

# **NGO Strategy Seminar on Earth Summit 2002**

**Hosted by the Heinrich Böll Foundation**

**Brussels**

**February 20, 2001**

## **Final Seminar Report**

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This seminar report addresses the following:

- I. Objectives of the strategy seminar;
- II. Overview of official UN and EU preparations for 2002;
- III. Overview of participants' activities for 2002;
- IV. Summary of key points from discussion on challenges, goals and possible focus for collaboration;
- V. Agreed operative next steps

### **I. Objectives of the strategy seminar:**

On February 20, 2001, the Heinrich Böll Foundation hosted a seminar that brought together Brussels based environmental and developmental NGOs in order to discuss how to best forge greater solidarity and co-operation within our NGO community in the run-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (hereafter referred to as the "Earth Summit 2002").

The specific objectives of the February 20 seminar included the following:

- (i) To share respective Earth Summit 2002 plans, strategies and advocacy and public awareness campaign ideas;
- (ii) To learn more about various official and civil society preparatory activities and to identify key opportunities for input and influence and to assess where collaboration may be desirable;
- (iii) To identify priority themes which could be further refined into concrete policy recommendations and which could serve as the basis of future collaborative NGO efforts. Such themes should also become part of various processes such as the European Rio+10 Coalition May meeting, the ECE regional meeting in September, the forthcoming 2002 PrepCom meetings, and the related civil society efforts attached to those processes;

- (iv) To explore the strategic modalities for collaboration and co-operation between the Brussels based NGO community and the European Rio+10 Coalition process;
- (v) To explore how the Brussels-based NGO community can enhance its collective impact on the Earth Summit 2002 preparatory process of the EU and other important government actors. In this regard, to explore how the Brussels based NGO community can assist the EU to more meaningfully address Southern priority concerns in their 2002 preparations.

It was agreed that this February strategy session would be followed by a substantive meeting scheduled for Thursday March 8, 2001 at the Brussels office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation. The details of the agreed work programme for the March 8 meeting is set out in Section V of this final report.

## **II. Overview of official UN and EU preparations for 2002:**

### **1. Specific objectives of the UN's 2002 preparatory process:**

- Comprehensive review and assessment of progress based on results of national assessments and sub regional and regional prep meetings etc;
- Identify major accomplishments and lessons learned;
- Identify constraints and propose time bound measures to be undertaken etc;
- Address new challenges and opportunities that have emerged since Agenda 21;
- Address ways of strengthening institutional framework for SD and evaluate the role of the CSD.

### **2. Time frame for the UN official preparatory process:**

- Summit will be held in Joburg in summer of 2002
- First organizational prepcom will be held on 30 April to 1 May in NY followed by three prepcoms (First substantive Prepcom 1 Jan28-Feb 8 2002)
- Last prepcom will be held in Indonesia at ministerial level in May 2002

### **3. National level preparations**

- National preparatory committee functions will include the following: undertake review and assessment; support "101 Ways", Visions initiative, Posters and Progressions Initiatives;
- Objectives of the national preparatory processes include: mobilize awareness, interest and involvement at national level; ensure organic link between national preparatory activities and assessments to regional processes and then into the global process;
- CSD invites all governments to undertake national review processes as early as possible;
- DESA is preparing country profiles to cover most of the thematic themes of A-21
- 101 Ways: countries select one SD activity which brought the most successful results;
- National Progressions: national based consultation to identify 3-4 specific SD targets that are achievable in the next 5-10 years with the aim to generate action

### **3.Regional level preparations**

- Intergovernmental regional meetings will take place from September to November 2001 to benefit from national and sub regional processes.
- The European official regional meeting will be convened under the auspices of the ECE in late September 2001. Eco-Forum and ANPED will be organizing NGO preparatory meetings for that process during the summer.
- Regional preparatory meetings have two main tasks: undertake regional assessments of progress; prospective outlooks and main constraints faced by regions; formulate regional platforms
- In preparation for regional prep meetings, following activities underway: Regional Commissions and UNEP with DESA are developing the modalities for the meetings; DESA to ensure that results of national assessments are available to regional preparatory meetings; UNEP and Regional Commissions will collaborate to ensure that the results of various studies and assessments (GEO etc) are brought to attention of regional meetings

### **4.Global level preparations**

- In Feb 2000, the InterAgency Committee on SD (IACSD) launched the UN system's preparations for 2002 and agreed that: preparations should involve the Admin Committee on Coordination (ACC);
- The IACSD, through its Task Manager system would ensure the preparation of substantive documents; a thematic clustering of A-21 chapters will be applied to promote an integrated rather than chapter-by-chapter review; one review report will be prepared for each cluster;
- Factual part of the review reports will be submitted by SG reports in first session of CSD 10 in 2002;
- The analytical part of the review reports will form the main body of information for the prep of one comprehensive policy report of the SG which will review the status of implementation of Agenda 21;
- A series of global thematic Agenda 21 roundtables to prepare inputs to intergovernmental preparatory meetings. 3-5 roundtables addressing possible themes such as: new opportunities to SD offered by recent Science and tech developments; strengthening the national and global institutional framework for SD; social inequities as an impediment to SD; new ethics for SD; promising approaches to integrate economic, social and environmental objectives of SD in policy formulation.

## **5. Key elements from the European Commission's Communication on 2002**

### **(i) Four strategic objectives that the EU undertakes to promote through the Summit:**

- Increased global equity and an effective partnership for SD
- Better integration and coherence at the international level
- Adoption of environment and development targets to revitalise and sharpen the political commitment
- More effective action at national level and international monitoring

### **(ii) EU's suggested closely set of issues for the forward looking agenda:**

- Protecting the natural resource base of economic development;
- Integrating environment and poverty eradication;
- Making globalisation sustainable;
- Enhancing good governance and participation.

### **(iii) EU plans to speed up its preparatory process:**

- Steering group to champion stakeholder preparations
- Major public event on an assessment of the implementation of the Rio Agreements;
- Enhancing support for NGO advocacy role
- Increased outreach to developing countries, supporting CS participation and regional preparations at pan-Euro levels

### **(iv) EU's Political Challenge for 2002:**

- EU must show real commitment to changing unsustainable production and consumption (involves adoption of a SD Strategy at Goteborg Summit)
- Contribute to breaking the deadlock caused by developing countries expectations and developed countries lack of development of development aid finance;
- EU must create a united, coherent and far-sighted EU position and thus necessary to launch a preparatory process involving all EU member states and partners around the world;

- UN conference on LDCs and the UN Financing for Development process and the ongoing OECD work on SD will provide wider platforms to the EU to build consensus for 2002.

**(iv)Key problems identified by the EU in implementing the Rio Agenda:**

- Failure to change unsustainable patterns of consumption and production
- Shortage of financial resources
- Insufficient response from international institutions
- Weaknesses in domestic governance and capacity

### **III. Overview of Participants' 2002 Activities:**

**Important Note:** The following is a very brief overview of participants' 2002 activities. For more information, please contact the respective participants directly. See appended participants list for their contact details.

#### **1. Heinrich Böll Foundation:**

- Organizing two NGOs seminars on 2002. The first one is this February strategy seminar and the second one will be determined by the participants of the February 20 seminar;
- Working with Friends of the Earth Europe in the organisation of a two NGO conference on Rio+10 at the Goteborg EU Summit;
- Working with Stockholm Environment Institute to host a policy dialogue between European NGO SD thinkers and leaders (representative of European and Southern civil society) and EU policy makers and political officials at the Goteborg Summit to focus on how the EU can play a more progressive leadership role in the run up to 2002 and in particular address more meaningfully Southern concerns.
- HB offices in Berlin organizing a range of Germany-based public outreach activities on 2002.
- Organizing a number of capacity building events, including training programmes for southern activists on substantive issues and advocacy skills. These trainees will then be brought to Brussels and Washington DC where they will spend one to two months working with different organizations to gain a better understanding of the EU and DC based political processes.

## **2. European Rio+10 Coalition:**

- The Coalition is a multi-stakeholder initiative that is organizing several key events leading up to 2002. These include a multi-stakeholder conference entitled “Objective 2002” on 10-11 May in Brussels. Overall objective will be on enhancing implementation of Agenda 21 and the Rio Agreements.
- Specific Conference themes to be addressed include poverty and peoples’empowerment; povety and sustainable agriculture; poverty and sustainable trade; poverty, development policy and public funding; poverty and energy and environment; and elements of a new North South deal. Working papers on these themes will be prepared in advance and will form the basis of discussion during the Conference;
- A series of region to region dialogues will also be initiated in Asia, Africa, Mediterranean and Latin America;
- The Coalition is also developing an initiative on freshwater on issues of security, pricing and public/private partnership.
- The European Rio+10 Coalition is coordinated by a Steering Committee comprised of ETUC, ICDA, ICLEI, MIO-ECSDE, SEI, UNEP, WBCSD and WWF and facilitated by the European Movement and EPE.
- The “Europe in the World” Contact Group consists of representatives from EU and Accession Member States, European Commission officials, MEPs and civil society.

## **3. UNED Forum:**

- UNED Forum is an international multi-stakeholder initiative that has as its core activities: building partnerships and networks; training and capacity building; researching and influencing policy; providing and spreading information through development of web site resources and publication of a monthly newsletter on the 2002 process; publication

of briefing papers (to date: freshwater, HIV/AIDs; FDI; Energy and Climate Change, International Financial Instruments and Food Security)

- UNED Forum is working in many regions to support the engagement of the broadest range of multi-stakeholders in key 2002 events and processes.
- Other key activities include: developing workshops with ECLI in Africa; developing a methodology for multi-stakeholder processes; helping to organize a multi-stakeholder dialogue at the September ECE meeting as well as at the International Freshwater Meeting in Bonn in December; and is also working on the organization of an Implementation Summit that would directly follow Earth Summit 2002 and focus on how best to take the results of the official process forward.

#### **4. FOE Europe/Böll NGO meetings at Gothenburg EU Summit:**

- FOEE and Hbf are planning a two day NGO meeting at the Goteborg EU Summit (June 13-14). This meeting will focus on the broader theme of the global responsibility of the EU. It will bring together European environment and development NGOs together with several southern NGOs to address how the EU should play a more effective leadership role in the global process and what are the steps necessary for the EU to get “its own house in order”. The first day will focus on “Sustainability and Solidarity” and will involve NGO discussions on a number of themes related to the 2002 process. Day Two will focus on “European Politics for Sustainability” and will involve interactive dialogue sessions between popular movements and key political figures.

#### **5. Greenpeace Europe:**

- Greenpeace Europe is working on most of the Rio Conventions, monitoring follow up and implementation and formulating policy positions that are channelled into the respective decision-making forums.

- Greenpeace will prepare its own evaluation of progress, especially as regards the impact of the WTO on the global sustainability agenda.

## **6. ICDA:**

- ICDA is a member of the European Rio+10 Coalition and will be channelling its trade policy expertise through that process. ICDA will also be increasingly working on globalisation issues as they impact trade and gender concerns.
- ICDA also administrates the coordination of a regional network, the Coordination of European NGOs Networking on Trade (CENNT) and an international network, the Informal Working Group on Gender and Trade (IWGGT) Both can provide access to a wide range of expertise on these key issues as will be needed over the course of the next few months.
- CENNT will be meeting on March 9 and will bring together key development NGOs working on trade to exchange information and produce policy positions.

## **7. GLOBE Europe:**

- GLOBE Europe will convene a conference in Stockholm on May 11-12 that will bring together representatives from over 40 European countries and MEPs to discuss the challenge of integration of environmental concerns into other key policy areas. The results of this meeting will be channelled into the Goteburg EU Summit.
- GLOBE Europe will also continue to focus on two key substantive issues: energy and climate change.

## **8. European Federation on Transport and Environment:**

- T&E has not yet developed any concrete plans regarding the 2002 process but is prepared to provide its transport and environment policy expertise in the context of European NGO preparations for 2002.

- T&E is in contact with a wide range of transport and environment policy experts around the world and can be an important source of expertise on these issues

#### **IV. Summary of key points from discussion on challenges, goals and possible areas and means of collaboration in preparation for 2002:**

- With all the various multi-stakeholder processes underway, it is important for **NGOs to create their own forum** and space within which they can deepen and refine and consolidate their own thinking. It is important to define what that forum might be;
- It was generally agreed that what is most needed is for NGOs to **focus attention on the challenges, obstacles and impediments to implementation** and develop new and innovative strategies for overcoming those impediments;
- It is important to keep **track of the different national level NGOs processes**, to feed critical information from them and to receive their concrete input which can be most helpful in assisting this “ad-hoc” group in developing operational recommendations that stem from real-life on the ground experience. The extent to which national NGOs organize themselves efficiently, will of course qualitatively affect the extent to which they can impact positively on the regional preparatory processes;
- One possible challenge for the Brussels based NGO community to address is how best to **strengthen and improve our media outreach efforts**. It was agreed that the media must be better engaged in the process, otherwise we will fail at stimulating public interest and involvement. A related point was the need for the NGO community to begin to articulate an exciting and inspiring new vision of a Sustainable Europe as a way of stimulating the EU to play a more proactive role, and also as a way of capturing the imagination and enthusiasm of the general public;
- **Other ideas** for the group to pursue collectively included: general public outreach on 2002; stimulating interest and engagement within our respective constituencies; focusing on a small list of priority items, coupled with a list of concrete demands regarding implementation targeted possibly on the EU; organizing collective meetings with EU officials to address how the EU can play a better leadership role in the 2002 process; engaging and linking up more effectively with development NGOs and perhaps with the private sector;

- It was suggested that for the next Brussels based **meeting, that efforts should be undertaken to engage** the various national networks and processes underway. It was felt that this would be an effective way to reach the development NGO community;
- It was also acknowledged that the **European Rio+10 Coalition offered an excellent opportunity for building multi-stakeholder relations** and joint activities, and that it also provided a very useful forum for coordination and information exchange. It also provides an opportunity for the NGO community to become more actively engaged in the process and to work with other stakeholders with whom it may not necessarily have contact. It was reiterated that in order for NGOs to contribute effectively to that forum, that it was important for them to create their own space in which they can develop their own thinking and analysis;
- It was also felt that the precise **scope, orientation and focus of this desired NGO forum** should be determined only after efforts have been undertaken to assess what similar forums do in fact exist, if at all. It is important to identify what our specific niche will be and what the added value of our collaboration would be;
- It was pointed out that **NGOs must be clear in identifying what we want to concretely achieve**. Once that has been defined, we can then define the precise role that we want to play collectively in order to advance our agreed collective goals and aims;
- It was also felt that it would be useful to consider starting a **dialogue process with “enlightened” sectors of the business and industry community**. On a substantive point, it was suggested that efforts should also be directed towards consolidating and integrating efforts and work around the poverty reduction strategies, the national sustainable development strategies and the EU Sustainability Strategy.
- It was generally agreed that in a desire to focus on a tangible initiative, a good starting point would be to produce a **thorough and rigorous critique of the European Commission’s Communication on 2002** and to evaluate gaps and weaknesses, as well as define concrete benchmarks against which we can hold the EU accountable for the political commitments it has made in that Communication. This critique could then be further developed, refined and used in a variety of ways. For example, as an input to the European Rio+10 Coalition; as an input to the drafting process of the EU Sustainability Strategy; as an input to the various planned at Goteborg; the ECE meeting; and

importantly, as a basis for engaging media interest. See next section for suggestions for operative next steps

## **V. Agreed next operative steps:**

1. The Heinrich Böll Foundation will host the **follow-up seminar to this February 20 strategy seminar on Thursday March 8** at their offices. The purpose of that meeting will be to focus on evaluating and critiquing the European Commission's Communication on Earth Summit 2002 as a concrete basis around which collaboration among the Brussels based environment and development NGO community can be further developed.
2. **The critique of the Communication** (to be undertaken at the March 8 meeting) **will focus on the following:** (i) identification of gaps; (ii) critique of key elements; (iii) identification of key benchmarks for measuring the EU's performance and holding them accountable to the broad political commitments in the Communication; (iv) specific policy recommendations and demands that will be directed towards the EU to ensure that it plays a positive leadership role in the 2002 process, and that it meaningfully addresses Southern concerns in a manner that truly contributes to a renewed global partnership; and finally (v) elements of our radical, creative and forward looking vision for a Sustainable Europe.
3. In preparation of the March 8 meeting that will focus on critiquing the Communication, Johannah Bernstein will prepare a set of **detailed questions to assist in focusing the evaluation and critique exercise**. These questions will be circulated to the participants one week in advance of the March 8 meeting. Participants are requested to reflect on these questions and to come prepared to make substantive contributions. The extent to which advance analysis can be undertaken by individual participants will greatly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the March 8 meeting. Please be sure to confirm your attendance at the March 8 meeting with Johannah as soon as possible.
4. The **results of the March 8 meeting** will yield a comprehensive evaluation and critique of the EU Communication that can be used in a number of different ways. Strategies for next steps will be developed at that meeting.
5. Some of the **strategic ideas regarding use and application of the Communication critique**, as discussed on February 20 include: (i) feeding that critique into the European Rio+10 Coalition May Conference; (ii) using it as a basis for media outreach including a press conference perhaps at the LDC conference; (iii) using that critique as a basis for the various dialogues with EU political leadership at the Goteborg Summit; (iv) feeding the critique into the ECE meeting in September; (v) using the

critique as a basis for a wide range of lobbying and advocacy efforts by European NGOs; (vi) using the critique as a basis for developing concrete recommendations regarding the EU Sustainability Strategy, since the EU SDS will in fact be one of the key instruments and vehicles through which our demands can and should be operationalized; (vii) using the critique as a basis for a Brussels based media roundtable to inform and educate Brussels media on the key 2002 issues and the leadership role that we expect the EU to play.

6. The March 8 meeting should also **identify other European colleagues** whom we should engage in the process such as ANPED and ECO-Forum. The March 8 meeting should also define its strategic plan for disseminating the Communication critique. It should also decide on the precise form in which this ad hoc grouping of NGO colleagues would like to continue working.

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February 21, 2001