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Response to the Zero Draft of the Outcome Document for Rio+20 as a Means to Improve the EU Engagement for Sustainable Development

Backdrop/ Introduction:

On 20-22 June 2012 the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) will take place, 20 years after the first Rio conference where the international community endorsed the concept of Sustainable Development (SD), and adopted a number of principles and actions to achieve sustainability. The International conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification were also approved.

Sustainable development is a multi dimensional concept in which primacy is given to human beings who "are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature" (Principle 1 of the 1992 Rio Declaration). Social progress through the eradication of poverty, human rights realisation and increased equity and overall well being must be achieved in full respect of planetary boundaries, and the economy must be designed and managed to serve this purpose. The interdependent nature of the three dimensions of SD should be taken fully into account.

Since 1992 the international community has made further commitments and adopted action plans to take the sustainable development agenda forward, but progress has been far too limited¹. The gravity of the challenges facing humanity, and the urgency in the need to effectively address them, has been voiced by many, backed up by scientific evidence. The loss of biodiversity, increasing desertification, deforestation, rising sea

¹ If we take the example of carbon dioxide emissions, the main greenhouse gas, in 2009 global CO2 emissions had increased by almost 40% since 1990 (the Kyoto base year). Source: The Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency (2010), *No growth in total global CO2 emissions in 2009*, <http://www.pbl.nl/en/news/pressreleases/2010/20100701-China-and-India-nullify-global-reduction-in-CO2-emissions>.

Also, while global income more than doubled in the period 1990-2010, if we look at the indicators of the Basic Capabilities Index such as mortality among children under five, reproductive health (measured by births attended by skilled personnel), and primary education (school enrolment, proportion of children reaching fifth grade and adult literacy rate), social progress has only increased by one tenth in those same 20 years. Source: Social Watch Basic Capabilities Index <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/13749>

levels, and changing weather patterns threatens the security of growing numbers of people, particularly in the most disadvantaged and vulnerable parts of the world.

The prevailing economic model in our global system relies on unsustainable consumption and production patterns and unbalances rights in favour of corporations and to the detriment of people. It has given increasing wealth to many people, especially in the so called advanced economies, but has also resulted in growing inequalities both within and between countries². As can be increasingly seen this has serious implications for people and the planet. With economic growth at the centre of this model the wealthiest nations, have drawn disproportionately on the finite natural resources of our planet. The resulting increased levels of CO2 emissions in the atmosphere have prompted rapid climate change that threatens the lives and livelihood of many, and potentially the eco-system on which we depend.

Economic growth has been seen as being beneficial to development and the promotion of prosperity for people as a whole. Increased trade and financial liberalisation has been promoted as an effective means to achieve this goal, and it has contributed to economic growth, but benefits have accrued to some, not all. The ecological and social costs of the prevailing economic model have not been fully recognised. Disparities between and within countries have continued to rise contributing to social, political and economic exclusion of significant proportions of society. The current liberalisation policies have ultimately generated instability and have contributed to the crises which impact on all.

The development path we have been following is far from being sustainable. The growth of materialistic consumption, which is central to the current economic model, is increasingly putting our very existence under threat. We must find alternative ways of development to ensure a balanced, equitable and sustainable future.

The Rio+20 conference is an opportunity for the international community to revisit the way economic development is envisaged and put in place the actions and mechanisms needed to address the urgent challenges. It not only requires agreement on a common strategy that rapidly leads to achieving sustainability but a common commitment to take the necessary actions needed. It requires a strong institutional framework and effective enforcement mechanisms that guide governments and other stakeholders in fulfilling the commitments and agreements that have been made for achieving sustainable development, and which are able to hold them accountable.

This will be no easy task as governments work to protect their own national interests in the process. Yet ultimately given the critical nature of the challenges we face, our global common interests must take precedence. The outcome of the recent Durban UN conference on climate change raised concerns that societies that have benefited most from unsustainable past practices are reluctant to accept the differentiated responsibility for addressing the consequences. The concept of *common but differentiated responsibilities* (CBDR) that was adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit is now contested, laying open concern that other principles and commitments will also be subject to re-interpretation by stronger members of the international community.

² As set out, for example, in the 2011 OECD report: *An Overview of Growing Income Inequalities in OECD Countries: Main Findings* "Over the two decades prior to the onset of the global economic crisis, real disposable household incomes increased by an average 1.7% a year in OECD countries. In a large majority of them, however, the household incomes of the richest 10% grew faster than those of the poorest 10%, so widening income inequality."

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/40/12/49499779.pdf>

The concept of equity, encompassing inter- and intra-generational equity, is central to achieving sustainable development. Equity is about fair distribution of costs and benefits and fair access to resources. It must guide any political strategies and actions, only by doing so will the balance of power be more equitable, will people be able to make sustainable choices and a sustainable path to development possible. An economy can only be sustainable if it is based on this principle. Hence, the principle of CBDR must guide efforts for more ecological economies and without integrating the social dimension of sustainable development (striving for poverty eradication, reduction of inequalities, better equity and which empowers people, not least women) and reforming the economic and financial system towards more equitable resources and power distribution and increased regulation, economic activity will not bring about global and long term equitable prosperity.

The EU has sought to project itself as playing a leading role in tackling climate change and on promoting sustainable development. Its credibility in playing such a role will not only be judged in the positions it takes towards the outcome of Rio+20, but also in the actions it takes to mitigate the impact of climate change and to promote all aspects of sustainable development. Part of the answer will rest on the willingness of the EU to recognize its own responsibility for creating the current situation and act accordingly. It has to match policies and actions with the rhetoric puts forward in its strategies as well as the principles and values that it has adopted. Without strong political commitment and actions geared towards increasing equity and tackling power imbalances, putting in place strong regulatory frameworks and assessment and enforcement mechanisms immune to vested interest sustainable development will remain a blurry dream.

Evaluation of the zero draft

Message 1: The zero draft is too complacent and lacks ambition

The outcome of the conference must fully recognise the gravity of the situation and demonstrate the political will needed to put in place far reaching changes for implementation without delay. The zero draft puts forward interesting principles and proposals but these are too weak, lack ambition and are not sufficiently comprehensive.

Despite listing in very loose terms some of the present problems and practices that have negatively impacted on progress towards sustainable development (paragraph 11) such as the recent crises that have adversely affected development gains or extreme poverty that touches many people around the world, the urgency of the situation is poorly spelled out. It is said “scientific evidence points to the gravity of the threats we face”, but more is needed, figures and statistical evidence that illustrate the above statements and other negative trends are necessary³ if the content of the outcome document is to be proportionate to the “gravity of the threats we face”. Actions need to be clearly linked to the analysis of the challenges.

³ Regarding climate change, using, for example, the Reference scenario developed by the International Energy Agency (<http://www.iea.org/Textbase/npsum/WEQ2008SUM.pdf>) should be envisaged and regarding poverty and exclusion, references, for example, to the fact that women represent 70% of the world's poor (Unifem: http://www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_poverty_economics/) or that two thirds of the world's illiterate persons are women are important realities to mention.

The “need to reinforce sustainable development globally through our collective and national efforts” is recognized, (paragraph 9) but the urgency requires stronger language. Governments and stakeholders recognise that past and current patterns of economic development being followed in advanced economies are not sustainable, having relied too much on natural resources consumption that had generated levels of CO2 emissions that are not sustainable within the eco-system. The financial crisis has also dramatically and violently showed some of the shortcomings of a system relying on consumption growth and of current approaches to the economy. Scientific evidence clearly demonstrates the limitations of our planet’s resources, and the visible impacts of climate change. It is acknowledged that rapid population growth⁴, social exclusion, discrimination and poverty are aggravating the problems and will continue to do so if no appropriate and targeted actions are undertaken to address them. A common understanding of and an agreement on crucial facts by the international community is therefore essential.

Acknowledging the impact of the multiple crises on development gains (paragraph 11) without an analysis of the root causes of the crises or any proposed actions to be undertaken to prevent them in the future are serious omissions. The lack of regulation of the financial market, uncontrolled and intense speculation and a representativity in the IFIs that is biased towards the financial sector interests are some of the main problems of our current global financial system. Sustainable development will never be a reality within an unstable, insufficiently regulated and inequitable economic and financial system. Rio+20 must clearly address these weaknesses.

The problem of extreme poverty is identified, but the question of increasing inequalities and inequities are not sufficiently addressed. The recently released OECD report shows that in developed countries, while wealth and growth have steadily increased throughout the years, inequalities have also risen. These facts reflect the flaws of our development where redistribution of wealth is not equitably ensured. Better redistribution of and equitable access to resources need to be given priority so as to reduce conflicts, enhance resilience of societies, contribute to economic development, improve well being and political representation and therefore ensure sustainable development (as explained in the 2011 UNDP report: “Sustainability and Equity: a Better future for all” or in the report of the United Nations Secretary General’s High Level Panel on Global Sustainability “Resilient People, Resilient Planet: a Future Worth Choosing”).

The interdependent nature of the world requires action that is global and collective. The importance of policy coherence for global sustainable development should be further stressed and explained. The zero draft by referring to the “sovereign right of states over their natural resources” (paragraph 9) omits any recognition that “states have the responsibility to ensure their activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other states or areas beyond their jurisdiction” (Principle 2 of the 1992 Rio Declaration) thus undermining the principles and responsibilities previously adopted.

Recommendations:

1.1 A common understanding, supported by facts and data, of the threats we face and of the consequences of inaction or insufficiently rapid actions must be encompassed in the outcome document.

⁴ The global population is likely to reach nearly 9 billion people by 2040. Source: High Level Panel on Global Sustainability (2012), “*Resilient People, Resilient Planet: a Future Worth Choosing*”, New York: United Nations, p.23.

The report of the high level Panel on Global Sustainability, amongst other sources, provides data and statistics that exemplify the situation.

1.2 Clear acknowledgement that the economic model followed by developed countries is not sustainable and therefore radical changes should be undertaken at national and international level while re-affirming the developing countries' right to development should be included in the outcome document.

1.3 The root causes of the multiple crises and proposals for increasing resilience in the future must be set out.

1.4 The problems of inequality and inequity should be stressed as well as the necessity to tackle them to ensure a sustainable world.

1.5 The interconnected nature of our world and its implications for national and global governance need to be put forward at Rio 2012.

Message 2: Analysis of gaps and barriers to implementation

Paragraph 13 refers to the "major barriers and systemic gaps in the implementation of internationally agreed commitments" without specifying the nature of these barriers or gaps.

The important gaps and barriers should be identified. As stated in the introduction, the economic model itself, relying on unsustainable consumption and production patterns and calling for trade and financial liberalisation with minimum State intervention, is an obstacle to the achievement of sustainable development. Power imbalances that exist at national and international levels (transnational companies vs. small enterprises, men vs. women, developed vs. developing countries, corporate vs. public interests etc) are detrimental to sustainable development. The predominance of economic considerations over environmental and social concerns as reflected by the use of GDP as a measure for well being or by the fact that ecological issues are almost absent from economics (except in some rare exceptions) also constitutes a serious hindrance. The lack of regulation (private sector in general and financial sector in particular), transparency, enforcement mechanism and democratic scrutiny are flaws of our system that need to be addressed. Developed countries have failed to meet their commitments to provide the financial and technological means for the implementation of sustainable development in developing countries. There is also a serious gap in the implementation of the human rights agenda. Sustainable development has not been mainstreamed and given priority in national and international strategies. There is a lack of political will as governments fear that implementation of sustainable development will mean reduced level of economic growth. Multilateralism has also been weakened with some states calling into question important Rio principles or even rejecting treaties (for example, Canada with the Kyoto protocol).

Recommendation:

2.1 The main gaps and barriers to the implementation of sustainable development must be specified and detailed and solutions to overcome them put forward in the outcome document.

Message 3: Strengthening political will towards implementing a common agenda

In part II/ of the document: “Renewing political commitment”, “A. Reaffirming Rio principles and past Action plans”, commitment to “advance progress in implementation” of all past and important agreements on sustainable development is made. While being positive, an unambiguous commitment to “fully implement” is needed.

Rio+20 must clearly establish a good and strong normative framework so as to guide the different actors in the implementation, follow- up and monitoring of the goals and action plans to be agreed at Rio+20.

The re-affirmation of the importance of the 1992 Rio principles and in particular of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities is to be welcomed. This principle is crucial. It is central to equity and promoting intergenerational justice, from the past to the future. As a principle its application should be universal. The world’s largest economies inevitably bear greater responsibility for ensuring we collectively live within sustainable limits, with the principle of equity being applied on a per capita basis. In this context advanced economies must recognise their particular responsibility to promote sustainable life styles and sustainable patterns of economic activity that reduce their share in the use of natural resources that is proportionate to their population⁵.

It is essential to re-affirm the importance of the *Precautionary principle* for sustainable development. New technologies do offer important opportunities and can contribute to achieving effective approaches to sustainable development. However, there are risks too, and the development and implementation of new technologies must be subject to the precautionary principle, with transparent and participative assessment mechanisms being established under the auspices of the UN framework.

The polluter pays principle should also be clearly stated so as to stress the necessity for governments and international organisation to devise and put in place mechanisms to internalize social and environmental costs.

A commitment to the principle of solidarity and equity also needs to be clearly included as being crucial thus promoting the idea of justice with regard to the distribution of costs and benefits. In this context the provision of assistance to achieve common sustainable development objectives would be viewed as a necessary act in the pursuit of a global sustainable development agenda.

Adopting a human-rights based approach to sustainable development is also fundamental. People are entitled to fundamental rights, agreed and laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or in the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights. It is the role of governments to enable their people to have access to these rights. Governments, within their boundaries, and international organisations have also the responsibility to ensure there is no infringement to human rights. Focusing on

⁵ “According to the International Energy Agency, OECD States account for 40 per cent of all emissions and for 25 per cent of the increase in emissions worldwide. In terms of tonnes, the developing countries are today's biggest emitters, though not in per capita terms: at 10 tonnes per annum, the per capita emission by OECD countries is almost five times that of the rest of the world. A US American emits on average more than three times as much CO₂ as a Chinese.

Although in historic terms developing countries account for only one quarter of climate change, they have promised more emissions reductions than the industrialized countries, according to a study by the Stockholm Environment Institute. China could thus reduce its emissions by twice as much as the USA by 2020. All developing countries taken together could effect reductions three times greater than those promised by the EU” said Nicole Werner in an article published in Social Watch on 17 November 2011 (<http://www.socialwatch.org/node/13884>)

or taking full account of human rights when devising strategies is key to poverty eradication and people's empowerment.

Recommendations:

3.1 Commitment to full implementation of past agreements and plan of actions must be made at Rio 2012.

3.2 All of the Rio 1992 principles must be re-affirmed and the principles of common but differentiated responsibilities, polluter pays, solidarity, equity and the precautionary principle should clearly be spelled out in the outcome document.

3.3 Fulfilling and respecting human rights should be recognized by governments and other stakeholders as central to sustainable development and prioritized in strategies.

3.4 All the above principles should underpin the concept of green economy, only by doing so will the link between the green economy and sustainable development be ensured.

Message 4: Recognising real strengths and limitations of different actors

The role of all sectors in society needs to be equally recognised in a global strategy to promote sustainable development, as consumers, as producers, or as social interest groups. Differences between actors as to their contribution to sustainable development should also be explained, where each has its role. Governments, parliaments, local authorities, professional interest groups, the private sector, trade unions, civil society organisations. Clear recognition of the role of the different actors, and their specific interests, and an analysis of their contributions and possible limitations with regard to sustainable development must be recognised in the outcome of Rio+20.

In the zero draft specific attention is given to the private sector which is seen as having a "key role in promoting sustainable development" and being urged to "show leadership in advancing a green economy". Private sector actors may be central to economic activity as producers, service providers, and innovators and they can make an important contribution towards a sustainable economy being realised. However, this is not inevitable as some will act in ways that hinder such a goal. Distinctions need to be made between different actors within the private sector and the roles that they play. The role that small local enterprises play within their local community is very different from that of a transnational corporation. Small local enterprises are much more likely to be rooted in the interests of local communities in which they operate. Transnational Corporations, with their leverage over markets, products, consumption patterns, trade rules, and indeed decisions taken by governments are less accountable to local concerns, or even the national interests of the countries in which they operate, with a tendency to respond much more to the financial interests of their significant shareholders. Private sector activities are intrinsically driven by profit making therefore sustainable development requirements are not naturally followed by the private sector, unless sustainability constitutes the basis of the activity (ecological agriculture, renewable energy etc) or generates the best financial return. Regulation certainly influences the orientation that enterprises may have towards adopting sustainable practices, as does consumer demand and expectation. However transnational corporations, which are often financially stronger than many national economies, do use their leverage to block and subvert regulatory

frameworks that limit their actions, including blocking any substantial advancement on issues such as climate change, social and environmental protection or technology assessment.

Therefore, the private sector, especially transnational companies, must be encouraged to contribute to achieving sustainable development within suitable regulatory frameworks that are consistent with and derived from the principles for sustainable development and human rights, various conventions, and other agreements adopted by the international community, and with appropriate mechanisms for transparency and accountability being put in place, at both national and international levels.

Governments and international institutions should take the lead in ensuring the private sector complies with sustainable development requirements. Citizens want their governments to play the role which they have been elected for namely ensuring security and justice and that long term strategizing prevails over short term and vested interests, as can be seen by the support given to the sentiments of the Occupy movement. The “laissez faire” doctrine as the multiple crises have dramatically showed has proven its limits.

We welcome paragraph 18 of the zero draft which re-affirms the necessity to improve access to information and strengthen civil society capacity to exercise this right. The principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent should also be mentioned in this regard.

Recommendations:

4.1 Stakeholders should be given equal considerations in the outcome document and their roles, strengths and limitations as to the implementation of sustainable development should be set out.

4.2 The responsibility of governments for ensuring the protection of their citizens and that long term visions prevails over short term interests must be re-affirmed. The necessity of governments' leadership in the implementation of sustainable development must be explained and stated at Rio2012.

4.3 Legally binding measures obliging the private sector to apply the UN principles of Corporate Social Responsibility and to report on environmental and social governance must be agreed at Rio2012. Establishing independent control mechanisms and ensuring democratic accountability as well as implementing the UN "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework for business and human rights should also be made mandatory at Rio2012. This is particularly relevant for transnational companies. Small or medium sized enterprises, in case of insufficient resources, must be assisted to apply in the long term the above principles.

4.4 Establishing binding country by country financial reporting as an international standard applying to all multinational companies, adopting automatic, multilateral information exchanges which take account of the needs of developing countries, and imposing sanctions on countries that practise banking secrecy and make transactions to such jurisdictions should be outcomes of Rio2012.

4.5 Private sector activities that directly contribute to sustainable development (i.e. ecological agriculture or production of renewable energy) must be given priority in terms of strategy and financing.

4.6 The particular role of civil society in voicing citizens' concerns and ensuring governments and private sector accountability should be re-affirmed. Clear steps towards the implementation of principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration on access to information should be set out and agreed at Rio2012.

Message 5: A radically different economy for ensuring sustainable development

The green economy is presented as the key to sustainable development. It is stressed that the green economy is just a means to achieve sustainable development, not the end goal. However there remains much ambiguity over the link between the green economy and sustainable development. Sustainable development is a multidimensional concept but the green economy mainly focuses on the environmental dimension of SD with the hope that the rest will naturally follow (poverty eradication, equitable distribution of resources or financial and economic stability).

Regarding the social dimension of SD, it is accepted that the green economy should contribute to meeting key goals such as poverty eradication and should also be “people-centred and inclusive”. However, addressing poverty and inequity requires a multi-dimensional approach; there are structural flaws in our economic, financial and governance system that needs to be dealt with at the international level, and exclusion and discrimination at national level constitute serious obstacles to the improvement of people’s lives and sustainable development. Asserting that the green economy should be inclusive and people-centred is not enough. The rhetoric has to be matched by proposals and commitments. A transformation towards a “green” more ecologically sustainable economic model alone without addressing the above issues will maintain the current imbalances, inequalities and inequities.

A sustainable economy also needs to be resilient, with adequate transparent and an effective regulatory framework for all sectors of the economy, including the financial sector. The policy framework overall must promote sustainable development ensuring all three pillars are effectively addressed.

Actions adopted to urgently address lack of sustainability, inequality and inequity require time bound targets to phase out fossil fuel subsidies in priority⁶, increase the use of renewable sources of energy, improve resource efficiency or commit to adopt policies to internalize environmental and social costs. Public procurement should also be used to promote sustainability. Developed countries should set ambitious targets.

Improving the sustainability of the economy by enhancing resource efficiency (including through technological innovations), or increasing the use of renewable sources of energy while being necessary for achieving sustainable development will not be sufficient⁷. With a prevailing model that promotes consumerism even with a greener economy huge doubts can be cast over the ability of the green economy to be sustainable. Radical changes are required to the economic model and its reliance on

⁶ “According to IEA research, 37 governments spent \$409bn on artificially lowering the price of fossil fuels in 2010. Critics say the subsidies significantly boost oil and gas consumption and disadvantage renewable energy technologies, which received only \$66bn of subsidies in the same year.” Source: Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/jan/19/fossil-fuel-subsidies-carbon-target>

Furthermore, as set out in the GSP report, according to the IEA, in 2010, only 8 per cent of fossil fuel consumption subsidies reached the poorest. Source: GSP report (2012), p.52
http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP_Report_web_final.pdf

⁷ As set out in the report of the High level Panel on Global Sustainability, the number of middle class consumers is expected to increase by 3 billion over the next 20 years, thus putting even greater stress on planetary boundaries.

consumption and growth. A post growth economic model should rapidly and seriously be envisaged by political leaders of wealthy nations.

Recommendations:

5.1 Rio +20 must adopt a clear definition of what constitutes an economy that promotes sustainable development; general principles underpinning the green economy (as set out in section 3 of this document) should be defined so as to facilitate a common understanding of an economy for sustainable development and help actors define actions for its implementation.

5.2 The link between the green economy and sustainable development should clearly be explained. The approach must fully encompass the three dimensions of sustainable development. The interdependent nature of the three dimensions must fully be recognized and treated as such. Economies must be designed and managed to ensure social progress in full respect of planetary boundaries.

5.3 The outcome document should recognize that to achieve poverty eradication tackling inequity and focusing on the fulfilment of and respect for human rights is necessary. At national levels, reforming fiscal systems to ensure fair distribution of resources and costs based on the polluter pays principle and that of equity or focusing on the needs of poor and marginalised people in strategies and financing should be considered as sound political choices for the achievement of sustainable development. At the international level, reforms of the financial and economic systems that ensure fairer distribution of costs and benefits are necessary.

5.4 Improving the resilience of our economies involves stronger regulation and increased transparency in our economic and financial systems. Commitment to systematically apply the principle of policy coherence for sustainable development in trade relations and focusing on human rights fulfilment as a means to empower people should be made.

5.5 Governments should commit to time bound targets to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, to define the share of renewable sources of energy in national energy mix, to realise universal access to energy and to improve energy efficiency in view of achieving absolute decoupling of resource use from economic growth. Because of the “rebound effect” relating to increase in resource efficiency, it is central that government agree on measures to reduce total resources use; relative decoupling is not enough. The principle of CBDR and its implications should be re-affirmed in this regard.

5.6 Even with the implementation of a more balanced green economy wealthy nations must acknowledge that greening the economy will not be sufficient to achieve sustainable development. They should start the debate on post growth models of development. The right of developing countries to development and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities must be re-affirmed in this regard.

Message 6: Increasing equity, empowering people and investing in environmentally friendly economic activities are key to sustainable development

In this section we will only focus on four priority areas for sustainable development which are also addressed in the zero draft. In order to achieve sustainable development changed approaches to the economy should be a means to foster a more ecological and resilient economy while focusing on empowering people, human rights fulfilment and equity. The most disadvantaged segments of the world’s population should be priority targets of sustainable development strategies. The wealthiest

countries should reduce drastically the impact of their own economies on the planet while helping developing countries achieve a sustainable path to development.

Food security

Food security is fundamental to sustainable development and Rio+20 must validate this, drawing and building on the analysis and adopted actions of other international conferences. There should be a better description of the situation and problems faced by people with inadequate access to food and to smallholder farmers around the world. The challenge to feed 9 billion people by 2050 should also be stressed. Emphasis should be placed on the fact that the majority of people living in absolute poverty live on small farms, and these small holder farmers are responsible for growing the majority of the world's food. Agro-ecological farming, in contrast to agro-business, approaches to agriculture have proven effective in increasing yields while at the same time acting to protect the environment. These approaches have also been advocated by several expert agencies such as the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, UNEP, UNCTAD, FAO and the IAASTD. Instead of giving priority to making intensification approaches more sustainable (as put forward in the zero draft), Rio 2012 should see the promotion of agro-ecological farming.

Efforts to ensure sustainable development needs to include these small-holder farmers, specifically recognising the role that women play as producers, in the family, and in the community. Women produce 60-80 percent of food in most developing countries, are responsible for preparing food, and are the primary caregivers. A woman's nutritional status is critical not only to her own health but also to her ability to maintain a secure livelihood and ensure that her children are properly nourished and healthy. Women therefore play a critical role in tackling food and nutrition security, and ensuring sustainability. Food production however, is not necessarily synonymous with production of nutritious foods. Meeting increased demand for food must primarily be about producing the right type of food, foods that contribute to dietary requirements. In this regard, the four dimensions of food and nutritious security must be spelled out in the outcome document:

- Physical availability of food; it addresses the supply side. Sufficient quantities of food of adequate quality are available either through domestic production or on the markets.
- Secure access to food; all households or all members of a household have access to productive resources and have the capacity (knowledge, income and capital) to produce sufficient and nutritious food for their own consumption and/or are able to acquire, exchange or purchase it.
- Use and utilisation of food according to requirements; it is about the individual state of nutrition and health in relation to varied food, clean drinking water, health care, sanitary facilities as well as caring capacities and practices
- Stability of the other three dimensions over time; food security is also about adequate access to food on a periodic basis⁸.

Food security is only realised when these four dimensions are fulfilled.

⁸ Source : Welthungerhilfe

The lack of coordination and flow between funding for emergencies and longer term development measured against food and nutrition security targets has been increasingly recognized. The zero draft touches very briefly on this but it could be stronger. The lack of funding for transition phase and post-emergency rehabilitation leaves communities vulnerable to shocks and less resilient. As the impacts of climate change on food and nutrition security continue to be felt and become more frequent, it will be important that there are sound policies and programmes as well as institutional changes necessary to allow for a smooth transition out of emergency responses.

The problem of food price volatility, its causes such as climate change, biofuels cultivation or the lack of regulation in the commodity market, and its impact on food security as well as clear solutions to overcome it should be comprised in the outcome document. The phenomenon of land grabbing related to the cultivation of biofuels as well as the impact of biofuels on the environment should be addressed.

The consequences of climate change, such as loss of agro biodiversity, environmental disasters, water scarcity or soil erosion, to name just a few, on food production and food security must also be addressed.

The issue of food waste given that each year approximately 1/3 of the food produced for human consumption is lost in harvest or storage or wasted by consumers must be emphasized at Rio2012.

Recommendations:

6.1 Promoting and investing in ecological approaches to agriculture should be prioritised by governments and seen as the best strategy to ensure food and nutritious security in developing countries. Commitments by donor countries to increase ODA for food security objectives and ecological agriculture must be made at Rio2012. Ecological agriculture not only protects the environment but also makes economic sense and contributes to poverty eradication and people's empowerment. Approaches to trade need to be adapted in recognition, with international trade rules being adjusted accordingly.

6.2. The particular role of women as regard to food and nutritious security should be emphasized in the outcome document. Governments should commit to policy reforms that ensure land rights, and access to water and productive resources for farmers, in particular women.

6.3 Building up extension services and shifting research budgets to promote take-up of sustainable, farmer-led technologies must be committed to at Rio 2012.

6.4 The four dimensions of food and nutritious security must be reaffirmed in the outcome document.

6.5 The lack of coordination and flow between funding for emergencies and longer term development measured against food and nutrition security targets should be addressed at Rio 2012. The 2010 European Commission's Communication "An EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security" provides a good framework in this regard.

6.6 The problem of food price volatility, its causes and solutions to overcome it should be comprised in the outcome document.

6.7 The controversy over the impact of biofuels cultivation on the environment and human rights should be addressed. The actual contribution of bio-fuels to sustainability needs to be critically reviewed, as do practices used for its production.

6.8 The consequences of climate change on food production and food security must fully be acknowledged as well as the need to increase people's resilience to climate change. Optimizing the potential of social protection and safety nets and focusing on disaster risk reduction for food and nutrition security in agriculture must be emphasized in this regard in the outcome document.

6.9 Addressing the issue of food waste must be recognized as crucial to ensure food security and also seen as a means for reducing climate change as it reduces pressure on food production. Policies that improve harvesting techniques, storage and processing in developing countries must be prioritized.

Energy

A description and analysis of the problems with regard to energy access, consumption and use need to be comprised in the section on energy of the zero draft. This could encompass the fact that globally 1.5 billion people are currently without access to electricity and the majority of them live in rural areas. There is a predominant use of traditional biomass fuels for cooking which impacts on health and contributes to environmental damage. According to forecasts the need for energy is going to exponentially increase in the coming decades (in the Reference scenario of the IEA the demand for primary energy should grow by 45% by 2030⁹). For poverty to be addressed and sustainable development ensured, prioritization needs to be given to providing access to renewable energy through small scale decentralized energy projects. There is a particular need for this in many least developed countries. Access to energy through large scale biofuel, nuclear energy or hydroelectric cannot be considered valid and clean options for sustainability.

Helping developing countries to achieve efficient use of natural resources is also crucial to ensure sustainable development. Diversifying energy sources is key to energy security; over relying on one source of energy for power generation such as hydropower or imported fossil fuel cannot ensure sustainable access to energy.

The goal of providing "universal access to a basic minimum level of modern energy services for both consumption and production uses by 2030" put forward in the zero draft is not appropriate when taking into account all the above stated points and the sustainability requirements. The International Energy Agency (IEA) at the Oslo conference in Norway on 10 October 2011 concluded that "Universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy services by 2030 is both financially and technologically achievable"¹⁰. Universal access to a "basic minimum level of modern energy services" is therefore not ambitious enough and constitutes a step backward compared to the IEA's conclusion.

The other goal proposed in the zero draft of "improving energy efficiency at all levels with a view to doubling the rate of improvement by 2030" seems to be very difficult to implement. How could efficiency (or absence of efficiency) be doubled? A better formulation would be that through increased efficiency one third of projected energy use should be covered. Regarding the third goal of doubling the share of

⁹ IEA (2008), World Energy Outlook, Executive summary, Paris: International Energy Agency
<http://www.iea.org/Textbase/npsum/WEQ2008SUM.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.osloenergyforall2011.no/aboutud2012.cfm>

renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030, again this objective lacks adequate ambition as the current levels of renewable energy use are already very low and the energy demand will continue to grow. To avoid a stagnation of absolute non renewable consumption, renewable sources of energy should account for one fourth of the global energy mix by 2030.

Recommendations:

6.10 Providing access to renewable energy through small scale decentralized energy projects needs to be recognized by governments as the best way to fight poverty and ensure sustainable development. Commitments to prioritize this approach in terms of strategies and financing need to be made by governments (donor countries and developing countries) at Rio2012

6.11 Governments should commit to the goal of providing universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy by 2020; increasing resource efficiency so as 1/3 of the projected energy use for 2030 will be covered through energy efficiency by 2030 ; ensuring the share of renewable energy accounts for 40% of the global energy mix by 2030.

6.12 Governments must agree long term goals to ensure that 100% of energy use comes from renewable sources of energy, with the intermediate goal of 80% of renewable sources of energy in the global energy mix by 2050 as put forward in the IPCC special report on renewable energy¹¹.

Social protection right to the most vulnerable

Social protection is recognised as an aspect of the right to livelihood and social security. The commitment made to a global social protection floor at the UN MDG review summit in September 2010 needs to be built upon. "The need to provide social protection floor to all members of society, including those who are not employed in the formal economy" is stressed in the zero draft. This is to be welcomed. However, this paragraph only constitutes a small part of the section on "green jobs - social inclusion" whereas many people in developed and especially in developing countries are excluded, vulnerable and do not enjoy their right to social security¹². Attention to their particular situation and needs should be given greater emphasis.

Targeting women in social protection strategy is particularly important in this regard as they constitute half of the world's population, are more vulnerable to external shocks and are too often subject to discrimination. Women are disproportionately represented amongst people living in poverty, but with their specific role within the family and within communities they have a greater propensity to promote effective social protection policies.

Granting rights to social protection, besides being a fundamental responsibility of governments (commitments to the human rights agenda), is also based on the argument that to achieve sustainable development involving all parts of a society is essential; social protection allows people to have access to education and health services, to live more decent lives if they are not employed in the formal sector or

¹¹ See Press release: http://www.ipcc.ch/news_and_events/docs/ipcc33/IPCC_Press_Release_11612_en.pdf

¹² "In sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the number of people with access to even the most rudimentary protection is estimated to be less than 10 per cent", ILO (2010), World Social Security Report, Geneva, p.7
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/secsoc/downloads/policy/wssr.pdf>

unemployed, to be more resilient to external shocks (price volatility or impact of climate change) or to be lifted out of poverty. Granting social protection rights to vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded people allow them to be able to take part in the economy of a country and make sustainable choices.

Recommendation:

6.13 Commitment to provide social protection floor to all members of society, including people employed in the informal sector as well as unemployed, indigenous and marginalised people, should be made at Rio2012.

6.14 Social protection strategies should pay particular attention to targeting women as a means of empowerment, and in order to improve women's lives and their contributions to sustainable development as well as those of their children, as well as to their local community as a whole.

The key role of women for sustainable development

We welcome the paragraph on "Gender equality" in the zero draft. However, we would like to stress that the essential role of women for sustainable development should be centrally recognised in the outcome document (in the preamble or in the second chapter) and inform all approaches and strategies; gender equity is an issue in its own right but also an overarching goal of SD. Besides, in the paragraph of the zero draft the contribution of women to sustainable development is only considered through an economic perspective; the crucial role of women in social and environmental aspects of life should be re-affirmed.

Enhancing gender equity and equality should be priorities in terms of strategizing and financing. Increasing participation of women in policy making should be prioritized and viewed as essential to the achievement of sustainable development. Indeed, women give higher priority to gender issues in policy decisions and as it is put forward in the report of the High Level Panel on Global Sustainability "when women are at the table in greater numbers, collective needs are given higher priority – including access to clean water and education and setting aside protected land areas"¹³.

It is also important to stress the link between women empowerment and population growth. Focusing on reproductive rights fulfilment is of utmost importance in terms of health, gender equality, and development but also as a means to reduce population growth. This needs to be acknowledged in the outcome document.

Recommendations:

6.15 The crucial role of women for sustainable development should be acknowledged at Rio2012. Their contribution to sustainable development is essential so as to increase countries' population resilience to external shocks, eradicate poverty, promote sustainable development through policies and strategies or enhance economic development.

6.16 Enabling and encouraging women's participation in the social, economic and political life of their country should be prioritized by governments at Rio2012. This includes using Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) mechanisms, repealing discriminatory laws against women, ensuring that measures to fight gender based violence are in place or advancing the representativeness of women in political bodies.

¹³ High Level Panel on Global Sustainability (2012), *"Resilient People, Resilient Planet: a Future Worth Choosing"*, New York: United Nations, p.30

6.17 The link between population growth reduction and reproductive rights fulfilment should be made at Rio2012. Governments should commit to ensure universal access to reproductive health.

Message 7: The future global institutional and action framework must ensure effective and accountable implementation

In the zero draft there is almost no immediate commitment to targets or concrete goals but there are commitments, for instance, to devise Sustainable Development Goals and develop Green Economy roadmaps in a near future. It is specified at the end of the zero draft that these commitments are voluntary and not legally binding (paragraph 128). Sustainable development is too important an issue to be subject to voluntary commitments, this will again allow governments to implement what they want in a flexible way and poses serious questions about the effectiveness of any accountability framework and assessment mechanisms. Furthermore, as already specified in our recommendations commitments to specific target as regards, for example, to phasing out fossil fuels subsidies, increasing the share of renewable sources of energy in the energy mix or providing social protection floor for all citizens should be agreed at Rio2012 (the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 while necessary is too late, concrete actions in view of achieving sustainable development should start now).

SDGs

When proposing to devise sustainable development goals by 2015, the need to integrate and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development is re affirmed. However, when looking at the proposed priority areas this balance is not evident.

Furthermore, it is important to underline, in line with the recommendations of the Stiglitz-Sen-Fitoussi Commission, as further stressed in the 2012 Social Watch Report and with the Oxfam's doughnut¹⁴, that because of their different natures progress in sustainability and in well being should be assessed according to different logics. Indeed, sustainability is about limits whereas well being is about human rights fulfilment within these limits. A great number of human rights have already been agreed upon and laid down in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The goals should therefore focus on when these human rights will be achieved, this follows the same logic as the MDGs that embody some of these crucial rights and set a deadline for their fulfilment. Nevertheless, the SDGs should go further by, for example, encompassing the goal of providing social protection floors for all citizens and the concept of equity must fully be reflected. Therefore, the SDGs should set limits to be respected by UN member states and their population and propose sound strategies for actors to stay within these limits. They should also encompass time lines for the achievement of already agreed human rights. The SDGs could comprise three different sets of goals based on the three main chapters of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. A set of goals on poverty eradication and equity by focusing on human rights fulfilment, a second one on natural resources management and protection and the third set of goals on achieving sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The economic dimension of SD should also be reflected through goals that focus on

¹⁴ See the Oxfam Discussion Papers (2012), *A Safe and Just Space for Humanity: Can we Live within the Doughnut?*
<https://www.oxfam.org/en/grow/policy/safe-and-just-space-humanity>

improving the transparency, regulation and governance of the financial and trade system. These goals should be designed by taking into account planetary boundaries. They should also be based on core principles such as equity, fairness, common but differentiated responsibilities, universality, polluter pays or the precautionary principle (see message 3 for a full list). The SDGs should be universally applicable but take account of the principle of CBDR. Efforts to respect the sustainability limits should be greater for wealthiest nations, assistance should be provided to developing countries for the achievement of the human rights agenda and an enabling environment for developing countries in terms of trade and finance should be put in place.

Recommendations:

7.1 Governments should agree on devising SDGs by 2015 which take account of the different nature of sustainability and well being. Sustainability should be measured against environmental and ecological limits while increase in well being should be assessed according to human rights fulfilment and equity criteria.

7.2 The process through which the goals will be designed must be inclusive. Besides governments, a wide range of stakeholders (CSOs, local authorities, indigenous people, the private sector etc) as well as scientists and experts coming from different spheres (development, environment, economics, finance, trade etc) must participate in the shaping of the goals.

7.3 The SDGs should not divert the international community from the achievement of the MDGs by 2015. The SDGs should complement and support the attainment of the MDGs. Successes and weaknesses of the MDGs should be drawn upon in this regard.

7.4 The SDGs could encompass three sets of goals based on the three main chapters of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation in order to tackle each dimension of sustainable development in a balanced way. These sets of goals should be designed according to planetary boundaries. Sustainable development is about ensuring social progress in full respect of planetary boundaries, and economic development should serve this goal.

7.5 The economic dimension of SD should also be reflected in goals that focus on improving the transparency, regulation and governance of the financial and trade system. This could include an agreement on the establishment of a tax on financial transactions.

7.6 The SDGs should be based on a certain number of principles such as equity, the precautionary and the polluter pays principle. They should be universally applicable but allowing for the principle of CBDR.

Roadmap

The idea of developing green economy roadmaps is interesting providing that the concept of the green economy agreed at Rio2012 fully addresses the concerns expressed in the paragraph 6 of this document. Indeed, as set out in the zero draft the green economy is skewed towards environmental issues. Improving equity and ensuring the resilience of our economies (reforms of the financial and economic sectors) should also be priorities of the green economy. Besides, while we acknowledge the need for green economies, tailored to national situation and needs, there is also an absolute necessity to agree on common principles underpinning the concept of GE so as to guide governments and stakeholders in devising and implementing their roadmap but also in order to hold them accountable. Furthermore, the process leading to the adoption of green economy roadmaps at national and international levels must be

inclusive, transparent and democratic. At national level, while governments will take the lead, all stakeholders should be equally involved and informed on time to about the consultations to take place. Also, the green economy roadmaps should be devised according to the principle of CBDR. Actions and strategies to be adopted by developed countries must show ambition and be focused on radically changing a model of development based on highly unsustainable production and consumption patterns. Developed countries must also commit to help developing countries achieve sustainable development. Commitments must be transformed into actions. Ensuring an enabling environment for developing countries in terms of trade is essential. It should also be acknowledged that increased liberalisation does not necessarily lead to development and can even have huge consequences for sustainable development. In this regard, policy coherence for sustainable development should be taken fully into account when devising green economy roadmaps (potential impacts at national and international levels should systematically be assessed when there are doubts over particular strategies). Finally, as specified in the zero draft, concrete objectives, actions and steps for the provision of means of implementation for SD to developing countries (financial assistance, technology and know how transfer) should be defined in an international roadmap, but these should be in line with the concerns voiced by developing countries.

Recommendations:

7.7 In order to develop green economy roadmaps the understanding and definition of the concept of green economy should be improved. Clear principles underpinning the green economy and ensuring that the link is made with the multi dimensional concept of SD should be set out (see section 3 of this document in which a list of principles essential for SD to be achieved is provided). Governments should recall at Rio2012 that economic development is only a means of ensuring social progress in full respect of planetary boundaries.

7.8 Commitment and provisions for the process of developing roadmaps at national and international level to be transparent, inclusive and democratic should be made at Rio2012.

7.9 Clear recognition, according to the principle of CBDR, that the roadmaps to be drawn up by developed countries should show great ambition as regard to the improvement of the three dimensions of SD with a particular attention to addressing unsustainable production and consumption patterns and as regard to provide assistance to developing countries should be made at Rio2012.

7.10 Governments should acknowledge that trade and financial liberalisation can undermine State's and international organisations' control over financial and economic activities as well as State's responsibility to protect its citizens. Financial and trade liberalisation can also be very detrimental to sustainable development objectives and lead to increasing poverty, inequality and inequity. Commitment to apply the principle of coherence for SD when developing roadmaps and establish impact assessment mechanisms should be agreed at rio2012.

7.11 An international roadmap should set clear actions and steps towards the provision of the means of implementation for SD to developing countries.

Beyond GDP

The limitations of GDP as a measure of well being are recognized in the zero draft, this is to be welcomed. The need to "strengthen indicators complementing GDP that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions in a balanced manner" is also put forward. It is important to highlight, in line

with our previous recommendations, that economic development is a means of improving social progress in full respect of planetary boundaries. Indicators must therefore reflect this approach, social progress and environmental protection are goals in their own rights, they cannot be considered as economic externalities. Furthermore, a list of potential complementary indicators could have been added in the zero draft. We would like to re-affirm that using alternative indicators to measure development is key to a successful implementation of sustainable development strategies.

Recommendation:

7.12 Governments must acknowledge that without the right set of indicators the sustainability of a particular model of development cannot be evaluated and therefore achieved. The well being of a population and the sustainability/unsustainability of a country's governance and economic, environmental and social policies must be fully reflected in a new alternative model, guided by a set of binding goals and indicators. This should build on already existing initiatives such as the Human Development Index, the Better life Index, the Stiglitz commission's proposals or the International System for integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA), amongst others

Ombudsperson for future generations

We strongly advocate in favour of the establishment of an ombudsperson for future generations at the international and national level. At the national level this will help to give focus to long term objectives of sustainable development, with the requirement for short term actions to be implemented that are needed if the long term objectives are to be achieved. This will bring some perspective to policy making and decisions which tend to be biased towards short term parameters by politicians with an eye to the next election. At international level it will give focus to the overall balance required to meet commonly agreed commitments.

Recommendation:

7.13 Establishing an ombudsperson for future generations at the international and national level should be agreed at Rio2012.

Sustainable Development Council

The proposal for a Council for Sustainable Development is the best way to ensure that the 3 pillars of sustainable development are integrated in a balanced way. The Council's jurisdiction should extend to all multilateral bodies including the International Financial Institutions and the WTO. The Council should advise multilateral bodies and stakeholders and assess progress towards the implementation of and coherence of policies for SD. A universal periodic review mechanism on sustainability could be established. UN member states, multilateral bodies and stakeholders should report on the advancement of the SD agenda. The council should also be inclusive (stakeholders participation) and democratic.

In the zero draft it is proposed that all the important processes relating to the normative aspects and follow up mechanisms for the implementation of SD (devising of SDGs, setting up of alternative indicators to GDP, development of an international green economy roadmap or the establishment of an information sharing platform) should be led by the Secretary General. Because of the importance and sensitivity of

the issues we think that member states should play a prominent role, the mandate for the devising of these follow up mechanisms should therefore be given to the Sustainable Development Council or the General Assembly in case such a Council is not established.

Recommendations:

7.14 UN Member States should agree to establish a UN Council for Sustainable Development at Rio2012.

7.15 The processes relating to the normative aspects and follow up mechanisms for the implementation of SD (devising of SDGs, setting up of alternative indicators to GDP, development of an international green economy roadmap or the establishment of an information sharing platform) should be led by the Member States. These mandates should be given to the future Sustainable Development Council.

22 February 2012

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