



# Rio+20 Informal Informals

## MGCY Address to Member States

30 April 2012, New York

Environmental degradation represents serious human rights violations as it deprives populations and communities, especially the most vulnerable in those communities, of basic resources for securing minimum standards of living.

In order to safeguard our natural resources and secure standards for life, survival and development of current and future generations, there is a need to enhance environmental protection and conservation through legal instruments that will establish obligation and responsibilities as well as effective and efficient protection mechanisms with repercussion for violators.

Principles of International Environmental Law, and especially the precautionary principle and the polluter pays principle must be strengthened and mainstreamed into all relevant policy areas pertaining to sustainable development. Additionally, it is necessary to ensure a human rights based approach to development, and enhance the use of human rights instruments for environmental protection. The need for accelerated and enhanced efforts towards the safeguarding of future generations cannot be over-emphasised.

We need to acknowledge that natural capital and the environment are the primary input for all types of economic activity; hence environmental protection needs strong legislative and executive actions that reflect this.

We need to develop and implement parameters and indicators that go beyond GDP and take into account the health and wellbeing of the planet and its inhabitants, along with environmental and social equity and equality, thus realigning policy goals towards integration of the three pillars of sustainable development and respecting planetary boundaries.

We call for governments and industry to commit to regulating the development of new technologies by requiring independent, publically available health and environmental impact assessments, prior to production commencing, in order to prevent potential harm to the environment that may impact upon the health and wellbeing of current and future generations. We also call for development of insurance mechanisms that should

mitigate against risks posed by such technologies and so that any damages intentionally or accidentally resulting from their use can be paid for.

We call for strong action by governments *and* civil society to promote the sustainable development of our Blue Economy, and to avoid depletion of finite water resources as well as achieve long-term food security for fisheries-dependent communities. Actions should include participatory commons-based governance, the establishment of a global network of marine protected areas, maximum catch size, and “no-take zones”, including a moratorium on mineral exploration in the Arctic and effective mechanisms for conflict resolution over aquatic resources. Conflict over future water availability and allocation, with growing global pressures such as climate change, must be recognised and addressed as a serious global threat to long-term peace and security.

We also call upon governments to take action at the international and national levels to prevent further land grabbing and ensure vulnerable populations' land rights are protected.

As children and youth we hope that Rio can deliver on the future we want, indeed the future we *need*, by ensuring that human rights are fulfilled and protected; that international and national environmental law is strengthened, those responsible for environmental degradation are held accountable and that we achieve a transition to greener, more socially inclusive, sustainable economies around the globe.

Like the environment, children and youth are a resource and in order to ensure sustainability, we hope you use us wisely as equal partners in our common quest for creating a future we want.

Thank you.