

Invitation from IAIA to Participate in the Rio+20 Process

The Rio+20 Conference, which will be held from June 4-6, 2012, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, marks the 20th anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference of Environment and Development (also known as the Earth Summit, UNCED). The 10th anniversary of UNCED was held in Johannesburg, South Africa, and was called the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

The two main themes for Rio+20 are

- **A Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication**
- **Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development**

More details on the Rio+20 process can be found at <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/>. World leaders are expected to attend.

IAIA would like to ensure that Impact Assessment (IA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are included in the Rio+20 Outcome Statement, since IA and SEA strongly support the Conference's main themes.

The IAIA Board has made an intervention to the Rio+20 process to have IA and SEA text inserted into the Outcome Statement (see bullet titled IAIA Intervention to Rio+20).

The deadline for all written submissions to the compilation document is November 1. For those IAIA members who are involved in Rio+20 as members of governments, NGOs, civil society or industry, IAIA has developed generic text (below) that you can use and modify if necessary for any submission you may be making by your respective organization:

Recognising that:

- Over 100 countries already successfully use Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Impact Assessment (IA) through directives, policies or laws.
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has a new policy on SEA (2008) and the European Union has the SEA Directive (2001) and many developing countries in the last 5 years have been applying SEA to sectoral planning.
- SEA and IA help ensure that high level policies, programs and projects are designed and implemented to have more sustainable outcomes while reducing poverty and advance green economy objectives.
- SEA and IA work to ensure that development activities of individual sectors complement rather than undermine other sectors. They provide a systematic means for minimising potential adverse outcomes and maximising benefits early in policy, program and project design.
- SEA and IA are used to find legislative and policy gaps that would hinder achievement of sustainable development.
- When SEA recommendations take root in key, cross-sectoral line ministries, the projects that get approved and implemented will have gone through a very rigorous sustainability filter, where full social and economic costs are examined.
- SEA and IA, underpinned by participatory processes, ensure development processes are inclusive and give a voice to society's most vulnerable.

- SEA and IA can alert decision-makers to risks, improve community engagement and incorporate traditional knowledge, and facilitate cooperation across sectors and boundaries prior to strategic decisions being taken.
- The results of the SEA and IA are used to inform the development of future proposals. They also inform on-going decision-making relating to a given geographic entity such as a country, a province or a river basin, including transboundary and shared basins.
- Political support for sustainable development and the Green Economy, which are core objectives of Rio+20, can be advanced if countries take advantage of effective existing tools such as SEA and IA.

Organisation/Country X urges the Rio+20 Conference Secretariat and the participant countries to consider, in the Conference Final Declaration, the adoption of the following statement:

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Impact Assessment (IA) be recognised by States as effective high level decision support processes that can assist in the implementation of political commitment to Sustainable Development and Green Economy initiatives.

Details on how to submit your text to the Rio+20 process can be found at
<http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/documents/guidancenote.pdf>

IAIA encourages its membership to get involved with the Rio+20 process to ensure IA and SEA are recognised in the Outcome Statement. This would be a very strategic accomplishment for IAIA and for the global practice of SEA and IA.

Good luck!!

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