

RIO+20 REGIONAL MEETING PREPARATORY - ECLAC
7-9 SEPTEMBER 2011
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MAJOR GROUP – OPENING STATEMENT

Business and Industry is pleased to join member states and other stakeholders at this important Regional Meeting Preparatory to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. I hereby present the statement representing the position of the Business and Industry major group gathered under Business Action for Sustainable Development¹, group which Instituto Ethos (Brazil) have joined for this particular meeting, to ensure that our opinion can make a positive contribution to the Rio+20 Conference and during the preparatory process.

The role of the business and industry sector as a constructive partner and engine of growth and sustainable development is increasingly recognised as are the benefits it brings to society. The business sector makes an essential contribution to sustainable development and will remain at the forefront of technological advancement to help deliver the goods and services that people around the globe need today and tomorrow, contributing to economic and social development in an environmentally responsible way.

Sustainable business practices are essential for creating a sustainable future and business is committed to broadening the concept of sustainable development to incorporate the purpose of eradicating poverty, committing its partnerships with governments and other stakeholders to expand and improve its corporate responsibility role that is required to work jointly towards sustainable development. The business community believes that 'green economy' is imbedded within the larger concept of an economy in which economic growth and environmental sustainability work together in a mutually reinforcing way to support progress on social deployment. More importantly, clear and measurable social, environmental, economic and ethic goals must be integrated to the decision-making process of a new economy.

Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation have defined a broad terrain of necessary areas for action. The challenge at Rio+20 will be for countries to reaffirm their commitment to sustainable development through the active collaboration of governments, businesses, workers and civil society organisations. A common agenda is required based on international funds and a cooperation system, with clear priorities and goals for reducing greenhouse gases emissions, promoting conservation, restoration and the sustainable use of resources; for reducing poverty, social inequalities and corruption indexes; and promoting transparency. For achieving successfully such goals, Business and Industry believes that specific guidelines are needed such as the adoption of a new standard for development measurement, with indicators, indexes and metrics for measuring sustainable development, the abatement of carbon emissions by adequate mechanisms and the payment for ecosystems services, the establishment of minimum operating standards, and the encouragement of sustainable production and consumption.

In order to assist in the pursuit of sustainable development through a shared undertaking with government and society, Business and Industry requires clear, stable and homogeneous regulatory conditions among countries towards a regional integration; sharing responsibilities with the other stakeholders, with a decision-making inclusive approach; as well as adequate policies for technology, science and innovation which should be fostered and used as effective contributors to government policies aimed at achieving sustainable development.

Through active collaboration, sustainability challenges can be addressed creating integrated approaches and solutions across global, national and local levels.

Business and Industry reaffirms sustainable development as embracing poverty alleviation and reducing social inequalities, wealth as well as job creation, environmental stewardship and social inclusion and empowerment. While prosperity can add environmental pressures, without prosperity to meet the needs and aspirations of growing world populations, there is little chance that economic, social or environmental challenges can be met.

ⁱ The BASD is formed by the following partners: International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), United Nations Global Compact, Aquafed - Intl. Federation of Private Water Operators, Air Transport Action Group (ATAG), Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE), CropLife International, Cement Sustainability Initiative, Digital Energy Solutions Campaign (DESC), International Aluminum Institute, International Council of Chemical Associations (ICCA), International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM), IPIECA - Global Oil & Gas Industry Association, World Steel.