

**Submission(s) for the Draft Framework on Sustainable Development**



**Local Agenda 21 Submission**

**Rio Earth Summit (+20)**

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## **Submission(s) for the Draft Framework on Sustainable Development**

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Following the Seminar on the draft framework for sustainable development, held at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin on the 24.01.2012, invitations were invited from the seminar participants and generally to the public via the Environment International and Sustainable Development Unit<sup>i</sup> within the Department of the Environment.

Local Agenda 21 is an area which this submission wishes to address, and the submission is a planning submission and will be available as a Public document under the freedom of information act.

Issues addressed at the seminar included the following points

- Sustainability of public finances and economic resilience
- Sustainable consumption and production
- Conservation and management of natural resources
- Climate change and clean energy
- Sustainable agriculture
- Sustainable transport
- Social inclusion, sustainable communities and spatial planning
- Public health
- Education, communication and behavior change
- Innovation, research and development
- Skills and training
- Global poverty and sustainable development

Three of these points are addressed in this submission. The submission acknowledges the interrelated nature of all points discussed.

- Sustainability of public finances and economic resilience
- Social inclusion, sustainable communities and spatial planning
- Global poverty and sustainable development.

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## **Background to the Submission.**

Local Agenda 21 is a document drawn up at the original Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro 1992, with aims of;

“In general, the financing for the implementation of Agenda 21 will come from a country's own public and private sectors”<sup>ii</sup>

&

“Funding for Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the Conference should be provided in a way that maximizes the availability of new and additional resources and uses all available funding sources and mechanisms. These include, among others: The multilateral development banks and funds:

- i.** The International Development Association (IDA). Among the various issues and options that IDA deputies will examine in connection with the forthcoming tenth replenishment of IDA, the statement made by the President of the World Bank at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should be given special consideration in order to help the poorest countries meet their sustainable development objectives as contained in Agenda 21;
- ii.** Regional and sub regional development banks. The regional and sub regional development banks and funds should play an increased and more effective role in providing resources on concessional or other favourable terms needed to implement Agenda 21;
- iii.** The Global Environment Facility, managed jointly by the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP, whose additional grant and concessional funding is designed to achieve global environmental benefits, should cover the agreed incremental costs of relevant activities under Agenda 21, in particular for developing countries”<sup>iii</sup>

As Globalisation expands and borders open up,

“An open, equitable, secure, non-discriminatory and predictable multilateral trading system that is consistent with the goals of sustainable development and leads to the optimal distribution of global production in accordance with comparative advantage is of benefit to all trading partners. Moreover, improved market access for developing countries' exports in conjunction with sound macroeconomic and environmental policies would have a positive environmental impact and therefore make an important contribution towards sustainable development”<sup>iv</sup>

Protectionism would lead to a reverse of policies, preventing sustainable development globally and therefore also locally and of course Local Agenda 21. It is a worry for these banks that;

“The international trading environment has been affected by a number of developments that have created new challenges and opportunities and have made multilateral economic cooperation of even greater importance. World trade has continued to grow faster than world output in recent years. However, the expansion of world trade has been unevenly spread, and only a limited number of developing countries have been capable of achieving appreciable growth in their exports.

**Protectionist** pressures and unilateral policy actions continue to endanger the functioning of an open multilateral trading system, affecting particularly the export interests of developing countries”.<sup>v</sup>

“Therefore, all countries should implement previous commitments to halt and reverse protectionism and further expand market access, particularly in areas of interest to developing countries”<sup>vi</sup>

“Consider strengthening/developing legal frameworks for land management, access to land resources and land ownership - in particular, for women - and for the protection of tenants”<sup>vii</sup>

Local Agenda 21 is a system of enabling development at local level to form a bottom up system, democratic and open, which is accessible by all and in particular Woman. In order to facilitate this ideal many local councils and stakeholders in the local community will be able to take guidance from the Local Agenda Steering Groups, which if not in your area will be shortly.

In Ireland the current budget for Local Agenda 21 is modest in comparison to the Billions and/or Trillions this world development model will release on an annual basis, yet its new beginnings in any country recognises that poverty is not just unemployment, debt and landlessness but also environmental.

The Earth Summit in June 2012 in Rio has as one of its main concerns;

“The world is facing a mounting crisis. In recent years we have experienced a combination of a global financial crisis, a food crisis, volatile oil prices, accelerating ecosystem degradation and an increasing number of climate-induced extreme weather events. These multiple and inter-related crises call into question the ability of a growing human population to live peacefully and sustainably on this planet, and demand the urgent attention of governments and citizens around the world”<sup>viii</sup>

<http://www.earthsummit2012.org/> and/or <http://www.earthsummit2012.org/beta/background>

A new globalised economy cannot exist harmoniously in a global financial crisis, and these concerns were echoed at the **Davos World Economic Forum**<sup>ix</sup> earlier this month (February 2012). Where amongst many topics and seminars the founder of the economic forum Klaus Schwab stated the world needed to introduce new economic models, he suggested capitalism needs new models of business and finance and solutions for alleviating poverty. Schwab is a former University Professor and the World Economic Forum is based upon the principle of a non-profit organisation.

These are also the aims of Europe 20/20 and the Department of the Environment in its Draft for the framework for sustainable development states;

“An October 2009 report from the National Economic and Social Council described Ireland’s crisis as five-dimensional - banking, fiscal, economic, social and reputational”<sup>x</sup>

“Europe 2020 sets five key targets for the EU over the period to 2020,

**Employment** 75% of 20-64 year olds to be employed;

**Poverty** at least 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion”<sup>xi</sup>

By 2050 the 50 year strategy is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% - 95% <sup>xii</sup> leading to a requirement to develop economic resilience, new low carbon industry and a further challenge;

“Sustainability of the public finances relates to the ability of a government to assume the financial burden of its debt currently and in the future and is, therefore, a key challenge for any government. The major drivers of public spending include public service pay and pensions; social welfare and public service programme spending; and public investment. Large budget deficits are unsustainable and must be addressed by closing the gap between public expenditure and revenue generation. **Failure to do so involves increasing, and ultimately unsustainable, levels of debt.** Achieving economic growth that is environmentally sustainable is another major challenge.

Conventional economic metrics do not take into account the social and environmental aspects of sustainability. The importance of integrating social and environmental dimensions into measures of sustainable economic performance is now well recognised internationally. **Current economic indicators such as GDP were never designed to be comprehensive measures of societal well-being.**

**Therefore, complementary indicators are also needed that are more inclusive of other dimensions of progress” <sup>xiii</sup>**

These concerns from the department of the environment on current economic indicators (GDP) are also echoed in the original Local Agenda 21 document (see notes) <sup>xiv</sup> and indicators such as GNP or GNI whilst preferred to GDP (see page 7 in the draft for public consultation) still combine these indicators without any real indicators of accruing debt.

Therefore with new greener industry and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 80 – 95% across Europe by 2050, traditional industry will give way to a new greener economy with *Green Tenders; An Action Plan on Green Public Procurement*<sup>xv</sup> will act as a driver in developing the green economy in Ireland.

Implementing this new revolution which (as stated) is a bottom up movement will require new models of economics, economic measurement and new tendering methods with local agenda 21 being a vehicle for creating employment across Ireland.

“The two main instruments that drive environmental appraisal in Ireland are Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). EIA assesses the environmental impacts of projects i.e. development proposals.

SEA involves assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of plans and programmes prior to their adoption.

**Poverty Impact Assessments** are an important mechanism in assessing the impact of Government policy on groups in poverty or at risk of poverty. Guidelines to assess the impact on people with a disability of policy proposals being submitted to Government will also be developed following completion of a pilot project. Ireland also has a system of Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) which involves a detailed assessment of the impacts of regulation and involves consultation with stakeholders and citizens. Its purpose is not to substitute decision-making, but to help inform policy decisions” <sup>xvi</sup>

Institutions and groups exploring new ways of financing are ICLEI who describe themselves as;

“ **ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability** is an association of over 1220 local government Members who are committed to sustainable development, Our Members come from 70 different countries and represent more than 569,885,000 people”<sup>xvii</sup>

Aside from the World Bank and the IMF, ICLEI are suggesting many solutions as follows;

“ If the utility or municipality would like to immediately access a large part of the revenues i.e. loan principal plus interest charges to invest in resilience upgrade of the whole system, then it might structure the pool of loans into a secondary financial vehicle instrument. The special purpose vehicle would take ownership of the whole portfolio of outstanding loans and associated revenue collections. In exchange, the utility or municipality would receive an immediate payment that is equivalent to part of the total discounted revenue stream predicted over the term of the pool of loans.” <sup>xviii</sup>

Therefore whilst Local Agenda 21 is a bottom up system, the method of financing remains closely aligned to existing failed measures of financing our planet. The draft framework states we cannot return to Business as usual, and it is imperative that new models of finance are created, and that any Local Agenda 21 steering group or project must be chosen or elected from those outside the system from the public realm.

Therefore as a Submission please accept the following 6 Submissions, along with the pre-amble above to be considered for the Earth Summit 2012 and the United Nations.

Anti – poverty measures and ant- protectionism without fair trade which also hinders Local Agenda 21 economics can only be achieved from the bottom up at local level, placing decision making and economics (the entire financial system) back to the people. It is impossible that every economic indicator and financier and finance department across the world, has missed debt accruing since the end of World war two.

## **Submissions (6)**

- 1. New fiscal indicators to support Poverty Impact assessments be created to monitor debt to GDP ratios in real time as well as future forecasts for debt levels induced by Unnecessary Borrowing.**
- 2. New fiscal indicators for weekly and monthly debt levels.**(Genuine Progress Indicator and the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW). Use the Steady State Economy Index to indicate proximity to a sustainable steady state<sup>xix</sup>)
- 3. Local Agenda 21 steering groups to be elected by the local community.**
- 4. All business and trades and individuals to be eligible for Local Agenda 21 funding.**
- 5. A new type of no interest bearing bonds for municipal and local agenda 21 use be initiated, as non debt interest free money for national use by all citizens.**
- 6. World Debt Cancellation for a sustainable green future.**

## Notes

<sup>i</sup> Environment International and Sustainable Development Unit<sup>i</sup> within the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government <http://www.environ.ie/en/Environment/SustainableDevelopment/ConsultationFrameworkforSustainableDevelopmentforIreland/>

<sup>ii</sup> United Nations Conference on Environment & Development Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 3 to 14 June 1992 AGENDA 21 Paragraphs 33.13 <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/Agenda21.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid 33.14

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid 2.5

<sup>v</sup> Ibid 2.8

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid 2.12

<sup>vii</sup> Ibid 3.8

<sup>viii</sup> <http://www.earthsummit2012.org/> and/or <http://www.earthsummit2012.org/beta/background>

<sup>ix</sup> <http://www.weforum.org/>

<sup>x</sup> Draft for Public Consultation *A Framework for Sustainable Development* December 2011 Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government **Page 2** quoting Next Steps in Addressing Ireland's Five-Part Crisis: Combining Retrenchment with Reform, *NESC, No. 120 October 2009*

<sup>xi</sup> Draft for Public Consultation *A Framework for Sustainable Development* December 2011 Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government **Page 3**

<sup>xii</sup> Draft for Public Consultation *A Framework for Sustainable Development* December 2011 Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government **Page 21**

<sup>xiii</sup> Draft for Public Consultation *A Framework for Sustainable Development* December 2011 Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government **Page 14**

2.28. With regard to debt owed to official bilateral creditors, the recent measures taken by the Paris Club with regard to more generous terms of relief to the poorest most indebted countries are welcomed. Ongoing efforts to implement these "Trinidad terms" measures in a manner commensurate with the payments capacity of those countries and in a way that gives additional support to their economic reform efforts are welcomed. The substantial bilateral debt reduction undertaken by some creditor countries is also welcomed, and others which are in a position to do so are encouraged to take similar action.

2.30 In connection with multilateral debt, it is urged that serious attention be given to continuing to work towards growth-oriented solutions to the problem of developing countries with serious debt servicing problems, including those whose debt is mainly to official creditors or to multilateral Financial institutions. Particularly in the case of low-income countries in the process of economic reform, the support of the multilateral financial institutions in the form of new disbursements and the use of their concessional funds is welcomed. The use of support groups should be continued in providing resources to clear arrears of countries embarking upon vigorous economic reform

2.33. Many indebted developing countries are undergoing structural adjustment programmes relating to debt rescheduling or new loans. While such programmes are necessary for improving the balance in fiscal budgets and balance-of-payments accounts, in some cases they have resulted in adverse social and environmental effects, such as cuts in allocations for health care, education and environmental protection. It is important to ensure that structural adjustment programmes do not have negative impacts on the environment and social development so that such programmes can be more in line with the objectives of sustainable development.

3.2. While managing resources sustainably, an environmental policy that focuses mainly on the

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conservation and protection of resources must take due account of those who depend on the resources for their livelihoods. Otherwise it could have an adverse impact both on poverty and on chances for long-term success in resource and environmental conservation. Equally, a development policy that focuses mainly on increasing the production of goods without addressing the sustainability of the resources on which production is based will sooner or later run into declining productivity, which could also have an adverse impact on poverty. A specific anti-poverty strategy is therefore one of the basic conditions for ensuring sustainable development. An effective strategy for tackling the problems of poverty, development and environment simultaneously should begin by focusing on resources, production and people and should cover demographic issues, enhanced health care and education, the rights of women, the role of youth and of indigenous people and local communities and a democratic participation process in association with improved governance.

<sup>xv</sup> Green Tenders; An Action Plan for Green Public Procurement 2011 Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government

<sup>xvi</sup> Draft for Public Consultation *A Framework for Sustainable Development* December 2011 Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government **Page 74**

<sup>xvii</sup> <http://www.iclei.org/>

<sup>xviii</sup> Brugmann, Jeb **ICLEI, 2011**, *Financing the Resilient City: A demand driven approach to development, disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation - An ICLEI White Paper, ICLEI Global Report* [http://www.iclei.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/documents/Global/Publications/Report-Financing\\_Resilient\\_City-Final.pdf](http://www.iclei.org/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/Global/Publications/Report-Financing_Resilient_City-Final.pdf)

<sup>xix</sup> [www.fisnua.com](http://www.fisnua.com) & [http://fisnua.com/?page\\_id=524](http://fisnua.com/?page_id=524) Ecological Economics Numbers 1 & 11