



ASOCIACION LATINOAMERICANA DE ORGANIZACIONES DE PROMOCION AL DESARROLLO A.C.



Brussels, 08 June 2012

Dear Minister for Environment,

The failure of last week's negotiations in New York to make significant progress on an agreed outcome of the Rio+20 conferences is of great concern. Given the little time that is left, and the entrenchment of positions on fundamental issues, the prospect for any meaningful conclusion is clearly bleak. Yet the consequences of failure are alarming. If, as scientific assessments indicate, we are already consuming significantly more environmental resources than our planet can sustainably replenish and climate change effects keep advancing, then failure to address our mounting levels of ecological debt can only diminish the already declining scope to achieve sustainable solutions.

Negotiating positions are clearly determined by national interests to secure and safeguard the access and use of natural resources for economic recovery and growth, and poverty eradication is a priority for developing countries. Contentious competition over the Earth's limited resources cannot lead to sustainable development. On the contrary it will reduce future options for achieving sustainability.

The EU has championed itself as an ambitious UN partner and has devoted much of its energy in trying to convince other UN members, in particular developing countries, to agree to implement green economy strategies. Without doubt the use of more efficient ecological practices is a vital component to promoting sustainability, but can only be part of the solution. Without radical reforms in approaches to economic development sustainability will not be achieved. The concept of the green economy, as presented by the EU, has raised concerns and many believe that corporate interests will be its main beneficiaries. The proposals for the green economy do not address the root causes of the crisis, nor fundamentally tackle inequalities and power imbalances. Nor would they sufficiently regulate corporate sector activities.

The EU's promotion of fundamental principles such as equity, human rights and the integration of the three pillars of Sustainable Development is also viewed with caution. While these principles resonate well around the world there is considerable concern that their application as identified in EU proposals to the conference will reinforce inequality and inequity rather than the contrary. In the context of existing EU trade and economic policies and practices, they are seen as a part of the EU's strategies to increase opportunities for its own interests. Furthermore, EU policies and positions, such as the promotion of biofuel cultivation obstruct the realization of the right to food, as well as undermine the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) in the context of Rio+20 negotiations. This demonstrates the lack of coherence between the fundamental principles previously mentioned and the EU's actual actions.

Clearly the EU faces testing economic and fiscal challenges. A viable and sustainable economy in Europe is vital for its own citizens, as well as for the rest of the world too. But more of the same, even with increased ecological efficiency is not a solution. For the EU to show real leadership in the pursuit of true

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sustainable development strategies and to be consistent with the principals and values that it espouses it must demonstrate its commitment to fundamental changes in its policy framework based on the principles adopted in Rio 20 years ago. It must demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that policies and practices pursued within and outside the EU are consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

In Rio it must reaffirm the Rio principles that are essential to equity and sustainable development, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), polluter pays principle, the precautionary principle and Principle 10 on access to information, public participation, and environmental justice. These principles must serve as guiding principles for the implementation of all action plans and initiatives to be agreed in Rio.

The EU must also clearly demonstrate its willingness to provide the necessary means for developing countries to achieve sustainable development, consistent with commitments made in various UN fora and treaties. Even in the current challenging economic and financial circumstances the EU has capacity to provide new and additional financial resources, help build capacity and transfer technology on favorable, concessional and preferential terms to developing countries (JPOI). This is vital for a successful outcome in Rio to be possible and for the EU to be seen as a credible and ambitious partner for sustainable development.

The EU puts great emphasis on the private sector and market based mechanisms in its approach to the green economy. While we recognize the important contribution the private sector can make towards a sustainable economy being realized, this is not inevitable as some will act in ways that hinder such a goal. Distinctions need to be made between different actors within the private sector and the roles that they play. Small and medium sized enterprises are the major generators of employment. They are more likely to be rooted in local communities, and be accountable to national regulations and accountability. The corporate sector is less responsive to national interests and strategies. Regulatory frameworks for corporate sector activities that are consistent with, and derived from, the principles for sustainable development and human rights as well as appropriate mechanisms for transparency and accountability, must be put in place, at both national and international levels.

Governments must be at the forefront of the designing and implementation of policies promoting sustainable development, and public leadership and financing must be at the centre of any strategies contributing to its achievement. There are many examples of good practices implemented at the local level; these must increasingly be promoted and drawn upon as sound solutions for sustainability. For the necessary radical changes to be achieved such practices must be encouraged, and must be reflected in reforms to national economies, while at the same time striving for global standards and norms to be adopted at the UN level particularly with regard to global economic reforms.

Yours sincerely,



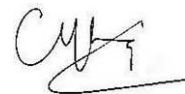
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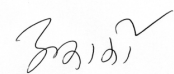
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