



Global Civil Society Workshop on the Rio+20 "Zero Draft" and Rights for Sustainability

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Church Center for the United Nations



Equity in the Compilation Document for Rio+20

The following is an overview of equity-based language in the submissions of member states and inter-governmental organizations compiled by the Secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development 2012. They are organized according to major themes:



- Social equity,
- Equitable economic development,
- Sustainable use of resources,
- Equitable access to resources,
- Equitable distribution of wealth, and
- Equity in global trade



This background document was prepared by Ibon International for the **Workshop on Rights for Sustainability**¹ to be held at the UN Church Center, New York on January 24, 2012. It is intended as a reference paper for civil society organizations who wish to influence the negotiating positions of members states and promote a rights-based approach to sustainable development as a way of ensuring that inter- and intra-generational equity and justice are central concerns in the reform agenda at Rio+20 and beyond.



Everyone interested in participating in the Rights for Sustainability Initiative may email Paul Quintos pquintos.ibon@gmail.com for more information.



¹ This workshop is organized by Ibon International in cooperation with the Asia Pacific Research Network (APRN), People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty (PCFS) and the Center for Environment and Development (CED) with the support of Diakonia-Asia, Both Ends and the World Council of Churches.

EQUITY

The main themes under equity identified in the country submissions are social equity, equitable economic development, sustainable use of resources, equitable access to resources, equitable distribution of wealth, and equity in global trade.

Social Equity

In general, the **countries** (Egypt, Indonesia, Nepal, Switzerland, Montenegro, South Korea, Botswana, Kenya, Norway, Philippines, and Uganda) and **inter-government organizations** (UN Interagency Committee for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, UN Women, UN Conference on Trade and Development, UN Development Programme, International Olympic Committee to the UN, International Labour Organization, UN Habitat, G77+China) below believe that the green economy should reduce social equity and should safeguard social equity.

Egypt believes that green economy/ growth should be a means to achieve sustainable development through undertaking economic activities in an environmentally sound manner, while ensuring social equity.

Indonesia, Nepal and Switzerland - (GE) environmental sustainability, economic growth through public and private investments will improve social equity.

Botswana borrowed the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) working definition on Green Economy as a basis for its initial deliberations: "a green economy is one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities". Like Switzerland, Botswana sees Green Economy as one which is low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

In **Montenegro**, the discussions held during the national multi-stakeholder conference on sustainable development (October 2011) confirmed Montenegrins aspirations to become a pilot country for thorough restructuring and greening of the national economy based on the principles of social equity, resource efficiency and preservation of the environment. The idea and possibility to secure support for such an endeavor has been tested during the 19th Session of UN Commission on Sustainable Development in May 2011, when it was generally evaluated in a positive manner. Rio+20 Conference is seen as an opportunity to pursue this idea further, marking the twentieth anniversary of the initial presentation of Montenegro as an ecological state at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.

South Korea says that green equity should be insured in the green economy. GE should give due attention to fairness and equity, particularly in addressing disparities in access to resources and poverty reduction. GE should account for the relation between social equity and economic and environmental policy. GE should reinforce a framework whereby balanced economic and environmental policies are legitimized and sustained through transparent and equitable domestic policy tools and strengthened international partnership.

Kenya welcomes the concept of green economy development pathway and support the African group position on as guided by the African Head of States

and Government meeting in Malabo, AMCEN meeting in Bamako and the African Regional Preparatory Meeting for Rio +20 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The broad definition of green economy has been as one that increases human well-being and social equity while reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities, and as a vehicle for sustainable development. On pathways to a green economy it highlighted wealth in natural capital assets, the possibility of choosing between different development strategies and “leapfrogging,” and efficient use of materials and energy inputs.

For **Norway**, green economy is a means to promote sustainable development, and must promote gender equality and social and intergenerational equity, build on decent work and provide sustainable livelihoods. A key role of Rio2012 is to make greener political and economic choices more attainable. The development of green jobs is a key in the transition towards a greener economy, and merits further attention.

The **Philippines** believes that payment for environmental services to improve human well-being and social equity must be institutionalized and operationalized.

Uganda calls on Rio+20 to focus on intergovernmental processes and country efforts towards eradicating poverty, creating an equitable society as well as sustainable management of natural resources.

UN Interagency Committee for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development's solution towards sustainable development and to break the cycle of poverty and inequity is setting up sustainable education systems and education for sustainability that will produce men and women who are educated to think and act responsibly and respectful towards environment and the society. Mainstream the integration of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) by all countries' education sectors with a strengthened focus on key sustainable development issues (such as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk preparedness, sustainable consumption and production, gender equality, equity and tolerance), skills for resilience and dealing with complexity, innovation, creativity as well as participation and cooperation.

The **UN Women** laments that- global challenges such as increasing disparities and inequalities, persistent gender inequality, social inequity, a growing deterioration of the environment, and recurrent economic, financial, energy and food crises continue to pose additional burden to women and the further realization of their agency and contribution to sustainable development.

The **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** believes that the 2012 Rio+20 Conference will provide an opportunity to reaffirm the positive links between trade, environment and development, and allow developed and developing countries alike to cooperatively define and shape a green economy that supports sustainable development goals by catalyzing new investments, income sources, jobs and enhanced social equity across and within countries.

UN Development Programme (UNDP) says that a new set of goals would need to encompass developed and developing countries alike. In this context, Rio+20 can help establish a roadmap that may include specific or broad sustainable development goals—such as in the area of energy—as well as a definition of critical themes and principles that can give clear direction to the process. From UNDP's perspective, such principles must include equity and inclusion, as well as

environmental sustainability. One key strength of the MDGs has been their focus on people, of measuring progress in terms of enhancing human dignity and capabilities. This should not be lost as we move to 2015 and beyond.

International Labour Organization wants governance structures that will achieve greater social equity, create quality employment opportunities, and a just transition for sustainable development in a green economy. International labor standards provide an important normative framework as well as practical guidance for the formulation of relevant policies and for governance.

UN Habitat says that urban challenges can only be addressed in an integrated manner, balancing social equity, resource efficiency and competitiveness. Therefore, sound planning and management at the city level offers concrete opportunities to connect the economic, social and environmental pillars at the local level.

At the local level: The sustainable development implementation gap can only be closed if the capacity of Local Authorities as a Major Group is strengthened. Indeed, sustainable urban development will not occur spontaneously. It must first define how resources are to be managed, allocated and re-distributed to ensure efficiency and equity, with the strong participation of inhabitants in the governance of the city. It requires more effective and adaptable institutions in the public and private sectors and civil society that are able to promote sustainable development, and reduce poverty and inequality. It also requires innovative urban planning and greater entrepreneurship and clear cooperation of all the spheres of government.

G77+China, while recognizing that there is no consensual agreement on the definition of a Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication, discussed that ensuring social inclusion and equity should be among the basis of GE.

Equitable Economic Development

Turkey says that people must be at the center of sustainable development and have an equal opportunity in economic growth process. It is all the more important to achieve sustainable development in an equitable and inclusive manner. Sustainable development needs to be pursued in accordance with the principles contained in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations. All stakeholders should cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to address global economic, social and environmental challenges.

Bhutan echoes the language of Rio 1992, this resolution acknowledges that unsustainable patterns of production and consumption can impede sustainable development, and it urges a more inclusive, equitable and balanced approach to economic development that promotes sustainable development, poverty eradication, happiness and the wellbeing of all peoples.

Jamaica says that the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI) Caribbean regional workshop in preparation for Rio + 20 endorsed the concept so long as it was pro-poor, pro-growth, and pro-jobs --- [and promoted] ---

economic development that is equitable, sustainable and resilient. Its overwhelming focus was on socio-economic development, governance, regional integration and cooperation with Latin America.

In **Sri Lanka**, the agriculture sector is the cornerstone in the economy of Sri Lanka. It contributes about 18% of the Gross Domestic Product and 30% of employment. Sri Lankan government vision on agriculture is an agriculture sector contributing to regionally equitable economic growth, rural livelihood improvement, and food security through efficient production of commodities for consumption for agro-based industries and for exporting competitively to the world market.

The **Albanian government** recognizes the current limited capacity of implementing and enforcing environmental legislation and the need for strengthening the rule of law, not only for establishing a climate conducive to investment, required to achieve sustainable and equitable growth, but also for the consolidation of the respect for the law among population.

Croatia believes that inclusive and equitable development should be at the heart of the Rio+20 agenda. Therefore there should be close alignment of the Rio+20 agenda with the ongoing and especially post-2015 MDGs agenda. Croatia expects that agreed political document should be supported by operational outcomes that should include a green economy roadmap with specific goals, objectives and actions at international level as well as a package of reforms which includes transforming the UNEP into a specialized UN agency for the environment, leading to a strengthened international environmental governance (IEG) as part of a more balanced and effective IFSD.

The **IMF** recognizes the potential nexus between macroeconomic stability and sustainable, equitable growth and their social, economic, and environmental impacts. Advice on macro-economic policies and structural reforms takes into consideration sustainable development priorities of recipient countries and the risk of adverse effects on the environment and social development. Moreover, the IMF is collaborating with UN Statistics Division and members of the Editorial Board on the revision of the System of Environmental and Economic Accounts to provide standard guidance on statistical measures of sustainable economic performance that will be essential in assessing progress toward sustainable development goals.

ECESA plus Cluster on Social Development recognizes the paramount need to put people in the centre of economic and social policy, strengthen the social pillar of sustainable development, and to stimulate inclusive, equitable and sustainable economic growth. The ECESA also recognizes that high youth unemployment is a consequence of lack of inclusive and equitable economic growth and, particularly in developing countries, of high population growth. Addressing the youth employment challenges, in developing and developed countries alike, requires adequate investment in education and training systems to equip the younger generations with necessary skills, as well as productive investment in the economy to create employment opportunities for younger generations.

The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** says equitable development means universal access to both safe drinking-water and acceptable sanitation, i.e. all people should have access to affordable water of sufficient quantity and

quality and access to sanitation facilities that ensure hygienic separation of human excreta from human contact. In addressing equity in water supply and sanitation it is necessary to analyze disparities across equity dimensions, such as geographical location, socio-economic status and gender. Other dimensions such as ethnicity and disability can also be considered.

The **UNDP** says that sustaining MDG progress and making further progress in the fight against poverty beyond 2015 will be challenging. Rio+20 must address this challenge head-on by agreeing on an ambitious development agenda for the future where progress will not be undermined by unsustainable policies and practices, but where we can accelerate poverty reduction through a more inclusive, equitable, and environmentally responsible development model. Agreeing to expand access to sustainable energy for all would be a key building block.

For **ILO**, the world of work plays a key role not only in the generation of wealth, but also in its distribution and thus in equitable development, as well as in shaping production and consumption patterns, reducing emissions, and managing natural resources to ensure resource efficiency and recycling. It is in workplaces that the social, economic and environmental dimensions come together inseparably. The world of work can therefore inject essential impetus to the drive for an integrated approach to sustainable development.

The **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** believes that a more resilient global economy needs to complement competitiveness with inclusiveness and diversity. The growing inequalities and power imbalances of our economic systems are not only unjust, but inherently unsustainable. A Green Economy transition must make economic development more inclusive and equitable. Promoting greater equity should become an overriding principle of a Green Economy transition. Hence, Green Economy policy frameworks must strengthen local-level capacities, skills, and institutions and should support participatory governance systems based on multi-stakeholder engagement, and particularly the engagement of women and vulnerable groups, as stated in IUCN's position paper on institutional framework for sustainable development.

The **UN Habitat** says we must urgently find a way to achieve further economically and socially equitable growth without further cost to the environment. Cities, their spatial frameworks and infrastructural and governance systems constitute a key lever for delivering this transition.

G77+China says that sustainable, sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth in developing countries will remain the main priority, in order to achieve their ultimate goals of eradicating poverty, hunger, achieving the MDGs and restoring harmony with nature. These are essential conditions to prepare action plans for technical and financial assistance to developing countries and to solve the current global imbalances and inequalities.

The **EU and member states** believes that for the promotion of a high-production, sustainable agriculture, it is necessary that all stakeholders in the agri-food chain cooperate to improve access to local and global agri-food markets for farmers, with special attention to women. Business, primary producers, governments, traders, retailers and consumers each have different possibilities and responsibilities which need to be pooled in order to achieve sustainable agriculture and food security. Multi-stakeholder initiatives are best practices

which facilitate sustainable agriculture through dialogue between the relevant stakeholders in the agri-food chain. These initiatives promote more equitable investment contracts as part of more sustainable business models.

Equitable Access to Resources

According to **Switzerland**, further IFSD reform elements should include the building of the Sustainable Development Goals on the experience of the MDGs and address all dimensions of sustainable development and their interconnectedness. They should be comprehensive and universal in scope, reflect the need for further poverty eradication, development and equity, address the planet's boundaries as well as the challenges of sustainable management and equitable access to its resources, and should also address the social dimension. They should remain concrete enough for providing a useful tool in practice, have targets and enable data collection to monitor progress, be limited in number, and easy to communicate.

For **Montenegro**, much has been done to improve policy and strategic frameworks for public participation, development of partnerships among stakeholders, application of principles of solidarity and equity (within current generation and among generations), equal access to resources and services (including health and education), poverty reduction and similar.

The Green equity concept of **Korea** stipulates that GE should give due attention to fairness and equity, particularly in addressing disparities in access to resources and poverty reduction. GE should account for the relation between social equity and economic and environmental policy. GE should reinforce a framework whereby balanced economic and environmental policies are legitimized and sustained through transparent and equitable domestic policy tools and strengthened international partnership.

Australia says that Rio+20 recommendations on biodiversity should reinforce previous international biodiversity commitments and build on the work of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), which provides a legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and fair and equitable access and benefit sharing of genetic resources.

Tajikistan is promoting water cooperation for equitable access to water. It also believes that in order to ensure ecological coherence, ecosystem approach should be applied as a framework for integrated management that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way.

Nigeria says that the Rio+20 should result in enhanced commitment and practical actions with respect to cooperation and provision of relevant support in respect of means of implementation of the Rio and WSSD commitments. Among them is equitable access to benefits.

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** believes that the sustainability of future growth and development will rely critically on innovation, improved economic, energy and natural resource efficiency, an open and supportive multilateral trading system, better fiscal policies providing incentives for sustainability, comprehensive wealth accounting and valuation of ecosystem services, equitable access and inclusive political processes and the capacity to create sufficient decent work. Growth must lead to strengthened resilience – of

households, ecosystems, and economies, and improved water, food and nutrition security.

For the **UNDP**, a green economy which works for the world's poor would generate more public revenues to enable investment in environment-friendly quality services, to which the poor would have equitable access and promote equitable access to energy and its efficient use.

The **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)** advocates for providing technical assistance and ICT training, sharing knowledge on successful practices and technological innovation, facilitating affordable and equitable access to ICT infrastructure and services are challenges that need to be considered and addressed, possibly with the involvement of all relevant factors such as the international community, countries, the private sector and local communities.

The **UN-HABITAT's** 23rd Governing Council adopted resolution 23/17 on sustainable urban development through expanding equitable access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure which encourages Governments and Habitat Agenda partners to include the issue of sustainable urban development in their contributions to the preparatory process for Rio+20.

According to the Blue Economy concept of the **Pacific small islands**, the conservation, sustainable management and equitable sharing of marine and ocean resources is an integral component of the Green Enhancing opportunities of developing states to participate in fishing activities Distant-water fishing States, when negotiating access agreements and arrangements with developing coastal States, in particular Small Island Developing States, should do so on an equitable and sustainable basis. Those States must comply with the conservation and management measures adopted by the developing coastal States, and take into account that in accordance with their sovereign rights over the natural resources of their exclusive economic zones (EEZ), those coastal States have the legitimate expectation to fully benefit from the sustainable use of such resources.

Fair and Equitable Benefit Sharing

Nepal says that while utilizing natural resources (such as hydropower generation and biodiversity conservation) for economic benefits, the fair and equitable benefit sharing should be ensured for the local communities and indigenous people, whose life and livelihoods are directly or indirectly dependent on these resources or ecosystem services.

Norway wants an increased research, capacity building and dissemination of knowledge on plant genetic resources based on participatory processes ensuring equitable benefit sharing.

Australia believes that the Rio+20 recommendations on biodiversity should reinforce previous international biodiversity commitments and build on the work of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD), which provides a legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and fair and equitable access and benefit sharing of genetic resources.

In **Japan**, the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets concerning biodiversity conservation have been agreed upon. Japan, in particular as Chair of the Convention on Biological Diversity by next COP, retains the responsibility to promote efforts itself. However, global assessments, such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and the Global Biodiversity Outlook indicate that the situation surrounding biodiversity is still deteriorating.

Philippines says that environmental and social safeguards (e.g. rights based approach, equitable benefit sharing) must be ensured to achieve green economy in the sector.

WHO believes that economic growth must be of high quality and inclusive. It should occur hand in hand with relevant efforts to accelerate progress in global health, gender equality and women's empowerment, the realization of human rights, greater equity, improved access to and quality of social protection, the rule of law, and the fair distribution of the benefits of development. Policies must avoid trade protectionism and negative impacts especially on the poor and vulnerable groups such as refugees and internally displaced persons. These objectives are all key elements of the green economy approach, and we pledge the support of our organizations to Member States as they engage in this critical and transformational transition.

The **UN Women** says that the approach toward sustainable development should be holistic, comprehensive and inclusive with the overall strategic goal of enhancing human well-being. To reach this goal, we must collectively enhance equity, revitalize the global economy and protect the ecosystems so that all people – women and men – can live in dignity and equitably share one planet, ensuring its viability for future generations.

For the **UNDP**, Rio should ensure that we collectively seize the opportunity to accelerate poverty reduction and that we recommit to sustainable development based on socially and environmentally responsible growth and equity. This should include the need to change global consumption patterns, particularly in rich countries and population segments. In short, we have to learn to expand human development and share prosperity more equitably, within the larger web of life, no longer viewing ourselves – humanity - as alien conquerors of our planet. We are part of it. This is the essence of sustainable human development.

The **IUCN** believes that sharing power, responsibility and benefits in natural resource management, as well as strengthening governance arrangements, including legal entitlements, to make decisions more transparent, inclusive and equitable, are good for people, for biodiversity and for sustainable development.

Gender Equity

Kenya supports the MDG3: Promote Gender equity and Empower Women. Net enrolment ration (NER) increased from 77.3% in 2002 (76.5% for boys and 78% for girls) to 92.9% in 2009 (94.8% for boys and 90.7% for girls). At secondary, NER increased from 28.5% (29.7% for boys and 27.4% for girls) in 2003 to 42.5% (46.4% for boys and 38.8% for girl) in 2008. There exist great regional disparities with ASAL parts lagging behind the rest of the country. Limited access

of women to productive resources, cultural and traditional practices and beliefs that result in girl child dropping out of school

Norway says that green economy is a means to promote sustainable development, and must promote gender equality and social and intergenerational equity, build on decent work and provide sustainable livelihoods. A key role of Rio2012 is to make greener political and economic choices more attainable. The development of green jobs is a key in the transition towards a greener economy, and merits further attention.

Australia believes that women's participation in sustainable development is crucial to both the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development. Women face barriers to their full participation in economic, social and political life. Addressing these barriers is critical to reducing poverty, enhancing economic growth and democratic governance and increasing the well-being of whole communities. These barriers persist despite the evidence from both developed and developing economies that the increased participation of women generates faster and more equitable income growth.

WHO says that economic growth must be of high quality and inclusive. It should occur hand in hand with relevant efforts to accelerate progress in global health, gender equality and women's empowerment, the realization of human rights, greater equity, improved access to and quality of social protection, the rule of law, and the fair distribution of the benefits of development.

The **Rome-based agencies : FAO, IFAD, WFP and Biodiversity International** says that the issues are complex, and they may take in, for example, fairer trade, energy, health, gender equity or rural-urban linkages – issues that often go beyond the scope of specific agriculture and food policies. This requires a comprehensive approach that cuts across inter-related disciplines, territories and institutions, as well as new ways of working and collaborating between governments, the private sector and civil society. Strong leadership at the national level must promote these urgently-needed comprehensive approaches, supported by international institutions and global agreements.

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) believes that to achieve the Millennium Development Goals' target of ensuring universal access to reproductive health, at least 215 million women who have an unmet need for family planning need to get access to modern contraception. There is convincing evidence that with strong Government commitment this goal can be achieved in any socio-economic or cultural setting. But in order to reach that goal, women must have the possibility of having their voices heard. Increasing equity in gender relations within families and in society is key to accelerating the achievement of that goal.

Intra-generational Equity

Montenegro says that much has been done to improve policy and strategic frameworks for public participation, development of partnerships among stakeholders, application of principles of solidarity and equity (within current generation and among generations), equal access to resources and services (including health and education), poverty reduction and similar.

For **India**, intra-generational equity and poverty eradication remains the major concerns for many developing countries.

Grenada supports sustainable development that emphasizes a holistic, equitable and far-sighted approach to decision-making at all levels. It emphasizes not just strong economic performance but intra-generational and inter-generational equity.

Norway says that green economy is a means to promote sustainable development, and must promote gender equality and social and intergenerational equity, build on decent work and provide sustainable livelihoods. A key role of Rio2012 is to make greener political and economic choices more attainable. The development of green jobs is key in the transition towards a greener economy, and merits further attention.

Equitable Distribution of Wealth

Bolivia believes that the main challenge for the eradication of poverty is not to grow forever, but to achieve an equitable distribution of the wealth that is possible under the limits of the Earth system. In a world in which 1% of the population controls 50% of the wealth of the planet, it will not be possible to eradicate poverty or restore harmony with nature. To end poverty and achieve an equitable distribution of wellbeing, the basic resources and companies should be in the hands of the public sector and society. Only a society that controls its principal sources of income can aspire to a just distribution of the benefits needed to eliminate poverty.

Egypt says that the social pillar of the IFSD needs to be reinforced. Issues of social justice and of a rights-based approach to sustainable development should carry a special place in upcoming discussions. There is a need for a paradigm shift, beyond the focus on achieving economic growth to address the manner in which the fruits of such growth are equitably distributed; lifting people from poverty, providing them with needed jobs, social safety nets, and social protection in general.

Slovenia says that the wealth generated by scientific and technological achievements should be distributed to reduce inequalities and not merely produce such economic growth that makes better off only 5% of the richest. Green economy has a long-term perspective; it is a multisectoral, whole-of-government task that exceeds the consumer society. Instead of Gross Domestic Product, the indicators of public health, environment and green economy (ecological footprint, human development index etc.) will be primarily used as a measure of progress.

ILO says that Economic growth must be of high quality and inclusive. It should occur hand in hand with relevant efforts to accelerate progress in global health, gender equality and women's empowerment, the realization of human rights, greater equity, improved access to and quality of social protection and the rule of law, and the fair distribution of the benefits of development.

Productive employment and decent work play a pivotal role for sustainable development and poverty reduction. Gainful employment creates wealth for families, communities and national economies. Finding a job or starting a

business are two of the most important factors people in developing countries cite as the means by which they have overcome poverty. The world of work plays a key role not only in the generation of wealth, but also in its distribution and thus in equitable development, as well as in shaping production and consumption patterns, reducing emissions, and managing natural resources to ensure resource efficiency and recycling. It is in workplaces that the social, economic and environmental dimensions come together inseparably. The world of work can therefore inject essential impetus to the drive for an integrated approach to sustainable development.