

# Rio+20 Earth Summit:

What the UK needs to do to make it matter



# Preface

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**T**here has been a good deal of cynicism about international summits on environment and development issues in recent years. Many people would point to the deeply disappointing anti-climax of the 2009 UN climate talks in Copenhagen as the cause, but actually the scepticism had been building way before then.

Let's face it, multilateralism is not easy even when the issues involved are relatively straight forward. When they are complex and multi-faceted, it can seem impossible.

The limited progress can lead many to turn their back on international environment negotiations, and argue that governments should too. But this is a mistake.

We need urgent action at all levels – local, regional, national and international – if we're to deal with the crisis facing our planet and move to living fairly and sustainably within its limits.

International agreements can spur action at the local level. For example, the Agenda 21 document, agreed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, led to the implementation of countless sustainability action plans in local authorities across the UK.

And action at the local, regional and national level can also inspire international action. Rich countries like the UK have both the ability and historic responsibility to help develop new economic models that have people's wellbeing and a healthy environment at their heart.

But the failure to take agreed actions and implement the promises made to other countries has damaged trust. Even worse, a recent tendency by rich countries to use international environment summits to attempt to rewrite the basis for negotiations has further scaled back the possibility of comprehensive multilateral action.

The sooner rich countries like the UK accept their responsibilities, show real commitment to action, and deliver their promises, the sooner trust will build across the world to increase ambition for moving to a sustainable future.

The UK Coalition Government must remember this during the Rio+20 conference. There is a real danger it imagines its success in Rio will be judged on how dramatic Nick Clegg's plenary speech may be, or on the basis of what deals UK officials can forge over snippets of negotiating texts in the early hours on the final day.

But the best way to judge the UK Government's performance in the context of Rio+20 is by their actions at home.

This Friends of the Earth report explores some of the most important and contentious themes of the Rio+20 summit and links them to the Coalition Government's performance in the most relevant UK policy areas. The harsh reality is that – with the notable exception of the Fourth Carbon Budget – there are plenty of things which the Coalition Government is doing, or failing to do, that directly contradict the spirit and purpose of the Rio+20 summit.

There are a number of areas where the Government could and should use the impetus provided by the Rio+20 to transform the UK sustainability agenda. For example, on biodiversity, they could act to halt the decline of native bee populations crucial to our food supply. And on energy, they could do much more to switch the UK from reliance on dirty fossil fuels to clean British energy from our wind, waves and sun.

The Coalition Government should take the opportunity presented by Rio+20 to commit to a step change in its actions on sustainable development.

This is, after all, the administration that promised to be "the greenest Government ever". In Rio, where the world's governments will come together to learn from each other on sustainability, Nick Clegg might be wise to demonstrate a little humility with respect to this claim.

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# Contents

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Executive summary	4	7 Safe and renewable energy for a sustainable future	26
1 The challenge we face	6	7.1 A 'once in a generation' opportunity: Electricity Market Reform (EMR)	26
2 Can Rio+20 put us on a pathway to a fair global transition?	8	<b>Box:</b> Clean British Energy	26
2.1 Key areas to watch	9	7.1.1 Decarbonising our electricity supply	26
3 How credible is the UK Government on sustainable development?	10	7.1.2 Support for renewables	27
4 Putting in place the governance mechanisms for a fair global transition	12	7.1.3 No more support for gas and nuclear	27
4.1 Engaging citizens in shaping the transition	12	7.1.4 Energy efficiency	27
<b>Box:</b> Principle 10 – Rio Declaration (1992)	12	7.1.5 A boost for decentralised energy	27
4.1.1 Implementing the right to information, participation and to justice in the UK	13	<b>Box:</b> Fracking hell	28
<b>Box:</b> The Aarhus Convention	13	7.2 Boosting access to safe and clean energy around the world	28
4.1.2 Creating a Global Convention on Principle 10 to enable universal access to the rights to information; participation and justice	14	7.2.1 Lack of ambition	29
4.2 The role of corporations in sustainable development	14	7.2.2 Poor definitions of sustainable energy	29
4.3 Planning for the transition in the UK and internationally	15	7.2.3 Reliable finance to fund a global transformation	29
4.3.1 Sustainable Development in England	15	7.2.4 Civil society participation	29
<b>Box:</b> Sustainable Development in Wales	16	8 Food for all within planetary boundaries	30
4.3.2 UN High Commissioner for Future Generations	17	8.1 Sustainable Intensification and the Rio summit	30
4.3.3 Sustainable Development Goals	17	8.2 Reforming the Common Agricultural Policy to create food security	31
5 Protecting nature	18	8.3 Biofuels	31
5.1 Changing course to protect nature in the UK	18	<b>Box:</b> Land – they don't make it anymore, so they just take it: Landgrabbing	33
<b>Box:</b> The Bee Cause	19		
5.2 Stop Rio from becoming the summit that commodified nature	20		
6 An economy that promotes sustainability	21		
<b>Box:</b> Q. When is a green economy not a green economy?			
A. When it's the greed economy	21		
6.1 Becoming a global leader in low carbon economics	22		
6.1.1 Targeted intervention to support new industries	22		
6.1.2 Investing in and supporting skills and job creation	22		
6.1.3 Procurement	23		
6.1.4 Policy robustness and stability	23		
6.2 Becoming a global leader in resource efficiency: carbon, land, water and materials	23		
<b>Box:</b> Greener products	24		
6.3 Supporting a global economic transition to a low-carbon world	25		
6.3.1 Get behind the Financial Transaction Tax	25		
6.3.2 Promote the reduction of fossil fuel subsidies	25		

# Executive summary

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**T**he United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) will be held in Rio de Janeiro, from 20-22 June 2012. Over one hundred presidents and prime ministers are expected to attend. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg will lead the UK delegation. The summit comes twenty years after the ground breaking 'Earth Summit' also held in Rio, which agreed the basis for national and international efforts to secure a fair and safe planet.

The "Rio+20" summit is happening at a crucial moment in the Earth's history. We face an unprecedented planetary crisis. Voracious levels of consumption are putting ever-increasing pressure on the Earth's limited resources. Leading scientists have repeatedly warned that life on Earth will only be sustained if we dramatically change the way we live and the operations of the global economy. We have already breached the safe operating space for three of the nine key planetary boundaries – climate change, biodiversity loss and nitrogen and phosphorus load. In the UK, we are experiencing symptoms of this crisis as key species such as bees go into rapid decline – threatening our food supply – energy bills soar due to spiralling gas prices, and communities across the country face the impacts of floods and droughts.

As world leaders focus on the global economic crisis, the scale of inequality between the haves and the have-nots continues to grow. The wealthiest 10 per cent of the world's population live in increasing material comfort, while a billion people don't have access to nutritious food.

This Rio summit is unlikely to be the one to solve this crisis. However, it will launch a negotiating process to agree new global goals for sustainable development, which will define the framework for action until 2030.

In tackling the environmental, economic and social crisis that we face, business-as-usual is not an option. Rather than following the mantra of 'immediate economic growth at all cost', world leaders need to plan for a global economic system that supports the future of life on Earth and a dignified life for the majority of people – rather than concentrating ever more wealth in the hands of a few.

For too long, global agreements have been held to ransom by politicians playing a game of chicken – waiting to see who will blink first before taking action.

If international summits are to be more than mere talking shops, it is critical that developed countries such as the UK take the lead in turning rhetoric into reality.

In this report, Friends of the Earth sets out the key steps the the UK Government could and should be taking at home this year to deliver in a meaningful way on the high level commitments that they are likely to support at the Rio+20 summit.

We also set out the policies that the UK should be championing globally, to put us on a path to a sustainable future.

Within the next twelve months we want to see the UK government take action at home to:

- help hard-pressed households struggling with high fuel bills by developing clean British energy and cutting energy waste. This will also boost British manufacturing and create thousands of jobs. 85% of people in the UK want the Government to force the Big Six energy companies to invest in clean home grown energy from the wind, sun and sea.
- protect nature right across the UK – starting by saving British bees with a National Bee Action Plan. Without bees it would cost the UK £1.8billion every year to hand pollinate our crops.
- take urgent action to reduce the UK's consumption of the planet's limited resources and ensure sustainable development is at the heart of government policy-making – from how we plan our towns to the way we farm and feed ourselves.

While he is in Rio, we want to see Nick Clegg act to ensure that:

- plans coming out of the summit don't undermine existing agreements on sustainable development and sow mistrust in future international negotiations
- the summit isn't hijacked by the interests of those who only want to see business as usual, and that the needs of those affected by the environmental crisis – future generations and the world's poorest people – are at the heart of the talks

- the UN's initiative to enable poor communities to access energy prioritises tripling the use of renewable energy by 2030 rather than using dirty energy that will lock poor countries into fossil fuels
- World governments stick to their promise and stop handing almost \$100 billion in taxpayers' money to the fossil fuel industry every year. Instead, the money could help the poorest billions get access to clean, safe and affordable energy
- developed countries stop pushing for dodgy deals to sell off the world's forests and unique habitat and species-rich areas to the highest bidder
- the UK backs the introduction of a new global convention to make sure that people everywhere can have a say in how the environment is protected and access to justice when it isn't.

**Friends of the Earth – together with people across the UK – will continue to push the Government to change its game at home and abroad. We have no time to waste. We're facing nothing short of a planetary emergency. Hot air and empty promises are not good enough.**

**People created this problem – and people can help solve it. We know practical solutions are out there and we want serious leadership to get them put in place now, to give the vast majority of people a better quality of life and a fair share of a healthy planet.**



## SECTION 1

# The challenge we face

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From 20 – 22 June 2012, world leaders will come together in Rio, Brazil, at the UN Conference for Sustainable Development – commonly known as the “Rio+20” conference. They will discuss action for sustainable development – development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>1</sup> This type of development envisages humanity living in balance with nature and meeting everyone’s needs.

Some want to use the summit to develop a plan for action based on so-called successes in sustainable development over the past 20 years.<sup>2</sup> More realistic observers, however, can see that, the actions of the past 20 years have created a state of unprecedented planetary emergency:

“The human pressure on the Earth System has reached a scale where abrupt global environmental change can no longer be excluded. To continue to live and operate safely, humanity has to stay away from critical ‘hard-wired’ thresholds in the Earth’s environment, and respect the nature of the planet’s climatic, geophysical, atmospheric and ecological processes.”<sup>3</sup>

We have already breached the safe operating space (or boundaries) for three of nine key planetary systems (climate change, biodiversity loss and excess nitrogen and phosphorus production).

“Research now demonstrates that the continued functioning of the Earth system as it has supported the well-being of human civilization in recent centuries is at risk.”<sup>4</sup>

“Energy-related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are at historic highs; under current policies we estimate energy use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will increase by a third by 2020, and almost double by 2050. This would probably send global temperatures at least 6°C higher within this century.”<sup>5</sup>

As we confront these massive environmental problems, we face societal problems that need not exist in the 21st century: some 1 billion people lack access to nutritious food<sup>6</sup>; 2.7 billion lack access to clean cooking facilities, and breathe in smoke which damages their lungs as they cook<sup>7</sup>; 2.6 billion lack access to basic sanitation<sup>8</sup>; 793 million adults – two thirds of whom are women – are illiterate<sup>9</sup>; and 1.4 billion people live on less than US\$1.25 a day.<sup>10</sup> Behind each of these statistics is a human family or community whose story could be so different if the political will existed to make it so.

As the people with the least struggle to survive, the consumption habits of the richest are stripping the earth of its resources:

“The biggest source of planetary-boundary stress today is excessive resource consumption by roughly the wealthiest 10 per cent of the world’s population, and the production patterns of the companies producing the goods and services that they buy.”<sup>11</sup>

There is an urgent need for humanity to shift course, and put the needs of the Earth and future generations above short-term gain. This will mean charting a course away from current values and expectations, developing societies and economies that support life and the Earth beyond the end of this century.

“We believe that real success can only be achieved if the underlying causes of problems are challenged. Settling for solutions that only deal with the short-term symptoms is pointless. Thus we cut to the heart of the matter: the single-minded determination of corporations, governments and international financial institutions like the World

1 Brundtland Commission 1987, <http://www.un-documents.net/ocf-02.htm#I>

2 <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/about.html>

3 <http://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/researchnews/tippingtowardstheunknown.5.7cf9c5aa121e17bab42800021543.html>

4 [http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net/pdf/State\\_of\\_the\\_Planet\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.planetunderpressure2012.net/pdf/State_of_the_Planet_Declaration.pdf)

5 [http://www.iea.org/press/pressdetail.asp?PRESS\\_REL\\_ID=436](http://www.iea.org/press/pressdetail.asp?PRESS_REL_ID=436)

6 [http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP\\_Report\\_web\\_final.pdf](http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP_Report_web_final.pdf) P36

7 [http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP\\_Report\\_web\\_final.pdf](http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP_Report_web_final.pdf) p 42

8 [http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP\\_Report\\_web\\_final.pdf](http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP_Report_web_final.pdf) p18

9 [http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP\\_Report\\_web\\_final.pdf](http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP_Report_web_final.pdf) p17

10 <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/2008/09/16/new-data-show-14-billion-live-less-us125-day-progress-against-poverty-remains-strong>

11 <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/dp-a-safe-and-just-space-for-humanity-130212-en.pdf>

Bank to put short-term economic concerns and corporate welfare before the long-term health and well-being of the planet and its people. This upside-down approach to our future, our children's future, and the future of the ecosystems around us simply cannot continue."<sup>12</sup>

**Nnimmo Bassey**

**Friends of the Earth International, 2011.**

Friends of the Earth suggests that returning sustainable development to the heart of national and international politics is the only way to recover from the triple-headed crisis we face. The UK Government defines sustainable development as, "living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly."<sup>13</sup> Real sustainability would see an equal focus on the three key pillars – environment, society and economy – and a plan to drive development across all three areas – not focusing on one pillar at the expense of others. The world has been gripped by a focus on short-term economic growth for too long. The current crisis demands a longer-term lens and an ambitious and urgent approach.

We know that we can choose to fix the problems that confront us – and see nature better protected and people across the world enjoying a better standard of living.

We now need the political momentum to take us forward.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.foei.org/en/who-we-are/about/40th-anniversary/40th-op-ed/view>

<sup>13</sup> From the NPPF, <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

## SECTION 2

# Can Rio+20 put us on a pathway to a fair global transition?

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**T**he road to Rio+20 so far has been bumpy. The first Earth Summit was held during a period of great hope as the world defrosted from the Cold War. This Summit is held at a time of global economic, environmental and societal crisis, where multilateral talks have repeatedly failed to deliver agreements that match the scale of the global challenge.

There has been a series of official international preparatory meetings held since May 2010. The co-chairs of the Rio Conference released a suggested first draft of the outcome text of the conference – known as the ‘zero draft’ text – based on submissions by member states, business and civil society in January 2012. Titled “The Future We Want,”<sup>14</sup> it has formed the basis for negotiations. This initial text had swelled from 19 pages in January 2012 to 206 pages by the end of March 2012, with comments, brackets, and amendments from member states, indicating the level of disagreement. By April it had been cut back to 157 pages, but with no greater cohesion between negotiating parties.

Key issues raised during the preparatory meetings have been:

- **Lack of urgency and ambition**

The lack of ambition in the zero draft negotiating text has been attacked on all sides. In her keynote speech on the summit in February 2012, the UK’s Secretary of State for Environment and Rural Affairs Caroline Spelman said: “the text lacks focus and ambition. It needs to be a lot stronger if Rio+20 is to deliver the transformational change that we know it can.”<sup>15</sup> Greenpeace’s International Political Director Daniel Mittler notes: “The Future envisioned here is one in which we have plenty of time to fix our problems – be they unemployment or climate change. There is a lot of talk of “acknowledging,” “resolving,” “recognizing” and “noting” in this text – all UN code words for not doing much.”<sup>16</sup>

- **Focus on the green economy**

The green economy was included as one of the two key themes of the conference, but without a common understanding of what the term meant. The European Union was one of the key exponents of its introduction and is keen to see what it calls a green economy roadmap – with targets, indicators and goals adopted at the summit.

Developing countries and many in civil society have repeatedly expressed concerns that the term ‘green economy’ is being used to replace the agreed multilateral conceptual framework for sustainable development – with a focus on the single pillar of economics, rather than all three pillars of sustainable development.<sup>17</sup> Further to this, developing countries have expressed concerns that these negotiations may pave the way for environmental issues to be used as the basis of trade protectionism or new conditionality for aid and loans.

- **Failure to take stock of the challenges of implementing previous agreements**

Many in civil society and in developing countries are alarmed that there has been a failure to take stock of the problems in implementing the agreements made at the original Rio summit, and that these issues have been brushed over. For example, in its submission to the zero draft, Kenya stated:

“Kenya is concerned that previous international commitments made at major UN summits and conferences on sustainable development have neither been fully adhered to nor implemented. Instead, some attempts have been made to renegotiate them. Kenya believes that existing commitments should neither be diluted nor renegotiated and urges the international community to urgently and fully implement all the international commitments related to Agenda 21.”<sup>18</sup>

Underlying this concern is the fact that many of the financial and technological transfers promised by developed countries have not materialised. A lack of acknowledgement of

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14 <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/370The%20Future%20We%20Want%2010Jan%20clean.pdf>

15 Caroline Spelman, 9 Feb 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/feb/09/rio-20-earth-summit-caroline-selman-speech>

16 Daniel Mittler, 13 Jan 2012, <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/news/Blogs/makingwaves/the-future-we-want-between-hope-and-despair-o/blog/38636/>

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17 <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/sdc2012/sdc2012.100502.htm>

18 <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=510&nr=560&menu=20>



this failure and its subsequent consequences is affecting the ability of parties to negotiate new agreements at the Rio+20 summit.

- **Developed countries attempts to rewrite the basis for negotiations and undermine human rights**

Talks have seen the EU, USA, Japan, Canada, New Zealand and Australia try to undermine or write agreed international protocols on rights and equity. Their negotiators have tried to remove references to the human right to food and proper nutrition, the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation, and the right to development. The UK Government is reported to have been particularly active in trying to remove any mention of the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation from the text.<sup>19</sup> Although some of these rights were restored in the text in later negotiations, the attempts to remove them created distrust.

The same developed countries have tried to remove from the text the precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibility (whereby the richest countries, which have historically caused the greatest damage to the global commons, bear the greatest responsibility to tackle the problem, both through domestic actions and through financial and technological transfers to developing countries).<sup>20</sup> In the April 2012 negotiations, Brazil tabled text proposing that there should be no regression on previous agreements made. This was incorporated by the negotiation co-chairs in their new suggested text. Observers wait to see if this suggestion makes it through to the final outcome document.

Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia and President Yudhoyono of Indonesia. This panel is likely to play a crucial role in bringing together the ideas for Sustainable Development Goals and post-2015 poverty goals.

There will be discussions on reforming the architecture for governing sustainable development. There is consensus that the current mechanisms for international governance of sustainable development are too weak to oversee the implementation of previous summits. There is emerging consensus that a new high level Sustainable Development Council or Forum is needed. Operating under the UN General Assembly or the UN's Economic and Social Council, this would meet throughout the year and have a strong secretariat. Some also want to see the UN Environment Programme reformed to become a specialised agency of the UN (like the Food and Agriculture Organisation), although this faces strong opposition from the United States, Russia and Canada.<sup>21</sup>

**Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland believes that if the global negotiations at Rio and beyond are to tackle the biggest issues of our era, the countries that have done the most to cause the current environmental, social and economic crisis must make a step change in putting their own houses in order – otherwise we're likely to see a set of failed talking shops.**

**The UK Government must therefore take action at home, as well as showing leadership in international negotiations, to help put political momentum behind a global transition to sustainability.**

## 2.1 Key areas to watch

Although Rio will not be the summit to save the world, it is likely to launch new global frameworks intended to do so. This includes the start of negotiations over Sustainable Development Goals which were first mooted by Colombia and Guatemala. The idea is to develop international, universally applicable goals on sustainable development to merge with or complement the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (which expire in 2015). Given that there is so little negotiating time left, it is likely that the summit will agree to launch these Sustainable Development Goals, with details to be worked out in negotiations over two to three years afterwards. This would mean goals being agreed from 2015, probably with a delivery date of 2030. David Cameron has agreed to be a co-chair of the UN High Level Panel on post-Millennium Development Goals, with President

<sup>19</sup> <http://canadians.org/blog/?p=14438#more-14438>

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2012/120327\\_Rio.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/briefings/docs/2012/120327_Rio.doc.htm)

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/sdc2012/sdc2012.120502.htm>

## SECTION 3

# How credible is the UK Government on sustainable development?

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**W**ithin days of taking office David Cameron pledged that the coalition Government would be the “greenest government ever”. In its consultation on the Natural Environment White paper in the early days of the coalition, DEFRA noted: “we can no longer afford the costs to our economy and quality of life which arise from a degraded natural environment”.<sup>22</sup> However, the government soon abolished the Sustainable Development Commission, the only body able to independently scrutinise the Government on its action on sustainable development.

In his report on the first year of the coalition Government for Friends of the Earth in May 2011, Jonathon Porritt, the former Chair of the Sustainable Development Commission, noted: “Decisions by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Treasury and the Department for Education had alarm bells ringing within the first few weeks.”<sup>23</sup> As the first year of the coalition went on, David Cameron failed to show the “husky hugging” leadership on sustainable development that he had pledged in opposition. His failure to step up to the mark let others rule the roost on key issues:

“Listening to Osborne, Pickles and even Vince Cable, it is clear that that the ‘growth at all costs’ lobby has won out over the advocates of ‘sustainable economic development’... That in itself is discouraging, but is compounded by some much more problematic positioning on the part of the coalition around more ideologically-charged issues like deregulation and “shrinking the size of the state”. That positioning (anti-regulation, hostile to planning, favouring the private sector, shrinking the state, etc) makes it significantly harder to deliver on the ‘Greenest Government Ever’ pledge, let alone to put sustainable development anywhere near the heart of government.”<sup>24</sup>

In May 2011 Porritt concluded his report with a warning: “Instead of having a really strong story to tell at the Rio+20 Conference in a year’s time, having built up an internationally-recognised framework for sustainable development in the 10 years running up to last year’s General Election, our

contribution in Rio – as things stand at the moment – will be humiliatingly insubstantial.”<sup>25</sup>

One year later, the UK delegation goes to Rio without a ringing endorsement of their credentials on sustainability. While the government did adopt the Fourth Carbon Budget as advised by the Committee on Climate Change, all too often a rhetoric of ‘economic growth at all costs’ continues to weigh government policy towards a short-term agenda. This puts immediate economic benefit over the long term economic stability and planetary and human well-being.

The Chancellor has been repeatedly hostile to policies that work towards sustainable development. At the Conservative Party Conference in October 2011 he said “We’re not going to save the planet by putting our country out of business. So let’s at the very least resolve that we’re going to cut our carbon emissions no slower but also no faster than our fellow countries in Europe.”<sup>26</sup>

In his autumn budget statement in November 2011 he continued “I am worried about the combined impact of the green policies adopted not just in Britain but by the EU on some of our heavy, energy intensive industries. We are not going to save the planet by shutting down our steel mills, aluminium smelters and paper manufacturers. We shouldn’t price British business out of the world economy. If we burden them with endless social and environmental goals – however worthy in their own right – then not only will we not achieve those goals, but the businesses will fail, jobs will be lost, and our country will be poorer.”<sup>27</sup>

This rhetoric undermines confidence in the UK Government’s commitment to ensuring Britain is a world leader in sustainability. And all too often this is followed by policies that build on the rhetoric. Here are some examples:

### Economic Policy:

- Refusal to let the Green Investment Bank borrow money until 2015/16 at the very earliest creating a major threat to delivering billions of investment in clean energy.
- Vetoing the introduction of a ‘financial transaction tax’ – or ‘Robin Hood’ tax – which

22 <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/natural/documents/newp-discussion-summary-260710.pdf>

23 [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest\\_gvt\\_ever.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest_gvt_ever.pdf), p.51

24 [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest\\_gvt\\_ever.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest_gvt_ever.pdf)

25 [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest\\_gvt\\_ever.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest_gvt_ever.pdf)

26 [http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2011/10/Osborne\\_together\\_we\\_will Ride\\_out\\_the\\_storm.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2011/10/Osborne_together_we_will Ride_out_the_storm.aspx)

27 [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press\\_136\\_11.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_136_11.htm)

would raise the UK Exchequer £8.4bn a year and add 0.25% to GDP, equivalent to 75,000 jobs.<sup>28</sup>

#### Energy policy:

- Opening the floodgates for a new dash for gas which will make carbon targets practically impossible to meet.
- Tax breaks for oil and gas in the 2012 budget leading to extra emissions equivalent to one year of total UK emissions.
- The shambolic mishandling of solar subsidies leading to job losses and uncertainty in a recession-beating industry and loss of confidence in renewables.
- Leading and mobilising EU opposition to the inclusion of oil from tar sands within the EU Fuel Quality Directive (although ultimately abstaining at the voting stage).<sup>29</sup>

#### Planning policy:

- Releasing controversial new rules for land-use planning which give primacy to economic growth and business demands in decisions about how land is used.
- Development can be planned while only vaguely relating the need for genuine sustainable development and rapid and extensive restoration of nature.<sup>30</sup>

#### Water:

- Failing to address one of symptoms of the mismanagement of water: the over-abstraction of water from rivers in the new Water White Paper policy.
- Foreseeing drought and water shortages in 2011 but failing to act soon enough, leading to – and probably compounding – an unusual but not unexpected winter 2011 and spring 2012 drought, now expected to continue for most of 2012.

#### Protecting nature:

- Failing to meet most of the nature and biodiversity objectives it set itself when it entered office after 18 months of government.<sup>31</sup>
- Announcing a review of the EU Wildlife and Habitats directive in the autumn budget statement, saying that it was “placing ridiculous costs on British businesses” (only for the review by DEFRA to note that “in the large majority of cases the implementation of the Directives is working well, allowing both development of key infrastructure and ensuring that a high level of environmental protection is maintained.”)<sup>32</sup>

#### Resource efficiency:

- A disastrous set of policies on waste which have failed to set a target to cut black bin waste and

consented to a number of new incinerators despite popular opposition. It has also found £250m to persuade councils to revert to weekly collections even though evidence suggests this reduces recycling rates.<sup>33</sup>

#### Food and agriculture:

- Failing to take action to address the UK's unsustainable food (particularly meat) consumption habits, through acting to change either production or consumption patterns.
- Consideration of increasing the UK's use of biofuels from 4% to 10% in transport fuels, when biofuels are increasing expansion of unsustainable and uneconomical crops and leading to land grabbing<sup>34</sup> in developing countries.<sup>35</sup>

Despite this rather woeful state of affairs, the Prime Minister has not yet seized control of the green agenda. Furthermore he failed to use a long-billed keynote speech at the Clean Energy Ministerial in April 2012 to put forward a clear plan of how the government will deliver a green and fair future.<sup>36</sup> When he has intervened, it has only been to stop the very worst excesses of far-right sceptics, such as reaffirming his Government's commitment to wind energy after a number of conservative MPs mounted a backlash against it. Tellingly, the Deputy Prime Minister has recently spoken out on the need for a strong green economy – a tacit rebuttal to the Treasury's increasingly anti-green rhetoric.<sup>37</sup>

The UK public can see through the wrangling and green spin. In an April 2012 poll, only 2% of the British public believed that David Cameron was leading the ‘greenest government ever’.<sup>38</sup> With less than three years until the next general election, the coalition Government will need more than spin to regain its credibility.

In this report we suggest five areas where the UK Government could raise its game and regain credibility on sustainability at home, and lead efforts towards a fair global transition.

*On entering office, Prime Minister David Cameron promised to lead “the greenest government ever”. But the reality is that George Osborne's attacks on environmental regulation have undermined both this pledge, and green investment in the UK*



28 <http://robinhoodtax.org/sites/default/files/The%20Economic%20Consequences%20of%20the%20EU%20Proposal%20for%20a%20Financial%20Transaction%20Tax.pdf>

29 [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/media\\_briefing/gvt\\_green\\_record.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/media_briefing/gvt_green_record.pdf)

30 [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing\\_notes/friends\\_of\\_the\\_earth\\_reac.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/friends_of_the_earth_reac.pdf)

31 <http://www.wcl.org.uk/nature-check.asp>

32 <http://www.defra.gov.uk/habitats-review>

33 [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/media\\_briefing/gvt\\_green\\_record.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/media_briefing/gvt_green_record.pdf)

34 Landgrabbing is further detailed on page 33

35 [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing\\_notes/sustainable\\_livestock\\_repo.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/sustainable_livestock_repo.pdf)

36 <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/david-cameron-clean-energy>

37 <http://www.dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/deputy-prime-minister-green-speech>

38 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/mar/19/cameron-greenest-government-ever-poll>

## SECTION 4

# Putting in place the governance mechanisms for a fair global transition

Responding effectively to the societal, economic and environmental crisis demands rapid and radical changes in the way that we live and work. A global transition needs to take place as swiftly as possible and the next ten years will be crucial to avoid environmental catastrophe. It will require a total transformation of our energy system and a radical overhaul in the design of our buildings, towns and cities. It will entail huge changes in how we manage our land, freshwater and seas, in what and how we produce and consume, and in how we manage markets and deliver an economy within environmental limits.

## 4.1 Engaging citizens in shaping the transition

This future needs to be developed in a way by which all citizens can actively participate and benefit from these changes, to create a world where the ability of all people to live a dignified life within environmental limits is the priority. In order for this transition to meet the needs of all, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable, we need governments to step up. They must facilitate processes to enable ordinary people to engage with and shape the decisions that will enable each country to play its part in bringing about a fair global transition.

“The truth is that sustainable development is fundamentally a question of people’s opportunities to influence their future, claim their rights and voice their concerns. Democratic governance and full respect for human rights are key prerequisites for empowering people to make sustainable choices. The peoples of the world will simply not tolerate continued environmental devastation or the persistent inequality which offends deeply held universal principles of social justice. Citizens will no longer accept governments and corporations breaching their compact with them as custodians of a sustainable future for all. More generally, international, national and local governance across the world must fully embrace the requirements of a sustainable development future, as must civil society and the private sector. At the same time, local communities must be encouraged to participate actively and consistently in conceptualising,

planning and executing sustainability policies. Central to this is including young people in society, in politics and in the economy.”<sup>39</sup>

At the 1992 Earth Summit, parties adopted a series of principles to establish “a new and equitable global partnership through the creation of new levels of cooperation among States, key sectors of societies and people.”<sup>40</sup> One of these principles outlines the importance of public participation, access to information, and access to justice in making decisions on environmental issues:

### Principle 10 – Rio Declaration (1992)

“Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.”

Emphasising the relevance and importance of Principle 10 in its Rio+20 submissions to the zero draft of the current summit, UNEP stated:

“Building such consensus and participation is critical to balancing the social, environmental and economic aspects for sustainable development and for moving in a concerted way to achieve the objectives. Generally, many societies have not invested adequately in creating and managing such arrangements, which are necessary for more participatory governance.”<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP\\_Report\\_web\\_final.pdf](http://www.un.org/gsp/sites/default/files/attachments/GSP_Report_web_final.pdf), p10

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm>

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=510&nr=217&menu=20>

### 4.1.1 Implementing the right to information, participation and to justice in the UK

In Europe, the Aarhus Convention was created to turn Principle 10 into a framework which has legal standing.

#### The Aarhus Convention

The UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters was adopted on 25th June 1998 in the Danish city of Aarhus at the Fourth Ministerial Conference in the 'Environment for Europe' process. This Convention:

- links environmental rights and human rights acknowledges that we owe an obligation to future generations
- establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders
- links government accountability and environmental protection
- focuses on interactions between the public and public authorities in a democratic context.

The Aarhus Convention grants the public rights and imposes on Parties and public authorities obligations regarding access to information and public participation and access to justice.

Taken from: <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/introduction.html>

The United Kingdom presents a mixed picture on the implementation of the Aarhus rights to information, participation and access to justice.

Under the right to know, the Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations and INSPIRE regulations have given the public access to documented information from public bodies, or bodies carrying out public functions, for instance in relation to water and waste.

The right to participate is implemented in the UK mainly through the land-use planning system. This has changed through recent reforms in England and for some cases in Wales (2008) where a new major infrastructure projects decision-making process has limited the right to be heard in person. It has also reduced the matters for discussion with regard to these projects. This will result in weaker, untested evidence being brought forward and therefore poorer environmental decision-making. In England, a new tier of neighbourhood planning (2011) below local planning, has been introduced with no right to be heard in person but a right to submit written responses. This could lead to discrimination against some voices, particularly as some of the bodies involved in planning are not required to consider equalities issues. Democratic

voice on this new neighbourhood tier is found in the referendum to accept or refuse the plan at the end of the process. Wales retains a simpler local planning system, with a right to be heard in person at the inquiry to the local land-use plan as does Scotland. The system in Northern Ireland has recently changed for the better: the planning decision-making service provided by the Department of Environment now follows the model in England and Wales of local authorities preparing land-use plans (2011), including a right to be heard in person at the inquiry.

Access to justice has been an ongoing problem in the UK. The general position is that the loser in a case is liable for the winner's costs. This means that communities bringing challenges to government or other public authority decisions are faced with a weighty costs risk. The Aarhus Compliance Committee has ruled that this is a breach of the provisions of the Aarhus Convention that the costs of bringing environmental cases should not be prohibitively expensive. There are also legal proceedings being brought at the EU level about the costs of bringing environmental cases in the UK. As a result of this the Government issued a consultation on revising the costs rules, proposing a cap on the costs of losing a case that falls within the Aarhus Convention. We are still awaiting the Government's response to the consultation. Northern Ireland's Department of Justice has also issued a consultation asking for opinions on the specific issue of protective costs orders and environmental judicial reviews which is ongoing on at the moment. There is a similar consultation in Scotland. If the issue of costs can be resolved then a significant hurdle to obtaining access to justice will have been overcome.

**Recommendations:** The UK government should take the following actions to enable the Aarhus Rights to be fully implemented in the UK.

**On the right to know:** Speed up responses to Freedom of Information requests, particularly where they affect planning decisions.

**On the right to participate:** The UK Government should:

- Review planning policy both for major projects and local planning to ensure that equality issues are considered, and that public participation is actively promoted.
- Amend regulations on the examination of major projects to make it easier for people to register their interest in the process, and to allow more flexibility in timescales.
- Amend regulations on neighbourhood planning in England to ensure that equality issues are adequately assessed and addressed in neighbourhood planning.

The Welsh Government should ensure that the forthcoming Planning Bill and Sustainable Development Bill empower the right to participate in environmental decision-making in Wales.



Local Government should:

- Ensure planning policies and site allocations in the local plan address inequality across the UK.
- Build capacity and drive through cultural change to address equality and sustainable development, and actively promote public participation in the UK.
- Lead in helping neighbourhood forums and parish councils in England to address inequality in the involvement of the community in the planning process.

**On access to justice:** Friends of the Earth recommends the introduction of an 'Aarhus Certificate' for cases falling within the Aarhus Convention and other public interest cases. The certificate would enable judges to apply modified rules at an early stage in the legal proceedings, reducing undue uncertainty and risk for concerned individuals and public interest groups. It further recommends Community Legal Services take positive steps to ensure funding for public interest environmental cases.

#### 4.1.2 Creating a Global Convention on Principle 10 to enable universal access to the rights to information; participation and justice

Implementation of Principle 10 around the world is patchy and the intention that it would cover all relevant levels of decision-making has not been fulfilled.

Over 140 submissions were made to the UN calling for better implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and greater transparency, participation, and accountability in matters affecting sustainable development in response to calls to feed in to the zero draft of the Rio+20 text.<sup>42</sup>

As a result of these calls to strengthen the implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, the zero draft of the negotiating text for adoption at Rio+20 contains a number of references to access to information, public participation and accountability in sustainable development decision-making. Paragraph 58 of the zero draft specifically stated that UN member states "agree to take steps to give further effect to Rio Principle 10 at the global, regional and national level, as appropriate."<sup>43</sup>

A global convention would build upon achievements so far by providing an overarching framework for the implementation of Principle 10, setting baseline standards and providing a capacity-building and co-ordination function while plugging gaps. A significant amount of the zero draft text is devoted to the need for participation

of various groups in various processes, as well as calls for transparency and better decision-making. A global Principle 10 convention would provide a single, consolidated mechanism for ensuring that this happens. A global convention would set minimum standards for the implementation of rights of access to information, participation and access to justice at both national and international levels. States, parties or regional conventions would be free to set higher standards if they so wished. It would provide a means for capacity-building for countries who wished to advance their application of Principle 10. It would ensure coherence and provide a base for sharing information on best practices across countries. This would encourage public ownership of and contribution to environmental decision-making at the national and sub-national levels.

Additionally a global convention would track and consolidate progress on Principle 10 rights in regional contexts and provide leadership in areas such as public participation in international processes. It would provide a platform to hold, develop and share the knowledge developed in a number of areas and contexts about how best to involve groups rarely heard in environmental decision-making. The convention would have a particular role in developing methodologies for public participation in environmental decision-making where there are transboundary impacts or impacts across different regions of the globe. It could provide guidance on the application of public participation concepts in linked areas such as international trade.

**Recommendation:** The UK government should support the creation of a global Principle 10 convention on the rights to information, participation and to justice in Rio.

## 4.2 The role of corporations in sustainable development

There has long been widespread debate about the role of the business sector in promoting sustainable development. This debate is continuing ahead of the Rio summit, both inside and outside the negotiations.

It is undeniable that the actions of businesses have a profound impact upon humanity and the environment. Businesses are often located far away from the places where they operate – either through subsidiaries or through their supply chains – and can make profits without having to consider their impacts on local people and local environments. Regulation of companies and the implementation of international laws and treaties is left to national governments. However, as Friends of the Earth Europe explains "The complex structure of corporations today – for example, the unclear connections between a holding company and its subsidies, often referred to as the 'corporate veil' – mean it is almost impossible to regulate companies'

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.accessinitiative.org/blog/2012/01/citizen-voices-sustainable-development-putting-principle-10-heart-rio20>

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=12&nr=324&menu=23>



activities. The existing framework – or lack thereof – tends to reward cowboy-capitalism, leaving high environmental and social costs for citizens and taxpayers.”<sup>44</sup> The impact of European corporations on the global environment – for instance through excessive or dangerous resource extraction – is entirely unregulated by European law.

As the deregulation of the global financial market led to the financial bubble and subsequent economic crisis, so the failure to regulate corporations threatens to lead to a global ecological bubble. When it bursts the consequences will be much more severe for the Earth and humanity than previous regulatory failure.

Friends of the Earth has repeatedly called for global frameworks for corporate regulation. This would ensure that companies must report on the social and environmental impact of their activities, are legally accountable for their impacts wherever they operate, and that those who are affected by their activities are able to claim justice in the country where the profits are held.

Some businesses understand the importance of this regulation, and have been actively promoting its introduction in the run up to Rio. Other businesses see environmental or sustainable development summits as opportunities to oppose the introduction of regulation, and to further their commercial interests. The resources of such corporations mean that they can wield significant lobbying power over the positions of national governments, and dominate in discussion spaces and in some UN bodies. Civil society has become increasingly concerned about this “corporate capture” of multilateral environment negotiations. Friends of the Earth International is leading a call for the UN to overhaul its processes to ensure that its over-riding priority is to serve the public interest and adequately address the multiple crises that the world faces.<sup>45</sup>

## 4.3 Planning for the transition in the UK and internationally

### 4.3.1 Sustainable Development in England

The coalition Government pledged to “mainstream sustainable development” across government, rather than updating the 2005 UK sustainable development strategy that they had inherited. This plan to mainstream a complex issue depended upon “providing Ministerial leadership and oversight, leading by example, embedding SD into policy and transparent and independent scrutiny.”<sup>46</sup>

Ministerial leadership and oversight has been lacking throughout government to date, save for the notable exception of the adoption of the Fourth Carbon Budget. As Jonathon Porritt noted in 2011: “It is hard to find substantive evidence of the Prime Minister using any of his personal political capital to promote more sustainable outcomes off the back of the Coalition Agreement. Most of the important battles (on the Green Investment Bank, for example) have been lost, and the predominantly hostile orientation of Ministers like Eric Pickles, Michael Gove, Francis Maude, Andrew Lansley and George Osborne has clearly established what can only be described as ‘default negativity’ regarding sustainable development in this Government.”<sup>47</sup> The mechanisms for “embedding Sustainable Development into policy” are reliant upon the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) taking “take the lead responsibility for reviewing departmental business plans in relation to SD principles.”<sup>48</sup> This is a weak mechanism given DEFRA’s lack of capacity and clout in government, and seems to have led to ‘add-in’ of sustainable development rhetoric in policy frameworks such as the National Planning Policy Framework. With the abolition of the regional development agencies the Government has also removed one of the main routes to the delivery of sustainable development on the ground in England.

Since the abolition of the Sustainable Development Commission in March 2011, England in particular has lacked a body with sufficient resources to scrutinise and propose measures to ensure sustainable development is at the heart of policymaking. DEFRA has proposed that the Environmental Audit Committee can scrutinise “mainstreaming” of Sustainable Development but the Committee have argued that they don’t have

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.foeeurope.org/node/608>

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.foei.org/en/get-involved/take-action/pdfs/statement-un-corporate-en/view>

<sup>46</sup> <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/mainstreaming-sustainable-development.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest\\_gvt\\_ever.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/greenest_gvt_ever.pdf)

<sup>48</sup> <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/documents/mainstreaming-sustainable-development.pdf>

the resources to do this.<sup>49</sup> As Wales presses forward with legislation and strategies to deliver sustainable development, England is being left behind with no coherent strategy to ensure a transition to a more sustainable future, nor an effective body to scrutinise the effect of policy decisions on sustainable development.

In their closing statement, the Chair and Chief Executive of the Sustainable Development Commission noted: "It will also be essential to find ways of hard-wiring this approach [of sustainable development] over successive political cycles. If this is not done, we run the risk that the changes that have been made, and the benefits that have been so hard won step by painful step, will unravel. There is as yet no equivalent for sustainable development of the Climate Change Act, carbon budgets and the reporting role of the Committee on Climate Change. These mechanisms do bind successive Parliaments and Governments to a clear overall direction of travel, even if their specific policies vary."<sup>50</sup>

**Recommendation:** There is an urgent need to examine proposals that look at governance frameworks which would enable a serious and coherent commitment to sustainable development in England,<sup>51</sup> including a body which would be able to scrutinise action. Any option would need serious and coherent leadership from the top of the Coalition Government.

### Sustainable development in Wales

The Welsh Assembly is leading the way across the four nations. It is planning to introduce a Sustainable Development Bill in autumn 2013 which will:

"Make sustainable development the centre of all activities and decisions of the Welsh Government and public bodies in Wales; and create an independent sustainable development body for Wales." In the words of the First Minister: "Sustainability lies at the heart of the Welsh Government's agenda for Wales; it also lies at the heart of this legislative programme. Taken as a whole, it will promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing and enhance people's quality of life in Wales. Our approach to sustainable development has been to focus on fairness, social justice and the protection of our outstanding culture and heritage. However, sustainability is more than just a green idea. It is about defining the long-term development path for our nation. It means healthy, productive people; vibrant, inclusive communities; a diverse and resilient environment and an advanced and innovative economy. This legislative programme provides new powers, duties and institutional capacity to advance our goals of building a sustainable Wales."

Taken from <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/sdbill/?lang=en>

At the end of March 2011, Wales chose to appoint a Commissioner for Sustainable Futures to provide advice to the Welsh Government and leadership for sustainable development across Wales.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmenvaud/504/50406.htm#a11>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/presslist.php/119/what-next-for-sustainable-development>

<sup>51</sup> A number of options are outlined in the EAC's report on Embedding Sustainable Development in Government <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmenvaud/504/504.pdf>

### 4.3.2 UN High Commissioner for Future Generations

The Alliance for Future Generations, of which Friends of the Earth is a member, has been promoting the introduction of an UN Commissioner for Future Generations through the Rio negotiations. The proposal entered into the negotiations in paragraph 57 of the zero draft text, although in a weak call to “further consider” the introduction of such a post.

The proposal promoted by the Alliance for Future Generations is that the Rio outcome document should commit the UN to a time-bound process leading to the creation of the post of a UN High Commissioner for Future Generations. This proposal is based upon the understanding that:

“Humanity faces a situation of gross intergenerational injustice. Future generations will question hardships they face and the sacrifices they are forced to make due to their ancestors’ careless, short-termist lifestyles. Likewise, the world’s poor people will also question their privations when they observe a widening disparity between their lifestyles and the lifestyles of the rich; generation upon generation. Inequality, over-consumption, loneliness, isolation and greed threaten our current collective well-being and threaten greater intergenerational injustice in the future.”<sup>52</sup>

The High Commissioner would “build a body of advice, analysis and practice to underpin a systematic approach to regard for future generations in UN policymaking and implementation.” They would have “authority of his or her own motion to initiate inquiries and to issue statements on matters of concern; to act independently and free from political interference.”<sup>53</sup>

While the post is no panacea it would create a strong voice for sustainable development at the heart of the UN.

**Recommendation:** The UK Government should back the creation of the post of UN High Commissioner for Future Generations, and use political capital to enable its introduction through the Rio negotiations.

### 4.3.3 Sustainable Development Goals

Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland sees the promotion of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at Rio as a useful step in providing a framework under which a fair global transition may take place. First mooted by Colombia and Guatemala, the idea to develop international, universally-applicable goals on sustainable development has gathered momentum. The summit secretariat suggests that there is interest in developing goals for the following areas:

- green jobs, youth employment and social inclusion
- energy access, efficiency and sustainability
- food security and sustainable agriculture
- water
- sustainable cities
- management of oceans, including fisheries
- improved resilience and disaster preparedness.<sup>54</sup>

However, there are differing views between developed and developing countries on this proposal. South Centre Director Martin Khor notes: “Developed countries are now keen to put in as many SDGs as possible and to have the goals, indicators and targets with deadlines mentioned in the summit text. They mainly have environmental goals in mind, such as addressing climate change, resource use, and pollution. Developing countries argue that the economic and social goals such as sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and reform of the global financial system must also be included.”<sup>55</sup>

Given that there is such little negotiating time left until the summit conclusions, it is likely that the summit will agree to launch SDGs, and the details will be worked out in negotiations for two to three years afterwards.

As previously stated, it has recently been announced that Prime Minister David Cameron will play a leading role as a co-chair of the UN High-level Panel on the post-2015 framework.

**Recommendation:** Friends of the Earth urges the UK Government to ensure that any negotiating process for Sustainable Development Goals that may emerge from the Rio conference is framed under the principles of equity and rights, and that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities underpins both the goals and their implementation. Following the Rio conference, the UK should ensure that the goals are defined through a transparent and inclusive process that directly engages all stakeholder groups, especially the poorest and most marginalised. The UK should also ensure that the SDG process is merged with the process to determine the post-2015 goals on poverty eradication that will replace the Millennium Development Goals.

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.fdsd.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Alliance-for-Future-Generations-UNCSD-open-challenge-final.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.fdsd.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Committing-to-the-future-we-want-main-report.pdf>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=218&menu=45>

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/sdc2012/sdc2012.120401.htm>

## SECTION 5

# Protecting nature

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**T**he state of nature in the UK and globally is extremely worrying for life on the planet. In his analysis of planetary boundaries Rockstrom notes that:

“The current and projected rates of biodiversity loss constitute the sixth major extinction event in the history of life on Earth – the first to be driven specifically by the impacts of human activities on the planet. Accelerated biodiversity loss during the Anthropocene (Mace et al. 2005) is particularly serious, given growing evidence of the importance of biodiversity for sustaining ecosystem functioning and services and for preventing ecosystems from tipping into undesired states (Folke et al. 2004).”<sup>56</sup>

This global crisis is mirrored by the state of nature in the UK – as a study looking at England’s natural heritage shows:

“Over the last 50 years or so England’s natural environment has suffered serious losses. Our farmland today is much less rich in wildlife. Although there is much grassland, now only 3% of it is rich in plant species, and traditionally managed meadows are very rare. Arable land is also now much poorer in wildlife. There has been a substantial decline in the distribution of arable flowering plants, with seven species going extinct. Farmland birds have declined by over a half since the 1970s. Many of the surviving wildlife-rich sites form a small, isolated and fragmented resource.”<sup>57</sup>

Whilst over the past ten years the overall decline has levelled for some species, other groups are still at serious risk. There is an urgent need to both protect existing species, and restore habitats that have been damaged.

## 5.1 Changing course to protect nature in the UK

The Chancellor of the Exchequer tried to change course on protecting nature in 2011, announcing in his autumn statement: “We will make sure that gold plating of EU rules on things like Habitats aren’t placing ridiculous costs on British businesses.”<sup>58</sup> UK conservation and environment organisations were concerned at this attack on regulation which protects the UK’s rarest and most threatened

habitats and species. Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts Stephanie Hilborn noted: “It seems that the Chancellor is not content with the massive shake-up of the planning system that is already under way, and which initially failed to recognise Local Wildlife Sites. Now sites and species of European importance face an uncertain future in England. When will the Government recognise that our natural resources are finite?”<sup>59</sup>

Environment and conservation organisations would like to see the UK Government alter its economic and development policies and practices. Friends of the Earth wants these to ensure rapid restoration of nature leading to an abundance of species and habitats in the UK and beyond. These species and habitats are needed to support life and the effective functioning of nature. They form ecosystems which we rely on but tend to take for granted.

Restoration and protection of nature must take place in all locations and should not be confined to designated protected areas. The UK’s own scientific advice is clear that protection of the most precious natural habitats and species relies on better treatment and restoration of areas that are not covered by official designations.

Taking this action will provide government and society as a whole with many ways to reconnect with nature, recognise its intrinsic value and find better ways to nurture it. It will achieve a shift to a sustainable economy less reliant on damage to nature and ecosystems for its success. The new 2020 Biodiversity Targets championed by the UK Government at the 2010 Nagoya COP are key to get on track to do all of this. The government should now make rapid progress on the new Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2015 and ensure that the effort to stabilise the UK and global economy is carried out in step with the requirement of meeting 2020 biodiversity aims.

### Recommendations:

#### Plan to meet the new 2020 Aichi Biodiversity

**Targets:** set out in all Whitehall policies, especially those lead by economic and business departments, how the UK Government will get on-track to be sure of meeting the new 2020 Biodiversity Targets. This is especially pertinent given the pre-occupation with economic recovery and forms and patterns of growth that tend to rely on environmental damage.

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.stockholmresilience.org/download/18.8615c78125078c8d3380002197/ES-2009-3180.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/31043?category=118044>

<sup>58</sup> [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press\\_136\\_11.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_136_11.htm)

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/2011/11/29/wildlife-trusts-lose-patience-over-new-attack-nature>

**Restore nature in unprotected areas:** ensure that action to restore and extend nature and ecosystems is extensive, rapid and not confined to protected national parks and other designated areas. The UK Government's own advisers are clear that nature restoration cannot be confined to protected areas<sup>60</sup> and that ecosystem function will continue to decline if nature outside these areas is allowed to face continued development pressure.

### The Bee Cause

Bee numbers in Britain have fallen dramatically in recent years. Two bumblebee species are already extinct. The number of managed honeybee colonies in the UK fell by 53% between 1985 and 2005 and wild honeybees are nearly extinct. Solitary bee diversity has declined in 52% of UK landscapes.

Many factors are causing the decline of bees, including habitat loss, disease and climate change. There is also growing evidence that some pesticides harm bees. But bees are essential to our food supply, economy and quality of life:

- **Bees pollinate 75% of our most vital crops and favourite foods**  
Without bees and other insects we'd also have 20% less vitamin C, 41% less vitamin A and 9% less calcium.
- **Without bees it would cost UK farmers £1.8 billion a year to pollinate our crops**  
That's more than it costs farmers to produce all the milk consumed in the UK every year.
- **They're essential to our gardens, parks and countryside**  
Bees and other insects help pollinate over 75% of our plants, which in turn are vital to our insects, birds and animals.

Friends of the Earth is calling on David Cameron to introduce a National Bee Action Plan. The plan outlines action on the planning of our towns, the way we farm and use pesticides and funding for nature experts in the Government to ensure vital bee populations are restored.



<sup>60</sup> "Making Space for Nature: A review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network" report to Defra, Lawton, J.H, Brotherton, P.N.M, Brown V.K, Elphick, C, Fitter A,H, Forshaw,J, Haddow, R,W, Hilborne, S, Leafe, R,N, mace, G,M, Southgate, M.P,Sutherland, W.J, Tew, T.E, Varley, J., & Wynne, G.R (2010)



## 5.2 Stop Rio from becoming the summit that commodified nature

The current UK approach is dominated by a drive towards the 'financialisation' of nature. This approach holds huge risks for the protection of nature, and for human beings. Understanding the value of services provided to us freely by nature can in some instances help us make good decisions to protect it. However, any over-emphasis on the 'cost' and 'price' of such services, and in particular any move towards trading nature's assets as another market mechanism, would be hugely detrimental to both people and planet.

The UK government is pushing the 'natural capital accounting' approach as a key part of its Rio+20 strategy: "We will call for governments to take steps to measure and account for their natural and social capital, as well as their GDP... known as GDP+ it's an area where the UK is taking the lead."<sup>61</sup>

The Government's proposals are based upon its national strategy on valuing nature which are set out in the Natural Environment White Paper: "By properly valuing nature today we can safeguard the natural areas that we all cherish and from which we derive vital services."<sup>62</sup>

The UK Government does not seem to have factored into its thinking the very significant risks in pressing for this approach to be taken internationally. The biggest risk is that the approach will be used to set up markets in so-called natural capital, where biodiversity loss in one place can be traded off against biodiversity loss elsewhere.

The complex, difficult-to-measure, and non-interchangeable characteristics of biodiversity make it difficult, if not impossible, to trade or offset. Once a species or ecosystem is gone, it's gone – as has been the case with countless species and habitats in the UK and overseas.

The new Brazilian Forestry Code presents the logic of setting a price on biodiversity in order for it to be preserved. In the Forestry Code, forests become an economic title called CRA (environmental reserve certificate). Thus a landowner or a municipality with forests can issue green papers to be sold in the financial market to those who need to buy them and compensate the pollution or degradation they cause with their activities in another ecosystem or basin. This means that a forest can be degraded by an individual or organisation so long as they have the financial

resources to buy credits in the stock market.<sup>63</sup> This is being resisted by Brazilian environmentalist, peasant, indigenous and social movements, who are supported by Friends of the Earth International.

There is an argument that bringing biodiversity and ecosystems into the market will help society to realise their true value and consequently to conserve them. But market systems are crude and unproven in the protection of biodiversity and the rapid recreation of ecosystems that is needed. There are limitations and dangers inherent in this approach. Friends of the Earth believes the intrinsic and societal value of nature can never be properly captured. It is beyond the market and should be valued as such. This reflects the essential fact that the conditions for life depend on the ability of our natural world to sustain us.

We cannot pick and choose from a menu of biodiversity and ecosystem protection. Yes, in places cash injections are needed to conserve and enhance biodiversity. But this needs to be combined with tackling the root causes of biodiversity loss, not by giving a licence to destroy biodiversity and ecosystems elsewhere through biodiversity offsetting.

### Recommendations:

**Real finance for global nature protection:** Friends of the Earth wants to see the UK government refocus its strategy on nature and biodiversity at Rio. Instead of using Rio as an opportunity to press for the further financialisation of nature, Friends of the Earth wants to see the UK Government work with other developed countries to promote new and additional public finance for nature protection.

**Put a rights-based approach at the heart of biodiversity protection:** The UK government should ensure that any measures and mechanisms to incentivise biodiversity protection include a rights-based approach (such as community-based governance over forests and other resources), rather than a narrow focus on market mechanisms.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Caroline Spelman, 9 Feb 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/feb/09/rio-20-earth-summit-caroline-selman-speech>

<sup>62</sup> "The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature" Defra 2011

<sup>63</sup> For more details, see Quem ganha e quem perde com o REDD e Pagamento de Serviços Ambientais, in Documento de Sistematização das Convergências do Grupo Carta de Belém extraídas do seminário sobre REDD+ e Pagamento por Serviços Ambientais X Bens Comuns, Brasília, November 21-22, 2011, 9 pages, February 2012.

<sup>64</sup> For more information on Community Forest Management see <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2008/position-paper-community-based-forest-governance/view>



## SECTION 6

# An economy that promotes sustainability

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**M**uch of the global economy is structured around generating products through the use of materials to sell to the market.

A focus on promotion of economic growth combined with an intensity of resource use throughout the lifecycle of a product has resulted in unsustainable consumption that is destroying the very foundations of the economy – the environment – for the benefit of the richest in society.

The scale of consumption by the richest is not sustainable, and needs to be reduced. Concurrently the poor must have a chance to improve their quality of life, increasing their resource consumption.

It is now widely accepted that business as usual is not an option. Yet little is being done to move away from current approaches.

It is time to challenge the primacy of economic growth at all cost, in order to preserve the environment and create an economy that serves the whole of global society, not just the richest.

This means putting the environment and human well being at the heart of economic strategy, and it means decoupling resource use from economic growth to develop sustainable consumption patterns.

**Q. When is a green economy not a green economy?**

**A. When it's the greed economy.**

The term “green economy” is frequently used in the UK to refer to incentives for low-carbon development. Internationally, however, it is being used to enable environmentally damaging activities to expand – such as monoculture tree-planting, the growth of biofuels, carbon offsetting, and the setting up of new markets in biodiversity and forests. This is often led by multinational companies focused on the brown (old, unsustainable) economy but which are using the opportunity of the Rio summit to “greenwash” their activities. (For example: <http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/how-corporations-rule-vale>). This has led civil society groups to call for an outright rejection of the green economy as it is articulated at Rio+20:

*“Civil society, including those gathering for the Peoples Summit in Rio, remain deeply uncomfortable with the green economy concept as elaborated in these informal consultations. We believe it is being used for greenwashing the old discredited model of unsustainable development as exemplified by the yawning gap between the conditions of the 99% and the 1%. This is particularly evident in the over-emphasis by some countries on the leading role of the private sector in the green economy [in NCST\* 40 and 42 for instance]. At the same time there is opposition to proposals for stricter regulatory mechanisms for large corporations, in particular Transnational Corporations [in para 28 bis]. Indeed this is one of the major shortcomings of the first Earth Summit and a factor behind much of the increased inequity and environmental destruction that has occurred since then. The stress on market-based mechanisms for the green economy [in NCST 28 bis], which by definition could include trading of carbon, forests and biodiversity and water, for example are major concerns for us which we firmly oppose. We fear that all these amount to the further privatization, commodification and financialization of nature and ecosystem functions which in turn would lead to further concentration of control over nature, displacement and marginalization of communities most dependent on access to these resources, as well as greater financial speculation. We are also concerned that the green economy roadmap may be used to impose new obligations on developing countries contrary to the principle of equitable burden sharing and historical responsibility.”*

Remarks from NGO Major Group for Working Group 1, in pre Rio+20 negotiations on the green economy May 1, 2012.

\*NCST here stands for ‘New Chairs Suggested Text’ – a negotiating draft of the Rio text that parties were using during negotiations in May 2012.

## 6.1 Transition to a low-carbon economy in the UK

If the UK government is going to be able to play a credible role in Rio and beyond as a leader in sustainable development, it needs to show that it is serious about dramatically reducing the UK's carbon emissions. The world-leading legislative framework provided by the Climate Change Act needs to be backed by credible policies that significantly reduce emissions.

Currently, the UK lacks a coherent, proactive and muscular policy approach to developing a sustainable economy, preferring instead to focus on price signals, tackling market failures, voluntary agreements, and occasional regulation. As Tom Burke (leading environmentalist, advisor to companies, and former advisor to the UK government) said: "The view that government cannot pick winners and that technology choice must be left to the market is deeply entrenched in our political culture... but it is equally true that markets are often not very good at picking winners. We have just had a brutal wake up call about the dangers of leaving systemic risks to be managed by the market in the financial world."<sup>65</sup>

### 6.1.1 Targeted intervention to support new industries

The depth and urgency of the required transition to a low-carbon economy, and the mounting pressure from international competitors – coupled with policies that are not always up to the job – calls for a pro-active strategy for nurturing new technologies and industries. There is an inherent irony in the Government's current policies. It simultaneously acknowledges the pace of overseas investment in countries such as China and India and highlights the potential of the £4 trillion 2015 global market in low-carbon goods and services. It sets out its desire for UK businesses to take advantage of these expanding markets and "exploit comparative advantage". Yet the Government sidesteps the fact that countries such as China are streaking ahead in large part because of their strategic, strongly interventionist approach.<sup>66</sup>

According to Pew, in 2010 China accounted for almost 50 per cent of all manufacturing of solar modules and wind turbines. Most of the solar panels were destined for the export markets, cementing China's position as the dominant force in the global market for panels; yet the wind turbines were largely used domestically.

In 2010 China installed 17 GW of wind power. Pew notes this is down to single-minded determination from the Government, with its

"aggressive clean energy targets and clear ambition to dominate clean energy manufacturing and power generation." Compare that to the components in the new London array offshore wind farm, where 90 per cent of the turbines were manufactured outside the UK. An extensive review of overseas offshore wind development by IPPR (The Institute of Public Policy Research) concluded that a critical factor in the countries studied is a coherent programme of industrial activism, in the form of "tax incentives, favourable customs duties, quality certification, research and development (R&D) support and... local content requirements," and a strong skills base.<sup>67</sup>

**Recommendation:** The Government must produce an industrial policy which does more than just set price signals. It must directly support the technologies and industries that are critical to developing a low-carbon economy.

### 6.1.2 Investing in and supporting skills and job creation

One of the key areas under discussion in Rio will be the promotion of 'decent work' that contributes to sustainable development. A major study into 'green jobs' conducted by the IPPR in March 2009 concluded that "without smart government intervention, the UK will struggle to benefit from new 'green' industries and the workforce is unlikely to be equipped with the right skills to work in the future low-carbon economy."<sup>68</sup> If the UK is to be able to play a significant role in discussions about job creation in the low carbon economy, it needs to be able to show success domestically.

As of 2011 only 4,000-6,000 people were employed in wind in the UK, compared to 20,000 to 30,000 in Spain, and 80-85,000 in Germany. The Carbon Trust has recommended that the offshore wind industry needs £100 million – £600 million of public research, development and deployment investment between now and 2020 to meet this potential growth.<sup>69</sup>

There is concern that the changes that face the UK economy could mirror those of the 1980s, where wholesale upheaval in the UK's manufacturing and industrial base left entire communities desolate. Many have never fully recovered. That cannot happen again. It is vital to the success of the green economy that it reaches all parts of the UK. The Government must directly support retraining and reskilling in areas that have already experienced, or potentially face, major changes as a result of the move to new industries and practices. This must be a core consideration for any new skills

<sup>67</sup> [http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2011/05/green\\_jobs\\_1686.pdf](http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2011/05/green_jobs_1686.pdf)

<sup>68</sup> <http://www.ippr.org/publications/55/1686/green-jobs-prospects-for-creating-jobs-from-offshore-wind-in-theuk>

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/emerging-technologies/currentfocus-areas/offshore-wind/pages/offshore-wind.aspx>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/1801403/conservatives-centralise-green-tech-funds>

<sup>66</sup> [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing\\_notes/eac\\_green\\_economy.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/eac_green_economy.pdf)

strategy, and the skills and jobs policies that must accompany every major policy designed to speed the green transition.

**Recommendation:** The Government must complete the work of its predecessors and produce a green jobs and skills strategy, including providing necessary state funding to support skills academies and training (and retraining) programmes nationwide.

### 6.1.3 Procurement

It is clear that value for money is the driving factor in awarding procurement contracts. Although this is an important consideration its primacy can place low-carbon industry in the UK at a further disadvantage, particularly compared with international competitors who have had greater and more sympathetic policy support from their own Governments in previous years.

**Recommendation:** The Government must use its procurement muscle to, firstly, invest in low-carbon products and services, and secondly, to support UK industries.

### 6.1.4 Policy robustness and stability

The UK's Climate Change Act set a framework from which suitably ambitious policies are intended to flow. Yet the Committee on Climate Change has repeatedly warned that a "step change" in government efforts is needed to meet even the first three carbon budgets, let alone the fourth. Policies must be strong enough to keep up with the increases in carbon reduction and resource efficiency that are needed. Too often the top line ambition and rhetoric of the government policy is not being honoured by the substance of the policies themselves. Two major policy areas to consider are:

#### a. Green Investment Bank

Securing major investment is an integral part of delivering a green economy. Friends of the Earth was one of the leading organisations calling for the creation of the Green Investment Bank, and its progress is welcome. But as the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) has pointed out, it is unacceptable that the Bank is prevented from borrowing until the national deficit has been eliminated in, optimistically, 2015/16 at the earliest. Until then it is a hamstrung quasi-Bank which underlines the corrosive influence of short-termist Treasury thinking and influence over the bold decisions that are needed.

**Recommendation:** The Bank must be permitted to borrow from the capital markets as soon as it starts operating, and the Bank must be swiftly enshrined in legislation.

#### b. Energy Efficiency / the Green Deal

The Green Deal will help many people and businesses make energy-efficiency improvements to their properties. But the Green Deal is very unlikely to be a genuinely revolutionary programme. Research suggests that the interest rates which are likely to be attached to the scheme are going to be unattractive

to consumers. Even with widespread take-up, the fundamental mechanics of the Green Deal – including the 'Golden Rule', whereby all energy efficiency measures must pay for themselves over the period of the loan – mean that the Green Deal will not be able to deliver the kind of comprehensive, whole-building retrofits needed to safeguard householders and businesses from looming energy prices and the rising scandal of fuel poverty.

**Recommendation:** More funding for energy efficiency is needed. The new Energy Company Obligation, which is intended to reach the parts that the Green Deal cannot (in particular the fuel poor) is going to be spread too thinly. Its size is limited by the fact that it ultimately ends up on bills. A solution is to redirect environmental taxation coming into the Treasury via EU Emissions Trading Scheme auction receipts and the Carbon Price Support to bolster support for energy efficiency funding. The EAC was clear on this notion in its June 2011 report on green taxation.

## 6.2 Acting to measure and reduce the UK's use of resources: Carbon, land, water and materials

In her keynote speech on Rio+20 in February 2012, Caroline Spelman noted that resource scarcity threatens the future of economic development and that resource efficiency has to be a cornerstone of discussions on sustainable development.<sup>70</sup>

If resource scarcity is to be tackled, those countries using the most resources must cut their consumption to enable global agreements to have meaning.

Europe is the continent with the highest net imports of resource. As such it depends on a secure and uninterrupted supply of imports of all types. In the current economic climate, all countries in Europe need to move towards an absolute reduction in resource use in order to make the most of the substantial economic, environmental and social benefits this will bring. These benefits include:

- **Boosting competitiveness by substantially increasing cost savings:** Numerous studies have highlighted the short- and long- term benefits of improving the resource efficiency of companies. It is estimated that over the course of one year, low-cost or no-cost strategies can create savings of £23 billion for UK businesses.<sup>71</sup> Similar savings could be achieved in the public sector.
- **Creating green jobs through recycling:** If all member states recycled as much as the best EU performers, 560,000 new jobs would be

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2012/feb/09/rio-20-earth-summit-caroline-selman-speech>

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.ier.org.tw/smm/UK%20The%20Further%20Benefits%20of%20Business%20Resource%20Efficiency.pdf>

created.<sup>72</sup> In addition, jobs in the recycling sector are better paid than jobs in landfilling and incinerating waste.

- **Protection of the global resource base:** The over-consumption of resources has reached alarming levels, jeopardising the sustainable functioning of our ecosystems and the services they provide. As Oxfam's "Safe and Just Space for Humanity" discussion paper states: "The biggest source of planetary-boundary stress today is excessive resource consumption by roughly the wealthiest 10 per cent of the world's population, and the production patterns of the companies producing the goods and services that they buy."<sup>73</sup>

Friends of the Earth has been working on the development of resource indicators since 2008, in partnership with the Sustainable Europe Research Institute. Our analysis concluded that the best indicators for this purpose are:

- Water footprint (in litres)
- Land footprint (in hectares)
- Carbon footprint (in tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>eq)
- Material footprint (in tonnes)

These indicators can be used as an effective method of monitoring resource use, not only at the country level, but also at organisational level and for individual products. They have recently been overwhelmingly supported by a vote in the European Parliament's Environment Committee.<sup>74</sup>

It is becoming widely accepted that business as usual is not an option, and that richer global regions must reduce their resource use. Targets are the only way to ensure that this is happening; otherwise increased resource efficiency can lead to a rebound because of increased demand. Targets also ensure the whole economy is aware of the direction policies are taking. We believe targets can and should be developed by 2013.

When setting targets, special attention should be paid to land. Land is a key resource increasingly under pressure due to diverse factors, including increased wealth in countries such as India and China (leading to rising demand for agricultural goods, crops for animal feed, biomass), and climate-related policies such as the push for biofuel and biomass burning (for example in the EU Renewable Energy Directive). Land rights, land ownership and landgrabbing are now major issues around the world, (see box on land grabbing on p33) and land use is closely linked to biodiversity loss, which is difficult to measure.

Until recently, no attempt had been made to measure and monitor Europe's land footprint. However, recent research has shown that in 2004,

Europe used 1.5 times its own size in land, and 60 per cent of this area came from outside its boundaries. On a per capita basis, the average European citizen consumes 1.3 hectares of land per year, whereas countries such as China or India use less than 0.4 hectares per capita.<sup>75</sup>

**Recommendations:** It is imperative that the EU make reducing its resource use and its land footprint a political priority. The European Commission should start an examination of what land footprint Europeans can expect to have in the future, based on equitable global distribution and sustainable use. This should be used to develop reduction targets by 2013.<sup>76</sup> To ensure that its warm words on the importance of resource efficiency are backed up by practical action, the UK government should push for strong action on resource efficiency domestically and at EU level, including monitoring the UK's material, land, water and carbon footprints and taking measures to reduce them.

### Greener Products

To cope with the pressures of growing population and consumption, we need to use our limited natural resources much more efficiently. This means we have to reduce the impact products have on the environment, from what goes into them to how they are produced and taken to market.

At the moment there are no requirements for companies to measure, let alone manage, the impact of the things they make.

Our research and analysis shows that this debate is currently focused on individual consumers. The theory is that it is up to people as consumers to choose the 'green' option. Market demand will then encourage companies to 'green' their supply chains. Concerned consumers can and do already help by buying products with a low environmental impact or cutting down on shopping altogether.

But to really make a difference on the scale needed, we must tackle the way companies produce our 'stuff' in the first place. A handful of companies are starting to do this. But the vast majority are not.

It's high time for governments to start developing the policy mechanisms needed to ensure all companies take responsibility for reducing the impact of the goods they make.

See [www.foeeurope.org/greenerproducts](http://www.foeeurope.org/greenerproducts) for more information

<sup>72</sup> [http://www.foeeurope.org/publications/2010/More\\_Jobs\\_Less\\_Waste\\_Sep2010.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/publications/2010/More_Jobs_Less_Waste_Sep2010.pdf)

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/dp-a-safe-and-just-space-for-humanity-130212-en.pdf>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.foeeurope.org/europe-ready-for-resource-efficiency-250412>

<sup>75</sup> [http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/publications/Europe\\_Global\\_Land\\_Demand\\_Oct11%5B1%5D.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/publications/Europe_Global_Land_Demand_Oct11%5B1%5D.pdf)

<sup>76</sup> [http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/foee\\_eeb\\_reroadmapbrief\\_mar2012\\_final.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/foee_eeb_reroadmapbrief_mar2012_final.pdf)



## 6.3 Supporting a global economic transition to a low carbon world

The UK government should ensure that the international financial policies it pursues, or funds over which it has influence, contribute towards sustainable development. This includes money spent through multilateral development assistance (such as by the World Bank) or money spent through the European Union. The next European Budget (2014-2020) should support measures that promote job creation in industries that protect nature and reduce carbon emission. The budget should be invested in energy savings and renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, protection of nature and biodiversity, and decarbonised transport and infrastructure.<sup>77</sup> In addition to its ongoing relationships in Europe and beyond, there are two particular measures the UK should pursue during the Rio period.

### 6.3.1 Get behind the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT)

The UK has repeatedly blocked the introduction of this new, global tax on cross-border financial transactions, which could generate additional government revenue while curbing dangerous speculation in the global financial market. This revenue could be used in the UK and globally to invest in reducing national deficits, and in helping developing countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals and adapt to and mitigate against the impacts of climate change. As shown by a recent study,<sup>78</sup> the tax would:

- Raise £8.4 billion a year for the UK Exchequer.
- Add 0.25% to GDP, equivalent to 75,000 jobs.
- Not be avoidable through complex derivatives, since the majority of these are now centrally cleared. Market participants would take on a huge risk by operating outside these frameworks, which are designed to make transactions safer.<sup>79</sup>

**Recommendation:** The coalition Government should introduce a financial transaction tax.

### 6.3.2 Promote the reduction of fossil fuel subsidies, in a way which protects the vulnerable.

It is likely that at the Rio summit there will be a recommendation to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, with safeguards for the poorest. Commitments to begin such a process were made by the G20 at their

meeting in Pittsburgh in 2009 and again in Toronto in 2010, with little progress to date.

Global subsidies for fossil fuel production and consumption are estimated at around US\$700 billion per year.<sup>80</sup> Subsidies from developed countries to support production are harder to estimate, but according to the OECD the global total could be as much as US\$100 billion per year.<sup>81</sup> A significant proportion of producer subsidies involve direct transfers from developed country governments to Northern-based multinational companies involved in the global extraction, processing and distribution of fossil fuels. Neither of these estimates includes spending by developed countries to secure fossil fuel supplies. The UK is one of the countries providing such subsidies. In his budget 2012, the UK chancellor provided £3 billion in tax breaks to introduce a new “field allowance for particularly deep fields with sizeable reserves,” as well as increases in the tax thresholds for smaller fields.<sup>82</sup>

Effective global action on climate change requires decarbonisation of the global energy supply and thus changes to the way we use energy. This entails bringing an end to all artificial subsidies for fossil fuels. However, it would be both unfair and difficult to tackle consumer subsidies for fossil fuels before action is taken to reduce the cost of alternative renewable energy sources (for example via the implementation of a global feed-in tariff programme) alongside action to reduce the need for fossil fuel-based energy use. But subsidies to fossil fuel producers do not play the same important social role. The economic benefits associated with the subsidies largely accrue to the senior executives and shareholders of fossil fuel companies. As a result, fossil-fuel producer subsidies could be redirected soon without significant detrimental impacts on the affordability of or access to energy.

**Recommendation:** The UK Government should lead developed nations at the Rio summit in pledging a short and credible timescale to phase out subsidies from developed countries to support fossil fuel production, and immediately commit to a timetable to end them rapidly in the UK.

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/publications/Investing\\_for\\_the\\_future\\_Feb2012.pdf](http://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/publications/Investing_for_the_future_Feb2012.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> <http://robinhoodtax.org/sites/default/files/The%20Economic%20Consequences%20of%20the%20EU%20Proposal%20for%20a%20Financial%20Transaction%20Tax.pdf>

<sup>79</sup> <http://robinhoodtax.org/latest/new-report-shows-robin-hood-tax-would-be-good-britain>

<sup>80</sup> [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/clearing\\_air.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/clearing_air.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/55/5/45575666.pdf>

<sup>82</sup> [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/budget\\_2012\\_reaction.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/budget_2012_reaction.pdf)

## SECTION 7

# Safe and renewable energy for a sustainable future

In December 2010 Friends of the Earth published research into the limit on carbon emissions between now and 2050 to give at least a slim chance of avoiding a global average temperature increase of 1.5°C. It identified that a global carbon budget of 1,100 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO<sub>2</sub>e) between 2010 and 2049 gives a 25 per cent chance of avoiding a rise of 1.5°C and a 70 per cent chance of avoiding 2°C. Given that global emissions between 2000 and 2010 were 400 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e and the trajectory of emissions is upwards this carbon budget is very small.<sup>83</sup>

The level of change needed is unprecedented. The UK Government needs to play its part – in the UK and globally in moving the world away from its dangerous addiction to fossil fuels and on to a sustainable energy pathway.

## 7.1 A 'once in a generation' opportunity: Electricity Market Reform (EMR)

In 2011, the UK government confirmed its latest commitment to meeting its emissions reduction targets under the Climate Change Act 2008 by accepting the recommendation of the Climate Change Committee on the level of the Fourth Carbon Budget, covering the period 2023-2027. We now need to see government policies which lead to the decarbonisation needed in the timescales agreed.

This year, new laws to reform the electricity market are designed to bring forward over £100 billion of investment in our power infrastructure. Ministers have described it as a 'once in a generation' opportunity to change the rules of Britain's electricity supply. Under the proposals, National Grid would also be given additional responsibilities to deliver many elements of EMR, including putting in place contracts for low-carbon generation.



### Clean British Energy

Friends of the Earth is running a campaign for clean, renewable energy to be put at the heart of the UK's energy policy. We want to see the government:

- Shift the energy market away from just six big energy firms hooked on fossil fuels.
- Help new, smaller energy companies into the power market to develop energy from our wind, sun and water.
- Provide better support for communities, schools and hospitals wanting to plug into clean power.

In a recent YouGov poll carried out for the campaign, 85 per cent of British people said they want to see the Government increasing the use of clean British energy and decreasing our dependence on imported gas, which is driving up fuel bills. Two-thirds of people want more of their electricity to come from our wind, sun and sea, and just 2 per cent of people back more gas.

### 7.1.1 Decarbonising our electricity supply

Government advisors the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) have said that the power sector must decarbonise substantially if the UK is to stay within its carbon budget. The CCC says this means that by 2030 our electricity system should produce no more than 50g of CO<sub>2</sub> for every kilowatt-hour of power produced. However, ministers have instead talked about "largely decarbonising the power sector during the 2030s"<sup>84</sup> which could mean a much higher target, achieved a lot later.

**Recommendation:** Currently our power system produces on average over 400 g CO<sub>2</sub>/kWh. Friends of the Earth is calling on the Government to commit properly to a target of 50g CO<sub>2</sub>/kWh of electricity by 2030. At the same time, National Grid should ensure its plans are set in line with the UK's carbon budgets, and the CCC must have a formal role in advising on this.

<sup>83</sup> [www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/just\\_transition.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/just_transition.pdf)

<sup>84</sup> [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/electricity\\_market\\_reform.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/electricity_market_reform.pdf)



## 7.1.2 Support for renewables

Britain has abundant resources of renewable energy. Making use of less than a third of usable offshore wind, wave and tidal resources could cover all our electricity needs, and allow us to sell the excess to other countries.

Solar PV alone could cover 30 per cent of our electricity requirements.<sup>85</sup> Offshore wind alone could also create 66,000 jobs by 2020.<sup>86</sup> EMR therefore needs to create the right conditions for massive investment in renewable energy. However, recent announcements caused significant confusion for investors. Recent feed-in tariff reviews have also proved damaging for certainty about investment in renewables, and for community-scale projects in particular.

As part of their EMR plans, the Government has proposed a mechanism called Feed-in Tariffs with Contracts for Difference to provide incentives for renewable energy. However, these plans will very much favour big businesses. Contracts for Difference are so complicated that they will discourage new investors and new renewable energy businesses, including co-operatives, local authorities and social enterprises.

**Recommendation:** The Government should model its approach on the proven German model of fixed feed-in tariffs for all technologies at all scales, which guarantees a buyer for all renewable energy generated at a fixed price. It should also set out minimum targets for deployment of onshore and offshore wind, wave, tidal, solar PV, geothermal and other technologies for the long term beyond 2020.

## 7.1.3 No more support for gas and nuclear

In recent months and years, the gas industry has attempted to position itself as the answer to climate change – rather than as one of the problems.<sup>87</sup> If we are to cut our carbon emissions in line with the recommendations from the CCC and stabilise energy bills then it is vital we end our reliance on this dirty fuel, and the volatile price spikes it is prone to. Emissions from gas, even with Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technology, are much higher than from renewable energy, and far higher than the 50g CO<sub>2</sub>/kWh target.<sup>88</sup>

The Government recently announced that new gas-fired power stations built before 2015 will be able to emit 450 g CO<sub>2</sub>/kWh until 2045, placing our carbon budgets at significant risk. Moreover, under

the current EMR plans, nuclear will also receive further subsidies, as the Contracts for Difference will apply to low-carbon energy sources, not just renewables. This comes at a time when, post-Fukushima, countries like Germany are abandoning their nuclear programmes in favour of a 100 per cent renewable future.

**Recommendation:** The Government should keep nuclear out of the support provided for renewable or low carbon electricity generation. We also believe that a much tougher Emissions Performance Standard (EPS) must be adopted, to rule out unabated gas in the 2020s, to prevent a new dash for gas and to stop us locking our energy system into fossil fuels. The level of EPS should also reduce over time, to be consistent with reaching average emissions for electricity generation of 50g CO<sub>2</sub>/kWh in 2030.

## 7.1.4 Energy efficiency

The cheapest and quickest way to cut our emissions is to use less electricity in the first place. This means ensuring our homes, offices and appliances are as energy efficient as possible. We should also use smart technologies to help even out the peaks and troughs in our demand for electricity.

**Recommendation:** The Government should set a target for reducing our electricity demand. At the same time it should explore how feed-in tariffs could be used to incentivise cuts in energy use. A framework for smart technologies is also required, to help shift our use of electricity from times where supply can't meet demand to times when there is additional capacity – effectively smoothing out the peaks and troughs in our electricity requirements.

## 7.1.5 A boost for decentralised energy

Just six companies supply 99 per cent of domestic customers in Britain.<sup>89</sup> Between them, they have plans for major investment in new fossil fuels, and EDF plan to build new nuclear power stations as well. Their market dominance has created suspicion from consumers and a barrier for new businesses trying to enter the market. Meanwhile, our centralised energy system wastes energy through unused heat from power stations and losses in transmission.

Generating power in the communities where it is needed is a much more efficient process. If the infrastructure can be owned by, or for the benefit of, those communities, it can deliver social and financial returns for them too. This can help councils or community groups to fund additional projects and schemes.

However, EMR is set to only apply to installations above 5 MW in size, on the basis that the feed-in tariff will cover installations below 5 MW. Changes to the feed-in tariff mean that it is increasingly

<sup>85</sup> Based on utilising the entirety of the UK's practical solar resource, compared with projected electricity demand for 2030, in Committee on Climate Change (2011) The Renewable Energy Review

<sup>86</sup> [www.carbontrust.co.uk/news/news/press-centre/2011/Pages/offshore-wind-gg.aspx](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/news/news/press-centre/2011/Pages/offshore-wind-gg.aspx)

<sup>87</sup> [www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/apr/20/fossil-fuel-lobbying-shale-gas](http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2011/apr/20/fossil-fuel-lobbying-shale-gas)

<sup>88</sup> [www.parliament.uk/documents/post/postpn\\_383-carbon-footprint-electricity-generation.pdf](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/post/postpn_383-carbon-footprint-electricity-generation.pdf)

<sup>89</sup> [www.consumerfocus.org.uk/news/consumer-focus-helps-consumers-by-publishing-energy-complaints-data](http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/news/consumer-focus-helps-consumers-by-publishing-energy-complaints-data)

viable only for the domestic sector, leaving a gap in support for community-scale and decentralised or local schemes.

**Recommendation:** Ofgem has made limited proposals to open up the electricity wholesale market and encourage new players, including decentralised energy (generated, used and owned by householders, local businesses, community groups, housing associations and councils). Friends of the Earth is calling on the Government to go beyond these proposals, and use EMR to introduce a fixed feed-in tariff for all scales of generation to allow this vision to be realised.

## 7.2 Boosting access to safe and clean energy around the world<sup>90</sup>

Today 1.3 billion people lack access to electricity, mainly in Africa and India. The electricity consumption of the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa is equal to the state of New York, and is considerably less if South Africa is excluded. Meanwhile, 40 per cent of the world's population relies on fuels like firewood and coal for cooking and heating; as a result, smoke-related illness is widespread and particularly affects women and children.<sup>91</sup>

We need an energy system that can sustainably address the needs of almost half the world's population but is not based on dirty fossil fuels. At the Rio+20 summit, the UN Secretary-General's Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative<sup>92</sup> and the accompanying political momentum is an opportunity to drive a clean energy revolution.

The initiative aims to provide universal access to modern energy services: double the global rate of energy efficiency improvement, and double the proportion of renewable energy in the global energy mix from 15% to 30% by 2030. However, there are some key problems with the initiative, which we want to see the UK government take a lead in addressing:

### Fracking hell

"Fracking" is short for hydraulic fracturing, the controversial technique used to extract shale gas from rocks thousands of feet below the earth's surface. Wells are drilled and then a mixture of water, sand and a small amount of chemicals is injected into the rock at very high pressure to help the gas flow. American production of shale gas has rocketed in the last decade, moving the United States from being on the point of importing gas to one of the world's leading gas producers.

In the UK, shale gas is being promoted by some as the miracle solution to our energy problems – a clean, cheap, secure supply of gas. But the development of the industry in the United States has brought major concerns about its potential impacts on the environment and human health.

Locally, the key concern is about the potential impact of fracking on water supplies. There is evidence from the United States of water contamination from methane gas and the fracking chemicals. And earlier this year Cuadrilla (the only company currently test-drilling for shale gas in the UK) admitted its activities had triggered minor earth tremors in Lancashire.

But Friends of the Earth's biggest concern about shale gas is its impact on climate change.

Continuing to rely on gas to heat our homes and generate our electricity risks locking us into an energy system addicted to dirty fossil fuels and make it much harder to meet our climate change targets.

And our dependence on fossil fuels has already hit us in the pocket: rises in electricity and gas bills in recent years have been overwhelmingly driven by rises in fossil fuel prices. Shale gas has cut gas prices in the United States, but experts say it won't do the same in the UK.

Advocates of shale gas say we should bet the farm on this new 'wonder-fuel'. But the UK has vast potential resources of renewable energy. If we link a major program of cutting energy waste with really exploiting this renewable potential, then the wind, waves and sun can give us the vast majority of the electricity we need. We will also create tens of thousands of green jobs.

**Recommendation:** The potential programme of fracking in the UK is the antithesis of sustainable development. It focuses on short-term access to energy, and puts the UK's long-term climate goals out of reach. It unnecessarily pits the energy needs of the country against the health and well-being of those directly affected, rather than enabling the UK to move to clean British energy. A quick decision by the UK government to abandon fracking in the UK would enable the delegation to arrive in Rio with greatly enhanced credentials.

**Tony Bosworth**

[http://www.foe.co.uk/blog/shale\\_gas\\_fracking\\_33350.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/blog/shale_gas_fracking_33350.html)

<sup>90</sup> For more information and full references from this section, see [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/sustainable\\_energy\\_for\\_all1.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/sustainable_energy_for_all1.pdf)

<sup>91</sup> [http://www.who.int/quantifying\\_ehimpacts/publications/en/Indoorsmoke.pdf](http://www.who.int/quantifying_ehimpacts/publications/en/Indoorsmoke.pdf)

<sup>92</sup> <http://www.sustainableenergyforall.org>

## 7.2.1 Lack of ambition

**More renewables:** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has stated that global emissions will need to be cut by 80-95 per cent to claim a 50 per cent chance of keeping temperature rises below 2°C, let alone the widely-called for 1.5°C. To reduce emissions by 80-95 per cent requires 100 per cent renewable energy by 2050, meaning 30 per cent by 2030 is insufficient: WWF research points to a minimum of 42 per cent by 2030.<sup>93</sup>

**Energy efficiency** is equally important, but while the initiative aims to double the rate of improvement, in their World Energy Outlook 2011 the International Energy Agency (IEA) stresses the need for an even faster pace of change to stay below 2°C, noting that the world is already on course to double the rate by 2035.<sup>94</sup> According to Greenpeace International, decarbonising our energy system would require a 50 per cent reduction in energy intensity through energy efficiency by 2030.<sup>95</sup>

**Universal access** to energy is a prerequisite for tackling poverty, opening up access to clean water, health, education and other basic needs. Access to energy must be measured in terms of the achievement of minimum standards for each of the principal energy services people need; simple power supply metrics are insufficient. But while this is arguably the most ambitious goal, the distant target of 2030 and lack of milestones reduces the likelihood of mobilising action. Not bringing the date forward is a political decision that will leave hundreds of millions without clean energy access for another 10 years. Friends of the Earth would like to see a goal of 2020.

## 7.2.2 Poor definitions of sustainable energy

There is a risk that unsustainable technologies such as industrial biofuels, large scale hydro power and fossil fuels (for example natural gas), will be included in the initiative as some groups define them as clean energy. These must be ruled out of the energy mix, and we must ensure that the world's energy poor don't get locked into dirty development pathways.

## 7.2.3 Reliable finance to fund a global transformation

Currently most funding for the Sustainable Energy for All initiative is expected to come from the private sector. Our experience of private sector involvement in climate initiatives is that:

- Profitability not development goals will decide projects, potentially compromising their environmental and social integrity.

- State responsibility to provide public goods like energy access will be passed onto the market, lessening accountability.
- Experience of private finance in climate has shown it doesn't deliver the promised social and environmental benefits.

Whereas public finance works to deliver clean energy access:

- Interest-free loans electrified rural America in 17 years through local energy co-operatives.<sup>96</sup>
- Energy subsidies in Brazil stimulated local electrification, fuel production, job creation and the control of sources and production of food.<sup>97</sup>

Public finance, including innovative sources like the financial transaction tax or re-directed military spending, can help communities and local businesses drive the energy revolution.

## 7.2.4 Civil society participation

To date, there has been very limited engagement of civil society in outreach around SE4ALL, in particular in the Global South. This has greatly weakened the legitimacy of the initiative as well as undermining the credibility of proposed projects and the possibility of their success. Civil society should play an active role in all stages of policy design as well as implementation, especially within priority countries. Civil society should also be fully supported in devising and implementing its own scalable projects to deliver an ambitious SE4ALL initiative.

**Recommendations:** The UK Government should use its political capital at Rio to lead the world to improve the Sustainable Energy for All initiative through increasing its ambition, ruling dirty energy out of the mix, gaining commitments for public finance to deliver universal access, and ensuring that civil society has a voice in designing the initiative.

<sup>93</sup> [assets.panda.org/downloads/101223\\_energy\\_report\\_final\\_print\\_2.pdf](http://assets.panda.org/downloads/101223_energy_report_final_print_2.pdf)

<sup>94</sup> [www.iea.org/Textbase/npsun/weo2011sum.pdf](http://www.iea.org/Textbase/npsun/weo2011sum.pdf)

<sup>95</sup> <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/Global/international/publications/climate/2010/fullreport.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> <http://www.nreca.coop/members/history/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>97</sup> <http://www.natbrasil.org.br/docs/publicacoes/sovereignty2.pdf>

## SECTION 8

# Food for all within planetary boundaries<sup>98</sup>

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**I**n 2008 the most comprehensive international agriculture assessment ever conducted was released by the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development IAASTD. The assessment noted that the continuation of an intensive model of agriculture was not an option to feed the world due to its huge environmental and social costs. Many recent high level analyses such as from the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and the Foresight Report on the Future of Food and Farming confirm that it is possible to abandon environmentally-damaging intensive farming without jeopardizing future world food supplies. This will be possible especially if people in developed countries adopt healthier, lower-meat diets. With a billion people in the world malnourished, and the same number of people obese – overweight to a level which endangers their health – adjusting diets globally will benefit rich communities as well as poor ones.

Given the significant contribution of agriculture to climate change, it is vital that policy and research focus on reducing emissions. The impact of climate change on future food production is uncertain. However, even if climate change has a negative impact on crop yields, a global lower-meat diet will still allow for the world to be fed. Intensive crop yields are currently associated with energy intensive inputs, such as nitrogen fertilisers and water. Climate change should not be used as a justification for further intensification that will worsen the vicious circle of environmental degradation and more greenhouse gas emissions. Taking account of the need to mitigate and adapt to climate impacts, an intermediate system of crop yields with 'fair less meat' diets should be pursued.

Viable food systems already exist. Small scale food producers provide the food for about 70 per cent of the population today, and there is widespread recognition that taking into account the needs of smallholder farmers is vital to feed a global

population in the future.<sup>99 100</sup> Yet marginalisation of small-scale farmers in policymaking and investment, combined with a focus on producing for export markets, means most of the poor and hungry in the world today are small farmers in rural areas.<sup>101</sup> The global market is failing to feed them. Therefore we need policies that allow small-scale food producers to feed themselves and prioritise states achieving the right to food.

Organic and agro-ecological farming techniques can play a significant role in feeding a world population of 9.2 billion by 2050, while enhancing farmland biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem services. However for this to be realised there must be recognition of the contribution and importance of smallholder farmers in feeding local populations with local, culturally-appropriate and healthy food, and of the importance of secure land and resources tenure to enable them to do so. It is farmers themselves that invest the most in agriculture and they must be supported by an enabling policy environment alongside research and development. It is vital that any other investments, especially foreign direct investment, must not encourage industrial export-oriented agriculture or grabbing land and resources from local communities.

## 8.1 Sustainable Intensification and the Rio summit

Put simply there are two ways we can address the need to feed existing and predicted populations globally: by using differently the existing crops and animal protein produced (changing how they are distributed, reducing waste, ensuring all diets are more sustainable); or by increasing the global food output.

Sustainable intensification looks specifically at the latter approach. Farmers can expand the area under cultivation or they can increase productivity on the same amount of land. Bringing more land into cultivation is severely limited by how much land exists, of what quality and what the impacts will be for ecosystem services (if the land in question consists of wetlands, forests or peat, for example).

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<sup>99</sup> High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis (2008). Comprehensive Framework for Action. New York, United Nations.

<sup>100</sup> (2007b). Agriculture for Development. World Development Report 2008. Washington, D.C., World Bank.

<sup>101</sup> IFAD (2010), Rural Poverty Report 2011. Rome, IFAD

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<sup>98</sup> For more information and full references see: [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/eating\\_planet\\_briefing.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/eating_planet_briefing.pdf)

Sustainable intensification therefore focuses on increasing yields while reducing environmental impact.

The UK Government is one of the most proactive supporters in the Rio process of the inclusion of sustainable intensification as a key tool in feeding the world, given the constraints on increasing land take for agriculture. However, the sustainable intensification approach is open to wide interpretation and suffers from poor definition. Friends of the Earth believe this is unhelpful terminology and we need something far more rooted in sustainability and equity for society to base future direction for food and farming.

**Recommendation:** At the Rio summit, the UK Government should support the inclusion of policies which:

- Give strong and increasing support to small-scale, agro-ecological and other forms of sustainable, ecological and humane food production to ensure a shift away from environmentally and socially destructive industrial food production systems. This shift will produce enough and healthy food for the projected 9 billion people or more.
- Regulate, encourage and support the transformation of industrial and other forms of unsustainable agriculture towards smallholder-based agro-ecological and other forms of sustainable, ecological, and low energy food production.
- Support food sovereignty as the overall framework for food and agricultural policies.
- Start to develop a work plan for implementing the findings of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD).
- Call on governments to stop the global land grab and return the more than 80 million hectares of land that has been taken from small-scale farmers, pastoralists and indigenous communities with immediate effect.
- Recognise the environmental damage and inequitable consumption patterns promoted by industrial, grain-fed livestock systems. Support integrated, low input, humane farming systems and take action to reduce over-consumption of meat and dairy products in the industrialised world.

## 8.2 Reforming the Common Agricultural Policy to create food security

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the framework under which farmers in the European Union (EU) and the UK operate. It covers farming, environmental measures, rural development and the policies that control how Europe trades with other countries. It is the largest common policy across Europe and 40 per cent of the EU's budget is spent on the CAP.

Friends of the Earth along with many other organisations wants to see a complete overhaul of the CAP so that it delivers safe, healthy, local food for all, produced by diverse, ecological farming methods: a CAP based on food sovereignty. In particular we are calling for a halt to any support for animal factory farming and environmentally-damaging imports of soy animal feed from South America, and a shift of money towards home grown animal feeds and low input livestock farming.

About £4 billion of taxpayer's money is spent on UK agriculture every year through the CAP. At the moment this money is being spent propping up systems of farming that are bad for the environment and bad for farmers. We need funding and robust policy measures to shift UK and EU agriculture to more extensive, low input farming that provides jobs in rural communities and safe, healthy food.

**Recommendation:** With the negotiations currently ongoing, the UK Government should:

- Demand that all farmers who are receiving greening payments implement crop rotations with legumes.
- Support payments to increase the amount of home grown protein crops – reducing our dependence on imported soy.
- Redirect payments from large farms to smaller farms and farms with high nature value.
- Publish a paper outlining its policies on the CAP reform that will shift the UK farming industry away from environmentally-damaging practices.
- Introduce effective supply and demand management in the CAP to prevent price volatility and build resilience in European farming.

## 8.3 Biofuels

Biofuel use in the UK is rapidly increasing demand for imported feedstocks and leading to serious environmental and social impacts in producer countries.<sup>102</sup> These impacts include:

- Food price rises caused by the competition between biofuel crops with food crops for land and water.
- Land grabs: Farming communities' land rights being ignored or undermined in the dash for land to grow biofuels.
- Biodiversity loss: Rapid expansion in land use for soy and palm oil is a major cause of deforestation in South America and South East Asia.

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<sup>102</sup> For more information see: [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing\\_notes/biofuels\\_in\\_2011\\_gathering.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefing_notes/biofuels_in_2011_gathering.pdf)



- Climate change: The EU biofuel target has been shown to result in a net increase in greenhouse gas emissions rather than a reduction when the effects of indirect land use change are being accounted for.<sup>103</sup>

Expectations for the potential of bioenergy as a future fuel should be lowered to more realistic levels and should not be viewed in isolation from world food supplies. Currently, fuel companies are mandated to blend all transport fuel sold in the UK with 4 per cent biofuel. This will rise to 5 per cent by 2013/2014 under the UK's Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation (RTFO). The recently introduced EU Renewable Energy Directive (RED) requires that 10 per cent of energy used in transport comes from 'renewable sources' by 2020. According to the UK Government Renewable Energy Action Plan, in the UK this would be expected to be met almost entirely through the use of first generation biofuels from crops, in essence a 10 per cent biofuel target.

Biofuel targets are unsustainable and fail to result in a net reduction of climate change-causing emissions. The billions spend by the EU and its member states in support of biofuels every year would be far better spent on transport solutions that are cheaper, not environmentally damaging, and proven to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

For example we should be taking measures to boost walking and cycling, lower speed limits to reduce emissions and save lives, increase the fuel efficiency of new cars, and support the increase of electric vehicles. These measures would all save carbon emissions alongside benefits for health, energy security and creating new jobs.

The carbon accounting system for bioenergy is also flawed. Currently biomass is considered carbon neutral at the point of combustion and emissions from production and land use change are supposed to be accounted for under the LULUCF (land use, land use change and forestry) accounting. However a large number of countries do not account for LULUCF emissions, allowing biomass emissions to disappear.

#### Recommendations:

- Targets and incentives for transport biofuels should be abandoned.
- The UK must push for a reform of the carbon accounting system for bioenergy.



*John Muyisha and his community in Kalangala, Uganda, have lost their land. One day, BIDCO, a Kenyan company, arrived and told him that the land was now theirs. Bulldozers came that flattened the ancient forest and John's coffee plants. The company planted oil palms instead. Is this what is meant by "the green economy"?*

To read more about this story go to [www.flickr.com/photos/foei](http://www.flickr.com/photos/foei)

<sup>103</sup> [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/driving\\_to\\_destruction.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/driving_to_destruction.pdf)



## Land – they don't make it anymore, so they just take it: Land grabbing

Land grabbing occurs when land that was previously used by local communities is leased or sold to outside investors, including corporations and governments. Typically, the land is taken over for commodity crops to sell on the overseas market, including for agrofuel and food crops. However land grabbing also occurs to clear land for tree plantations (grown for carbon offsets), protected reserves, and mines. It can often result from speculative investments when funds predict a high rate of return from land investments. As a consequence, land, especially fertile agricultural land, is increasingly being privatised, depriving rural communities of access to vital resources. The lack of adequate and secure access by the rural and urban poor to land and natural resources is a prime cause of hunger and poverty in the world. Studies have found that around half the people suffering from hunger are estimated to be living in rural smallhold farming households. A further fifth are farming households without land.

Examples of land grabbing have been recorded in more than 60 countries around the world, with investment groups, corporations and governments taking the land. There is no global land registry, so it is difficult to know exactly how much land is involved, but recent estimates range from between 80 to 227 million hectares. For example, in Ethiopia, 10 per cent of the country's farmland is under foreign control. In Indonesia and Cambodia foreign landowners control 8 per cent. In Uganda, estimates suggest between 4 and 8 per cent of land is under foreign land deals.

A range of factors have triggered this global land grab, including high food prices, growing demand for land and for other natural resources, and a financial crisis that forced investors to look for new speculative investments. Companies often secure long leases to exploit the land for profits, extracting natural mineral resources, or growing crops for food, fuel or carbon credits.

Behind these growing levels of demand lies the fundamental problem of over-consumption. The industrialised world, and, increasingly, elites in the emerging economies, use the lion's share of global resources to feed their affluent lifestyles. Globally, we are living beyond the planet's means. This problem is particularly acute in the United States and Europe, setting a trend that is rapidly being followed by a growing middle class in parts of the developing world. Europe's consumption levels far exceed the continent's capacity, relying heavily on imported resources from the rest of the world. A study by Friends of the Earth Europe found that Europe's land footprint is one of the biggest globally, second only to the United States. More than half of the land used to produce resources consumed in Europe is based overseas.

Friends of the Earth calls on international governments to:

- Immediately cease all large-scale land grabs and return the plundered land to communities.
- Implement genuine agrarian and aquatic reform programmes and implement actions agreed at the 2006 International Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development.
- Target public investment towards peasant agriculture, family farming, artisanal fishing and indigenous food procurement systems that are based on ecological methods (as outlined in the conclusions of the 2008 International assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development).
- Reject the weak World Bank Principles on Responsible Agricultural Investment (RAI) and instead base national and international governance structures on the Voluntary Guidelines for land and natural resources tenure agreed at the Committee on World Food Security in order to provide secure access to land, forestry and fisheries for communities.
- Abide by their treaties and conventions under international law with regard to land grabbing, especially under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other Human Rights obligations.
- Put in place policies to stop over-consumption, for instance by scrapping agrofuel mandates and subsidies in the European Union and United States, and tackling high-meat diets in the West.

See [www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view](http://www.foei.org/en/resources/publications/pdfs/2012/land-life-justice/view) for more information

# Conclusion

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**T**his report began by outlining the challenge we face – an unprecedented environmental crisis that threatens the future of humanity, and levels of extreme poverty and vulnerability that are unacceptable in the 21st century.

Given the state of pre-summit negotiations, it would now require a miracle for Rio+20 to define an adequate response to these challenges. However, it may mark the beginning of a process to create new global frameworks intended to help us out of our current hole.

To rebuild confidence in the possibility of adequate global action, the countries that did the most to cause our problems must act first. Friends of the Earth wants to see the UK become a global leader in action on sustainable development – in order to both rebuild confidence in multilateral negotiations, and help ensure a safe and prosperous future for people living here.

With the right political will, it is entirely possible to transform our energy system to depend on clean energy we generate from waves, wind and sun. We can shift to an economy that consumes less of our planet's limited natural resources. We can develop new economic models that work to support prosperity for the majority of people – rather than the greed of the few. And the decisions and choices of ordinary people can be at the heart of this amazing new future.

By 2022 – Rio+30 – it will be clear whether adequate action has been taken to avert catastrophe. The current Coalition Government is very unlikely to be in power then. But the ramifications of the decisions they make during their administration will still be felt in the UK and beyond.

Friends of the Earth is calling on the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister to seize the opportunity of Rio+20 to rise to the challenge and show serious leadership to put the UK on course to drive the change we need to see.

**Nothing less than our future depends on it.**



**Humanity faces a red alert – economic meltdown, billions going hungry and dangerous pressure on our natural life-support systems.**

**It's in this context that world leaders meet in Rio de Janeiro, 20 years after the first Earth Summit.**

**This report looks at what we need and what we can expect from the negotiations – with specific recommendations for the UK Government.**

**World leaders must recognise that we all rely on the same planet by acting together to protect it.**

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#### **Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland**

For more than 40 years we've seen that the wellbeing of people and planet go hand in hand – and it's been the inspiration for our campaigns. Together with thousands of people we've secured safer food and water, defended wildlife and natural habitats, championed the move to clean energy and acted to keep our climate stable. **Be a Friend of the Earth – see things differently.**

