

# equity

World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, Issue 2, 27 August, 2002

## Hey there, EU! What are you doing? Precaution or Permissive?

There is a frightening proposal for a new paragraph 23, which is missing two fundamental elements that were part of the draft paragraph. On Sunday, the term 'precautionary principle' disappeared – the EU wanted the "ecosystem approach." On Monday, the 'ecosystem approach' suffered the dreaded square-bracket treatment.

What is the EU playing at? In response to a question about what happened to the Precautionary Principle in the Means of Implementation text, the representative of the EU's Trade Department replied that it would be covered by "sustainable impact assessments!" This is reducing a fundamental principle to a simple methodology.

The Precautionary Principle now forms the cornerstone of much national legislation and many regional and global conventions. The EU has been a staunch supporter of the Principle since it was first espoused in the mid-1980s. It must now apply equally to trade.

Any concrete outcome of the WSSD must include these crucial principles. The EU must continue to champion this cause. In its intervention on August 26, Denmark, president of the EU, stated, "the WSSD must give political impetus to the essential action to reach [the]

targets. These include: Recognition and application of the ecosystem approach..."(emphasis added).

EU must take the lead and defend the Precautionary Principle and the ecosystem approach. We protect our biodiversity because it is both priceless and irreplaceable. These principles enable us to afford the same protection for a broader category of equally priceless and irreplaceable resources. We can't afford to let them disappear.

### And What's Happening to Kyoto?

Not long ago, many in the EU wanted the Kyoto Protocol to have

entered into force by the time the WSSD commenced. Clearly, this hasn't happened. Even worse, the EU is wavering on the inclusion of any reference to Kyoto in Paragraph 36. We must make sure that Kyoto is incorporated into this text.

Now, on Day One of the full negotiations, these basic principles and the Kyoto Protocol are being threatened. Chair of the EU Troika, Dan Nielson, has stated that, "[Y]ou will not see the EU as a difficult partner." Is this an indication that the EU is starting to cave in to the toxic Texan cowboy in the White House?

## Corporate accountability is dead! Long live the Global Compact!

Corporate accountability resurfaced last night at 6pm in Paragraph III of Chapter V, Sustainable development in a globalising world.' If approved as drafted, this would mean that governments of the world have decided that corporations need not be regulated and that public/private partnerships and voluntary initiatives are the only control mechanism necessary.

This is a significant loss, as compared with the Chairman's Bali text, as governments of the world are giving up their responsibilities to make corporations accountable for their impacts on human rights, environment, labour and liability standards.

If this text is adopted then corporations effectively rule the world.

At the eleventh hour, the G77 proposed changes to this text – apparently reasserting concern about the focus on voluntary initiatives. But there are many questions yet to be answered.

Watch out tomorrow for our full critique on the Globalisation and Implementation texts.



Jo Fox

## Mandela's Absence Deepens Civil Society's Discontent

A long way from Sandton, Nasrec's WSSD started yesterday with disillusionment. Nasrec was always going to be a problem. Far from the Summit both in distance and in involvement with the negotiations, civil society groups complaining that they have been cut off from the real business of the Summit are – on yesterday's evidence – dead right.

The opening ceremony was kicked off with the high-spirited arrival of several

singing and chanting South African groups. But the festive atmosphere was soon deflated by the realisation that the key speaker, former President Nelson Mandela, was not going to show. Mr Mandela was scheduled to deliver an address, but a spokesman for the Civil Society Secretariat said they learned, only the morning before, that Mandela would not come. Mandela's spokesperson said he hadn't been invited and was in the Limpopo Province working on his book.

Business went ahead, but as ever, the question, "is anyone out there listening?" hovered over the proceedings. In the course of the session, NGO speakers highlighted several "unaddressed environmental and social issues." Referring to the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, a group of four NGO's, including Greenpeace and the US-based National Black Environmental Justice Network, stated that, "after 10 years of some progress in negotiations, but little actual implementation, the impacts of these unfulfilled promises are becoming clear." The group alluded to events such as the massive flooding throughout Central Europe, China and South Asia, which has caused thousands of deaths and billions of dollars in damage.

Global Environment Facility replenishment and on the target of 0.7% of GNP for Overseas Development Assistance. Contentious issues include market access and subsidies, as well as targets and timetables. There is still hope on reversing fish stock depletions.

## Don't Let Dams Ruin a Renewable Future

### Countries Are Using Hydro to Stymie Energy Negotiations

Negotiations on a renewable energy target have been raging over the last few days. Although one would think that discussion would focus on solar, wind and sustainable biomass, the negotiations have in fact been hijacked and blocked by a very unsustainable, damaging energy source – large hydro.

A number of countries are using large hydro as a tactic to block a new renewables target. Or, could it be that they are actually trying to create new incentives for large, damaging dams?

### Why Is Eco So Worried About Dams?

There are several reasons why large hydro projects should be excluded from the definition of renewable energy, here are the most important ones :

Some 40-80 million people have been physically displaced by dams worldwide;

According to a study from the World Commissions on Dams, large hydro projects are responsible for up to 28% of global greenhouse gas emissions, generated mainly from methane emissions from organic decomposition of flooded biomass;

Large dams are also responsible for a number of other environmental impacts such as mercury contamination, impacts on fish population and land disturbance. Surely these impacts must be taken into account when looking at a renewable definition that is in accordance with sustainable development;

Large dams require extensive grid network for the distribution of energy. In many developing countries, these grids are limited and would therefore require extensive investments. Decentralised energies such as solar, wind and small-scale hydro do not require such an extensive grid system;

Including large dams in the definition of renewable energy would only increase the incentives for this form of energy. This must be prevented;

All these reasons, as well as the fact that the world needs a target that makes wind, solar, geothermal and sustainable biomass a greater share of the energy mix are reasons to stop the large hydro madness and use the WSSD as a platform to make the world a better place.

## Access Policy Changes Again

### Confusion As Entry Policy Is Revised

The system of secondary passes to get into the Sandton Convention Center was scrapped yesterday. Instead, there will be an absolute limit of 6,000 people in the building at one time, determined on a first-come, first-served basis.

Under the new system, once capacity has been reached, new arrivals will only be allowed in when someone else leaves.

Besides major group accreditations and being one of the first 6,000 to arrive, attendees will also need tickets (available to the fortunate few at the information desk in the NGO room) to attend the UN plenary sessions. These meetings of delegates are where decisions actually get made, and only 125 observers will be allowed to attend, according to UN sources.

This will eliminate the need to wait in line the day before, for a chance at getting one of a limited number of secondary passes. Now instead of missing meetings in order to get a pass for the next day, NGO members and others will have to arrive early, or risk not getting a space in the building. Those who waited in the anarchic queue today certainly wish they had known about the change

in policy earlier.

*Eco* extends thanks to Zehra Aydin of the Secretary General's office for her patience and persistence in wrestling with this intractable problem.

## Left Hand, Right Hand

### NGOs Tossed as Talks Continue

The Vienna-style process set up to negotiate the plan of action are open to participation by NGOs, according to President Mbeki. The truth, however, is at odds with the president's welcome news: dozens of NGO representatives attempting to participate in the meetings were firmly escorted out and denied access subsequently. Whether this is a simple matter of miscommunication or something else *Eco* does not know. We do hope that the situation will be resolved in favour of the vaunted "transparency" and participation the UN touts so proudly.

### Some Good News

Meanwhile, representatives of Mr. Mbeki reported mixed progress in the sessions. They said there was significant progress on the 'common but differentiated responsibilities' principle in the Plan of Action. The parties have moved closer to each other but the issue is not yet resolved.

There is progress on the language on

## The Type-Two Tango

The instructions to the summit are unambiguous: Type 2, or public-private partnership initiatives, are supposed to be new, or at least to involve expansions of existing projects, what the UN in its tortured way calls "additionality."

How to explain, then, that the 400 initiatives in 148 countries described by the US include almost exclusively ongoing projects, including an agricultural laboratory in Brasil initiated in 1995 or a coal-technology project in Botswana and Senegal that is not new and unsustainable to boot?

Arm in arm with this evasion of the guidelines for Type 2 partnerships is the continuing embarrassment of the US's relative stinginess when it comes to aid. Aid comprises just .10 percent of GNP, scheduled to rise to .15 if the pledges, with all their attached strings, made in Monterrey are kept. This is one-fifth of the UN's target of .70 percent. European countries' contributions, which have fallen since Rio and been boosted back to .39 percent at Monterrey, still far outstrip the US's.

The Eco-Equity has expressed its concerns with the way Type 2 partnerships are used by some governments to take the focus away from a strong Type 1 with targets and timetables.

We agree with Ms. Hilde F. Johnson, the Norwegian Development Minister:

Why are we here if the only tangible results from the Johannesburg process will be Type-2 partnership initiatives financed from existing [overseas development flows], with no additionality, putting 'green paint' on old projects, or launching new ones primarily directed towards show-offs and flags for donor governments, undermining national ownership and coordination in the poor countries.

Specifically, most groups in the Eco-Equity coalition have called on governments to:

Ensure, in the Plan of Implementation, the necessary reference to efficient linkage between Type 1 and I2, including Article 138 (b), and embrace the proposed legal framework on corporate accountability and on access to information and decision-making (Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration in Article 151);

Mandate a legitimate international forum to be given the task of deciding on UN endorsement of Type 2 partnerships and monitoring;

Establish a proper process for Type 2s to ensure that only locally or nationally owned and fully participatory partnerships move ahead;

Ensure that a strong follow-up mechanism is in place, including the areas of monitoring, reporting, accountability, and external evaluation.

The ECO paper can be found at [www.rio10.dk](http://www.rio10.dk).

## Human Rights and Human Wrongs

### Don't Forget Paras 151 and 152

At Stockholm 30 years ago, the UN declared, "Man has the fundamental right to . . . adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well being. . . ." The Rio declaration was less definite, but still paid homage to this simple but powerful idea. As it stands at this conference, unless the brackets are removed from paragraphs 151 and 152, the idea that a life-sustaining environment is a basic human right will disappear altogether from the text.

This would be a major step backward. It would not only be a shameful abandonment of a key principle, it would also send a dreadful message to the relevant UN bodies that have been working diligently,

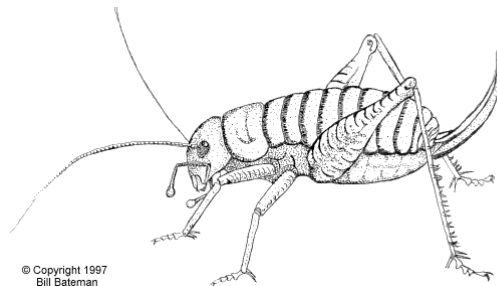
with the help of NGOs, to make this important link.

The paragraphs in question are simple and shouldn't threaten any state.

151 states, in its latest incarnation, "Promote and ensure public access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice, drawing on existing experience, including [regional] initiatives designed to implement principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development."

152 states, "Acknowledge the importance of the interrelationship between human-rights promotion and protection for sustainable development, and invite further consideration of those issues in the relevant forums, including by continued cooperation between UNEP and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights."

What's so hard about that?



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Bill Bateman

### Parktown Prawn

⇒ Green MEPs don't bite! Members of the European Parliament – Green Party are apparently being housed in the same hotel as members of the American delegation. It was revealed to the Green MEPs that the American delegation had asked to have breakfast in a separate dining room. Perhaps they are afraid of being contaminated by GM-free food.

⇒ "How much faster things would happen if delegates were given a tin bucket of grimy water, purification tablets, no electricity, biodegradable soap, and hemp clothing to prove their commitment. On a budget of R10 a day they'd soon understand

the issues of sustainability, which must be impossible to grasp when you're seeing the world through the windows of your Merc."  
—Jenny Ridyard, The Citizen, (Johannesburg), 26 August 2002

⇒ Observe today as Bhopal day in solidarity with the victims of corporate crime and demand corporate accountability.

### Headlines the Prawn Would Like to See:

"New solution takes famine off Summit agenda:

MONSANTO TO LAUNCH GENETICALLY-MODIFIED

### POPULATIONS"

"On a diet of the company's patented uranium products, New Man survives without an ozone layer on the hottest of planets. "So sustainable, he'll never go away," assures Monsanto CEO."

Business opportunities win over G.W. Bush and his oil-industry friends:

USA PLEDGES TO COOL THE WORLD

"The White House should not become the Green House", agrees the world's most powerful man from his ranch in Texas. "What we need now is an air-condition effect."

"Only exception concerns the country's fossilized leaders:

SAUDI ARABIA WANTS END TO FOS-SIL FUELS

"Let's just burn it all", said a spokesperson.

# Thirty Scientific Nobel Laureates Launch Appeal to Save the Planet

Thirty Nobel Laureates are part of the launch of a 'Johannesburg Appeal' urging the world's political and economic leaders to help save the planet and not to excuse or tolerate the negative consequences of technological developments. The members of the 100-member strong World Institute of Science (WIS) are concerned about protecting the biosphere from pollution, conserving natural resources, restoring degraded environments, and analysing the human activities responsible for climate change. The WIS members believe that every major technological development should include an evaluation of the relatively long-term human and ecological costs. The scientists concede that they should "accept a share of the responsibility" for the applications of their scientific knowledge in areas such as biotechnology, nuclear processes and climate change. Technological applications of scientific knowledge have played a large role in the societal and environmental changes of the past 300 years. They therefore argue that, "only collectively recognized responsibilities can form the

basis of effective legislation, which must include obligations, prohibitions and sanctions." WIS created a steering committee which will draw up recommendations on how to deal with major environmental issues such as climate, power, biotechnology, agro-ecology, water, pesticides and demography. An area of particular focus will be on how to reduce the use of fossil fuels and the development of renewable and safe forms of energy.

## New Proposal Takes Summit by Storm

### Type 3 Agreements Proposed

It doesn't take a keen eye to discern the differences between Type I and Type II agreements. Type I agreements have targets, timeframes, means of implementation and penalties for failure. Type II agreements don't. But you know what else is missing from Type II agreements? Governments. There's none of this self-righteous We the Elected Officials Take Responsibility For Our Actions stuff. Are you a head of government? Has the global community identified a problem? It needs solving? Well, someone else might make a voluntary agreement and take the hard work of fixing it from your hands and you can concentrate on other important issues. And if the voluntary partners fail you can't blame them, they were just trying to help for godsake, they weren't trying to solve the major problems of our time. Oh, wait a minute, they were trying to solve the major problems of our time. Oops.

But if governments are trying to abolish governments, maybe there's a better way of accomplishing just that. The hip US started all this off by rechristening binding agreements and calling them Type I. The trend is setting in and, frankly my dear, Type I agreements are quite passé. Since dodging responsibility is now on the agenda, I'm saying hold that thought. Aren't we letting Type II agreements become way too fashionable way too quickly before exploring other options that might be even better? We don't want 'voluntary' to become the buzz word of the WSSD if we can find a better word. So, try 'telepathy' on for size.

Why have voluntary agreements when we can have agreements that will

be based exclusively on telepathy? We can call these agreements Type III. And, guess what, we don't even need paper to write them on. Now, how green is that!

By promoting voluntary agreements we're exploring new options and we obviously don't need proof that they will work. So, why not also put Type IV on the table? Type IVs can be arrangements with extra-terrestrials (President Bush might even help by translating). We can ask these other life forms (and I don't mean President Bush) to deal with all this awkward stuff like poverty, climate change, food security, biodiversity loss, health, equity and safety.

Not.

Anyone up for a Type I agreement? Because, if we want governments to fulfill their reason for existing in the first place, these global binding deals are the best chance we got.



## Thirty Years Ago in Eco

The anticipated rift between industrial and non-industrial countries began to emerge at the first working plenary session of the Conference yesterday. . . .

The most strongly worded statement came from the Algerian delegate who said that the environmental problems begin with capitalism, imperialism and racial discrimination, and that his country and many other African nations demand that the Conference go on record condemning apartheid and colonialism. He denounced the war in Viet-Nam and the oppression of the people of Palestine, and said that the way to begin cleaning up pollution in the Mediterranean would be to remove all foreign navies.

*Eco 1, Stockholm 7 June 1972*

## eco-equity

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# attention seeking

a special Eco insert from the groups listed below

## African Delegates Silenced by EU Bureaucracy

By our African field correspondent, Tolit Olwor-Atiya

African leaders start business while hundreds of civil-society delegates are left stranded in various African capitals

Talk of mourning more than the bereaved, and the situation of the over 200 African civil-society delegates stranded either in Jo'burg with no accommodation yet, or still grappling to leave their national airport fits in quite well.

The short story is this: The European union pledged to support a total of 530 delegates, making it ten from each of the 53 African states to attend the summit. This was the good news. But rather shortlived. As the old adage goes, the borrowing goes sorrowing. According to local press reports a week ago, this plan was almost put off, because the organisers had not accessed the necessary funds until four days ago. And today, even with the intervention of the South African government enabling some of the delegates to make it here, the situation may not be any better. Did they have to attend anyway?

With more than half of them living two to three hours drive away from either Sandton or Nasrec, you can trust their official delegations should be having a field day pacing the Sandton convention corridors, dining with the mighty and above all cutting deals without being pried upon.

Some of the delegates have described this situation as voluntary incarceration, as some of them are sharing crowded rooms with no major facilities as telephone or computer access, let alone that they may not be able to attend the various caucus meetings.



I am hearing a distant voice saying: Please allow me to attend that funeral, for even the dead deserve a decent burial..

### Making sustainability work:

Decent jobs are at the heart of sustainable development

**By International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC)**

During the 10 days of this World Summit, more than 50,000 workers across

the globe will die from work-related accidents and disease, more than will be killed by war or even AIDS. This costs around 4 percent of the world's GDP, and millions of family members of dead or injured workers are thrown into poverty, with no insurance or social protection. Shocking as these figures are, they underline an even larger phenomenon –working people being deprived of their rights to decent, safe jobs and union membership, which is a major barrier to sustainable development. Creating decent employment and recognising workers' rights are central

to overcoming the environmental degradation, inequality and social exclusion so often identified with globalisation. These issues can no longer be left at the sidelines of global and national policy – they must be brought onto center stage.

The current rules governing global economic activity pay scant, if any, regard to the needs and the rights of the people who produce the world's wealth. Companies which seek to maximize their profits can move production to avoid environmental and labour standards, exporting exploitation to countries which often have no option but to accept investment at any cost, undermining the position of responsible employers and leaving workers defenceless and condemned to poverty wages. Increasing global investment flows and lowering trade barriers alone does little to create sustainable employment or sustainable communities. The Johannesburg Summit must focus on the human side of the

equation, and the commitments which governments make on this must be put into practice.

Throughout the summit at Johannesburg, trade unions will be emphasizing the role that they are playing in sustainable development, and striving to convince governments and the international community that decent jobs and clean and safe workplaces are fundamental. In Johannesburg, trade unions will bring an integrated approach stressing the inextricable links between social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainable development. And through their roles in the workplace and in society, trade unions play a pivotal role in this approach.

Experience from factories, offices, farms, transport, forestry, mining and all other sectors, has shown that trade unions are best placed to make the necessary and sustained improvement in the workplace and to the community as a whole. In just one of many examples of combined workplace and community actions, the ICFTU's Philippine affiliate, the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), has created seven clinics where its members and their families can visit a doctor free of charge. The personnel in these clinics play another essential role: contributing to preventing the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. As UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan explained during a July 2000 meeting of the Global Compact initiative, "unions can mobilize the workforce - for after all, companies are not composed only of their executives."

The full details of the trade union positions in Johannesburg can be found in the document 'A New Deal,' produced for the WSSD at: <http://www.icftu.org/wssd2002>

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#### Latin America priorities for the WSSD:

### Not Seeing the Forest For the Trees

By *Fundación Ecológica Universal, Argentina*

What are the priorities of Latin America at the WSSD? Unfortunately, sustainable development is not on top of the list. Leaders from our region are worried about economic crises, exemplified by

Argentina and Uruguay, and about political strife, especially in Colombia and Venezuela. Unemployment rates are reaching 40-50 percent, while half the population is living below the poverty line. In this climate, saving the world takes second place to saving one's skin.

Nevertheless, government representatives from all Latin American countries are in Johannesburg trying to reach beneficial agreements. But without stability at home, they are unable to see the forest of long-term sustainable growth for the trees of the next currency crisis or debt default. This is why they are looking for economic assistance and trade agreements for the near future, not for a long-term sustainable growth. The sustainable-development priorities of our population—health, education, safe water and sanitation—are hard for governments to address without political and economic stability.

This is where civil society comes in. We have been working to raise awareness, implement projects and advise decision-makers on these priority issues. Some governments have understood the potential of such partnerships (in Brazil, Costa Rica and Ecuador); others remain very reluctant.

One basic lesson from Rio, agreed and stated in Agenda 21, is that sustainable development has to be achieved by working together – governments and civil society. It is time for governments

All Southern NGOs are welcome to seek attention, as this insert aims to give more voice at the Summit to civil society in developing countries. This springs from the Rio+10 Project, facilitated by the Danish 92 Group, working in Africa, Latin America and Asia through a series of national and subregional networks coordinated by the following organizations.

Southern Africa: EMG; Mozambique: ABIODES; Namibia: Desert Research Foundation within the NANGOF NGO Forum; South Africa: ENJF, ENDABA and the WSSD NGO Secretariat. East Africa: EcoNews, Kenya; Zimbabwe: Zero Regional Environmental Organisation; Uganda: The Rio+10 Coalition; Kenya: EcoNews and ELCI; Tanzania: JET; West Africa: Friends of the Earth Togo and networks in 11 countries. Ghana: ICA. South East Asia: WWF-Philippines, alongside WWF in Indonesia (with IPF), Malaysia, Thailand (with NGO COD), Vietnam and national NGO networks. South Asia: CSE India; Nepal: Forum of Environmental Journalists; Bangladesh: Forum for Environmental Journalists; South America and Argentina: Fundación Ecológica Universal; Brazil: Vitae Civilis; Ecuador: Fundación Natura and IUCN Quito; Bolivia: Fundación Tierra; The Amazon: Coordination of Indigenous Organisations in the Amazon including rainforest peoples in Peru, Guyana, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela, French Guyana, Surinam, and Colombia. Central America and Costa Rica: CICAFOC, supported by UNES and Enlace Sur Sur; Nicaragua: Centro Humboldt; Guatemala: Fundación Solar; El Salvador: UNES.

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to practice what they preach.