

PROGRESSIO

BRIEFING FOR MPs on RIO + 20 AND PROGRESSIO'S POSITION

Why is the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development important?

The world meets in June 2012 for Rio+20, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. It marks 20 years since the Rio 'Earth Summit', and will be the biggest global environment and development conference since Copenhagen in 2009. But world governments need to be much more ambitious, if Rio+20 is going to be the spur to action that we desperately need. If the world's leaders can rise to the challenge to provide essential political will, we can achieve a global consensus to push for a green and fair economy, commit to the creation of clear and time-bound Sustainable Development Goals, and catalyse action for a fairer, more sustainable world in which all can flourish.

How can you engage on Rio+20?

Progressio would welcome support from MPs for our key messages, especially encouragement for the UK to **push for a strong, ambitious agreement** at Rio+20.

We are calling specifically for:

- a greater emphasis on fairness and participation: not just a green economy, but **a green and fair economy**
- stronger recognition of the need for **sustainable and equitable access to water**, particularly for women who play a crucial role as water managers for poor families and communities
- more prominence for **action on climate change**
- a call for the effective enforcement of legislation against **illegal logging**
- a global policy framework on **corporate sustainability reporting and responsibility**, including full water accounting and footprinting

Read our more detailed briefing on Rio+20 at:

<http://www.progressio.org.uk/Rio-policy>

We welcome the preparations made by both the government and opposition to date ahead of Rio+20. Given the importance of this moment, we encourage UK government to engage strongly with Rio+20, to push for a strengthened, far more ambitious outcome. A Green and Fair Economy needs cross-governmental commitments and therefore cannot be achieved by Defra and DfID on their own. We welcome **calls for joined-up action and commitments from across government** – the Treasury, BIS, CLG, DECC, and all.

You have the chance to engage in the debate on Rio+20 **at these events on 28th February**:

Rio+20 debate organised by the APPG International Development and Environment
Time: 28th February, 9.30am – 11am
Place: Room E, 7 Millbank
RSVP to appg@iied.org
More details: <http://www.appgide.org/>

AND

House of Commons Debate - Rio+20
Time: 28th February, 7pm-10pm (following debate on transport & economy)
Place: House of Commons

Why is Progressio saying we need to Waterproof Rio+20?

Water is a fundamental resource that underpins both life and livelihoods – health, food, energy, security, transport. Water scarcity is an especially big problem for the third of the world's population who rely on small-scale farming to make sure they have enough to eat. Climate change and land degradation make the challenges created by water scarcity even more difficult to manage. Local community resource managers need access to capacity building and scientific information and expertise in order to plan for and adapt to climate change.

The Green Economy can offer decent jobs and opportunities for all, and UK business has a key role to play in achieving it. However, governments and the private sector often plan to shorter timescales (5-10 years) than local communities who are very conscious of their need to husband their natural resources for future generations. Giving local communities a leading role and voice in water management will strengthen long-term sustainability. Who will make sure there is enough water in 20 or 50 years for these communities? Short term national and international economic interests and weak national governance often fail to recognise poor communities' customary rights to water.

What is the UK government position on Rio+20?

The government input to the EU position is being led by Defra. Key themes include: a stronger case for green growth; inspiring the private sector to lead the investment in the green economy worldwide, with government in a facilitating role; natural capital accounting; ways of measuring national progress that go beyond GDP; Sustainable Development Goals, particularly on food security, water security, and access to energy.

Read Caroline Spelman's speech and response to the House of Commons at

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/feb/09/rio-20-earth-summit-caroline-spelman-speech>

<http://www.theyworkforyou.com/wms/?id=2012-02-09a.43WS.0>

What is the opposition saying about Rio+20?

Labour is preparing for Rio+20 in a cross-departmental working group led by Shadow Secretary of State for the Environment. Some of Labour's concerns were expressed by Shadow Secretary of State for International Development Ivan Lewis: "For us it is essential any new compact must focus on social justice, inequality and human rights."

Read Ivan Lewis' speech at

<http://fresh-ideas.org.uk/resource-security-in-a-rapidly-changing-world-speech,2012-02-09>

Why is the Environmental Audit Select Committee concerned about Rio+20?

The EAC is examining the government's preparations for Rio+20 in order to "encourage wide-ranging engagement in the Rio+20 process and raise the level of debate within the country, and seek to influence the Government's approach to Rio+20". Read the Environmental Audit Committee report on Rio+20 preparations at <http://bit.ly/sRtxH4> and the government's response at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmenvaud/1737/173702.htm>

Why should Catholics care what happens at Rio+20?

As Catholics our respect for the dignity and worth of the human person, and our responsibility as stewards of God's creation, calls for us to ensure that our use of the environment takes into account the impact of our actions on future generations, especially on the poor and the least protected. Rio+20 is an opportunity for us to stand in partnership with poor and marginalised people to support them in achieving their rights and challenging unfair systems.

Read the Holy See Mission's submission to the Rio+20 negotiations at

<http://www.holyseemission.org/statements/statement.aspx?id=338>

Progressio is an international development charity that enables poor communities to solve their own problems through support from skilled workers. We work in partnership with civil society organisations in 11 countries around the world and we also lobby decision-makers to change policies that keep people poor. Our work is guided by three themes: participation and effective governance; sustainable environment; and HIV and AIDs. Progressio is the working name of the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR).

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