

Statement NGOs (Plenary session – 20th of June)

Thank you President

I am making this statement on behalf of the NGOs in Rio+20

It feels amazing to be sitting in this room among all the world leaders, and feeling all this power around me that can shape the World. We all know the threat that is facing us, and I do not need to repeat the urgency. Science is very clear. If we do not change in the coming five to ten years the way our societies function, we will be threatening the survival of future generations and all other species on the planet. Nevertheless, you sitting here in this room have the power to reverse all of this. What you can do here is the dream of each one of us: to have the opportunity to be the saviors of the planet. It is all up to you.

And yet we stand on the brink of Rio+20 being another failed attempt, with governments only trying to protect their narrow interests instead of inspiring the World and giving all of us back the faith in humanity that we need. If this happens, it would be a big waste of power, and a big waste of leadership.

You cannot have a document titled ‘the future we want’ without any mention of planetary boundaries, tipping points, or the Earth’s carrying capacity. The text as it stands is completely out of touch with reality. Just to be clear, NGOs here in Rio in no way endorse this document. Already more than 1,000 organisations and individuals have signed in only one day a petition called “The Future We Don’t Want” that completely refuses the current text. It does not in any way reflect our aspiration, and therefore we demand that the words “in full participation with civil society” are removed from the first paragraph.

If you adopt the text in its current form, you will fail to secure a future for the coming generations, including your own children.

To mention a few examples:

In the issue of finding resources to implement sustainable development, we see countries using the economic crisis as an excuse, while at the same time spending 100s of billions of dollars subsidizing the fossil fuel industry, the most profitable industry in the world. The first thing you can do is eliminating the existing harmful subsidies, especially fossil fuel subsidies, which was voted as the number one issue during the civil society dialogue.

Under the oceans section, you have failed to give a clear mandate to even start negotiating an implementing agreement to stop the Wild West abuse of the high seas.

There are many other failures in the document related to women’s reproduction health, missed opportunities to start new global treaties on civil society participation and on sustainability reporting, the extraordinary lack of any reference to armed conflicts, nuclear energy (especially after the Fukushima disaster), and many others.

But it is not too late. We do not believe that it is over. You are here for three more days, and you can still inspire us and the world. It would be a shame and a waste for you to only come here and sign off a document. We urge you to create new political will that would make us stand and applaud you as our true leaders.

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NGO 2 minutes statement at Interactive Dialogues (18.00-19.30h)

### **Thursday 14th of June**

Thank you chair,

Like yesterday, we want to reiterate points of concern on behalf of the NGOs Major Group:

We remain strongly committed to the principle of non-regression and support the bracketed language in paragraph 19 on this critical concept. Given the growing global ecological crisis, the outcome document must recognize the need to prevent backsliding on environmental protection and sustainable development. We urge states, which oppose the current text on non-regression to seriously reconsider their opposition or to propose constructive alternatives. We must not squander this opportunity for damage control.

The following are a few examples where we see regression on language from prior international agreements:

\* On the text referring to health, the Beijing plan of action and the “convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women” refer to rights, whereas now the language is being replaced by access to services. Rights language must return.

\* We remain concerned that the debate on access to information, public participation and access to justice is unresolved as paragraphs 68g and 93 ter are weaker than the rio 1992 outcome and JPOI. We urge states to commit to progress;

There is a growing fear that negotiations are backsliding on numerous principles and ambitions, while crises are increasing by the day.

\* The first groundbreaking report of the Club of Rome (and later many others) emphasized that there are limits to Growth. This reality must be acknowledged and reflected in the text by replacing “economic growth” with “economic prosperity.”

The protracted nature of the negotiations calls into question the very purpose of this conference. How can we “achieve international cooperation in solving international problems” as per the UN Charter, when negotiations are being driven by loyalties that do not extend beyond the nation state? The urgency of these matters must be reflected in the negotiations. In short, Rio+20 must build on agreed principles: there must be no regression

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### **Wednesday 13 of June**

Thanks Chair for giving us the opportunity to give you our concerns on the negotiations until now. As NGOs we are following quite closely the negotiations.

So this are the points NGOs want to raise today for you:

- on **Green Economy**: we want to reiterate again and again that we need to stop the GDP-growth addiction (esp in industrialised countries) so that we can move forward towards sustainable economies. We do not stop this with only pushing for other indicators, because this paradigm is of course also related with the need for a radical transformation of our current monetary system. We need to move from a “debt based economy towards a commons based economy to stay within our ecological limits. Unfortunately we don’t see any reference in the text on this idea. We regret the total unwillingness of the industrialised nations to discuss the lowering of their material resource consumption to sustainable levels. This needs to be done immediately to respect the carrying capacity of our Mother Earth and in favour of equal sharing of resources with underconsuming countries/regions.

On **Governance**: the Council of SD, under the GA, we demand, needs to be given coordinating capacity and the mandate to assure that all agreements are fully implemented and that the agreed goals will be met. This new Council must include pro-active participation of all Major Groups in the decision-making processes and implementation.

A lot of nice words has been said about the essential role of stakeholders in SD, so it is disappointing to see that there is low ambition to launch here in Rio the process for a global convention of environmental rights and public participation.

On **Education**: We emphasis the importance of including non-formal education in the negotiation text. Education for sustainable development supports the development of the whole personality and needs to be gender-based and equity-based.

-On **Subsidies**: We think it is shocking that after 10 years we are still supporting unsustainable patterns of production. This shows the lack of political will very clearly, and the priorities governments have. Please keep in mind that already the JPoI is made a reference to the need to get rid of the harmful subsidies. It is still unclear what will happen with the references to harmful subsidies in this text (Energy 6 on fossil fuel subsidies, Oceans 14 & 17 on fisheries, and Trade 2 on agriculture).

Thank you.