

EDITORIAL

We are impressed by the UN Secretary-General's stated commitment to sustainable development as an overriding priority for his second term and are happy to report on the outcomes of his global sustainability panel in this issue.

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Further to the announcement in last issue's Editorial, more than 20 organisations and individuals collaborated with the International Council of Environmental Law in its effort to propose alternative formulations to the draft language of sections III–V of the zero draft for Rio+20. ICEL was able to deliver a compilation of these submissions to colleagues closely involved in negotiations prior to the 29 February deadline. Many thanks to those who lent their expertise to this exercise!

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In his briefings prior to the next round of Rio+20 negotiations, Nikhil Seth, Head of the Secretariat, announced that the newest compilation of the zero draft had received proposed amendments from the G-77 and China, the EU and over 20 other Member States, increasing the length of the text from 17 to 157 pages since it was first released on 10 January! As of writing this Editorial, only Member States were able to access the document through a password-protected e-room on the Conference website. Nonetheless, a colleague recently described it to us as "...a terrible text that keeps changing every day..." It is thus no surprise that night and weekend sessions are anticipated to try and keep negotiations on track. Reaching consensus with less than 20 negotiating days left will be (to say the least) a challenge.

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The minutes of the last meeting of the Rio+20 Bureau envision additional meetings with Major Groups. To avoid detracting from the time available for negotiations, however, these meetings have been scheduled for early mornings. Two additional "informal dialogues" with Major Groups have been tentatively announced, to take place in April, possibly back-to-back with the next round of consultations.

We assume that these additional meetings with Major Groups are being held to maximise the value of these groups' participation. With a growing number of heads of State and government already planning formal interventions during the Conference, organisers hope to ensure that Major Groups can have a useful influence before the final text adopted in Rio de Janeiro, and to avoid any future claim that their input was delayed too long.

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We feel increasingly vindicated in deciding not to travel to Rio! Nonetheless, we will work closely with our network to properly inform you of the Conference's final outcome.

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Looking toward the result of Rio+20 and the Secretary-General's increased engagement, we remind all of you that these initiatives are being undertaken to implement Agenda 21.

21 March 2012

- Wolfgang R. Steury -