

The C... en e nd p... o... e

By *Felix Dodds*

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Thank you for inviting me to speak today and share my thoughts on Rio+20. Although I have been asked to speak on the contribution that stakeholders might play, I do want to start by making comments on the agenda for Rio+20 as well. In doing so I will draw on the article Maurice Strong and I did for the BBC in May this year.

To start with, I would like to commend Brazil for the leadership they have shown in persuading the world that another Earth Summit is needed. Unfortunately, some developed countries have had to be dragged to the table.

There is a simple question we should all ask ourselves - is the world going in the right direction?

If the answer to this question is no, then we should ask what are the current challenges that the world needs to address, how can we address the

Despite all that, I do believe that these issues can be positively influenced by Earth Summit 2012. We still have time to change direction, but this time there can't be any more failed promises. Successfully addressing the challenges we face will require an ambitious and creative agenda and us all working together governments, intergovernmental organisations and stakeholders.

## 1. The green economy and the concept of prosperity and development

The current economic model, which has brought unprecedented prosperity to the more developed countries and to particular people in those countries, has only deepened the disparity between them and most developing countries.

The parallels of the ecological problems with the financial crisis are clear. The banks and financial institutions privatised the gains and socialised the losses.

We are doing the same with the planet's natural capital. According to WWF, we are operating at 25% above the biological capacity to support life and that is before adding another billion people by 2020. We are going to see an even greater ecological crunch in the years to come

Our present lifestyles are drawing down the ecological capital from other parts of the world and from future generations. We are increasingly becoming the most irresponsible generation our planet has seen.

The past 30 years have been characterised by irresponsible capitalism, pursuing limitless economic growth at the expense of both society and environment, with little or no regard for the natural resource base upon which such wealth is built.

Today, the principal goal of our economy must be to improve the lives of all the world's people and to free them from want and ignorance - without compromising the planet itself.

An economy that integrates sustainable development principles with responsible capitalism can produce enough wealth to meet the needs of people in all nations, equitably and sustainably.

Earth Summit 2012 can clearly draw a roadmap to set the world on the path to a new "economy" that is sustainable, equitable and accessible to all.

## 2. Environment

Environmental and security issues are becoming increasingly intertwined.

The "environment-security/insecurity nexus" covers such overlapping issues such as climate





In addition to the traditional industry groups – Rio should reach out to the social market networks and entrepreneurs. Companies should work with their trade unions to help green the companies' workplace and their activities. A move to zero carbon, zero water, zero waste strategies will require cooperation of governments and stakeholders.

As the US Summit Bureau member helpfully reminded us, Rio+20 should be a *do no harm* exercise: there must be moves to recognize our inter-generational responsibilities towards young people, starting by ensuring that they have an education system that is re-oriented towards Sustainable Development as promised by Agenda 21. They have to be educated, empowered and mobilized to rise to their generational challenge of creating a green, post-carbon economy in their lifetimes.

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We can **e r n o** on this planet together equitably taking into consideration not only this generation but future generations – who have a right to a good quality of life.

The Earth Summit 2012 presents a unique platform for negotiating the co-operation needed to achieve a new deal between North and South, between rich and poor, between governments and stakeholders and between present an