

RIO +20: AN ABBREVIATED GUIDE

What is Rio+20?

The UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), more commonly referred to as “Rio+20.”

“Rio+20 will mark the 20th anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), in Rio de Janeiro, and the 10th anniversary of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. It is envisaged as a Conference at the highest possible level, including Heads of State and Government or other representatives. The objective of the Conference is to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges.”

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

When/where is it?

June 20-22, 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

What are the conference themes?

The Conference will focus on two themes:

1. The [green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication](#)
2. The [institutional framework for sustainable development](#) (IFSD)

What are the expected outcomes?

The Conference will result in a “focused political document.” Contained within the draft outcome document (as of 31 January 2012) are recommendations for future action on the following items:

1. *Strengthening the IFSD by integrating the three pillars of development (environmental, social, and economic) at the local, national, regional, and global levels.*
2. *Action on Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)*
 - a. Improving the CSD
OR
 - b. Transforming the CSD into the Sustainable Development Council
3. *Action on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*
 - a. Strengthening the capacity of UNEP
OR
 - b. Establish a specialized agency for the environment with universal membership, based on UNEP
4. *Developing set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) --- See below*

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Member States could agree in the outcome document to launch a process to produce by 2015 a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a mechanism by which to monitor the progress around these goals. The UN Secretary General would be requested to coordinate this process. The SDGs would be universal and applicable to all countries, but would allow for differentiated approaches by countries.

Six potential SDG themes emerged from a Member State retreat in late January:

- Nutritious Food for All
- Sustainable Energy for All
- Safe and Sustainable Cities of All
- Sustainable Consumption and Production by All
- Decent Jobs for All
- Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation for All

Why does Rio+20 matter?

Health is central to sustainable development

Despite the fact that health figures prominently on international resolutions for sustainable development (e.g. Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation [JPOI]) and poverty alleviation and economic development (e.g., the MDGs), the zero draft of the outcome document ([available here](#)) includes surprisingly little attention to the centrality of health concerns for green development. Health is also conspicuously absent among the “priority/key/thematic/cross-sectoral issues” of the outcome document.

Any and all outcomes of Rio+20 must reinforce prior recognition of health within the context of sustainable development, health as fundamental to sustainable development, and the need to integrate health policies into policies and programs designed to address the emerging challenges identified by the Rio+20 process. Although negotiations on the zero draft text are now underway and Member States can make changes to address these deficiencies, they will not do without demand and pressure from civil society.

The SDGs will have a significant impact on the post-2105 process

The issues defined in a set of SDGs could be the single most significant contribution to discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. According to paragraph 108 of the zero draft of the outcome document, the SDGs would “complement and strengthen the MDGs in the development agenda for the post-2015 period.” Because no decisions have been taken and the post-2015 process is only just beginning, it remains to be seen exactly how the SDGs will impact the process. But, that SDGs will have an impact is undisputed.

Logistics of the Conference :

How big will Rio+20 be?

Organizers are predicting that Rio+20 will be the largest UN conference ever, with expected attendance around 150 Heads of State and 50,000 people. To compare, Rio '92 had 109 Heads of State and 30,000 visitors. A portion of the city will become a UN security zone, with the plenaries and official Member

State side events taking place within the zone. Civil society gathering areas, including the official space for civil society side events, will be located in another part of the city, outside of the security zone.

How can an organization participate in Rio+20?

Pre-registration is open to NGOs and major groups that are currently in consultative status with ECOSOC as NGOs (including those on the roster through the list of the Commission on Sustainable Development). NGOs and major groups that were accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 can also pre-register. [See ECOSOC list here.](#), the [CSD Roster list here](#) and [the WSSD2002 list here.](#) **The deadline for registration is May 20, 2012.**

NGOs and other Major groups' organizations that are NOT yet accredited to the United Nations and wish to participate will be offered a one-time opportunity to become accredited to Rio+20. Once your registration is approved, your organization can preregister representatives until the general deadline of 20 May 2012. **The deadline for new accreditation is February 20, 2012.** [Click here to start the accreditation for new groups.](#)

Important dates:

- March 19-23, 2012: First "Informal informal" negotiations on the zero draft of the outcome document. Location: UN Headquarters, NY
- March 26-27, 2012: 3rd Intersessional Meeting. Location: UN Headquarters, NY
- April 23- May 4, 2012: Second "informal informal" negotiations on the zero draft of the outcome document. Location: UN Headquarters, NY
- June 13-15, 2012: 3rd Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) Meeting. Location: Rio de Janeiro
- June 20-22, 2012: Rio+20