UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

CONFERENCE NEWS

Green Economy and Sustainable Development: Bringing Back the Social Dimension

Report of the UNRISD Conference
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Overview

In the lead up to the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), and 20 years after sustainable development was popularized at the first UN Earth Summit in 1992, the concept of green economy has taken centre stage in international development circles. It emphasizes the need to shift from high to low carbon systems and transform patterns of investment, technological innovation, production and consumption, at a time when multiple global crises—food, fuel and finance—have revealed the limits and contradictions of current development models based on the exploitation of finite natural resources.

Strategies to promote a green economy, and the concept itself, are highly contested. There are widely varying assessments of the opportunities, costs and benefits of green economy transition for different social groups, countries and regions. Opinions also diverge about the feasibility and implications of different approaches for achieving the social, environmental and economic objectives inherent in the concept of sustainable development.

The months leading up to Rio+20 are crucial for the global community to make progress on these issues. By explicitly coupling green economy with the goals of sustainable development and poverty eradication, the Rio+20 process has called attention to the importance of social dimensions of development. But there is considerable lack of clarity—indeed, even confusion—about what the social dimensions of green economy entail.

In response to these challenges, UNRISD held the conference, *Green Economy and Sustainable Development: Bringing Back the Social Dimension,* in Geneva on 10-11 October 2011. Attended by some 250 participants, the event brought together academic researchers, United Nations policy makers, government officials, civil society actors and activists from around the world; 24 papers were presented by 32 researchers, identified through a call for papers that attracted over 300 submissions. Speakers included representatives of CICERO, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Focus on the Global South, Friends of the Earth International, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), Oxfam International, South Centre, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Environment Fund (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank.

The focus on social dimensions aimed to direct attention to key issues that are often ignored: how green economy initiatives and strategies impact different social groups and patterns of inequality; whose values, priorities and interests are shaping the concept and policies of green economy; and what alternative visions and processes exist at local, national and global scales.

The following questions framed the six thematic sessions of the conference.

- *Competing Paradigms: How is the notion of green economy itself, and the consideration of social dimensions, being framed, and with what effects in terms of influencing policy agendas and shaping development models?*
- *The Challenge of Policy Coherence: What role can social policy, in association with economic and environmental policy, play in minimizing costs, maximizing benefits and building resilience, especially for vulnerable groups?*
- *Agency, Interests and Coalitions: What forms of participation, contestation, coalitions, alliances and compromises are emerging—or might need to emerge—to promote green economy approaches that contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication?*
- *Community Values, Institutions and Dynamics: How is green economy perceived and interpreted locally? How do local level contexts and dynamics affect—and how are they affected by—external interventions?*
- *The Social Construction of Markets: How do societal norms and pressures, as well as public and private regulation and governance, shape market relations and business behaviour associated with green economy and sustainable development?*
- *Agriculture and Rural Development: What are the consequences of the restructuring of food production, finance, energy and consumption patterns associated with green economy for employment, livelihood security and ecological sustainability in rural areas?*

The social dimensions of development are essential for responding to these questions, and for understanding the connections between green economy, sustainable development and poverty eradication. In critiquing market-centred approaches to green economy, some of the speakers questioned whether the logic of capitalism, dependent as it is on growth as a driver, can be consistent with these broader objectives. The commodification of nature poses serious risks, not least in reinforcing existing patterns of inequality. Technocratic approaches often prevail at the expense of more effective forms of participatory governance, and fail to recognize the effectiveness and legitimacy of different value and livelihood systems. Others identified problems at the stage of implementation, at the micro or community level, in addressing the specific needs of disadvantaged or marginalized groups, or in compensating those who lose out (as a result of both environmental change and of a green economy transition itself). The interconnections between local, national and global policy levels, as well as between sectoral restructuring and social co-benefits, were recurring themes.

Much of the research and analysis presented at the conference highlighted many positive lessons. For green economy to also become green society, policy around sustainable development must be defined, not only in terms of *outcomes*, but also by the *processes* that shape, enable and constrain its potential as an alternative vision. Several presentations made explicit the importance of unpacking and reconfiguring power relations in participation and decision-making processes, and for opening up spaces for contestation and negotiation in the design and implementation of policies. This will require discursive struggle between different worldviews; contestation (over policies and solutions); challenges to power structures; recognition of alternative forms of knowledge; and the participation and inclusion of a wider range of actors. A fair and equitable green economy transition extends beyond addressing consequences of environmental or economic change, to enabling the *transformation* of social structures, institutions and power relations that underpin vulnerability, inequality and poverty.

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For UNRISD, these insights have pointed to the need to further develop both a research agenda and a conceptual and policy framework positioning social

dimensions at the centre of green economy and sustainable development debates, which can inform the Rio+20 preparatory process and subsequent policy discussions.

Opening

In her opening remarks, **Sarah Cook** asserted that the current global environmental challenge requires a major transformation: involving fundamental changes in structures of production and consumption, in patterns of resource use and investment, in technologies and how we use them, and in human behaviour and public policies from the local to the global levels. There are various interpretations of the nature of the transformation that is needed (or indeed, possible), and widespread debate over whether countries that have not yet transformed their economies along the high carbon development path can develop along an alternative path. Questions remain as to how, or at what stage, social dimensions are incorporated into the analysis and solutions, or even whether goals of equity, poverty reduction and inclusivity are compatible with the proposed transition paths.

> ***Will a green economy transition centre on technological fixes and business as usual or will it, conversely, be seized as an opportunity to enhance well being and transform the social structures, institutions and power relations that underpin various forms of vulnerability and inequality?***

Cook highlighted a number of key tensions facing green economy policy makers and development actors today. Will a green economy transition centre on technological fixes and "business as usual" or will it, conversely, be seized as an opportunity to enhance well being and transform the social structures, institutions and power relations that underpin various forms of vulnerability and inequality? Can it address underlying causes of poverty or redress historical development imbalances? Will it lead to new forms of conditionality and protectionism, or reinforce policy approaches that have increased inequalities in recent decades?

In his opening remarks, **Kåre Stormark** emphasized that green economy should primarily be a means and a strategy to promote social justice. Referring to the debates and government policy in Norway—the main funder of the conference—he noted that climate change and green economy occupy an increasingly central role in policy discussions, and in particular, in shaping priorities for development assistance. This translates into a need for increased funds for combating deforestation and for investing in green energy and green jobs. In response, Norway is actively working to establish the Green Climate Fund. This question of where funding for social dimensions of green economy would ultimately come from was to recur throughout the conference.

Session 1—Competing Paradigms

The first session, chaired by **Bina Agarwal** set the scene for critical analysis of the concept, definitions, and approaches being put forth under the rubric of green economy, by placing its emergence in the broader contexts of the global triple crisis, limits and contradictions of market-based development, contrasting economic perspectives and broader development trajectories around green growth.

According to **Bob Jessop**, while the triple crises of food, fuel and global finance undermine development for present and future generations, they are also open to interpretation. Crises may be "accidental", that is, due to natural or "external" forces (such as invasion, tsunami, crop failure, earthquake); or they may be generated by specific social arrangements (capitalism, for example). How crises are defined in turn determines how they can be solved, by whom, and who should bear the costs and benefits. The challenge lies in identifying whether the current triple crisis is a normal and solvable crisis "in" the global system, in which case, the solution lies in crisis management routines or innovations that restore business as usual. By contrast, if we are seeing a crisis "of" the global system—that is, an inability to "go on" in the old way—this ought to result in a potentially radical break. Jessop argued that because the green economy concept is vague, it can be captured by powerful forces and filled with meaning in line with ideas preferential to them. Green growth and the Global Green New Deal, much like sustainable

development, are "…narrated as capitalism's best hope to create jobs, restore growth, and limit climate change [but] also pose a risk because of its potential incoherence and/or vulnerability to capture by the most powerful economic and political forces".

Kathleen McAfee presented a critique of the green economy concept based on its aim to increasingly put a dollar value on nature. Doing so may not only have negative consequences for environmental protection, but may also be contradictory to the practices and priorities of many of the people most negatively affected by climate change and climate mitigation policies. The main concern is that, while nature can become a source of tradable commodities (resources such as timber and water, as well as ecosystem services

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such as carbon sequestration), people are also likely to respond to short-term self-interest (payment or profit), and it is often private actors who decide what gets produced, where and how. The costs and benefits of conservation differ between regions, and particularly between North and South. According to McAfee, "the market can allocate for efficiency by directing conservation spending toward those people and places where it can be done most cheaply; carbon sinks in the tropics are a conservation bargain!"

Using the example of Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD), McAfee also argued that market mechanisms for incentivizing carbon storage both require and reinforce increased inequalities (as well as rarely resulting in carbon staying in the ground). Thus, when focusing on such instruments, it is important to go beyond the scope of environmental economics to more comprehensively address the social repercussions of carbon trading schemes and other "green" economic policies.

Pascal van Griethuysen added to these debates through a review of different economic perspectives and their socio-environmental implications. Although the use of carbon trading as a policy instrument certainly reflects a conventional economic rationale (efficiency and internalizing externalities, for example), the field of economics is more pluralistic in its potential approaches to green economy than initially suggested. While neoclassical environmental economics reinforces the market as a cost-effective environmental policy instrument, other sub-disciplines can better account for interactions between ecology and economy (ecological economics), the social embeddedness of the market (institutional economics), or the links between property rights, capital and finance (property economics). His presentation also resonated with Jessop's argument that green economy is a concept that is "up for grabs", even within the discipline of economics.

Referring to India, **Payal Banerjee** and **Atul Sood** explored some of the contradictions that arise when the objectives of green growth and sustainable development are pursued in the context of rapid economic liberalization. The government's high-growth objectives have privileged a privatized approach to development and problem solving while often ignoring and aggravating social inequalities. Drawing on research carried out in the state of Sikkim, they highlighted the contradiction between the promotion and adoption of a range of green policies, and the implementation of development projects that create severe environmental and socio-cultural problems for marginalized and displaced peoples. High-growth strategies have not been accompanied by improvements in the participation or rights of those affected adversely. The examples also illustrate the importance of bottom-up movements around legislative reforms: while social

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movements have some space to exert influence, the state does not facilitate their involvement, thus compounding ineffective policy implementation. Green economy, while good in theory, must also be implemented in ways that reduce inequality and social

conflict. For Banerjee and Sood, "legislative changes, along with new principles of governance like decentralized decision making, public-private partnership and stakeholder consultations for the Indian state, together provide a defense for growth."

The discussion was initiated by **Robin Mearns**, who first pointed out that, while there is a tendency to set up dichotomies of state versus market, it should be recognized that both play important roles. Growth is important for poverty reduction and social development, but the market needs to be regulated. One way to harness the power of the private sector is by promoting socially responsible consumption, such as strengthening CSR and labelling schemes for organic and fair trade products. These are powerful tools for behavioural change that need to be reinforced, as they can increase the bargaining power of small producers in the global market.

Second, there are inflated expectations of what carbon trading can deliver. REDD is not going to finance climate action as a whole: it will only constitute a small part of a much larger agenda. The real problem is that there are no effective limits on emissions. There need to be mechanisms in place that set caps on emissions at the global level for a carbon trading system to be effective.

Countries also need to explore other alternatives such as public regulation, carbon taxes and incentives (rather than compensation only). Mearns also stressed the need to focus on strengthening forest communities' ownership rights, as this leads to better conservation practices, a point reiterated throughout the conference.

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Greater policy coherence, for example through reinforcing REDD systems with social protection policies, is also necessary. Still, the dominance of monetary metrics as a way of capturing the value of forests is problematic, and "the elephant in the room is still the global politics of whether countries can agree on hard limits on emissions".

These discussions over market-led development highlighted a key point of contention that set the scene for the rest of the conference. While the role of markets was acknowledged, Jessop and McAfee argued that the conventional discourse of the market disguises its inequalities. In line with Polanyi, creating markets based on "fictitious commodities", such as labour, nature, money and knowledge, said Jessop, is the "road to ruin". Markets are not black or white; instead, we need to ask what is being commodified; find a balance between market, hierarchy, networks and solidarity; and better incorporate both macro- and micro-level perspectives. Diversity of institutions is always a reality; the challenge is to ensure that markets (especially for carbon) do not exclude the rights, interests and worldviews of diverse groups.

Given the current "crisis of the system", these debates pointed clearly to a need to find space for institutional change and alternative solutions. As Mearns and Cook suggested, the dominant policy approach is to compensate the people or groups that lose from the transition process. Another approach is for policies to focus on complementarities and how to reinforce the green economy through incentives.

> *There is enough for everybody's need, but not enough for anybody's greed.*

A third approach would address the structural drivers of inequality and social change. Common assumptions—such as green growth automatically being socially equitable growth—need to be empirically tested, and meaningful cross-country comparisons of environmental, social and economic performance undertaken. For example, research by the World Bank shows that gender equality is robustly correlated with environmental performance, but that such data is not commonly considered or measured. In conclusion, Agarwal remarked that we can no longer rely only on grand economic theories of markets to solve problems and promote a fair transition to green economy. Today, practice on the ground—the work of households, communities, etc.—is leading theory, as the wealth of practical, local, cooperative solutions in community forestry has shown. Green economy is therefore fundamentally about addressing inequality and social

justice. Referring to a quote from Gandhi, Agarwal reminded us that "there is enough for everybody's need, but not enough for anybody's greed."

Session 2—The Challenge of Policy Coherence

Policy coherence is a recurrent theme in green economy debates, although exactly what this means and how to achieve it need clarification. The presentations in this session, chaired by **Lucas Assunção**, UNCTAD, discussed the relationship between different types of policy, the scope for achieving co-benefits, and the role of social policy in addressing winners and losers in a transition to green economy. Speakers considered issues of policy coherence related to welfare states, green jobs, eco-social policy, and environmental stewardship in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The distributional consequences of various policy approaches on different actors, levels and sectors emerged as a key theme.

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Drawing on the experience of the United Kingdom, **Ian Gough** questioned whether ambitious policies to "de-carbonize" the economy pose new challenges to the institutions of the welfare state. Fuel poverty and distributional injustice are rising, alongside significant political backlash. While carbon allocation schemes may be progressive overall, research shows that there will be many low-income losers: large families in rural, hard-to-heat houses; empty-nesters in large houses and houses without gas central heating; and retired under-occupied urban households. This is double injustice, where those least responsible for emissions related to climate change are also those that pay the highest costs. The common policy response is to use targeted social programmes to compensate such groups. However, the heterogeneity of households and dwellings makes it difficult to compensate rising energy costs through social benefits. Policy coherence, in this instance, implies a stronger role for the state and a return to redistributive policies. Gough called for radical policy integration to connect income, time and carbon consumption. He argued that "the need for further policy integration is at least part of a green growth strategy, let alone a beyond-growth strategy."

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Laura Rival presented three projects to illustrate how coordinated, cooperative and integrated policy design around carbon markets works in practice:

- Bolsa Floresta (State of Amazonas, Brazil): A REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) scheme to avoid deforestation by making sure that trees are worth more alive than dead.
- The Yasuní-ITT Initiative (Amazon region of Ecuador): A PES (Payments for Ecosystem Services) scheme to avoid CO_2 emissions and make sure petroleum is worth more under the ground than above it.
- Araçuai Sustentável (State of Minas Gerais, Brazil): A regional scheme to avoid migration, build social capital and food security, and ensure a good life for inhabitants of small towns and rural surroundings.

> *Is it possible to replace older trade-offs between development and conservation with new hopes of 'developing while conserving' in the Latin American context?*

Using different combinations of market mechanisms, incentives and local community resources, each project represents efforts of social actors seeking to create innovative sustainability-enhancing institutions in order to achieve environmental and social policy integration. These examples revealed some of the challenges of integrating conservation and social development, including building community trust in the national government and in the market, and creating support at the policy level for community initiatives. Rival further explained the value of the innovative approach used in Ecuador, a country trying to move beyond an oil-led development path, having realized that the present development path had not produced the positive

outcomes initially expected. She stressed that policy makers need to accept that local green economy initiatives have a big role to play in national development, and asked, "is it possible to replace older trade-offs between development and conservation with new hopes of 'developing while conserving' in the Latin American context?"

Amalia Palma and **Claudia Robles** elaborated on the potential for green economy in Latin America where a shortage of household assets limits the potential of green economy policies to improve the livelihoods of the poor. They argued that policies to increase productivity, create new sectors and improve technology transfer and training need to be accompanied by other interventions, such as social protection or social transfers, long term investment policies and labour regulation. In the absence of such policies, it is likely that greening the economy will not automatically lead to improvements in the living conditions of the poor, but green economy can also be seen as an opportunity to rethink development in Latin America.

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Samuel Awoniyi discussed the difficult situation faced by the Nigerian government to ensure consistency of policies in relation to food security and deforestation. Evidence shows that areas with low poverty profiles exhibit lower rates of deforestation, suggesting that improved rural social welfare programmes could reduce both poverty and ecosystem degradation. Age, marital status, household size, gender, and farming are important aspects of rural demographics that policy should address. However, a lack of good governance, the legacy of structural adjustment programmes and long political terms are key barriers affecting Nigeria's capacity to strengthen policy in these areas. He stressed that there is a clear need for more community-driven programmes and for more financial assistance from the international community.

Based on research in Bangladesh, **Kathrin Bimesdörfer**, **Carola Kantz** and J.R. Siegal (absent) argued that, while green jobs in the rural electrification market have resulted in numerous co-benefits (such as increased power supply for households, employment opportunities in green industries, and a net gain on the job market), there is a striking gap in knowledge with regard to employment and labour within the rural off-grid electricity market. Referring to a large project in which one million households had received off-grid solar home systems, they noted that the metrics for gauging success currently focus on evaluating the reach of energy infrastructure and energy output. However the social dimensions of the jobs created—such as the total number of jobs, the types and quality of jobs, wages, gender impacts, skills development, labour conditions and working hours—are not well understood. The social impacts of the shift from public to private solutions are also unclear. Green jobs policies therefore need to be complemented by research monitoring social indicators. While there are many existing studies on labour policies in other sectors, there are very few in relation to renewable energy. In light of these findings, concerns were raised about the appropriateness of the technologies themselves; for example, are solar panels an appropriate energy source to introduce in poor communities lacking the necessary technical knowledge? In the case of Bangladesh, the solar home systems were simple to use and low cost. The main challenge was not technological suitability per se, but rather measuring and evaluating the social dimensions of green technologies.

Lucas Assunção closed the session by stating that the transition towards a green economy is well under way, but remains fragmented. There are many initiatives across diverse sectors, but few coherent links between them. For green economy to be successful, an active state with developmental objectives is needed, as the transition will not happen by default. In this transition, greater policy coherence will be needed to tackle distributional and other social aspects.

Session 3—Agency, Interests and Coalitions

This session, chaired by **Lucia Schild Ortiz,** Friends of the Earth Brazil, debated the role of social

movements, and the relationship between states, businesses, social movements and other organized interest groups, in shaping and contesting green economy concepts and policy approaches. Speakers discussed the influence of these actors in terms of different patterns of resource allocation and access, political and institutional structures, and power at national and global levels. The importance of building alliances, and thus analysis of these alliances, *now*—as green economy is already happening—emerged as a key factor in better understanding the power and participation of different actors in the transition to a green economy.

Rocío Hiraldo used the example of the global political economy of REDD+ to analyse how different environmental worldviews impact the emerging green economy debate. REDD includes programmes that financially compensate countries for reducing CO_2 emissions from deforestation. In REDD+, strategies must go beyond deforestation and forest degradation to include the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in reducing emissions. However, she argued that REDD+ remains mostly focused on growth and governance with the underlying assumption that economic growth is compatible with significant reductions in carbon emissions. Social issues such as poverty reduction and social justice are not well integrated, as the emphasis is on efficiency rather than equity.

> ***What is needed is increased institutional support and policy space for currently less powerful forest voices if equity, rights and social justice are to be considered as key aspects of the future global climate change regime.***

The competition around defining the goals and potential benefits of REDD+ characterizes disputes between actors, due to varied worldviews or narratives linking forests and development. Referring to four such positions—market-liberal, institutionalist, bio-environmentalist, and social-green—Hiraldo pointed out that REDD+ is a product of non-linear power relations, and thus, what is needed is increased institutional support and policy space for currently less powerful forest voices if equity, rights and social justice are to be considered as key aspects of the future global climate change regime.

Hiraldo argued that in order to make social aspects more visible, national regulations and institutional architecture that recognize and engage local communities at different levels need to be established, enabling benefits to reach those who need them most. But challenges also remain—namely around incorporating diverse groups as beneficiaries. For example, a participant from the floor criticized the World Bank (which plays a key role in financing REDD/REDD+ around the world) for using problems of poor governance and state failure as a justification for further strengthening market initiatives, privatization and commodification schemes, in turn further marginalizing local forest communities from the potential benefits of REDD/REDD+.

Nicola Bullard and **Tadzio Müller**—speaking from their experiences with civil society activism—discussed the climate justice movement's (CJM) weakness in relation to forces and interests favouring market-centred green economy approaches. They argued that green economy and the climate justice movement can be considered as two competing paradigms. Referring to Jessop's distinction between fundamentally different types of crisis, the conventional green economy approach speaks to a crisis *in* the system, whereas the CJM assumes that there is a crisis *of* the system. Having emerged in 2007 without an overarching strategy, the CJM comprises the old anti-globalization movement, environmental NGOs and new climate change negotiation followers. But today, the general lack of high level consensus on green economy makes it difficult for the CJM to create an oppositional counter-hegemonic climate justice project at the global level. There is also little or no widespread social base for focusing on ethical justice, meaning that the Northern climate justice movement has had to move from a focus on transforming consumption patterns to energy democracy—linking energy resource use with political institutions, governance and equity—in order to shift the debate from one of distribution to redistribution.

Connecting Northern and Southern movements and shaping global-level coalitions are major challenges for the CJM and any other movement in opposition to "business as usual". Bullard and Müller argued that the

most pressing need is to find ways to bridge local realities and global strategies, and to learn from existing and growing alternatives (such as the food sovereignty movement from networks such as Via Campesina). However, the lack of funding, research and policy work in this area limits the possibility of these alternatives being taken seriously, and thus, being articulated as viable alternatives to dominant green economy approaches.

Through case studies of food, fuel and energy policy in Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa, **Danielle Resnick** and **James Thurlow** discussed tensions between state encouragement of green growth agendas and anti-reform coalitions whose interests may conflict with such agendas. While green economy discourse assumes a win-win situation in terms of growth, well-being and carbon reduction, such a possibility is questionable beyond the local or project level. In practice, other development strategies prevail. One example discussed was in relation to calls for a large-scale African "green revolution" (AGRA)—one which would ultimately increase the use of chemically-based fertilizers. While this carries big environmental risks, it has also gained widespread political support for reasons disconnected from environmental or social sustainability, such as gaining electoral support in return for promises of low-cost fertilisers to rural farmers. This was one example of a trade-off between social and environmental aspects of green growth, highlighting the important role that political economy plays in determining green economy strategies.

> ***The experience of past structural adjustment initiatives cautions against ignoring trade-offs and political economy considerations.***

Their case studies show the difficulty of adopting a green growth approach in Malawi, Mozambique and South Africa. Initial high costs and the lack of long-term vision have meant in some cases that political leaders, business interests and small-scale farmers resist implementation of the approach. Resnick and Thurlow stressed the need for policies to protect losers in order to limit resistance, and to use *official development assistance to facilitate transition and implementation of green technologies.* They highlighted the need to look beyond the costs of a green economy transition and to focus instead on systemic social and political change, as "the experience of past structural adjustment initiatives cautions against ignoring trade-offs and political economy considerations." Major governance problems in Africa make it difficult for green economy projects to actually reach the grassroots; in this context, local actors need to be encouraged to participate through more bottom-up policy approaches.

Next, **Hironobu Sano** discussed how different actors—states, civil society and businesses—take part in formal environmental policy processes and decision-making in Brazil. Historically, there has been fragmentation within the arena of governance in environmental policy. New structures have been put in place which on paper appear to overcome this fragmentation, but there is still resistance to change, imbalances in participation of various government divisions, and lack of commitment by the government to negotiate with other multistakeholder groups. The integration of national, subnational and local levels of policy making, and the improved participation of state, business and civil society actors in formal governance institutions is necessary to overcome such fragmentation.

Currently in Brazil a growing lack of legitimacy faces governmental institutions (federal, state and municipal councils, institutes and agencies responsible for implementing the National Environmental policy) due to the disproportionate weight of government representation in relation to workers and civil society in decision-making arenas. Sano called for more effective incorporation of civil society representatives in particular; this should be complemented with increased institutional support for adapting participatory channels to meet the needs of the most marginalized. This would contribute to more decentralized power so as to enable civil society to take on a more substantial and active role.

Session 4—Community Values, Institutions and Dynamics

This session, chaired by **Christina von Fürstenberg**, UNESCO, highlighted the richness of community level values, dynamics and experiences, and the need for sustainable development strategies that reflect local

social, environmental and political contexts. Drawing on case studies from Africa, India, Latin America, South Asia and the United Kingdom, speakers explored the extent to which local actors are (or are not) able to shape institutional and policy change both nationally and globally; the interplay of power relations; and the scope for active citizenship.

Adnan Hezri presented an analysis of the Malaysian government's approach to green economy based on research into community engagement in three green economy sectors—agriculture, renewable energy and waste—focusing on how these sectors meet social objectives. Alongside national green policies (for technology, construction, finance, employment, procurement and energy) aimed at reducing carbon emissions in urban areas, Malaysia has also seen growth in green economy projects in rural areas, albeit to a lesser extent. These include (i) the introduction of a system of rice intensification that aims to eradicate poverty for small farmers and their communities through more sustainable farming practices; (ii) experiments with micro-hydro and other renewable energy sources to bring electricity and enterprise to rural areas not able to connect to the national power grid; and (iii) small-scale production of handicrafts produced from waste paper by women's groups. Each of these projects can potentially provide multiple social "co-benefits", including poverty reduction and food production; energy, jobs and new businesses; and waste reduction, tourism and gender empowerment.

However, scaling up such initiatives has proved difficult. A major problem was the lack of consultation with intended beneficiaries during the policy-making process. This led to a lack of local uptake and ownership over the process, which were compounded by limited interest of funders. Hezri concluded that many green economy initiatives launched in Malaysia amount to piece-meal greening, whereby the creation of green jobs tends to benefit certain sectors and urban areas, but bypasses rural workers and their needs. In this case, the ecological modernization approach taken in Malaysia often represents a limited technological fix to a much more complex problem. What is needed is more long-term thinking to understand policy making and its trajectory over time, combined with the reform of social institutions to give them more credibility and strengthening of communication between local and state levels.

Amy Merritt and **Tristan Stubbs** discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the use of incentives and other policy mechanisms to promote participation in climate change and sustainability policies at the local level. Evidence from Angola, Brazil, Mozambique South Africa and the United Kingdom showed that green consumption policies have the potential to generate finance, shift production, mitigate climate change, and improve participatory governance or "green citizenship". They can raise resources that communities and governments can use to drive locally appropriate sustainability actions, although governments must also ensure mechanisms for decentralized community participation and actively encourage citizenship.

By generating funds through consumption policies based on incentives and disincentives and using participatory political channels for their disbursement, consumerism (both consumption patterns and activism around consumption) can directly feed into strengthening local capacities to devise and implement local initiatives and address climate change. For example, letting local communities decide over tax instruments is one way to provide citizen benefits.

In the United Kingdom, the Transition Town movement is demonstrating innovative ways to raise resources to fight climate change and promote sustainability that put people at the centre. Transition Towns are developing public infrastructure, energy descent plans, local complementary currencies, community allotments and locally produced food schemes to help people transition from a reliance on fossil fuels and consumerism. Despite some challenges in scaling up their approach, they emphasize autonomous organization for the delivery of local services. In Angola, Mozambique and South Africa, incentives for green citizenship can complement climate finance from private sector and multilateral donors. But to work well, incentives need to be permanent, transparent, accompanied by information, packaged differently according to different groups, flexible and locally relevant, support growth in the voluntary sector, and support the functioning of community groups.

Improving consumer citizenship at the local and national levels requires investment in social capital, since this builds trust and increases the likelihood that people will support actions for the common good. Merritt and Stubbs concluded that the main challenges are how to ensure equitable representation at the local level (rather than equitable distribution), re-establish trust within a broken system, and thus ground policies locally.

Referring to the Philippines, **Marlyne Sahakian** discussed the role of households in charting transitions toward a green economy, using a case study of consumption patterns in Metro Manila. She argued that in global green economy debates, there is an over-emphasis on production, technological optimism and individual choice. Energy consumption is not simply about choosing energy efficient technologies; it is also a social and cultural practice entwined with social status and lifestyle. For households, this tension can result in confusion and lack of trust in policies and programmes that aim to transform consumption patterns. The problem is compounded by mistrust in the public sector.

> *In global green economy debates, there is an over-emphasis on production, technological optimism and individual choice. Energy consumption is not simply about choosing energy efficient technologies; it is also a social and cultural practice entwined with social status and lifestyle.*

The key issue is not designing new laws, but implementing those that exist. It is also important to change values and norms through public discourse, despite the difficulties in doing so. Because the current environmental discourse has become increasingly less meaningful, there needs to be a creation of new understandings and social processes, such as engaging in public debate around what constitutes consumer status symbols. She also emphasized that until Northern consumption lifestyles are re-envisaged, it will remain difficult to reshape consumption patterns in the developing world.

Ashok Kumbamu discussed the rise of civil counter-movements or "self-protecting measures against the intrusion of the market system" in the context of the growth of the market-centred agri-food system in India. The Deccan Development Society is an example of a "post-developmentalist" or "social economy" initiative that engages local communities—especially groups of marginalized Dalit women—in democratic decision making and biodiversity conservation, with the aim of building local autonomy over resources, the market and the media. This movement is positioned in opposition to ecological modernization, corporate control of seed and land, and technological fixes such as genetic modification and agri-chemicals. Its successes include improved local food production, storage and distribution; the growth of rural enterprises (such as organic cafes and stores); revival of local food cultures and the documentation of indigenous knowledge; biodiversity conservation through the establishment of seed banks; and the creation of community media and green education programmes.

In response to the question of whether it is possible to have a green economy without taking an ecological modernization approach, Kumbamu explained that ecological modernization often leans towards neoliberal, modernist and technocratic solutions, underscored by a lack of transparency and undemocratic approaches. What is needed—as exemplified by local social economy experiments—is to deconstruct hegemonic discourses and reconstruct local-level dialogue on the ground. He

> *Technological fixes for politico-economic and socio-ecological crises are undemocratic and unsustainable.*

stressed that technological fixes will never work unless structural issues are addressed, as "technological fixes for politico-economic and socio-ecological crises are undemocratic and unsustainable."

Session 5—The Social Construction of Markets

This session, chaired by **Angela Cropper**, UNEP, addressed a central tension within green economy debates: how societal norms and pressures, as well as public and private regulation and governance, shape market relations and business behaviour associated with green economy. The presentations raised questions

about who bears the cost of a green economy within and between countries, and the potential for the greening of markets to either redress or reproduce current inequalities in development.

Samuel McGlennon argued that markets are social constructions shaped by different combinations of actors and institutions, and that their governance confronted major challenges in contexts of globali-zation. Thus, "a green economy will be one in which patterns of natural resource use are able to be more closely guided and steered, that is, governed".

> ***A green economy will be one in which patterns of natural resource use are able to be more closely guided and steered, that is, governed.***

Environmental degradation often occurs at sites of production that are located either in developing countries or the global commons, while the benefits of consumption (such as access to a range of profits and products, for industry and consumers alike) are concentrated in the developed countries. Consequently, the majority of these natural resource products travel great physical distances through complex supply chain networks. Complications also arise in how best to govern across national and international borders, between national governments and domestic producers and consumers, and with international actors such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). These are examples of "governance gaps".

Certification schemes have emerged as a potential solution to the governance gap. While they aim to restructure production and consumption through various norms and incentives, they too face major challenges. One example raised from the floor referred to the Netherlands, which has decided to only purchase certified "sustainable" palm oil. However, evidence shows that to grow palm trees, land needs to be cleared and people displaced to make way. The social impacts of certification and related governance mechanisms must also be considered, raising concerns about whether "sustainable" is a robust enough concept in this case. McGlennon explained that it very much depends on who is driving the certification and what meaning or evidence is embedded in its claims about sustainability.

Each actor with a stake in certification schemes (national governments, industry bodies and associations, environmental NGOs, producer groups, consumer groups and consumers) differs in their perspective on how certification schemes should be used and to whose benefit: McGlennon therefore suggested that we should look beyond simply moving from public to private market governance, towards "mixed" market governance arrangements.

Other presentations analysed examples of market-based approaches to environmental governance that currently dominate global green economy debates—carbon markets and PES—the discussions of which resonated with earlier presentations on REDD and REDD+.

Adam Bumpus discussed the ways in which global and local conditions interact to shape carbon markets and their social impacts. Examining two different types of carbon-offset projects, his presentation showed how variations in global-local interactions can lead to different outcomes. In the case of a small hydro plant in Honduras, local benefits were uneven and mediated by local power relationships between the project developer and communities, as well as the agency of certain communities to negotiate benefits. In the case of cookstoves, significant symbiosis existed whereby the benefits of a particular technology not only reduced emissions and improved health at the local level, but also increased the value of the carbon credit on the international market.

> ***There is a need for a systemic change where priorities are reversed, and social and ecological dimensions are put first. The goal should be to achieve an equitable approach to the construction of markets.***

A more inclusive social development component in carbon finance would require three 'I's: *information* (through monitoring, reporting and verification) on benefits and power asymmetries; *inclusion* of local agency by structuring participation at systemic levels; and *innovation in communication* of participation in the carbon commodity chain.

In the discussion, it was noted that carbon trading has failed to reduce carbon levels. Moreover, the focus has

been primarily on measuring carbon levels, with little attention to the social and economic effects of carbon trading. Bumpus argued that there is a need for a systemic change where priorities are reversed, and social and ecological dimensions are put first. The goal should be to achieve an equitable approach to the construction of markets.

Michael Winer, **Helen Murphy** and **Harold Ludwick** stressed the need for PES markets to incorporate the participation of indigenous landowners. Referring to the experience in Cape York, Australia, they argued that indigenous peoples have largely been left out of negotiating and defining land use policies including PES, at the same time as being overloaded with too many inconsistent and unsuitable government policies. PES could be highly beneficial to local indigenous communities, but land management models need to recognize indigenous rights and participation in institutional decision-making, as well as cultural perceptions and practices that value land and the environment differently. The presenters reflected that both state and federal governments, and some NGOs, are using green economy and conservation measures,filled with positive connotations, to pursue a narrow conservationist agenda which often does not help reduce poverty. Instead, "green and political pressure to protect 'what's left' in Australia is focusing on…the largest remaining Aboriginal Homelands," with negative outcomes for indigenous people. Strict environmental regulation has meant that indigenous people's autonomy over their land and resources has been reduced, which has undermined local development possibilities that are compatible with sustainable development.

> *Green and political pressure to protect 'what's left' in Australia is focusing on...the largest remaining Aboriginal Homelands.*

Each case study pointed to the need to strengthen mechanisms for community participation in the governance of markets, a core social dimension. Rather than leaving the market to address social concerns, markets must be accompanied by social processes of building consensus, participation and social regulation (through building shared values and norms at the local level, as well as formal channels of regulation or certification). The session ended with a discussion on the difficulties in achieving this, especially in regard to building consensus among indigenous groups. In the case of Cape York, there are over 50 groups at the grassroots level with different languages, making coordination and consultation difficult. Both government and activists' approaches to representation therefore need to be questioned; these actors cannot be spokespersons for indigenous groups, but should put resources behind local leaders to enable them to make their own decisions.

UN Perspectives on the Social Dimensions of Green Economy

During this session, representatives of United Nations agencies that are playing a pivotal role in several inter-agency or multistakeholder initiatives related to the Rio+20 preparatory process gave their perspectives on social dimensions of green economy.

Sheng Fulai, UNEP, provided some background to the concept of green economy. The term was coined by UNEP as part of its green economy initiative launched in 2008, in response to the neglect of environmental deterioration and the lack of integration of environmental concerns into economic policy or poverty reduction strategies since the Rio Summit in 1992. In both international and national policy making, despite a strong emphasis on internalizing environmental externalities through taxes and reform of subsidies, environmental protection continues to be considered as a burden on economic growth, and there have been difficulties scaling up successful local, integrative approaches. Furthermore, the importance of reconfiguring investment has not been sufficiently addressed. But activities at the macroeconomic level are a systemic driver of environmental degradation, and thus their transformation is fundamental for bringing about sustainable development. In recognizing the need for a more integrative perspective, UNEP has coordinated global research linking the redirection of public and private investment to the reduction of CO_2 emissions, reduced loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, job creation, and income generation. The shift in investment needs to be supported by policy measures in the areas of finance, trade, innovation and technology, regulation, and measurement of progress.

The social dimension of a green economy—in terms of increased investments in human and social capital—is emphasized in a UN system-wide report, Working Towards a Balanced and Inclusive Green Economy'[1], by the Environmental Management Group.

Sheng cautioned that it is a misconception that green economy gives too much emphasis to the economic pillar; he argued that the economic pillar is the most problematic for achieving sustainable development, and as such we should give it *more* attention, not less, in order to change the engine of economic growth. This involves redirecting public and private finance and investment away from business as usual towards environmentally significant economic sectors. This will inevitably result in social co-benefits, but we need to be proactive to include the social agenda and avoid considering social dimensions as secondary to economics and the environment. Thus, for Sheng, "green economy currently offers a policy window which should be opened even wider instead of starting to search for a new window".

In response to his presentation, the link between green economy and poverty reduction was challenged. A few participants raised concerns that the current neoliberal economic framework limits—rather than facilitates—concrete change, requiring a more innovative approach, perhaps beyond what green economy might offer. The notion of green economy reinvents growth without fundamentally questioning its implications. The economy should be seen first and foremost as a *tool* to bring about ecological and social equity. Sheng argued that, in the context of a market economy, it would not be possible to forgo growth *and* achieve poverty reduction. But there needs to be a change in how growth is generated; economic activities need to be transformed so that they are non-polluting and socially inclusive; and social pressure through activism needs to prompt real changes within the market system.

Ana Belén Sánchez presented the ILO Green Jobs Programme[2] main areas of work and lessons learned since the programme started five years back. She presented the Green Jobs Initiative, built up by four partners: ILO, UNEP, the International Organization of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). This represents a joint effort between employers, workers and the UN system in promoting green jobs creation and the transformation to a sustainable economy with the active participation of the world of work.

The Green Jobs Programme has focused on carrying out research to better understand the (positive and negative) relationships between labour and environment, in which sectors green jobs can be found, and which sectors might face challenges in the transition to a sustainable future. One of the most important conclusions from their research is that a different development paradigm is needed, one where the relationship between environmental, economic and social areas are much better integrated than at present. For the world of work to overcome the potential challenges that a transition to a low-carbon and sustainable economy might bring, there is a need to focus on a "just transition". In other words, impacts of environmental policies on jobs should be identified well in advance in order to put in place policies and programmes to deal with labour market changes; social protection systems should cover all those at risk of both environmental damage, and, income and employment challenges, due to the transition to a green economy; decisions should be taken in a participatory fashion through social dialogue; and finally, opportunities for "green jobs" should be maximized.

According to the ILO, green jobs have the potential to mitigate environmental degradation by reducing energy and raw material consumption, de-carbonizing economies and minimizing waste and pollution. Green jobs must also be decent jobs that respect labour rights and are associated with productive employment, social dialogue and social protection. The ILO's goal of decent work translates into a framework for socially just transition.

However, the discussion raised a number of important questions. First, many examples of jobs arising from green economy initiatives tend to be found either at the periphery of the economy (such as formalizing previously informal industries such as waste

[1] www.unemg.org/Portals/27/Documents/IMG/GreenEconomy/report/GreenEconomy-Full.pdf
[2] http://www.ilo.org/green-jobs-programme

management) or in new green industries (such as solar panels or sustainable building). Such approaches often target the poor and marginalized, but to some extent may do little to move substantial segments of the labour force into green and decent employment. It is therefore important to also focus on how labour patterns are shifting within large energy production, manufacturing, services and agricultural sectors that have substantial impacts on the environment, in order to improve both environmental performance and labour conditions there.

The High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) Task Team on Social Dimensions of Climate Change (SDCC), whose work was presented by **Elena Villalobos Prats,** WHO, was co-convened in June 2010 by the ILO, UNDESA and WHO. Today it is a major initiative comprising 19 UN agencies. The objectives are to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework for the social dimensions of climate change, advocate a multidimensional approach to climate change policies, and identify ways in which the UN system can more effectively support Member States to ensure that climate-related policies and measures simultaneously provide better living conditions for the whole society. With this, it aims to broaden and deepen policy makers' understanding of the benefits of addressing social dimensions of climate change in climate policies. The SDCC report was launched at the COP17 in Durban in late 2011.[3]

According to Villalobos Prats, the current climate change discourse mainly emphasizes its environmental or economic dimension, without properly addressing the social one. In the framework of sustainable development and its three pillars (social, economic and environmental) there are three sets of needs to be considered when addressing the social dimensions of climate change—basic needs, individual needs and social needs. Basic needs (water, food, energy, shelter, transport and security) should of course be met first, and all reflect a combination of social, economic and environmental factors. At the individual level, health, decent work, social protection, empowerment and mobile assets are required. Social needs refer to equity and social inclusion, human rights, participation, governance, cooperation and solidarity and education. A better understanding of these social dimensions of climate change requires an increased emphasis on the principles of equity, social justice and putting people at the centre of sustainable development. This would improve the climate change policy framework by positioning participation, accountability, equity and empowerment more centrally. Gender equality and civic activism are crucial in this regard, both for substantive and procedural equity.

> *A better understanding of these social dimensions of climate change requires an increased emphasis on the principles of equity, social justice and putting people at the centre of sustainable development.*

During the discussion, a conference participant noted that there seemed to be a disconnect between the position of some UN organizations on green economy, and the content of conference presentations; the latter were much more critical of the growth paradigm and called for deeper structural change, alternative production and consumption models, and more attention to overall livelihood systems.

Session 6—Agriculture and Rural Development

Agriculture is a sector with large CO_2 emissions and directly affects the livelihoods of many vulnerable farmers, and thus plays an important role in green economy. The consensus of this session was that food production and consumption patterns need to be restructured if environmental, social and economic sustainability of the sector is to be improved. Any green economy transition process will have major implications for employment, food security and ecological sustainability in rural areas. Points of contention arose, however, around the extent to which technological fixes, corporate involvement, local community knowledge and alternative paradigms are needed for achieving this goal.

The chair, **Edward Heinemann**, IFAD, presented data that highlighted the gravity of the agro-food crisis. He stressed that it is important to acknowledge whose perspective one is representing when talking about sustainable agriculture and rural development, as

[3] www.who.int/globalchange/mediacentre/events/2011/social-dimensions-of-climate-change.pdf

understandings of these differ between actors. For the very poor, economic growth is critical for poverty alleviation. He put forward three major challenges that the agricultural sector will have to address more effectively in the years to come: expanding food demand associated with growing populations and rapid economic growth; natural resource limitations and environmental degradation; and increasingly uncertain weather patterns and climate change.

In her presentation on food security, **Diana Alarcón** discussed the need for sustainable agricultural innovation systems (SAIS). She stressed that food insecurity is a major development challenge given the adverse impact of climate change on agricultural production. As small-scale farms constitute the majority of agricultural product supply in the world, it is important to address food security, poverty reduction, economic growth and sustainable development simultaneously and strategically. In the context of population growth, we have to ensure that "increased food production [is] compatible with green technology, sustainable agriculture and sustainable use of natural resources."

> *Increased food production [is] compatible with green technology, sustainable agriculture and sustainable use of natural resources.*

This needs to be compatible with small-scale farmers' needs. While large-scale farms usually have better access to the market and are thus more competitive, they are not always more efficient in terms of food production or environmental impact. For example, evidence points to higher levels of pollution due to more intensive use of pesticides, chemicals and fuel on large-scale, mechanized farms. Small-scale farmers are often able to follow more ecologically sound production methods as well as contribute to local (and simultaneously, global) food security. But they need to be supported to meet high standards of quality; to access local markets, finance, insurance and technology; and to be recognized as an integral part of sustainable agriculture. Innovative solutions (including technological solutions to improve yields, such as irrigation or fertilizers) need to be context specific, adapted to the local agricultural environment (especially in the context of rapid climate change), supportive of local farmers, environmentally sustainable, and address local consumption needs.

But what can be considered as an acceptable level of food security; does such a level exist? In the discussion that followed, the importance of developing a comprehensive notion of food security that goes beyond increased production to focus as well on purchasing power and the fairness and efficiency of food consumption was stressed. A lot of food is wasted in the production and consumption process, due for example to poor infrastructure, and there is a need to shorten the value chain. And while migration might help alleviate local food insecurity in the short term, long-term solutions to improve the production of food at the local level are needed.

Witchuda Srang-iam brought local and global perspectives together in her presentation on forestry in Thailand. Tree carbon sequestration has the potential to address climate justice between the North and the South but, as her case study showed, it can also lead to increased local inequalities. For example, only farmers that have a certain level of income can afford to invest in tree planting; unequal access to carbon sequestration programmes therefore has the potential to increase inequality between farmers at the local level. While framed around global justice (taking responsibility for rebalancing historically unequal carbon emissions and consumption between North and South), justice at the local level is actually perceived more in terms of the costs and benefits of adaptation and mitigation measures (who will pay and who will benefit). Srang-iam's research showed that often interventions that are perceived as just within global discourses, such as economic compensation and inviting farmers to participate, do not necessarily result in local justice. In the Thailand case, because only wealthier farmers, brokers and buyers/corporations have the ability to provide the long-term investment required for setting up tree planting schemes, this excludes small scale farmers and aggravates local inequalities. "'Glocalization"' is needed, whereby fairness and justice need to be considered and warranted both from a local and global perspective."

> *'Glocalization' is needed, whereby fairness and justice need to be considered and warranted both from a local and global perspective.*

Mairon Bastos Lima shared results from research into the social aspects of biofuel production involving different crops in Brazil, India and Indonesia. He argued that the rationale for increasing biofuel production in developing countries is often that it can meet social goals, and that there is a growing body of knowledge, technology and institutional capacity to enable this. The reality has been very different. On large farms, conditions of work and pay are often poor, and mechanization has displaced labour. While smallholders have been incorporated into many schemes, they have often derived relatively few benefits. From a food security perspective, the expansion of biofuels has displaced land otherwise suitable for food production. In sum, there is a clear lack of sustainability, and policies have often failed to address issues of social justice.

Referring to recent policy changes in Brazil, Bastos Lima identified the types of social, institutional, economic and political factors that resulted in change that was positive from a social perspective. These included increased levels of state support, policy advocacy, the use of multipurpose crops (also conducive to food security), possibilities to add value to raw materials, and local-level organization and collective action on the part of smallholders and movements.

Discussions during question time further highlighted the need to better understand how global value chains work and to find ways to support small-scale producers to gain access to global markets. But whether and how the mechanisms of global value chains are compatible with both sustainable agriculture *and* the development of local food chains need to be addressed far more centrally in current debates and analysis of green economy.

Closing Plenary—Future Research and Directions for Rio+20

In this session, chaired by **Peter Utting**, UNRISD, commentators from diverse backgrounds—research, policy making and civil society—were invited to reflect on the conference themes and to highlight the key lessons, gaps and future issues for research and practice. Participants were asked: What key message should we take to Rio+20 about the social dimensions of green economy and sustainable development?

Asuncion St Claire argued that research and policy need to go hand in hand, with the first continuously informing the latter. The urgency of climate change means that we do not have time to wait 30 years for evaluations. Nor will the solution to climate change be found in "hard" science, as it is also a complex social issue raising questions about values which must be put in a social context. Put simply, "climate change science needs to be challenged to not only focus on 'climate' but also on 'change'". New integrated natural and social science approaches must be found so that natural sciences can better take social causes and consequences into consideration.

> *Climate change science needs to be challenged to not only focus on 'climate' but also on 'change'.*

What is needed, St Claire argued, is a critical social science—"research as unusual"— in order to plan for an alternative future. Rather than mainstreaming climate issues into development, or vice versa, this new approach must reframe and change the meaning of growth, and must re-evaluate development to fill it with new meaning. This is the only way social dimensions will figure in both research design and outcomes.

Stephen Hale emphasized that power relations are at the centre of understanding how and why institutional and policy change may (or may not) occur. He pointed out two central misunderstandings about the connection between research and social change. First, unfortunately, evidence is a poor driver for action; we have the knowledge, both in terms of natural science and economics, but this knowledge does not lead to action even at the governmental level. It has not done so before and it will not do so in the future. Analysing power structures—that is, who benefits or profits from the status quo and who has the power to effect change—is therefore central if we are to identify successful routes towards the kind of social change necessary to achieve a sustainable, green economy. A second contradiction is that, while the green economy "problem" is complex and interdisciplinary, understandings in society and within institutional structures are not. This poses great challenges, as different knowledge bases and interpretations can be enormously divisive when it comes to political debate, particularly for governments.

Together, these realities present several challenges for the research community:

- Research must focus on what drives commitment to action, in international negotiations, national adaptation strategies and at the community level. In particular, what is needed to trigger change at community and national levels?
- Researchers must be tough on assessing impacts of research on policy, and of their own work.
- Researchers must be mindful of the audience—to whom evidence needs to be communicated—as this has important implications for how to carry out research. Co-production of knowledge leads to greater chances of impact.
- Climate change and green economy research needs to be relevant, contemporary and connected to wider trends, as does the community of researchers involved.

> *Traditional knowledge also needs to play a more integral role in informing analysis, policy and action. Yet local voices are seldom heard at the international level.*

But it is not just the knowledge of researchers that needs to better inform policy making; so-called traditional knowledge also needs to play a more integral role in informing analysis, policy and action. Yet local voices are seldom heard at the international level. Research and policy making should learn from these diverse knowledges, and particularly from societies in which there is no ontological schism between ecology and society. This could strengthen the links between natural and social science, breaking down boundaries and maybe creating a new science altogether.

Vicente Yu from the South Centre identified other key gaps in understanding about green economy that research should address. While we know what green economy should not be, we are less clear on what we want it to be. Thus there is a pressing need to better understand why the concept was developed, by whom and with what objective. It is increasingly recognized that green economy should not be a one-size-fits-all approach, nor should it be used as an excuse for trade protectionism against developing countries or imposing new structural adjustment programmes. But still there is no clear idea of what green economy should include, especially in light of the financial crisis of 2008. Yu suggested that future research should address the policy implications of green economy at:

- the global/macro level—for example, given the challenges of linking trade and climate change, should green economy imply the removal of export subsidies;
- the national level—for example, what policy strategies should be adopted, especially in developing countries; and
- the sectoral level—for example, policy coherence between green sectors with livelihood implications for people in developing countries, and between policies to achieve social and economic equity in the context of multilateral regimes.

> *Green economy should not be seen as one small part of the overall economy, but rather, that moving towards a green economy will require addressing deeper structural issues of power, knowledge and broader development goals.*

Taken together, these points reinforced that green economy should not be seen as one small part of the overall economy, but rather, that moving towards a green economy will require addressing deeper structural issues of power, knowledge and broader development goals. Social dimensions of green economy are not add-ons, but are central to achieving sustainable development.

Concluding remarks

In closing, **Peter Utting** highlighted some of the main points and messages that had emerged during the conference discussions. The event had clearly illustrated not only the centrality of social dimensions for ensuring that green economy is compatible with sustainable development and poverty eradication, but also their relative neglect in international policy-making. There seemed to be a striking disconnect between local realities and global thinking on the topic: numerous examples from community-based research and action of what does and

does not work have not informed global discourse and policies. Various speakers emphasized the following key social dimensions that need to be taken into account:

- Social impacts and distributional consequences: who is affected and how, whether inequalities are reinforced or diminished.
- Social contestation: who is actually framing the agenda, who is for or against particular approaches.
- Social policy: what role does, and should, social policy play.
- Social institutions: how social relations (including class, gender, ethnicity), and norms, values and regulation shape behaviour, decision making and governance.
- Social action: who mobilizes and with whom, and what coalitions and alliances are needed to push through particular agendas and policies.
- Social alternatives: local and regional livelihood systems and projects that simultaneously meet social, economic and environmental goals should inform national and global thinking and policy.

According to Utting, "there is a need for joined up analysis, joined up policy and joined up action". What clearly emerged were serious problems of fragmentation, compartmentalization and incoherence in relation to intellectual inquiry, policy design and implementation, governance and activism. There is a need for joined-up analysis that connects different disciplines and schools of thought to deepen our understanding of problems and solutions; joined-up policy to ensure greater policy coherence between sectors, institutions and scales; and joined-up action for building the broad-based networks, coalitions and alliances that are needed to transform policy and bring about structural change.

Utting noted that the conference had passed through various moments of gloom and hope. Many of the challenges facing a green economy transition that is fair and equitable at times seemed daunting. Various presentations had alluded to the seemingly unstoppable juggernaut of corporate globalization and neoliberal policy, the fact that the commodification of nature is reinforcing inequalities, and the ways in which more powerful interests can co-opt the benefits of green economy. Concerns had also been expressed about the relative weakness of climate justice activism. He reminded the audience of the importance of forging links between research and activism, noting areas of progressive reform on international policy, such as gender equality, where the research-activist nexus had been crucial. For those feeling disheartened about the prospects for change, he recalled Gandhi's words about what happens when a movement gathers momentum: "First they ignore us, second they laugh at us, third they fight us, and fourth we win."

> *There is a need for joined up analysis, joined up policy and joined up action.*

Throughout the two days of discussions, numerous spaces for progressive action and policy had been identified. Civil society and local government interactions had proved particularly important in many countries. And new multistakeholder standards and regulatory initiatives pointed to the possibility of reasserting social control over markets and corporate behaviour. Perhaps the most uplifting aspect of the discussions lay in the myriad examples of local-level experiences conducive to sustainability. Whereas such social alternatives often confront a disabling environment, the international development community must now face up to the challenge of fostering an enabling environment where such experiences can flourish.

Agenda

10 October 2011

Welcome

09.30 –09.50 Sarah Cook, Director, UNRISD
Kåre Stormark, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Norway in Geneva

Session 1: Competing Paradigms

09.50-11.00 Chair—Bina Agarwal, International Society for Ecological Economics and University of Dehli

- Bob Jessop, University of Lancaster - *The Global Economic Crisis, the Green New Deal and the No-Growth Economy*
- Kathleen McAfee, San Francisco State University - *Nature in the Market-World: Social and Developmental Consequences and Alternatives*
- Pascal van Griethuysen, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies - *The Social Dimensions of Carbon Trading: Contrasting Economic Perspectives*
- Payal Banerjee, Smith College and Atul Sood, Jawaharlal Nehru University - *Economic Growth, Social Divides and Sustainable Development: Making Development Work, Lessons from the Indian Experience*

11.00–11.30 BREAK

Perspectives on Session 1

11.30–12.30 Chair—Bina Agarwal

- Robin Mearns, Social Development Cluster Leader, The World Bank
- General Debate

12.30–14.00 LUNCH BREAK

Session 2: The Challenge of Policy Coherence

14.00-15.45 Chair—Lucas Assunção, UNCTAD

- Ian Gough, London School of Economics - *Climate Change, Double Injustice and Social Policy*
- Laura Rival, University of Oxford - *Ecological Threats, New Promises of Sustainability, and the Evolving Political Economy of Land Use and Rural Development in Latin America*
- Amalia Palma and Claudia Robles, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) - *The Green and the Social: How Far, How Close in Latin America?*
- Samuel Awoniyi, A.O. Adeola and M.M. Omole, Joseph Ayo Babalola University Nigeria, and T.T. Amos, Federal University of Technology Nigeria - *Social Welfare Sustainability in Rural Nigeria: Path to a Greener Environment*
- Carola Kantz and Kathrin Bimesdoerfer, IFOK Consulting, and Jonathan Siegel, The Fletcher School - *Killing Two Birds With One Stone: Driving Green Jobs through Creating a Rural Renewable Energy Systems Industry*

15.45–16.15 BREAK

Session 3: Agency, Interests and Coalitions

16.15-17.45 Chair—Lucia Ortiz, Friends of the Earth, Brazil

- Rocío Hiraldo and Thomas Tanner, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex - *The Global Political Economy of REDD+: Engaging Social Dimensions in the Emerging Green Economy*
- Nicola Bullard, Focus on the Global South and Tadzio Müller, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation - *Beyond the "Green Economy": System Change, Not Climate Change? Global Movements for Climate Justice in a Fracturing World*
- Danielle Resnick, Finn Tarp and James Thurlow, World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University (UNU-WIDER) - *Food, Fuel and Electricity: the Political Economy of "Green Growth" in Southern Africa*
- Hironobu Sano, Federal University at Rio Grande do Norte - *Governance in Environmental Policy: Advances and Challenges to Develop a Brazilian Green Economy*

11 October 2011

Session 4: Community Values, Institutions and Dynamics

09.00-10.30 Chair—Christina von Fürstenberg, UNESCO

- Adnan Hezri, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Rospidah Ghazali, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia - *Social Aspects of the Green Economy Goal in Malaysia: Case Studies of Agriculture, Renewable Energy and Waste Initiatives*
- Amy Merritt, Independent Consultant, and Tristan Stubbs, Overseas Development Institute - *Incentives for Promoting Green Citizenship and Consumerism in the Transition to a Green Economy*
- Ashok Kumbamu, University of Alberta - *How Does Localized Social Economy Sustain in a Globalizing World? A Critical Analysis of Post-Developmentalist Initiatives in Andhra Pradesh, India*
- Marlyne Sahakian, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies - *A Matter of Trust: The Role of Consumer-Citizens and Civil Society for Charting Transitions Towards a Green Economy*

10.30–11.00 BREAK

Session 5: The Social Construction of Markets

11.00-12.30 Chair—Angela Cropper, UNEP

- Samuel McGlennon, Australian National University - *Governance of Markets with Distant Environmental Impacts*
- Adam Bumpus, University of Melbourne - *Realizing Pro-Poor Development in the Carbon Commodity Chain: Understanding the "Value" of the Carbon Asset at Multiple Scales*
- Marc Brightman, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies - *Conservation Capitalism: Native Amazonian Regimes of Ownership and Market-Based Rainforest Conservation*
- Michael Winer and Helen Murphy, Cape York Institute, Harold Ludwick, Aurukun Opportunity Hub - *The Potential and Constraints on the Payment for Ecosystem Services Markets on Aboriginal Land in Cape York Peninsula*

12.30–14.00 LUNCH BREAK

UN Perspectives on the Social Dimensions of Green Economy

14.00-15.00 Chair—Heide Hackmann, ISCC

- Sheng Fulai, United Nations Environment Programme - *Issue Management Group on a Green Economy*
- Ana Belén Sánchez, International Labour Organization - *ILO Green Jobs Programme*
- Elena Villalobos Prats, World Health Organization - *Task Team on Social Dimensions of Climate Change*

Session 6: Agriculture and Rural Development

15.30-17.00 Chair—Edward Heinemann, IFAD

- Diana Alarcón and Christina Bodouroglou, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs - *Sustainable Agricultural Innovation Systems (SAIS) for Food Security and Green Economies*
- Witchuda Srang-iam, National Institute of Development Administration Thailand - *Planting Trees for Sustainability? A Climate Justice Perspective on Green Agriculture in Thailand*
- Agnes Musyoki, University of Venda - *Emerging Policy, Plans and Programmes Towards a Green Economy and Social Development in Limpopo Province, South Africa*
- Mairon Bastos Lima, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam - *An Institutional Analysis of Biofuel Policies and their Social Implications in Developing Countries: Lessons from Brazil, India and Indonesia*

Closing Plenary Future Research and Direction for RIO+20

17.00-17.45 Chair—Peter Utting, Deputy Director, UNRISD

- Asuncion Lera St. Claire, CICERO
- Stephen Hale, Oxfam
- Vicente Yu, The South Centre

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International Society for Ecological Economics and
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