CES Musings:
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Isn’t this What the Ecozoic Is All About? – Abundant Life!

And we will see with new eyes. We are going to trip the light.

REVIEW OF MATTHEW FOX’S EVENT IN CHAPEL HILL AND DVDS

Eco-Spirituality: A Weekend with Matthew Fox (April 27-28, Chapel Hill, NC)

Reviewed by Marilyn McNamara

Marilyn McNamara, as a graduate student in religion at Fordham University in the 1960s, studied with Thomas Berry. After moving to Chapel
Hill, North Carolina in 1986, she received her MSW degree, and is now a psychotherapist working within a Jungian framework. She prepared this report for the newsletter of the C.G. Jung Society of the Triangle. The Jung Society was a co-sponsor of the event as was CES.

With striking vividness, Matthew Fox describes the context for his weekend presentation on Eco-Spirituality: planet earth is presently undergoing its biggest extinction of species in 65 million years. A recent UN study further reported that our oceans may be devoid of sea-life in some 40 years!

This massive extinction of species puts both our planet and we humans in what Fox aptly calls the Dark Night of the Soul. As with any dark night, it carries great uncertainty, where what we thought we knew, gets unraveled. By insisting that what we are actually experiencing, however, at this time is nothing less than a planetary Dark Night of the Soul, Fox begins to orient us. At least we have some way to name what is happening to us.

In the midst of such extinction and the consequent dark night for humans, Fox recommends that we turn to the mystics. These are the ancestors, he reminds us, who have lived through dark nights, and therefore know something about them. They can teach us about this situation. Fox calls his teachers, the mystics, not only poets of the soul, but also pioneers of consciousness.

Fox summarizes what he has learned from his mystic teachers.

1. **Via Positiva**, We are not to neglect the importance of joy and celebration during this time. We are to take note of, and appreciate, the world we see all around us, and to love and celebrate one another. He reminds us that the great medieval thinker and mystic, Thomas Aquinas, taught us that the universe itself is the primary revelatory vehicle and that we are to cherish it.

2. **Via Negativa**. In the midst of any suffering, and our not knowing what to do about it, the mystics ask us to increase our ability to make silence, for this is a process of developing the muscles of receptivity. He reminds us that our very heartbreak can be an opening to Mystery.

3. **Path of Creativity**. Here Fox reminds us that the very same Spirit that hovered over creation in the beginning and down through the ages, hovers with the artist in all of us right now. Therefore, facilitated by being in and with silence, new possibilities can emerge.

4. **Path of Transformation**. In this latter phase of the process we are re-inspired and re-invigorated and we are called to come out of ourselves and the silence and struggle for justice. (As Fox points out, we either all come through, or no one comes through this time, so only securing what might appear to be our own safety will not be an adequate solution.)

Fox is mentored by the mystics, who help him navigate these dark times. In this context he offers his reflections on what insights have emerged for him on three critical fronts, worship, education and work.
Renewal of Prayer, Liturgy, Worship

Matthew Fox ponders on how we are to transform prayer, liturgy and worship. He shares some of what he has learned in this process.

He explains that first of all what is needed during this time of exploration is more emphasis on spirituality, and less on fixed institutions and their dogmas. (Wendell Berry is his book, The Unsettling of America, suggests that when what is fixed and too rigid is no longer adequate, some have to move into the margins and experiment anew, to bring back new ways of being and doing and thinking.)

Nevertheless Matthew Fox emphasizes that ritual is primal to our species. Anthropologically, it is a defining element of being human. Fox invites us to explore and experiment with new forms of ritual, forms that will awaken awe and creativity, create community and discourage fear. He emphasizes that a goal of worship and ritual is to make people high without drugs, for transcendent experiences are central to being human.

Fox also reminds us that the Christian celebration of Easter has an archetypal component, helping us to be in touch with and celebrate the very structure of the universe (i.e., how new life emerges out of what has died).

Education for Community, Creativity, and Sustainability

Fox reminds us that education today is too often limited to the training necessary to find ones place in the human-made world of work. This is not adequate, Fox insists, for humans are more than workers. In this context, Fox cites the Dalai Lama, who emphasizes education is in crisis the world over, for it is too often rooted in a European model that only trains the left brain. Such a model leaves out too much of our chakra system which includes broader and richer dimensions of our humanity.

Fox then offers us the Ten C’s! These, he suggests, are what can guide us to re-invent our educational systems:

1. **Cosmology:** Students need to be introduced to how we got here.
2. **Chaos:** Students need to be taught that chaos is integral to all creativity.
3. **Creativity:** Students need to be encouraged to learn how to bring it alive (e.g., India is producing cars that run on air!).
4. **Compassion:** Fox calls this the number one sign of divinity.
5. **Community:** A number one problem for so many is loneliness, yet Swahili has no word for loneliness.
What are we doing wrong here? At this time, our species is autistic, for we are cut off from the friendliness of the universe.

6. **Critical Thinking:** We need to develop the ability to use both the right and the left sides of our brain.

7. **Courage:** We will need big hearts to get through our dark times.

8. **Character:** This is the development of virtue, which increases our ability to be patient, to control impulsivity, and to see the broader implications of our behavior.

9. **Ceremony:** An adequate ritual life is essential to our humanity.

10. **Contemplation:** This creates a field for creativity, and calms the reptilian brain.

### Transforming Work

We must re-sacralize work, Fox insists, for if we take the sacred out of work we turn it into a job. In order to do this, we must link our outer work with our inner work, for work is not only about what we do but also about who we are. Though it has taken the universe 13.7 billion years to bring each of us here, the universe continues to birth us. Creative Spirit is the root of our creativity today and an increased awareness of this nourishes our inner and outer lives.

Fox reminds us that initially so many professions were developed to relieve people’s pain, and therefore make possible our joy. He offers us a question from the mystic tradition: what joy does my work bring to myself and others?

### Conclusion

Fox concludes his presentation on several fronts. First, he reminds us that hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up. In this context, he invites each person to ask the Universe, what can I do with my gifts? Fox gives an example of someone doing this: Calvin Mercer, professor at East Carolina University. “Dr. Mercer is the originator of the Monastic Project, a comprehensive program used by professors around the country that speaks to a deep yearning many people have for substantive religious experience.”

Secondly, he offers us images, striking images, which can so easily be recalled, and which have the power to inspire us on our journey. In this context he re-introduces men to the Green Man, an image that was rather ubiquitous in 12th Century Europe, and is all over the Medieval Cathedrals. Fox invites us to savor his various depictions, ready to be with them metaphorically:

- his mouth gives birth
- his beard is filled with leaves and birds
Fox stresses that the fertility of men can be inspired by the generativity of nature. (Remember—plants invented photo-synthesis!) This Green Man image, Fox insists, invites men to be spiritual warriors defending Mother Earth.

Fox re-introduces women to the Black Madonna, the dark mother who emerges as Tara, as Quan Yin, as Kali or Our Lady of Guadalupe. Fox insists that she is the Mother of us all, and a sign of dark earth and our own depths. Fox concludes by recommending a sacred marriage, both within us and as possible outer reality, between the Green Man and the Black Madonna.

**DVDs of Matthew Fox Weekend on Eco-Spirituality Are Available**

Videos of the weekend reviewed by Marilyn McNamara above are available from CES. The videos are 3.5 hours long and cover all four of Matthew Fox’s talks on Eco-Spirituality, which were:

- Spirituality for an Ecological Age
- Renewal of Spirituality, Prayer, Ritual, and Worship
- Refocusing Education
- Transforming Values, Norms, Culture, Work

The pricing of the set (two DVDs) is (1) for people who attended the event on either Friday or Saturday, $20, plus shipping of $2.00, plus tax of $1.40, or $23.40 in total; and (2) for people who did not attend the event, but are members or meaningful associates of one of the co-sponsoring groups, $25, plus shipping of $2.00, plus tax of $1.75, or $28.75 in total.

The Co-Sponsors of the event were: Binkley Memorial Baptist Church, C.G. Jung Society of the Triangle, Center for Ecozoic Societies, Church of Reconciliation-Presbyterian (USA), Community Church of Chapel Hill, Eartheal, The New Millennium Renaissance Scholars, North Carolina Interfaith Power & Light, United Church of Chapel Hill, and Unity Center of Peace.
REPORTS ON RIO+20

By Patrick Nickisch

Patrick Nickisch, from Cologne, Germany, is one of the members of the Europe Executive Committee of United Religions Initiative, the Executive Director, Board of Directors of Shri Ramanuja Mission Trust (SRMT), Director of Foreign Relations of Global Hindu Congress and Member of the International Advisory Council of the Initiative of Shared Wisdom.

22 June, 2012, Rio de Janeiro marked the conclusion of the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), www.uncsd2012.org, the largest UN conference ever held. There were 44,000 participants registered, including more than 3,000 participants under the age of 30. From the media reports, you might think that this conference was a failure. These reports hold some truth, as even Mr. Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of the Rio+20 Conference, gave this remark at the closing plenary, “At least, we are all equally unhappy.”

As a participant at the conference, I want to share some of the positive outcomes from Rio+20.

Many initiatives of countries, intergovernmental organizations and NGOs came into being during the Rio process and were formally launched in Rio. One example is The Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), based in South Korea. This was announced at a meeting I attended where nine heads of state were present as well as the Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon. He said he was proud to be a South Korean citizen for his country has set sustainable development as priority in their policy for many years. Dozens of countries signed as partners of GGGI during that event. Another example was when Australia’s Prime minister was present at the launch of their Project. Seven hundred aboriginals work as rangers to protect the land, water and mountains, as they have done always, but they will now receive financial support from the government to do so.
There also were large gatherings of the nine major groups of civil society representatives: NGOs, women, children and youth, famers, local authorities, indigenous people, scientific and technological community, business and industry, and workers and trade unions. Over 500 so-called ‘side events’ for and by civil society at Rio+20 created a lot of space for synergy and sharing. This lead about what needs to be done Many alliances were formed and it is from here we need to interfaith statement was Soetendorp calling all the sustainable civilization and to a side event led by Chinese This was historic as this was the first time they had opened up to the rest of the world. Although there were only a few NGOs present, the event was called the Tripartite Forum among China, Europe and South America. They were highly appreciative of the United Religions Initiative Cooperation Circle methodology that I explained in my statement. In response, I was told that Chinese leadership is open to cooperation with religions, a message that could resonate widely and loudly within the Interfaith movement.

In essence, a global citizens’ movement is taking shape amongst civic society organizations that is unprecedented so far in human history. One important focus is the ongoing post-2015 development agenda debate. In 2015 the Millennium Development Goals expire and there are emerging Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a brilliant idea put forward by the government of Colombia, that will determine global policy for decades to come.

The UN can be the bridge-building organization between the governments and their people. UN agencies have shared much space with civil society, which as a result have come closer together. It seems apparent that the UN can only accomplish its goals with full participation of governments, business and civil society.

The Rio+20 outcome document may not be what many hoped for, but it is much more than seemed possible even a week before Rio+20. That it reaffirmed the basic sustainable development commitments that were adopted in the UN’s First Earth Summit held in Rio in 1992, and have guided the UN sustainable development process ever since, means that the effort remains intact and we can all continue working to implement the policies with grassroots projects and by working to change governmental policies as we move to 2015.

Many thousands of participants were transformed during their time in Rio. They left carrying the spirit of Rio+20 back to their communities with more awareness of how to manifest collectively a sustainable, just, and peaceful global civilization.
A Post Rio+20 World: Planning Our Own Sustainable Futures After a Summit that Promised Nothing!
By Uchita de Zoysa

Uchita de Zoysa, from Nugegoda, Sri Lanka is Executive Director of Centre for Environment and Development in Sri Lanka and the initiator of the Peoples’ Sustainability Treaties at Rio+20. He participated in the first Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and has followed the Rio+20 negotiations during the past two plus years and was lead author of the Peoples’ Sustainability Manifesto, which is presented below.

Last year, at United Nations Conference held in Bonn, I warned the international community that Rio+20 could easily turn into a funeral ceremony of sustainable development. Sensing threats to the real issues on sustainable development, I urged the global civil society to step out of their fragmentation and act collectively and proactively using Rio+20 as a platform. While Rio+20 preparatory sessions tried hard to bury the real issues, the final summit resulting in nothing has actually saved the sustainability agenda for another day to be battled.

A summit to keep the sustainable development agenda alive or dead?
Chairing a side event at the first preparatory committee meeting in New York in May 2010, I asked Felix Dodds of Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future why we need another summit. “A Summit can help us keep the sustainable development agenda alive” was his answer. An interesting argument, but did Rio+20 ever promise to inject life to a sustainable development agenda? On the contrary, it ridiculed forty years of serious attempts to place the world on a sustainable development path and tried to change the direction established twenty years ago at the First Earth Summit in Rio through Agenda 21. These attempts were made by redefining sustainable development from a narrow green economy perspective, by drowning the calls for equity, and by trying to slaughter the rights to sustainability. One thing was obvious from the beginning: We had to fight to keep the true sustainable development agenda alive, while Rio+20 tried to murder it.

A zero minus draft
The first real evidence that Rio+20 could seriously damage twenty plus years of sustainable development work was when it released the Zero Draft (first draft) of the outcome document. For many of us it was a zero minus draft, and it was a red alert warning to rally civil society for a greater battle. The zero draft ignored the hundreds of submissions made by national governments, civil society organizations and major groups and came up with a document that even shocked government negotiators who called for greater imagination by the UN Secretariat for Rio+20. This document not only lacked any imagination, but took us twenty years backwards in the sustainable development agenda to before the first Rio conference. Many of us were once again forced to doubt the sincerity of the United
Nations and left to question its motives and influences. Many questions that were under the carpet started to come out—whose agenda was this zero draft trying to promote?

The future we don’t want

The zero draft of the outcome document was ironically named as “The Future We Want.” This led to an immediate outcry and a campaign that was called “The Future We Don’t Want.” Preparation for Rio+20 which had been boring and had low participation suddenly came alive with rights-based groups from across the world joining the debate and challenging the UN process. Rio+20 preparation for a long time was not driven by governments. It was the UN Secretariat and the different UN agencies like UNEP that drove the agenda. Lethargic representatives from national missions in New York, especially from developing countries, were reluctant participants in most of the negotiations that took place in the preparatory meetings and intersessionals. Little about the negotiations was known by governments back home and they could have cared less given the low profile of the conference. The negotiations were simply kept alive by civil society and major groups who continued to challenge the agenda and emerging issues, which finally drew attention of most of the sleeping national delegates. But, by the time they woke up, the zero draft was already on the table leaving them a single option of negotiating forced text.

Saving the summit

It was rather strange that the UN Secretariat decided to hold the third and final preparatory committee meeting for Rio+20 in Rio de Janeiro to conclude just four days before the summit. When the three days of negotiations ended without any progress, it was also unusual that there was no real panic amongst parties to the conference. The four days leading to the summit were used by the Brazilian government to hijack the peoples plans for Rio+20 by having alternative Sustainable Development Dialogue Days. Making a late and forceful entry into the schedule of events, this new initiative had been planned rather smartly by the Brazilian government to manipulate and save a losing process. It was obvious that the Brazilian government could not afford to have the Rio+20 Summit ending in a total failure or deadlock. They as hosts, with a lot of reputation at stake had to come-up with a completely new strategy to save the summit. Once the UN Secretariat handed over the summit to the Brazilian hosts, they took over the outcome document and came up with another version of “The Future We Want,” which was released as a consensus document of all parties. They had always put forward this plan to save the summit and save themselves.

A summit of nothing

The day prior to the commencement of the Rio+20 summit, on the 19th of June 2012, the
Brazilian government released the final consensus outcome document. Before the summit commenced on the 20th, and before national leaders and delegates arrived in the plenary hall, the summit was more or less over and done with. “The Future We Want” outcome document was already adopted by consensus and rest of the agenda was for heads of states and delegations to make their official statements. Even I have to admit that the document was a sharp piece of diplomacy that included more or less everything in question, but shrewdly avoiding any new political commitments. Therefore, the political leaders who arrived in Rio de Janeiro, who are used to making convincing speeches to dead audiences, made their statements without any conscience or guilt. Many governments praised Brazil for its smart diplomacy while those outside the plenary were cursing the global hypocrisy that had taken place. Ultimately a summit of nothing came out with a nothing outcome—simply a set of words and sentences and paragraphs that do not hold our governments responsible for action. Thus, the summit was saved and the fight for sustainable development was left yet for another day. Sadly, the fight ahead looked rather grim too in the sparsely filled conference rooms at RioCentro on the last day of the summit; many had already left or were out shopping and sightseeing.

An eluding summit of equity

The former Director of the Rio+20 Secretariat Tariq Banuri, who joined us in the civil society during his stay in Rio de Janeiro, said this should have been the summit of equity. Disillusioned by the low imagination and low commitment levels for the summit, he recognized that the only positive outcome could be that Rio+20 had many summits within the summit; meaning that the global civil society and different stakeholders who were organizing their own action to decide their own futures could bring some hope. But, these other summits too seemed to have eluded the ultimate goal—joining hands for a common future.

The so called Rio+20 Peoples Summit, hijacked by a Brazilian NGO Organizing Committee, was a chaotic demonstration that lead to thousands of civil society representatives from across the world being stranded and lost without any sense of direction or coordination. Compared to the Global Forum organized by the International NGO Forum in 1992 at the first Earth Summit, this was a sad show of how fragmented the civil society has become. While those who were serious about meeting like-minded groups to build plans for the future were stranded, the mock social forum appeared more satisfied by lending the space to conference-junkies, travelling-hippies and eco-pilgrims to sing, dance, dine, shout and also trade their products. In the corners of the Peoples Summit, very dubiously, there were large tents managed by big corporations and mining industries. The mind of the curious were burning with the question “Who sponsored the chaos and distraction so the Brazilian government could enforce effectively their smart diplomacy to save the summit?”

Manifesto of the Peoples Sustainability Treaties
Alternately, 14 Peoples’ Sustainability Treaties evolved through a consultative process with hundreds of civil society organizations converged at the Rio+20 to launch a Manifesto on the final day of the summit. They declared that another world is possible after Rio+20 and pledged their commitment to a transition toward increasingly sustainable futures on Earth. The signatories to this Manifesto refused to sit idly by in the face of another failure of governments to provide hope for a sustainable future for all. They announced their own responsibility for undertaking actions, inviting and encourage similar actions and commitments by other rights holders and stakeholders, communicating a vision for healthy communities, sustainable and equitable human well-being and its associated strategies, and coming together in the form of a global citizens’ movement to shepherd the transition to a sustainable, equitable, and democratic future.

This manifesto calls for action that helps move simultaneously toward a more localized socio-economic structure and toward a supra-national mindset that helps us transcend the parochial concerns of a corporate-capitalistic globalization to activate a global citizens’ movement.

From a summit of nothing towards a transition to sustainability

Many industrialized country leaders including USA, UK, and Germany ignored Rio+20 sending clear signals that it was already a summit of nothing. For them, the G20 Summit, just a few days before, was more important than the world summit in Rio. For those who actually arrived in Rio de Janeiro, they would have realized that visits to beautiful scenic places would be more memorable than the actual summit. For me, the day I was part of a meeting in the office of Mr. Shah Zukang, the Secretary General of Rio+20, was the end of my hopes for the summit when he stated that he had no vision for the summit. This was a summit of nothing that could not draw any vision for sustainable futures and derive political commitment from our leaders to further the sustainable development agenda drawn in 1992. Indeed, since 1992, there has been a retrogression in the consensus that was reached at the First Earth Summit—reflected in such principles as burden sharing, articulation of rights, mobilization of support, and protection of the vulnerable. Repeated attempts to revive this consensus—at Johannesburg in 2002, Bali in 2007, Copenhagen in 2009, and now Rio de Janeiro in 2012—have come up empty handed, thus thwarting efforts to build upon it.

We as citizens of the world are now left to look after our own sustainable futures. In this realization, advancing a global citizens’ movement to shepherd the transition to a sustainable, equitable, and democratic future, one in which ethics is both a right and a responsibility—at the level of the individual, the community and the planet has become more important than ever.
Rio+20 People’s Sustainability Manifesto

Humankind faces the ultimate challenge in this decade whether to accept the path of sustainable development with equity and justice for all, or continue the path of business-as-usual with its certain unbearable outcomes. Governments at Rio+20 are missing yet another opportunity to formulate an effective response to this challenge. Indeed, since 1992, there has been a retrogression in the consensus that was reached at the Earth Summit—one reflected in such principles as burden sharing, articulation of rights, mobilization of support, gender equality, planetary boundaries and protection of the vulnerable. Repeated attempts to implement this consensus—at Johannesburg in 2002, Bali in 2007, Copenhagen in 2009, and now Rio de Janeiro in 2012—have come up empty handed. Despite unprecedented growth in the global economy since 1992, governments are trapped in the insatiable demands for still more unsustainable growth and inequity to remedy the problems business-as-usual itself has caused.

We, the signatories to this Manifesto, refuse to sit idly by in the face of another failure of governments to provide hope for a sustainable future for all. Inviting and encouraging by other stakeholders to join us, we commit to building a global citizens movement to build the political will for effective change and to undertake though its own actions at global, regional, national, sub-national and local levels to communicate the vision of sustainable development as articulated in the Earth Charter and realize through action its promise. We urgently call on those who join us to shepherd the transition to a sustainable, equitable, and democratic future.

We issue and embrace the call to live in accord with ethical, spiritual and religious values so that we may transcend those limitations that have held us in their thrall. In doing so, we pledge ourselves to

**Equity** is the overarching requirement of the new world order and is the foundation of the collective global response. We call for equity within generations, equity across generations, and equity between humans and nature. For this we need to revert back to making individual and societal decisions based on equity and ecological factors and not merely on monetary factors. A different sort of economics, a new approach to education, revised understandings of ethics and spirituality then become the ways in which we can work toward a more Equitable society.

**Localizing** our systems of economies, decentralized governance, sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods becomes the new social order of sustainable societies. Localism is the theme emerging across the board which is linked to the principles of devolution, of decentralization and of subsidiarity, turning localism into a world-wide movement becomes the key to unpacking many of the complexities we face, whether in the case of sustainable consumption and production or in the case of radical ecological democracy. Protecting the rights of Mother Earth and of humans, transforming our governance systems through radical ecological democracy, and strengthening sustainable economies is the way towards sustainable futures for all.

**A Global Citizens Movement** is the collective response towards transitioning to a sustainable world. Civil society and stakeholders must thrive to converge upon their visions and convictions and find common ground for collective action that can bring about the transformation that is required to ensure the wellbeing of all on the planet—humans as well as nature. Such a global citizens movement would catalyze for a peaceful and prosperous new world that generates widespread happiness and contentment – thus propagating widespread Mindfulness. For this, a new sense of ethics, values &
Spirituality must be rooted within the current and future generations through a redesigned system of education and enlightenment.

Under these circumstances, this manifesto calls for action that helps us move simultaneously toward a more localized socio-economic structure and toward a supra-national mindset that helps us transcend the parochial concerns of a corporate-capitalistic globalization. We must work to activate a global citizens movement that will move us rapidly into a great transition toward authentic sustainability.

VISION

**Time for the Sustainability Transition - navigating our planetary phase**

Humanity has arrived at the planetary phase of civilization. This is reflected in a level of self-awareness of global interdependence as well as the peril of transgressing planetary boundaries. This awareness and sense of stewardship may well enable the radical transformations required in economic, political, and cognitive systems for ensuring sustainability. The Sustainability Transition envisions a profound transformation in world-views and values, a transformation towards human solidarity, affinity with nature, and a dramatic re-emphasis on a decent quality-of-life for all.

**Equity: The Foundation of a Sustainable Society**

We call for an unequivocal commitment to a holistic form of Equity, based on a shared vision of ethics, spirituality, and intentional mindfulness, as the foundation for building a different sort of economics, a new approach to education, and an improved and redesigned institutional framework. Equity is the foundation on which institutional structures, governance, economic arrangements, and technological choices must be built. Without an agreement on this foundation of Equity, it is foolish, futile, and dangerous to attempt to build the superstructure.

**A New Social Order – the necessary governance architecture for a just and equitable society**

Our primary challenge is to recognize the legitimate, even necessary role of civil society and of a post-national citizenry, viewed as an integral part of a planetary system that expresses itself as a nested formation of global, regional and local phenomena. From within such a vision, we need to grow the processes of democratic global governance in a manner that implements the necessary transition toward planetary sustainability. We endorse the principle of subsidiarity in the redesign of global governance institutions, including the institutional framework for a system of global economic governance, sustainable energy systems, or measures to promote sustainable consumption and production. Societal decisions should be no more global than they absolutely have to be, and should always be as local as they possibly can be.

**A New Ecological Order – honourable lifestyles and livelihoods that respect our planet**

The dominant model of development has failed to lift large sections of humanity out of poverty, achieve greater equity within and between nations, or protect the planetary bio-geo-chemical systems and natural landscapes. We propose a radically different vision of human well-being, one that is in tune with nature and respects other species, promotes socio-economic equity amongst all people, enhances the cultural, material, economic, social, and political opportunities for all, empowers each person and community to take part in decision-making affecting their lives, even as it leaves the natural world a better and much improved place.
A New Economic Order - a system of sustainable economies

The world comprises many economies, at many levels—not just the global economy, or the national economy, but a plethora of regional and local economies as well. Any alternative economic system must promote such economic diversity instead of being enslaved to a globalized capitalistic-corporate monolith. Without an agreement on the shared visions of equity, plurality, and subsidiarity, the green economy will again become a means if justifying the unjustifiable excesses of the current system. What is needed is a vision of a networked system of decentralized, community based, sustainable economies in a diversity of settings, which stands on a foundation of ecological integrity, social accountability and an economically equitable distribution. A truly just and sustainable economic order will be one that increases the resilience of natural ecosystems, enhances the quality of life for all individuals, and creates a level of prosperity that allows all of humanity the opportunity to attain its full potential. A New Economic Order will be one that leaves both humans and Nature better off, in perpetuity.

MANIFESTO

Another world is possible! We intend to define this potentiality, and we commit to our transition toward increasingly sustainable futures on earth. To realize this vision, we resolve to undertake the following actions:

Sharing a Vision

We resolve to come together to share knowledge, experience, and information through a diversity of channels, social media, the educational system, scientific panels, conferences, and symposia, and print and electronic media.

Undertaking Actions

The Peoples’ Sustainability Treaties identify a range of actions required to support the transition to a sustainable world. We resolve individually and collectively to undertake these actions in our own personal and professional lives.

A Global Citizens’ Movement

We invite all stakeholders, including private citizens, students, teachers, farmers, workers, representatives of women’s organizations, civil society representatives, business leaders, journalists, parliamentarians, government officials, politicians, and indigenous people to join the campaign towards advancing a global citizens movement by endorsing the Peoples’ Sustainability Treaties, committing themselves to action, and crafting and proposing additional treaties. We resolve to come together to build such a movement, to support its evolution and progress, to make it both a cradle and a touchstone for values and actions that lead to a sustainable future. We call upon all right thinking people in the world to join this movement and make it a reality.

SIGNATORIES

Signatories to this manifesto represents the sentiments of hundreds of civil society organizations consulted from around the world prior to Rio+20 who, with commitment, evolved the following fourteen Peoples’ Sustainability Treaties.

i.  Peoples’ Sustainability Treaty on Rights of Mother Earth
We are the signatories demanding for new world order as detailed in this manifesto;

1. Mr. Uchita de Zoysa, Centre for Environment and Development  
2. Dr. Ashwani Vasishth, Ramapo College  
3. Herman Greene, Center for Ecozoic Societies

All civil society organizations and citizens of the world are invited to commit themselves by endorsing the Manifesto at: http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/peoples-sustainability-manifesto/.

More information on the Peoples’ Treaties process, the treaty documents and on the Manifesto of post-Rio+20 action can be found at: http://sustainabilitytreaties.org/.

For any Rio+20 follow-up action, please contact Mr. Uchita de Zoysa at uchita@ltnet.lk.

Find the Peoples’ Sustainability Manifesto at http://sustainabilitytreaties.org/pst-manifesto/.

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Notes from Rio+20: Why It Didn’t Fail  
By Herman Greene

I was in Rio from June 13-22 for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and events preceding it. The prevailing sentiment is that Rio+20 was a failure. Scott Simon of NPR described it as the biggest UN conference ever and perhaps one of its biggest duds. The New York Times quoted a representative of CARE as saying it was “nothing more than a political charade,” and a representative of Greenpeace as declaring it “a failure of epic proportions.” When the official outcome document from Rio+20, titled “The Future We Want,” is not rejected outright, tepid assessments are generally given such as “it partially salvaged prior commitments, but offered little new.”
Evaluating Rio+20 as a failure has consequences. For some, the “failure” of Rio+20 underscores the weakness of the UN processes as a whole. Because blame for the alleged failure has largely been placed on “governments,” the faith of some in the ability of governmental and intergovernmental organizations to address major problems has fallen. In the United States, where the event was seldom reported, summary reports of failure may lead some to say, “I didn’t know about it and it wasn’t important anyway.”

My view of the conference is, however, different. I had to educate myself to understand the UN sustainable development process, of which Rio+20 is only the latest chapter in a 40-year long and continuing history. I began to engage directly in this process in October 2011 in order to promote formation of an International Ethics Panel on Ecological Civilization (IEPEC), a panel first proposed by Professor Ryoichi Yamamoto at a September 2011 conference in Tokyo. Returning from that conference, I learned Rio+20 was the place to take this idea as many NGOs and some governments were emphasizing the need for new ethical structures in UN governance in connection with one of Rio+20’s two major themes, “Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development.”

In the course of attending three preparatory events in New York and the final Rio+20 conference, I have learned the UN’s sustainable development process is not primarily about the environment. It is about how the peoples of the world, as a whole, can improve their lives and the forms of development that are most appropriate for achieving this. Environment comes in because it must: after all Earth is the living planet and resource base on which humans depend both physically and culturally. Economics enters because our current understanding of social development is dominated by it and by certain established conventions, such as GDP, neo-liberalism, globalization, and industrialization, all of which were questioned in the Rio+20 debates, especially in relation to the conference’s other major theme, “The Green Economy in the Context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development.

I have learned that equity and security, in unfamiliar ways, are at the heart of every sustainable development debate. Small island states ask if it is equitable that they should be flooded due to global warming and rising seas attributable to the actions of others. The President of Ecuador raises the question how much should his country be paid to leave rainforests intact in order to produce oxygen for the world. The “Green Economy,” is viewed by many in the Global South (the term commonly used in place of the “Third World”) as a further expansion of global capitalism, the commodification of nature and a threat to indigenous people. Security becomes a question for many of whether they will have enough food to eat in a world, soon to be populated by 9 billion people, facing erosion of land, desertification and land grabs by both foreign governments and corporations. Subsistence farmers wonder why they must enter the monetary economy to become “sustainable” or “be lifted out of poverty,” and why their occupation of land for centuries does not constitute “title.”
I have learned that civil society, largely composed of nonprofit organizations (also called nongovernmental organizations or NGOs) and given quite limited official status, by holding to ideals of the future, commenting on intergovernmental negotiations and making their voices heard, are collectively a major force in the UN sustainable development process. Yet I have also learned that, now more than ever, government is the indispensable actor in bringing about the future we want.

With this growing knowledge, I have come to understand Rio+20 as not being a failure. The language of outcome documents in UN conferences such as Rio+20 are arrived at by consensus. Thus, the outcome document of Rio+20 reflected where there was and was not a global consensus on future commitments. The current financial crisis (and related national and regional politics) hung like a shadow over the proceedings. While progress on new commitments would have been preferable, the central issue in the proceedings became whether governments would preserve the basic principles of sustainable development adopted at the First Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, principles such as social equity, gender equality, common but differentiated responsibilities (requiring greater responsibility for developed countries), human rights (including, heretofore unrecognized rights to clean, drinkable water, basic sanitation, food security, a minimum standard of living, and a social protection floor), the polluter pays, the precautionary principle and the right to development (the right of all peoples to develop their own resources for their own needs, interests, and cultures). The reaffirmation of these principles became the limited success of the governmental portion of Rio+20.

The greater achievements came in the civil society portion. More than 30,000 civil society representatives participated in the official Rio+20 conference and 100,000 more in the concurrent People’s Summit and protest marches. There were also large concurrent business and professional gatherings in Rio, such as Business Action for Sustainable Development Business Day and the World Congress on Justice, Governance and Law for Environmental Sustainability. Knowing of the limitations of the official outcome document, activists released 14 People’s Sustainability Treaties and a People’s Sustainability Manifesto. President Rousseff of Brazil was justified in calling Rio+20 the most participatory conference in history and “a global expression of democracy.”

People who gathered in Rio knew the official results of the conference would be limited. They came nevertheless to network and to set the stage for the next phase of the UN sustainable development process, the shaping of the post 2015-development agenda in which the present Millennium Development Goals will be integrated into broader and more ambitious sustainable development goals. Those from civil society left to form a global citizens’ movement to take action now for sustainable development and to develop the political will for global policy change. Rio+20 was not an end, rather it was a new beginning.
NEWS

Ecology and Infectious Disease
A developing model of infectious disease that shows that most epidemics — AIDS, Ebola, West Nile, SARS, Lyme disease and hundreds more that have occurred over the last several decades — don’t just happen. They are a result of things people do to nature. Read more: Ecology and disease.

US Drought Is Worst Since 1956
A new report shows that the drought gripping the United States is the widest since 1956. The monthly State of the Climate drought report released on Monday by the National Climatic Data Center says 55 percent of the continental United States is in a moderate to extreme drought. Read more: US drought.

US Poverty on Course for 46-Year High
The ranks of America’s poor are on track to climb to levels unseen in nearly half a century, erasing gains from the war on poverty in the 1960s amid a weak economy and fraying government safety net. Read more: US poverty.

Tokyo’s Biggest Rally Opposing Nuclear Plan
In Japan’s largest antinuclear rally since the disaster at Fukushima, tens of thousands of protesters gathered at a park in central Tokyo to urge the government to halt its restarting of the nation’s reactors. Read more: Tokyo rally.

Jeffrey Sachs at Rio+20 on Business, Democracy and Measuring Well-Being
The world famous economist speaks on corporate control, the search for happiness and why a multidisciplinary approach is the only way to find solutions to sustainability challenges. Read more: Sachs at Rio+20.

Whales Cope with Human Noise
Scientists have discovered that whales can decrease the sensitivity of their hearing to protect their ears from loud noise. Humans tend to do this with index fingers; scientists haven’t pinpointed how whales do it, but they have seen the first evidence of the behavior. Read more: Whales coping.

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