



UN Starts “Global Conversation” to Engage Public Ahead of Rio+20

22 November 2011: The UN has launched a campaign in the lead-up to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD, or Rio+20) to promote the Conference and the need for sustainable development. The “Rio+20: The Future We Want” campaign aims to stimulate a global conversation on the kind of world people wish for in 20 years.

The results will be exhibited at the Conference, in collaboration with the non-governmental organization The Future We Want. The website for the campaign serves as the online platform for the public to express their ideas about the future. It is organized according to seven key sustainable development issues, which correspond to the priority areas previously outlined by Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of the Conference: cities, disaster resilience, energy, food, jobs, oceans and water.

Speaking at the launch of the campaign on 22 November 2011, at UN Headquarters, New York, NY, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the campaign aimed to provide a “golden thread” linking all current challenges and priorities, so that if the international community achieves a solution to one, it can do so for all. Zukang said Rio+20 is “first and foremost” about implementation of long-standing commitments and renewing a strong global commitment to sustainable development. He emphasized the importance of participation by civil society, which is at “the frontlines of implementation.” Maria Luiza Ribiero Viotti, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the UN, noted the “old challenges” that remain to be addressed at Rio+20, such as poverty, in addition to outlining collective thinking on new challenges.

The speakers addressed questions conveyed through Facebook and Twitter and from audience members at the briefing. Topics included affordability of clean energy; the relationship of sustainability with social equity; and sustainability of transportation and construction.

A second set of speakers included: Kiyo Akasaka, UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, who said “The Future We Want” could provide a set of indicators to clarify the meaning of sustainable development; Bill Becker, co-founder of the NGO The Future We Want, who said the visions that emerge from the global conversation campaign would be presented at UNCSD; Ella Tamufor, SustainNigeria/SustainAfrica, who said the UNCSD must result in tangible and practical and partnerships; Tara DePorte, MobilizeUS!, who called for mayors and business leaders to attend the Conference and for communities to live the vision of Rio+20 no matter the Conference’s political outcome; and Eduardo Fischer from Grupo TotalCom, a member of the UN Global Compact, who spoke of sustainability’s benefits for business.

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