



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the
First Round of 'Informal-Informal' Negotiations on the Zero Draft of the
Outcome Document *and* Third Intersessional Meeting of the UN Conference
on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20)

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Events convened on Tuesday, 27 March 2012

Green Jobs for Youth: Working towards social equity

Presented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNEP



Sébastien Duyck, Youth Representative, called for Rio+20 outcomes to include: a global strategy on youth employment in the green economy; a global partnership on youth employment; and the setting of concrete targets for the decent work agenda.

This event discussed opportunities for the green economy to address the issue of youth unemployment.

Kees van der Ree, ILO, outlined the need for increased job opportunities, particularly for youth, citing recent figures that estimate that 200 million people are currently unemployed, with 75 million of those classified as "youth." He stressed the need for targeted social protection policies that encourage green jobs and emphasized that these policies should be inclusive and undertake public consultation processes.

Sébastien Duyck, Youth Representative, said the green economy presents an opportunity for addressing youth unemployment and underemployment. He outlined policy interventions to encourage youth employment, including: youth-targeted hiring; employability by building skills and competencies; and support for entrepreneurship.

Adam Greene, US Council for International Business, stressed that promoting youth employment through the green economy is not always applicable. He underscored the importance of new enterprises as being "job engines."

Laura Martin, Sustainlabour, summarized work undertaken by her organization to lobby for green jobs, and cautioned that not addressing youth unemployment and green jobs could lead to "social bombs." She noted the importance of government-led job creation programmes to increase youth employment and called for: ensuring equity in job creation; establishing youth training centers; and including social protection floors.

Henri Dommel, UN Capital Defense Fund, highlighted the Youth Start Programme and the Clean Start Programme, which provides access to financial instruments and access to clean energy respectively. He said both these programmes encourage entrepreneurship opportunities.

Ali Mohamed, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, Kenya, outlined his government's steps to encourage green jobs for youth. He noted that economic growth to encourage job creation does not always equate with a green economy pathway.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed: opportunities for public-private partnerships to provide youth employment in a green economy; mobilizing and supporting the youth agenda at Rio+20; integrating priorities at the national level; and building on existing partnerships to encourage job creation.

More information:

<http://www.unep.org/greeneconomy/>
<http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/lang--en/index.htm>

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Special Event on The Trade Dimension of Rio+20: Key Issues for the Outcome Document

Presented by UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), UN-DESA and the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)

This event addressed trade issues related to sustainable development and climate change.

Lucas Assunção, UNCTAD, said UNCTAD has aimed to build negotiators' awareness and knowledge on trade issues as they relate to Rio+20, highlighting two workshops held to assist in this process. He outlined recommendations that emerged from the workshops, including on maximizing trade opportunities, maximizing the potential for green economy policies and on how Rio+20 has the potential to strengthen trade issues.

Wei Liu, UN-DESA, provided a brief overview of trade issues in the Rio+20 zero draft outcomes. He said that the G-77 has proposed to include trade issues under the sub-section on cross-cutting issues and areas. He noted many new proposals on subsidies, with the majority addressing fishery and fuel subsidies, and very few proposals on intellectual property rights.

Marianne Schaper, ECLAC, noted that growth in Latin American countries is often reliant on natural resources, which can be associated with negative impacts such as high price volatility and exchange rate appreciation. She said export diversification out of primary commodities was necessary, noting the need for adequate governance of natural resources and smart industrial policy.

Aaron Cosby, UNCTAD, highlighted specific text on trade, including on green economy and fossil fuel subsidies, noting that some references refer back to the original Rio Principles while others refer to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). He said that the premise of some text in the Rio+20 outcome document is that countries do not want to increase trade barriers, but that countries trading in "dirty goods" could be at a disadvantage.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates addressed: regulations and green protectionism; capacity building on issues related to trade and Rio+20; transport and trade; and the importance of technology transfer.



L-R: Aaron Cosby, UNCTAD; Lucas Assunção, UNCTAD; Marianne Schaper, ECLAC; and Wei Liu, UN-DESA



Marianne Schaper, ECLAC, said that there is a need to rethink current lifestyles, especially as developing countries wish to attain higher levels of development.



Lucas Assunção, UNCTAD, noted that countries are seeking assurances that a green economy will either improve trade or at least let trade remain unaffected.

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The Role of Private Solutions in Ensuring Sustainable Energy for All and the Role of Public Incentives in Stimulating Such Solutions

Presented by the Permanent Missions of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden to the UN

This event, presented by Amb. Morten Wetland, Permanent Representative of Norway to the UN, addressed examples of actions by private sector to highlight how the public and private sectors are cooperating to expand energy access.

Elizabeth Heider, Skanska USA Building, presented on energy-efficiency investments made by her company in its office at the Empire State Building, saying that their investment has a pay-back period of five years. She underscored that energy consumption by the building sector is responsible for a large share of green house gas emissions, and that in New York City, this share is approximately 79%.

Justin Perrettson, Novozymes A/S, explained that biotechnology could contribute to and support renewable energy development and make consumer products more environmentally-friendly, providing laundry detergent as an example.

Petter Nore, Director and Head of Department, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, described the Norwegian Energy+ Initiative, launched in 2011 that aims to promote renewable energies in developing countries, focusing on both energy efficiency and energy access. He said it would contribute by leveraging commercial investments using a country-driven approach.

Magnus Gehringer, Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme (ESMAP), presented an overview of geothermal power generation, noting advantages of this form of energy, including: reliable electricity supplies; low generation costs; and low carbon dioxide emissions.

Tarja Reponen, Finnish Ambassador for Sustainable Development, elaborated on policies for stimulating renewable energy and other sustainable energy sources. She emphasized the need to promote: adequate financing incentives for both the public and private sectors; partnerships; and a cluster-based rather than a sector-based approach.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed topics, including: financing and barriers; community involvement; financing of off-grid electricity generation; and gender mainstreaming.



Elizabeth Heider, Skanska USA Building, said that the renovation of her company's offices in the Empire State Building led to a 57% reduction of energy consumption and 40% reduction of water consumption.



Magnus Gehringer, ESMAP, lamented that geothermal energy is underdeveloped, citing lack of adequate financing as a barrier.

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Meeting the Challenge of Communicating Rio+20: Engaging the global public in the transformation to a sustainable future

Presented by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Environmental Media Association, the Global Campaign for Climate Action and the UN Department of Public Information (DPI)

This event explored the challenges and opportunities of communicating Rio+20.

Opening the session, Elizabeth Thompson, Rio+20 Executive Coordinator, underscored the importance of communication that engages people not connected to the UN. She called on communicators to use Rio+20 as an opportunity to frame sustainability as a means to “global prosperity, not austerity.”

Moderating the panel, Jacob Scherr, NRDC, asked panelists to address the challenges and opportunities for effective communication around Rio+20.

Providing input by video, Elisabeth Rosenthal, New York Times, stressed the need to highlight the human consequence of environmental stories, cautioning that otherwise scientific- or data-driven stories can disengage people.

Colin Sutton, OMD Word, summarized key social media lessons in preparation for Rio+20. He highlighted social media platforms available for engaging the public, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Foursquare.

David Guggenheim (or the “Ocean Doctor”), Ocean Foundation, shared his experience communicating scientific data related to the oceans. He compared social media and climate change characteristics to highlight the communication challenge: while social media is “fast moving” and “speaks to what is relevant in the moment,” an issue like climate change unfolds in “slow motion.”

Marie-Pierre Daigle, We Canada, summarized her experience developing a Canada-wide campaign to inspire citizens and the Government for leadership during Rio+20. She described the potential to engage each person’s network as a way to heighten awareness for Rio+20. She introduced the Earth Summit Dialogues as a campaign that intends to engage local communities across the country.

Charlotte Scaddan, DPI, addressed lessons learned from UN social media platforms. She highlighted the need to, among others: harness assets and partners given limited resources; frame the appropriate message for an audience; and ensure correspondence and interaction as part of a meaningful, two-way dialogue.

Emily Ross, UN Foundation, introduced the Rio+Social event scheduled for 19 June 2012, which plans to use technology and digital media to foster interaction around Rio+20.



David Guggenheim, Ocean Foundation, said that good communication is about speaking to, and reaching for, the heart.



Marie-Pierre Daigle, We Canada, showed how We Canada “champions” are helping to get the message out through their networks and online presence.

More information:

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