



**OPINIONS**  
OF THE ECONOMIC  
SOCIAL AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
COUNCIL

# Rio + 20 :

*A major meeting  
on the future of our planet*

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## **RIO+20** ***A MAJOR MEETING ON THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET***

Opinion of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council

presented by

**Mme Françoise Vilain, the Rapporteur**

on behalf of the

**section for European and International Affairs**

Question referred to the Economic, Social and Environmental Council by a decision of its office dated 14 February 2012 applying Article 3 of the ... Amended Ordinance of 29 December 1958 on the Act constituting the ESEC. The office gave the section for European and International Affairs the task of preparing an opinion entitled *RIO+20: a major meeting on the future of our planet*. The section for European and International Affairs, presided over by Mr Veyrier, appointed Ms Françoise Vilain as the rapporteur.

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# RIO + 20 : A MAJOR MEETING ON THE FUTURE OF THE PLANET

## Summary of the Opinion<sup>1</sup>

Faced with climate change and the inexorable exhaustion of the planet's resources, the very future of living conditions on Earth is called into question. The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development in Rio in 1992 marked a significant step in establishing the concept of sustainable development. Since then, awareness of the urgent need to take action has been affirmed, although this development has failed to translate into actions capable of achieving the ambitions set forth. In fact, ecosystems have continued to decline, and economic and social inequalities have worsened. On an international level, the legal and institutional landscape remains both highly fragmented and divided, whereas the challenges, which are now of a global scale, require cross sectoral and interinstitutional approaches and responses.

Twenty years on, in June 2012, the challenge for the Rio +20 Conference is now of an entirely different magnitude. The challenge is to mobilise states and all sectors of civil society around strong commitments in favour of an economic, social and environmental transition, the fight against poverty and more successful governance of sustainable development.

Rio+20 is an opportunity not to be missed to open the way to real implementation of sustainable development in service of human progress. In line with its previous opinions set forth during the French Presidency of the G20 and the Durban Conference on international climate negotiations, the ESEC has focused its recommendations on the international governance of sustainable development.

## The main recommendations

### ➤ Reducing major global inequalities

While recalling its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, the ESEC is of the view that drawing up new development objectives should be a priority.

**To that end, the Council recommends:**

- **Speeding up the economic, social and environmental transition**
  - by supporting projects that are clearly conducive to economic stimulus, job creation, preservation of the environment and social inclusion;
  - by facilitating this transition by introducing new rights to access to information for employees and establishing lifelong learning programmes for workers and teachers;
  - by drawing on the partnerships between the UNEP, the International Trade Union Confederation, and the International Employers Organisation to define coherent economic, social and environmental policies at an international level.

<sup>1</sup> The entire draft opinion was adopted by public vote with 178 votes in favour and one abstention (see the result of the vote annexed).

- **Mobilisation around the fight against poverty**
  - by emphasising food security, with the consolidation of the agricultural sector, particularly the livestock sector;
  - by speeding up the construction of infrastructure in the water, transport and food products storage sectors;
  - by respecting the commitments made regarding state aid for development, in particular the objective of 0.7% of GNI;
  - by also pursuing the search for innovative sources of revenue such as the tax on financial transactions
- **Establishing a minimum standard of social protection**
  - by guaranteeing a minimum level of social protection in every country;
  - by taking concrete initiatives such as the ratification of Convention No. 102 of the ILO, at least by all the G20 countries, the exchange of best practices and an examination of the budgetary feasibility of this minimum standard.

## Structure global governance around sustainable development objectives

The Rio+20 Conference should be the forum for articulating a strong desire to establish a more effective institutional framework for environmental and sustainable development policy.

### **Our assembly declares itself in favour of:**

- **The consolidation of the environmental pillar via the creation of a Global Environment Organisation - GEO**, a specialised UN agency, with the following tasks:
  - the adoption of strong environmental regulation based on existing agreements;
  - the prevention of damage to the environment, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of commitments;
  - The promotion of the participation of the various sectors of civil society;
  - Strengthening scientific expertise by establishing accessible and reliable databases.
- **Development of communication channels between international institutions**
  - with reciprocal systematic and strengthened inter-institutional consultations;
  - by reasserting the role of the ILO, the WHO and the FAO vis à vis trade and financial organisations.

- **A stronger political impetus in favour of sustainable development and an evaluation of what has been achieved**
  - by strengthening the leadership role of the G20 and setting up a Permanent Sustainable Development Council to replace the current United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development;
  - by setting global targets to be achieved within the next 10 or 20 years for the conservation of the planet and sustainable development, based on a range of indicators.

## ➤ **Strengthening mechanisms for the participation of civil society**

The 1992 Rio conference opened the way to the recognition of civil society. Since then, the growth in information technology has led to a massive increase in communications between people at all levels and the feeling of belonging to one world. It is now time to take things a step further.

**Therefore, the ESEC is also campaigning to:**

- **Strengthen the role and position of each of the major sectors of society:** social partners, enterprises, key players in the social economy, women, young people, associations, foundations and NGOs, local authorities, Economic and Social Councils etc.
  - by putting forward the principle of full rights, during negotiations and debates, to expression, to access all documents and indeed the right to propose amendments;
  - by providing an institutional basis for the participation of social partners in the elaboration of global sustainable development strategies and involving enterprises in identifying the measures to be taken;
  - by strengthening the role of local authorities at grass-roots level, while seeking better coordination between regional, national and global bodies;
  - by restating its commitment to the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, as well as the principles of corporate social and environmental responsibility.
- **Full and complete recognition of a right to information, participation, and access to justice**
  - by pleading for the international application, beyond the European continent, of the rights and principles set forth in the Aarhus Convention and by encouraging the EU to support regional initiatives taken on the basis of this convention;
  - by integrating new models of governance, based on the principles of access to information and participation, into the statutes of GEO;
  - by exploiting the full potential of new communication technologies with a view to full implementation of Principle 10 of the 1992 Rio Declaration.

# Opinion

## Introduction

The issue of the limits of the exploitation of the planet's resources is clearly a matter of much debate.

No country will benefit if the worst-case scenarios materialise, a possibility which can no longer be excluded, particularly in light of climate change and the exhaustion of world resources. These resources constitute the common heritage of humanity which, in the absence of a global management system beyond the level of sovereign states, are in danger, thus threatening the balance in international relations and the future conditions of life on earth.

Nevertheless, the populations of poor countries and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) have a legitimate right to access well-being, health, education and work. Their aspirations cannot be fulfilled unless there is a change in the current economic model. Continuing with the old ways is no longer viable. We need to develop new production and consumption methods and move towards a green and inclusive economy, a concept which has barely been brought to the drawing board, let alone been adapted to diverse regions, social dynamics and cultures, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Europe, Japan, and countries such as South Korea are seeking these new models, and China and Brazil are also pursuing them intently in their own sphere of influence.

As understanding of the urgent need for action has advanced to a huge extent since the first conference in Rio in 1992, the challenge for the Rio Conference in June 2012 is of an entirely different magnitude: to mobilise states and civil society based on concrete commitments to speed up the economic, social and environmental transition, the fight against poverty and a more rationalised and successful governance of sustainable development. While the challenge is significant, Rio+20 provides an excellent opportunity to lead the way for important advances towards the realisation of a concept of sustainable development in the service of human progress.



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## Three challenges for global environmental and sustainable development governance

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### **The dual challenge: the fight against the deterioration of the environment and the social and economic development of the planet**

Without going so far back as the 1972 Stockholm Conference, which first brought ecological issues to an international level and brought to light the links between economic growth, damage to the environment and the well-being of populations, the Rio Earth Summit, in June 1992, marked an important step in the journey.

The Declaration on Environment and Development, adopted on the basis of the work of the Conference, established the concept of sustainable development and affirmed certain principles which are just as relevant today to the preparation for the Rio+20 Conference: human beings must be at the centre of the sustainable development agenda - 1st principle - the protection of the environment must form an integral part of the development process - Principle 4 - : all states and peoples must cooperate in working towards the essential task of eliminating poverty, as an indispensable condition of sustainable development - Principle 5 -: public participation must be developed - Principle 10 -.

However, twenty years later, we must conclude that the commitment and action on the ground under Agenda 21 has failed to live up to the ambitions set out therein. In the same way, negotiations for international agreements on climate change, biodiversity and desertification have failed to take urgent priority. Whether we look at the protection of ecosystems or the fight against social and economic inequality, progress at both national level (access to essential resources, decent living and housing conditions) and international level remains insufficient. It is regrettable that no full evaluation has been carried out since the Rio Conference in 1992 on the major issues that call for a coordinated and collective response, ensuring, to a large extent, the failure of the United Nations Commission for sustainable development.

Regarding the state of the planet, which will have a population of 9 billion by 2050, all the research and data predicts a depletion of natural resources due to the combined effect of the pollution of the soil, water and air, and the exploitation of the earth, the oceans, forests and mineral resources. This will lead to the deterioration and erosion of biodiversity in many parts of the world, as well as climate imbalances, which will have a marked effect on the populations of certain countries. Between 2005 and 2010, an average of 240 million people per year were affected by disasters linked to climate fluctuations. Ecologically fragile areas, particularly poorer countries, could also become focal points for violence and armed conflict. Current predictions give cause for concern: By 2025, 1.8 billion people could be facing water shortages, particularly in Asia and Africa; more than 300 million people risk exposure to increasingly frequent flooding incidents and it is estimated that more than 50 million people will have to leave their home countries in the coming years due to climate change.

In any case, climate disturbances and the risks of water, energy and food shortages will mean that the future will become more and more uncertain, thus exacerbating economic and social fault lines across the world. The dysfunctional aspects of a global economic model founded on both inequitable distribution of wealth and a system of financial regulation that exacerbates speculation and a “race to the bottom” on social and environmental issues, and which is based on modes of production and consumption that are all too often incompatible with the limited nature of natural resources, give cause for concern.

On the basis of some particularly illuminating figures demonstrating the interaction between the deterioration of the environment, poverty and social inequality, we can assess the progress that needs to be made to give substance to the concepts of global environmental responsibility and sustainable development governance: more than 43% of the global working population, or 1.3 billion people, live on less than two dollars per day; 16% of the global population still suffer from hunger; the number of unemployed people has reached a record level of 200 million globally and more than 600 million jobs will have to be created in the next ten years to prevent an increase in unemployment figures and offer sustainable jobs to young people entering the employment market; 5.3 billion people do not enjoy any social protection and more than a million live in unhygienic accommodation without water or sanitation.

In 2011, the ESEC (Economic, Social and Environmental Council) expressed concern about the delay in achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG). These figures illustrate that in spite of significant progress made in the areas of health, education, and the fight against certain pandemics, the poorest and most vulnerable rural populations have largely failed to benefit.

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## **Fragmentation and insufficient implementation of environmental agreements and programmes**

Twenty years after the Earth Summit, the legal and institutional landscape has evolved. It is without question that the new understanding of global environmental issues has left its mark. However, the current system of governance, established progressively over a long period, is ill equipped to deal with the global nature and the interdependence of these new challenges. We are far from an international system of governance capable of coherently integrating the various components of responsible management of natural resources, from local level to global level, and the links between the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

Many multilateral environmental agreements (MEA) have been concluded in order to respond to ecological issues and to find a way of managing resources in a reasonable manner. The preservation of the ozone layer, the control of transportation of dangerous and pollutant materials, sustainable management of water resources, controlling deforestation, protecting wild species of flora and fauna are among the issues covered in these agreements. While the objectives of these individual treaties are legitimate, there is little or no coordination between them. The most symbolic conventions, concluded at the Rio Conference (climate change, biodiversity and desertification) are to be found alongside more specifically targeted treaties as well as a number of regional agreements, not to mention bilateral agreements. In total, the MEAs make up a library of more than 500 texts,

with no particular hierarchy or coherent classification. Paradoxically, there are almost no protective measures in place to protect almost 70% of the world's oceans, beyond the areas under national jurisdiction.

Current institutional provisions are as convoluted as they are fragmented. More than thirty agencies are involved in the area, and the MEAs secretariats, spread across the world, some of them are very protective of their autonomy.

In this context, the UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), based in Nairobi, appears to play the role of the watchdog rather than the initiator, and has clearly not been equal to the coordination task with which it was officially entrusted by Agenda 21. However, it must be acknowledged that, as a creation of a United Nations General Assembly resolution, it cannot adopt regulation of its own initiative and does not have the benefit of guaranteed regular funding. In spite of many attempts at reform and multiple declarations reaffirming its central role in the UN system, its political influence remains weak.

In the view of this Assembly, the various United Nations (UN) specialised agencies and programmes – the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Organisation for Food and Agriculture (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) etc. – as well as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), have a crucial role to play under their mandate to ensure a fair transition of the economy. This applies equally to all the commercial and financial institutions outside the United Nations framework. It is also true that each of these organisations tends to pursue their own agenda, and that at the final count, this tends to work against the pursuit of an integrated global agenda, based on common objectives.

The ESEC has continuously condemned the explosion in the number of international organisations and the imbalances between institutions in the international multilateral system. In the absence of leadership from a higher authority, conflicts of laws continue to multiply and solutions can only be found on a case-by-case basis against a backdrop of major inequalities between the respective powers of the institutions and monitoring the application of international law. The texts designed to protect the environment suffer from this inequality to an extraordinary degree. It should be noted that, unlike the WTO and its Dispute Settlement Body, most of the MEAs do not provide for any conciliation or sanctioning mechanism. Furthermore, some MEAs organise an arbitration procedure requiring the agreement of both parties. In this context, the continuing discrepancy between the magnitude of the decisions taken in principle and the limited nature of concrete progress is hardly surprising.

In spite of intentions declared at a high level, or led by the United Nations, the record as regards the implementation of Agenda 21 set out at Rio in 1992 has been very mixed and there is no sign of change on the horizon. The reluctance of several countries to accept multilateral frameworks which they consider to be overly restrictive, a spectacular manifestation of which was the refusal of the United States to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and the Canadian withdrawal from that same agreement, clearly illustrates this problem. The deadlock in the WTO Doha round of negotiations, where interactions between trade and investment, trade and competition and trade and the environment is another such example.

In spite of the urgent need for action to preserve the "terre patrie" (Mother Earth) (Edgar Morin), the slowdown in economic growth across the world, from the rate of 4 to 5% per year in the first decade of the new millennium, the general reduction in public money available in less developed countries, and the entrenchment of protectionist policy may result in further withdrawals from environmental policy.

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## The need for the involvement of the key players in civil society

The growth of information and communication technologies, the increase in the movement of people, goods and capital have shortened distances, and led to massive growth in the connections between citizens, and an irreversible change in the psyche of individuals towards a feeling of belonging to a global village, with finite resources.

The 1992 Rio Conference opened the way for a recognition of the position and the role of civil society. Principle 10 of the Declaration on the Environment and Development, which was ratified following the Conference, states “Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level...” Another important development at this conference, under Agenda 21, was the establishment of a list of nine categories of civil society representatives, called “major groups”: business and industry, workers and trade unions, farmers, women, youth and children, NGOs, local authorities, the scientific and technological community, and indigenous populations.

We can only admire the spirit animating the efforts of the UN institutions and the Brazilian authorities to establish forums for debate for the benefit of civil society members at the Rio 2012 Conference. Through the preparatory committees, civil society representatives have been involved in the elaboration of the “zero draft”, a document which constitutes the foundation for the text to be discussed at the end of the summit by the Heads of State and government. The ESEC recalls the significant contribution made by French and European organisations, which have succeeded, at various stages of the process, in taking advantage of the opportunities to express their views and contribute to the deliberations.

A few examples suffice to demonstrate this point: declarations of the Rio+20 Club; the Collectif Rio+20 (Rio+20 Group); the local and regional authorities in France; a document adopted by the International Forum on the Social and Solidarity Economy; the consolidated contribution of the International Trade Union Confederation; the “Global Compact Lead” initiative, which brings together 50 major firms to adopt the “Blueprint for Corporate Sustainability Leadership” model; the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee, etc.

Mr. Jean-Pierre Thébault, environment ambassador, highlighted the merits of the model to the section: “.....thanks to the efforts of the Brazilians, Rio will be the first international summit to be radically open to civil society”. In the same vein, sessions designed to give voice to the views of some 50,000 accredited civil society participants will be held in the run up to the Heads of State Conference, in order to provide the negotiating parties with a certain number of recommendations emerging from these debates.

However, it is worth assessing the extent to which the various contributions are likely to be taken into account in the conclusions of the Conference. The wider question of the interests represented, and their aims, as well as the avenues through which civil society can participate in and be associated with major international conferences also merits more extensive debate. The informal Rio+20 Peoples Summit on environmental and social justice, to be held alongside the official summit, is just one example.

Given their role as gatekeepers to participation for representatives of civil society, the division and internal composition of the major groups, which only partially reflects the diversity in approaches among the organisations, has led to questions about their representativeness and calls for revision of the provision. For instance, the low levels of participation of youth organisations in the preparation for Rio+20, in spite of their essential role in changing behaviour on the ground, demonstrates the extent of the progress yet to be achieved in order to ensure the participation of this “major group”.

Equally, key players in civil society often share one another’s views on a variety of substantive issues. Without going into all the issues, the fact that one of the two main themes of the Rio+20 Conference, the concept of a “green economy”, has elicited so many different reservations and interpretations is indicative of the desire among civil society representatives to avoid the misconception that there is one simple economic model for sustainable development, or that it would lead to the fight against poverty being sidelined. Opinions also diverge on the principle of “codecision sharing”.

Clearly, there is still much progress to be made to establishing a common approach to the challenges and objectives that should be pursued.

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## Recommendations

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### Reducing major global inequalities

Economic, social and environmental pressures and crises are all inextricably intertwined. Their combined effects lead to profound dysfunction at global level. The improvement in living and working conditions, particularly in developing countries, the reduction of inequalities, the protection of nature and the environment and progress towards a more rationalised governance of sustainable development should also be brought to the fore.

**The ESEC is of the view that priority should be given to drawing up new development objectives,** combining the modes of production and consumption that have the lowest possible environmental impact, sustainable management of natural resources and international governance of global<sup>2</sup> public goods with the introduction of mechanisms to guarantee a minimum standard of social protection and a better distribution of wealth. In this regard, two major international summits, that of the G20 under the Mexican Presidency and the Rio Conference, both of which have the green economy, the fight against poverty, sustainable development and climate change firmly on the agenda, will be held just a few days apart. The participation of the G20 Heads of State and government in the Rio+20 Conference is undoubtedly a positive symbol, which should greatly enhance the impact of the political message and commitments to speed up the economic, social and environmental

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2 The concept of “global public goods” (GPG), which first appeared in 1999 under the guise of the UNDP, is based on the claim that there are certain goods and services that neither markets nor states have the capacity to produce and protect, in the most efficient manner. The concept of GPGs covers environmental goods (the preservation of the ozone layer), “human” goods (the fight against poverty, scientific and technical knowledge, global cultural heritage etc.), transnational infrastructures (for example, the Internet), and intangible goods (peace, health, financial stability, etc.).

changes that are necessary both now and for the benefit of future generations. To that end, along with bringing the issue of international environmental governance and sustainable development to the table, the ESEC takes the view that **it is absolutely essential to pursue and intensify efforts in three areas** in order to give substance to the concept of sustainable development.

## Speed up the economic, social and environmental transition

Mr. Peter Poschen, Head of the Department of Job Creation and Enterprise Development at the International Labour Office (ILO), who spoke before the section for European and International Affairs, highlighted that the net effects of a transition towards a green and inclusive economy would, overall, be compatible with economic growth and should even result in a 1 to 2% increase in employment, on the condition that policies that incentivise investment, education and retraining are pursued.

Although their size should not be overestimated, there are a number of key sectors, in both developed and developing countries, linked to the change in production and consumption methods with real potential for job growth, through the transformation of existing jobs or the acquisition of new skills. These sectors include energy supply and the promotion of renewable energies, energy efficiency, transport, housing, recycling, forestry, and agriculture, which remains the world's largest employer.

Two examples:

- at European Union level, the Europe 2020 Strategy emphasises the importance of intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth based on a greener and more competitive economy that uses resources more efficiently;
- in developing countries, it has been demonstrated through numerous pilot programmes and projects that decent jobs can contribute to progress in achieving the Millennium Goals.

For these reasons, the **ESEC resolutely supports and encourages, on an international level, national policy initiatives designed to facilitate the transition towards a system that is conducive to economic stimulus, job creation, the preservation of the environment, as well as social inclusion and the principle of decent work.** However, we wish to emphasise that the economic, social, and environmental transition will not be possible unless new rights for employees are introduced, along with measures to facilitate workers in adapting their skills and competences. **Continuing professional development for employees, workers in general, and trainers should be at the heart of such policies. salariés et sans une adaptation des compétences et des savoir-faire.**

In line with the Global Employment Agenda and the Global Jobs Pact, the ILO Green Jobs Programme, among the aims of which are to provide support to governments and to employers' and workers' organisations by setting up diagnostic and impact analysis tools for measures taken in labour markets, deserves full support.

The ESEC is also of the view that the concrete initiative of the **partnership between the UNEP, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE)** is relevant to this issue. The aim of this partnership, which brings together industrialised countries, developing countries and poorer countries,

is to contribute to the elaboration of a coherent policy framework, based on data analysis instruments on the consequences of a transition to a green economy in terms of job creation, substitution and losses, as well as energy savings, redistribution of wealth, and social inclusion and exclusion. Mr. Poschen, referred to above, also brought it to our attention that while a green economy is a necessary condition of sustainable development, it is not the solution in and of itself. Sustainable development requires coordination of social, economic and environmental policies, along with robust measures to protect populations from possible crises.

## Mobilising around the fight against poverty

Certain countries have made significant economic progress since Rio 92. With the emergence of new economic powers, including Brazil, the redistribution of power on the international stage is also among the major changes witnessed over the past twenty years. However, the gap between rich and poor has had a tendency to grow and even accelerate, both within and between nations, even in the most developed countries due to the current economic crisis.

Development and social cohesion, particularly in poorer countries and in the least developed countries (LDC), in favour of a more desirable model of global economic growth, remains a central issue.

In spite of the series of international meetings that followed the adoption of the Millennium Declaration on 8 September 2000, progress on the ground has failed to live up to the ambitions set out therein. We will limit our observations to the commitments made during the G20 Seoul Summit with the adoption of a multiannual action plan for development, and the agenda of the G8 and G20 set by the French Presidency in 2011, particularly on development funding. The United Nations High level Plenary Meeting on the development of MDGs, held in September 2010, was unable to do more than make it clear that progress has fallen short of expectations.

Over the past few years, in several opinions, this assembly has consistently reiterated the view that the **eradication of poverty and the development of poorer countries must be prioritised. In this regard, the assembly wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the MDGs, as a means of achieving real progress on the basis of measures taken by the international community, complete with development indicators and evaluation tools.**

In line with recent G20 summits, **the ESEC wishes to recall the importance of mobilisation in three areas: the establishment of a minimum standard of social protection** an issue to which we will return later; **food security, with the consolidation of the agricultural sector**, particularly the livestock sector, by improving productivity and production methods through national and regional investment programmes, education, advice and the development of distribution networks; and **building infrastructure** in the water, transport, energy distribution, and food storage sectors.

To that end, strengthening the dialogue between Heads of State and Government is of a matter of fundamental importance. The Los Cabos G20 Summit, along with the Rio+20 Conference, should be used as a platform for the participants to recall their full commitment to achieving the MDGs and the major priorities involved, and in particular, to bring solutions to the table to meet their commitments as regards the funding of Official Development

Assistance (ODA). While discussions on finding innovative sources of funding must continue, the establishment of a tax on financial transactions in particular, **ODA remains the first priority, and an essential investment, and the objective of 0.7% of GNI remains an absolute imperative.** These objectives can only be achieved if both of the following conditions are met:

- Greater coordination and coherence in the assignment of aid;
- Combating the lack of financial transparency and the use of tax havens to avoid fiscal obligations.

In this regard, this assembly is in favour of the proposals set out in the Communication from the European<sup>3</sup> Commission with the objective of “reinforcing the trade capacities of developing countries by making trade part of their development strategy”. Recommended measures include targeting the least developed countries, concentrating aid on specific domains with a view to inclusive and sustainable development, improving the commercial environment, beyond the reduction of customs duties by refocusing the Generalised System of Preferences on those countries most in need.

## Establishing a minimum standard of social protection

Over 75% of the world’s population does not benefit, or has a very limited social protection. In this context, the opinion delivered by the ESEC entitled “At the heart of the G20: a new dynamic for economic, social, and environmental progress”, in which it emphasised that the establishment of a minimum standard of social protection to guarantee basic services to all, in the areas of health, housing, nutrition, access to water and education, hardly requires justification.

However, it must be pointed out that no significant progress has been made towards achieving this objective, which was included as an item on the agenda of the G20 Summit in Cannes. Therefore, the ESEC wishes to recall with force and conviction that it is in the interest of all to work towards a fair system, both within and between nations. It is imperative to tackle this issue at the Rio Conference, and to call on the Heads of State, through civil society organisations, to exercise their responsibility in this regard.

The ESEC is campaigning for the following initiatives in order to begin the process of giving concrete form to the shared desire for a more structured governance of sustainable development:

- The ratification of ILO<sup>4</sup>, Convention 102, which forms the basis of international law on social security, by all the G20 countries;
- Exchange of best practices, skills and setting up projects to provide countries with recognised expertise in certain areas with opportunities to share their experience;
- Initiating research on the means through which a minimum standard of social protection can be funded in each and every country, drawing on the expertise and resources of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and regional development banks.

In any case, this assembly supports the position of the French authorities in favour of adopting a recommendation on a minimum standard of social protection, which was put forward during the 101st Session of the International Labour Conference – 30 May to 15 June 2012..

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<sup>3</sup> Communication from the European Commission “Trade, growth and development: Tailoring trade and investment policy for those countries most in need”, COM (2012) 22 final, 27 January 2012.

<sup>4</sup> The Convention concerning Minimum Standards of Social Security..



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## Structuring global governance around sustainable development objectives

In May 2000, the Malmoe Ministerial Declaration solemnly called for “an institutional architecture that has the capacity to effectively address wide-ranging environmental threats in a globalising world”. **The ESEC takes the view that the time has now come to translate words into actions** and that the Conference on 20 22 June should be used as a forum to express a strong political will **in favour of the creation of a more effective institutional framework for the environment and sustainable development**.

Progress must be made on the following three themes, which are both complementary to one another and inextricably intertwined:

### Consolidate the environmental pillar through the creation of a Global Environmental Organisation

In line with a position that has been reaffirmed several times, and since the urgent need to take environmental action has been proven, this assembly supports, as part of the agenda of the Rio+20 Conference, **the establishment of a Global Environmental Organisation (GEO) as a specialised UN agency**.

Solutions to problems with wide ranging implications, such as climate change and biodiversity must be **introduced by a strong voice that carries authority**. In our view, **this means that GEO must have the capacity and the responsibility for adopting a fundamental body of environmental law based on MEAs and for ensuring compliance. GEO would therefore be given the task of monitoring compliance and the implementation of commitments, as well as preventing damage to the environment**. To that end, the ESEC is in favour of setting up a mechanism modelled on the WTO dispute settlement body. At a time when we are witnessing the dangers of a “race to the bottom” in terms of environmental regulation, reversing this process is the price that must be paid in order to make sustainable development a reality.

The creation of GEO would also constitute **a response to the need for rationalisation and effectiveness. Far from making a sanctuary of the environment, the aim should be to provide the means to streamline the current arrangement of multiple agreements, programmes and secretariats into a more unified organisation. This could also contribute to optimising the management and implementation of various support measures, particularly the Bali Strategic Plan for developing countries (technology support for green growth and strengthening of administrative capacity)**.

This institution should be based on a **renewed model of governance** and should take an innovative approach. The same applies to the participation of **civil society members** in decision making and implementation, a point to which we will return later.

However, this assembly is of the view that the organisation and mandate of this new agency should also reflect significant ambitions in the area of scientific expertise. **GEO should be responsible for compiling credible and accessible scientific databases upon which to base its decisions**. The objective is to encourage the emergence of a consensus in the research in the areas within its competence, and to confer credibility and legitimacy on international negotiations on the environment. Strengthening environmental expertise

should also facilitate the implementation and monitoring of commitments on the ground, in a more structured manner. The new organisation is in no way intended to replace existing scientific bodies, such as the GIEC or the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), but rather to facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation and coherence in policy preparation and recommendations.

## Develop communication channels between international institutions

Due to its inherently interdisciplinary nature, sustainable development goes beyond environmental issues, and it is clear that **the creation of a GEO will not resolve in itself the issues involved in the interactions between the three pillars:** economic, social, and environmental policy. On the other hand, it will be practically impossible to address these interactions unless a GEO is set up.

This assembly is convinced that profound changes in the way international institutions operate are essential in order to make progress towards a more integrated and coordinated global governance. In line with the opinion issued on 6 September 2011, *Au cœur du G20: une nouvelle dynamique pour le progrès économique, social et environnemental* (At the Heart of the G20: a New Dynamic for Economic, Social and Environmental Progress), presented by Mr. Bernard Guirkingner and Mr. Guy Vasseur, this assembly recalls the proposal put forward by the President of the French Republic before the 98th International Conference, suggesting that “the ILO, and, in the future, the World Environmental Organisation, should have their say at the WTO, the IMF and the World Bank whenever the eight core labour standards or essential clauses of climate agreements are challenged.”

For these reasons, we now call for a transition from commitments to action and believe that **conferring a more systematic character on reciprocal consultations between institutions is necessary.** The content of these consultations must be strengthened substantially and clearly aimed at achieving sustainable development objectives.

In the same way, a more even balance of power is needed between institutions in order to facilitate compliance with sustainable development principles in the management of globalisation: currently, the WHO and the ILO do not have sufficient human, financial or legal resources to deal with the WTO and the IMF, or to ensure sufficient implementation. In our view, **there can be no justification for the growing dominance of trade and financial organisations. The ESEC would therefore reiterate its position in favour of respect for social and environmental rules in the decisions taken by trade and financial organisations.**

## Give greater political impetus for sustainable development and evaluating the achievements

Owing to their global nature, environmental and sustainable development issues call for a global response that can only be set in motion by a strong political authority. For this reason, the ESEC has repeatedly declared itself in favour of enhancing the role of the G20 in providing political impetus. In an opinion adopted some weeks prior to the Cannes Summit, the Committee called on the Heads of State and government to steer the course of globalisation in order to achieve greater coherence between economic, social and environmental policy.

The ESEC also supports the proposal to draw up, by 2015, **a set of objectives to be achieved within 10 or 20 years for the conservation of the planet and sustainable development.** This process could offer an opportunity to set out collective commitments for a greener and more inclusive economy. Without seeking to deny the difficulties involved in such an exercise, and regardless of the reservations that might be issued, particularly by developing countries, this is **an ambitious roadmap for an economic, social and environmental transition that must be adopted by the Rio+20 Conference.**

The monitoring of progress on these objectives, at the highest level, will also necessitate **a breakdown into environmental and sustainable development indicators**, beyond GDP (Gross Domestic Product). In line with its opinion issued on the request of the French Prime Minister on 27 May 2009, Sustainable Development Indicators and the Ecological Footprint (Les indicateurs du développement durable et l’empreinte écologique), this assembly has participated in drafting complementary indicators at national level. It is also campaigning for a similar project to be undertaken at international level.

This new set of indicators could also be of assistance to the work of a **Permanent Council on Sustainable Development**, which we would recommend should replace the current Commission on Sustainable Development, and which should be directly associated with the United Nations General Assembly and the missions and resources of which should be subject to review. This institutional change should not be understood as an attempt to exclude the long term possibility of a more fundamental reform of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), based on sustainable development principles.

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## Strengthening the mechanisms for the participation of civil society actors

Speaking before the section, Mr. Pierre Radanne, President of the Association 4D (Dossiers et débats pour le développement durable) (Themes and Debates for Sustainable Development), emphasised the major discrepancy that exists between public opinion and leaders regarding issues as fundamental to the future of the planet as global warming, agriculture, and energy strategy, and expressed the view that sustainable development necessitates “a complete renewal of our democratic system”. In his view, while the 1992 Summit led to “the awakening of universal citizenship on sustainable development themes and Agenda 21”, the fact remains that the issue of the “integration of civil society actors in the policy making process” remains largely unresolved.

**The ESEC shares this view and is campaigning for the application of all aspects of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration** so that the public, as well as key players in civil society, will play a full role in the global governance of sustainable development.

### Ensure that the right to information, participation, and of access to justice is fully respected

Authorities and individuals must be in a position to exercise their collective and individual responsibility: in our view, this is the real issue, at the heart of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration. Not only does the confidence of citizens in institutions need to be restored, the involvement of every person in the governance of the environment and sustainable development must be facilitated in the most concrete way possible through the right to access information and to participation.

In France, the right to access information and to participation has been established on a constitutional basis with the adoption of the Environment Charter and, as the ESEC<sup>5</sup>, recently recalled, our country has managed to begin a dialogue to address the issues, through the innovative Grenelle method and its “gouvernance à cinq” (five party governance). In the same vein, the European Union has placed the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, at the heart of its legal framework.

However, the fact remains that very few states across the world have put in place a legal framework for the implementation of Principle 10. In this context, **the ESEC takes the view that France and the EU have an active, determining, and essential role to play at the Rio Conference in order to ensure a more solid legal basis for these principles in the global governance of sustainable development.**

*As indicated in the opinion on international climate change negotiations cited above, this assembly is campaigning for the international application, beyond the continent of Europe, of the rights and principles set forth in the Aarhus Convention, without underestimating the difficulties involved. Speaking before the section, Mr. Raymond Cointe, Head of European and International Affairs at the Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing, pointed to the risk that “in defending the argument too passionately, Europe risks being perceived as seeking to impose its model on others”. For this reason, **this assembly is in favour of a process through which Principle 10 can be promoted universally at Rio, and invites the EU to support proposals in this regard, particularly regional initiatives involving civil society.***

This process could be promoted as part of the three international conventions agreed in Rio on climate change, biodiversity and desertification. By integrating mechanisms in its statutes to ensure access to information and facilitate participation, the creation of GEO should mark a new step in the implementation of Principle 10.

Furthermore, the ESEC takes the view that it is essential **to give, in Rio, concrete meaning to the right to access information and the right to participation, drawing on the massive potential of new information and communication technologies.** The Internet and social networks encourage knowledge sharing, facilitate communication, and are, as noted by the Collectif Rio+20 the “new vectors of mobilisation”. In the view of the ESEC, their success is indicative of a demand for participation which must be satisfied, especially since this demand emanates from a mainly young population, which is directly affected by environmental challenges. Clearly, it is in light of this reality that Rio Principle 10 should now be implemented.

## Consolidate the efforts of those working in the transition to a sustainable economy

For the ESEC, the Rio+20 Conference must be based on bottom up thinking, involving all the stakeholders involved in the preservation of the environment and natural resources, at all stages of the process, from decision making to implementation – in tandem with a “top down” approach, which has been dominant up to now. **To that end, a full rights of expression, of access to all documents, and indeed a right to introduce amendments must be granted to all stakeholders during debates and negotiations.**

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<sup>5</sup> *Bilan du Grenelle de l'environnement, pour un nouvel élan (Grenelle Environment Assessment, for a New Impetus), Rapporteur Pierrette Crosemario, Opinion of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, 22 February 2012.*

This new dynamic, justified on the basis of the measures required to achieve sustainable development and efficiency, must prevail within GEO.

The ESEC wishes to reiterate its conviction, previously expressed in its opinion on the international climate change negotiations, that “the transition towards an economy that consumes less natural resources cannot be achieved without the involvement of workers and enterprise”. In the context of the global economic and social crisis, the essential role to be played by **social partners** is becoming increasingly apparent. It is this very claim that led the ESEC to propose, in its opinion cited above on the issues for the French Presidency of the G20, the establishment of processes to formalise the consultation of social partners within major international institutions. **The ESEC is of the view that the Rio+20 Conference should mark a new step by providing an institutional basis for the participation of social partners in the definition of global strategies for sustainable development.**

This assembly takes the view that **businesses** can play a pivotal role in the transition to a green and inclusive economy. Whatever their sector of activity, it falls to businesses to put the new sustainable model of production and consumption into practice by tackling, with pragmatism, the complex factors and objectively different situations encountered across the world. It should be noted that France is particularly technically and economically advanced in certain major sectors (electricity, food, public infrastructure and materials, water treatment and sanitation), which should facilitate the implementation of projects. From the point of view of the ESEC, **the role of businesses in the concrete implementation of sustainable development principles justifies their close involvement in the identification of the measures to be taken, which may include:** support for research and innovation, improved protection of intellectual property rights, promotion of public and private investment, integration of social and environmental clauses in public procurement contracts, drafting of rules for fair competition in environmental and social matters.

Regarding multinational firms, **this assembly can only recall its commitment to the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, as well as the OECD (Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.** By recalling the possibilities for businesses to fulfil their societal and environmental responsibilities, the declaration also opens the way to an integration of social and environmental measures into commercial activities. The ESEC accepts the proposal presented by the European Economic and Social Committee for “a wider implementation of good practice in the area of sustainable<sup>6</sup>.development in business, drawing on the best examples”. The Committee also recommends the introduction of a non financial rating system for businesses in order to encourage responsible investment.

**The social and solidarity economy** should also be further integrated into discussions on a transition towards a new model of development, which cannot be achieved without a change in the behaviour of citizens in two areas: **strengthening development education programmes for children and young people** in both formal and informal educational contexts; **raising awareness among consumers and users**, as well as fulfilling the desire

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6 Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the “Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Rio+20: towards the green economy and better governance” COM (2011) 363 final - The contribution of European organised civil society. Rapporteur: Mr. Wilms .

expressed by the European Economic and Social Committee, in an opinion delivered on 4 November 2010<sup>7</sup>, to work towards less waste and more civically oriented personal attitudes.

**Associations, foundations and NGOs** (Non governmental organisations) have acquired knowledge and expertise through direct engagement on the ground, which is recognised by citizens. **This assembly is in favour of greater recognition of the work carried out in this sector.**

Regarding **local and regional government**, it **has**, in the view of the ESEC, **an increasingly decisive role to play** in promoting **sustainable development at regional level**. While the issues are global, governance works best when local, city, and regional government are involved. By implementing Agenda 21 locally, as well as other initiatives to encourage sustainable and socially responsible regional management, local government at all levels has proven its ability to take action on the basis of the Rio principles.

The consolidation of the influence of city councils and networks, recognised in Agenda 21 as a way of implementing sustainable urban development, is a quintessential example of such an initiative. The ESEC shares the analysis of the “Declaration by local and regional government in France on Rio+20”, and takes the view that lessons must be drawn from their source at grass roots level, at the crossroads of economic, social and environmental issues. However, we wish to stress the need for greater coherence and take the view that Rio+20 **should design a framework to ensure better coordination between regional, national and global bodies. Rio+20 should also encourage the development of governance mechanisms for local sustainable development with the greatest possible involvement of local communities.**

In the same way, the potential contribution of **National Economic and Social Councils (ESC)** should not be overlooked. The diversity of their membership tends to facilitate the emergence of a collective approach to sustainable development issues. **The ESEC endorses the establishment of a sustainable development observatory by the European Economic and Social Committee** and declares itself in favour of strengthening existing lines of communication between ESCs and the European institutions, particularly in the context of preparation for major international negotiations on issues such as sustainable development.

**Finally, the ESEC wishes to be involved in the preparation of France’s positions in a more systematic manner in the future, regarding certain international issues within its scope.**

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<sup>7</sup> Opinion of the European Economic and Social Council of 4 November 2010 regarding the Communication from the Commission on “International climate policy post-Copenhagen: Acting now to reinvigorate global action on climate change ».

# Declaration by the Groups

## Agriculture

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The main theme of our deliberations was governance. Our section was often tempted to go a step further in the areas of poverty and the green economy. However, we have kept within our brief, since, in the absence of policy coordination and effective governance, sustainable development policies will be condemned to the status of mere paper declarations of intent.

The participation of civil society is fundamental to successful governance in this area. However, it also raises the question of the representativeness and the legitimacy of the interests involved. Although this is a complex debate at international level, progress must be made in order to improve the way in which governance works.

The recognition of farmers by the United Nations Development Commission as a “major group” is, in our view, a positive step. This will give farmers an opportunity to communicate their concerns about food security, the regulation of markets and raw materials, desertification, conservation, and conversion of agricultural land. We also seek to promote better agricultural policy at national and regional level. Such policies must include the provision of training, information, and the distribution of new techniques and technologies, as well as encouraging investment in agriculture and supporting research and innovation.

It is regrettable that these aspects were not all taken into account by the major commercial and financial international organisations. Although it often seems that these organisations are the only sources of international law, they are incapable of taking social, economic and environmental issues into account.

From our point of view, along with issues affecting agricultural markets, farmers have an essential contribution to make to the discussions held within international institutions, including a future Global Environmental Organisation, the role and functions of which are still to be worked out.

The agriculture group would request that the Rapporteur prepares a report on the main proposals introduced at Rio+20.

The agriculture group voted in favour of the opinion.

## Craft Industry Group

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The Craft Industry group is of the opinion that the ESEC, which represents the three pillars of sustainable development in civil society, must contribute its views to preparations for the Rio+20 Conference.

In our view, the Council has an important contribution to make in terms of raising the profile of the issues discussed at the Summit, particularly in the context of the current economic and financial crisis, which may lead to a sidelining of international commitments.

We wish to commend the Rapporteur on her work in explaining, in a clear and effective manner, the three main themes on which we wish countries to take action, as well as a renewal of their commitment to sustainable development over the next twenty years.

Regarding the green economy, we would subscribe to the objective of speeding up the economic, social and environmental transition, with a view to achieving a more desirable and fair kind of global economic growth.

With the capacity of the planet to renew its resources in danger, and the dramatic economic and social impact of climatic disturbances, particularly on the poorest countries, along with the explosion in the level of the world's population predicted between now and 2050; now, more than ever, every country must take responsibility for the future of our planet.

To that end, we wish to express our support the drawing up of an ambitious roadmap towards a sustainable economy and the adoption of indicators on the basis of which progress can be monitored.

While this transition towards a greener economy will bring employment, it also requires a strong mobilisation for the adaptation of skills and competences through education and lifelong learning.

In this regard, the role of professional organisations and support structures, which encourage businesses to improve their knowledge and practices on sustainable development, should be highlighted.

We cannot fail to support the view expressed in the opinion that businesses, which have a responsibility in the implementation of the concept of sustainable development on the ground, must be more involved in the process of identifying the measures to be taken. This involvement seems to us to be an essential means of ensuring that such measures are adapted to the realities experienced by small businesses.

We also share the view of the Committee with regard to the need for greater integration of civil society in policy making as a way of ensuring that the issues are fully understood and of involving all the stakeholders in the much needed reform of the methods of production and consumption.

A review of the current system of global governance with a view to ensuring a better balance between the economic, social, and environmental pillars, while maintaining coherence with the existing organisations is essential to meeting the challenge of rallying countries in favour of sustainable development. As the opinion emphasises, the creation of a Global Environmental Organisation, charged with leading and coordinating environmental policy, would contribute to improving this balance.

The Craft Industry Group voted in favour of this opinion.



## Associations Group

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There is much at stake for our shared future at the Rio Conference .

The Associations Group wishes to commend the coherence of the work produced by the section for European and International Affairs in the Economic, Social and Environmental Council. The need to review the current economic model, which displays little regard for environmental conservation, has been a consistent theme, from the G20 to Durban, and from Durban to Rio+20.

We can no longer continue to produce and consume regardless of the erosion of our natural resources and the need to remedy the unequal distribution of wealth. In this regard, putting the spotlight on the social and solidarity economy seems to be particularly relevant. It is through the development of values and practices among the actors of the social and solidarity economy that we will ensure a pragmatic paradigm shift towards an economy founded on solidarity.

A “shared vision” involves two essential elements: the reform of global governance, on the one hand, and of civil society, on the other.

Following the Earth Summit in 1992, civil society began to play a major role in the monitoring and evaluation of progress on the commitments made. Unfortunately, many of these commitments have not been met. NPOs are now mobilising once again to make their voice heard at Rio by demanding, in particular, as mentioned in the opinion, the effective implementation of the commitment made by developed countries to allocate at least 0.7% of the gross national income to official development aid. The NPO group is of the view that, where necessary, this ODA should take the form of donations, rather than loans.

The group also supports the recommendations proposed by the Rapporteur regarding the development of Principle 10 of the Rio 92 Declaration. The implementation of this principle can provide a response to new forms of democracy, in accordance with a “bottom up” approach. The NPO group is eager to see a greater role for civil society in decision making, from grass roots to the international level.

Finally, the Rio+20 Conference should facilitate clear commitments in terms of regulation, in particular, by defining, along with GDP, new indicators for the management of the planet and on social and economic prosperity. The creation of a global environmental organisation also constitutes an essential determining factor in responsible and effective governance.

The NPO Group voted for the opinion, adding that the Rio+20 participants should agree a roadmap from 2012 2020 setting out the details of the decisions and the resources to be put in place in order to set the environmental and social transition in motion.

## CFDT Trade Union Group

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The ever increasing number of events organised around the Rio Summit : The G20, the General Assembly of the International Confederation of Trade Unions, the Alternative Conference of the Peoples Summit, and civil society events organised by the Brazilian government, demonstrates the way in which all key players have mobilised to address sustainable development issues.

States and key players in civil society must join forces at Rio and make solid policy decisions in favour of sustainable development in the service of human progress, through an economic, social and environmental transition, and the fight against poverty.

Since the Earth summit, which established the concept of sustainable development at Rio in June 1992, the urgent need for action has become much more widely understood. It is now high time to take action.

It is truly regrettable that the ESEC was not more directly involved in the preparation for the negotiation process. For this reason, the opinion has come too late.

The opinion notes the insufficient implementation of agreements and programmes related to the environment and the fragmentation of structures and various UN agencies, each of which pursues their own agenda, without proper coordination of their respective missions. The CFDT shares this view.

With this in mind, the challenge is to provide the means for proper governance of sustainable development, a governance that must be shared and must facilitate access to information and the participation of all the stakeholders.

The CFDT takes the view that the creation of a Global Environmental Organisation is relevant to that challenge, as long as its role is developed to the same degree as that of the international commercial and financial organisations.

Indeed, there can be no justification for the dominance to the WTO and the IMF vis à vis the ILO and the WHO, or the future GEO.

For that reason, GDP must be accompanied by social and environmental indicators in order to measure true national wealth.

It is also in this spirit that the opinion proposes to facilitate greater integration of social and environmental measures in business activities, particularly through the development of non financial rating systems.

In terms of jobs, the opinion is resolutely in favour of developing intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth, linked to the need to modify our methods of production and consumption, and facilitating the creation of new decent and sustainable jobs.

Regarding the fight against poverty, firm decisions must be taken at Rio to ensure compliance with the commitment made to assign 0.7% of gross national income to official development aid, particularly with regard to France.

Finally, the CFDT commends the fact that the decisive role of local government has been taken into account, through sustainable urban development policy.

The CFDT voted in favour of this opinion.

## **CFE-CGC Trade Union Group**

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The CFE-CGC Trade Union Group (French Confederation of Management – General Confederation of Executives) takes the view that mobilising states and civil society around strong commitments in favour of the energy, social and environmental transition, the fight against poverty and more successful governance of sustainable development is the main objective of the Rio+20 Summit.

From the point of view of our organisation, it is a fundamental societal issue and a responsible act for the benefit of younger and future generations.

The CFE CGC supports the proposal to create a Global Environmental Organisation (GEO), as a specialised UN agency.

The CFE CGC also expects the Rio+20 Summit to strengthen and clarify the mechanisms for the participation of civil society.

For all of these reasons, the CFE CGC Group voted in favour of this opinion.

## CFTC Trade Union Group

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Will the world be capable of changing its behaviour before it is forced to do so as a result of environmental and energy crisis? Those who spoke before the Committee responded in the negative: many countries are in favour of change, as long as they do not have to make this change themselves.

Many states need to make progress in terms of economic growth, while others do not wish to jeopardise development, which is needed for their people. In these circumstances, it seems unlikely that organised and reasoned framework for development can be worked out. On the other hand, the only battles lost are those that are never fought. In this regard, the Rio Conference offers an important opportunity to make progress on this issue.

A consensus appears to be emerging on certain issues. The planet has the capacity to feed everyone, but many people suffer, and all too often die from hunger. As a result of an unequal distribution of wealth within and between countries, many employees, even in richer countries, exhaust themselves at work without even having access to a minimum level of social protection in the area of health, unemployment, and housing. The CFTC cannot fail to endorse the recommendation to reduce major global inequalities, the fight against poverty and the establishment of a minimum standard of social protection. This must be an imperative measure, with the same legal status as the WTO rules. The CFTC made this same recommendation with regard to the opinion on social and environmental traceability.

Without a minimum level of social justice at global level, it is impossible to maintain economic stability or peace. Progress must therefore be made in this respect.

Damage to the environment is also increasing in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and pollutants, to name but two problems. The consumption of energy is leading to a dangerous level of exploitation of resources, particularly fossil fuels.

The CFTC Group fully shares the view expressed in the opinion with regard to the need to mobilise civic bodies, thereby involving organised civil society. It will not be possible to reach a solution unless there is a change in behaviour in terms of production and consumption. This change requires personal commitment on the part of individuals, which cannot be achieved without the involvement of civil society. There is very little detail given in the opinion regarding the roadmap to be followed in terms of changes in consumption, as part of the approach to sustainable development.

The CFTC Group endorses the proposal regarding the need for global governance and the creation of a Global Environmental Organisation, in which the key players in society would be involved, particular organised civil society.

The CFTC voted in favour of the opinion.

## CGT Trade Union Group

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This text is in line with a number of opinions issued by the section for European and International Affairs on sustainable development issues.

The angle chosen is on global governance, the coherence of the actions of the various international institutions and the participation of all the actors in a mode of governance that we need to review, since, in practice, it sidelines the seven pillars of the Rio negotiation.

Although the CGT (General Confederation of Labour) shares the recommendations set out the opinion in terms of global governance, particularly with regard to the integration of civil society, the establishment of a GEO to streamline and consolidate the body of law on sustainable development will not be sufficient as a means of achieving what the Cancun Conference termed a "just transition" of the global economy. This is clear from the opinion.

While the assembly has pointed to the importance of the Durban Conference in the opinion, there is no reference to the need for sustainable development law to be binding and enforceable, as is the case with the WTO rules. For an equal GEO ILO WTO partnership, the future GEO must have powers to impose sanctions; monitoring alone will be insufficient as a means of ensuring effective implementation of environmental law.

Governance is likely to fail in the absence of financial provisions. The "quadrupole" needs to be ambitious, and to find new ways of forging links with the international financial institutions.

The CGT takes the view that the challenge for the Rio Conference is not limited to the transition to a green economy, which involves a limited number of sectors. What is needed is a complete reform of the current economic model, a point that is, of course, emphasised in the opinion. The success of a "just transition" to a low carbon economy requires that all actors in the economy are bound to behave in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.

The role of employees in the decision making processes was not mentioned. The right to access information and to participation are, on their own, insufficient, and the CGT considers it unfortunate that the creation of new rights for employees to take action, both within and outside the workplace, was not included in the recommendations.

Although the CGT is of the opinion that a more in depth analysis of environmental issues could have been undertaken and that the recommendations do not go far enough in terms of the means to be deployed to ensure the success of economic transition, it also takes the view that, on the condition that amendments are introduced to modify substantive issues, they are a step in the right direction.

The CGT voted in favour of this opinion.

## CGT-FO Trade Union Group

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For the FO (Labour Force), the concept of sustainable development can only be based on serving progress in human rights and social justice, while preserving the environment today and tomorrow for all people.

However, global growth in wealth, measured using GNP, cannot hide the parallel growth in inequality, the maintenance of extreme poverty, or the violation of human rights in the workplace across many countries, which has been aggravated by the crisis of the capitalist system. For these reasons, the FO is campaigning for a transformation of the economic

model at all levels, be they national or international, not to mention the possibilities at European level.

The FO group largely supports the opinion submitted for debate: Both for the briefing on the deterioration of the situation as regards social issues, as well as the clear emphasis on the need for urgent and decisive action by states within the United Nations in the service of human progress. In this regard, the report highlights the insufficiency, as well as the deficiencies in the action taken thus far, and, worse still, acknowledges that the liberal economic and financial model continues to impact on social and environmental issues.

The FO wishes to highlight the coherence of the assessment and the recommendations with opinions previously adopted with regard to the G20 and the Durban climate change negotiations.

At a time when debate in industrialised countries is centred around the austerity versus growth dichotomy, particularly in Europe, the FO takes the view that the “green and inclusive economy” advocated by Rio+20 can only be understood as one element of a strategy for economic growth and job creation. Policy designed for this purpose should not be limited to merely taking account of social and environmental issues, but rather, it should have as its principal objective the redistribution of wealth and state investment. The FO endorses the proposals to give primacy to social rights as defined by the ILO, work quickly towards access for all to safe drinking water and nutrition, to medical care and particularly to energy, set out universally applicable environmental law and ensure their implementation and compliance at both national and international levels, including commercial, monetary and financial exchange mechanisms via the creation of a Global Environmental Organisation (GEO).

However, the FO has reservations regarding two points. First, the promotion of the concept of social and environmental responsibility, insofar as this is often used as an excuse for making half hearted voluntary efforts to the detriment of binding and democratic mechanisms. The FO is particularly concerned about the prospect of the introduction of non financial rating systems, which implies the privatisation of monitoring the behaviour of businesses and the clear risk of conflicts of interest that is clearly evident in the financial world. Regarding the participation of “civil society”, the FO wishes to emphasise its commitment to freedom of association, which should not be subjected to constraints under the guise of a systematic evaluation of legitimacy or representativeness, which a contrario, is part of any participatory process.

Having expressed its reservations, the FO group voted in favour of the opinion.

## Cooperation Group

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*Twenty years after the first Rio Conference, and with the world in economic, financial, social and environmental crisis, the question of how to reconcile human activity with sustainable development remains to be answered. What are the right choices? What priorities should be set to ensure that human beings are at the heart of development, while ensuring that future generations will have at least the same quality of opportunities?*

*The opinion insists on the necessity of “giving greater political impetus in favour of sustainable development”, which is the main objective of the Rio Conference. Cooperatives contribute to sustainable development that is economically viable, socially equitable and ecologically sustainable.*

The UN is celebrating the International Year of Cooperatives in 2012 since the “entrepreneurial cooperative model is a major factor in development that supports the fullest possible participation of people in economic and social development, in both developed and developing countries. Cooperatives contribute to the eradication of poverty.” For these reasons, we are convinced that this dimension of sustainable development must remain at the heart of the strategic direction of work of this assembly. The General Secretary of the United Nations made this one of the major priorities of his second term in office. The governance of sustainable development is another objective of the Conference. The opinion insists on strengthening the participation of civil society actors. Faced with the complexity of the sustainable development issues, no government or organisation can claim to have the capacity to adequately respond to all the challenges which the planet is faced. The question of the representativeness of civil society actors must be asked. The diversity of the interests represented in civil society, particularly in terms of the forms of organisations, must be ensured; cooperatives monitor this via the International Co operative Alliance.

In a world in crisis, there are few issues upon which unanimous agreement can be reached. Rio 2012 and its objective of a more socially just and greener economy has come at a crucial time. With the economic crises currently experienced by the majority of the major global powers and the search for immediate solutions to ensure economic recovery, the discrepancy between the challenges for sustainable development and the implementation of policy on the ground could worsen.

We must acknowledge that developing countries take a very different view of climate change to industrialised countries. Similarly, China and the United States, which produce twice the average level of greenhouse gases, do not appear to be ready to make concrete commitments. On the other hand, they have chosen to make massive investments in the area of green technologies, with Europe lagging behind significantly in this respect. We must take advantage of the Rio Conference to elaborate, together with our European partners, an ambitious and dynamic growth strategy, to create employment, invest in regions and stimulate sustainable innovation.

The Cooperation Group voted in favour of this opinion.

## Entreprise Group

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It is highly appropriate for the issue presented to us today to be debated in this forum.

Firstly, while this assembly set out to ensure that the voice of civil society is more closely listened to at the Rio+20 Conference, the ESEC had to make its own voice heard on the subject. It has managed to do this today.

Secondly, the Rio+20 sustainable development objectives, in particular the green economy and the eradication of poverty, are relevant to us all. While they may be the source of expectations or worries, their achievement, or lack thereof, will have an impact on our lives in the future.

This conference aims to spark renewed political commitment to achieving sustainable development, evaluate the progress achieved and the gaps to be filled, as well as reviewing the institutional framework for sustainable development. It is without question that we must make progress on these issues.

The opinion that was presented to us today gives us an understanding of the relevant issues and the Rapporteur has succeeded in broadly setting out the measures that must be taken. However, I wish to go beyond the opinion to reaffirm the role that businesses have to play in all areas of sustainable development.

Business leaders are constantly faced with these issues, which are often at the heart of their concerns and strategies.

Furthermore, as the Rapporteur correctly noted, businesses can play a pivotal role in intelligent and sustainable growth, based on a more efficient and competitive economy in terms of the use of resources. It falls to them and to their employees to take a pragmatic approach to putting the sustainable model of production and consumption into practice, in the face of complex issues and objectively different situations.

The primary responsibility of businesses in the concrete application of sustainable development principles justifies their close involvement in the identification of the measures to be taken. As their involvement in national and international policy making demonstrates, they are equal to the task. In this regard, it must be noted that this is the first time in France that all the key players in civil society (business networks, regional government, associations) have been closely involved in the preparation for such a conference.

This is extremely important since there must be a proper strategy involving all the actors, including businesses and local government, in order to implement, particularly with regard to the state, of a “greening” of the economy in order to facilitate an economic, social and environmental transition that is desirable for all. The integration of sustainable development principles in grass roots public and private organisations by developing information, training, support and networking, will facilitate the success of Rio+20. It is also important to highlight the significance of lifelong learning for business leaders and employees on environmental and sustainable development issues. The conversion of current jobs is a real opportunity that should be taken advantage of, and that we cannot do without.

The group of businesses voted in favour of this opinion.

## Environment and Nature

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It has taken time. Time for the urgent nature of environmental problems to be put on the agenda of Heads of State and government; that was in the 1970s. Time for the international treaties to be signed; twenty years ago, in Rio. How much more time is needed before strong decisions will be taken to meet the social and environmental issues with which we are faced. A third of the energy resources available over the next fifty years has already been consumed, according to scientists. They also predict extinction for many species, a destruction of biodiversity. The deficits in this area are much more serious than the debts of the euro zone countries, and in the end, just as urgent. The next United Nations Conference, Rio+20, will be worthwhile if it accelerates the ecological and social transition of our economy and of governance.

The opinion presented today vindicates this transition and contains relevant recommendations. We wish to express our thanks to the Rapporteur for her excellent work, based on an informed and constructive debate.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the treaties and international rules, reform of the institutional framework is indispensable. This will of course be achieved by giving greater power to institutions set up to protect the environment. Allowing the UNEP to become a specialised UN agency, symbolised by the creation of a GEO, is the first important step. Setting up a dispute settlement body, thus giving it the means to take action, would be even better. Let us not forget either that it is in the financial and commercial organisations that the issue of environmental regulation really comes into play. While the transition may take place through a reform within the UN, it will also be played out just as much in the reform of the whole basis of our economic system: the WTO the IMF and the World Bank. When will the WTO recognise the precautionary principle?

The Heads of State and government at Rio have the capacity to give new momentum to the economic transition, and this, even more than the G20, will determine the outcome of the Rio Conference. Internal reform of the UN is a necessary condition of effective change, but is far from being sufficient. Courageous and long awaited decisions must be taken. Let's take them at Rio!

In the end, democracy is the key to a successful economic transition. This is the meaning behind Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration in 1992: access to information, participation of the public in decision making and access to justice. The opinion makes some interesting recommendations in this regard. Our group is in favour of a much stronger support for Principle 10 by the ESEC.

At least one month from the Rio Conference, our group welcomes this opinion and expresses the wish that the French President works hard on these issues at this important time.

## Mutual Societies Group

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In one month, the United Nations Conference on sustainable development will meet in Rio, twenty years after the "Earth Summit", which put the issue of sustainable development on the agenda.

Twenty years on, where are we and in what direction are we going?

The imperative of a transition to a more sustainable system has been recognised, and objectives must be set in terms of the creation of employment, protection of the environment and the reduction of inequalities.

As the opinion highlights "Development and social cohesion, particularly in poorer countries and in the least developed countries, in favour of a more desirable model of global economic growth, remains a central issue", and in this regard, achieving the Millennium Development Goals is still a priority.

For the Mutual Group, the creation of a minimum standard of social protection, as part of the diverse solutions adopted in each country, is essential to speeding up the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals which, in spite of substantial progress, still fail to reach the most vulnerable.

Support for the initiative of a universal standard of social protection from all the key players in civil society, particularly those in the social and solidarity economy, seems to be essential in this regard.



The Mutual Group endorses the more specific recognition of a role for key players in the social economy in mobilising citizens around these issues, which can be achieved through awareness raising, education and dissemination for “a transition to a new model of development”.

Another central issue for Rio+20 will be to work out how the construction of a “green economy”, a concept which has been subject to varying interpretations, can contribute to sustainable progress towards the eradication of poverty and other social development objectives.

Finally, the Mutual Group wishes to emphasise the need for the involvement of civil society by strengthening the participation mechanisms for these key players. The creation of a Global Environmental Organisation, as a specialised UN agency, in accordance with a new model of governance, must therefore introduce “the participation of key players in civil society in its decisions and their implementation”.

The Mutual Group voted in favour of this opinion.

## Student Organisations and Youth Movements

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As the title of our opinion indicates, the event which, a few weeks from now, will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the 1992 conference on the environment and development, is a major meeting on the future of our planet. Twenty years has passed since the international community marked the new understanding by setting environmental goals, but few of these have been achieved since. The June 2012 Conference therefore faces huge challenges; to take the necessary measures, at international level, to preserve the very future of our planet, while supporting the necessary development of the least developed countries, the populations of which live in an unacceptable state of widespread and extreme poverty.

Our group also endorses the choice proposed in the opinion presented today, to place the fight against poverty among the top priorities. From the point of view of our group, it is clear that this challenge cannot be met without putting an end to financial secrecy, and fighting effectively against tax evasion. We would recall that each year, developing countries lose 125 billion dollars through well known tax evasion mechanisms used by multinationals. We commend the opinion for raising this point, even if it ought to have been mentioned as part of the assessment, rather than the recommendations.

On the voluntary initiative of the Brazilian diplomatic service, the next United Nations conference on sustainable development will be the first international summit to be truly open to civil society in a concrete way. Although the impact of their contribution cannot yet be measured, we endorse the choice made in the present opinion to recognise the importance of mobilising civil society actors. The transition to a green and equitable economy, based on the radical transformation of our modes of production and consumption, cannot be achieved unless all the key players in civil society work towards this objective, particularly the younger generations, the behaviour of whom will have a considerable impact on the effectiveness of the decisions taken. However, there is still a long way to go in order for civil society to move from being a mere observer to a full contributor to international relations.

Young people are among the nine “major groups” designated as such by the United Nations. It’s a first step in the right direction. We must now give them the means to play an

active role in decision making processes, for instance, by giving youth organisations across the world access to all working documents, opportunities to speak and express their views and put forward proposals. Our group condemns the fact that student organisations and youth movements are not systematically integrated into the French delegations, among civil society organisations.

Finally, we are in favour of the proposal from the ESEC to create a Global Environmental Organisation, on the condition that it is effective, and coordinated with other organisations such as the ILO or the WTO. GEO must have rights of initiative and proposition, and above all, the power to monitor and sanction non compliance, given that the main problem in the current multilateral systems is the lack of enforceability.

In conclusion, in accordance with both the assessment and the recommendations set out in the opinion, the Student Bodies and Youth Movements Group voted in favour of this opinion.

## Overseas Group

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The opinion expands on the discussions held by the ESEC over the course of the past few months on major global economic, social and environmental issues based on the G20 and the Durban Conference.

The Rio+20 Conference, which will be held in June 2012 in Brazil, in this context, poses a real challenge that states must face together.

To that end, the recommendations featured in the opinion are, from our point of view, relevant, and would benefit from being fully integrated in the proposals of the French delegation for the conference.

The Overseas Group endorses the objectives of reducing major global inequalities, structuring global governance around sustainable development objectives and strengthening participation mechanisms for key players in civil society.

Future decisions regarding the management of the environment are particularly important. For instance, in the Caribbean, global warming is a matter of serious concern due to its impact on the frequency and severity of hurricanes in the regions. In Guyana, the management of forests remains a primary concern for decision makers. In the Pacific and the Indian Ocean, ongoing campaigns are being led by economic, social and environmental players against repeated attacks on biodiversity and the marine environment. The absence of governance of the oceans as an item on the agenda of the conference is worrying; all the more so when we consider the fact that they cover 70% of the earth's surface. The group will therefore monitor the work of the Rio+20 Conference closely.

However, the implementation of the decisions taken at Rio in June is another matter. From the point of view of the Overseas Group, it appears that more enforceable provisions must be put in place in order to ensure that the recommendations are not relegated to the status of dead letter law yet again. The opinion does not appear to place sufficient emphasis on this point. If no measures are put in place to assess and monitor the implementation of the decisions taken during the conference across the world, twenty years from now, we will meet again to take stock of the damage.

For these reasons, as well as its desire to facilitate significant advances towards sustainable development in the service of “human progress”, the Overseas Group voted in favour of this opinion.

## Liberal Professions Group

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This opinion demonstrates that we have high hopes for this international summit. Rio+20 must provide some perspective on the key issue of the management of global public goods, through a combined effort of all nations. Exhaustion of these resources is in nobody's interest.

Twenty years on, Rio+20 must assess the progress since the 1992 Conference that put the concept of sustainable development on the agenda, and initiate a new deal between developing and developed nations. There is a more or less shared consensus on the state of the planet, but the discussion centres on who will carry the burden.

The Rio Conference must respond to a major challenge, rallying states and all the key players in civil society around three themes: the economy, sustainable development governance and the eradication of poverty.

The green economy:

It is a question of managing the transition to a new economic system. In order to succeed in this, we must review our modes of production and consumption to respond to the increase in the population, and the deterioration, even exhaustion of natural resources. Policies to encourage investment, training, and the skills conversion, adaptation of skills and competences. We expect that the objectives for the next twenty years will be set at Rio. The priorities are clear: energy, water, food security, oceans, cities, etc.

Sustainable development governance:

Everyone knows that the issues are global; they require cross sectoral responses and yet, at the same time, we are faced with a multiplication in jurisdictions and a fragmentation of the legal and institutional landscape.

The time has come to express a strong political will in favour of a more effective institutional framework for the environment, that up to now, has not had the benefit of its own structure, with the same standing as trade (WTO), health (WHO), etc. There is currently only one “programme” (UNEP) making decisions without reference to the United Nations. The Commission on Sustainable Development, created after Rio, is failing to make an impact. The main issue is deciding on the kind of institution that should be set up to implement this new transition to sustainability. The opinion recommends the creation of a Global Environmental Organisation (GEO), a specialised UN agency, with several missions listed in this opinion. This seems to be a possibility; otherwise, another path will have to be set out. However, during the Conference, states must still answer two questions: the articulation and coordination of all the bodies and their resources. Crucially, as we know in the current crisis, it is hardly reasonable to expect further budgetary resources to be allocated.

Similarly, the new role for civil society in international governance demonstrates the recognition of its role and the principle of “full participation”, although states will still retain their voting rights. The Rio Conference must mark this new step.

Finally, the eradication of poverty:

As the opinion highlights, the redistribution of power on the international stage is also among the major changes witnessed over the past twenty years, a truth that should not be used to conceal the widening gap between rich and poor, both within and between nations, even in the most developed countries due to the current economic crisis. The opinion rightly recommends the mobilisation of all in order to reduce inequality, establish a minimum standard of social protection and ensure that social justice principles and the concept of decent work are taken into account.

The concept of sustainable development is dependent on attitudes, and nature constitutes its economic capital. Taking care of the environment is important now, more than ever, in order to avoid putting future generations in danger. Other indicators of wealth are needed in addition to GDP, which is becoming an increasingly controversial indicator; on the other hand, how can the value of nature be calculated in the books or on a balance sheet? How can the value of the services of ecosystems be estimated? The Rio Conference must make progress on sustainable development indicators, beyond GDP.

The Liberal Professions group, convinced of the importance of this international summit, voted in favour of the opinion:

## **L'Union nationale des associations familiales (UNAF) Group (National Union of Family Associations)**

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In July 2011, Brice Aloué stated "Rio, it's YOU", meaning "it's up to you, civil society, to put forward proposals".

The present opinion responds to this challenge and comes two weeks before the opening of the Rio Summit.

The issue of the limits to which the planet's resources can be exploited is set among the three challenges to be met. Right from the beginning, the opinion recalls that "Rio+20 is an opportunity to be seized upon to open the way for sustainable development in the service of human progress."

The UNAF Group supports this invitation since the success of the summit certainly depends on the following factors:

- A commitment by all the most developed member countries, with the support of the United States and Canada;
- An improvement in the international governance of development, which will be key in re-establishing confidence between citizens in order to safeguard future generations.

The UNAF group endorses the main recommendations in the present opinion and recalls that:

- The reduction of poverty will not only be achieved through jobs, but also through the fight against illiteracy and through education, particularly of women;
- A green economy must be an economy for the improvement of human well being and social equality, while also reducing environmental risks and the scarcity of resources. In 2009, the Stiglitz Commission submitted a report to the President of the Republic recommending the use of complementary indicators to GDP to evaluate well being.

The UNAF group recalls three strong points made in the opinion regarding their positive impact on families:

- Strengthening the role and position of each of the key players in civil society, as representatives of families must play a role on behalf of women, youth and children;
- Full and complete recognition of a right to information, to participation, and access to justice;
- The need for education on global issues and ensuring responsible behaviour (energy saving) through support from all the relevant stakeholders.

The UNAF Group adopted this opinion.

## L'Union nationale des syndicats autonomes (UNSA)

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The Rapporteur has sought to modify the title of the referral, adding that Rio+20 is a major meeting on the future of our planet. It is more than a meeting, it is an imperative for success.

For the UNSA (National Union of Independent Unions), the fight against poverty, famine, pandemics and the development of poorer countries is a priority. The “Western” doctrine of sustainable development can only be credible if significant advances are made. We therefore endorse the Rapporteur’s view when she specifies that this leads her to reaffirm her commitment to the MDGs, as a means of achieving real progress on the basis of measures taken by the international community, complete with development indicators and evaluation tools.

The three main themes of Rio+20: better coordination between international institutions and governments; consolidation of international agreements and partnerships and reformed governance, the opinion dwells much on the theme of governance, while indicating that “it must be acknowledged that in the absence of political consensus and a genuine desire to meet the commitments, their impact will be limited ».

For some, growth is synonymous with structural reform of the jobs market, reduction in salaries, precarious employment, and a lower level of social protection. Weaker social protection is also among the reasons for business relocations. The dysfunctional aspects of a global economic model founded on an inequitable distribution of wealth, along with a system of financial regulation that exacerbates speculation and a “race to the bottom” on social and environmental issues, and which is based on modes of production and consumption that are all too often incompatible with the limited nature of natural resources, give cause for concern.

For this reason, the UNSA supports the recommendation to encourage businesses to take the opportunities available as regards corporate social and environmental responsibility and to develop non financial rating systems for businesses in order to encourage responsible investment. The UNSA recalls its commitment to the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles on multinational enterprises and social policy, as well as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (Organisation for Economic Co operation and Development). We would also reiterate our position regarding the compliance of decisions taken within commercial and financial institutions with social and environmental law.

For the UNSA, policy change and political will are indispensable. This reality cannot be ignored in the context of the lack of progress at G8 and G20, and other climate change summits. The UNSA would have endorsed a review of the ILO mandate and the global objective of at least a 50% increase in “green and decent” jobs between now and 2015. France and the EU (European Union) have an active, determining and constructive role to play to ensure that sustainable development principles occupy a more central place in global governance.

The Conference must mark a new phase by providing an institutional basis for the participation of social partners in the elaboration of global strategies for sustainable development. The UNSA has considered the possibility of the creation of a Global Environmental Organisation, as a specialised UN agency, as well as a permanent sustainable development council to replace the current United Nations commission. This can only be achieved if these new organisations are more than a simple add on to current institutions, the scope of which does not always appear to be well defined.

Finally, the sound proposal set out in the opinion to draw on the potential of new information and communication technologies should not lead us to neglect the existence of the “digital divide” that is ever present in all countries, regardless of their degree of development.

While further measures to protect the environment are advisable, the UNSA found that its own main recommendations were included, or at least listed, in the opinion, and therefore declares itself in favour of this opinion.

# Voting

## Vote on the entire draft opinion

Number of votes	179
Voted in favor	178
Abstentions	1

## The CESE adopted this opinion.

Votes in favor: 178

<i>Agriculture</i>	Mr Bailhache, Bastian, Mrs Beliard, Bernard, Bonneau, Dutoit, MM. Giroud, Gremillet, Lemétayer, Mrs Serres, M. Vasseur.
<i>Craft Industry Group</i>	Mrs Amoros-Schwartz, Mr Crouzet, Mrs Foucher, Gaultier, Mr Griset, Lardin, Le Lann, Liébus, Mrs Sassano.
<i>Associations Group</i>	Mrs Arnoult-Brill, Mr Charhon, Da Costa, Mrs Gratacos, Mr Leclercq, Pascal, Mrs Prado, Mr Roirant.
<i>CFDT Trade Union Group</i>	Mr Blanc, Mrs Briand, Mr Duchemin, Mrs Hénon, Mr Honoré, Jamme, Le Clézio, Legrain, Malterre, Mrs Nathan, Mr Nau, Mrs Prévost, Mr Quarez.
<i>CFE-CGC Trade Union Group</i>	Mr Artero, Mrs Couvert, Mr Dos Santos, Lamy, Mrs Weber.
<i>CFTC Trade Union Group</i>	Mr Coquillion, Mrs Courtoux, Mr Ibal, Louis, Mrs Parle, Simon.
<i>CGT Trade Union Group</i>	Mrs Crosemarie, Cru-Montblanc, Mr Delmas, Mrs Doneddu, Dumas, Geng, Hacquemand, Mr Lepaon, Mansouri-Guilani, Michel, Minder, Rozet, Teskouk.
<i>CGT-FO Trade Union Group</i>	Mrs Baltazar, Mr Bellanca, Bernus, Mrs Boutaric, Mr Chorin, Hotte, Lardy, Mrs Medeuf-Andrieu, Millan, Mr Nedzynski, Peres, Mrs Perrot, Mr Porte, Mrs Thomas, Mr Veyrier.
<i>Cooperation Group</i>	Mrs de L'Estoile, Roudil, Mr Verdier, Zehr.
<i>Enterprise Group</i>	Mr Bailly, Mrs Bel, Mr Bernardin, Mrs Castera, Colloc'h, Duhamel, Duprez, Frisch, Ingelaere, Mr Jamet, Lebrun, Marcon, Mariotti, Mongereau, Placet, Ridoret, Roger-Vasselin, Roubaud, Mrs Roy, Mr Schilansky, Mrs Tissot-Colle, Vilain.
<i>Environment and Nature Group</i>	Mr Beall, Bonduelle, Bougrain Dubourg, Mrs de Bethencourt, Denier-Pasquier, Ducroux, Mr Genest, Genty, Guerin, Mrs de Thiersant, Vincent-Sweet, Mr Virlouvét.

<i>Mutual Societies Group</i>	Mr Andreck, Beaudet, Davant.
<i>Student Organisations and Youth Movements</i>	Mrs Guichet, Mr Prévost, Mrs Trellu-Kane
<i>Overseas Group</i>	Mr Budoc, Galenon, Grignon, Ledee, Omarjee, Osénat, Paul.
<i>Qualified Personalities</i>	Mr Aschieri, Mrs Ballaloud, Mr Baudin, Bernasconi, Mrs Brunet, Chabaud, Mr Corne, Mrs Dussaussois, El Okki, Mr Etienne, Mrs Fontenoy, Mr Fremont, Gall, Geveaux, Mrs Gard, Graz, Mr Guirkingier, Hochart, Jouzel, Khalfa, Le Bris, Lucas, Martin, Mrs de Menthon, Meyer, Mr Obadia, Mrs d'Ormesson, Ricard, Mr Richard, de Russé, Soubie, Urieta.
<i>LIBeral Professions Group</i>	Mr Capdeville, Mrs Gondard-Argenti, Riquier-Sauvage.
<i>L'UNION NATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS FAMILIALES (UNAF) Group (National Union of Family Associations)</i>	Mrs Basset, Mr Damien, Farriol, Fondard, Joyeux, Mrs Koné, L'Hour, Therry, Mr de Viguerie.
<i>L'UNION NATIONALE DES SYNDICATS AUTONOMES (UNSA)</i>	Mrs Dupuis, Mr Grosset-Brauer, Rougier.

Abstentions: 1

<i>Environment and Nature Group</i>	Mrs Laplante.
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# List of speakers

In order to inform itself further on the issues, the section heard the views of :

- ✓ **Mr Peter Poschen**  
*Head of the Department of Job Creation and Enterprise Development at the International Labour Office (ILO);*
- ✓ **Mr Gérard Worms**  
*President of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC);*
- ✓ **Mr Raymond Cointe**  
*Head of European and International Affairs, Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development, Transport, and Housing;*
- ✓ **Mr Gilles Berhault**  
*President of Committee 21, President of the Policy Committee for Club France Rio+20;*
- ✓ **Mrs Sylvianne Villaudiere**  
*General Delegate for the College of Sustainable Development Leaders (3CD), Coordinator of Club France Rio+20;*
- ✓ **Mr Pierre Radanne**  
*President of the 4D Association (Themes and Debates for Sustainable Development);*
- ✓ **Mr Daniel Geneste**  
*Confederal Adviser on Sustainable Development (CGT);*
- ✓ **Mr Jean-Pierre Thebault**  
*Ambassador for the Environment, Directorate General for Globalisation, Development and Partnerships, Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs;*
- ✓ **Mrs Dominique Dron**  
*Interministerial Delegate for Sustainable Development, Commissioner General for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing.*

# Table of Acronyms

MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreements
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ILO	International Labour Office
GPG	Global Public Good
ESC	Economic and Social Council
SECE	Economic, Social and Environmental Council
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
4D	Themes and Debates for Sustainable Development
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPBES	<i>Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services</i>
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
ILO	International Labour Organisation
WTO	World Trade Organisation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
GEO	Global Environmental Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation
NGO	Non governmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LDC	Least Developed Countries
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
GNI	Gross National Income
EU	European Union
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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**OPINIONS  
OF THE ECONOMIC,  
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COUNCIL**

Since the idea of sustainable development was first put on the agenda in June 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, the urgent need to take action has become much more widely understood. However, with the exhaustion of the planet's resources, the erosion of biodiversity, and climate change, the Rio 2012 Conference now faces a challenge of an entirely different magnitude: to rally states and civil society to work for the realisation of a concept of sustainable development in service of human progress.

With this in mind, the ESEC has structured its recommendations into three main themes: reducing major global inequalities; structuring global governance around the objectives of sustainable development; and strengthening participation mechanisms for civil society actors..



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