

UNEP GC-XII

20-22 February 2012

Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development and the Means of Implementation

Key messages from the NGOs

Principle 10

Civil society's key role in shaping a sustainable future needs a supportive legal, institutional and policy framework at all levels.

- First and foremost, we call for Rio+20 to launch negotiations on a global convention on Principle 10, and guidelines to strengthen participation in international SD-related forums.
- Rio+20 should also commit to a robust capacity building programme by UNEP to implement the 2010 Bali Guidelines on Principle 10 and should encourage the development of regional conventions on principle 10.
- We also seek guarantees that the rules of procedure for Rio+20, as well as all new processes and governance structures emerging from the Conference, reflect from the outset the principles of transparency, accountability and inclusiveness.
- We urge governments to enhance the role that civil society can play in achieving better implementation of environmental laws, both at national level through strengthening access to justice provisions and at international level through encouraging the governing bodies of MEAs to adopt participatory compliance mechanisms whereby the public can trigger a review of compliance by an independent compliance review body.

International environmental governance

- The NGOs support the option in the Zero Draft text on turning UNEP into a specialized agency (para. 51 alt) with universal membership, a strengthened mandate, a strong financial base and a mandate to support MEA implementation.
- We also encourage governments to establish a SD Council (para. 49 alt) mandated to integrate SD pillars and to review member state progress and stakeholder commitments towards current and future development goals.

Ombudsperson for Future Generations

We welcome the inclusion in the Zero Draft of the establishment of Ombudspersons for Future Generations, since the needs of future generations are currently missing from policies and decision-making processes.

- The outcome text of para. 57 of the Zero Draft must be strengthened to include the Ombudsperson's functions and roles of agenda setting, monitoring and advocacy, to provide an integrated approach at the highest level of UN decision making, policies, and programmes.
- Rio+20 should recommend national and regional ombudspersons. Adequate resourcing is essential.

SD advisory councils

We welcome and support the recommendation in the Zero Draft (para. 61) to countries to establish and strengthen, as appropriate, national multi-stakeholder sustainable development councils, and urge that these be adequately resourced.

Sustainable Development Goals

We recognize that goals, targets, and milestones are essential for measuring and accelerating progress towards sustainable development. NGOs call for an inclusive participatory process to be established to devise by 2015 at the latest a set of global SDGs that reflect an integrated, holistic and balanced treatment of the three domains of sustainable development, consistent with the principles of Agenda 21, addressing issues of governance and universally applicable to all countries but allowing for differentiated approaches among countries.

Compendium of commitments

We need commitments sufficient to deal with the scope of each problem they address. The accountability framework should go beyond pure transparency, considering better systems of public monitoring, capacity-building and appeals. Governments should immediately initiate a process of participatory development of commitments with their citizens. Voluntary commitments should complement rather than substitute for effective and decisive international and domestic action.