

Global Ecological Diplomacy

Earth Summits

- The Earth Summit refers to the United Nations (UN) conferences organised to address issues concerning environmental protection and socio-economic development.
- The Earth Summit is also a platform in which the world examines and evaluates the relationship between human rights, population, social development, women and human settlements.

- In 1992, more than 100 heads of state met in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil for the first international Earth Summit convened to address urgent problems of environmental protection and socio-economic development.
- The assembled leaders signed the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, endorsed the Rio Declaration and the Forest Principles, and adopted Agenda 21, a 300 page plan for achieving sustainable development in the 21st century.
- The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created to monitor and report on implementation of the Earth Summit agreements.

- It was agreed that a five year review of Earth Summit progress would be made in 1997 by the United Nations General Assembly meeting in a special session.
- This special session of the UN General Assembly was to take stock of how well countries, international organizations and sectors of civil society responded to the challenge of the Earth Summit.
- Through that Earth Summit, many important treaties and conventions were concluded such as:
 - 1. Rio Declaration on Environment and Development;
 - 2. Agenda 21;
 - 3. Convention on Biological Diversity;
 - 4. Forest Principles;
 - 5. Framework Convention on Climate Change;

- The following are the issues addressed by the Earth Summits:
- 1. Issues relating to the production of toxic components, such as lead in gasoline, or poisonous waste including radioactive chemicals ;
- 2. Issues relating to the use of fossil fuels which are linked to global climate change;
- 3. Issues relating to vehicle emissions, congestion in cities and the health problems caused by polluted air and smog;
- 4. Issues relating to the growing scarcity of water .

- **Stockholm 1972**
- In 1972, Stockholm, Sweden, hosted the first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which was attended by 113 delegates and two heads of state (**Olaf Palme of Sweden and Indira Gandhi of India**).
- This conference raised a generation's awareness of an issue hitherto little talked about, the global environment.
- The Stockholm conference secured a permanent place for the environment on the world's agenda and led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- The conference and its aftermath made known the international nature of the environment and introduced the idea of the relationship between development and the environment.

- It has been said that the only way to unite the countries of the world is for them to face a common enemy; perhaps environmental degradation will be that enemy.
- Since the 1972 conference, there have been many international environmental agreements.
- These include:
 - the 1978 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement;
 - the 1979 Geneva Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution;
 - the 1985 Helsinki Agreement (a 21-nation commitment to reduce sulphur dioxide emissions);

- the 1988 Montreal Protocol on Substances That Deplete the Ozone Layer; and,
- the 1989 Basel Convention on Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes.
- It was this kind of international cooperation that the 1992 Rio conference sought, but on a larger scale.
- In 1983, the UN General Assembly set up the World Commission on Environment and Development, known as the Brundtland Commission after its chairperson, Norwegian Prime Minister ***Gro Harlem Brundtland***.
- Its aim was to link environmental issues to the findings of the 1980 Brandt report on North-South relations.

- The Brundtland report, published in 1987 as *Our Common Future*, declared that the time had come for a marriage between the environment and the economy and used the term "sustainable development" as the way to ensure that economic development would not endanger the ability of future generations to enjoy the fruits of the earth.
- After considering the 1987 Brundtland report, the UN General Assembly called for the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

- The primary goals of the Summit included:
 - to come to an understanding of “development” that would support socio-economic development and prevent the continued deterioration of the environment, and,
 - to lay a foundation for a global partnership between the developing and the more industrialized countries, based on mutual needs and common interests, that would ensure a healthy future for the planet.

- **Rio Summit of 1992**
- On the twentieth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, representatives from 178 nations, non-governmental agencies (NGOs) and other interested parties (approximately 30,000 in total including members of the media), met in Rio de Janeiro from 3 June to 14 June 1992 to discuss global environmental issues that would become central to policy implementation.

- The conference sought agreement on concrete measures to reconcile economic activities with the protection of the planet to ensure a sustainable future for all people.
- This first UN Conference on Environment and Development -- UNCED for short, but better known as the "Earth Summit" after its final three days -- was the culmination of two and a half years of world-wide consultations that demonstrated the best intentions of the human race to live responsibly.

- **Pre-Rio Ambitions**
- UNCED addressed environmental issues, such as the protection of air, land and water; conservation of biological diversity, forests, and natural resources; and sound management of wastes and technology.
- It was a unique opportunity for world leaders to curtail the human activities that were threatening the planet and bringing about pollution of land, ocean and atmosphere, drought, desertification through land degradation, thinning of the ozone layer, global warming and the threat of rising sea levels, and the extinction of plant and animal species.

- Also included were the concerns that had led to serious differences between countries of the North and South:
- patterns of development that cause stress to the environment;
- poverty in developing countries;
- economic growth;
- unsustainable patterns of consumption; and
- demographic pressures and their impact on the international economy.

- **WHAT HAPPENED AT RIO?**
- At UNCED, more than 130 nations signed a Convention on Climate Change and a Convention on Biodiversity.
- The delegates also reached agreement on Agenda 21, an action plan for developing the planet sustainably through the twenty-first century, and on a broad statement of principles for protecting forests.
- All nations present accepted without change the Rio Declaration, a non-binding statement of broad principles for environmental policy.
- New international networks, both formal and informal, were set up to carry out and oversee implementation of the agreements.

- In the end, the UNCED negotiations came down to a matter of money.
- The industrialized nations have it and the developing nations want it.
- If the industrialized nations want environmental protection, they must be prepared to pay for it.
- The tensions between the rich and the poor and the financial conflicts that underlie them were at the heart of every major negotiation.

- Before the summit, Mr. Maurice F. Strong, UNCED Secretary General, had defined success as a minimum of an extra \$10 billion a year of "new money" from Western countries to finance summit commitments in the Third World.
- The \$6-\$7 billion pledged at the conference, implied a good start. This figure was based on the supposition that Japan would increase its aid budget by 50% over the next five years, to a total of \$5 billion.

- **Resulting Documents from Rio:**
 - 1. Agenda 21,**
 - 2. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,**
 - 3. The Statement of Forest Principles.**
- In addition, two legally binding Conventions aimed at preventing global climate change and the eradication of the diversity of biological species were opened for signature at the Summit, giving high profile to these efforts:
 - 4. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and,**
 - 5. The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity**

- **Agenda 21**
- **An Overview of Agenda 21**
- Agenda 21 is an environmental action plan for the next century.
- It is not legally binding but forms the basis for a new international partnership for sustainable development and environmental protection worldwide.
- Agenda 21 was the major overall document coming out of Rio and was devised to deal with some of the fundamental problems of resource degradation and aid to the developing world.
- It addresses many issues with respect to global sustainability and includes core chapters related to financing, the implementation of technology transfer and institutional follow-up to UNCED.

- ***Goals of Agenda 21***
- The primary goals of Agenda 21 include:
- i) To ensure that development proceeds in a sustainable manner: "the system of incentives and penalties which motivate economic behaviour must be reoriented to become a strong force for sustainability."
- ii) Another goal is ultimately to eliminate poverty throughout the world through better management of energy and natural resources and improvement of the quality of life by ensuring access to shelter and clean water, sewage and solid waste treatment.

- iii) Agenda 21 also attempts to achieve the sustainable use of global and regional resources such as atmosphere, oceans, seas and freshwater, and marine organisms.
- iv) The final goal is for improved management of chemicals and wastes. It is estimated that one third of the deaths in the third world are caused by food and water contaminated with human or industrial waste.
- **Areas of Contention**
- A number of contentious issues in Agenda 21 were not agreed upon prior to the conference, including forest protection, desertification, financing, and who would oversee the implementation of Agenda 21.
- i) The developing countries suspect that the preservation of their forests is advocated only so that these can act as a sink for the carbon dioxide produced in the West.
- The North-South standoff on this point was resolved by changing the language to read, "the parties will consider calling for a treaty on forest issues."

- ii) Desertification affects one-quarter of the earth's landmass and is a particular problem in Africa.
- Over 100 countries and some 800 million people are affected by it, with Australia, the U.S. and the Commonwealth of Independent States heading the list of industrialized countries.
- It can be combated by reforestation, afforestation and soil conservation.
- The wording describing the issue of desertification raised opposition from the South, which wanted a firm commitment to negotiate a treaty, whereas the U.S. recommended attacking the causes of desertification.
- The final outcome was a call for the adoption of an international convention on this subject.

- iii) The final major area of contention concerned who would oversee the financing and implementation of Agenda 21.
- Most countries wanted the establishment of a new UN monitoring agency to be called the Commission for Sustainable Development.
- This was finally agreed to but the details of implementation were not determined.
- A recommendation that funding be handled by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) met with opposition from the Third World, whose concerns were based on the GEF's connection to the World Bank and thus the industrialized world.
- The World Bank's environmental record has been poor and the Third World has had little influence over it in the past.
- In the end, a compromise agreement was that funds would be directed through a variety of entities including the GEF, regional banks and bilateral aid.

- **The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development**
- It had been hoped that the Earth Charter drafted five years earlier as a moral framework for environmental development would be adopted as a legally binding document at the Conference.
- It affirmed the rights of all citizens to a clean environment and the rights of developing countries to pursue sustainable development.
- Instead, the Earth Charter was replaced by a 27-clause statement of principles called the Rio Declaration.

- ***The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*** supports Agenda 21 by defining the rights and responsibilities of States regarding these issues. Among its principles are:
- That human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature;
- That scientific uncertainty should not delay measures to prevent environmental degradation where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage;
- That States have a sovereign right to exploit their own resources but not to cause damage to the environment of other States;

- That eradicating poverty and reducing disparities in worldwide standards of living are “indispensable” for sustainable development;
- That the full participation of women is essential for achieving sustainable development; and,
- That the developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

- **The Statement of Forest Principles**
- It is the *non–legally binding* statement of principles for the sustainable management of forests,
- It is the first global consensus reached on forests. Among its provisions:
- That all countries, notably developed countries, should make an effort to “green the world” through reforestation and forest conservation;
- That States have a right to develop forests according to their socio-economic needs, in keeping with national sustainable development policies; and,

- That specific financial resources should be provided to develop programmes that encourage economic and social substitution policies.
- At the Summit, the UN was also called on to negotiate an international legal agreement:
 - on desertification,
 - to hold talks on preventing the depletion of certain fish stocks,
 - to devise a programme of action for the sustainable development of small island developing States; and
 - to establish mechanisms for ensuring the implementation of the Rio accords.

- **The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**
- The ultimate objective of this convention and any related legal instruments that the Conference of the Parties may adopt is to achieve, in accordance with the relevant position provisions of the Convention, stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.
- Such a level should be achieved within a time frame sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner.

- The ***main principles*** of this convention state that the developed world must take the lead in combating climate change and its adverse effects.
- The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicts that if present emission trends for greenhouse gases continue, the average global temperature will increase by 1.5-4.5° C by the middle of next century.
- Some scientists claim the global warming threat is exaggerated since the predictions are based on computer modelling and theoretical models of the atmosphere so complex that even those strongly convinced that global warming will take place feel the analyses are oversimplified.

- The discussions on climate change took place from February 1991 to May 1992 and concluded with a framework convention agreed to by more than 130 countries.
- The key elements of the convention are:
 - new and additional financial resources to meet convention goals;
 - promotion of transfer of technology to developing countries; and,
 - an institutional mechanism to enable the international community to manage the climate change problem over the long term, working with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

- **The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity**
- Conserving biological diversity has become an urgent issue. It has gone beyond the laboratory, and as UNCED demonstrated, it has become an issue debated in political arenas.
- The objectives of this Convention, to be pursued in accordance with its relevant provisions, are:
 - the conservation of biological diversity,
 - the sustainable use of its components and,
 - the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including by appropriate access to genetic resources and by the appropriate transfer of relevant technologies, taking into account all rights over those resources and to technologies, and by appropriate funding.

- Conservation of biodiversity is more than an aesthetic or moral issue; it is integral to our health and economy.
- Species loss threatens the natural resources upon which sustainable development depends.
- Genetic material from plant and animal species (many still undiscovered) is the foundation for the agricultural, pharmaceutical and other biotechnology-based industries.
- It is estimated that one-quarter of all the pharmacological products used in North America contain ingredients derived from wild plants.
- Biodiversity is integral to the maintenance of the environment and supports water purification, soil production, carbon cycling and oxygen production.

- **Johannesburg Summit 2002**
- The **World Summit on Sustainable Development, WSSD** or **Earth Summit 2002** took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002.
- It was convened to discuss sustainable development by the United Nations.
- WSSD gathered a number of leaders from business and non-governmental organizations, 10 years after the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. (It was therefore also informally nicknamed "Rio+10".)
- The conference Secretary General of the Earth Summit 2002 was Nitin Desai.

- The WSSD produced three types of outcomes:
- A political declaration known as the ***‘Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development’***;
- The ***‘Johannesburg Plan of Implementation’***, a 65-page document restating existing targets e.g. Millennium Development Goals and a limited number of new commitments; and
- ‘Type II’ non-negotiated, partnership commitments by governments and other stakeholders, including business and non governmental organisations.

- **The Johannesburg Declaration** built on earlier declarations made at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment at Stockholm in 1972, and the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.
- While committing the nations of the world to sustainable development, it also included substantial mention of multilateralism as the path forward.
- In terms of the political commitment of parties, the Declaration was a more general statement than the Rio Declaration.
- It was an agreement to focus particularly on "the worldwide conditions that pose severe threats to the sustainable development of our people, which include:
 - Chronic hunger;
 - Malnutrition;

- Foreign occupation;
- Armed conflict;
- Illicit drug problems;
- Organized crime;
- Corruption;
- Natural disasters;
- Illicit arms trafficking;
- Trafficking in persons;
- Terrorism;
- Intolerance and incitement to racial, ethnic, religious and other hatreds;
- Xenophobia; and,
- Endemic, communicable and chronic diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.“

- The One hundred Heads of State and Government who attended the WSSD agreed with the political declaration.
- Delays in completing negotiations on the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation left little time for full and effective consultations on the content of the declaration.
- A few notable references include the following:
 - - Recognition that the deep fault line that divides human society between rich and poor poses a major threat to global security and stability;
 - - Recognition that globalisation has added a new dimension to the challenges of sustainable development, with the benefits and costs of globalisation unevenly distributed;
 - - Recognition that a lack of action to fundamentally change the lives of those who suffer the consequences of global disparities may lead the poor of the world to lose confidence in democratic systems;

- - A call on developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the internationally agreed ODA targets (0.7% of GNP for ODA);
- - Support for the emergence of stronger regional groupings and alliances, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to promote sustainable development;
- - Recognition of the private sector's duty to contribute to the evolution of equitable and sustainable communities and societies; and the need for private sector corporations to enforce corporate accountability within a transparent and stable regulatory environment;

- - Recognition of the need for strengthened and improved governance at all levels, for the effective implementation of Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;
- - Recognition of the need for more effective, democratic and accountable international and multilateral institutions;
- - A commitment to monitor progress at regular intervals towards the achievement of sustainable development goals and objectives;

- **The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation**, negotiated by governments, sets out in more detail the action that needs to be taken in specific areas, including gaps in implementation of Agenda 21 but also introducing new action themes such as ***globalisation*** and ***corporate accountability***.
- The main commitments agreed in the Plan of Implementation are:
 - - Halving the number of people lacking access to basic sanitation by 2015;
 - - Minimising the harmful effects on health and the environment from the production and use of chemicals by 2020;

- Halting the decline in fish stocks and restoring them to sustainable levels by 2015;
- - Reducing the loss of biodiversity by 2010;
- - Increasing ‘substantially’ the use of renewable energies in global energy consumption; and
- - Setting up a ten-year framework for programmes on sustainable consumption and production.

- **Type II Commitments by governments and other stakeholders** to a broad range of partnership activities and initiatives that will implement sustainable development at the national, regional and international level.
- Instead of new agreements between governments, the Earth Summit was organized mostly around almost "partnership initiatives" known as Type II, as opposed to Type I Partnerships which are the more classic outcome of international treaties.
- Over 220 partnerships (with US\$235 million in resources) were identified in advance of the Summit and around 60 partnerships were announced during the Summit, including major initiatives by the US, Japan, UK, Germany, France and the EU.

- For example, the European Union announced its ‘Water for Life’ initiative which sought to engage partners to meet goals for water and sanitation, primarily in Africa and Central Asia.
- During a press conference on 3 September, the President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, conceded, however, that the US\$1.4 billion allocation for water and sanitation schemes was not ‘new money’.
- He added that the European Union intended to increase its allocation of funds towards these areas. One partnership initiative drew more attention than most, when Greenpeace teamed up with the business and industry lobby group, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, to call on the public and private sectors to step up action to combat climate change risks.

- The return of the partnership debate – first launched at UNCED in 1992 – has provided the private sector with an opportunity to present itself as part of the solution to the problem of implementation.
- In the run up to the Summit, industry lobby groups such as the International Chamber of Commerce and Business Action for Sustainable Development, with the support of the United States, urged the adoption of public-private partnerships between UN agencies, governments, companies and NGOs.
- However, the debate also taps into concerns linked to the debate on globalisation, corporate accountability and governance.

- **Corporate Responsibility and Accountability**
- Governments agreed at the Summit to actively promote corporate responsibility and accountability, based on the Rio Principles, and to support continuous improvement in corporate practices in all countries.
- Tariq Banuri has described the growing importance of global public policy networks (GPPN) that have emerged over the last decade in response to widening gaps in policy making created by globalisation, trade liberalisation and the information revolution. He believes that such networks can contribute to thinking about gaps which have opened up in areas such as policy delivery and ethics.

- **The Rio+20 Conference 2012**
- The Conference Secretary-General for Rio+20, Sha Zukang was quoted as saying:
 - *“We have enough papers; we have enough conferences. What we need to do now is something really different: Rio+20 should be not another conference in normal sense; it should be a conference of action, a conference of implementation of what we have agreed twenty or ten years ago.”*
- The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) commonly known as the **Rio+20 Conference** took place in Rio de Janeiro between the 20th and 22nd June 2012, twenty years after the UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development) that was also hosted in Rio in 1992.

- More than 150 heads-of-state and ministers kicked off the Rio+20 Conference on 20 June 2012.
- However, leaders like Barack Obama (USA), David Cameron (UK), and Angela Merkel (Germany) as well as dozens of other leaders did not attend the Conference.
- The absence of so many key figures was viewed as unfavourable to global sustainability governance. Gro Harlem Brundtland, famous for her 1987 WCED report, also pointed out that the absence of world's leading heads-of-state was not good and it did not look good.

- **Rio+20 objectives**
- Over 190 countries agreed to the conclusions contained in the document of the Rio+20 Summit, *The Future We Want*.
- The document emphasised the importance of making progress towards sustainable development globally and set out principles and processes to help achieve that goal.
- The 49-page document reaffirmed previous international commitments (the Rio Principles and Agenda 21 agreed at the original Earth Summit in 1992 and the Johannesburg Plan for Implementation agreed at the 'Rio+10' Summit in Johannesburg in 2002) and set out renewed global priorities.

- The Rio+20 Document contains six main sections:
- I. Our Common vision
- II. Renewing Political Commitment
- III. Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication
- IV. Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development
- V. Framework for action and follow-up
- VI. Means of Implementation

- **Our Common Vision**
- The first section is made up of 13 paragraphs that are mainly concerned with the vision of the summit which is the pursuit of sustainable development. This vision is driven by the need to ensure the “promotion of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable future for our planet and for present and future generations” (UNCSD, 2012).
- It identified poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge and emphasizes:
 - “We recognize that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.”

- **Renewing Political Commitment**
- This section consists of 42 paragraphs and is divided into 3 subsections.
- The first mainly reaffirms the Rio 1992 principles and past action plans.
- The second is preoccupied with the assessment the progress made and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development and addressing new and emerging challenges.
- In this context, especially four urgent problems seemed to be still far away from the solution:
- I. Poverty (par.21, 23),

- II. Unemployment (par.24),
- III. Climate Change (par.25), and,
- IV. The relationship between people and ecosystems (and particularly considering the poor and their livelihoods) (par.30).
- The third subsection, in its 14 paragraphs, stresses the necessity of “engaging major groups and other stakeholders” and highlighted especially that “broad public participation and access to information and judicial and administrative proceedings are essential to the promotion of sustainable development” that also requires involvement and active participation (par.43).

- The main three objectives of the Rio+20 Conference were:
 - a) to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development,*
 - b) to assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and*
 - c) to address new and emerging challenges.*
- The conference focused mainly on two themes:
 - I). A green economy in the context of SD and poverty eradication;**
 - II). The institutional framework for SD.**

- In addition, seven critical issues were recognised during the preparatory work for the conference and were given 'priority attention': jobs, energy, cities, food, water, oceans, and disasters.
- **The Seven Critical Issues and Priority Areas in Rio+20**

1) Jobs

Economic action and social policies to create gainful employment are critical for social cohesion and stability. It's also crucial that work is geared to the needs of the natural environment. "Green jobs" are positions in agriculture, industry, services and administration that contribute to preserving or restoring the quality of the environment.

2) Energy

Sustainable energy is needed for strengthening economies, protecting ecosystems and achieving equity. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is leading a Sustainable Energy for All initiative to ensure universal access to modern energy services, improve efficiency and increase use of renewable sources.

3) Cities

At their best, cities have enabled people to advance socially and economically. Many challenges exist to maintaining cities in a way that continues to create jobs and prosperity while not straining land and resources. The challenges cities face can be overcome in ways that allow them to continue to thrive and grow, while improving resource use and reducing pollution and poverty.

4) Food

If done right, agriculture, forestry and fisheries can provide nutritious food for all and generate decent incomes, while supporting people-centred rural development and protecting the environment. The challenges facing the world includes soil degradation, freshwater, oceans, forests and biodiversity. Climate change is also mounting even more pressure on the natural resources. The food and agriculture sector offers key solutions for development, and is central for hunger and poverty eradication.

5) Water

The importance of water is underscored by the fact that every year millions of people, most of them children, die from diseases associated with inadequate water supply, sanitation and hygiene. Water scarcity, poor water quality and inadequate sanitation negatively impact food security, livelihood choices and educational opportunities for poor families across the world.

6) Oceans

The world's oceans - their temperature, chemistry, currents and life - drive global systems that make the Earth habitable for humankind. Careful management of this essential global resource is a key feature of a sustainable future.

7) Disasters

Disasters caused by earthquakes, floods, droughts, hurricanes, tsunamis and more can have devastating impacts on people, environments and economies. But resilience -- the ability of people and places to withstand these impacts and recover quickly -- remains possible. With a quickening pace of natural disasters taking a greater toll on lives and property, and a higher degree of concentration of human settlements, a smart future means planning ahead and staying alert.

Green Economy in the Context of SD and Poverty Eradication

- The term green economy came to the fore in 2009 against a backdrop of global financial crisis.
- With rising unemployment and inequality across all continents, a new vision for greener, fairer and more inclusive economies arose, championed by many as the only solution to the current monetary malaise.
- Building on this momentum, Rio+20 included green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” as one of its two primary themes.

- However in reality the green economy concept proved controversial at Rio+20 and negotiations were challenging.
- This was partly due to the lack of an internationally agreed definition or set of principles for green economy and a lack of clarity around what green economy policy measures encompass.
- As a consequence, commitments on the green economy at Rio+20 were perhaps not as strong or as far-reaching as some would have hoped.

- The document affirmed that policies for green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should be guided by and in accordance with all the Rio principles, Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and contribute towards achieving relevant internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs.

- It also acknowledged that green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication will enhance our ability to manage natural resources sustainably and with lower negative environmental impacts, increase resource efficiency and reduce waste.
- The Document encouraged each country to consider the implementation of green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, in a manner that endeavours to drive sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth and job creation, particularly for women, youth and the poor.

- In this respect, it noted the importance of ensuring that workers were equipped with the necessary skills, including through education and capacity building, and were provided with the necessary social and health protections. In this regard, we encourage all stakeholders, including business and industry to contribute, as appropriate.
- It invited governments to improve knowledge and statistical capacity on job trends, developments and constraints and integrate relevant data into national statistics, with the support of relevant UN agencies within their mandates.

- **Institutional Framework for sustainable development**
- The Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD) refers to the collection of bodies, organizations, and networks that participate in policy formulation and execution at the national, regional and international levels.
- In other words, IFSD is the systems of governance which enable decision makers and stakeholders to create and implement sustainable development commitments, and is therefore seen as vital to the success of the agenda.

- The section on IFSD consists of 29 paragraphs divided into the following 5 subsections:
 - A. Strengthening the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social dimensions);
 - B. Strengthening intergovernmental arrangements for sustainable development;
 - C. Environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development;
 - D. International financial institutions and UN operational activities;
 - E. Regional, national, sub-national, local

- **Framework for action and follow-up**
- This is under the fifth section. The Framework for action and follow-up is divided into 2 sub-sections and 148 paragraphs.
- In the first subsection, a fairly high number of twenty-six thematic areas and cross-sectoral issues are addressed.
- The framework volunteered “to address remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, to address new and emerging challenges and to seize new opportunities through the actions enumerated below in this framework for action”. These thematic areas include:

- i. Poverty eradication
- ii. Food security and nutrition and sustainable agriculture
- iii. Water and sanitation
- iv. Energy
- v. Sustainable tourism
- vi. Sustainable transport
- vii. Sustainable cities and human settlements
- viii. Health and population
- ix. Promoting full and productive employment, decent work for all, and social protections
- x. Oceans and Seas
- xi. Small island developing States (SIDS)

- xii. Least developed countries
- xiii. Landlocked least developed countries
- xiv. Africa
- xv. Regional efforts
- xvi. Disaster risk reduction
- xvii. Climate change
- xviii. Forests
- xix. Biodiversity
- xx. Desertification, land degradation and drought
- xxi. Mountains
- xxii. Chemicals and waste
- xxiii. Sustainable Consumption and Production
- xxiv. Mining
- xxv. Education
- xxvi. Gender equality and women's empowerment

- The second subsection deals with the elaboration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- SDGs indicates a very strong commitment to Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This paragraph potentially reflects the idea or fears that a new framework on SDGs would need to take into account that the UN process on MDGs is still ongoing with regard to implementation and review of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 UN Development Agenda.
- Thus, integrating SDGs with MDGs would be, on the one hand, a critical challenge as well as opportunity to harmonise development aspiration of developing countries and the plea for environmental protection of the developed countries in a single framework.

- **Means of implementation**
- The last section of the document is called Means of implementation and contains 32 paragraphs divided into five subsections: A. Finance, B. Technology, C. Capacity-building, D. Trade and E. Registry of commitments.
- Means and Implementation reaffirm that the means of implementation identified in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development are indispensable for achieving full and effective translation of sustainable development commitments into tangible sustainable development outcomes.

- In the Finance subsection, the call on all countries “to prioritize sustainable development in the allocation of resources in accordance with national priorities and needs” is significant.
- Moreover, it is agreed that, by 2014, an intergovernmental committee, comprising thirty experts nominated by regional groups, with equitable geographical representation, will implement a process that will (i) assess financing needs, (ii) consider the effectiveness, consistency and synergies of existing instruments and frameworks, and (iii) evaluate additional initiatives.
- This will serve to prepare a report proposing options on an effective Sustainable Development Financing Strategy to facilitate the mobilization of resources and their effective use in achieving sustainable development objectives.

- The roles of technology, of technology transfer and of the science-policy interface are also emphasized with a special focus on the “the need to facilitate informed policy decision-making on sustainable development issues”.
- In this regards, capacity building has a major status together with the importance of human resource development that includes “training, the exchange of experiences and expertise, knowledge transfer and technical assistance for capacity-building”.
- Therefore, with the purpose of enhancing national capabilities and the quality of research for decision- and policy-making processes, scientists and researchers are encouraged to participate in processes related to global environmental and sustainable development assessment and monitoring.

- While recognising that international trade is an engine for development and sustained economic growth, it also reaffirms the critical role that a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, as well as meaningful trade liberalization, can play in stimulating economic growth and development worldwide, thereby benefiting all countries at all stages of development, as they advance towards sustainable development.

- **What are the major results achieved at Rio+20?**
- The main outcome of the event seems the plan to set up Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- However, negotiators in Rio were unable to agree on themes, which will now be left to an “open working group” of 30 nations to decide upon by September 2013. Two years later, the SDGs will be blended with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).
- In terms of global SD governance, the fact that the UN Environment Program (UNEP) will be upgraded is surely a fundamental result, especially toward a strengthened environmental pillar, also in the UN system.

- UNEP will, therefore, get a more secure budget, a broader membership and strong powers to initiate scientific research and coordinate global environment strategies.
- What should be noted is the establishment of a new body – “a universal intergovernmental high-level political forum” – that will substitute the Commission of Sustainable Development (CSD).
- Also prominent is the need to “strengthen the science-policy interface” in order to “to facilitate informed policy decision-making” on SD issues.
- it also strongly commit nations to move to a green economy that integrates environmental and social costs into decision-making.

- **Criticisms**
- it offers precious little in terms of finding active solutions to the various problems it “recognizes, “acknowledges” or “notes.”
- The entire document leaves so much to be desired. From a policy standpoint, there is nothing there that offers any kind of support for moving sustainability forward.
- Indeed, the document would seem more appropriate for the first **Rio Earth Summit** rather than this one. It does a splendid job of acknowledging what has been achieved but it fails to mention what still needs to be done.

- Apart from the lack of strong language, the draft also disappoints when it comes to pursuing active commitments on a timeline and actually getting world leaders to arrive at an action plan.
- ***The Guardian*** (London), argued that the Summit document contains almost no timetables, definitions or ways to monitor new sustainable development goals.
- Prior to the summit, there was hope that there would be a set of goals in each socio-enviro sector like food scarcity, renewable energy, ocean protection, women's empowerment etc. Not only are these poorly defined, there is also no clear direction on how to move forward.

- Overall, the document drew criticisms from many civil society leaders. For instance, Jim Leape, the head of WWF has said that, “It’s pathetic. If this text proposed by Brazil is accepted, then the last year of negotiations has been a colossal waste of time. If you saw this document without knowing what it was supposed to be, you might think Rio+20 was convened as a seminar.”
- On several issues, the document left the science and engineering communities dismayed. For example, scientists had hoped that the text would express urgency over the accumulated evidence that many of the planet's systems are now under dangerous stress, threatening, for example, fish numbers and terrestrial food chains.
- But it proved impossible to reconcile such a statement, and its implied support for limiting economic growth, with the paramount goal — namely, how to raise more than one billion people out of extreme poverty, a task for which many claim economic growth remains essential.

- Research communities also complained that science was not given the same prominence as a critical component of sustainable development solutions as it had been in documents generated by the 1992 summit. In particular, no section of the final document includes the word "science" in its title.
- Gro Harlem Brundtland said the outcome document leaves out reproductive rights, an omission she called "a step backwards." She was not alone in her criticism. Family planning advocates, including the International Planned Parenthood Federation, said reproductive rights had once again been sidelined.