

## United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20,2012)

The **United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**, also known as "**Rio+20**," was held in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil** in **June 2012**, twenty years after the historic **Rio Earth Summit** of 1992.

World leaders and thousands of attendees from the commercial sector, NGOs, and other organizations gathered at the Rio+20 Conference to discuss how to **eliminate poverty, enhance social equity, and assure environmental protection** on a planet that is getting more congested.

### Rio +20 - Objectives & Themes

#### Objectives

The UNCSO 2012 has the following objectives:

- Renewing political support for sustainable development;
- Evaluating the results of the execution of the decisions reached at the Rio Conference and the gaps that remain to be filled; and
- Tackling fresh and developing problems.

#### Themes

Themes for UNCSO 2012 include:

- **Green Economy** in relation to eradicating poverty and promoting sustainability; and
- **Institutional framework for sustainable development.**

### Rio +20 - Seven Priority Areas

1. **Jobs:** Jobs have suffered as a result of the economic downturn. Over the next ten years, there will be more than 500 million job searchers.  
More "green employment," or jobs in agriculture, industry, services, and administration that can protect the environment, are needed.
2. **Energy:** Energy is crucial for reducing climate change, producing more food, stabilizing employment, and raising earnings.
3. **Cities:** Cities serve as centers for business, culture, research, productivity, social progress, and many other things. People can now grow socially and economically thanks to cities. However, common municipal issues include traffic, a lack of essential amenities, inadequate sanitation and hygiene, and dangerous drinking water.
4. **Food:** Food security is under increasing threat due to climate change. By 2050, there will be 2 billion more people living on the planet.  
Our soils, waters, oceans, forests, and biodiversity are currently deteriorating quickly in order to improve food production.  
Rio 20 was the ideal time to reconsider how the production and distribution of food happens.
5. **Water:** The world has enough fresh water. But each year, millions of people—mostly children—die from diseases linked to inadequate water supply, sanitation, and hygiene due to poor economics or poor infrastructure.  
Water scarcity, poor water quality, and inadequate sanitation have a detrimental effect on impoverished families' access to education, livelihood options, and food security worldwide.

Some of the world's poorest nations experience drought, which makes hunger and malnutrition worse. At least one in four people will likely reside in a nation by 2050 that experiences ongoing or persistent freshwater shortages.

6. **Oceans:** The sea is ultimately responsible for providing and regulating all of the human needs, including rainwater, drinking water, weather, climate, coastlines, much of our food, and even the oxygen in the air we breathe.

Seas and oceans have played a crucial role in trade and transportation. A sustainable future must include careful management of this vital global resource.

7. **Disasters:** Disasters are brought on by natural events including earthquakes, floods, droughts, hurricanes, and tsunamis. They have terrible effects on the economy, the environment, and the people.

Disaster recovery is aided by wise decisions, whereas vulnerability is increased by poor decisions.

### **OUTCOMES:**

- In June 2012, world leaders and representatives met for intense meetings which culminated in finalizing the non-binding document, "**The Future We Want: Outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20–22 June 2012**"
- Rio+20 sought to secure affirmations for the political commitments made at past Earth Summits and set the global environmental agenda for the next 20 years by assessing progress towards the goals set forth in Agenda 21 and implementation gaps therein, and discussing new and emerging issues.
- The UN wanted Rio to endorse a UN "green economy roadmap", with environmental goals, targets and deadlines, whereas developing countries preferred establishing new "sustainable development goals" to better protect the environment, guarantee food and power to the poorest, and alleviate poverty.
- At the Conference, Member States decided to launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), building on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and converging with the post-2015 development agenda.
- The Conference also took forward-looking decisions in a number of thematic areas, including energy, food security, oceans and cities, and decided to convene a third international conference on small island developing States in 2014. (discussed above)
- The Rio+20 Conference caught the attention of thousands from the UN system and beyond. Over 700 voluntary commitments were announced and the formation of new partnerships to advance sustainable development were initiated.