

## Changing Climate, Changing Planet, Changing Participation – the case for Environmental Justice and less Hubris in the post 2015 agenda

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It's global warming stoopid" Popular Graffiti on busy London Road 2009 (Carolyn Stephens)

*"We have seen essential progress. But let us again be clear that we are witnessing ever more frequent, extreme weather events, and the poor and vulnerable are already paying the price," (Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 2013).*

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*(Friends of the Earth 2013)*

## **1. Introduction. Why is it important to debate the post-2015 agenda in 2014?**

Sustainable Development, in theory, means the positive interaction of the global environment with social and economic development. However, we are now in a context in which, despite some progress, we are nowhere near the targets we have set ourselves on sustainable development, poverty elimination, biodiversity, or human health. We are living through, perhaps, the most socially and environmentally unsustainable moment in our history as a species. Essentially, this means that, as we move towards 2015, we are conceivably further from Sustainable Development than we have ever been.

The situation is ever more urgent. In 2013 at the UN climate change negotiations in Warsaw, the meeting saw an unprecedented hunger strike by the Philippines' representative Minister, following the massive environmental and social disaster caused in that country by extreme weather events in 2013. This was combined with a mass walkout by all the civil society and non-governmental organisations (CSOs and NGOs) present. Speaking for the CSOs and NGOs, Friends of the Earth stated, *"this Warsaw summit is achieving nothing to help protect vulnerable and poor communities or to reduce global carbon pollution – we must all do more in the months ahead to make the world wake up to the need for urgent action"*(Friends of the Earth 2013). Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) said, *"We have seen essential progress. But let us again be clear that we are witnessing ever more frequent, extreme weather events, and the poor and vulnerable are already paying the price"*(UNEP 2013).

Climate change is not the only risk we, and the planet, are facing: biodiversity is declining at unprecedented rates and whole ecosystems are disappearing before we even know the extent of their biodiversity (Stephens C 2012). It is generally accepted that the destruction of biodiverse ecosystems internationally is not by communities directly dependent on these ecosystems, but due to deforestation, mining, resource extraction, over-exploitation of marine environments and biopiracy, all generated by external human demand (King, Carlson et al. 1996, Soejarto 1996, Merson 2000, Jones, McCormick et al. 2004, Foley, Asner et al. 2007). Rich countries and their populations are currently particularly responsible for the resource extraction that impacts negatively on biodiversity and on the well-being of rural and indigenous communities. However, increasingly, urban populations in every country demand resources and products from biodiverse forests, rural and marine ecosystems (Stephens C 2012). This affects not only our current human population, but also future populations and every other species on the planet.

In the face of this context, a major outcome of the 2012 Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development was the initiation of an inclusive inter-governmental process to prepare a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the post 2015 agenda. In 2013, the RIO+ Centre started to support

the world's governments in their planning for the post 2015. The initiative commenced with supporting the Brazilian government in the development of its position toward the debate about the post-2015 agenda. The RIO+ contribution encompasses two initiatives: a) review the state of the art of the debate about the post-2015 agenda in order to support the development of international interventions, and b) facilitate the debate between the national governments and civil society in order to improve the representativeness and transparency of the political process.

This discussion paper was commissioned by the RIO+ Centre to provide a brief review of the current social and environmental context and to explore the need for civil society participation in the development of new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the post 2015 context. It is intended to be a non-technical, accessible briefing for governments and civil society organisations internationally. The briefing covers the global context, the urgent need for new goals, the need for genuine participation, and reviews the example of Environmental Justice as a means to develop civil society involvement in the new SDGs. Involvement of the world's 7 billion people in the development of SDGs is not a panacea for the crisis we are living through. The conclusion will discuss the need to recognise, and take responsibility for the fact that we are now making decisions for future generations and all other species on the planet.

## **2. The Context for the post 2015 SDGs.**

### **2.1. Achievements and pitfalls after 2000.**

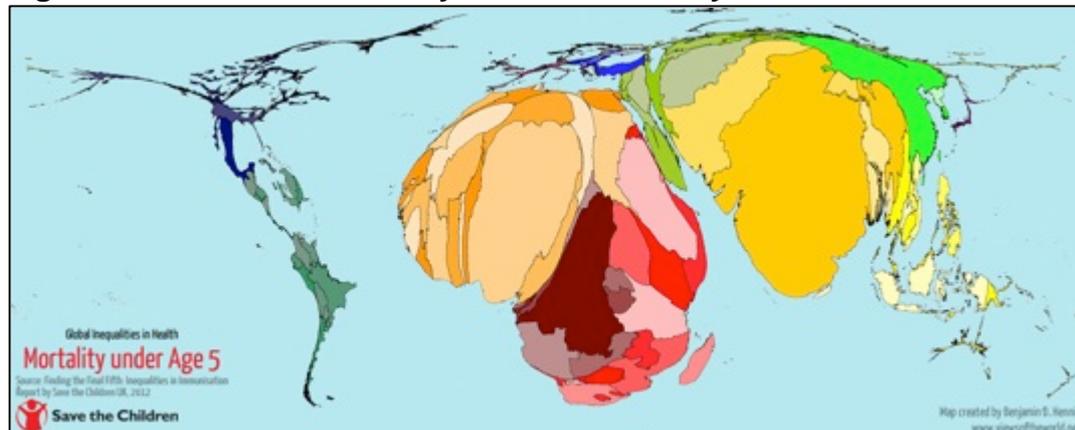
The start of the new millennium saw the initiation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In sum: *“The eight MDGs were derived from the Millennium Declaration, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2000. Through the Declaration, world leaders forged a commitment to combat poverty, hunger and disease, provide education to all children and equal opportunities to both women and men, protect the environment, establish a global partnership for development, and to achieve these goals by 2015. The MDGs provided a framework of time-bound goals and targets through which progress can be measured, using a baseline of 1990”* (United Nations 2000)

Fourteen years later we have seen *some* progress on *some* indicators and in *some* regions. Looking at a human well-being goal, MDG 4 on Child Mortality, which is strongly linked to poverty and inequality, there have been some significant improvements. The latest data from the UN MDG programme reports that (United Nations 2013):

- *Since 1990, the under-five mortality rate has dropped by 47 per cent.*
- *While around 17,000 fewer children are dying each day, 6.6 million children under five died in 2012—mostly from preventable diseases.*
- *More than 10 million lives have been saved through measles vaccines since 2000.*
- *In sub-Saharan Africa, one in ten children dies before age five, more than 15 times the average for developed regions.*

Despite gains, child mortality remains a major challenge in Africa and for specific population groups in many regions, such as slum-dwellers; remote rural communities; and minority and indigenous populations (UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues 2006). Figure 1 shows graphically what countries look like when resized according to their rates of under five mortality (Save the Children 2012).

**Figure 1 Countries resized by Under 5 Mortality Rates in 2012**



The UN MDG 7 on environmental sustainability shows some improvements, but we are losing ground dramatically on climate change and deforestation. The latest data show (United Nations 2013):

- *“More than 2.1 billion people have gained access to improved drinking water sources since 1990, exceeding the MDG target.*
- *While almost 2 billion more people now have access to proper sanitation than in 1990, 2.5 billion still do not have access to toilets or latrines.*
- *An estimated 863 million people reside in slums in developing countries.*
- *Global carbon dioxide emissions have increased by more than 46 per cent since 1990.*
- *Nearly one-third of marine fish stocks have been overexploited and the world’s fisheries can no longer produce maximum sustainable yields.*
- *More species are at risk of extinction despite an increase in protected areas.*
- *Forests, particularly in South America and Africa, are disappearing at an alarming rate.”*

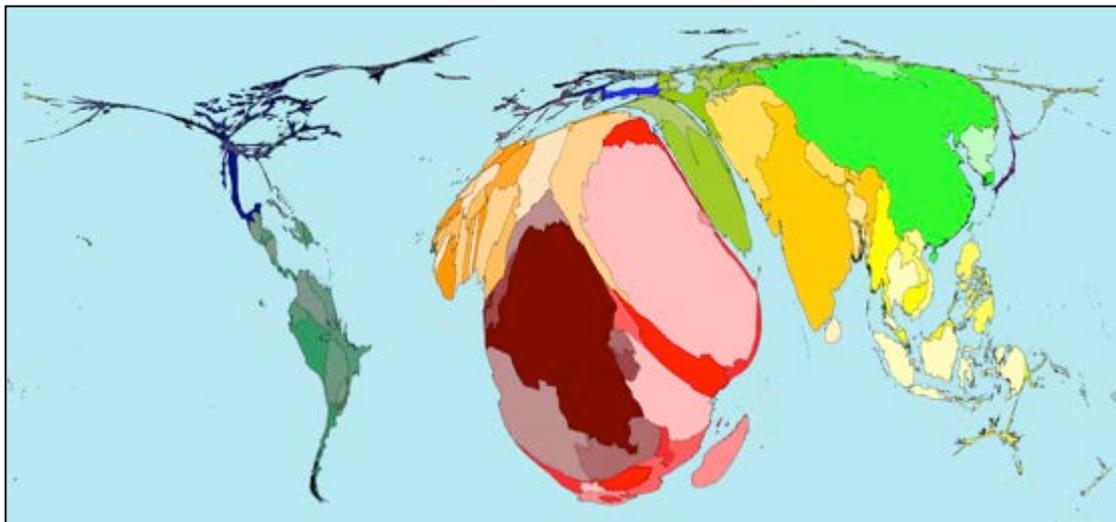
In terms of deforestation the UN reports *“The largest net loss of forests has occurred in South America —around 3.6 million hectares per year from 2005 to 2010. Deforestation is not only a serious threat to achieving sustainability, but also to progress towards hunger and poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods, as forests provide food, water, wood, fuel and other services used by millions of the world’s poorest people”* (United Nations 2013).

## 2.2. Lack of commitments on sustainable development – what are the impacts on the poor?

During the past two centuries, the human population expanded approximately eight-fold and material-intense and energy-intense economic activity greatly increased. World population, currently 7 billion, is expected to reach 8.5 – 9 billion by 2050. The total human ‘carrying capacity’ of Earth is uncertain, and depends on future patterns of consumption and waste generation, but at current levels we are on a path to long term destruction (UNEP UNEP 2012).

We face unprecedented problems posed by global environmental change. Global environmental change is being driven by the consumption patterns of populations in wealthy and emerging economies, and particularly the consumption of the wealthy citizens of those countries. But the impacts of global environmental change will be felt most, and are already being felt, by poorer countries and poorer peoples in those countries. Figure 2 shows the countries of the world resized according to their vulnerable rural populations dependent on threatened ecoregions (UNEP-WCMC 2011).

**Figure 2 Countries resized according to their vulnerable rural populations dependent on threatened ecoregions.**



UNEP-WCMC & Worldmapper 2010. Copyright SASI Group (University of Sheffield) and Mark Newman (University of Michigan).

As UNEP points out *“from space the Earth looks blue”* (UNEP 2014). Water is one of our most important resources. At a global level, we are already seeing regional changes in rainfall patterns, with increases over the oceans but reduction over much of the land surface, especially in various low-to-medium latitude mid-continental regions (including Sahel, Amazonia and Southern Latin America), and in already arid areas of India, the Middle East, northern Africa and parts of Central America (McMichael 2005). It is likely that, despite this overall reduction, rainfall events would tend to intensify, with more frequent extreme events increasing the likelihood of flooding, as we are

already witnessing in Europe and in Asia. Regional weather systems could undergo latitudinal shift.

Climatologists also anticipate that global climate change will increase overall climate variability. Evidence already suggests that we are experiencing increasingly severe weather events including more powerful storms and stronger winds, intensification of the El Niño cycle, and altered patterns of drought and rainfall. There is great stability in the climate system and once it begins to change it will continue to change. Thus, even if the build-up in greenhouse gases is arrested in the next 20-30 years, it is highly likely that the seas would continue to rise as the extra heat permeates the oceans, ascending by up to several metres over the coming centuries (IPCC 2013).

For centuries, waterways and coasts have been vital for human trade and survival. More than 50% of the world's population, and 75% of all major cities, are within 60 kilometers of the sea. A rise in sea-level will have widespread and catastrophic social, environmental and health impacts. The latest estimates suggest that even the IPCC scientists have underestimated the potential sea level rises we will experience (Horton, Rahmstorf et al. 2014). The regions most vulnerable to sea-level rise include some of the world's poorest countries and regions: Bangladesh, Egypt, and eastern India with huge river delta farming populations; and Pakistan, Indonesia and Thailand, with large coastal populations. Various low-lying small-island populations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, with few material resources, face the prospect of wholesale displacement. Some of the world's coastal arable land and fish-nurturing mangroves will be damaged by sea-level rise. This and human damage to mangroves, coral reefs and other coastal ecosystems will also lead to erosion, siltation and render coastlines more vulnerable to storms and natural disasters (UNEP 2014). A heightening of storm surges would damage coastal roadways, sanitation systems and housing and risk the lives of the millions of people who live in coastal cities (McMichael 2005).

### **2.3. What is expected if the countries cannot produce a relevant agenda?**

The latest warning from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is stark: *“Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented over decades to millennia. The atmosphere and ocean have warmed, the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea level has risen, and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased”*(IPCC 2013)

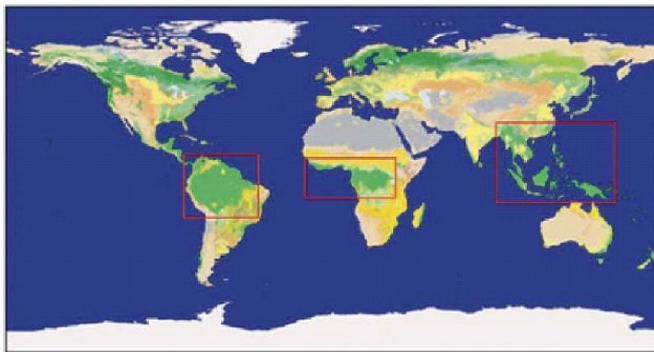
2013 IPCC data show that the globally averaged combined land and ocean surface temperature data (as calculated by a linear trend), show a warming of 0.85°C [0.65 to 1.06], over the period 1880 to 2012, when multiple independently produced datasets exist. The total increase between the average of the 1850–1900 period and the 2003–2012 period is 0.78°C [0.72 to 0.85], based on the single longest dataset available (IPCC 2013). The warming would be greater at higher latitudes. This anticipated warming would be much more rapid than any natural warming experienced by humans in our

history as a species. This extremely rapid rate of change will put many of the biosphere's ecosystems and species under stress.

If deforestation continues at its current rate we face major loss of biodiversity with impacts on access to new medicines, disease resilience and climate change. The world's forest systems are critical for the world's path to sustainability.

NASA scientists recently studied the long-term impacts on global precipitation of deforestation of major forest regions such as Amazonia. Figure 3 shows this: They conclude: "*Deforestation does not appear to modify the global average of precipitation, but it changes precipitation patterns and distributions by affecting the amount of both sensible heat and that released into the atmosphere when water vapor condenses, called latent heat*" (NASA 2013)

**Figure 3 Global Land Cover Map: Global land-cover map (1-kilometer or 3/5ths of a mile resolution)(NASA 2013)**

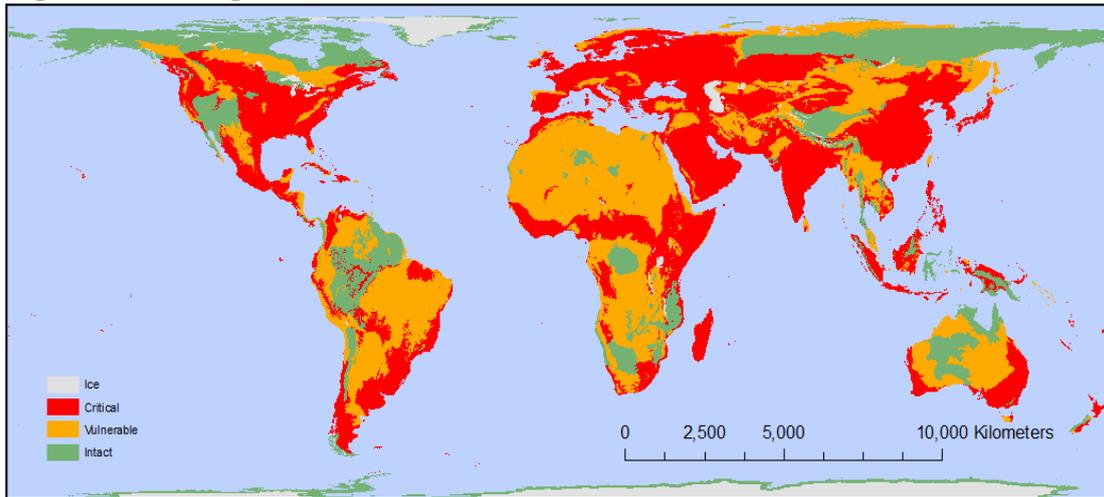


(NASA 2013) (*emphasizing with red rectangles the three regions in which all tropical forests (green color) are replaced with a mixture of shrubs and grassland*)

One challenge is that changes we are seeing now are highly interconnected. We now understand that climate changes and deforestation have an almost symbiotic relationship - one affects the other and then the other impacts back. Related to both are concomitant changes including:

- biodiversity impacts
  - loss/extinction of species
  - redistribution of species (invasion);
- changes to food-producing ecosystems;
  - land cover, loss of soil fertility
  - coastal and marine ecosystems (including fisheries);
- desertification;
- changes to the hydrological cycle, and depletion of freshwater supplies including major underground aquifers;
- worldwide dissemination of persistent organic pollutants (POPs);
- Impacts of urbanisation including pressure on regional ecosystems, massive waste generation and environmental contamination.

**Figure 4 Ecoregion threat status**



(Olsen *et al.* 2001; Olsen & Dinnerstein 2002, in UNEP WCMC 2012) (ecoregions and national boundaries have been removed for clarity of display)

Figure 4 shows in summary how many of the world's eco-regions are in a *critical or vulnerable* state. Combining all these threats to our planet, we are on the road to long-term and irreversible damage to the planet - unless we take immediate and radical action at all levels in every country.

#### **2.4. Why the opinion of civil society organisations and individual citizens can help the political debate among countries?**

At international level, the UN Economic and Social Council is playing a central role in developing the post 2015 agenda: *“the outcome document of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the MDGs requested the Secretary-General to initiate thinking on a post-2015 development agenda and include recommendations in his annual report on efforts to accelerate MDG progress. The outcome of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development initiated an inclusive intergovernmental process to prepare a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs). There is broad agreement on the need for close linkages between the two processes to arrive at one global development agenda for the post-2015 period, with sustainable development at its centre”* (United Nations EcoSoc 2014). Coordinated action by Governments and UN agencies is a critical step forward, but governments and international agencies cannot resolve the planetary crisis alone.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) can support the process. So can businesses – from big companies to small retailers everywhere. But this needs to be an exercise in what could be called “critical democracy” – building on the direct democracy model first developed centuries ago, but now in the context of 7 billion current citizens of the planet faced with a critical moment in human development.

The development of Sustainable Development Goals needs to be fundamentally inclusive for two very simple reasons: first, in a post 2015 context, the actions of *every citizen* of the planet are important for sustainable development. Second, we are in a moment when many governments feel under pressure, perhaps indirectly from their populations, and in the light of the economic crisis, to prioritise short-term economic development over any sustainable development plans. Without fundamental population involvement and support, governments cannot take radical action, and without government policies and actions, people cannot make radical change either.

We simply cannot afford to exclude anyone from the debate and from action. Taking just four of EcoSoc building blocks for sustainable development:

- Energy Energy companies can source and promote sustainable energy. Governments can provide incentives and startup funding for technological development. But *people* need to choose sustainable energy and play their part in energy conservation (McMichael, Woodward et al. 1994, Gleick and Cooley 2009).
- Food security and nutrition Food companies and supermarkets can source foods sustainably – using organic, local produce. Farmers can produce sustainable produce. Governments can provide incentives to farmers and companies. But *people* need to play their part in calling for, and buying sustainable produce to support farmers, companies and governments (Stephens and Valeiro 2001).
- Natural resource management Deforestation is directly caused by logging, agricultural expansion and indirectly by climate change (Millar, Stephenson et al. 2007). Governments can create protected areas and legislate to protect native forests. Companies can source sustainable products and reuse wood. But *people* play a major part in their choice of wood for building, furniture and fuel, and their decisions about hunting and trafficking forest wildlife.
- Sustainable urbanization The world's population is now predominantly urban (UN Habitat 2010). Governments can promote sustainable urban development through energy conservation, urban design, and recycling and reuse of resources. But the options available to urban citizens and their subsequent choices, drives the exploitation of the world's ecosystems and the model of unsustainable over-consumption. It is highly likely that it is urban populations who will decide the fate of biodiversity and climate change, through their decisions about resource use and consumption (Anderson 2005, Stephens 2011).

Calling for civil society involvement in the development of international goals is nothing new. Involving multiple stakeholders in the development of global goals has been part of UN process for some time. But we cannot take a business-as-usual approach and this time meaningful and active participation of citizens needs to be programmed into the process at every level.

## 2.5. Are there good experiences of democratic participation out there?

There is extensive evidence, at every level of government and society that meaningful democratic participation in policy development and implementation is both beneficial and critical for policy success (United Nations Development Programme 2003).

In summary, civil society participation supports policy by:

- raising legitimacy of development activities through popular engagement in policy formulation;
- improving programme impacts by incorporating local information and experience;
- promoting transparency and accountability;
- enhancing the enabling environment for policy by building trust between broader CSOs and government (United Nations Development Programme 2003).

Perhaps the most promising approach for the development of new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) comes from the Environmental Justice movement (Stephens and Bullock 2000, Stephens, Bullock et al. 2003, Stephens, Willis et al. 2008). Environmental Justice has evolved from civil society groups, initially in the USA, and now widespread, angered at what they perceive as the “unjust” distribution of environmental resources for health and, conversely the “unjust” distribution of environmental harms. The network now includes a collaboration of non-governmental organizations with environmental scientists, public health professionals, and lawyers, all working on the issue of the distributions of environmental harms and the rights of everyone to a healthy environment.

In 1998, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) turned Environmental Justice from a civil society movement into European policy. The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted on 25th June 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in the 'Environment for Europe' process.

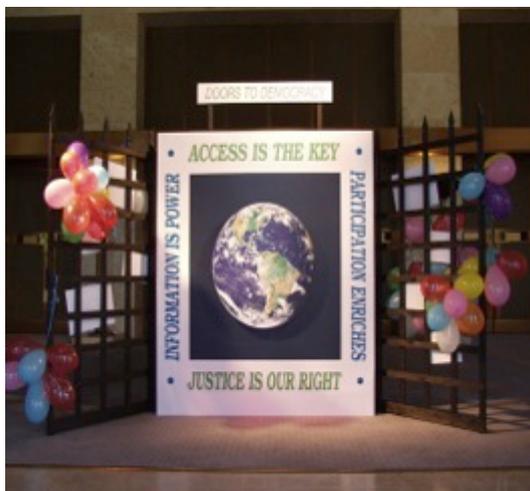


Figure 5 1998 Launch of the Aarhus Convention

The Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted on 25th June 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in the 'Environment for Europe' process. Kofi Annan, then Secretary-General of the United Nations said at the time *“It is by far the most impressive elaboration of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, which stresses the need for citizen's participation in environmental issues and for access to information on the environment held by public authorities.*

*As such it is the most ambitious venture in the area of 'environmental*

*democracy' so far undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations".*  
(UNECE 2003)

The Aarhus Convention remains the best example of a new kind of environmental agreement. It links environmental rights and human rights. It acknowledges that we owe an obligation to future generations. It establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders. It links government accountability and environmental protection. It focuses on interactions between the public and public authorities in a democratic context and it forges a new process for public participation in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements (UNECE 2003).

The two basic premises of Environmental Justice are, first, that everyone should have the right and be able to live in a healthy environment, with access to enough environmental resources for a healthy life, and second, that it is predominantly the poorest and least powerful people who are missing these conditions. Taking these two premises together suggests that a priority is to ensure that the adverse conditions faced by the least powerful people are tackled first and that they have the most legitimate right to participation in policy development.

Two national definitions of environmental justice provide examples. The US Environmental Protection Agency defines environmental justice as:

*'... the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including a racial, ethnic, or a socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies. Meaningful involvement means that: (1) potentially affected community residents have an appropriate opportunity to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment and/or health; (2) the public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision; (3) the concerns of all participants involved will be considered in the decision making process; and (4) the decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.'*(US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) 1998)

The Scottish Executive (2005) defines environmental justice in similar terms:

*This strategy is based upon the principles of environmental justice. The ultimate goal is to secure a fairer world and a fairer future, enabling all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations.*

*When we talk about environmental justice we are talking not only about addressing the unfair burden carried by communities who live in the most degraded environments but also about fairness in providing the information and opportunities for people to participate in decisions affecting their local environments. (Scottish Executive Social Research 2005)*

As well as implying environmental rights, an environmental justice lens implies environmental responsibilities. These responsibilities are on this current generation to ensure a healthy environment exists for future generations, and on countries, organizations and individuals in this generation to ensure that development does not create environmental problems or distribute environmental resources in ways which damage other people's or planetary health. Current human activities that have impacts on future generations include:

- Activities that impose costs on future generations without any balancing of benefits: nuclear waste will have to be managed for thousands of years; toxic waste that impacts on health of future generations.
- Activities that reduce the ability of the environment to provide non-substitutable resources and services (what environmental economists call 'critical natural capital')
- Activities which create incremental and accelerating negative environmental impacts: for example climate change is predicted to become more severe in its disruptive effects over the coming centuries
- Activities with unknown and unexplored potential long-term effects – for example, there is limited scientific understanding of the long term health and environmental impacts of the vast range of chemicals we use daily

The Aarhus convention now has more relevance than ever. Taking an Environmental Justice approach would change decision-making for the post 2015 agenda.

### **3. Recommendations. How would an environmental justice perspective show the way for the post 2015 agenda?**

The Rio+20 process has already hosted popular participation in the development of the post 2015 agenda using the UN platform World We Want. But we also have a challenge: how to include all citizens and particularly those citizens who are not benefitting from the current model of development and those who are at the forefront of the fight to protect world's ecosystem for a sustainable future.

In this context, it is more than time for the world to take an explicit Environmental Justice perspective to the development of the post 2015 agenda and to the development of any new goals for the world we live in. The UNECE argues that "*The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in*

*Environmental Matters, or Aarhus Convention, and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs) are the only legally binding international instruments on environmental democracy that put Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in practice; and they are open for global accession”.*

For a start, the World We Want process could be uncompromisingly disseminated at every level of society, through schools, CSOs, media channels and in workshops with remote rural and indigenous communities throughout the country. An Environmental Justice approach would imply that the views of populations most affected by environmental problems would be particularly important for global Sustainable Development Goals. In many contexts this would mean prioritizing the views of marginalized indigenous and rural communities who are directly dependent on fragile ecosystems; listening to slum dwellers in the major cities – who are marginalized within the globalized economy; and, perhaps most of all, listening to young people in all settings.

There would have to be major governmental initiatives to reach isolated and marginalized communities – many of which are at the forefront of protection of ecosystems but do not have access to modern technology and certainly not a virtual interface such as the World We Want.

If true participation is achieved, it is very likely that this kind of environmental justice approach would affect national and global Sustainable Development Goals and subsequent policies. There is significant evidence that young people and rural and indigenous peoples are particularly concerned about climate change, deforestation and sustainable development. Their involvement might change the post 2015 agenda significantly.

## **Final Observations – When the Sea is Rough the Fish don't Mind**

An Environmental Justice approach is not a panacea for the crisis we are in, either in any one country, or internationally. Nor is it the simplest approach to use, since an environmental justice lens addresses the crisis from the perspective of power and places emphasis on the voices of the usually powerless and voiceless. That said, there is no easy way to develop *meaningful* goals for a sustainable world in our current context. And there is also no doubt that the people who will be most affected by unsustainable development will be the excluded citizens of the world – in poorer countries; in poorer communities, in poorer homes everywhere. Given this reality, their voices are the most legitimate.

There is a second, and perhaps more critical observation I would want to conclude with. Sustainable development is currently framed as an interaction of environment, economy and social development. This is a step forward conceptually and we will need to make this a reality. But even this step forward casts the planet as a resource designed for human to exploit, even if

sustainably. The problem is that, fundamentally, the crisis of the planet is not only about the current human population or even about survival of the human species. As many cultures have recognized throughout history, we are part of nature: nature does not exist *for* us.

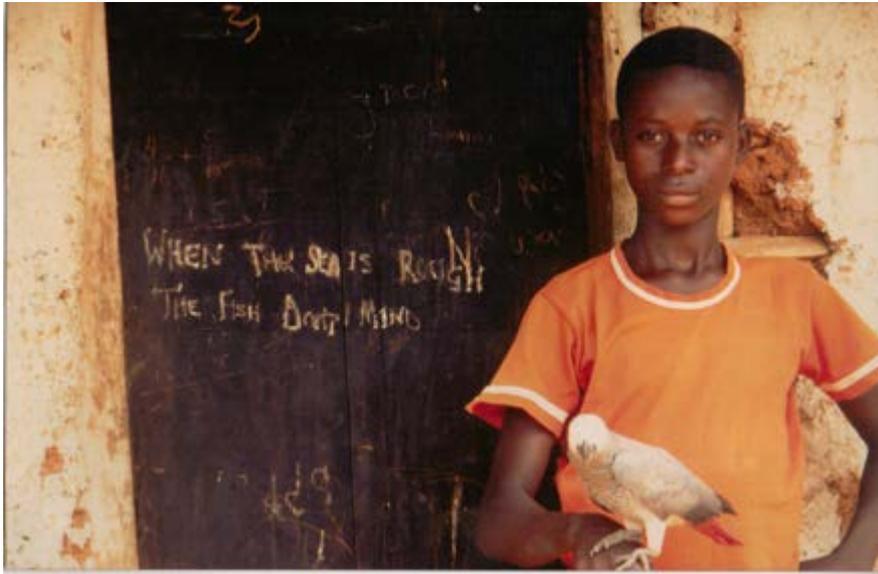


Figure 6 "When the Sea is Rough the Fish don't mind" Fisherman saying, Accra Ghana (photo James Mayers/Carolyn Stephens)

As we move into a critical moment for sustainable development, with the largest human population the world has ever seen, every human citizen needs to be part of the debate and everyone needs to be part of the solution. This alone seems challenging enough.

But every one human living in 2014 also needs to be aware that "we" are making critical decisions on behalf of future generations, and "we" are also making decisions for every plant, insect, animal and element on the planet. It is perhaps only our current hubris that makes us believe that we have the right to make such decisions for the planet and all its diverse inhabitants. Historically, and still for many cultures and many environmental philosophers, other species, and elements have equal rights with humans (Kessel and Stephens 2007). As we engage with the post 2015 agenda and our planetary crisis, our 7 billion citizens very probably need to make decisions that recognize their essential link with, and responsibility towards, both the future and every inhabitant of our planet.

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