

by CEEweb for Biodiversity

The worsening ecological and social situation on Earth indicates that UN Summit on Sustainable Development, held between 20 and 22 June was one of humanity's last chances to initiate the essential U-turn for the sake of protecting all creatures on earth including the *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Therefore, the Rio+20 conference could have provided a very unique opportunity to mark a milestone in effective sustainable development policy formulation, which was a very big failure to miss.

20 years after the Earth Summit, life on the planet has become dramatically difficult both for humans and for nature. The number of hungry people has increased to almost a billion, which means that one out of every six people is going hungry, mostly children and women in the countryside. The destruction of biodiversity has not been stopped. Contrary it has been accelerated in the past 20 years. Global climate change—with all of the disasters and dramatic suffering it is already causing—has not slowed, but has accelerated and become more severe.

The multiplicity of worldwide symptoms ranging from social unrest to climate change made Rio+20 global gathering pointedly relevant. It was supposed to take stock of the global environment and to develop concrete strategies to address the many critical goals have not been met over the past two decades. However, despite the best efforts of thousands of civil society organizations, the negotiated agreement gives little hope for progress in the political scene. The overall bulk of the so call *The Future We Want* outcome document reaffirms previous agreement and lacks new goals and commitments. It reflects short-term national agenda's and makes no mention at all of planetary boundaries. The economic growth model is dominating even this political statement on sustainability even though science keeps saying that this is not compatible with sustainability. Even EU Environment Commissioner Janez Potočnik warned in his former speech that the Rio+20 official document would be an empty shell without direction and tangible milestones.

Still hope for real progress?

While scientific platforms from all around the world¹ have kept in vain warning decision-makers to formulate policies redirecting development toward sustainability, civil society organizations CSOs initiated their own way of action. They are striving proactively to drive the agenda forward, providing the vision, leadership, and commitment to forge a process towards a just and sustainable planet.

Civil society organizations refused endorsing the Rio+20 outcome document, contrary in the leadership of ANPED (The Northern Alliance for Sustainability) they compiled "The Future We DON'T want"² document, which has been signed more than 2000 people so far. Furthermore, the Peoples' Sustainability Treaties³ culminated in a manifesto that urges for equity, a global citizens movement and localizing our economies.

Among the CSO initiatives, the European Resource Cap Coalition dedicated to global absolute resource use reduction has developed concrete measures, through which the necessary U-turn in global policies can be still easily realised.

¹ Decoupling Report of the UNEP's International Resource Panel (2011),
Some Reflections on Climate Change, Green Growth Illusions and Development Space , UNCTAD
Discussion Paper No. 205. (2011), 2052 – A Global Forecast for the Next Forty Years

² <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/the-future-we-dont-want/>

³ The Peoples' Sustainability Treaties initiative is an open invitation to civil society to come together to develop an independent, collective outcome for a sustainable future beyond Rio+20.
www.sustainabilitytreaties.org

The Resource Cap Coalition advocates for properly designing sustainable resource use policies, when we recognise that the crises we face are multiple and complex, and that existing institutions are inadequate to tackle these challenges. Changes will be needed at every level taking into account the subsidiary principle, but action at global and intergovernmental levels will provide critical leadership in this process of change and of developing real solutions for the emerging economic, social and environmental challenges. Therefore, the Resource Cap Coalition has been promoting a cap on the use of resources including all types of raw materials. Only through this humanity would be able to bring down effectively its consumption, refit the global economy inside its ecological space, and mitigate the impact of unsustainable resource use on nature and its consequences on peoples' livelihood. Resource use reduction shall be realised hand in hand with poverty reduction and building a green economy. The [Policy document of the RCC](#), and the proposed [Energy Quota Scheme](#) and the [Rimini Protocol](#) offer integrated tools for resource use reduction, bringing social, environmental and economic benefits at the same time.

Beside proper resource policies, wilderness areas have to be conserved globally in order to let nature flourish and thus provide its essential services to humanity making both nature and society resilient against global challenges. Therefore, to draw attention to the importance of the keeping wilderness in the world, a group of organizations including CEEweb and led by PAN Parks, is proposing to make 2014 the International Year of Wilderness.

We need to use our brains to think innovatively, our heart to make true commitments for the future we want, and not our legs to run away from today's biggest challenges and problems." says Klára Hajdu, CEEweb's Deputy General Secretary.

About CEEweb for Biodiversity

CEEweb for Biodiversity is an umbrella organization of NGOs in the Central and Eastern European region. Our mission is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development.

About the Resource Cap Coalition

The Resource Cap Coalition (RCC) brings together European organisations advocating for a global resource use reduction, a precondition for sustainability. This shall be achieved for the aim of halting biodiversity loss and maintaining, as well as recovering ecosystem services, which underpin human wellbeing. www.ceeweb.org/rcc

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