



**unitar**

United Nations Institute for Training and Research



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

The  
**Access**  
Initiative

**KEY MESSAGES FROM**  
**“IMPROVING THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT-**  
**A deep dive into governance issues and the Rio +20 zero draft”**  
**WORKSHOP FOR GOVERNMENT DELEGATES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND MAJOR GROUPS**  
**AND STAKEHOLDERS.**

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> March, 2012

9:30am -4:00pm

Church Center for the United Nations

777 First Avenue at 44th Street

New York

Objective: - To provide a venue for dialogue on ambitious and visionary outcomes on the second theme of the conference strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development to make Rio +20 a success.

The following are the main key messages from each of the working groups:-

**Hooks in the Zero Draft - Principle 10 and Compendium of Commitments**

This workshop focused on discussions on promoting transparency, inclusiveness and accountability as outcomes of Rio 2012. The discussion focused around means to enhance Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio declaration on access to information, public participation and access to justice, as well as new means to ensure accountability through public monitoring of commitments.

- There is strong support from many governments for Principle 10 (P10) to be reaffirmed and formalized through new legal instruments (especially for a new regional convention in Latin America but also possibly a global convention), as well as improving national implementation.
- CSOs are very concerned that the proposed amendments to the Zero Draft are going backwards on P10. They are especially concerned with the G-77s calls for deletion of paragraph 58 and removal of all sections that speak about implementation of this Principle and many amendments proposed by governments which weaken it. They call on governments to reaffirm

support for P10 in terms of specific language to ensure support for national, regional and global language on implementation.

- New information technologies can provide opportunities to identify and monitor commitments to hold governments accountable. A new compendium of commitments/global registry has been proposed to be run jointly by the UN/CSOs under the UNCSD but with some independence. This should include an accountability mechanism. This cannot replace institutional procedures of reporting and compliance.

### **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Zero Draft**

- Sustainable development goals (SDGs) need to be developed within a participatory approach, they need to be simple, achievable, realistic and measurable. A long list of SDGs is not desirable and means of implementation should be incorporated within the formulation of these goals. A human, economic and social rights framework should underlie the goals.
- The SDGs to be developed must be based on an assessment of the gaps in the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) process.
- Rio+20 should agree on a process and a set of principles for the formulation of the SDGs. Key principles need to be based on the Rio Declaration/Agenda 21 and should include transparency, intergenerational and gender equity, sector integration, public participation, accountability, common-but-differentiated-responsibility and non regression.
- SDGs should be universal and applicable to both developed and developing countries.
- A SDG on global partnerships (following the MDG 8) is needed to underpin improvements to institutions to ensure a governance framework for success of the goals.
- A robust governance and accountability framework for sustainable development can be part of the SDGs, but foremost needs a strong reference in other parts of the Rio outcome document.

### **Ombudsperson for Future Generations**

This workshop focused on the establishing an institution to help bring the long-term view and intergenerational equity to policy making. A proposal has been raised to establish this institution at the international, regional, national and local levels.

- This proposal to establish an ombudsperson for future generations has the full continued support of civil society.
- The value of both proposed titles Ombudsperson for Future Generations and High Commissioner was recognized with emphasis upon the reference to future generations in the title.

- The establishment of this office should be agreed in Rio and followed by a transparent, inclusive process to agree its mandate. This should be a very high level office with several suggested options about where it should sit, one being within the Secretary- General's unit. This office would provide an important link between UN organs, member states and would be accessible by local communities. The ombudsperson office needs to be multidisciplinary understanding law, policy and science. The office must be independent, with independent funding.
- Part of the mandate for the Ombudsperson should be to act as an interface and a high-level advocate for future generations and sustainable development. There are a number of offices that we could review to help determine the mandate of the ombudsperson including UN Rapporteurs, the Controller of the US, Canadian Commissioner for Environment and Sustainable Development, Hungarian Ombudsman for Future Generations and the World Bank Inspection Panel.
- A number of governments have referred to the financial implications of this new office. However, it was discussed that the costs of this institution is relatively low and is designed to bring long-term cost savings. This institution is critical for implementation of outstanding gaps which have prevented us for meeting the challenges of sustainable development. Investment in this body could have a long standing impact on achieving the aims of sustainable development. The financial cost of other similar institutions does not make this prohibitive e.g. World Bank Inspection Panel (with a budget of circa US \$3 million p.a.).

### **An International Environmental Governance Framework and Sustainable Development Governance for the Future**

- Current governance systems are not strong enough to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and review. We need a new institutional framework that is effective to address current gaps. Rio+20 has to deliver on governance institutions and mechanisms that are strong enough to carry effective universal periodic review of implementation, provide accountability framework, and build coherence and coordination across the UN system.
- On IFSD, the transformation of ECOSOC may not be possible as it would mean opening the UN charter, which is unlikely. However, Rio+20 must agree on the transformation of the CSD into a Council that will have a renewed political authority, and embed adequate review mechanisms, accountability framework, and provide a space for integration of sustainable development dimensions. A reformed IFSD has to facilitate dialogue between ministries of environment and ministries of finance, planning and budget, to further strengthen national governance and integration of the three pillars.
- IEG is an integral part of the IFSD framework and both need strengthening: they are mutually reinforcing dimensions. Therefore the functions as well as the basic elements of the IEG reform that need to be considered include: universal membership, predictable and secure financial resources, and location. Rio+20 is expected to deliver on the upgrade of UNEP into a specialized agency.

- MGS participation in a reformed IFSD/IEG should provide more space for MGS rather than just being mere observers, given the role MGS play in implementation, and their contribution to the full integration of sustainable development dimensions. Different models of MGS participation can be learned from (Human rights council, ILO, FAO Committee on Food Security, etc.) to move away from multi-stakeholder consultation into multi-stakeholder governance and equal participation. The establishment of the Ombudsperson for Future Generations function may also provide additional entry points for MGS participation.
- In addition, Rio+20 has to also deliver, in the context of governance for sustainable development, on the following: (i) a convention on corporate reporting; (ii) a global convention on Rio+20; and (iii) a convention on precautionary principle for new technologies.