

ecco

FREE OF CHARGE

Calling All Ministers!!!

Dear Ministers:

We are writing to you today to express our high level of concern on the state of the WSSD negotiations. We had hoped that the process at this point in the negotiations would be setting forth a vision and action plan to which heads of state could sign up. Instead we find that countries are faced with a long, muddled text that does not provide a basis for constructive negotiation.

We need an action plan to combat poverty, address unsustainable consumption and production, and protect the integrity of life-supporting ecosystems. We need leadership from you that sets forth a path of strong, visionary commitments backed up by concrete action plans with financial and institutional support.

With only one negotiating session left before heads of state meet in Johannesburg, the current text offers little hope of reaching consensus on concrete action plans to implement what was agreed in Rio that is worthy for heads of state to adopt. Indeed some parties continue to lead negotiations away from the time bound commitments that are the mandate from the UN General Assembly for these negotiations. At this moment the process is on a knife's edge and the success or failure rests in your hands.

We therefore ask you to intervene in this process, providing the much needed political will and leadership for the Summit to be a success.

A Way Forward

We have specific suggestions on how this could be achieved for your consideration. We believe that the commitments should be structured in a particular way in order to ensure action on the ground, follow-through and accountability. Each issue-based commitment should include the following elements:

Targets and timeframes – How will the vision laid out in the political declaration be met on each particular issue and by when?

Means of implementation & Financial Resources – What are the tools and delivery mechanisms identified in order for the achievement of each commitment, what is the additional level and source of sustainable funding required to meet the commitment and who is going to provide it?

Institutional requirements – Who is tasked with the implementation of the commitment?

Monitoring & Reporting: The development of agreed indicators and identification of what information governments should provide in order to assess whether the commitments or if the underlying environmental and sustainable development goals are being met?

As a practical and important example of how this process should be structured we lay out a vision for energy based on the above model. This is but one example and a number of other critical issues should follow this model.

In the case of energy leaders should commit to:

Target & Timetable:

-Agree to launch a global initiative on renewable energy and efficient clean energy technologies to provide by 2015 energy services to the two billion people, mostly in rural and remote areas, who currently have not access to modern energy services, and improve the services of the people who are currently powered by unsustainable sources of energy.

Means of implementation & Financial Resources:

-Commitment by OECD governments to shift energy sector lending practices of international financial institutions and export credit agencies towards sustainable energy by 20% within five years.

-Commitment by all governments to aggressive renewable portfolio standards, energy efficiency standards, and other measures to help build renewable energy markets, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

-Commitment by all governments to phase out subsidies to conventional energy sources within ten years.

-Commitments by OECD governments for substantial new ODA funds to fund the global initiative on renewable energy and energy efficient technologies

-Ensure that investments for sustainable development are directed to where they are most needed especially Least Developed Countries.

Institutional Requirements: A clear mandate must be given to an appropriate implementation body to ensure the fulfillment of these commitments, and to provide for adequate input from civil society and accountability for any failures in implementation.

Monitoring and Reporting: Countries should report on the above means of implementation and financial resources put into place so parties can make an assessment whether environmental and sustainable development goals are being met.

While giving the current chairman the mandate to restructure the text in the manner will be a necessary first step, we need much more. We need leaders with a vision for a sustainable future that are willing to step forward and set an ambitious agenda. We need leaders willing to take the risk of upsetting political norms in order to ensure that substantial and concrete action occurs to change the path of development to a sustainable one. To complement targets and timetables presented in such a structured format, a clear and rational framework of international governance for sustainable development also is needed. Such a framework should be organized in such a manner that it gives equal importance to each of the three pillars of sustainable development. Such a path will assist in combating poverty, implementing action plans for sustainable consumption and production and protecting the integrity of life-supporting ecosystems.

Sincerely,

ECO

ECO has been published by non-governmental organizations at international conferences since the Stockholm Conference in 1972. This ECO was brought to you by an international coalition of environmental and development NGOs, representing civil society from over 100 countries around the world, who are attending Prepcomm3 in New York. These organizations are: Oxfam International, CARE International, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), Greenpeace International, World Wide Fund for Nature, Friends of the Earth International, South Africa Climate Actions Network, Globe South Africa, LOBE South Africa, Tearfund UK, Consumer's International, Indonesian Peoples Forum, Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED), and the Danish 92 Group.