

# Report on Rio +20: Green Economy – Justice, Peace and Stability Briefing Conference



## INTRODUCTION

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2012, Gender Concerns International attended a briefing 2012 and the importance of sustainable development to women's organizations and women's rights.

The Briefing Conference was organized by *Tiye International* in cooperation with the *Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED)* and the *Dutch Platform for Rio +20*. The aim of the Conference was to provide insight in the topics to be discussed at the UN Sustainable Development Conference, Rio +20, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in June of 2012 and to create a nexus to women's organizations and women's rights by raising several problems that may arise if sustainable development does not create necessary safeguards for women, particularly women in rural areas, migrant women and refugee women.

The following report provides a concise summary of the *Rio+20: Green Economy – Justice, Peace and Stability Briefing Conference* and the issues discussed.

## SUMMARY RIO+20 BRIEFING CONFERENCE

The Conference was led by a panel of three experts including Ms. Helen Felter from *Tiye International*, Ms. Leida Rijnhout from ANPED and Ms. Alide Roerink from the *Dutch Platform for Rio+20*. Each representative presented their views on Rio +20 and the issue of sustainable development and provided further insight into the problems likely to arise when consensus is sought at the UN Rio+20 Conference.

Rio+20 serves as a meeting point where governments, NGOs and the private sector can come together to shape how the sustainable future is developed. This is to be achieved through reducing poverty, advancing social equity and ensuring environmental protection.

Rio+20 has two main themes, (i) the development of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and (ii) the institutional framework for sustainable development. The Briefing Conference will only focus on the first theme, *the development of a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication*.



*Tiye International's* representative, Ms. Helen Felter noted that the inclusion of women's rights during the Rio+20 Conference should be highlighted as one of major importance. This can be supported by several international instruments which emphasize the importance of women, such as CEDAW, the Beijing Action Plan, and the Durban Declaration and Program of Action. Moreover, Ms. Felter stressed that due to a lack of specification regarding the term "women", the consequences of an unsustainable future will hit women in rural areas and developing countries the hardest.. Emphasis was also placed on the disadvantaged position of immigrant and colored women, who tend to reap the shortcomings of today's society, both in developed and developing countries. Ms. Felter advised that NGOs need

to increase their lobbying to Governments if they wish to see change in regards to women and sustainability.

According to Ms. Leida Rijnhout, representative of ANPED, change needs to happen if the future is to be more sustainable. The change she refers to is to fight extreme poverty by fighting extreme wealth. This is to be achieved by re-dividing riches, natural resources and labor. Ms. Rijnhout advises that governments need to take back the lead and accept responsibility for society and apply strict regulations on the market.



The representative of the *Dutch Platform for Rio+20* explained the issues from a governmental perspective. Ms. Roerink mentioned that the Dutch Government has yet to decide its position in regards to the UN Rio+20 Conference. She stated that “the Netherlands has no real position for Rio +20”, however urged the Dutch Government to take a more assertive approach in deciding their position in order to present a strong front as a positive supporter of a sustainable future.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the *Rio+20: Green Economy – Justice, Peace and Stability Briefing Conference* provided the relevant introductory information regarding the UN conference, which is to take place in June 2012. The Briefing Conference provided insight into several differing sectors, all with different objectives and agendas aiming to achieve the same goal – a sustainable future for the generations to come.