



CONSELHO DE DESENVOLVIMENTO ECONÔMICO  
E SOCIAL



**European Economic and Social Committee**

## **FIFTH MEETING OF THE EU-BRAZIL CIVIL SOCIETY ROUND TABLE**

**Oporto, 7-9 November 2011**

### **Final Declaration**

*The EU-Brazil Civil Society Round Table is a permanent body for dialogue and cooperation between the civil societies of Brazil and the EU, as represented by the Brazilian Council for Economic and Social Development (CDES) and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). It contributes to the consolidation of relations between Brazil and the European Union within the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership established in 2007.*

*The Round Table held its fifth meeting in Oporto, Portugal, on 7-9 November 2011. At this meeting, and in keeping with the commitment undertaken at the fourth meeting, the preparations for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) were discussed, in particular the following two topics: "The social dimension of a greener economy" and "Sustainable distribution, consumption and production for a greener economy".*

### **General comments on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)**

The Round Table participants exchanged information on the preparations for the Rio+20 Conference and reached agreement on the following points:

#### **The Round Table**

1. welcomes the Conclusions of the 5th EU-Brazil Summit of 4 October 2011 and in particular the recognition of the work of the EU-Brazil Civil Society Round Table and the support for its activities in the field of sustainable development;
2. takes note of the conclusions reached at the fourth meeting held in Brasilia on 27 April 2011 on the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and would point to the legacy of decades of the international community mobilising to debate socio-environmental issues, including the Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002;
3. recognises that world leaders preparing for Rio+20 face a new set of conditions in the shift towards more sustainable development, as compared to 20 years ago. These conditions

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concern the legal framework, participatory processes, the public agenda, awareness-raising and changing behavioural patterns;

4. is convinced that the world economy will be able to make use of its potential and provide new impetus for sustainable development in the future, and recognises that the crisis could provide an opportunity to create a new model of development; it therefore urges world leaders to sign a commitment to sustainable development as a way of exiting the systemic crisis;
5. deems it essential for the Rio+20 Conference to send out a clear signal to the world community that political leaders all over the world need to strongly commit to irreversible policies on sustainable development, meaning development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, and stresses the importance of designing and implementing a monitoring process to analyse to what extent the Rio commitments have been fulfilled;
6. believes that education and the democratisation of knowledge are priorities underpinning development and should release the potential for creativity, innovation and production and, in particular, make it possible to create a new culture of co-existence within society and interaction with the environment;
7. calls for the active involvement of civil society representatives in the preparations for and follow-up to the Rio+20 Conference and for them to be effectively heard both during the negotiations at the conference and in the implementation of the results;
8. highlights the crucial role to be played by States and in particular by public authorities in fostering a more sustainable and socially inclusive development system;
9. considers that fostering more equal access to goods and services must be part of the sustainable development engagements to be taken in Rio+20;
10. is of the view that human rights and equality between persons, in particular between races, ethnic groups, genders and generations, and between regions, between countries and between regions of a particular country, are horizontal aspects of all policies and actions to promote sustainable development;
11. considers that these proposals have to include a set of measures and targets needed to promote sustainable development, such as education programmes, updating skills, regulatory measures, fiscal policy instruments, public spending and investment;
12. affirms that national development plans have to be drawn up, taking into account the specific proposals of the Rio+20 Conference, but with respect for national circumstances;

13. reiterates the need for new indicators to measure welfare, social well-being and environmental viability beyond GDP, and deems it crucial to involve civil society in the process of framing these new indicators;
14. proposes that Rio+20 continue a process for complementing the existing Millennium Development Goals with Sustainable Development Goals;
15. backs the Social Protection Floor Initiative of the United Nations which promotes access to essential services and social transfers for the poor and vulnerable for a life in dignity;
16. calls for particular attention to be paid to the risk that technological investment in greening the economy might increase prices, especially for the most vulnerable parts of the population. Greening the economy should promote food and energy security and access to green technologies, water, health and housing for all;
17. calls for the adoption of specific proposals with a view to eradicating poverty, as a fundamental step towards sustainable development processes. The challenge for the least developed and emerging countries is to grow economically while distributing income, fostering social inclusion and reducing inequalities, without compromising environmental resources and biodiversity;
18. stresses the need to take into account both rural and urban areas, paying attention to their specificities and involving them in a comprehensive approach;
19. deems it essential to improve the governance of sustainable development, to ensure it is **multilateral and participatory**, whilst giving due regard to the principle of shared but different responsibilities. Considers that this new governance should include elements for discussion on which the Round Table will continue to work, such as:
  - a) making progress on implementing a new global financing architecture, exploring the possibility of expanding the range of innovative financial mechanisms for inclusive and sustainable development, which can distribute costs progressively and help achieve the sustainable development of all countries, including a possible tax on financial transactions;
  - b) Beefing up the UNEP and further developing it into an institution;
  - c) creating a Sustainable Development Council made up of political leaders from UN Member States and reporting directly to the UN General Assembly;
  - d) setting up an institutional mechanism at the national level and at the United Nations, taking into consideration the interests of future generations and
  - e) putting in place effective mechanisms enabling civil society to be informed and consulted and to participate.

20. at the same time encourages all countries not just to wait on international events, but themselves to take an independent leadership role with bold and innovative steps towards greater sustainability.

### **On the social dimension of greening the economy**

#### The Round Table

21. reiterates that there is no unique definition of a green economy, but shares the understanding that making the global economy more sustainable means redirecting the way it operates so as to deliver more sustainable outcomes through a process of reassessing and resetting objectives and tools of economic management;
22. notes that a shift to a sustainable economy also means a shift in employment, leading to job creation in some sectors and job losses in others, as well as to a major transformation of the work environment;
23. urges that social partners be involved in this transformation of the work environment;
24. supports the ILO's recommendations on Green Jobs, A Global Jobs Pact, adopted by the ILO in 2009 and the OECD's project for green growth;
25. underlines that greener jobs also have to be decent jobs and have to respect the principles of gender equality;
26. highlights the need to ensure social protection for workers from sectors affected by the greening of the economy as part of the process of globalisation;
27. considers it essential to design training and skill enhancement programmes to prepare the workforce for the greening of the economy;
28. recommends that these programmes be designed and monitored with the active participation of the social partners, education and training institutions and organisations, public institutions, public authorities, professional associations and vocational training organisations.
29. calls for both financial and non-financial support to be given to SMEs, as potential sources of new jobs.

## **On sustainable production, distribution and consumption for greening the economy**

### The Round Table

30. endorses the concept that there is a clear link between the pattern of production and consumption and the distribution of income and wealth.
31. acknowledges that the current model of consumption and production, based on an urban-industrial way of life, has become unsustainable, as it jeopardises the climate and the planet's ecological balance.
32. considers that the concept of sustainable consumption and production as the use of services and products providing better quality of life, with less use of natural resources and a less adverse impact on the environment, so as not to jeopardise fulfilment of the needs of future generations;
33. notes that reducing the use of natural resources requires a change in lifestyles and product design. Such social changes do not occur from the top down, but are rooted in social and environmental initiatives which need better and more appropriate conditions than those now existing, conditions that must be created by public authorities;
34. underlines the need for an international coordinated, coherent approach to sustainable consumption and production; regrets that no definitive agreement has been reached on a multiannual global plan for sustainable consumption and production in the framework of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development; urges the Rio+20 Summit to continue efforts towards reaching such an agreement;
35. calls for exchange of best practice to foster mutual learning and develop shared criteria and indicators to assess sustainable practices; recalls that trade and industrial cooperation are necessary dimensions of an international approach;
36. highlights the fact that any strategy aimed at making production and consumption more sustainable must fully integrate the central role played by consumers. Education is crucial to making the public aware of the impact of their consumption patterns on resources. A sound education and information system must be put in place to give consumers the necessary means to choose more sustainable products;
37. deems it essential that information on products, including labelling and advertising, be sufficiently clear for the general public and provide incentives for sustainable consumption;
38. affirms that the switch to more sustainable production and consumption patterns and a fairer form of distribution is not only an environmental necessity but also an economic and social

necessity. Underlines that resource-efficient production offers opportunities for countries at all stages of development;

39. stresses the need to adopt a life-cycle approach for the sustainability of products and production chains and highlights in particular the need to fully integrate the notions of re-use, repair and recycling;
40. emphasises here the importance of measuring the environmental impact of people, businesses and countries, taking account of the resources used to produce and absorb waste, helping to make resource-efficient procedures more competitive in relation to types of production that damage the environment;
41. calls for measures to encourage sustainable distribution, consumption and production patterns, for example through the establishment of sustainability criteria for Corporate Social Responsibility;
42. calls for measures to provide incentives for energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in all sectors of economic activity;
43. highlights the need to enhance research and development, despite the current economic difficulties. R+D is essential for finding and implementing a more sustainable use of resources in production. Special attention should be paid to the specific needs of SMEs;
44. affirms that the sectors with the highest adverse environmental impact and the biggest potential for the reduction thereof through sustainable consumption and production patterns are nutrition, housing, water and sanitation and mobility.

This final declaration will be presented to the Brazilian and EU political authorities and forwarded to the next EU-Brazil Summit.

The Round Table has decided to hold its sixth meeting in Rio on 1 June 2012, in the run-up to Rio+20. The Round Table agrees to continue to cooperate on preparations for the Rio+20 Conference in order to reach a common position representing civil society across the world.