



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the
Second Round of 'Informal-Informal' Negotiations on the zero draft of
outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development
(UNCSD or Rio+20)

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
in cooperation with the European Commission (EC)

Online at <http://www.iisd.ca/uncsd/iinzod2/enbots/>



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Issue #9 | April - May 2012 UNCSD Meeting | 23 April - 4 May 2012 | Friday, 4 May 2012

Events convened on Thursday, 3 May 2012

Natural Capital Accounting: Better decisions for sustainable development

Organized by the Governments of Botswana and France, the World Bank and DESA



Amb. Charles Ntwaagae, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the UN, outlined Botswana's experience with natural capital accounting.

This event discussed the use of natural capital accounting to support better decision making for inclusive development.

Ambassador Charles Ntwaagae, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the UN, said that natural capital accounting is a concept that greatly assists in managing economies through aiding decision making, resource allocation and development planning.

Rachel Kyte, World Bank, noted that many countries are trying to find a new measurement of wealth that includes accounting for social and natural capital. She stressed that the measurement is complimentary to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). She provided an overview of the Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) partnership, which is a voluntary partnership to implement natural capital accounting based on the System for Environmental and Economic Accounts (SEEA).

Paula Caballero, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombia, reflecting on the linkages between natural capital accounting and SDGs, highlighted the importance of data and information so that the costs of action and inaction can be assessed.

Mary Ann Sering, Climate Change Commission, the Philippines, underscored the need for natural resource accounting on a regional basis. She additionally noted that progress in natural resource accounting will occur once there is more clarity on the green economy.

Tsalano Kedikilwe, Ministry of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism, Botswana, outlined a study undertaken to quantify the value of the Okavango Delta. She noted that the results were used in a management plan for the area.

Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the UN, called for ensuring the right metrics and valuations to guide politicians and consumers alike, noting that these should provide tools for policy makers to make the "right" decisions.

Bas Rüter, Rabobank Netherlands, urged the public sector and civil society to design mechanisms to mainstream natural capital considerations.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed: consensual baseline indicators; capacity building for natural resource accounting; and long-term valuation of natural resources.

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<http://go.worldbank.org/3PB3NABWZ0>

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The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin on the side (ENBOTS)* © <enb@iisd.org> is a special publication of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in cooperation with the European Commission (EC). This issue has been written by Kate Louw and Suzi Malan. The Digital Editor is Mike Muzurakis. The Editor is Tomilola Akanle Eni-ibukun, Ph.D. <tomilola@iisd.org>. The Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. Support for the publication of ENBOTS at the Second Round of 'Informal-Informal' Negotiations on the zero draft of outcome document of the UNCSD has been provided by the European Commission (EC). The opinions expressed in ENBOTS are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and funders. Excerpts from ENBOTS may be used in non-commercial publications only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>. Electronic versions of issues of ENBOTS from the Second Round of 'Informal-Informal' Negotiations on the zero draft of outcome document of the UNCSD can be found on the Linkages website at <http://www.iisd.ca/uncsd/iinzod2/enbots/>. The ENBOTS Team at the Second Round of 'Informal-Informal' Negotiations on the zero draft of outcome document of the UNCSD can be contacted by e-mail at <Kate@iisd.org>.



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Towards an Inclusive Green Economy: A think tank exchange at the second round of 'informal-informal' negotiations on the zero draft

Organized by the German Federal Environment Ministry (BMU)

This side event, moderated by Alexander Carius, Adelphi Research, focused on sustainable development initiatives that exist at the domestic level in many countries and how these can contribute to the negotiations on the zero draft of the Rio+20 outcome document.

Stephan Contius, BMU, emphasized that the concept of green economy is not a replacement for sustainable development, but should serve as a tool to drive and accelerate societies towards low-carbon, green supply chains and sustainable living.

Qi Ye, Tsinghua University, shared greening experiences from China, where there is a distinction between the domestic agenda and the less-defined, global agenda. On capacity building and policy learning, he said China has mainly relied on pilot experiences, emphasizing that “good policies are learned from the bottom up”.

Imme Scholz, Deputy Director, German Development Institute, suggested adopting annual targets to measure progress in green economy transformation, as longer timelines can postpone implementing change until the next government.

Aron Belinky, Vitae Civilis, speaking on Brazil's policy reforms for greening the economy, lamented that in some sectors it remains business-as-usual and called for aligning policies across all sectors and levels of government.

Adebayo Olukoshi, UN African Institute for Economic Development and Planning, spoke of the complexities faced by African countries in the transition to green economy, including driving development with very young populations, and massive unemployment rates.

Participants deliberated on: ways in which culture can drive transitioning to a green economy; top-level engagement; intergenerational equity; and the prerequisites of a transition to green economies.

Harriet Ludwig, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), stressed that a green economic reform strategy is also socially and economically beneficial, not just environmentally friendly.



L-R: Qi Ye, Tsinghua University; Imme Scholz, Deputy Director, German Development Institute; Alexander Carius, Adelphi Research; Aron Belinky, Vitae Civilis.



Qi Ye, Tsinghua University, spoke of China's commitment, at the highest level, for a low-carbon green economy.



Imme Scholz, Deputy Director, German Development Institute, said capacity building in a green economy is mostly about empowering citizens.



Alexander Carius, Adelphi Research, lamented that current negotiations are too focused on text, and not enough on open forum discussions.

More information:

<http://www.bmu.de>
<http://vitaecivilis.org.br>

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Harnessing the Contributions of Civil Society to Sustainable Development

Organized by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Desra Percaya (Indonesia), Vice-President of ECOSOC, underscoring that sustainable development cannot be achieved without the participation of all sectors of society, said that such collaborative action will be critical for future success. He urged Major Groups to mobilize their constituencies to continue this work.

Noelene Nabulivou, Women's Major Group, highlighted four concerns for Rio+20, including: the need for a human rights-based approach for sustainable development; lack of multilateral agreements and regulations governing transnational corporations; and that the institutional framework for sustainable development must enjoy adequate financing and resources and be based on common but differentiated responsibilities.

Ivana Savic, Children and Youth Major Group, urged for the adoption of SDGs and the 10-Year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production at Rio+20. Grace Balawag, Indigenous Peoples' Major Group, called for Rio+20 to: support and promote diverse local economies as cornerstones of green economy; have an integrated and holistic approach to sustainable development; and ensure intergenerational and gender equity.

Jeffery Huffines, Non-Governmental Organizations' (NGOs) Major Group, lamented the lack of major groups' involvement with the ECOSOC and stressed that increasing major groups' consultations could ensure that sustainable development has higher consideration at the UN. Maruxa Cardama, Local Authorities' Major Group, stressed the need for urgent action that results in adequately-funded commitments, which have measureable results. She called for ensuring that financial mechanisms for implementing sustainable development are made easily available for local authorities.

Catarina Silveira, Workers and Trade Unions' Major Group, underscored that trade unions are key to implementing the social dimension of sustainable development. She urged that the Rio+20 outcomes reflect past commitments and other guiding principles. Martina Bianchini, Business and Industry Major Group, noted the need for guidance on a green economy roadmap and underscored the need for understanding on how to measure the green economy.

Alice Abreu, Scientific and Technological Community Major Group, called for developing integrated sustainable development indicators beyond GDP and urged a UN General Assembly commitment to strengthen science. Robynne Anderson, Farmers' Major Group, urged recognizing the many opportunities that exist for eco- and agro-tourism.

As respondents, Neth Dano, ETC Group, emphasized the need to evolve the engagement mechanism for major groups within UN structures. Amir Dossal, Chair, Global Partnerships Forum, underscored capacity building for youth and stressed the role of women in sustainable development.

In the ensuing question and answer session, representatives from Major Groups responded by: applauding the initiative of ECOSOC in organizing the event; calling for an extension of this type of platform beyond Rio+20; and highlighting the need for even greater synchronicity from the UN and the establishment of institutions that enable this type of collaboration. On behalf of Woman's Major Group, Sascha Gabizon emphasized effective participation of all sectors, highlighted gender equality and empowerment, and called for concrete targets as an effective tool, saying quotas are very effective.



Maruxa Cardama, Local Authorities' Major Group, said that the urban green economy will play a strong role in the future green economy.



Jeffery Huffines, NGOs' Major Group, underscored that civil society both creates and solves sustainability issues.



Ivana Savic, Children and Youth Major Group, called for establishing an ombudsperson for future generations.

More information:

<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.html>

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IISD RS, publisher of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, also maintains online knowledgebases that are updated daily with information regarding meetings, publications and other activities related to international sustainable development policy and its implementation.

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- Daily news reports researched and written by our own experts and organized in a **freely accessible, searchable on-line knowledgebase**;
- A **comprehensive calendar of upcoming events** related to international sustainable development policy, which can be downloaded to your own online calendar;
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