

BEYOND RIO+20

SEARCHING FOR THE NEW PARIDIGM



The Wirth Chair in
Sustainable Development

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LOOKING PAST

TRADITIONAL BENCHMARKS

- ▶ Top leaders of the UK and Germany did not attend
- ▶ Top leaders from US, China, India, South Africa, Brazil, Indonesia and 90 other nations DID attend
 - ▶ **Thousands of governors, mayors, entrepreneurs, CEOs & business leaders**
 - ▶ **50,000 people participated in 3,000 side events + millions more connected electronically**
- ▶ "In Rio we saw the further evolution of an undeniable global movement for change." – UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon

REFLECTIONS ON RIO+20

“Trying to solve the world's most pressing and ubiquitous environmental problems by convening the very governments stuck in gridlock the last 20 years was never going to be a silver-bullet solution. An old-school UN conference with representatives of 193 countries negotiating a ‘consensus’ agreement is no longer the ideal medium for change. In some respects, the medium was the message.”

-- Roger Platt, U.S. Green Building Council

NO TREATY = **NO ACTION?**

- ▶ Diplomats wanted to present a completed agreement to national leaders in Rio
 - ▶ Lack of ambition in document
 - ▶ Desire to avoid another Copenhagen
- ▶ Not satisfied with waiting for action, hundreds of “non-globally-negotiated” specific commitments to take action NOW

ELINOR OSTROM'S LAST ARTICLE

- ▶ Many are billing Rio+20 as Plan A for Planet Earth
- ▶ Yet we cannot rely on singular global policies to solve the problems of managing our common resources and creating the right conditions for life to thrive
- ▶ Never dealt with problems of the scale facing today's globally interconnected society
- ▶ Build a system that can evolve and adapt rapidly

RIO+20 **CLOUD OF COMMITMENTS**

▶ **Creating the Cloud**

- ▶ to encourage and support commitments
- ▶ to help the world see this new path
- ▶ to empower individuals
- ▶ to hold our leaders accountable

▶ **Concrete, Specific Steps**

- ▶ Moves us faster towards a low-carbon sustainable economy
- ▶ Encourages public engagement

cloudofcommitments.com

RECOMMITMENTS + PLEDGES

- ▶ UN estimates that several hundred promises were worth more than \$500 billion
- ▶ On NRDC's "Cloud of Commitments," the 200 most significant platforms could lead to trillions of dollars in new investment
 - ▶ **Most notably in sustainable energy, transportation, and green urban infrastructure**
- ▶ Others are difficult to put a dollar amount on
 - ▶ **400 of the world's largest companies pledged to make their supply chains deforestation free by 2020**
 - ▶ **Australian Prime Minister promised to double the size of their marine parks**

REFLECTIONS ON RIO+20

“Summits like Rio+20 are about more than negotiated outcomes.

They inspire a new generation of leaders. They embed new concepts. They set agendas. They leave a legacy that can't be defined neatly as 'success' or 'failure.' Stockholm launched the global environmental movement. Rio 92 enshrined the concept of sustainable development. What will be the legacy of Rio+20?”

-- Glenn Prickett, Nature Conservancy