



**PARTICIPATION GUIDE**



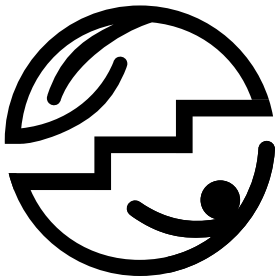
**RIO+20**  
United Nations Conference  
on Sustainable Development

An introduction for children and youth





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**Please print this guide according to high environmental and social standards.**



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**“ Inequitable consumption patterns are already evident in this process. As youth, who constitute 60% of the world’s population, we have been given 22 minutes of the official time throughout the process. This is where change must begin”**

**—Wagaki Mwangi**  
Speech at the 1992 Earth Summit

Introducing the UN Conference on  
**sustainable  
development**

# Introducing the UN Conference on Sustainable Development

*Sustainable Development is currently a buzz word used for all kinds “good” development and environmental practices. As the concept has a long history, a brief historic overview is given to provide context to what we hope to achieve. Then we take a closer look at the Rio+20 conference.*

## Sustainable Development

During the 50s and 60s, it was clear that the world’s environmental state was rapidly deteriorating. In 1962, Rachel Carlson in her book “Silent Spring” introduced the idea of development being interconnected with economic development, environment protection and social well-being. Six years later a debate on environmental sustainability was initiated at the UNESCO Biosphere Conference.

The next year, in 1969, the first Earth Day was held in San Francisco, USA, and has since become an annual celebration. The same year, Friends of the Earth was established, marking the sparking up of movements advocating for the environment. Two years later, Greenpeace and the International Institute for Environment and Development followed.

After this things began to gain momentum; in 1971 OECD adopted the “polluter pays principle”<sup>1</sup> and the following year, the UN Conference on the Human Environment was held in Stockholm, Sweden, which estab-

<sup>1</sup> The Polluter Pays Principle (PPP) is an environmental policy principle which requires that the costs of pollution be borne by those who cause it. It is normally implemented through two different policy approaches: command-and-control and market-based. The elimination of subsidies is also an important part of the application of the PPP.

lished the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). The Club of Rome published its “Limits of Growth” which predicted catastrophic consequences if development should continue in its current intensity and form. In 1976, for the first time, environment and human settlement were linked at a United Nations Conference.

However, the term “sustainable development” was only introduced a few years later by Eva Balfour and Wey Jackson in the IUCN World Conservation Strategy which was published in 1980. In 1987, “Our Common Future” (known as “the Brundtland Report”) defined sustainable development as “**development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**”. In 1990, the International Sustainable Development Institute was established and the UN Summit for Children recognised the impact of environmental issues on future generations.

These strands were then brought together in the Earth Summit, which was held in 1992. The Earth Summit is the popular name given to the UN Conference on Environment and Development, held in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Approximately 170 governments participated with over 2,400 representatives from NGOs.

The Earth Summit resulted in the following documents, which have become among the most important documents for sustainable development of our time:

- **Rio Declaration on Environment and Development:** principles that emphasized the coordination of economic and environmental concerns;
- **Agenda 21:** global measures to protect the planet’s environment while guaranteeing sustainable economic growth;
- **Forest Principles:** preservation of forests and monitoring impact on timberlands;
- **Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD):** which proposed a participative approach involving local communities to combat desertification in specific ecosystems;

- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):** This international agreement aims to conserve biological diversity, to use its components in a sustainable way and to share fairly and equitably, between all people involved, the benefits that arise from the use of genetic resources.
- **UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC):** This convention aims to provide a framework for actions to curb human-caused climate change well within manageable dimensions.

The Conventions on Biological Diversity, Combating Desertification, and Climate Change are often dubbed “the three Rio conventions”. The UNFCCC is the most famous and in turn led to the Kyoto Protocol. In 1997, countries concerned with climatic changes met in Kyoto, Japan, and established emission reduction commitments from a 1990-baseline. The global reduction target is 7% by 2012, the end of the first commitment period. Unfortunately, the USA (the largest emitter per capita) has not ratified the Kyoto protocol up to today.

The Earth Summit also began a new functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC), namely the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which has a mandate to monitor international progress on sustainable development, provide policy direction, and coordinate action within the United Nations system to achieve the goals of Agenda 21.

Ten years later, in 2002, the Rio+10 Conference was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, and produced the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). This document aimed at providing further guidance to operationalise sustainable development through advancing three priorities:

- Poverty eradication.
- Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.
- Production and protecting the natural resource base.

Finally, sustainable development has emerged as one of the most prominent development paradigms over the last four decades. It aims to provide

a holistic approach, enveloping several dimensions such as economic, environmental, social and participatory development into a single framework. Over recent years, we have seen a growing institutionalisation of sustainable development on the international level.

## Objectives and themes of Rio+20

### The themes of Rio+20

- A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication (GESPDE), or in short: **green economy** (see page 13).
- The institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD), or in short: **governance** (see page 14).



### The objectives of Rio+20

- **Securing renewed political commitment** for sustainable development
- **Assessing the progress to date and the remaining gaps** in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development
- **Addressing new and emerging challenges**

In 2009, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) decided “*to organize, in 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government or other representatives, and in this regard accepts with gratitude the generous offer of the Government of Brazil to host the Conference*” (paragraph 20 of the resolution A/RES/64/236)

It is our hope that the outcome should be “forward-looking and action oriented” and should result in a “focused, political document”.

## Objectives

The objectives of Rio+20 cover a vast terrain in terms of political debates and possible outcomes.

The first objective is to **secure renewed political commitment** for sustainable development. Against the backdrop of numerous crises, there has only been a lukewarm political commitment to sustainable development and the most relevant negotiations seem to attract very few Heads of State (with the exception of the UNFCCC’s 15th Conference of Parties on Copenhagen). Hence, the Rio+20 Bureau recently identified renewed political commitment as the most important of objective of Rio+20.

The second objective is to **assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps** in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development. The underlying rationale to this is that both Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration offered a lot of political food to the international community, which mostly remains relevant today. The bottleneck in achieving progress has been effective implementation, and the Rio+20 conference needs to bring additional guidance on this.

The last objective is to address **new and emerging challenges**. The Conference Secretary General, Mr. Sha Zukang, highlights some new and emerging challenges for consideration:

- Green jobs and social inclusion;



- Energy access, efficiency and sustainability;
- Food security and sustainable agriculture;
- Sound water management;
- Sustainable cities;
- Management of the oceans; and
- Improved resilience and disaster preparedness.

## Themes

### Green economy

There is no agreed definition of what a green economy is. Those in favour of a “green economy” focus primarily on the intersection between environment and economy. There are often trade-offs between economic and environmental goals and with the green economy, decision-makers want to recognise and strengthen the synergies between both. Those opposing the concept of “green economy” don’t hesitate to emphasize that the clear signal of the resolution in framing green economy within a certain context, namely Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication.

**“The transition to the green economy will require an improved notion of well-being [...] that takes into account the limits of our planetary and social boundaries”**

—MGCY input to the Rio+20 Compilation Document

Hence, green economy can't and should not replace the concept of Sustainable Development. We are not going to support either perspective as it's up to you to make up your own mind and we recommend reading about it (lots available online).

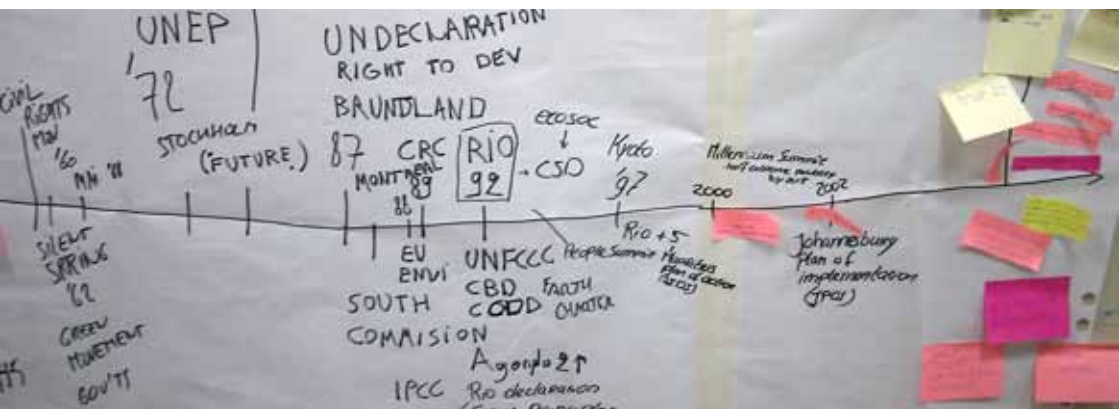
Thus there are many different views on green economy. But in a general way, the following five strands seem to have emerged so far:

1. **Reduce, reuse and recycle**, including making all production green, seen by many as a panacea for present economic ills, and is viewed as a market liberalistic view. Others call it green washing or greening greed;
2. **The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB)**, an approach adopted by TEEB to show how economic concepts and tools can help equip society with the means to incorporate the values of nature into decision making at all levels. The aim of TEEB is to provide a bridge between the multi-disciplinary science of biodiversity and the arena of international and national policy as well as local government and business practices;
3. **De-growth** or a critical approach to the system of economy, based on what is known as “hard sustainability”;
4. **Distributive growth**, which tries to look at Sustainable Consumption and Production in a 'frugal' way;
5. **Global transition**, incremental change with strengthening key institutions in the financial system, based on indentifying, among others, a number of principles from earlier UN documents.

The outcomes can range from a common understanding, shared vision to a more practical roadmap and toolbox.

## Key dates and meetings

24 Dec 2010	New York, USA	UNGA Adopts the Resolution calling for Rio+20
16-18 May 2010	New York, USA	First Preparatory Committee
11-12 Jan. 2011	New York, USA	First Intersessional Meeting
7-8 March 2011	New York, USA	Second Preparatory Committee
7-9 Sep. 2011	Santiago, Chile	Regional Preparatory Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean
7-9 Oct. 2011	Cairo, Egypt	Regional Preparatory Meeting for Arab region
19-20 Oct. 2011	Seoul, Republic of Korea	Regional Preparatory Meeting for Asia
20-25 Oct. 2011	Addis Abeba, Ethiopia	Regional Preparatory Meeting for Africa
1 Nov. 2011	Everywhere	Deadline for inputs to compilation document
1-2 Dec. 2011	Geneva, Switzerland	Regional Preparatory Meeting for Europe (including North America)
15-16 Dec. 2011	New York, USA	Second Intersessional Meeting
25-27 Jan. 2012	New York, USA	Initial discussions on Compilation Document (zero-draft)
19-23 Mar. 2012	New York, USA	Negotiations (informal-informals) on draft outcome document
26-27 Mar. 2012	New York, USA	Third Intersessional Meeting
30 Apr - 4 May 2012	New York, USA	Negotiations (informal-informals) on draft outcome document (tbc)
13-15 Jun. 2012	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Third and Final Preparatory Committee
16-19 Jun. 2012	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Informal "conference of the middle"
20-22 Jun. 2012	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD/Rio+20)



## Governance

The discussion on the **Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development** looks at radically improving the current governance system for Sustainable Development. The ultimate goal is to see how key Sustainable Development institutions, together with other institutions such as the international financial institutions (IFIs), the multilateral development banks (MDBs), and the rest of the UN system work in delivering on sustainable development objectives.

The discussion focuses mainly in the role of institutions in the different (economic, ecological and social) pillars, as well as how they interlink. This can include questions on decision-making, implementation or accountability. It ranges from upgrading existing institutions, designing new ones or improve efforts on how different institutions work together. The discussion also covers local, national and international levels.

## Process

Initially, the General Assembly resolution foresaw three preparatory meetings to prepare for Rio+20. However, by the end of the second preparatory meeting, the number of days preparing for the summit had mushroomed. The table on page 17 gives an overview of the most important (official) events building up to Rio+20. Note that this time-line is still subject to change. For more events and updates, please follow the official Rio+20 website: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

Other unofficial events are being (or will be) organized by the global civil society movement. These will run in parallel with the official track and could potentially influence the overall outcome.

## Major negotiating groups and regional interest groups

- **ALBA:** ALBA is the Spanish acronym for the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, a left-wing Latin American coalition of eight countries. ALBA countries advocate for an alternative to the current liberal capitalist framework, including during negotiations related to sustainable development.
- **Asian group:** UN Group of Asian states, often quite loosely coordinated.
- **African Union (AU):** The AU is the largest regional political organization, and includes all countries of Africa but Morocco. At international processes, the AU advocates for the general interests of African peoples.
- **BASIC:** Group comprising of Brazil, South Africa, India and China. This group of emerging countries manifested itself as strongly coordinated during the Copenhagen climate talks.
- **European Union (EU):** The EU comprises 27 member states, who prepare their positions together before taking part in international negotiations. The EU is a tightly knit block which is more capable of presenting common positions than most other coalitions.
- **Group of 77:** The G77 is the largest negotiating group involving 131 countries from the Global South. Due to the variety of its membership, the G77 rarely advocates for specific positions, besides the general interests of developing countries. Depending on the issue, China will negotiate independently or together with the G77.
- **The Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC)** includes all 33 states located in Latin America. Due to the strong political and economical differences prevailing amongst its members, GRULAC is a looser grouping.

- **JUSSCANNZ:** This group includes most of the nations from the Global North which are not part of the European Union, including Australia, Canada, Norway, Japan, Switzerland, New Zealand and the United States (the acronym JUSSCANNZ comes from combination of the first letters of most of the members of the coalition). The positions of this coalition are however less integrated than those of the EU.
- **Least Developed Countries (LDCs):** The group of LDCs is comprised of countries with the lowest Human Development Index ratings and lowest revenues. LDCs are located mainly in Africa, but also include Asian and Pacific countries and one Caribbean country.
- **League of Arab State:** The League is a political organization promoting the interests of its 22 member states from Northern Africa and the Middle East.
- **The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** is primarily a trade bloc which defends the interests of its 12 member states (located in the Middle East, but also in Africa and Latin America). As the economies of OPEC countries depend largely on oil revenues, OPEC often takes a conservative stand to international cooperation on sustainable development.
- **Small Island Developing States (SIDS):** The group of the SIDS represent low-lying insular countries which often face similar challenges regarding sustainable development. SIDS are mainly located in the Pacific, the Caribbean and around the coast of Africa. Most SIDS are also members of the AOSIS, the Alliance Of Small Islands States, which engages in advocacy work at various UN processes.

**Note:** Not all of these coalitions will necessarily be active during Rio+20. Some country groupings exist for the sole purpose of negotiating on one particular topic.

## Actors

We can break the main players of Rio+20 down to the following key groups:

- **Member States:** The UN has 193 member states, but not all countries have equal bargaining power. In order to increase their influence these states group together to defend common interests. Some networks are tight knit other more loose collaborations. Many countries are a member to more than one alliance. For instance Algeria is at the same time a member of the Group of 77 (G77), the African Union (AU) and the Organisation of Petroleum and Exporting Countries (OPEC).
- **UN-system and other Intergovernmental Organisations:** Apart from states, functions within the UN System will attend Rio+20 as observers. While they have a seat in the consultation rooms, and can take the floor, they do not negotiate directly. In general, these functions take the form of treaty-organizations, conventions or specialized programs. These include the three “Rio Conventions” (UNFCCC, CCD, CBD), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO), the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and many more.



- **Civil Society:** Another group of actors is civil-society. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are an important part of civil society and it is expected that thousands of NGOs will attend the Rio+20 conference. Similar to the functions within UN System, they participate in the negotiations, and can sometimes intervene through Major Groups, but neither Major Groups nor NGOs can directly negotiate. Among these NGOs there is an incredible diversity in forms, organizations, aims, tactics, visions, etc., that their only distinct characteristic is that they are not governmental.
- **Major Groups:** The Major Groups follow the classification of the nine groups as identified by Agenda 21. These are Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, Local Authorities, NGOs, Scientific and Technological Community, Women, and Workers and Trade Unions. All these Major Groups have their own focal points (Organising Partners) and each have a different way of operating. Young people are represented by the Major Group of Children and Youth. For more information about the Major Group for Children and Youth, see Chapter 7. These nine Major Groups represent only a part of civil society that will be present at Rio+20 and membership is not a prerequisite for attending the Conference. Some civil society actors don't find added value in associating with a particular Major Group and pursue their own tactics independently or in another coalition.
- **Bureau and the Secretariat:** The Rio+20 Conference is organized by a dedicated Bureau and Secretariat. The Bureau is comprised of representatives from the main regional groups with the objective of facilitating the Conference. The Bureau gives guidance to the Secretariat during the preparations and at the Conference, as well as in between the different sessions. The Secretariat supports the Conference and the Bureau with activities ranging from the day-to-day organisation, writing background documents and liaising with various actors.
- **Media:** While the media does not participate in the process, it is crucial to communicating what is happening at the Conference with the outside world.



## Official Youth Delegates

Some countries have included **youth delegates in their official delegation**. The more the youth are represented and have legitimacy, the better. Usually there are limits on what an official youth delegates can do, so the best is to combine her/his presence with the work done by other youth from the same country. At this moment, a limited number of countries include a youth delegate and we have great opportunity to change this. You could build the momentum and encourage (lobby) your government to establish a system for selecting a youth delegate. The composition of the governmental delegation is a matter for each government to deal with, so you will need to approach your own government. Sometimes, supportive declarations by UN officials can help governments overcome their reluctance to include a youth delegate. Countries such as Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden have a long tradition of having youth delegates in their country delegations. Those countries can be referred to when you contact your own government.

**German youth delegates**, for example, have a mandate given to them by the German Federal Youth Council and supported by the Federal Ministry for the Environment. This means that the two German youth delegates represent about 5.5 million children and youth as both part of the delegation and the Major Group for Children and Youth. The German government also has a unique system to increase participation of youth from developing countries: they support two young delegates from Africa to attend negotiations. In general, the young people of the global south are alarmingly underrepresented in international negotiations. Increasing the number of such youth delegates is crucial, as young people from developing and emerging countries are contributing their highly important perspectives on Sustainable Development at the global scope. The German government has taken a courageous step to increase civil society participation from a underrepresented region while also strengthening their Civil Society participation from their own country.

## Tips and tricks

- **Establish contact** with your country delegation in the process leading up to and after Rio+20.
- Find ways to **gather input from young people** during the year. This way more youth are involved and activated and the participation in the Rio+20 processes becomes more representative.
- Find ways to **ensure continuity** among youth representatives, to enable meaningful participation and allow knowledge transfer, for example via a junior/senior system.
- **Use your position as an official delegate** for the benefit of the youth movement at large. In some cases you will have access to information or insights that others do not yet have. Be transparent with your delegations so you do not cross lines you should not cross.
- Have a look at the '**Guide to Youth Delegates to the United Nations**' found at <http://bit.ly/youthdelegat-eguide>
- For additional help and support you can always contact the MGCY Organising Partners (see next chapter) as well as email UN youth at [youth@un.org](mailto:youth@un.org).







**“The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently”**

**—Friedrich Nietzsche**  
The Dawn of Day

The Major Group for  
**Children  
and Youth**

## The Major Group for Children and Youth

*Children and Youth are the key moral stakeholder when it comes to Sustainable Development. Their effective participation is hence a prerequisite for Sustainable Development. The Major Group for Children and Youth is the main platform for youth participation in the Rio+20 process. This chapter will give a brief overview.*



The Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) is one of the 9 groupings of civil society recognized by the Agenda21. It is the youth constituency for Rio+20. Therefore, the MGCY has officially a seat and limited speaking opportunities at the Conference.

Internally, it defines itself as umbrella under which all different youth-organisations, networks and young people have the opportunity to gather, participate, advocate and act toward achieving sustainability. Concretely, the MGCY meets online, through the different e-mail list and the public website. Once on site (in New York, or in Rio), it meets at least once a day, usually in the morning, in order to take major decisions and to plan ahead for the next day(s).

The MGCY is in a sense a “do-ocracy”. While smaller projects will be moved forward by a few people with the energy and capacity to mobilise other youth and to actually make it happen -- activities with far-reaching consequences (strategy) is discussed, consulted upon and decided within the bigger group. This is crucial to ensure transparency and accountability. One of our biggest strengths is that we are able to work together without personal self interests at play.

But please be aware that the possibility people will try to influence you as the youth voice is strong. Be careful what you say, what you echo and remember we are building relationships—and the governments are not the

enemy / opposition but rather our partners in achieving this change. Be persuasive, be prepared, be informed and create positive change.

You can find out more about how the Major Group functions here: <http://www.youthcaucus.net/about/Processes-and-Procedures>.



## Vision and Mission

The vision of the Major Group for Children and Youth is the advanced participation of young people all levels; locally, nationally, regionally and internationally, in the protection of the environment and the promotion of economic and social development.

### Objectives of the MGCY

The objectives of the Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) are to:

- Advance the full participation of children and youth within the Rio+20 and related processes
- Foster dialogue, collaboration, participation and unity in diversity within the MGCY
- Encourage, promote and strengthen the role of civil society at the Rio+20 Conference
- Strive to be an engaged and credible actor at Rio+20.







has decided that the Major Group of Children and Youth will be the mechanism for young people to be involved with Rio+20, any young person involved with any UN environmental process (e.g UNFCCC, UNEP, CBD, CCD, ...) will automatically be considered a member (unless they chose not to). As such, they will have the same rights and obligations as other MGCY members.

## **Organising Partners**

Each of 9 Major Groups has its own Organising Partners. Organising Partners do not lead the Major Group, but serve as a service institution and aim to facilitate their Major Group. This means that they are not gate-keepers, but are actually the individuals who keep the communication flowing back and forth with the Secretariat. Rio+Twenty, the organisation behind this guidebook, is one of the Organising Partners for the Major Group for Children and Youth. For a list of organising partners and their contact details please visit <http://bit.ly/OPcontact>





## Structure

The MGCY is structured around the following groups. Communication inside these groups mainly goes through free internet tools like Google Groups and Skype.

### The Youth Space

<http://groups.google.com/group/Rioplus20YouthSpace>

The Rio+20 Youthspace e-mail list is the main e-mail list. This is a group for youth from all over the world to share information and discuss about the upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Please join this list to get all the updates, information sharing and general discussion.

### Policy task forces

Through its three policy task forces, the Major Group shapes and compiles youth-opinion on topics like the green economy or the future of the institutional framework for sustainable development. The first major contribution of the task-forces was to outline the MGCY position on the main thematic issues, which was submitted to the Secretariat on November 1st 2011, for inclusion in the Compilation Document.

#### Task Force on the Green Economy

<http://groups.google.com/group/green-economy-youth>

This group works on Green Economy in the Framework of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication (GESDPE, see page 13).

**“We are the next generation of decision-makers and we stand for action and change”**

—Bandung Declaration, UNEP Tunza Youth Conference 2011

### Task Force on Governance

<http://groups.google.com/group/rio-20-youth-IFSD>

This group works on the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development (IFSD, see page 14)

### Task Force on Objectives

[http://bit.ly/Rio-Youth-Objectives\\_Taskforce](http://bit.ly/Rio-Youth-Objectives_Taskforce)

This groups works on the 3 objectives of Rio+20s, namely to secure renewed political commitments, to assess progress up to date and the implementation gaps and to address new and emerging challenges.

## Working groups

The Major Group organises its actions through a series of working groups, which are coordinated through a facilitation team. The working groups deal with everything that is not “policy action”.

### The Facilitation Team

<http://groups.google.com/group/facilitation-team>

The Rio+20 Facilitation Team is a group for youth from all over the world who have the time, capacity and commitment to actively collaborate in the preparations for the upcoming UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). It coordinates all the activities of the MGCY and meets

every two weeks through an on-line call to review progress made through the working groups and task forces. Please only join this list if you have a few hours a week to spare to follow up tasks (Membership is moderated)

### The Communications Working Group

<http://groups.google.com/group/Rioplus20YouthComms>

This working group deals with all the internal and external communications issues and provides the MGCY with a unified voice for children and youth.

### The Mobilisation Working Group

<http://groups.google.com/group/rio20-youth-mobilisation>

This working group is action oriented and covers everything from grassroots and large scale projects to project based, campaigning and/or creative actions that young people are taking, both inside and outside the conference centre in Rio.

### The Children Working Group

<http://groups.google.com/group/rio20-working-group-on-children-?hl=en>

As the voice of children is often harder to represent than that of youth, this working group tries to improve the participation of children and to empower them to engage in the Rio+20 process.



## Decision-making process

The MGCY deliberates annually during the CSD meeting, preparatory meetings such as the Inter-governmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) and Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs), and via the mailing lists. The mailing list will be the main means of communication for all decision-making processes and involvement therein. Different decision-making processes will be followed for the different events, as stipulated below.

### At the CSD

- The Major Group meets daily if not decided otherwise;
- The meeting is called by the Organising Partners (OP);
- Any member of the Major Group can propose a point of the agenda at least 30 minutes in advance of the session
- The MGCY decides with consensus based on its principles
- Any decision that is made through consensus should be implemented by the members of Major Group in a unified fashion, with all members committed fully to the decision that was made;
- In the rare situations/occasions where inclusive consultation does not result in consensus, the OP can make an executive decision to ensure crucial processes go forward
- Decisions can be made regarding activities and processes relative to the CSD itself, however more strategic decisions with far reaching consequences can be formulated at the CSD and shall be decided on-line.

## Through the email list

- All decisions that need to be made throughout the year, and decisions with far-reaching consequences, will be sent to the MGCY through the mailing list.
- A draft proposal will be sent to the mailing list and open for comments for at least 2 weeks, if not otherwise decided. All Major Group members have the opportunity to raise major concerns that they have pertaining to the decisions, with the OP;
- A second proposal will be circulated taking into account the previously raised concerns, for at least one week. If none of the members having issued concerns disagree, the proposal is seen as adopted.
- Shorter deadlines for a decision can be arranged based on the requirements of significant external time pressure





**“ Citizen Participation is like eating spinach: no one is against it in principle, because it is good for you. Participation of the governed [is] a revered idea that is vigorously applauded by virtually everyone. The applause is reduced to polite handclaps, however, when this principle is advocated”**

**—Sherry R. Arnstein**  
A Ladder of Citizen Participation



# What you can do...

## What you can do...

*In this section we will explore briefly what participation means, and how this can be shaped by young people. We give an overview of the different ways young people can use their participation and transform it into a meaningful role. These roles serve as an inspiration, and people can choose one, combine several or include other roles not covered here.*

### What is participation?

Participation comes in many forms, and you can take on different roles when engaging into the process. Everyone's participation is valuable because we all contribute in different ways based on our interests and capacity.

For Rio+20, youth and children are an officially recognised stakeholder within the process but ensuring meaningful participation and being taken seriously requires determination and work. Young people want to move beyond being seen as “token” representatives but significant, credible and active actors in influencing change.



## Different roles you can play

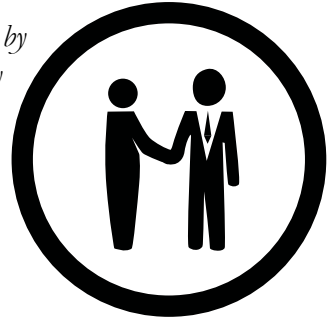
The number of roles you decide to take on is up to you. All roles are valuable and collaboration between all these different roles is key.

We need to work together to strength and support each other. We have a few suggestions for ways that you may want to get involved below, and some stories that hopefully will inspire you. Do not be afraid to create your own way of participating. We will ask a few questions that help you decide whether the role will suit you and then we will give a brief introduction to the role as well as some tips from young people globally. We have also included stories and interviews to give you a glimpse of what we mean...

## Do you want to be a young advocate or lobbyist?

*Are you interested in being actively involved in policy by developing and advocating for specific input into policy outcomes?*

*Are you good at remembering facts? Do you find it easy to approach strangers and make friends? Can you speak in an articulate, persuasive, friendly and knowledgeable way? If not...are you willing to learn?*



The Major Group for Children and Youth should be y o u r main focal point if this is a role you want to undertake. The Major Group for Children and Youth provides formal input to the process and welcomes young people to be involved in their activities.

During the preparatory meetings, intersessionals, informal informals and Rio+20 there will be space for the Major Group to make formal interventions. These opportunities are generally scarce and the time provided will be limited, varying from one to three minutes. It is key to develop an effective and collaborative way to write statements.

Lobbying is what the Major Group of Children and Youth does to make us more effective. We have trackers in all the negotiations and consultations who keep track of which group or member state shares our points or is against them. Then the lobbyists have the task of approaching them in a friendly way and discussing our key lobby points. These are based on our draft zero and have legitimacy because they have been prepared through input by thousands of organisations and individuals under age of thirty globally.

Lobbying is when you approach members of official delegations during drinks, dinners and in the lobby and corridors of the conference centre to present our points. It can be scary at first but it is just sharing our input, amendments and suggestions with the delegation. Therefore, you need to be able to answer questions about why they should be included in the policy.

The Major Group of Children and Youth holds workshops for those who are newer at lobbying and has recently (at CSD-19) created a mentorship and support systems.

## Interview with youth advocate Mitch Lowenthal

Member of the SustainUS delegation at CSD-19

### What was your most exciting experience at CSD-19?



**Mitch:** “At CSD-19, we had the opportunity to influence negotiations in a positive way. By speaking with the delegates and Chair of my topic area frequently, I was able to create a rapport that allowed the Major Group of Children and Youth to garner more speaking time. As a result we directly proposed an amendment to advance the rights of children and youth in the topic of waste management that was agreed upon by the delegates of our topic area.”

### Did anything disappoint you at CSD-19?

**Mitch:** “That the event did not produce an outcome document. I also thought 2 minutes for nine major groups to share at the end of each negotiations session is far too little chance to speak about the issues.”

### What do you think is the biggest challenge facing international negotiations?

**Mitch:** “I think the biggest challenge is time. We are in a day and age where things are to be completed instantly. The modernization of communication makes it easier to draft a single text that incorporates the comments of delegates right from the start. When delegates arrive to delegate, they should not waste their time reading line by line language that could have been transmitted ahead of time. Pomp and circumstance needs to subside and real dialogue must occur earlier. This will save delegations financial and capital resources. Making the negotiating process more efficient will help mitigate some of the frustration allowing for an enhanced form of diplomacy.”

## Tips and tricks on youth advocacy

- Base your advocacy on a shared Major Group position for more impact and a more coherent young people's voice
- Make use of the formal input moments prior to the conference
- Develop concrete lobby points based on the youth position that suit the state of official negotiation
- Once there is a negotiation text, use that as a basis for amendments
- Map the key players on your particular advocacy area and set up informal meetings with them
- Establish contact with your country delegation
- Consider lobbying your country delegation to become part of the official delegation
- The European Youth Forum developed a guide on youth NGO's at UN meetings which could be useful too. You can download the guide at <http://bit.ly/EuropeanYouthForumNGOGuide>



## Do you want too be an activist?

*Are you more interested in putting pressure on Governments using creativity or mobilisation tactics? Do you like organising or running campaigns? Are you able to present hard hitting messages in fun ways? Or are you interested in trying?*



With a few key messages, young people can put a lot of pressure on the international community to take action. By writing letters, political campaigning, organising rallies, street marches, strikes and sit-ins young people can influence the way people think about sustainable development issues; you can share a message clearly and demonstrate a key issue in a very fun way. Activism can lead to more creative forms of communication and make powerful statements that set the tone for Rio+20. Young people have the power to put the emphasis back on the big picture, on what it's really all about: our sustainable future.

Creative actions and peaceful demonstrations are excellent means to put pressure on decision makers and energize the process.



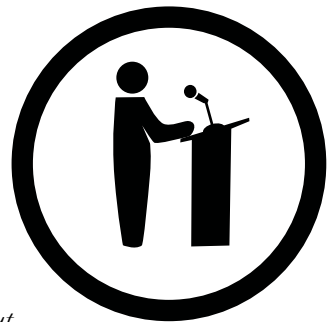
## Tips and tricks for young activists

- Be creative!
- Humour can be key to an effective action with an impact. In the climate negotiations for example, one of the youth proposed to the chairperson of the Kyoto Protocol “because true love needs commitment”.
- Non-violence should be the basis for the design of any action
- **Note:** Actions within the premises of the conference need to be approved by the Secretariat. Consult the Organising Partners for this; they are the liaisons between youth and the Secretariat.



## Do you want to be part of the media?

*Are you interested in journalism? Or love tweeting? Like writing about your opinion on things? Love to talk about things or share news? Are you studying Marketing? Media? Do you blog? Do you want to create a buzz online? Want to start discussions? Do you want to make the process understandable for youth/children/adults outside the process? Is your aim to put pressure on the negotiators?*



Whatever your slant....this area is pretty broad. Traditional media tends to be newspaper articles, press releases, interviews, radio, and television. But new media is rapidly increasing and there are lots of opportunities for young people.



## Youth break Guinness World Record

by the Sri Lankan team of the British Council's Global Change-makers



Youth broke the Guinness Book of World Records record for the “The Largest Human Mosaic”. One thousand five hundred (1500) participants from all around the Sri Lanka spelt the word Youth!

The event was much more than setting a world record. Young people of different ethnicities and religions gathered together, united, bearing in mind the fact that they were all Sri Lankans, proud to set a world record on Lankan soil. It was a celebration of youth. Sri Lankan Youth showed unity and strength.

More than 3 billion people on the planet today are aged 24 and under. 90% of them live in the Developing World, where they face the problems of lack of access to education and healthcare, high unemployment among other issues. Although the event was idea by 5 people chatting, it was organized with the help of 150 volunteers this event might be impossible to five us and their commitment and enthusiasm made our work easier.’

Check out the photos of the action here: <http://youth-is-the-word.weebly.com/y-force.html>

If you are interested in communication you can help make the process more transparent, digestible and understandable. You can share news from the conference halls with the wider world or spark public debate or act as a watchdog over the negotiators.

This is all do-able! We believe you have what it takes! And if you do too... just dive in.

## The Adopt a Negotiator Project

by Leela Raina - Adopt a Negotiator



I am adamant that youth are the key to halting climate change because: “Who could be better to decide the future than those who will inherit it?!”

I believe, we, the youth are able to make a difference where it seems impossible. And our most key contribution is in the field social media, in the age of facebook, twitter and blogs. When I started off communicating my thoughts to the world I would have never thought of the response I received and the influence my words had on policies and politics in the real world. As part of GCCA-Global Campaign for Climate Action, an alliance of over 200 environmental NGOs, I became the tracker for India.

My attempts to capture the essence of the talks in language that is fun and fresh, made the message appealing. The response I got was overwhelming with officials commenting on the blogs to stints with mainstream media like The Guardian and NPR where I got to connect with a larger audience.

You don't have to join a big youth movement to become an activist. You just have to act, and your action will become a movement in itself! [...] So write, blog, comment and get involved in whatever capacity you can. This is an important opportunity to fight for the earth and for our future. Seize the moment!



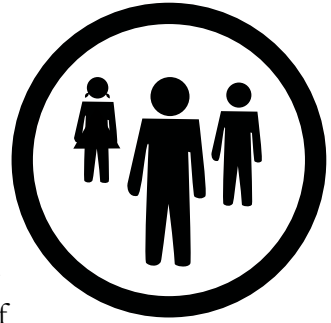
## Tips and tricks for youth media

- Identify your audience!
- Use both traditional and new media
- Bloggers, increase your outreach! Search for websites that are willing to cross-post or republish your blog as well as posting on your usual site.
- Establish contact with traditional media in advance of the event you are going to report on. In addition to a press release, a personal approach like an email or call will increase your chance of success
- Create relationships with journalists and maintain those relationships.



## Do you want to be a facilitator?

The Major Group of Children and Youth (MGCY) facilitates young people's involvement. However, for this to actually happen, it means that a small number of strongly committed young people serve the movement as a whole and create a space for 'the voice of young people'. They work within the Major Group of Children and Youth to prepare for the Commissions and Conferences months (even years) in advance.



and

They typically invest time and energy to organise a whole range of internal meetings, processes and structures and thus build a stronger movement. They also promote what young people are doing globally, provide empowerment or skill workshops and provide training on specific topics. They use their skills and ability to build a strong, more consistent and unified voice of young Civil Society behind the scenes.

Facilitating, capacity building and a good flow of information are aspects of this. Facilitators are concerned with creating unity and ownership in order to enable greater impact and a stronger voice. But just because they have been doing this for a long time doesn't mean that new people aren't welcome. As we are young, the group is constantly changing and evolving to ensure that the movement doesn't die when the current facilitators leave....

## Do you want to be a supporter?

Unfortunately, not all of us will be able or willing to attend the actual Conference. In previous UN Conferences, there were several organisations that made good use of their home office, both for logistical matters like fundraising and research.



You can be the backbone for those present at

## Tips and tricks for facilitators

### You can become a facilitator if you...

- Are willing to commit at least 6 hours a week.
- Believe in empowering individuals meaningful participation.
- Are willing to promote networks collaboration
- Are interested in striving for balanced representation and willing to consistently outreach.
- Know your limits but be prepared to take ownership and put in the time to make things happen.
- Are able to work with a diverse team, independently yet understand the importance of collaboration, consultation and consensus.

### You are a facilitator if you...

- Are working to build a model of organisation that allows new people to step in the process
- Arrange capacity building activities and promote meaningful participation within the process.
- Offer skills to youth working groups.
- Take a leadership role that is behind the scenes.
- Act as focal points or coordinators for the MGCY's Task Forces, etc.
- Avoid taking over or controlling things.



the conference, and be part of something bigger remotely. Off-site participation also has a positive result in terms of sustainability as reduced travels result in a lower-carbon impact but you need to think bigger than that. Your role in getting local organisations involved is vital to our overall success. You are on the ground in your communities and your responsibility is feeding information from the bottom up.

### Tips and tricks for supporters

- Mobilise your community
- Get local organisations involved with the process
- Feed information from the bottom to the top by making effective use of the existing mailing lists
- Take advantage of your time zone to give us an edge! You can assist with drafting statements or researching while the physically present group are asleep.
- Be available for quick response or research during the conference.
- Promote participation at a grass root level
- Ensure that the team feels supported and that they are not alone.



## **Rapid Response Network** - by Rachel Ray Butler

Leading up to the climate negotiations in Copenhagen, the Energy Action Coalition, the Sierra Student Coalition, and SustainUS jointly recruited a list of Rapid Responders-activists [...] that would be in the US during the Copenhagen conference. We made it clear in the sign-up process that we were [looking] for a high level of commitment. Rapid Responders would not only take action themselves, but would also spread the word through their networks at home and encourage others to take action as well. [...]

At Copenhagen, we began phase two of the plan: recruiting all-stars from the US Youth Delegation to commit to phone bank the Rapid Responder list every 2-3 hours. By staying in contact with the Rapid Responders in the US, we would be able to relay updates from the negotiations and an action to spread through our networks at home, giving the US Youth at the conference more power and helping to influence the negotiations.

During the negotiations, a small core leadership team met daily to determine the update and action of the day, write a script, and recruit the US Youth in Copenhagen to the Rapid Response phone bank. At the Rapid Response phone banks, US Youth in Copenhagen would meet, learn about the day's update and action, split up the phone banking list and [...] call the hundreds of Rapid Responders at home.

Through this cross-Atlantic phone tree, US Youth were able to generate thousands of actions that put pressure on the Obama Administration, [...] strengthening our networks and building power as US Youth for the long haul.

## Are you a university student?

*Are you studying a relevant topic? Why don't you share your knowledge?*

Student groups and young researchers can help create more concrete, valuable and researched youth positions. Having students in the policy paper drafting or statement writing processes, for example, is a valuable asset to negotiations. Their freshly acquired knowledge and insight could raise the quality of the youth contributions. The participation of young experts in the process also helps building capacity while providing them with experience applying their knowledge in the “real world”.



## Spark grass root action?

*Do you care about the planet and the people on it? Do you think you know other people who might be interested? Are you willing to raise awareness?*

You can raise awareness among your friends, family, neighbours, town or city. Mobilizing and building attention are of extreme importance for making Rio+20 a success. It is possibly the biggest and best thing you can do to help prepare. It is something that too few young people are doing. And whether you mobilise your friends, your school, your neighbourhood or club—you are a local hero.



Your grassroots action coupled with online forums can be used for increased involvement of a wider diverse group for feedback and input. This can be directly fed in to the process at Rio+20. We cannot do this without your work at home. We need your energy, your ideas; you play a very valuable role in making governments know that everyone cares and that there is pressure from home for them to perform.



## Tips and tricks for grass root action

- Get your friends involved and create a team
- Think of fun ways to raise awareness
- Twin with another town, neighbourhood or city somewhere else in the world. It will add an extra dimension of fun.
- Share your stories online
- An inspiring and mobilizing message is very effective
- Keep it short and simple!





“

A change is brought about because ordinary people do extraordinary things”

—Barack Obama  
President of the United States of America

# Before Rio+20

## Before Rio+20

*Preparation is key. Although it might sound dull and boring, the better you prepare yourself, the better you will reach your own priorities at Rio+20. This chapter tries to give you some pointers on how to improve your preparation*

### Outreach

An important task in our preparation for Rio+20 is the outreach to other young people and the broader public.

### Promote Rio+20

Talk about Rio+20 in coffee shops, schools, stores and while using public transport. Becoming a Rio+20 mobile commercial is an option you might want to consider. Convince people of the urgent need to make sustainable development not just a concept, but a way of life. It is important that we mobilize as many young people as possible, but also gain supporters.

We need to show that we not only care, but act! Raising awareness in your community, city, country and region about Rio+20, about the change you are and want to see is possibly one of the most valuable things you can do to help. Rio+20 should not be just another summit, it should be our summit. The time now must be not to talk, but to act.

## Approach Your National Youth Council

Try to find out if other young people in your country or your region are involved in Rio+20. Some countries have national youth councils and if your country does, contact them. Youth councils can reach a large group of young people to generate support for the work leading up to and during Rio+20. Many national or regional youth organizations have plans to launch campaigns on Rio+20 or to facilitate youth participation. The internet would be one way to find out who is involved. But if they aren't planning anything, you could take a role in initiating action.

## Try to contact your national official delegates

Prior to the Conference there are a lot of meetings and lots of discussions. The official delegates of member states are crucial in these negotiations. Try to get to know them, they have access to a lot of resources and the most recent information, they are the most important people to lobby.

We understand that it's not easy to find out who is part of the delegation. But the participation lists from CSD-18 and CSD-19 are a starting point. Let those delegates know that you will be involved, that you might be at Rio, and that you care!

When approaching your national delegates, you can use Major Group's lobby points to strengthen your demands. It is the most effective way to put our input on the international agenda.

## Participate in regional youth preparatory meetings

In some regions preparatory meetings will be organized by and for young people. Those meetings generally aim at preparing regional youth for the Conference and reflecting on their regional state of sustainable development. Additionally, in those meetings, regional youth lobby points should be one of the outcomes. These meetings are very helpful to prepare for the Conference and we would strongly advise you to attend these meetings if

## **Dutch National Youth Council** - [www.njr.nl](http://www.njr.nl)

The Dutch National Youth Council has an extensive background in youth involvement in social and political affairs worldwide. It endorses officially elected Youth Representatives to take part in international conferences, like Rio+20.

Each youth representative has a mandate a two year cycle. The junior youth representative attends UN conferences with an NGO accreditation and the senior (person who was junior the first year) youth representative generally is part of the official delegation. This is done to ensure continuity and quality to their youth contribution. Unlike in some other countries, in the Netherlands, youth representatives gather input from youth about the topics related to the negotiations and have in-depth discussions with other stakeholders throughout the year. Furthermore, they look for opportunities to deliver input to decision-makers at all levels. The youth delegates have a responsibility to involve young people at home in negotiations through youth conferences, workshops, guest lectures and engaging in outreach activities via (social) media.



There is an active youth working group on sustainable development within the Dutch National Youth Council. Youth representatives share knowledge and work together with them on their contributions.

What is your youth council doing?

possible.

If there is no preparatory meeting organized in your region it might be interesting to organize it yourself if you have the time and resources. For the list of Major Group of Children and Youth regional meetings visit [www.youthcaucus.net](http://www.youthcaucus.net)



## Don't forget the paperwork!

### Accreditation and registration

There are lots of ways to be involved without being accredited to attend the Conference., but if you want to be inside you will need to be accredited. This will need to be done **PRIOR** to your arrival in Brazil.

Accreditation means that you will be registered in the UN database and will have access to the actual negotiations. There are several normal types of accreditation: civil society delegate, government delegates, media accreditation and accreditation through intergovernmental organisations. Please note that the UN never accredits individuals but only states and organisations.

Depending on the status of your organisation it will need to get registered or accredited.

### Pre-registration

The NGOs that can pre-register their representatives fall into 2 main categories:

1. NGOs that are in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), including those on the roster through the list of the Commission on Sustainable Development;
2. NGOs that were accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.

**The deadline for pre-registration is 20 May 2012.** When the pre-registration is completed, each nominated representative will receive a confirmation letter via e-mail. That letter serves as an official invitation to the Conference and can be used to apply for a visa to Brazil (see also next page). Registration is valid for both the Conference and the Third Preparatory Committee.

Once pre-registration is closed, on-site registration by representatives of non-accredited NGOs will not be accepted! Representatives of an accredited organization who are not able to attend the Conference cannot be replaced by another representative of the same organization.

To start the registration process, follow this link: <http://bit.ly/UNCS-DRegistration>

## Accreditation

The Rio+20 Secretariat offers a one time opportunity to become accredited to Rio+20 for organization that are NOT in either of the two categories having access to pre-registration. These organizations need to complete an accreditation questionnaire as a new group. The Secretariat will evaluate all request and make recommendations to the General Assembly for the accreditation of new organisations. **The deadline for new accreditation is 20 February 2012.** Once accreditation is approved, an organization can pre-register its representatives until the general deadline of 20 May 2012.

The accreditation questionnaire can be found here: <http://bit.ly/UNCS-DAccreditation>



## Tips and tricks - How to get prepared

- Conduct your own research on the Conference. We suggest looking up its themes and objectives. Try to find out who's done what, both on international and national level, in order to learn more, organise your time.
- Join relevant listserves and contribute to the discussions
- Be brave! Remember that once you start...it gets easier!
- Do not be afraid of asking questions!
- Learn from other people's experiences.
- Reading UN documents is not the most thrilling experience but once you have, a lot of things will make more sense. Read as much as possible.
- Think practical thoughts.
- Be the change you want to see!
- Make a game plan. Think critically, strategically and creatively.
- Set your own aims and objectives.
- Promote your work.



## Visa

Depending on your nationality, you might need a visa when entering Brazil. We encourage you to look into this well ahead for the Conference. You can take contact with a Brazilian diplomatic or consular mission in your home country. A list of the Brazilian diplomatic and consular missions can be obtained at: <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/o-ministerio/o-brasil-no-16>

The Brazilian authorities promised to facilitate access procedures for all participants. Don't hesitate telling your local Brazilian diplomatic mission you are attending Rio+20 and if you already have accreditation, bring it with you to the consulate.

## Funding

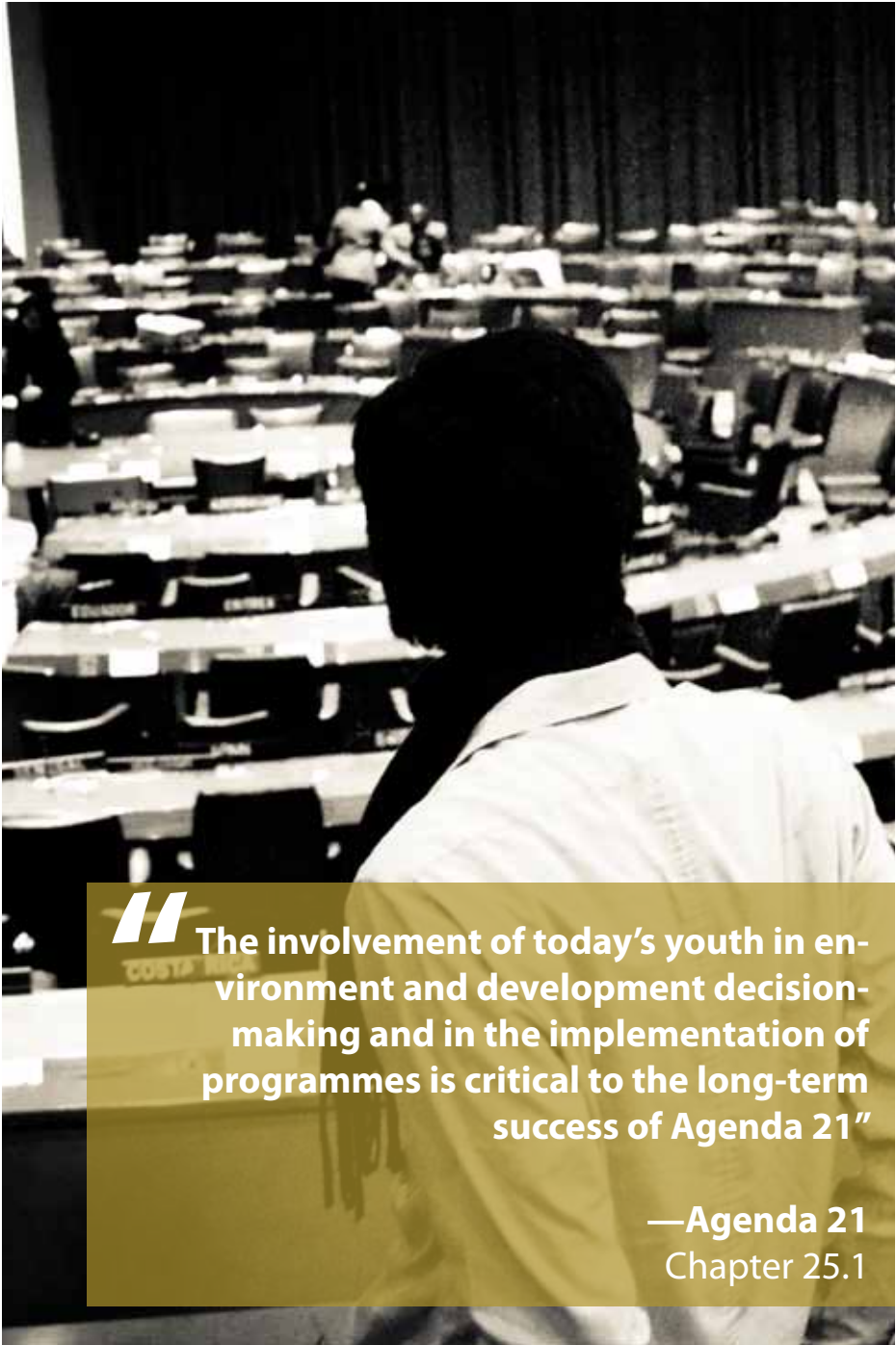
If you cannot imagine Rio+20 without you being physically there, then you will need to think about funding.

Rio de Janeiro is expensive and certain neighborhoods may be dangerous. Safe accommodation will be your biggest expense because you cannot afford to do it on the cheap as in some other places. That is why fundraising is important prior to the event.

Before you start fundraising, make an estimation of the cost of your participation. You might want to make a project proposal and submit it to potential donors. Approach philanthropic, charity organisations, companies, universities as well as individuals who can provide you with the whole amount or some part of the money that you need.

Ask your friends, family, and colleagues to help you in finding the right people to talk to, and there are numerous ideas online. In-kind contributions should not to be forgotten either: you could ask a travel agency to provide you with a ticket to Rio. Organising fund raising events would also be options. Be prepared to invest a lot of time and energy in finding money to fund your trip. Remember, unless you ask you will never know, but finding funds can be a soul destroying process if you don't start early enough and if you have no plan.





“

The involvement of today’s youth in environment and development decision-making and in the implementation of programmes is critical to the long-term success of Agenda 21”

—Agenda 21  
Chapter 25.1

# During Rio+20

## During Rio+20

*Once Rio started you'll probably want to contribute to the making of history. This chapter will provide you with some elements to write this history more to your likings*

Over time, it has been recognised that neither the governments nor the UN system have the human resources, political will, imagination or ideas needed to deliver much of what needs to be done. As such, the participation of NGOs and Major Groups has increased enormously and you have a big part to play –whether you got to Rio+20 or not.

Once Rio+20 has started, you will notice that there will be a lot of other young people, all with their own ideas about what to push for, as well as having different ideas how to push for it. The Major Group for Children and Youth is one of the most vibrant in terms of contributions and tactics. While it is important to respect strategies other young people might have which can contrast with your own views, it's equally important to prepare yourself well so you will shine. In this chapter, we will give some different ways to be active during the Rio+20 summit, as well as some more in-depth activities to consider in the Rio+20 conference.



## Engaging with the Rio+20 Conference

You need to ask yourself: “where am I of most use? Is it inside the conference? Or in Rio outside the gates? Or at home?”

Each is a valid, valuable and important path. You can contribute in your own unique way to making this event a success. There are numerous ways to meaningfully participate and the majority do not require you to be physically in Brazil.

No matter whether you will be able to be in the conference centre or not, or in Rio or not, the key success factors for your involvement are the same: be prepared; get friends and others around you with who to work and take actions; and be brave! Whichever way you finally decide to participate, please consider joining the Major Group of Children and Youth. You can find all the information about joining on <http://www.youthcaucus.net/rioplus20>

### From home

During the conference itself, there is a lot that you can do even if you are not willing or able to be in Rio. Attending an international conference is expensive and might have a high environmental impact. There are three main impacts that you can have while being home:

First, you can raise awareness in your community about what is happening at the conference, reach out, and translate the outcomes of the discussions for the public to understand. This is a key role in preventing other actors (governments...) from presenting very weak outcomes as successes.

Second, you can support the activists attending the conference by building up momentum and pressure towards various decision makers. If a particular country is blocking progress, why not organize spontaneous and peaceful demonstration in as many cities as possible all around the planet? These local actions are really important to build pressure on the right actors and make them “feel the heat”, wherever they are.

Thirdly, remember that the youth inside and outside of the conference cen-

## ‘Cancun in Brussels’ youth convergence



‘Cancun in Brussels youth convergence for climate justice’ was set up as an alternative space for youth activists who wanted to be involved in the climate negotiations but were not physically present in Mexico. From 29 November to 12 December 2010, it gathered some 100 young people coming from all across Europe.

Each day a programme of activities like workshops, training, actions and debates with European politicians were organised by the attendees. Activities were framed by daily theme under the topic of climate justice and how to get involved with it.

Every morning a political briefing of what was happening in Cancun was delivered by a team of people who followed the negotiations and youth activities in Cancun. This kept the link between the two events, helped us understand what was going on in Cancun, and on several occasions react with messages and actions in Brussels.

Our reasons for organising the event were many, not least to make sure that despite going to the negotiations themselves, young people had a voice and could have an impact on the negotiations. It also meant that we could support and highlight the work of youth and other civil society at the negotiations by echoing it to the outside world. Finally, we used this momentum to build and strengthen the youth movement for climate justice in the longer term, by creating an alternative platform for young people and activists from different organisations and backgrounds in Europe to come together to work and take action, take time to face to face discuss and share our experiences and beliefs and of course, having some fun and get to know each other.

See the blog at [www.cancun-brussels.org](http://www.cancun-brussels.org)



tre in Rio will use the internet as the main forum for coordination and planning. That means that you can contribute to this as well from home as they can in Rio.

Another form of engagement would be to also organize a national or regional event in order to provide an opportunity for young activists from a larger context to converge to a location closer to them and take actions together. See the text box for a very concrete example of such a convergence.

## Outside the conference doors

Not all of us who will be in Rio will be inside the main negotiation centre. Even if you are accredited to enter the conference centre, you also might want to spend some time outside with the broader group of civil society. It will be fun and chaotic and an experience you will not forget quickly.

### Keep in touch

If you are outside of the conference centre, make sure to constantly be updated on what happens inside, and what support NGOs inside might need from you. Also, a lot of coordination and organizing among youth during the conference takes place online. This means that even when you are outside, you can still follow what is happening and provide your own input to the activities taking place inside (for e.g. contribute to the drafting of positions, speeches, etc.).

### Networking

The streets outside of the conference centre and other event centres are the best place to network and meet a broad variety of stakeholders and organizations. Take this opportunity to learn about them, their issues, priorities, and methods. Share yours. Civil society is at its strongest when different groups (farmers, youth, faith-groups, NGOs, trade unions) all unite behind a common vision and message. Collective change means cooperating with other groups. It means having different strengths and trying different methods. When policy advocacy and outreach campaigns are coordinated, they

have a greater chance to make an impact on the process.

## Taking action

Media stunts or actions are a very creative and visual form of expression, particularly used by youth. When preparing them, identifying the target audience of the action (negotiators, fellow NGOs, Medias) is key before the action itself is designed (each audience might require different approach/location/timing for the action).

When planning any type of action, think about all potential factors that might play a role in your success. Consider how to use their potential or to reduce their capacity to interfere with your actions. If you do an outreach action for instance, the role of the media will be the key: think about how to get them interested in your message and how to help them write a good story about it (e.g. give them a good photo opportunity with a clear and visible message). If you feel that the police might be nervous about your plans, arrange in advance to have one person liaising with them.

Make sure to balance the benefits and costs that your initiatives might produce, both for you but also for other groups around it. Sometimes a great idea might be too difficult to put in place or have costs that might not justify its implementation.

All the other dimensions depend on the issue you are working on and the creativity of your group. The rules on how these can be conducted are different. There are several actors involved: mainly UN secretariat (managing the conference), UN security and host country police forces. There is no information yet on how this will take place in Rio.



## Art at Rio+20 - by Anna Collins, GCCA



Art can change the way a person or a whole society thinks about something. Both art and creativity have the power to reach people in new and exciting ways. Many of the principles involved in communal art projects are the same principles used in creating social change. Both involve people working to create something new or to make something better or more beautiful.

In the past youth groups have had an ‘Art Space’ at UN conferences where they can come together and make art to be used at the conference and beyond, this could be replicated at Rio+20. Here are a list of some of the most common tools young people have used at UN conference during the last few years and all these things have been put together in an Art Space.

**Banners:** Perhaps the most simple way of communicating, but very important. Think carefully about what message you put on your banner, keep it simple but understandable.

**Stencils:** Stencils are a great way to reproduce an image multiple times, perfect for making t-shirts and flags or to paint directly on walls.

**Songs/chants:** Never underestimate the power of a good song or chant – they can last for years and spread quickly.

**Puppets/Masks:** Masks and puppets can be easily made to communicate in an entertaining way. Puppets can interact with each other as theater or can stand alone and still communicate clearly

**Contastoria:** This simple technique is a great way to visually share more complex information. Its sort of like a powerpoint presentation that can be used on the streets, with no electricity and as much theatrics as you like.

## Inside the Rio+20 conference

A lot of young people will have obtained accreditation to the conference itself, whether it is as an NGO, part of the press or an official youth delegate as member of a national delegation. Although the colour of your badge might betray already what you will do, there are still a range of options at your disposal: from lobbying directly to delegations, enhancing the policy base or making the process more accountable.

### Oral interventions

There are only a few opportunities for civil society to speak. These opportunities are spread among the different Major Groups. Interventions allow us to make statements and raise issues. Their effectiveness is really dependant on how flexible the process to deliver them is and their timing. Other interventions delivered during sessions of the meetings are probably decided upon by the bureau or the chairperson of the ongoing session.

The statements of the Major Group on Children and Youth reflect the “young perspective” on the Conference themes. They aims to strike a subtle balance between a youthful message and strong concrete argument that raises the profile of young people as a credible actor.

### Tracking the negotiations

In order to influence the negotiations, it is crucial that you have the latest information about which direction the discussion is going, who we want to support, or who needs to be lobbied. Hence, it is crucial to keep track of the discussions.

Thus for any given priority, you want to keep track of the different positions of the governments. There are numerous different ways to track but as long as we can easily extract the information needed and someone is covering all the negotiations then we are fine.

**“ You need to be thematically oriented. Lofty speeches and generalities are not going to be of interest”**

—Jan-Gustav Strandenaes

### Corridor lobbying

One of the best ways to get your position across is to convince delegates in between the sessions. There are plenty of opportunities to exchange views with different delegates such as at receptions and side-events or just simply in the coffee bar. Meetings with national delegations allow often for more sincere and more in depth exchanges than we can have in other contexts.

What young people get out of this really much depend on the trust relationship and whether the national delegation takes you seriously. Announcing in advance that you are interested in meeting the delegation would be beneficial. Even better, arrange a meeting with your national delegation before the conference itself.

Getting in touch with the head of delegation could work best for global issues. When approaching delegates on specific issues, make sure you find the right person who is working on the issue you think is important. If not, maybe the delegate you just met might redirect you. Also the governmental “delegation coordinator” (the person arranging the schedule of everyone within the national delegation) can also be a good person to approach.

Once you are meeting the right delegate, it’s basically like making a sales pitch. Ideally you should convince the delegates why your proposal would make better policy for their country and their interests than their current stance. Keep your points short and simple. Make sure you convey the key message and can back up your message by giving a hard copy of your amendment(s) or by referring to other influential sources or previously agreed language. Also, having a common (national) language may be an asset.

Finally, don't see lobbying as a single shot, but try building a relationship of mutual respect with the delegates. Plan a follow up action plan: how you are willing to follow up with the delegation during the following days and most importantly at the implementation stage. Governmental delegations are usually keen on knowing what role their national civil society can play in the long run.

### Participation in workshops

Workshops offer an opportunity to hold less political and more technical discussions. Some of them might be too technical and not worth the resources for the major group on children and youth to be represented. However they are a good opportunity to build relations outside the heat of the main discussions. Also, participation from civil society representatives will be more welcome if they can share experience and knowledge. It is thus a good opportunity to raise the credibility of youth as having some type of expertise, provided representatives are well chosen. Also a good advocacy strategy for the inclusion of youth representatives / the inclusion of a youth voice (we planned to use recorded interventions when we could not attend workshops on education) is a good way to highlight the willingness for steady involvement.

### Holding a side-event

Side-events are events that are happening on the side of the official process (normally during lunch or after the official process). If designed well, they can be a powerful addition to any advocacy strategy as they are a good way to engage discussions or to showcase best practice.



## Tips and tricks for holding side-events

- Select your topic or theme and come up with a catchy title
- Find an organisation willing to sponsor the side-event and register your side-event with the Secretariat of the Conference
- Decide upon a format, find speakers and a moderator
- If you have enough funds, definitely organise a reception after the side-event
- Advertise your side-event via e-mail lists, folders or face to face invitation
- Ensure the equipment is there, and arrange accreditation passes for those coming from the outside.
- Promote it!
- Also have a look at this guide: [http://bit.ly/Side-event\\_guide](http://bit.ly/Side-event_guide)
- Queries regarding side events can be addressed to [side\\_events@uncsd2012.org](mailto:side_events@uncsd2012.org)



The process around the preparation of a side event can also play a very helpful role in pulling a team together around one particular project (it can contribute to creating a thematic group). Youth are usually also in a good position to show creative thinking regarding the way the side event is being facilitated, so don't hesitate to play around with the set up of the furniture and to structure the discussions in a different way than the classical PowerPoint presentations followed by questions and answers. Side events impact can be increased by inviting a key VIP. However side events often have limited impact in terms of engaging with delegations, often the outreach will concern more oth

Since the deadline for the submission of an application is rather early, this is probably the first thing one should work on. Submit a place holder application according to the specific time-frame (not sure for Rio) and then get the invitations out/the concrete planning of the side event. The one thing you might want to do before submitting the application, is to build a coalition behind it, so that it can be submitted on behalf of a larger group, hence increasing your chances of having the side event accepted.

At some larger meetings, some actors (the host country, the US, the EU...) might have rented a small part of the venue and have their own program there. An alternative to setting up your own side-event could be to get in touch and check whether they would allow for youth events there. If accepted, the time frame would be more flexible than the official UN one.

## Margin of Manoeuvre

Rules of procedure only partially influence the meeting. As civil society, the space of participation depends on a lot of different people and factors. The consequence of this is that the space of participation is based on subtle negotiations among the different actors. The application of the rules (e.g. how many times can you speak in a working group) often don't depend on formal rules, but the decision of a small group of people. Positively influencing these people (like the Chairperson of the session) can result in great strides in terms of civil society participation.



## DOs and DON'Ts

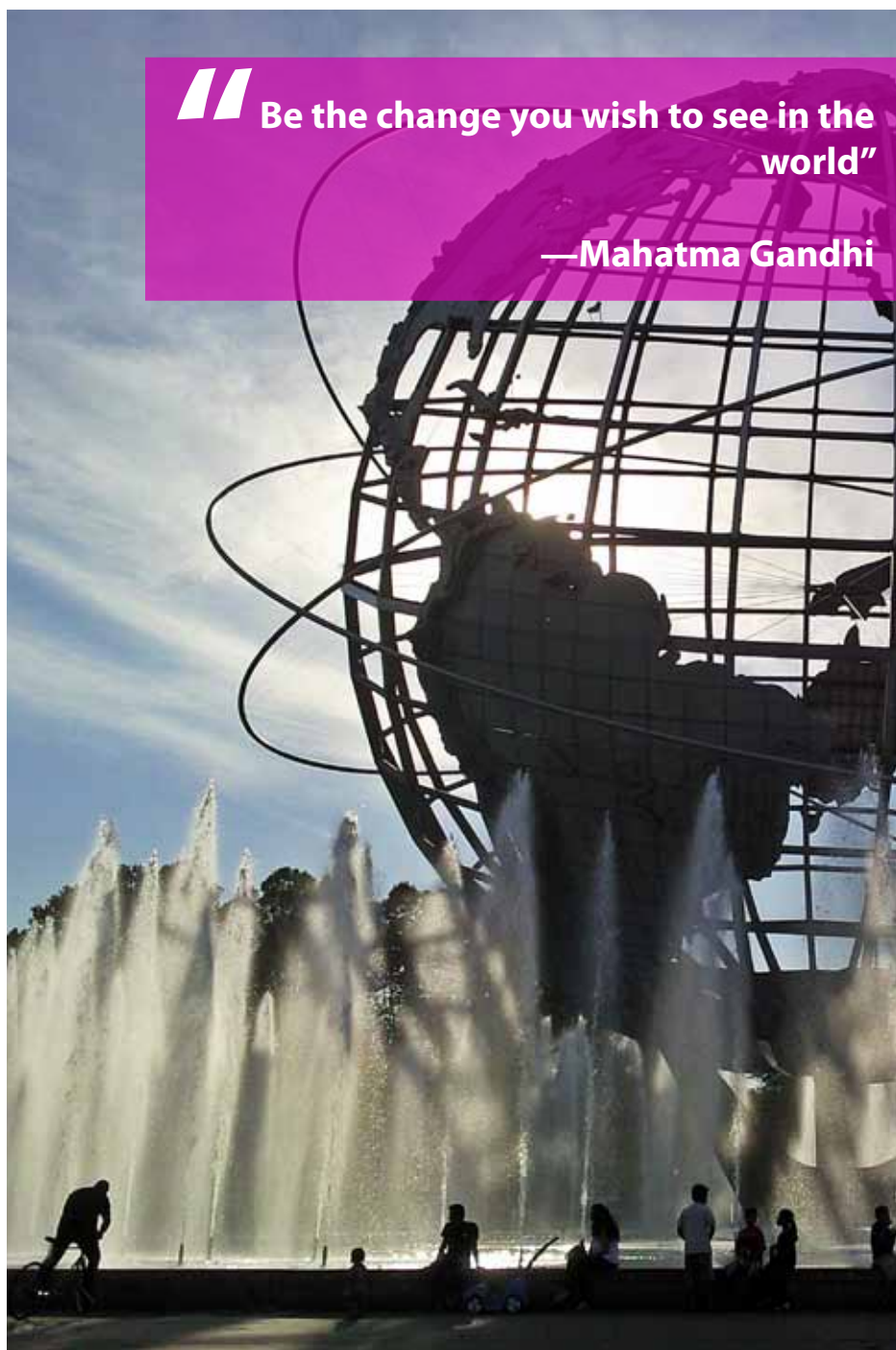
- **DO** try to focus on a specific issue. It is quite difficult to follow the whole course of actions.
- **DO** come prepared. Make sure you read all the relevant documents, and make sure you know your policy positions by heart
- Intergovernmental meetings push all of us, **DO** build a support network and be tolerant with people that seem to annoy you, but are in fact fighting for the same or similar course
- **DO** print business cards
- **DO** create friendships and be friendly
- **DO NOT** approach governments when they are taking the floor
- **DO NOT** disturb the meeting itself
- **DO** be polite and remember that delegates of a country (even if they advocate for an opposite view) are still people.
- **DO** have fun !






**Be the change you wish to see in the world"**

**—Mahatma Gandhi**



# After Rio+20

## After Rio+20



*Once you come back from Rio, you'll have learned a great new deal, met a bunch of likeminded people and hopefully are loaded with enough energy to continue fighting for a better planet. The Rio+20 conference can't solve all the complex problems the world currently suffers but hopefully gives a meaningful contribution. Hence a good and strong follow-up will be necessary*



### Why do we need to follow up?

Whether the outcomes of Rio+20 are good or bad, follow-up will be the key. Changes towards sustainability in the real world are what we want to see. Therefore, we will follow the topic until the outcomes are being properly implemented. Promises are not enough, we need to hold decision-makers accountable and raise the bar if outcomes turn out to be insufficient.

Moreover, we as the younger generation should stay committed to push our society towards a more sustainable way of living. What the follow-up will look like, will depend on the outcomes of the conference, on local realities but particularly on the role you play in the process.

You can choose to focus mostly on putting pressure on decision-makers or try to set up a dialogue on the implementation of the outcomes. Also, you could focus on spreading the word about the outcomes within your local (youth) community or design, for instance, an educational programme about it or organize an event. In addition, you could put your time and energy into translating the results of something relevant from very complicated policy into language suitable for day-to-day life via (social-) media. If the outcomes are highly dissatisfying, why not mobilize as many as possible young people (digitally or on spot) to make a clear statement that we can no

## We can save our planet - by WAGGGS



In 2010, UN member states pledged their support for climate change education. The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) used the decision to develop guidelines on how to hold governments accountable and make sure they act, as they have promised. They recommend some steps to design a national advocacy project, based on official decisions taken at UN summits.

1. Decide what you want to focus on and define your goals.
2. Investigate how young people and youth organizations within your country can get involved in influencing policy-makers and reach out to them. A united voice may result in a stronger voice.
3. Identify the most suitable governmental department and make contact to inquire on how your government intends to follow up on the decision taken in Rio. Try to set up a meeting.
4. Make sure you are prepared. If you are going to meet an important person and you know you will not have much time to talk, practice by doing a role play.
5. Be part of the solution. Show how you or your youth organization would be a valuable partner when implementing the results.
6. Bring examples (project descriptions, facts and figures, photos) proving that you are already putting your own suggestions on sustainable development into practice.

Be patient and persistent, as change sometimes happens very slowly. It might require a lot of persistence to reach your aim but it will be worth it! Download the guidelines here: <http://www.wagggsworld.org/en/resources/document/view/21981>

longer accept business as usual and the status quo.

Please remember that while we have a lot of hopes for Rio+20...it isn't the end. No one event can change everything and the small steps that each of us take have an impact. We know that not all our wishes for this event will come true. But we do know from past experiences that with dedication, hard work and lots of fun we can make a difference. We can positively influence outcomes and we can create concrete change together!

**“Join us and advocate for change now!  
This could be the start of something better...”**



# Acronyms

ALBA	Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
AU	African Union
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBDR	Common but Differentiated Responsibilities
CCD	United Nations Convention on Combating Desertification
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development
CSG	Conference Secretary General
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DSD	Division of Sustainable Development, part of UNDESA
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council one of the main organs in the UN Charter
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
G77	Group of 77
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
GESDPE	Green Economy in the context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication
GRULAC	Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries
HLS	High Level Segment
IEG	International Environmental Governance
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IFSD	Institutional Framework on Sustainable Development
IGOs	Intergovernmental Organisations
ILO	International Labour Organisation
Informal informals	term used for (negotiating) sessions that are not budgeted
Inter alia	among other things
JLG	Joint Liaison Group
JPOI	Johannesburg Plan Of Implementation
JUSSCANNZ	Japan, USA, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEAs	Multilateral Environmental Agreements
MGCY	Major Group for Children and Youth
NCSD	National Council for Sustainable Development
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development



OPEC	Oil Producing and Exporting Countries
RIMs	Regional Implementation Meetings
SIDS	Small Islands Developing States
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (First Earth Summit in Rio in 1992)
UNCSD TF	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development Trust Fund
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Conference Secretariat
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Africa
UNECE	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Europe
UNECLAC	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
UNEP GC	United Nations Environmental Programme's Governing Council
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
UNRES 64/236	UN (General Assembly) Resolution calling for Rio+20
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Earth Summit 2002" in Johannesburg) - see also JPOI
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## Participation Guide

Rio+20 - An Introduction for children and youth



**Rio+20**

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