

SD21 – Stakeholder Forum



Review of Agenda 21 and Rio Declaration

Felix Dodds, Executive Director

Fdodds@stakeholderforum.org

SD21 – Stakeholder Forum



1. Agenda 21

- 40 Chapters

2. Rio Declaration

- 27 Principles

3. Synthesis report

- Conclusions and recommendations

SD21 – Methodology



- 20 years of SF institutional memory
- In-house expertise
- Expert consultants
- Detailed analysis and review of each of the Chapters and Principles, including case studies

SD21 - summary



- Overall, there is mixed but limited progress on the implementation of both Agenda 21 and the Rio Principles.

SD21 Scorecard Traffic Light Rating System

	Excellent progress/fully achieved
	Good progress/on target
	Limited progress/far from target
	No progress or regression

- For both Agenda 21 & Rio Principles: more **Reds** and **Ambers** than **Greens** and **Blues**.



Agenda 21 - Successes



- Arguably the biggest success has come through driving ambition on what sustainable outcomes are achievable on a sector by sector basis, e.g. biodiversity.
- Engendered a much stronger notion of participation in decision-making, e.g. Major Groups.
- Local Agenda 21 has been one of the most extensive follow-up programmes.

Agenda 21 - Challenges



- Sectors-basis may have contributed to defeating the concept of integration that is at the heart of sustainable development.
- Globally, consumption and production patterns remain unsustainable.
- Some sectors were not included in Agenda 21, e.g. energy and mining.
- Other sectors today may be prominent than their space in Agenda 21, for example transport and waste flows.
- Lost Chapter 41 - Transnational Corporations.

Agenda 21 - Conclusions



- Agenda 21 retains strong relevance, and remains the most comprehensive undertaking by the UN system to promote sustainable development.
- While there are some gaps in coverage, the issues that humanity is struggling with now are more or less similar those covered by the chapters of Agenda 21.
- Agenda 21 has acquired considerable coverage amongst nation states, its implementation remains far from universal or effective.
- And progress has been patchy, and despite some elements of good practice most Agenda 21 outcomes have still not been realised.

Rio Principles - Successes



- As a soft law instrument, successful implementation of the Rio Declaration takes many shapes and can be loosely understood through analysing the various 'offspring' agreements or national laws.
- Principle 5 – eradicating poverty and raising the standards of living for all, e.g. MDGs.
- Principle 10 – access to justice, information and public participation – is the foundation of the successful regional instrument that enshrines the principle in the Aarhus Convention.
- Principle 15 – the precautionary principle – is widely accepted as a foundation of environmental law at both the national and international levels.
- Principle 7 – Common But Differentiated Responsibility

Rio Principles - Challenges



- Principle 5 - “reducing disparities in standards of living”, has been relatively forgotten.
- Principle 10 - Additionally access to justice remains a barrier for many who seek legal redress for environmental damages or concerns.
- Around the polluter pays principle (Principle 16) there remain ideological differences to its practical application.
- Principle 8 – sustainable production and consumption and the promotion of appropriate demographic policies – is deemed to have been unsuccessful in achieving its intended goal.

Rio Principles - Conclusions



- The Rio Principles are the heir to the Stockholm principles agreed in 1972, and both have a primary focus on environment and development.
- This framework left largely open interpretations about how to achieve sustainable development in practice.
- Overall, the gaps remain because of the difficulty faced with transposing soft law principles into implementable law.

SD21 - Recommendations



- Stronger implementation strategy e.g. guidelines for implementation
- Lost chapter -> Convention on CSRA
- Long term thinking in institutions e.g. SD Council, UN High Commissioner for Future Generations
- Long term thinking in integrating sustainability into the global economy e.g. sustainability in sovereign wealth funds, credit rating agencies, pension funds
- SD Goals