Expectations for the Rio Summit, in quotes

AFP | Fecha: 06/10/2012

Following is a selection of quotes from politicians, activists, business executives and scientists about expectations for the upcoming Rio Summit.

The once-in-a-decade gathering from June 20-22 will turn the spotlight on the planet's environment, poverty eradication, social equity and the green economy.

"We have a difficult mission, of proposing a new model for growth that does not seem too vague or idealistic... We have to make proposals bearing in mind that millions and millions of people do not have access to the minimum conditions for life. Today, because of the international crisis, in developed countries, millions and millions of people are losing their rights, their jobs."

- Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff

"I hope that Rio+20 will become the Tahrir Square of the global environmental crisis and that international public opinion will be able to tell leaders that they cannot brush off the science. They cannot lower expectations in the face of a crisis worsening every day."

- Brazilian activist and former presidential candidate Marina Silva, referring to the crucible of the Egyptian revolution

"The world has changed profoundly over the past 20 years, with a booming middle class, where we are consuming more, using more energy, and putting more pressure on natural resources. Poverty is on the decline, but inequality is on the rise. Rio is an opportunity to move sustainability toward the center of the political and economic agenda."

- Manish Bapna, interim head of US thinktank, the World Resources Institute (WRI)

"We can choose to rebalance the use of resources to a more egalitarian pattern of consumption, to reframe our economic values to truly reflect what our consumption means for our planet and to help individuals around the world to make informed and free reproductive choices. Or we can choose to do nothing -- and to drift into a downward vortex of economic, socio-political and environmental ills, leading to a more unequal and inhospitable future."

- Sir John Sulston, who steered a report on population and sustainability for Britain's Royal Society
"What I expect from Rio is the joint perception that we urgently have to overhaul our rapacious model of economic development. The risk from Rio is disappointment, which would legitimise the blind preference for short-termism and inertia."

- Laurence Tubiana, head of French thinktank Institute of Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI)

"The more biodiversity we lose, the more vulnerable we are to climate change, as well as food, water and energy crises. Our big wish for Rio+20 is that governments and businesses see the need to invest in nature and do so fast. Nature... should be included in all development plans."

- Julia Marton-Lefevre, director general of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

"Factoring in the cost of environmental inputs (in the prices of goods and services) does not yet exist. This is the area where we hope to make progress in Rio+20."

- Marina Grossi, president of the Brazilian Industrial Centre for Sustainable Development (CEBDS), gathering 73 corporations

"We can no longer carry on as if the planet's natural capital is boundless and free. The point of no return is looming. Business can do its part, but governments have to set clear rules"

- Philippe Joubert, advisor to the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

"We can start by making sure we measure what matters. Moving beyond GDP (as the sole benchmark of progress) would be a good next step, abolishing fossil fuel subsidies and putting a significant and rising price on carbon."

- Camilla Toulmin, director of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in London

"Governments have failed to enact and implement land laws to protect (indigenous peoples and communities) against the intense pressure of economic development driving the global land grab... The Rio+20 summit should call on governments to enforce community land rights and propose the development of an innovative private-public partnership to finance tenure reform."

- Andy White of land-rights campaign group Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI)

AFP | Fecha: 06/10/2012

Original source