

ON THE ROAD TO RIO+20



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Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

This brochure presents a brief background on the Rio+20 process and highlights spaces available for participation of civil society organizations in the process. It presents the key concepts of sustainable development and main messages from the positions of civil society organizations from the Arab region and other regions of the world in regards to the Rio+20 process.

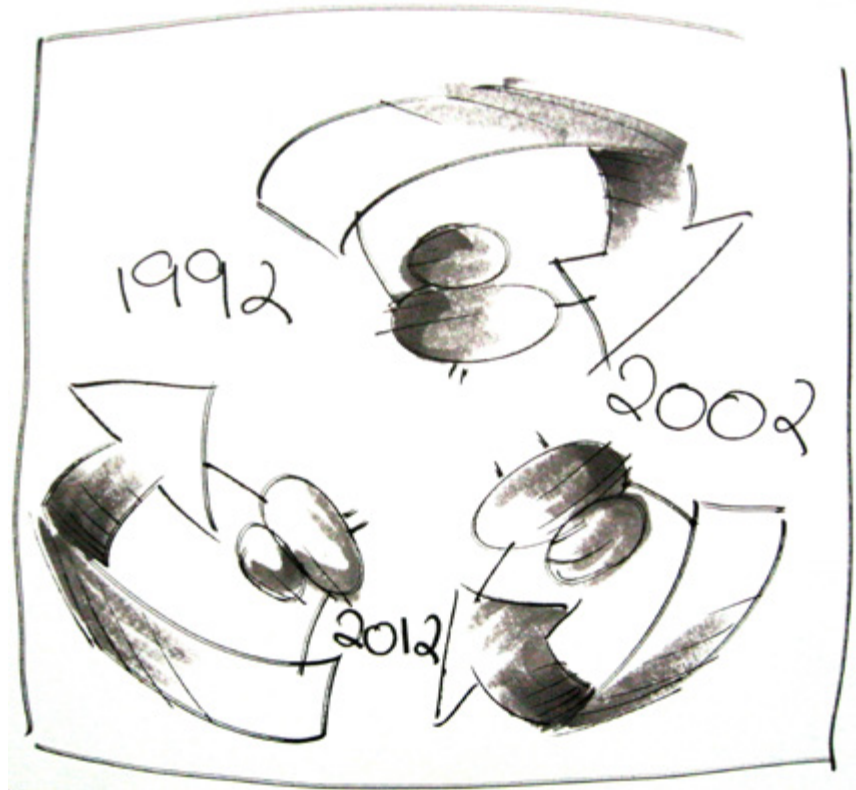
I. Rio+20 in a Nutshell:

20 years after the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) and 10 years after the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) presents an opportunity with great importance to revive commitments towards sustainable development.

The global Conference takes place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil between the 20th and the 22nd of June 2012.

The two main themes for Rio+20 are:

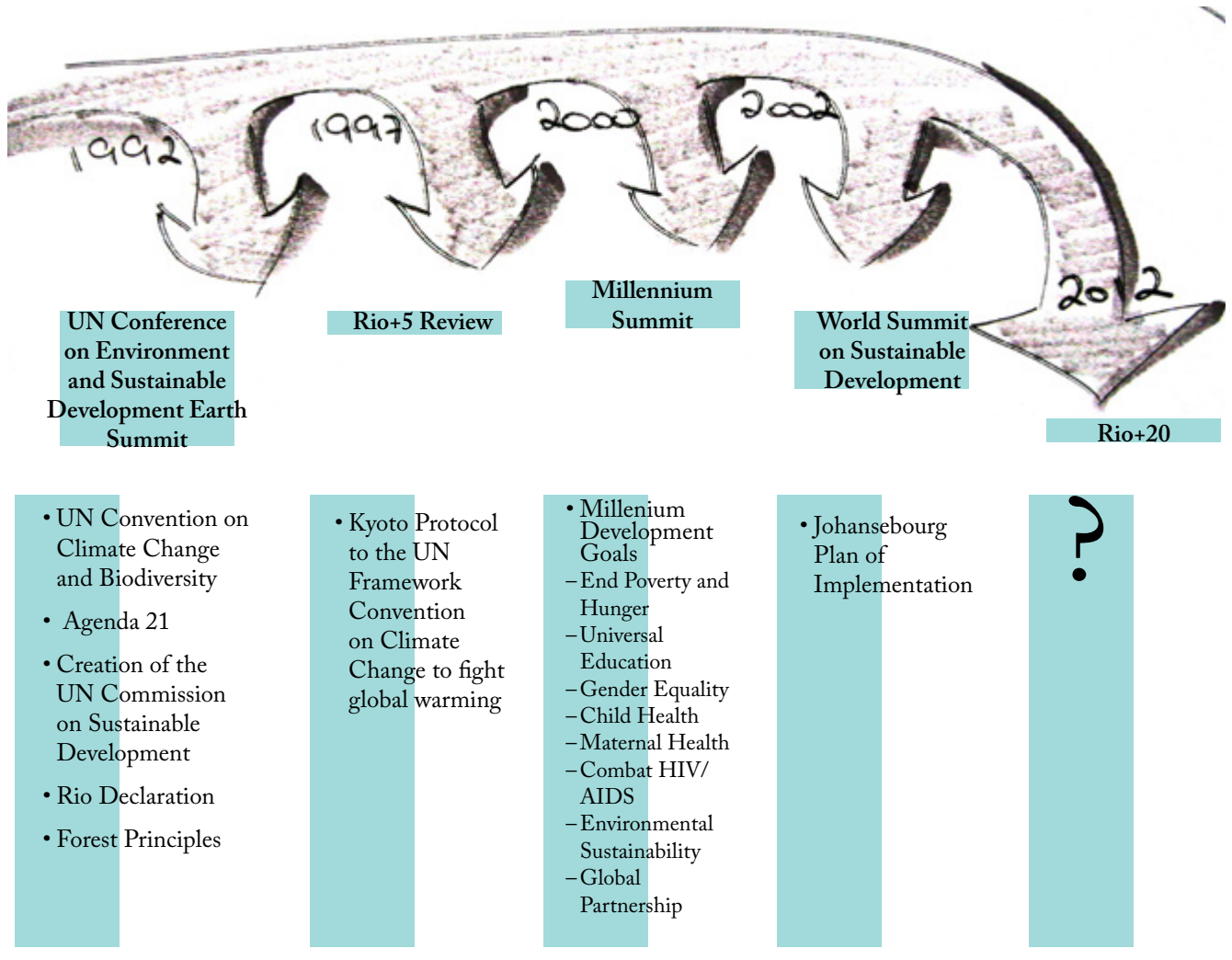
- a. a green economy in the context of poverty eradication
- b. the institutional framework for sustainable development.



Rio+20 aims to:

- Secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development.
- Assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development.
- Address new and emerging challenges.

Sustainable Development Time Line



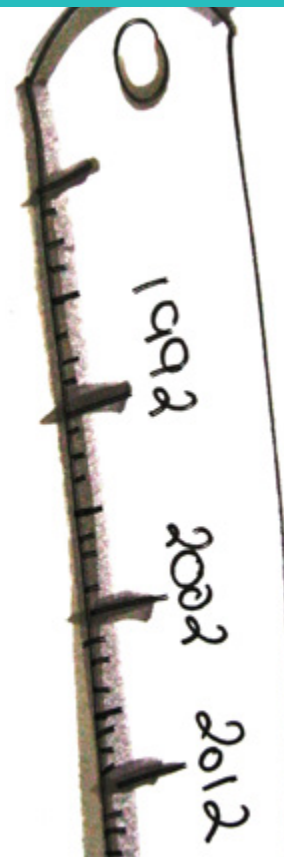
II. Civil Society Organizations' Engagement with the Rio+20 Process

«One of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making.»
Agenda 21, Chapter 23

Civil society was recognized as a crucial player at global summits earlier in 1972's Stockholm Summit. The engagement of civil society in international decision-making on sustainable development gained further momentum during the Earth Summit in Rio through nine Major Groups. The groups include indigenous peoples, farmers, workers and trade unions, local authorities, business and industry, science and technology community, women, children and youth and non-governmental organizations. The World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 became "the most participatory summit with non-state actors in the same venue and interacting directly, rather than parallel forums"².

With regard to Rio+20, civil society groups' engagement could start BEFORE the conference, DURING the conference, and AFTER the conference. This could include:

2. Sustainable Development Governance towards Rio+20: Framing the Debate, by Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, for Stakeholder Forum



UN Dates to Follow:

- **Preparatory Committee Meetings:** To discuss the substantive themes of the Conference. First between 16 - 18 May 2010; Second between 7- 8 March 2011, and the Third between 13- 15 June 2012
- **Informal-Informal Consultations:** To provide "informal-informal" negotiations on the outcome document.
- **Initial discussions on the zero draft of outcome document (25 -27 January 2012):**
 - First round of 'informal-informal' negotiations on the zero draft of outcome document (19 Mar- 23 March 2011).
 - Second round (23 April-4 May 2012).



BEFORE:

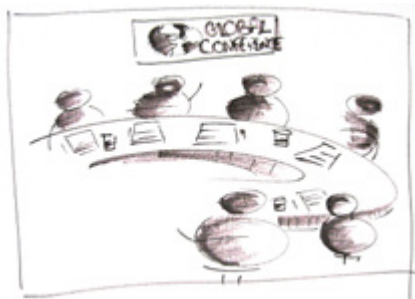
- Organize and take part in national and regional civil society consultations (Regional Multi - stakeholder Meeting in the Arab Region- October 2011- organized by ANND and ESCWA).
- Follow and take part in the UN preparatory meetings Submissions to the draft negotiation text by government.
- Contribute to awareness raising through different channels, including social media, newsletters, brochures/ booklets³.
- Follow the national official processes (through being in touch with National Official

Delegates, taking part in the Stocktaking Report⁴ and in multi-stakeholder meetings.

- Follow and engage with national, regional, and global campaigns⁵.
- Participate in the regional multi- stakeholders preparatory meeting organized by the regional secretariat of the Council of the Arab Ministers of Environment (CAMRE) (Cairo, October 2011).

DURING:

- Be in touch with your government representatives going to the Summit and actively engage in lobbying in Rio.



- Organize side events during Rio+20 or off-site events and contribute to other workshops.
- Continue updating / raising awareness about the decisions taken in Rio+20 at national level.

AFTERWARDS:

- Follow-up the outcomes of the conference, undertake analysis of the outcomes from a human rights, development and gender perspectives.
- Engage in monitoring the policies at national level-in light of the outcomes of the Rio+20.

3. i.e. Newsletter on Rio+20, Own the Edge

4. The First issue of the newsletter available at <http://us2.campaign-archive1.com/?u=19d3da1852472c315fccc5dd&cid=3405be5834&ce=affb2d825>

5. Stocktaking Report is a 20 - 30 page report prepared by national consultant through interviews, consultations. The report includes where possible intermediate objectives and activities, indicators and institutional frameworks for achieving the sustainable development goals. Any other relevant documentation of national strategies, plans, policies, capacity needs assessments, and practical experiences are included in the report. The report is aimed to feed into the discussions to take place during the multi-stakeholder meeting.

III. Spotlight on Key Concepts and Main Issues Raised by Civil Society Organizations from the Arab Region

Sustainable Development requires ensuring a complete integration and a comprehensive developmental approach including the three main policy pillars: Social, Economic and Environment. The consensus on the concept should be supported with genuine political commitment that leads to real progress. The concept of Sustainable Development, as it emerged from the 1992 UN conference in Rio, was adopted within this comprehensive approach and was clearly reflected by Agenda 21, including the need to reconsider the consumption and production patterns. Since then, political commitment towards sustainable development has been unfortunately shrinking. Consequently, it is imperative that Sustainable Development Goals will become part of the post-2015 UN Development Agenda. This necessitates the definition of agreed upon indicators of sustainable development measuring progress, while incorporating Human Rights at the core of the accountability mechanisms.

Economic Growth: Developing countries, including Arab countries, need to move away from their exclusive focus on economic growth, to address how economic growth is created, and how that process dynamically interacts with development objectives such as employment generation, reduction of poverty, and overall redressing of inequalities. This would include revising overall production and consumption trends focusing on human rights, equity, fairness and common but differentiated responsibilities.

partnership for development. However, any new concept should suggest the road map towards the achievement of the goals and not to propose new definitions and concepts.



Trade: Trade and investment policies should support democratically identified long-term dynamic development processes at the heart of which is rebuilding productive sectors, employment generation, and redistribution. Furthermore,

international trade rules should not be used as tools to fight against public support directed towards developing alternative energy sources and technologies, nor for trade protectionism, nor blocking the use of new 'environmental' technologies by developing country peoples. Environmental norms and standards should become an additional tool for non-tariff barriers, limiting the market access of the goods from developing countries.

Green Economy: The 'Green Economy' concept should not become a step backwards from the initial commitments to Agenda 21. Any roadmap towards a 'Green Economy' cannot be conceived outside the existing consensus towards Sustainable Development and necessitate a revitalization of global



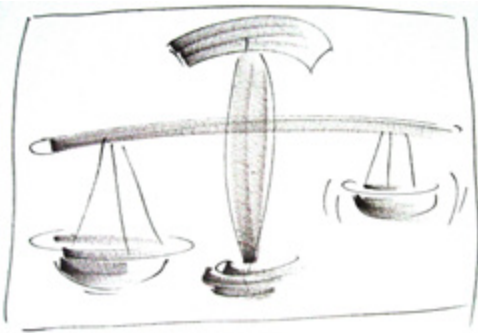


The Role of the State:

It is evident that the process of rolling back government's role in economic matters needs reconsideration. There is a need to revive the role of the developmental state

that takes an active role, along development and market actors, in sustainable development processes. The state should be perceived as the main actor in protecting the rights of the most vulnerable groups in society.

Common but Differentiated Responsibilities: This principle of 'common and differentiated responsibilities' is the basis for the equitable sharing of the efforts between developed and developing countries to shift from unsustainable to sustainable patterns of consumption and production.



Finance: Core to rethinking sustainable development should be efforts towards restructuring "the flawed financial system that creates global instabilities and that continues to result in net South-North flows of resources through various pathways"⁶.

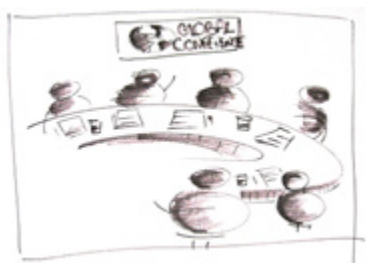


Private Sector: While the private sector is an important partner in the development process, corporate social and environmental responsibility should progress from being voluntary to being mandatory and systemic. Private sector actors are asked to develop the clear mechanisms to demonstrate their commitment and practice in the interest of sustainable development, while respecting internationally agreed principles including the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' Framework, ILO principles and labour standards.

Upgrading the Commission on Sustainable Development to a High Level Council on Sustainable Development: Both developing and developed countries need strengthened institutions that operate within intraregional and intra-thematic coordination and cooperation structures, with a focus on "bottom-up" participatory governance. The mandate and principles of a High Level Council on Sustainable Development should be rooted in the 1992 Rio Principles, Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation can serve as solid references.

6. i.e. Global Petition Campaign and initiatives beyond Rio+20 as the Peoples' Sustainability Treaties

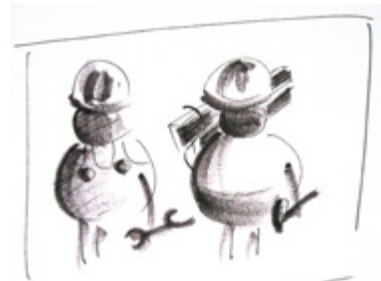
IV. Highlights from Major Groups Positions on Zero Draft and Rio+20



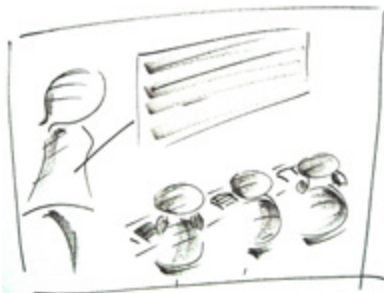
Least Developing Countries (LDCs): “Out of this process, we expect an inclusive and result-oriented outcome document from the Rio+20 Conference. This should be built on Rio principles, Agenda 21 and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation keeping in mind the goal of ensuring the positive and sustainable impact on the livelihood of the multitude of poor people in the rapidly changed context of the current times”.



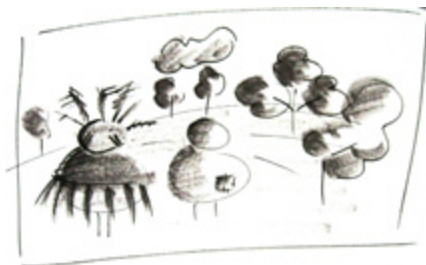
Women Groups: “Many women’s lives and livelihoods suffer from the current injustices. Rio+20 outcomes should strongly voice the failure of the neo-liberal system, where corporate interests have priority over human lives and should acknowledge that small adjustments are not enough. A major paradigm shift is necessary”.



Workers: “We will not support a green economy based just on voluntary measures by the private sector. The green economy should be a lot more and a lot better regulated than the current economy and perform better socially and environmentally. Trade unions have presented a list of principles to guide it: it should be equitable, inclusive, based on a rights’ approach and a just transition, non speculative, etc...”.



Children: “We need measures to shift to a sustainable economy with a focus on poverty eradication, especially in the context of rising youth unemployment. With equal importance, Member States should guarantee that young people are key players in the green economy; receiving necessary education and specialized training as well as support for youth-led enterprise”.



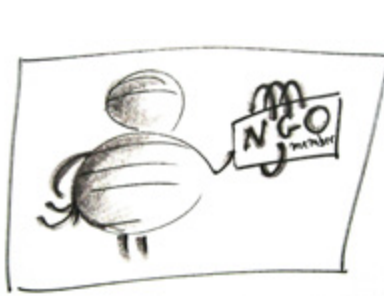
Indigenous People: “Beyond income, indigenous peoples and the poor need to have secure rights over their lands, territories and resources and to exercise their customary resource management and sustainable use systems, which are their basic sources of wealth and well-being”.



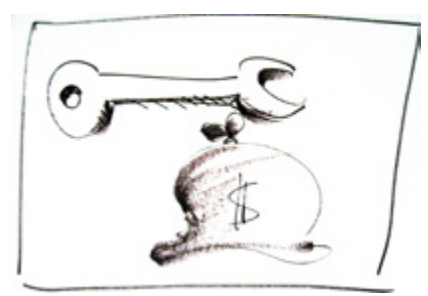
Local Authorities: “While renewed political commitment is first of all needed from the UN member states, other actors do have a role to play in that respect as well. At the level of government closest to the citizens, local authorities can help to link the people to the global processes. This can help to secure renewed political commitment”.



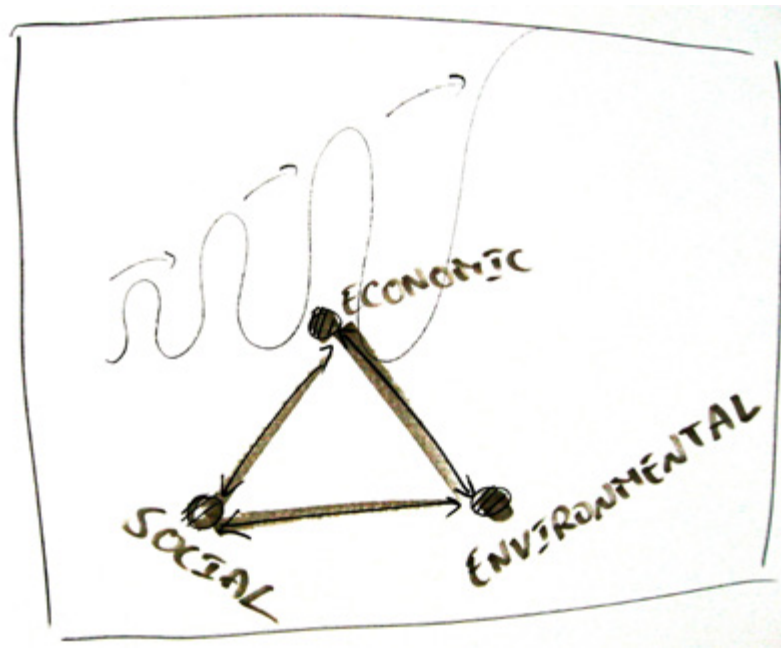
Farmers: “As one-third of the world’s population and one-half of its poor, farmers should be the 4th pillar of any sustainable development discussion. It is essential that the Rio +20 outcome contains an action plan that addresses the needs of farmers, particularly small scale farmers and the rural poor if the goals of poverty eradication, food security and sustainable development are to be achieved”.



NGO's: “Rio+20 should establish a Sustainable Development (SD) Council to rigorously review agencies and countries’ progress towards SD, with enhanced stakeholder participation. We also call for the establishment of Ombuds persons for Future Generations to serve as advocates and auditors at the heart of governments at all levels”.



Business and Industry: “Part of the challenge and opportunity for business and industry is to understand the concrete possibilities of a ‘Green Economy’ with its opportunities and risks for its many sectors in both developed and developing countries. Therefore, the actions needed to transition towards “Green Economy’ also varies from sector to sector and from a developed and developing country perspective, but the Green Economy must deliver economically viable products and services”.



About ANND

The Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) is a regional organization concerned mainly with social and economic policies and rights in the Arab region. ANND's interest in the Rio process comes from its deep commitment to sustainable development and its framework declared back in 1992 during the original Earth Summit. ANND has been following up the evolution of this process, working towards strengthening the political commitment of the governments in the region towards sustainable development and Agenda 21.

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