

A just and fair Green Economy

Greenpeace expectations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June 2012

*Almost twenty years after the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro we face a paradox: **We know solutions are available and affordable**, that investments in clean technologies are rising, that deforestation can be stopped, and food provided for all if governments have the will. **We also know development in both North and South remains deeply unsustainable.***

*Despite the Rio Conventions and hundreds of other multilateral agreements on sustainable development, resource extraction keeps growing, climate change is spiralling out of control, water is getting scarce, oceans are facing a state of emergency, deforestation is destroying livelihoods, toxic pollution is increasing, and we are gambling with our global food system by releasing genetically modified crops. Governments have talked a lot about sustainable development over the last decades, but **at the same time** are still encouraging environmental and social destruction with close to US\$ 1 trillion dollars-worth of harmful subsidies a year, covering everything from fossil fuels to fertilizers and fisheries. Corporate polluters and destructive industries are allowed to profit from over-exploitation of resources while people are left to pay the bill with their health, homes and livelihoods. Governments are bailing out greedy banks, but failing to mobilise finance and rescue packages for the planet and the poor.*

*To be clear: **governments have failed since Rio. But** they must not take the blame alone: **too many corporations have stood in the way of sustainable development. Asia Pulp and Paper** has undermined effective forest protection in Indonesia, while **Volkswagen** has fought against the climate protection rules we need in Europe and the US, to name but two. **The finance industry has** succeeded in making the taxpayer pay for its bad decisions and is **stopping governments from effectively regulating global financial markets.***

Governments will face a lot of – justified – cynicism about sustainable development and the broken promises of 1992 as they prepare to return to Rio de Janeiro in 2012. People will be watching if the “Green Economy in the context of sustainable development” is merely a new label masking business-as-usual, or will be turned into a rallying cry for finally delivering the transformational change we need.

***A fair and just Green Economy is achievable.** But it requires action. Promoting sustainable practices is essential. But, above all, governments must put a decisive **end to unsustainable practises.** An economy based on nuclear energy, oil and coal, genetic engineering, toxic chemicals or the overexploitation of our forests and seas will never be sustainable or green. Instead, a fair green economy is one that provides sustainable livelihoods for all while fully respecting ecological limits – our planetary boundaries. In a truly Green Economy, the **economy will be a mechanism to deliver societal goals**, and economic growth as an end goal in and of itself will be abandoned.*

***The transformation** is still taking place too slowly, but the good news is, it is **already proven.** **Brazil has shown that it is possible to cut deforestation** rates through effective*

governance and good business practices: Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon has declined year on year and 2011 it was at its lowest ever level. **But this year, the Brazilian government's monitoring system picked up a 37% increase in deforestation** compared to 2010 in Mato Grosso state as a result of a move to change the Forest Code, the main law in Brazil that protects the forests. The changes would allow an amnesty for past forest crimes, creating an incentive for illegal activity now and leading to an increase in deforestation before the law has even been changed. **Brazil must decide whether it wants to be known as the nation leading the path to sustainable prosperity and zero deforestation**, or as a nation that showed that deforestation could be halted, but failed to do so to cater to short term special interests.

The energy sector, a fundamental building block of any green economy, is already changing. In Germany, for example, of all installed power capacity in the last decade, 81% was renewable. The **Energy Revolution** scenario¹ Greenpeace has developed together with business partners shows that globally we can deliver energy to more people, especially the poor in developing countries, cut emissions by more than 80% by 2050 – **and** create more jobs doing so, by investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy instead of fossil fuels and nuclear power. By implementing the Energy Revolution, governments can help businesses create 3.2 million more jobs by 2030 in the global power supply sector alone. In South Africa 149,000 direct jobs could be created by 2030, 38,000 more than the current government's plan.

An Agenda for 2012

The outcome document adopted at Rio in 2012 must not be about rewriting the Rio Declaration or the Agenda 21. Instead we need honest stock taking on where we are with the existing commitments and who is responsible for our falling short. This must include addressing the excessive increase in corporate power the world has witnessed since Rio 1992. The limits of voluntary, bottom up approaches given the scale of the challenges must be fully acknowledged.

At Rio de Janeiro in 2012 governments must change the dangerous course we're on. Sustainable Development Goals should be launched to form the basis of development within planetary boundaries. The time-horizon for the goals should be no longer than two election periods at most, to ensure immediate implementation and avoid gaps in political commitment.

Concretely, governments should commit to the following steps towards a fair and just Green Economy:

¹ www.greenpeace.org/energyrevolution

1. Fundamentally improved governance, accountability and liability

- Strengthen the governance system that delivers an “environment for development” by **upgrading the UN Environment Programme to specialized agency status**. Sustainable development needs a global authority on the environment and stronger implementation, compliance and enforcement mechanisms.
- Commit to **corporate accountability and liability**. Today governance gaps created by globalisation provide a permissive environment for wrongful acts by companies. At the Johannesburg Earth Summit in 2002, governments acknowledged the need for global rules for global corporations. At Rio 2012, they must agree the **development of a global instrument that ensures full liability** for any social or environmental damage global corporations cause. Corporations themselves must take full responsibility for their supply chains.
- Agree on creating strong regulation and **control of financial markets** and introducing **restrictions on speculators and speculative products** to stop harmful practices that lead to rising resource and commodity prices and an accelerated depletion of natural resources with dramatic consequences for poor people and small economies. Agree on introducing new fiscal instruments, such as a **Financial Transaction Tax**, that can slow harmful speculation and deliver much needed finance for development and environmental protection.
- Agree on a **phase-out of environmentally and socially harmful subsidies within this decade**, including subsidies to fossil fuels, forest destruction, nuclear power, agrochemicals and other toxics, the meat industry and destructive fishing practises through socially just transition plans.
- Agree to bring the absolute consumption of **renewable and non-renewable resources** and the impacts of their extraction within planetary boundaries in a fair and equitable manner.
- Commit to a **complete social and environmental review of the global trade system** in order to stop the world trade system from undermining environmental and social objectives.

2. Providing clean and safe energy for all

- **Commit to providing access to clean and safe modern energy for all by 2020**, with clear and comprehensive implementation measures, adequate funding provisions, and an acknowledgement that **decentralised renewable energy is the best way to meet the needs of the poor**.
- Make a 100% renewable future possible by endorsing a long-term goal of powering the world economies with 100% sustainable renewable energy. Governments must specifically commit to **pursuing the most ambitious pathway outlined by the IPCC Special Report on Renewable Energy** enabling 80% of the world’s energy needs to be met by renewable energy by 2050. By 2030, the world needs to get 40% of its energy needs from sustainable renewables and improve energy intensity by 50%.
- Agree on a global feed-in tariff programme, to support renewable energy investments in developing countries.

- Commit to deliver, individually and jointly, **sustainable energy action plans** that include **mid- and long-term targets** for renewable energy and energy efficiency; **regulatory frameworks** that prioritize energy efficiency and ensure priority grid access and stable growth of investments into renewable energy; creating a **level playing field** including by **phasing out all subsidies to fossil fuels and nuclear energy** with time-bound and **socially just transition plans** and the introduction of pollution and CO₂ pricing for fossil-based energy.
- **Ensure the flow of adequate and predictable climate finance beyond 2012** and well above the pledged \$100 billion per year by 2020.

3. Protecting world's remaining forests by addressing drivers of deforestation

- **Commit to zero deforestation by 2020.** This requires commitment and actions by both governments and businesses around the world. All countries and companies must **end policies, subsidies and corruption** that drive deforestation and instead fund the transition to a zero deforestation economy. In order to reduce pressure on forests, all countries and companies need to **address demand-side causes** of deforestation and **implement policies and measures** to reduce and ultimately stop the production, trade, import and consumption of goods stemming from deforestation and degradation (including unsustainable timber, palm oil, and other commodities). Policies, measures and investments must support **participatory multi-scale conservation and land use plans**, meet the needs and **rights of forest dependent indigenous peoples** and local communities, and **support forest uses that protect biodiversity, carbon, and ecosystem values and services.**

4. Feeding the earth to feed the world

- Commit to increasing support to **small scale food producers and farming communities**, who are essential in feeding the world. This should be done through policy and market instruments that enable the development of thriving ecological farming systems, while **reducing the market power of big agribusiness over land, seeds, inputs and processing.** Ecological farming has the potential to produce 30% more food per hectare than industrial agriculture but realising this potential requires a substantial shift in investment.
- Agree to better regulate the use of agrochemicals to prevent harm to people and the environment and to set appropriate fiscal policies to reflect the true environmental and health costs of intensive agriculture. Agree to set **ambitious national targets for reducing consumption of chemical fertilisers and pesticides** and to promote and incentivise the wider uptake of ecological alternatives.
- Provide **a mandate to the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** to develop a workplan for taking forward the recommendations of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) in the context of improving global food security, including advising governments on specific measures and establishing an ongoing mechanism to track and report on progress towards ecological food and farming systems around the world. Countries should also commit to establishing their own **structures and mechanisms for following up the**

implementation of the IAASTD with full stakeholder participation, especially of small scale food producers.

5. Filling the gaps in oceans governance and stopping overfishing

- **Address gaps in oceans governance that are hampering progress on marine protection.** A new implementing agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is needed for the conservation of marine biodiversity and sustainable management of human activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction. It should be based on the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach and provide for the establishment and management of marine reserves in areas beyond national jurisdiction.
- **Commit to cutting overcapacity of the world's fishing fleets and providing priority access to fish resources for low-impact small-scale fisheries.** The world fishing fleet is able to catch up to 2.5 times the maximum sustainable yield. Yet the cumulative power of the global fleet is still increasing at a rapid rate. Bringing fishing yields to a sustainable level necessitates decisive measures to eliminate the excess capacity. Reduction efforts should be focussed on large-scale vessels and be flanked by ensuring priority access for small-scale fisheries².
- **Promote and invest in sound economic and sustainable fishing practices that maximize benefits to local communities.** Stop industrial large-scale fleets using unsustainable fishing techniques using access agreements to exploit the Exclusive Economic Zones of coastal states, while leaving them with very little economic and social benefits.
- **Implement a global network of Marine Reserves**, which is essential to conserve and restore the health and productivity of the oceans and to maintain vital ecosystem services and food security for hundreds of millions of people³. At the Johannesburg Earth Summit in 2002, governments agreed to establish networks of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by 2012. Yet today MPAs cover less than 6% of territorial seas and only 0.5% of areas beyond national jurisdiction. At a time when ocean ecosystems all over the world – including coral reefs, seamounts and other sensitive habitats – may be reaching tipping points, establishing networks of large-scale marine reserves becomes an indispensable tool to building resilience in ocean ecosystems. Conserving 20-30% of global oceans through a network of MPAs could create a million jobs and sustain a marine fish catch worth US\$70-80 billion/year. Eventually, the global network of marine reserves needs to cover 40% of the oceans.

² According to the recent UNEP report on the Green Economy, the catching power of large-scale vessels implies that 160 thousand of the world's 4 million fishing vessels catch the same amount of fish as the remaining 3.84 million vessels

³ According to FAO, fish provides 20% of the protein intake for 1.5 billion people in the world,

6. Eliminating hazardous chemical use

- Supplement and strengthen the existing commitments⁴ by agreeing to a goal of **zero discharge of all hazardous substances within one generation**, based on the precautionary principle and a preventative approach to chemicals management with the substitution principle at its core and producer responsibility to drive innovation in Green Chemistry and Toxics Use Elimination. This is crucial to rescue and heal our precious waterways and other fresh water sources.
- Agree on a related implementation plan to (a) **establish a dynamic priority hazardous substance list for immediate action**, compiled from all the existing commitments and treaties and the lists of OECD and the EU, (b) establish intermediate targets, (c) establish a publicly available register of data about discharge emissions and losses of hazardous substances.
- **Commit to providing adequate resources and frameworks for implementation**, including: (a) identify priority substance restrictions, (b) introduce requirements of mandatory audits and planning (c) provisions of technical help and **appropriate** financial incentives (d) research and support for innovation in green chemistry.

Rio+20 must deliver for the people and the planet. The transition to a green economy must be fair and equitable, lift people out of poverty, respect planetary boundaries and commit to a decent jobs agenda. As global climate-damaging emissions need to peak within a few short years, we cannot afford to make insufficient progress for another two decades. The time for action is now.

Contacts

Daniel Mittler, Political Director
Greenpeace International, Ottho Heldringstraat 5, 1066 AZ Amsterdam, Netherlands
daniel.mittler@greenpeace.org, +49 160 94676589

Patricia Lerner, Senior Political Advisor
patricia.lerner@greenpeace.org, +31 6 46162027

Kaisa Kosonen, Senior Political Advisor
kaisa.kosonen@greenpeace.org, +358 50 3688488

www.greenpeace.org

⁴The original Rio objectives for sound chemicals management, outlined in the Rio Declaration and the Chapter 19 of Agenda 21, were later in Johannesburg strengthened by a goal, according to which countries were to ensure that by the year 2020, chemicals would be produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health.