is an increasing number of resonating proposals on the table that support Ombudspersons

for Future Generations, including the 2012 Social Watch Report launched at the December Intersessional last year. Comprising over sixty national reports by independent citizen groups, entitled 'The Right to a Future', the proposal for Ombudspersons for Future Generations features prominently in the recommendations. Based very firmly on principles of intergenerational justice, we welcome the report and reiterate the critical need to rebalance our economic concerns to better redress the social and environmental injustices for all, but especially the youth and children of today and generations yet to be born.

For the negotiations in the next few days, we hope Member States will work together on strengthening the zero draft without delay. Rio will be 2012's biggest political conference. This is a once-in-a-decade opportunity and the urgency and commitment of the document must begin to reflect this occasion. It is the job of civil society and all delegations to make this happen. ■

FOR MORE INFORMATION

visit: www.futurejustice.org

Catherine Pearce is the Future Justice campaign manager at the World Future Council.
catherine.pearce@worldfuturecouncil.org

The sustainable urban future at Rio

Susanne Salz,
ICLEI-Local Government for Sustainability

If Rio+20 is to be a worthwhile multilateral conference, justifying the enormous financial and human resources invested in it, Heads of States and Governments have to be personally involved in jointly deciding upon and presenting concrete *actions*. The world needs more than just another declaration.

A lot is already being done and will continue to happen in the cities of the world, home to over 50% of the global population. Local solutions are key to tackling the global challenges we are facing.

By 2050 over two-thirds of the world population will be living in urban areas. In the next 40 years we have to build the same urban capacity which we have built in the past 4000 years. It will be a challenge to build quality urban fabrics that provide livelihoods and opportunities for people of all economic backgrounds so rapidly and at such enormous scale. Sustainable urbanization is, therefore, an issue which Rio+20 needs to forcefully address.

We need to redesign existing urban areas and systems, as well as build new ones that generate substantial amounts of their own resources within the urban region, in particular their energy, food, and even water. Put in economic terms, cities need to become more productive engines of economic growth by producing a substantial part of their own resource base. Until now, cities have mostly been extractive, resource consuming systems. Investment in the resource productivity of cities and urban systems is a vital opportunity and critical challenge of the green urban economies, which will form an essential part of the global transition to a socially cohesive and environmentally feasible green economy.

In light of these challenges and opportunities, it is not surprising that the significance of sustainable cities is gaining recognition in Rio+20 preparations. Maurice Strong, Secretary General of the 1992 Earth Summit recently stated that "cities are at the very foundation of environmental governance, as the main sources of environmental problems as well as their solutions. I would urge Rio+20 to give their key role recognition and a strong voice in policy and implementation." Many UN member states also recognise sustainable cities as an important aspect of sustainable development.

The role of local governments and the importance of sustainable cities are prominent in the Zero Draft of the Rio+20 outcome document. Yet, there is still room to go even further if we are to make real progress towards

sustainable urbanization. Section IIIc, on the Green Economy Framework for Action, for example, could be strengthened. Local authorities are ready to develop green urban economy strategies. In fact, urban goals and benchmarks for progress will be essential to support national green economy strategies. Urban areas need to be empowered and appropriately supported to take action.

In section IV, on the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD), the role of Local Governments as part of the group of Governmental Stakeholders – which was recognised by UNFCCC COP16 in Cancun – should be highlighted, emphasising how Governmental Stakeholders should be integrated into the future IFSD. Two options are viable. A new paragraph could be introduced, committing to further enhance the participation of stakeholders in the UN by upgrading the current nine Major Group structure to three new Stakeholder Groups with full participation: Governmental Stakeholders, business and industry, and civil society. Another option could be an addition to paragraph 62 committing parties to allow for full participation of Local Authorities in global sustainable development policy-shaping.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, visit www.iclei.org

Towards Rio+20: how can big companies show leadership?

Kaarin Taipale, Ph.D. (Urban Studies)
Freelance urban researcher

The Rio process is unique within the UN system, in its provision of space – even if limited – for 'civil society'. The composition of the nine Major Groups, however, has always caused debate. For example, why are local governments called 'local authorities' and considered non-government? Similarly, 'business and industry' sit uncomfortably in the role of an NGO. Although individual firms are represented by their umbrella organisations, much like in the other Major Groups, companies don't have the opportunity to represent themselves at a session of the CSD.

The Rio process recognises the juxtaposition of government vs. non-government, instead of a tripartite division of public sector vs. civil society vs. private sector, or for-profit vs. non-profit. Sustainable Development Governance is going to be one of the main issues on the agenda of Rio+20. Next to solving the puzzle of UN organisations, it is equally important to clarify and strengthen the role of the other stakeholders.

To regard the Rio process as one more place for lobbying and 'guarding one's own interests' would miss the point. It should be an open platform for voicing different suggestions about the implementation of the common goal: sustainability.

So what's in it for big business? Why should the lure of making money give way to sustainable policies? Why not simply continue with a business-as-usual attitude? Why show leadership when the public sector continues to berate business for making the wrong decisions?

Leadership is needed for credibility, bereft of this how can society expect businesses to act upon what they promise? The fact remains though, that the involvement of the private sector is absolutely crucial to achieve a sustainable economy. We need the right leaders to act now, those that have already earned the respect and trust of society. Without this, there can be no effective dialogue and the knowledge of the private sector will never successfully disseminate throughout the business world.

But how can companies show leadership?

Invest in research and development

In order to be a frontrunner, you have to know where the cutting edge research is going, not only in various technologies, but also societal analysis, human behaviour and urban development. Some companies may have in-house teams, others work with the best research institutes in their country or worldwide, or even donate funds for professorships if appropriate.

Reward success

Concerning the built environment, my favorite prize is the Holcim Award for Sustainable Construction, which is not



just a one-off event, but rounds of regional conferences and awards before a global jury selects the most inspiring examples every three years.

Partner with the best

Find the best experts in relevant fields and surround your company with the brightest minds, not only to educate internally, but to disseminate knowledge within the profession. It can also be valuable to work with colleagues across sectors. For example, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) has promoted Energy Efficiency in Buildings.

Lead by example

It is vital that corporations 'practice what they preach'.

A company cannot create a credible 'green' image if its headquarters waste energy and resources and are located in an area with no public transport, surrounded by parking fields.

Educate your customers

Rather than following a strictly 'client knows best' policy, it is the responsibility of firms like Skanska, to speak up about aspects of building plans that they find to be immoral or unsustainable to implement, provide better alternatives, and go public with them. This would be brilliant leadership.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kaarin Taipale, PhD (Urban Studies) from Finland is a freelance researcher. She is, among other things, the former Chair of ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, and of the Marrakech Task Force on Sustainable Buildings and Construction

This article has been produced with the support of Skanska. Read more about how Skanska contribute to a more sustainable "built environment" by visiting www.skanska-sustainability-case-studies.com

Food security and agriculture - the missing part of the picture

Vicki Hird
 Consultant on Humane Sustainable Agriculture, WSPA



It's been very clear - from the submissions to the Rio+20 compilation document, the statements at Rio+20 preparatory meetings, and in numerous research papers - that food security and sustainable agriculture need serious attention at the Rio+20 Conference in June. A commitment to resilient and equitable food system must be the goal.

- humane agriculture that improves livelihoods, health, diversity, culture and animal welfare as well as ecological sustainability.
3. Include specific reference to animal welfare because it is vital to ensure that Rio+20 outcomes cover sustainable livestock production. Research confirms that the production of livestock for food is more sustainable in terms of economics, health, and social and environmental impacts when animals are well cared for.
 4. Address how the products of agriculture are distributed and used; this needs the same level of policy attention as increasing the level of production, given the official evidence that we already produce enough to feed the world but are not achieving that goal.

We suggest that the meaning of the term 'sustainable intensification' in Paragraph 64 of the current draft is open to such differing and wide interpretation that it is unhelpful to include.

WSPA suggests paragraph 64 to be written as:

64. We reaffirm the right to food and are committed to ensuring proper nutrition for our people. Only a transformation of agriculture and food systems will enable nourishment of all people and communities, both today and in the future, with healthy, diverse and culturally appropriate food that respects animal welfare and the integrity of natural ecosystems at both the local and global level.

We would urge delegates to consider this and other amendments on agricultural sustainability and to review the evidence on the huge importance and impact of livestock farming to society across the globe.

WSPA can provide research and good practice case studies which demonstrate how humane, sustainable systems can be good for people, animals, and the planet. WSPA is also encouraging supporters and the wider public to engage in Rio+20 through an innovative and engaging new tool called Pawprint. Rio+20 provides an outstanding opportunity for politicians and the public to act now on one of the neglected but most pressing issues facing our food future.

As noted in the African Union statement at the Second Intercessional Meeting and the summary from the Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Economic Commission for Europe, both held in December 2011, a key strand of this is the need to address livestock and animal husbandry.

Livestock is one of the most important sectors for employment and livelihoods within agriculture. The sector accounts for 40% of global agricultural GDP, and employs around 1.3 billion people. A billion of the world's poorest people depend on animals for food, income, transport, social status, and security. Furthermore, in low-income countries, livestock production is often one of the few ways that women, the elderly, and children participate in the cash economy.

Good welfare means people are employed and animals are well cared for. Positive examples include a new backyard chicken rearing system in India improving the livelihoods of thousands of families; and a cattle farm in the U.S. increasing local jobs from 2 to 60 after converting to a higher welfare system.

Though some impacts are positive, research reports detail the major negative environmental impacts of current and predicted livestock production and consumption levels, particularly the rapid growth in feed (soy and grains) production for industrial livestock systems leading to biodiversity loss and ecosystem damage.

What does this mean for the Rio+20 Zero Draft and other outcomes? Given the enormous importance of food security and agriculture for a range of critical issues globally, the Rio Outcomes should:

1. Explicitly ensure nutrition for all as a primary and global need.
2. Commit UN member states to sustainable and

EARTH DEBATES: Ecosystem economics - can we put a price on nature?



Nature provides us with clean air, pollinates our crops, and much more. What are these natural services worth? Will calculating their monetary value promote more responsible use of the world's natural resources?

Until recently the hidden natural services supplied by the environment (such as providing clean air and water, or pollinating our crops) have had no market value and have been taken freely.

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) project has transformed the way nature is valued, and the costs of its loss. For example, if we didn't have bees and other pollinating insects to pollinate our crops, the true cost for this service is estimated to be 153 billion Euros every year, representing 9.5% of world agricultural output in 2005.

Tools for calculating some of these natural services are now being developed and are already influencing global environmental policy. What are the strengths of this emerging understanding and what are the risks? To what extent will the new economics of ecosystem services change our attitudes towards sustainable development?

The Panel

- **Professor Sir Robert Watson** Chief Scientific Advisor to Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)
- **Claire Brown**, a Senior Programme Officer for Ecosystem Services and Assessment at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) World Conservation Monitoring Centre, and coordinator of the UK National Ecosystem Assessment.
- **Ian Dickie**, a Director of the Aldersgate Group and Business Development Director at ettec (Economics for the Environment Consultancy)
- **Will Evison**, environmental economist at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and a lead contributor to The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity Report for Business (TEEB D3)

Watch the debate

A panel of leading experts chaired by Richard Black, the BBC's environment correspondent, will discuss the issues and answer some of your questions.

Watch the debate online on today at 19:00 GMT go to: <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/biodiversity/earth-debates/watch/index.html>

Have your say

Take part during the live debate on Twitter using the hashtag #earthdebates

The Zero Draft, poverty and water: reflections

Dr. Daniel Hale

Campaigns Officer, Progressio



'The critical importance of water resources for sustainable development' is marked out in the Zero Draft as a cross-sectoral priority challenge, second only to food security. The task for negotiators will be to maintain and develop this encouraging language as negotiations gather momentum. But how?

The Zero Draft looks beyond the need for safe and clean drinking water and sanitation to articulate the importance of water resources for fundamentals like food, health, and development. But access to water resources must also be sustainable and equitable, and include the poorest in decision-making. There is still work to be done to tie participation into the water management agenda.

While the Zero Draft puts forward 'sound water management' as a key goal of a green economy, poverty objectives for the green economy are not specifically highlighted. The definition of green economy needs to be tighter and this will take work between now and June. The green economy must be a 'blue and fair' one too. Women are often those in charge of managing resources at a

household level. When resources become scarce it is often women who are affected first and most significantly. Specific ways to include women locally and nationally in resource management must be further considered. Women's role as water managers should get a specific mention in the final text. Water is also clearly linked to climate change, which is very often experienced as water change; so it is important that this is acknowledged in the document. The interrelationship of water, energy, food, and climate change is central to debate on sustainable development; it's good to see this in the Zero Draft and this should be retained.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been in discussion for some time and are sensibly discussed in the text. The debate on the relationship between SDGs and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is key to post-2015 frameworks. Water is picked out as an important theme in the MDGs, and must also be a central component of SDGs.

As a development agency, Progressio works for a sustainable development that has the poorest at its heart. People like María Yolanda Rojas Ávila, 35, a small-scale farmer living in Antioquia in Peru.

Her hopes for "a good future for my children, in a healthy environment" echo the hopes of billions across the globe.

Yolanda actively manages her scarce water resources to grow crops to feed her family and sell for her livelihood. But poor water management in the watershed and lack of participation in decision-making processes made her balancing act increasingly difficult. With the support of the innovative local NGO and Progressio partner, Aquafondo, Yolanda is finding her voice. "Aquafondo," she says, "gives small water users an equal voice in the management of our watershed. Because for now, it's the big companies and the State who make all decisions and we do not even know about what they decide." Rio+20's success must be judged by the impact it has on people like Yolanda. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Daniel Hale is Campaigns Officer at Progressio, an international charity with Catholic roots that works in 11 developing countries. Visit www.progressio.org.uk

Outreach is made possible by the generous support of

SKANSKA