

Urgent Appeal to Change the Mindset

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development - Rio 2012, must change the dominant mindset by:

Restoring public rights over corporate privileges

after thirty years of strengthening the power of investors and big corporations through deregulation, trade and financial liberalization, tax cuts and exemptions, and weakening the role of the state; and after the market-driven financial meltdown.

The principles and values of the Rio Declaration and the UN Millennium Declaration, adopted by heads of states and governments, are threatened and urgently need to be re-established. They include Human Rights, Freedom, Equality, Solidarity, Diversity, Respect for Nature, and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. Corporate interests do not uphold these principles and values.

Taking equity seriously

after thirty years of policies that further widened the gap between rich and poor and have exacerbated inequities and inequalities, not least regarding access to resources.

Unbridled market forces have favored the strong, thereby widening the economic divide. This requires the state to redress the imbalance, eliminate discrimination, and ensure sustainable livelihoods, decent work and social inclusion. Intergenerational justice requires restraint and responsibility of the present generation. It is urgent to establish more equitable per capita rights towards the global commons and to the emission of greenhouse gases, taking fully into account historical responsibility.

Rescuing nature

after more than sixty years of global warming, loss of biodiversity, desertification, depletion of marine life and of forests, a spiraling water crisis and many other ecological catastrophes.

The environmental crisis is hitting the poor much more than the affluent. Knowledge-intensive solutions including technologies are available to restore natural systems, and dramatically reduce pressures on climate and the environment while improving human well-being. A "green economy" is attainable but must be embedded in a holistic concept of sustainability. What we need is a change of lifestyles.

The Rio 1992 Summit adopted legally-binding instruments and embraced *Civil Society*. The Johannesburg Summit 2002 celebrated partnerships relying on a self-regulated *Private Sector*. The Rio 2012 Summit must re-affirm the *State* as the indispensable actor setting the legal frame, enforcing standards of equity and human rights, and fostering long-term ecological thinking, based on democratic legitimacy.

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