

# **ESPA and Rio+20: June 2012**



## **Introduction**

Paul van Gardingen, ESPA Director, represented the ESPA programme in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012 in the lead up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), Rio+20.

There were two main objectives for ESPA in Rio:

1. To raise the profile of ESPA within the communities of research, policy and practice who attended events at Rio;
2. To enhance the linkages of ESPA with other organisations and processes contributing to the Rio+20 process and follow-up.

The ESPA programme's main contribution to Rio+20 was based around a side-event, as part of the IIED Fair Ideas two-day conference, in advance of the main UNCSD meeting. The event was hosted by ESPA and was held jointly with the World Bank's Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) programme and the United Nations Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI).

A series of side meetings was also held in Rio, including:

- A meeting between ESPA, PEI and WAVES to discuss closer collaboration between the three programmes;
- A session as part the IIED Fair Ideas conference, led by the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) on North-South and South-South Dialogue, in which Paul van Gardingen joined as a panel member;
- A meeting at the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), on collaborative approaches to ESPA's research agenda.

A brief summary of the three main events is below.

## **1. ESPA, WAVES and PEI Joint Event: Environment and Ecosystem Services: Improving Lives**

The ESPA Directorate hosted a joint event with the World Bank's Wealth Accounting and Valuation of Ecosystem Services (WAVES) programme and the closely related United Nations Poverty Environment Initiative (PEI) in the lead up to the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

The event was held during the IIED ['Fair Ideas'](#) conference in Rio on the 16th and 17th of June, 2012, immediately before the UN Conference.

The ESPA, WAVES and PEI global programmes, and their international partnerships, all generate evidence demonstrating how the environment improves lives, especially for poor people in developing countries. During this event, researchers and team members — including participants joining from around the world by live video connections — from all three programmes shared their findings and provided concrete examples of how it need not cost the earth to save the world.

This event highlighted how environmental and ecosystem services contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation using real examples from each programme. The audience of researchers, NGOs and policy-makers also contributed to a discussion of how the synergies between the programmes could be enhanced to deliver further impact.

## **ESPA**

The ESPA session was led by Paul van Gardingen, ESPA Director. It included, by video conference, representatives from three ESPA projects: Thomas Sikor, Munsur Rahman and

Bhaskar Vira. Due to technical difficulties in the venue the contribution of the video conference participants was somewhat impaired. Paul van Gardingen opened the session with a short introduction to the ESPA programme. This was followed by five minutes each from three ESPA project representatives who talked about their ESPA project, what they're trying to achieve with their project, and how their project relates to sustainable development.

### **WAVES**

The WAVES session was led by Glenn-Marie Lange, Program Leader of the World Bank's WAVES Initiative. The session included representatives from two WAVES countries, Botswana and Costa Rica. The session opened with a brief introduction to WAVES by Glenn-Marie Lange, followed by a discussion about how WAVES will make a difference in these partner countries.

### **PEI**

Isabel Kempf, co-Director of UNEP's PEI, gave an introductory presentation on the PEI and its experience of integrating pro-poor growth and sound environmental management into national development policy and planning processes. The PEI Botswana country programme presented its work towards integration of poverty–environment linkages into development planning/budgeting, natural resource accounting and sustainable development, will and draw on the collaboration between the Government of Botswana, PEI and WAVES.

### **Panel Session**

A panel session was held after the presentations from the three programmes. The panel session was opened by Dr Atiq Rahman, Executive Director of the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, and co-Chair of the ESPA International Programme Executive Board. Dr Rahman reflected on the 20 years since Rio 1992. The panel consisted of all of the above mentioned participants in the event as well as Dr Rahman. Questions from the floor were invited.

## ***2. Fair Ideas: North–South and South–South Dialogue: The Role of Key Actors in Achieving Poverty Eradication and Green Economy***

This session, led by the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) – in which Paul van Gardingen, ESPA Director, was a panel member – saw a panel discussion among leading experts, including organisers of the original 1992 Rio summit alongside senior policymakers, researchers, scientists and practitioners. The panel and participants explored stakeholder's perspectives on the key elements of green economy, poverty alleviation and future sustainable development to influence the Rio+20 process and decisions. [A video of this session is available online.](#)

## ***3. São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP)***

At a side event in São Paulo, the UK Government's Chief Scientific Advisor signed an agreement with the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) that will create opportunities for Brazilian co-funding of selected ESPA projects. The agreement represents an opportunity for ESPA's funders to work with FAPESP to enhance the opportunities for Brazilian researchers to contribute to a shared research agenda and commitment to research excellence and impact that enhances the well-being of the poor.

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