

XIII GLOBAL MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDER FORUM

KEY MESSAGES TO THE GCSS.XII/GMEF

WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS MAJOR GROUP

2012 more than ever demands leadership from governments at the international level. Rio+20 offers this moment. Unregulated markets are creating greater social inequality and environmental crises. Unemployment and precarious work are at crisis levels, resulting in more poverty and uncertainty, which in turn is driving violence, racism and xenophobia in too many countries.

Assessment: Overall, the Rio+20 Zero Draft fails to engage Heads of State in new commitments and actions, simply reaffirming previous engagements and leaving decisions on new ones for the future.

More specifically, workers and trade unions want more clarity on the principles in which Green Economy activities will be undertaken (Item #6), specific targets in the Green Jobs & Social Inclusion section (Item #17) and a stronger call for Major Groups involvement, which should be singled out with their specific roles and pledges in the relevant section (Item #3), as well as through the inclusion, under the Institutional Framework, of stronger language on participation rights, principle 10, among others (Items #10 and #11).

Top 3 demands

1. Green economy principles

The green economy must be different. We ask governments to ensure that the green economy debate incorporates a set of principles to ensure the social and environmental performance vital to sustainable development. These principles (full list in the amendments section) include:

Social principles require commitments to social equity, inclusion of vulnerable groups, decent work for all green jobs, social protection, democracy and rights.

Environmental principles must endorse the need for efficient use of natural resources, prioritise renewable sources, internationalize social and environmental costs for the poorest countries, a life cycle analysis of products, trend commitments to zero emissions and zero waste.

Economic principles require strong financial regulation, constraints on speculation and support for the real economy.

2. Concrete commitments from day 1

The zero draft as it stands delays many decisions to future meetings. This is not serious.

Unions globally want to see specific green job pledges, a commitment to the implementation of a 'social protection floor' for all people and commitments to kick start or strengthen provisions in the poorest countries and the launch of a 'financial transactions tax'.

3. Civil Society as partners and environmental justice mechanisms

There must be a sound framework for civil society participation. The same is necessary to access for information and justice mechanisms. Proposal on the table, such as an ombudsman (10) are not dealt with seriously in the zero draft and deserve further consideration for decision at RIO + 20.

20 amendments to the Zero Draft to ensure Rio+20 delivers for workers

We call on governments to:

I. Vision

1. Express the urgent need for changing our current unsustainable economic paradigm and ensuring rights are at the centre of a new era. The vision must talk to people's hearts and convince them that there is indeed hope to achieve global equity, that multilateralism has a role to play, that cooperation and solidarity between countries and their people is necessary and feasible.

⇒ **Add** new paragraph [after para 4]

[add: 4.bis. We affirm our commitment to urgently shift from our current unsustainable economic model towards a more sustainable one, based on freedom, respect for human and labour rights, gender equality and the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural development, within the carrying capacity of the planet's ecosystems]

II. Renewing Political Commitment

2. Commit to implement new sources of funding (either here or in the means of implementation section), such as the Financial Transactions Tax

3. Confirm the contribution of workers and trade unions to sustainable development.

⇒ **Strengthen** current paragraph #21quat

We stress the importance of the participation of workers and trade unions to the promotion of sustainable development. As their representatives, trade unions are important actors in facilitating [add: **a Just Transition towards a more sustainable economic model and**] for the promotion of socially-responsible economic development, social equity and decent work. [add: **The rights to information, education and training on sustainability at all levels, including the workplace, are key in strengthening workers and trade unions' capacity to support sustainable development**].

4. Outline the guiding principles for 'coherent decision-making' in the Framework for Action on Sustainable Development

⇒ **Add** new paragraph (after para 22)

[add: We commit ourselves to guide our actions under the framework of democracy, fundamental rights, and social justice. This requires putting at the heart of economic policies the need for equity and social progress as well as environmental protection. Accountability and social scrutiny must be at the heart of the framework, and so is the need for reducing the influence of financial markets in decision-making.]

III. Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

5. Indicate the importance that Green Economy contributes to decent work creation, and not just employment.

⇒ **Change** in para 25

We are convinced that a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication should contribute to meeting key goals (...) sustained, inclusive and equitable growth that generates [~~delete: employment~~] [add: **decent work**]

6. Incorporate a section on 'Principles of the Green Economy' that will at least endorse at least trade union's 10 principles.

⇒ **Add section** (between paras 27 and 28)

[add: We recognize the importance of ensuring that green economy policies and projects contribute to sustainable development. In order to guide action, we agree that green economy activities must comply with the following principles:

1. Equity between and within countries.
2. Inclusiveness and participation (youth, women, poor and low skilled workers)
3. Transformation of traditional and creation of new green and decent jobs.
4. Respect for the rights of workers and trade unions.
5. Fulfilment of social objectives and satisfaction of human needs in the long term, including universal access to water, food, housing, energy, land, health, education, transport and culture.
6. Based on the efficient use of natural resources, prioritisation of renewable sources, internalisation of social and environmental costs, life-cycle analysis and aiming at being zero carbon and zero waste.
7. Focus on materials' productivity rather than on cutting labour costs.
8. Just Transition for workers and communities that might be affected by change, including widening social protection schemes and developing social dialogue mechanisms on green economy policies.
9. Promotion of democracy.
10. Based on the real economy and be non-speculative.]

7. Establish the criteria for prioritising some 'green economy tools' over others

⇒ Add paragraph (after para 32)

[add: We recommend to prioritise policies that generate and maximise positive impacts on both the environment and social progress, such as taxation reforms that are socially-progressive and environmentally-friendly.]

8. Define a framework for action that engages governments (rather than asking the private sector to take on public responsibilities) and include concrete commitments on jobs through green investments (See 12-17)

IV. Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development

9. Agree on a new political prioritisation of dimensions (where social progress and environmental protection are placed higher in the agenda than profit) which should guide any UN institutional reform, including the creation of a Sustainable Development Council.

10. Agree on the establishment of an Ombudsperson for Future Generations

⇒ Change in para 57

57. We [~~delete: agree to further consider the establishment of~~] [add: support the proposal to establish] an Ombudsman, or High Commissioner for Future Generations, [add: with an agenda setting and monitoring role, to act as the advocate and representative for promoting] [~~delete: to promote~~] sustainable development [add: , helping to provide an integrated approach at the highest level of UN decision making. It would function in close cooperation with major groups and stakeholders]

11. Agree on the launch of negotiations for the establishment of an international convention on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration

⇒ Change in para 58

58. We agree to take steps at various levels to give further affect to Rio Principle 10, at the global, regional and national level, as appropriate **[add: and in particular to: a) launch negotiations for the establishment of an international convention on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, that deals with access to information, public participation and environmental justice, b) improve national laws, institutions and practices so as they extend these rights to workers' representatives at the workplace]**

V. Framework for action and follow-up

Water

12. Ensure public ownership of water and sanitation services is at the heart of policy recommendations

⇒ **Add** a new paragraph after para 68

[Add: 68.bis We recognize that the experiment with privatisation in the water and sanitation sector has failed to deliver for the poor. Therefore, we encourage governments to prioritise water and sanitation investments using public ownership and public management in order to ensure universal access to these fundamental services. Further commodification of water will only lead to greater exclusion for the most poor and vulnerable. This is true not only for direct water and sanitation services, but also in agriculture, energy, industry and other sectors.]

Energy

13. Ensure energy access is considered as a right and not as a private sector responsibility. We strongly recommend adding a paragraph along the same lines as the Water-related one.

Green jobs-Social Inclusion

14. Recognise the importance of skills and occupational health and safety provisions for workers engaged in the green economy

⇒ **Change** in para 73

We recognise that the development of human capacity is essential (...). Workers must have the skills **[add: social] [delete: and] protections [add: and occupational health and safety standards]** necessary to participate in and benefit from the transition to a green economy, wich has great potential to create decent jobs and eradicate poverty.

15. Ensure opportunities for job creation in traditional industrial sectors are taken into account

⇒ **Add** in para 74

We also recognise that significant job creation opportunities can be availed through investments

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