



DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
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From the Deputy Prime Minister

13 July 2012

Dear Colleagues,

The dust has now settled on the Rio+20 summit and I'm keen to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your immense and diverse contributions to delivering the outcomes that were secured. Looking back at our initial goals, it's true that the agreement reached at the summit is not as ambitious as we would have liked and had hoped for, but I'm pleased to say that all three of our priorities have been included in the final text of the document.

Firstly, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We agreed to launch a process to develop these, to ensure that countries around the world grow but do so sustainably, in a way that protects the environment as well. In my view, this is a really positive step and gives us an excellent base on which to build. SDGs will be a real driving force for change towards putting the world on a more sustainable footing if we get them right. I would have liked to see themes for the SDGs agreed, but these will be decided during the next phase of negotiations and I hope to see rapid progress towards this agreement. In my view, the SDGs need to focus on food, energy, and water – important for growth, poverty eradication and sustainability - and be coherent and integrated with the UN Development agenda beyond 2015. They should be aspirational and apply to both developed and developing countries. This is what we will be pushing for in the forthcoming negotiations.

My second priority was to achieve agreement on the need to develop a better understanding of growth – something called GDP+. I'm really pleased that Rio recognised the need to develop broader measures of progress to complement GDP to allow countries to measure their natural wealth and social wellbeing and make informed decisions. And this is the crucial part: we don't just need to measure what matters, we need to adopt Natural Capital Accounting to ensure that our natural resources, on which 40% of our global economy depends, are properly reflected in decision making. We are moving as a country to measuring our own prosperity in those terms from 2020, showing real leadership on this key issue.

Thirdly, I said that I wanted to see recognition of the need to involve businesses more. Government cannot do this alone. That's why it's so important that Rio has recognised the role of business sustainability reporting, something which would have been inconceivable even a year ago and which owes a lot to the leadership of the Government and to UK businesses. I also announced in Rio that we will be the

first country anywhere to mandate large companies to report on their greenhouse gas emissions. There is a market demand for this. There is increasing recognition among major companies that using resources sustainably is in their own interests. Companies have been asking for it, investors need to know, consumers want to make informed decisions and this should eventually lead to a global framework.

So concrete progress on our three priorities. Alongside this, there were other steps forward. For example, the final text specifically recognises that environment and development are intrinsically linked. This is major progress for those of us who not only believe that the two are linked, but see sustainable growth as essential to raising living standards. The text goes further, stressing the importance of the green economy to sustainable development – going further than any agreed multilateral document to date. And here's the thing: for us in the UK this is a real commercial opportunity. Close to a million people already work in the green economy in our country alone. We can become real world beaters on this. This is a great opportunity to create jobs at home but sustainable development across the globe as well.

Some individuals and organisations have said that the text agreed at Rio+20 doesn't go far enough or reflects too much the spirit of compromise. I sympathise with this sentiment, but would argue that it is a firm step towards achieving a sustainable future. We can only move the world forward through consensus. Any other agreement would have meant rejecting the views of large parts of the developing world. I'm clear this would have been completely unacceptable. Indeed, one of the most interesting things about Rio+20 has been the rise of the G77 - developing countries for the first time really making their voices heard.

I believe what was agreed at Rio+20 gives us all the right components; what we need now is enough political will and determination from governments, the corporate world and third sector to build those components into a system capable of delivering the inclusive, sustainable growth we all seek. If we can build on the agreements reached at the summit in the months and years ahead then it will have been a clear success.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Clegg". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style. The "N" is large and loops back, and the "C" is also large and loops back. The "g" has a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

NICK CLEGG