

Statement NGOs (Plenary session – 20th of June)

Thank you President

I am making this statement on behalf of the NGOs

It feels amazing to be sitting in this room among all the world leaders, and feeling all this power around me that can shape the World. We all know the threat that is facing us, and I do not need to repeat the urgency. Science is very clear. If we do not change in the coming five to ten years the way our societies function, we will be threatening the survival of future generations and all other species on the planet. Nevertheless, you sitting here in this room have the power to reverse all of this. What you can do here is the dream of each one of us: to have the opportunity to be the saviors of the planet. It is all up to you.

And yet we stand on the brink of Rio+20 being another failed attempt, with governments only trying to protect their narrow interests instead of inspiring the World and giving all of us back the faith in humanity that we need. If this happens, it would be a big waste of power, and a big waste of leadership.

You cannot have a document titled ‘the future we want’ without any mention of planetary boundaries, tipping points, or the Earth’s carrying capacity. The text as it stands is completely out of touch with reality. Just to be clear, NGOs here in Rio in no way endorse this document. Already more than 1,000 organisations and individuals have signed in only one day a petition called “The Future We Don’t Want” that completely refuses the current text. It does not in any way reflect our aspiration, and therefore we demand that the words “in full participation with civil society” are removed from the first paragraph.

If you adopt the text in its current form, you will fail to secure a future for the coming generations, including your own children.

To mention a few examples:

In the issue of finding resources to implement sustainable development, we see countries using the economic crisis as an excuse, while at the same time spending 100s of billions of dollars subsidizing the fossil fuel industry, the most profitable industry in the world. The first thing you can do is eliminating the existing harmful subsidies, especially fossil fuel subsidies, which was voted as the number one issue during the civil society dialogue.

Under the oceans section, you have failed to give a clear mandate to even start negotiating an implementing agreement to stop the Wild West abuse of the high seas.

There are many other failures in the document related to women’s reproduction health, missed opportunities to start new global treaties on civil society participation and on sustainability reporting, the extraordinary lack of any reference to armed conflicts, nuclear energy (especially after the Fukushima disaster), and many others.

But it is not too late. We do not believe that it is over. You are here for three more days, and you can still inspire us and the world. It would be a shame and a waste for you to only come here and sign off a document. We urge you to create new political will that would make us stand and applaud you as our true leaders.

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