

2012-10

# RIO + 20 :

## *A major meeting for the future of the planet*

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 not translated into actions able to meet 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, now global, require cross sector approaches and responses.

Against this backdrop, the challenge for the Rio Conference, the so-called Rio + 20 conference in June 2012 therefore assumes even greater significance. The issue is to mobilise States and all parts of civil society around strong commitments in favour of economic, social and environmental transition, the fight against poverty and more successful governance of sustainable development.

*« 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, which as yet we have hardly started on. »*

Rio + 20 is an opportunity to be seized to open the way to the true implementation of sustainable development in the service of human progress. Along the

same lines as 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.

*In the year 2000, there were 6 billion individuals on Earth, and there will be almost 9 billion in 2050*

*43% of the world's population lives on less than 2 dollars per day*

*5.3 billion people do not benefit from social welfare coverage*



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## REDUCING MAJOR GLOBAL IMBALANCES

While recalling its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, the ESEC considers the drawing up of new development paths as a priority, and recommends:

### ➤ **The speeding up of economic, social and environmental transition**

**by favoring** projects resolutely orientated towards the switch to an economy fit for the recovery of business activity, the creation of new jobs, the preservation of the environment and the inclusion of the social dimension;

**by establishing** new information rights aimed at employees, and ongoing training programs;

**by supporting** partnerships between the UNEP, the Confédération syndicale internationale (International Union Confederation) and l'Organisation internationale des employeurs (the International Employers' Association) for coherent economic, social and environmental policies.

### ➤ **Mobilising forces around the fight against poverty**

**by focusing** on food security and the consolidation of the agricultural sector;

**by speeding up** the construction of basic infrastructures;

**by respecting** the commitments made in terms of ADP;

**by continuing** to discuss sources of innovative financing such as the financial transaction tax.

### ➤ **The establishment of a foundation for social welfare**

**guaranteeing** a minimum level of social welfare in each country;

**taking concrete initiatives** such as ratification, at least by all G20 countries, of the WTO Convention 102 and examining the budgetary feasibility of this foundation.

## STRUCTURING GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AROUND THE OBJECTIVES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Rio + 20 should be a chance to express a strong commitment in favour of a more effective institutional framework for the environment and sustainable development. Our assembly declares itself in favour of:

### ➤ **The consolidation of environmental aspects via the creation of a world environment organisation, a specialist branch of the UN, having the following tasks:**

**the adoption** of strong environmental regulations based on existing agreements;

**the prevention** of attacks on the environment, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of commitments;

**the promotion** of the participation of civil societies;

**the strengthening** of scientific expertise.

### ➤ **The development of interfaces between international institutions**

**by making** reciprocal consultations between institutions systematic in nature and by reinforcing them;

**by reasserting**, faced with commercial and financial organisations, the role of the WTO, the WHO and the FAO.

### ➤ **A strong political impetus in favour of sustainable development and an evaluation of accomplishments**

**by strengthening** the role of the G20 in this impetus and setting up a permanent sustainable development Council;

**by fixing** global targets for the next 10 or 20 years, based on indicators.

## STRENGTHENING MECHANISMS FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The 1992 Rio conference opened the way to the recognition of civil societies. Now it is time to go further. Therefore, the ESEC is campaigning for:

### ➤ **The strengthening of the role and place of each major sectors of societies:** social partners, enterprises, key players in the social economy, women, young people, associations, foundations and NGO's, local authorities, Economic and social councils. ...

**by putting forward** the principle of a full right to expression, access to documents and indeed to propose amendments in the negotiations;

**by putting** the participation of social partners in the definition of global sustainable development on an institutional setting and involving enterprises in identifying measures to be taken;

**by strengthening** the role of local authorities, while seeking better coordination between regional, national and global bodies;

**by restating** its commitment to the WTO's tripartite declaration of principle on multinational companies and social policy, the guiding principles of the OECD concerning multinational companies, as well as CSR.

### ➤ **Full and complete recognition of a right to information, participation in 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;

**by integrating** new governance methods, based on the principles of access to information and participation, into the bylaws of the WEO;

**by exploiting** the full potential of new communication technologies.