

Scientific and Technological Community

Statement on Objectives and Themes of Rio 2012

(presented by Gisbert Glaser, International Council for Science – ICSU)

2nd Meeting of the Preparatory Committee

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Mr. Co-Chair,

The Scientific and Technological Community welcomes the SG Report on the Objectives and Themes of Rio 2012. Sustainable development must indeed integrate or be coupled with poverty eradication. Only an integrated and balanced consideration of social, economic and environmental goals in both public and private decision-making will bring about the transition to a sustainable future of humanity.

Allow me to begin with a comment on the objective of renewed political commitment. Our Community is concerned that the Rio 2012 outcome might lack ambition and not reflect a sense of urgency. As new scientific evidence shows, the current unsustainable consumption and production patterns have started to put the natural functioning of the earth system, as we know it, at risk. The Rio 2012 outcome must be commensurate with the urgent need to move humanity back to a sustainable path of development through the transition to a Green Economy, as well as through broader societal transformations, including poverty eradication.

If we have this ambitious goal in mind, policies and decision making should necessarily be based on sound science and technology and they must benefit from scientific advances and technological, economic and social innovation. The Rio 2012 outcome will miss a crucial element to progress if it does not include commitments to

large-scale investments in targeted science and technology, research, and to innovation driven technological, policy and social responses to achieve global sustainability. Targeted capacity building in science and technology, including assistance to developing countries, will be crucial.

As regards the objective of “assessing new and emerging challenges”, Rio 2012 should emphasize a holistic and far-sighted approach to the interlinked issues of, and possible multiple crises in, ensuring food and water security, access to clean and affordable energy, urbanization, climate change and safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystem services. The Scientific and Technological Community is committed to play its key role in contributing to solutions to these challenges, including for dealing with the complexity of the interlinkages. Rio 2012 must address the need for much enhanced policy coherence, at national, regional and global levels, across sectors and issues, not the least in efforts to reform and strengthen the institutional framework for sustainable development.

Finally, the link between science, education and policy should be strengthened in particular at the national level through different mechanisms. One would be to establish national task forces on this link issue, involving these three stakeholders, but also others.

Thank you