Donostia Declaration

Towards a world summit on sustainable development in 2012

December 2008
INTRODUCTION

On 13th – 14th November 2008, representatives of governments, stakeholders and the UN were invited to San Sebastian, Spain, to consider the possibility of a World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012. On the 4th of November, the G-77 and China tabled a motion in the United Nations General Assembly calling for such a Summit. This paper is a collection of the views expressed at the meeting. It forms a ‘Non Paper’ intended to stimulate discussion on the focus and structure of such a Summit.

I am reminded in writing this that the future is not a gift – but an achievement. Every previous generation has strived for a better and more secure world. The challenge for this generation is to strive for a bigger goal: that of a sustainable world. It is not a time for complacency to be content with today, or be timid or apathetic in the face of the challenges the world faces: business as usual is no longer an option. It is surely a time for boldness, for passion, for vision and for commitment to create a better and more sustainable future. As Einstein said:

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them."

The workshop was addressed, in person, by experts in policy and process, and veterans of previous sustainable development conferences. The workshop was also addressed via interactive video by Nitin Desai, former Secretary General of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development [from Delhi]; John Scanlon, Principal Advisor, Policy and Programme Team Leader, Strategic Implementation Team, Executive Office, UNEP [from Nairobi]; Olivier Deleuze, Chief, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch Division of Regional Cooperation, UNEP [from Nairobi]; Rémi Parmentier, Director of the Varda Group [from Madrid]; and Richard Sherman, governance advisor, Stakeholder Forum, and Programme Manager and Content Editor, IISD [from New York].
The workshop was organized by Stakeholder Forum. It was made possible by the financial support of the Basque regional Government and logistical support by IHOBE, IT consultancy Proyelia, the International Court of Environmental Arbitration and Conciliation Office of San Sebastian, and the office of the San Sebastian Film Festival. In particular I would like to thank Richard Black, Ibon Galarraga, Rémi Parmentier, Derek Osborn, Virginia Prieto, Hannah Stoddart, Michael Strauss, Genevieve Verbrugge and David Woollcombe, for the help they have given to organise the workshop and the production of the Donostia Declaration.

Felix Dodds
Executive Director
Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future
DONOSTIA DECLARATION

“Promoting development on a sustainable basis continues to constitute the only permanent and effective instrument for the establishment of peace, security and prosperity for individual countries and the international community as a whole.

We must not lose sight of this. We must create a new paradigm of international cooperation that takes into account the new global challenges and realities.”

Celso Amorium, Foreign Minister, Brazil

VISION

“We can do it – Yes we can”

President Elect Barack Obama

The Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio de Janiero was a major success. It identified the vast range of environmental, economic and social impacts threatening global ecosystems and human populations, and it integrated the complex agenda necessary to achieve sustainable development that could alleviate those threats. It convinced most of the world’s policy makers and much of the public of the imminent threats facing all of us, and most importantly triggered the momentum for the adoption of the Rio Conventions on Climate Change and Biological Diversity.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg [2002] pioneered specific strategies to include businesses and other stakeholders in sustainability program implementation – and particularly focused on the urgent problems of Africa. It took an additional step in convincing economic leaders to accept the need for implementing sustainable practices.
Two years earlier, the Millennium Development Summit [2000] prioritised achieving ambitious, tangible development goals for the world’s poorest populations, and it included sustainable strategies in its agenda for implementing them.

Since those summits, however, major new and urgent challenges have emerged that directly threaten local populations, regional ecosystems, national economies and the planet itself.

In the past two years, crises in Food Availability and in Energy Security emerged almost unanticipated and impacted both developed and developing countries. For almost a decade, extreme and erratic meteorological events – floods, droughts, heat waves, hurricanes and monsoons – have inundated coastlands, drowned cities, disrupted agriculture, instigated famines, spurred wildfire, caused near-permanent dust storms in certain regions, and led to the collapse of glaciers, ice caps and polar ice shelves that have stood intact for centuries. Their catastrophic impacts on human populations and ecosystems have occurred at an accelerated pace, beyond the worst-case scenarios of the IPCC.

Today, the international financial crisis threatens the stability of every nation’s economic system. The crisis reveals the risks posed by uncontrolled economic globalisation, and the potential negative impacts on environment and development goals. It also illustrates the results of a total failure to integrate environmental, social and development priorities into global economic policy.

Furthermore the problems addressed at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 have not been solved. Dangerous climate change has not been averted, the global loss of biodiversity has not been curbed and desertification has not been slowed. The wide-scale adoption and integration of sustainable development principles envisaged in Agenda 21 has not happened on anything like the scale needed. Despite the success of Rio as a summit with clear outcomes, those outcomes have not been transformed into real-world change.
The failure to implement agreed commitments, combined with the emergence of new challenges has substantially increased the threat to international peace and security and our survival on the planet itself. These challenges need urgently to be addressed, not only individually, but in an integrated model that provides a comprehensive new approach for the next few decades.

To address the challenges, UN agencies, national governments, civil society stakeholders and the general public need to engage in a new partnership for sustainable development – a blueprint for sustainable development, looking forward to 2030. These challenges also require an empowered mandate and an activist agenda by the international community tasked with monitoring and encouraging sustainable development.

WHY A SUMMIT IN 2012?

"God forbid that India should ever take to industrialisation after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom (the UK) is today keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 million took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts."

Mahatma Gandhi (1928)

A Summit must look forward to 2030 – a significant date in the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [2007] for stabilising GHG emissions. It is likely that this will also become the target for the next set of Millennium Development Goals [i.e. 2015-2030]. These goals will need to actively incorporate sustainable development principles. An Earth Summit in 2012 will help to ensure that this agenda is achievable, through creating a new and compelling vision of sustainable development for the 21st century.
Overall, a Summit should address the impact that uncontrolled globalisation is having on the ability of all people to live sustainably on our common planet. It should be the occasion for endorsing new binding agreements on key issues, undertaking new financial commitments, underpinning this with a global Green New Deal and reshaping global governance arrangements for sustainable development.

Politically, it seems that the time for a new global consensus is ripe. A new generation of national leaders is arriving; none of the G8 country Presidents or Prime Ministers who attended the Johannesburg Summit will be in office in 2012. Over the next four years, there will be new issues demanding urgent attention, new ideas for coordinated action to address them, and a new willingness to implement them. There will be potentially high interest in a global platform that can be utilized to project vision and leadership.

There is support for the idea that the Summit be a Heads of State and Government meeting, that it be a stand-alone event, and that it be held in a developing country. In recent years governments have moved away from the multiple summits of the 1990’s to organizing events at the UN HQ in New York. However, these events exclude global civil society and a great diversity of stakeholders – many of whom are the individuals and organisations needed to implement any agreement. Moving instead to an integrated summit process could not only bring the new ideas needed, but also bring energy and commitments from stakeholders to play an active and critical role in shaping and implementing agreements as they evolve.
A GLOBAL GREEN NEW DEAL

“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.”

President Franklin D. Roosevelt

In this new millennium, the world needs a new and challenging vision for achieving sustainable development, based on green, prosperous and equitable societies, rather than returning to the unsustainable production and consumption patterns of the past. The current economic crisis offers the opportunity to adopt a new development paradigm that leads to a liveable world, where all of its people and countries feel they are recognized as stakeholders with a share in the planet.

Economic globalization and uncontrolled free trade has been the organising principle of international economics until this point. Integrating economic, environmental and social sustainability and the promotion of natural and cultural diversity should be the organising principles for the 21st century. This is the only way to make use of the innovative mechanisms required to deal with the critical challenges presented by the current economic model which has resulted in an increased disparity between rich and poor, accelerated climate change; desertification, loss of biodiversity; degradation of ecosystems; and threats to food, water and energy security.

The financial crisis presents a real and tangible opportunity to reform the Breton Woods Institutions around the promotion of sustainable development. A reformed World Bank and International Monetary Fund that have at their hearts the promotion of sustainable development would ensure more socially equitable, economically stable and environmentally sound global development. An ‘International Sustainable Development Fund’ (ISDF) and a ‘World Sustainable Development Bank’ would go a long way to ensure a more sustainable approach to global development and finance.
The transparency and accountability of multinational companies has been made clear by the financial crisis. In this context, the adoption at the Summit of a Convention on Corporate Social and Environmental Responsibility concerning companies listed on the stock markets could be a milestone. This might include incorporating the Global Reporting Initiative and the Global Compact Principles as mandatory.

To mobilise new thinking the UN Secretary General should explore the possibility of a World Commission on the Green New Deal which would report to the Summit process in 2011 and 2012.

**MOBILISATION**

“Multi-Stakeholder Processes are a new species in the political ecosystem. They will make mistakes. They will not solve all problems to everyone’s satisfaction. MSPs should not and will not provide an alternative to good government. But they might help it – and the rest of us - make the necessary progress towards sustainability.” He concluded his presentation by giving an alternative definition of MSPs: “Making the Sum greater than the Parts”.

Paul Hohnen, former Strategic Director Greenpeace

An Earth Summit in 2012 offers the platform for global stakeholders to work towards common goals that transcend national boundaries. It cannot and should not be built without broad and grassroots public support.

If Earth Summit 2012 is to be a watershed, it requires a communication strategy that addresses and involves “real” people. The realities of the globalized world and the opportunities presented by the revolution in global communications allow groups of people with common concerns and interests to link up and mobilise to push for change. Earth Summit 2012
should be more than an intergovernmental process – it should be a focal point for mass mobilisation of a broad range of stakeholders around the world, from regional and local governments, to cities, businesses, trade unions, NGOs and all other Major Groups identified by Agenda 21 and other stakeholders.

These constituencies need to be engaged and involved not just as lobbyists but as actors in their own right, capable of making their own proposals for, and pledges to, the sustainable development of the future – this allows innovations to arise that complement and reinforce international obligations. It offers a chance over the next three years to explore and create new partnerships for sustainable development to become a driver for real change in implementing agreements.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“We need a new environmental consciousness on a global basis. To do this, we need to educate people”

Mikhail Gorbachev

In the preparation of Agenda 21, Maurice Strong realised too late that an important major group he had failed to identify and engage was the educators. In later years, he would say often that the key to implementation of Agenda 21 lay in education. Yet so far the international community has failed to “Re-orient education towards sustainable development” as Agenda 21, Ch. 36 demanded. Instead, educational institutions continue to train engineers, business people and service industry professionals whose valuable skills nonetheless fail to meet the challenge of designing a low-carbon economy. The 2012 Summit process will offer an opportunity to make a concerted effort to engage, and be guided by, the Education Community in an initiative to design an education system better geared to the creation of a sustainable, post-carbon green economy. The preparatory
process will also seek more seriously to engage the young people whose future the 2012 Summit is ultimately designed to secure and protect.

COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT

“Web 2.0 may not be social media, but it is the fundamental infrastructure.”

Auren Hoffman, Rapleaf

A global summit provides broad opportunities to catch the imagination of the world’s public, to build political constituencies in support of progressive and creative programs, and to motivate individuals to take personal action. An Earth Summit in 2012 should include bold, colourful and effective visual imagery. It should strive for a small environmental footprint, but a huge emotional footprint. An action-oriented Summit should emphasize positive scenarios that are available, affordable and achievable through concerted action – not just the catastrophic results that will be the effect of business as usual.

Until now, high-level political processes have had a tendency to be the preserve of an elite, or those ‘in-the-know.’ The global communications revolution offers an unprecedented opportunity for an Earth Summit to mobilise people all over the world to work together and to monitor governments’ accountability. The use of targeted interactive techniques of public engagement [e.g. Web 2.0 technology, or by then 3.0 or 4.0] can allow individuals to feel ownership of strategies and campaigns, and to be given access to an international policy-making arena that has traditionally eluded them: the recent campaign of President Elect Barak Obama has shown how new media can be harnessed to instigate mass participation.

An expanded use of print media, television and radio broadcasting– at both an international and a local level and in various languages - can also be utilized to empower individuals and communities to act and to realize how the goals of an Earth Summit are relevant to them.
We must take advantage of the generational shift: by 2012 there will be a large number of business leaders who need to be engaged in the global sustainable development agenda, having only been junior professions during the time of the first Earth Summit in 1992 - these individuals will be presented with the opportunity to be successful where their predecessors failed or had no opportunity. Furthermore, there is now a new generation of young people who will be adversely affected by the failure to achieve global sustainable development, and who are demanding a better future. These individuals were either too young to be politically aware, or not even born in 1992. They deserve to have their voices heard: a World Summit offers them that opportunity, and any preparatory process should harness the energy of this constituency of people.

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND THE ENVIRONMENT: THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

“Civil Society is in agreement that the international environmental regime is dogged by the lack of political will to resolve environmental problems coherently and to follow a policy for the sustainable use of the earth’s resources. This has led to a fragmentation of the environmental agenda, limited financial resources, poor enforcement of Multilateral Environmental Agreements as well as an imbalance between international environmental governance and other international trade and financial regimes.”

Richard Sherman, Stakeholder Forum, at the UN GA Informal Session 10th December 2007

It is becoming increasingly evident that the current international governance architecture is not sufficient for dealing with the economic, social and environmental challenges that the world faces. The mismatch between
current global problems and the institutions that exist to deal with them requires transformational change – the need for developing a coherent international governance structure could not be more urgent, dealing with international finance, trade, long-term investments and environment in an integrated and holistic way.

The Summit must address the following governance issues:

- Reform of International Environmental Governance
- Reform of UNEP – should it be reformed into a body similar to UNDP, or a United Nations Environmental Organisation?
- Clustering of Multilateral Environmental Agreements
- Balancing of the unequal relationship between MEAs and the WTO
- Reviewing the sustainable development architecture and how to mainstream sustainable development throughout the UN system so it becomes its guiding principle - perhaps with a Sustainable Development Council in the General Assembly.

An Earth Summit in 2012 should create the global institutional framework we need to take us forward in the first half of the 21st century. An Earth Summit has the potential to create new leadership in this area. Planet Earth is currently lacking leaders, and has been left largely undefended.

GLOBAL GOALS

"...If we are to make significant progress on meeting these Goals and stay true to the promise the world made to build a better, fairer world for all, there is no time to lose in putting in place the necessary policies and resources needed to achieve these aims."

Kemal Dervis, Administrator UNDP

There is an urgent need for a set of goals and standards around which all countries can cohere in relation to sustainable development. The Millennium Development Goals have served as a powerful tool for building accountability and momentum for poverty alleviation, though it is
lamentable that the goals were not sustainable development goals. Of further concern is that even these goals are not even half way to being achieved.

Any post-2015 framework therefore needs to build goals around a global sustainability consensus – this should involve a commitment for universal standards for environmental protection, social development and human rights. This should further include recognition of global responsibility, with industrialised countries taking the lead, especially in the area of sustainable consumption and production.

LOCAL ACTION

“Sustainable development, as it emerged in Agenda 21 from the Rio conference in 1992, will only be meaningful when it touches the lives of ordinary people; then it becomes a reality. Local Agenda 21 (LA21) seeks to achieve that objective.”

Prof Tim O’ Riordan

Whilst acknowledging the urgent need for global goals, there is an equally urgent need for such goals to be enacted at a local level. This action can replicate and enhance the success achieved with the Local Agenda 21 processes. Also, there is the perception that the Millennium Development Goals were a top-down initiative with little resonance in many local communities.

By utilising the Summit to also prepare for the Post-2015 MDGs then there should be more possibility that the Goals are ‘Sustainable development goals’, there is massive scope for communities and regions around the world to take local ownership of the goals, adapting and adjusting them to their particular local concerns. The 2012 pre-summit consultation process should take steps to encourage such initiatives by involving the International Association of Mayors, ICLEI, the Network for Regional Government for
Sustainable Development and other local and regional government associations. The Summit in 2012 should re-launch LA21 and introduce RG21 (Regional Government 21) to develop sustainable development frameworks at the local and regional levels.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Sustainable Development has suffered from a lack of public, political and media attention. As a result the profile of the sustainable development agenda has gradually declined since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, momentum for change has been lost, and the efficacy of the Commission on Sustainable Development has subsequently been questioned. In this context, Climate Change and the Millennium Development Goals have subsumed the international agenda. To encourage governments around the world to deliver on the commitments made at Rio and Johannesburg, and to address the multi-faceted challenges for the future, an open, inclusive, high-profile global event is required to initiate and accelerate change and hold the international community to account. The development of a global convention on access to information, participation and justice (Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration) could be an important contribution to ensuring the delivery of future agreements.
ENDNOTE

“A revolution is coming— a revolution which will be peaceful if we are wise enough; compassionate if we care enough; successful if we are fortunate enough. But a revolution is coming whether we will it or not. We can affect its character; we cannot alter its inevitability.”

Senator Robert Kennedy (1968)

Strong words from a Presidential candidate in 1968 when he was talking about the issue of civil rights in his country. We now in 2008 can see that the end result can be positive with the election of the first Black President in the history of the United States. A more fundamental revolution is needed, not in 40 years time and not only in one country, but in the next ten to twenty years and across the globe. We need a revolution in the way we live on this planet. The challenges are great - climate change is one of many. A Summit in 2012 will have to address the financial and environmental architecture that we need to live on this small planet together and in harmony. It will have to deal with the challenges of food, water and energy security, as well as the impacts of increased migration and the need to preserve our basic ecosystems. It surely is a time for us all to come together and work to create a blueprint for a sustainable planet once and for all.
ANNEX 1: ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

A Summit in 2012 should learn from the preparatory process for Rio in 1992, which saw the and setting-up of informal working groups with UN Agencies, experts and stakeholders to start to develop the framework for the agenda in good time.

OUTSTANDING ISSUES ON THE CSD AGENDA

There are two possible models for a Summit Secretariat:

- The establishment of a separate secretariat for the Summit (the Rio model)
- The CSD secretariat becomes the Summit secretariat (the Johannesburg model)

Should the CSD Secretariat be asked to take on the role as the secretariat for the Summit, it would be difficult to continue the present CSD cycle of meetings at the same time. There is strong support that the work on the sustainable consumption and production work continues and culminates in a special session of the CSD in 2010. The CSD Decision to organise the post-2009 Programme of Work according to thematic clusters also accommodates the potential for change:

“Thematic clusters will remain as part of the Multi-Year Programme of Work as scheduled unless otherwise agreed by the Commission (applies to the clusters for 2010/2011, 2012/2013 and 2014/2015)”

There is a well-founded concern that some key issues on the CSD Agenda from 2010-2015 will not be addressed adequately if a Summit takes place in 2012. There are a number of possible options to address this concern, and some suggestions are outlined below:
**Option 1**

This option sees the re-organisation of the Programme of Work for the CSD, dealing with the proposed thematic clusters through alternative UN and intergovernmental processes and meetings, thus allowing the CSD Secretariat to focus solely on Preparatory Meetings for a Summit in 2012.

**Sustainable Consumption and Production (2010-2011)**
A special Session of the CSD in 2010 to address Sustainable Consumption and Production

**Suggestions for the present CSD Cycle**

- **Chemicals (2010-2011)**
  UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) to address this since it is currently deals with Chemicals.
  Chemicals to be addressed specifically through the UN Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC)

- **Waste Management (2010-2011)**
  UNEP GC/GMEF to be asked to address this issue

- **Mining (2010-2011)**
  UNEP GC/GMEF to be asked to address this issue

- **Transport (2010-2011)**
  UNEP GC/GMEF to be asked to address this issue

- **Forests (2012-2013)**
  United Nations Forum on Forests FF to continue its work in this area

- **Biodiversity (2012-2013)**
  Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol
• Biotechnology (2012-2013)
Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol

• Tourism (2012-2013)
World Tourism Organisation to be asked to host a Responsible Tourism Summit

• Mountains (2012-2013)
UNEP GC/GMEF to be asked to address this issue

• Oceans and Seas (2014-2015)
To be dealt with by the third Intergovernmental Review Meeting (IGR) of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA), reporting directly to UN ECOSOC. In 2005 the United Nations General Assembly also endorsed the need for a regular process for reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment. The issue could be dealt with in the UN General Assembly.

• Small Island Developing States (2014-2015)
Summit or Conference be set up as a follow-up to the UN Conference on Small Islands in Mauritius, 2005

• Disaster Management and Vulnerability (2014-15)
UNEP GC/GMEF to address this issue
Option 2

This option moves to one year programmes for the CSD and ensures that 2011-2013 is kept free for a Summit

- Sustainable consumption and production (2010)
- Chemicals (2010)
- Waste Management (2010)
- Mining (2010)
- Transport (2010)

Summit 2011-2012

- Forests (2014)
- Biodiversity (2014)
- Biotechnology (2014)
- Tourism (2015)
- Mountains (2015)
- Oceans and Seas (2015)
- Small Island Developing States (2015)
- Disaster Management and Vulnerability (2015)
FINANCING THE MEETING

A concern is that a Summit in 2012 might be costly when the world is suffering a serious financial downturn. Would it be right to have a Summit in this time?

If the preparatory process for a Summit in 2012 follows a similar format outlined in Option 1 (above), financial resources that were originally earmarked for CSD sessions can be channelled instead into preparatory meetings for a Summit. As outlined above, the thematic issues to be dealt with under the current CSD Programme of Work could be allocated to alternative UN and intergovernmental processes.

It should be noted that it is possible that the world may be emerging out of an economic downturn in 2012, thus making more funds available to implement the commitments of the Summit. By contrast, the World Summits in 1972, 1992 and 2002 Summits were followed by economic downturns.

OUTCOME DOCUMENT FROM EARTH SUMMIT 2012: SOME SUGGESTIONS

The international community should learn some lessons from the widely-perceived success of Agenda 21 as an outcome document to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Despite the fact that a number of commitments in Agenda 21 have yet to be implemented, it continues to be a valuable resource for policy-makers as it clearly defines roles and responsibilities, sets clear objectives and targets, and also provides an indication of the costs involved. If the international community is committed to setting an ambitious agenda for sustainable development for the first half of this century, it requires clear targets, robust indicators, an outline of responsibilities and actors, as well as
an estimation of the resources required to deliver. It is therefore recommended that the outcome document from a World Summit in 2012 takes the following format (or similar) for each thematic section:

- Introduction
- Basis for Action
- Objectives
- Activities
  - Management-Related Activities
  - Data and Information
  - International and Regional Cooperation
- Means of Implementation
  - Financing and Cost Evaluation
  - Scientific and Technological Means
  - Human Resource Development
  - Capacity Building

Each section could consider the financial resources (both public and private), the common but differentiated responsibilities and the commitments of stakeholders. Furthermore these sections should mainstream the following items:

- A political declaration recalling Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Programme of Implementation and subsequent commitments
- Poverty eradication
- Sustainable Production and Consumption
- Preservation of Ecosystems
- The positive/negative aspects of globalization;
- Towards a post-2015 framework for the Millennium Development Goals;
- Human and Environmental rights;
- Gender Equality
- Managing Old and New Risks
- Governance