

Motion

tabled by the parliamentary groups of the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP and Alliance 90/The Greens

The United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20): Implementing sustainability on a global scale

The Bundestag is requested to adopt the following motion:

I. The German Bundestag notes:

At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, sustainable development was established as the guiding vision for policy-making. The German Bundestag pursues a concept of sustainability which focuses equally on the dimensions of the environment, economic development and social responsibility – for the benefit of the present population while safeguarding the bases of life for future generations. The Rio Summit in 1992 marked the dawn of a new era. After the conference, numerous countries adopted specific targets for the first time, primarily with the aim of curbing biodiversity loss, abating global warming, and alleviating poverty. In June 2012, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the 1992 summit, the United Nations will hold a follow-up conference (Rio+20) in order to assess progress to date and initiate further developments.

There is an urgent need for a radical restructuring of the global economic system, as climate change, our overstressed ecosystems, large-scale famines and the threat to the long-term viability of our financial and social systems are making increasingly clear. The situation requires an integrated approach which gives equal weight to environmental, economic and social objectives.

Although a raft of conventions and decisions have been adopted between governments, international organizations and civil society within the framework of the United Nations' sustainable development agenda, there are still deficits in coordination and implementation. It is apparent that strategies to address the existing problems vary considerably from region to region, notably as regards the implementation of a sustainable lifestyle and economy. The United Nations' overarching role as a platform for communication and coordination does not yet meet the high standards that global sustainable development demands. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is inefficient and has little practical focus. Intergenerational issues play only a secondary role. The linkage between the CSD and the UN climate (UNFCCC) and biodiversity (CBD) processes is unclear. Moreover, on environmental matters, the UN landscape is highly fragmented. Overall, then, the outcomes of the Rio process to date cannot yet be described as satisfactory. This applies especially to the dimensions of climate change and global warming.

Rio+20 is intended to respond to this situation. It will therefore focus on the following key themes: "A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication", and "The institutional framework for sustainable development".

The task now is to bridge the gap between the individual dimensions of sustainable development, particularly at the United Nations level, and as the outcome of the conference,

achieve comprehensive and binding implementation of the sustainable development agenda.

II. The German Bundestag calls on the Federal Government,

Institutional reforms

- to work to increase the political visibility of the sustainability agenda within the UN system and broaden its thematic scope. The competences of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) within the UN system fall short of what is required to do justice to the global relevance of sustainable development. As a consequence, it cannot adequately advocate for the sustainability agenda vis-à-vis other UN organizations. A process of institutional restructuring is required in order to put sustainable development at the heart of the UN's policy work. This could be achieved by enhancing the CSD's institutional status, but only if this is accompanied by a deepening and widening of its thematic scope and improvements in efficiency and effectiveness. The theme of sustainability could also be addressed within the framework of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) or a Sustainable Development Council established at UN level;
- to work for the substantial reinforcement of the governance structures in place at the UN level which are of relevance to all the dimensions of sustainable development. This requires far better linkage between the environment, social affairs and economic development within the UN system. The Federal Government is therefore called on to advocate for an effective and reciprocal system of coordination between the relevant UN work units on the basis of equality;
- to work to ensure that the three dimensions of sustainable development are given equal priority in organizational terms, and as part of this process, to become a strong advocate for the upgrading of the status of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), so that it is established as a specialized agency of the UN (the UN Environment Organization – UNEO). In particular, better coordination of the highly fragmented international environmental governance structures can help to create a “global authoritative voice” (Nairobi-Helsinki Outcome 2010) for the environment;
- to work to achieve better linkage between the UN's sustainable development, climate policy and biodiversity processes;

A green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

- to embed respect for the natural limits of the Earth's ecosystems as a core principle guiding political and economic action. The desired economic growth can only be achieved on a viable and sustainable basis within these guard rails. This applies especially to the protection of the climate, biodiversity and habitats;
- to advocate for a far more rapid transformation of national economies worldwide into systems which are sustainable in economic, ecological and social terms, and to drive the development of a “Green Economy Roadmap” within the UN framework. This Roadmap should combine national objectives with multilateral support mechanisms and should be implemented worldwide no later than 2025. Against this background, the Federal Government should work for the substantial intensification of the advisory services currently provided by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the World Bank for interested developing countries and emerging

economies, with tailor-made country concepts being produced which are adapted to the specific requirements of the countries concerned and have due regard for and encourage ownership by them;

- to align the “Green Economy Roadmap” with the objectives of a sustainable, low-carbon, resource-efficient economy which is guided by our responsibility towards the natural environment and is based on a renewable energy supply, and to consider incentive schemes to encourage “leapfrogging” of the fossil-fuelled/nuclear-powered emissions- and resource-intensive phase of industrialization;
- to promote technological cooperation, especially in the fields of environmental protection, energy efficiency and renewables, at the global and regional level, and to utilize this strategic opportunity for economic modernization, growth and employment in industrialized, emerging and developing countries alike. Mobilizing the private sector’s investment and innovation potential is crucial for a green economy;
- to ensure that during the transition, especially in the emerging economies and developing countries, particular emphasis is placed on the positive effects of a green, socially equitable economy for poverty alleviation. Efforts to ameliorate social hardships during the transformation process and improve access to basic infrastructure (water, sanitation, healthcare, energy, transport, housing, education) must form part of the modernization strategy within the framework of the Green Economy Roadmap;
- to work to ensure that all industrialized countries undertake to formulate sustainable development strategies with effective and verifiable indicators.

Berlin, 28 September 2011

Volker Kauder, Gerda Hasselfeldt and parliamentary group
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