

Statement by Children & Youth (11 May 2006)

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Where is the urgency in CSD 14? Your decisions and plans decide whether or not my peers and I have a future to look forward to. We would also like to note that youth of color, indigenous youth and low-income youth are already bearing the burdens of climate change and the policies that do little to combat it. We represent the biggest stake-holder in this entire commission. The future is more than a legacy; it is our lives.

The chair's summary includes nuclear and so-called "clean coal" in the definition of clean energy. For young people, for the future, the definition is clear; small scale hydro, wind, solar, marine power are clean, but nuclear, "clean" fossil fuels and large scale hydro-electric and incineration are neither clean, renewable, nor sustainable.

We have come together to find solutions toward real sustainable development. We believe in environmental justice and encourage you to remember that, as embodied in the Rio Declaration, "Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development".

During these weeks we have heard from governments that are not adopting environmental and social regulations because of a reluctance to interfere in the market. But there is no market today that governments do not interfere with by using taxes, subsidies, and trade barriers. We are concerned that many governments are willing to interfere in the market only on behalf of big business and not on behalf of the people or the environment. Therefore we call on member states to create such regulations along with enhancing clear corporate accountability measures.

We would strongly encourage you to embrace the plan of work you agreed upon at the Earth Summit and WSSD. Implementation does not mean passing responsibility to the market. Successful implementation requires equal opportunity and collaboration among stake-holders under the guidance of governments.

In these two weeks, we have inundated you with examples of youth who have initiated viable, sustainable, and profitable development projects. Here is a reminder of what we have told you:

In Sweden and the UK we are running fair trade purchasing programs; In rural Nepal we are organizing small hydropower projects; In North America we are converting universities to clean energies; In Ghana we are improving irrigation for agricultural development; In the US and Mexico we are supporting farmers through fair-trade coffee and cultural exchange. We've got more examples.

These are serious solutions that we are providing for serious problems. We must be taken seriously.

Although identified as an important cross-cutting issue at CSD-11, education has not been adequately addressed here. The words youth and education appeared in the chair's summary but

there is no coherent strategy for implementation. The UN Decade on Education for Sustainable Development plays an important role and must be completed with ambitious national plans.

Youth must be informed about how energy decisions will affect our future, so that we can be the agents of our own development. Education is the critical link between knowledge and action. We are 2.8 billion youth with unlimited potential for change.

Delegates please stand up if you have children.

Having read the chairman's summary, do you think that this document gives hope for your children in twenty years?

Here is the urgency in CSD 14. The future is more than a legacy; it is our lives.

Thank You Delegates. Thank You Mr. Chairman.