

National Council for Environment and Sustainable Development (CNADS)

Statement on Green Economy and Sustainability*

Abstract

The National Council for Environment and Sustainable Development (CNADS) during the Plenary Meeting of December 17th 2010 expressed its commitment and solidarity with the fundamental issues on The Green Economy to be considered at the Summit Rio+20, as cited in various preparatory documents for the Summit: *«The Green Economy in the context of Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development is one of the key themes to be addressed by the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012».*

CNADS, aware of its responsibilities and aiming to contribute to positive public policies and civil society stakeholder's debate, draws attention to the following issues.

The most developed economies and the international system, as a whole, are faced with a serious crisis. The most prominent concern is that the contemporary world is becoming unsustainable at multiple levels – environmental, economic and social. In fact, the increased process of distorted financing of collective needs and the extension of marketing strategies into domains in which it is certainly not the most appropriate social mechanism for regulation and coordination, led to a weakened society, threatened important collective commitments and reduced the social organization capacity.

The understanding that the economy must be seen, above all, as a balanced social system for fostering well-being based upon the provision and adequate use of resources has been seriously compromised by the predominance of reckless, often speculative, financial approaches. As a consequence, problems at the environmental level have been exacerbated and are reaching unsustainable limits, and the associated impacts on employment and accentuated social inequalities.

The fact that the social function of credit and financing are now disconnected from the economy and of the objectives of generating wealth favoring an uncontrolled autonomization of financial intermediation and speculation is, therefore, one of the central problems of our times.

It became clear that it is not enough to set off regulatory procedures or refine an external regulatory architecture. Confined to themselves, these solutions are fragile and easily captured by logics that contradict the social purposes of the economy, devalue the productive and organizational capacities, and block the equitable access to quality of life.

This set of circumstances increased the need to rebuild the economy so that the goals of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are an intrinsic part of the overall logic of economic organization, so as to create new goods and services worthy of the consumer's acceptance and preference, capture investment and develop qualitatively the production and the markets.

Besides the long-term goals that are implicit in an environmentally responsible management, the green economy is associated with a high potential for job creation, a significant capacity for the rationalization of energy consumption, a strong propensity to generate more balance mechanisms of social inclusion, and a useful contribution to new forms of fiscal equity and social justice.

The recognition of such solutions has been behind supranational initiatives aiming at launching and further developing the matter.

Recently, Achim Steiner, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, encouraged the members of the G-20 meeting in Seoul to promote a more sustainable global economy, capable of looking beyond the GDPs narrow-minded definition of wealth and to work against the losses that are being registered in ecosystems, forests and farmlands, food chains and natural resources in general, by investing and reinvesting in natural systems.

It is considered that a green economy will reconfigure the infrastructural and economic activities so as to achieve better societal and environmental investment returns, with a reduction of onerous impacts and better

use of natural resources. The renewable energy and technologies sectors are particularly important in this context, namely in the response to climate change, although the key point is to redefine the general forms of economic organization in cities, mobility, services and the industry.

Having in mind the above considerations the CNADS:

- Calls upon citizens, organizations and institutions to reflect on the green economy's potential to achieve an appropriate environmental management, aiming to reach the objectives of sustainable development, to value production and social organization and to introduce a sustainable dynamics in society, as a whole, so as to benefit the fulfillment of human capacities and the development of the country.
- Stresses the importance of internal debate and the mobilization of stakeholders - citizens, central and local public administration, companies and other public and private institutions - in a spirit of "*trialogue*", so that Portugal can move towards a green economy and contribute to meet the UNCED 92' objectives and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20 Summit) which will be held in 2012.

* Full text in Portuguese available at <http://www.cnads.pt>