



UN Sustainability Summit Exposed: Big Business, Dictators, and NGOs

RIO DE JANEIRO — The real agenda behind the United Nations Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development was clear months before the summit began. It had little to do with solving poverty or legitimate environmental concerns. Instead, the UN was hoping to acquire vast new powers to re-shape the world and its people, as evidenced by multiple reports and documents it released ahead of the conference. Of course, the fact that Rio+20 Secretary General Sha Zukang was a Chinese Communist who openly loathes Americans was revealing, too.



Aside from the fairly transparent UN agenda, however, the conference itself offered a great deal of insight into the forces working together against national sovereignty, private property, individual liberty, and economic freedom. Big business was there — mostly begging for more government control and taxpayer money. A wide assortment of tax-funded "non-governmental organizations" — known as NGOs for short — was there, too. Unsurprisingly, they mostly demanded more government control.

Finally, no UN conference would be complete without member governments — a chance for Western powers to mingle with a gaggle of dictators and mass murderers styling themselves "presidents." They found plenty to agree on. In fact, it seemed like all of the so-called "stakeholders" were essentially on the same page: more for them, less for you. *The New American (TNA)* was also at the summit to bring you the inside stories that the mainstream press largely ignored.

Police State, Green Hypocrisy, Secrecy, & Disorder

Rio+20 was originally touted as the biggest UN summit in history, but analysts later said that probably was not true. Some 50,000 people were supposed to participate, but nowhere near that number actually showed up — several observers even thought that less than 10,000 had attended. Many of the world's most important heads of state and government — Obama, Angela Merkel of Germany, and the U.K.'s David Cameron, for example — also stayed away.

Immediately upon arrival, the most striking phenomenon in Rio was the overt nature of the police state. All over the city, attendees were greeted by armored personnel carriers and assault vehicles, dozens of military helicopters swarming overhead with turrets aimed downward, checkpoints manned by machine gun-wielding Brazilian troops, federal police dressed in futuristic costumes, and much more.

On the first day of the official conference, it took the *TNA* team more than two hours to cover just a few miles and get into the conference — largely owing to the unimaginable traffic created by "security." The fact that the troops occupying every street corner in the area demanding ID did not know what they were doing certainly did not help matters.

Once inside, the UN again revealed that its inability to run a proper conference — let alone the world —





is surpassed only by its zealous ambition to assume ever-greater powers. There were not nearly enough desks for all of the journalists, leading to more than a few heated arguments. Internet cables were also in short supply, and the wireless Internet, when it was actually working, was pathetically slow.

Despite the summit being touted as an effort to increase "sustainability" — a vague term with hundreds of definitions generally understood to mean reduced consumption — the waste evident all throughout the conference was astounding. Every building was running the air-conditioning at full blast with the doors wide open, for example. In some rooms, the AC was so cold that journalists were moving out from under the vents.

Consuming less was apparently only a requirement for the ruled. The world's rulers and their representatives stayed at five-star hotels and lived a lifestyle unimaginable to most of the world — not to mention the millions of destitute Brazilians living in squalor throughout Rio's infamous *favela* slums. "Saving the world" from humanity at lavish conferences apparently costs a lot of money, and the "dignitaries" had every luxury at their disposal for the job. The total price tag of the summit remains a mystery.

Massive motorcades of gas-guzzling limos transported dictators and mass-murdering gangsters calling themselves "presidents," as well as their oversized entourages, to and from the venue. Meanwhile, other "VVIPs" — the term used by the UN to identify top officials at the summit — landed in carbon dioxide-spewing helicopters.

Apparently some of the dignitary squads squandered even more taxpayer money buying "carbon credits" from their cronies to offset the emissions. But the unsustainable resource-gobbling spectacle was slammed by more than a few critics on both sides of the debate, not to mention poor Brazilians who spoke with *TNA*, as blatant "green" hypocrisy. Even true "sustainability" believers were shocked.

When the environmental dignitaries left, security did too. At that point, residents of the slums in the area began pouring into the venue to scavenge for the remaining scraps left behind, looting the food court as the few remaining security guards were overwhelmed. The *TNA* team witnessed part of the commotion before leaving as dozens of *favelados*, as they're called, ran out from the food court carrying what they could.

The So-called "Stakeholders"

Governments:

Virtually every national government on Earth was represented at Rio+20. Delegates representing mass murderers, communist tyrants, genocidal maniacs, war criminals, Islamic theocracies, and more were all intermingling, supposedly defending the interests of their "citizens" while trying to hammer out an agreement to "save the world." Of course, it does not take much knowledge about the world to understand that at least the vast majority of the regimes present at the table had ulterior motives.

Unlike past conferences, government delegates at Rio+20 were kept in isolation, hiding behind security personnel in their own special pavilion. Organizations and the media were kept out — unless, of course, they could find a government willing to let them in. Even then, they were supposed to take care of business with the delegation that invited them through security and then promptly get out.

Across from the main venue was another large area where governments and dictatorships set up booths to tout their own accomplishments. Seeking press coverage for a panel discussion hosted by the Islamic monarchy ruling Qatar, the *TNA* team was invited to attend and was picked up in a private car paid for





by the regime.

The discussion — mostly on redefining the concept of rights to include things like food, rather than liberties — featured more than a few heavyweights, including UN boss Ban Ki-moon, a socialist former Spanish prime minister, heads of UN agencies, and many others. The AC was blasting there, too, in what was essentially an open-air tent. After chatting briefly with the Qatari ambassador to the UN who happens to be serving as the chief of the UN General Assembly, mostly about why and how he thought the global body should save the world, *TNA* decided to visit some of the other government booths.

The communist dictatorship ruling over China had a massive setup where interested parties could learn about its supposed leadership on "sustainability" issues, though the regime seems to have toned down its celebration of the reduced "carbon emissions" achieved through its barbaric "one-child" policy. Nobody was available for an interview with *TNA*, but we did get a "flash drive" containing documents.

The European Union had a big booth, too, where participants were debating the role of regional regimes in the new green-world order. At the American government's booth, the first visible flyer was promoting population control, while another touted USAID programs to achieve global "sustainability." U.S. taxpayers' money also went to hand out coffee — presumably sustainably grown coffee — to anyone who stopped by. It was delicious.

Throughout the three-day summit, government representatives, including some prime ministers and presidents, offered long speeches about sustainability, what they were doing, what should be done, and more. Their faces were broadcast throughout the conference center on huge screens so people could see the dignitaries no matter where they went. But most people were not paying attention anyway.

The Cheerleading "Media"

When Rio+20 boss Zukang announced hundreds of "commitments" by governments and businesses on so-called "sustainability" worth more than half a trillion dollars, much of the audience — supposedly unbiased members of the media — <u>applauded in delight</u>. The bizarre scene offered extraordinary insight into why the one-sided international press coverage of such summits has become so routine.

Rather than asking hard questions about the alleged science or the true agenda, the vast majority of reports being churned out of the Rio+20 media room largely parroted UN claims as if they were gospel. The "significant" UN announcement at the final major summit press conference included few details about the actual agreements or their implications. For the most part, Zukang and other conference speakers simply offered vague generalities about building a "sustainable" world for a "better future," saying governments and businesses around the world had agreed to undertake massive "sustainability" efforts.

"From the very beginning, we have said Rio+20 is about implementation. It is about concrete action. And the commitments that we share with you today demonstrate that governments, the UN system and the nine major groups are committed and serious about implementation," said Zukang, the communist who also heads the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "The total figure is now 692 registered commitments. Ladies and Gentlemen, this brings the estimated total value of commitments to \$513 billion."

That's when most of the supposed journalists at the official press conference applauded and smiled upon hearing Zukang's news. According to critics of the media reaction, they were behaving more like cheerleaders than objective reporters. But unlike past major international environmental summits, most of the press was kept in the dark about the negotiations throughout the final days of the summit —





making the applause even more bizarre.

As members of the press celebrated the vague announcements, one Japanese reporter called the behavior "ridiculous." Later on, more than a few analysts blasted the cheering, too. Critics of the shadowy negotiating process itself had even harsher words, slamming the global body's secrecy and the journalists' complacency about it.

The media applause continued after each speaker at the press conference — statements by politicians, bureaucrats, business leaders, and more all received a very warm reception from hundreds of journalists in attendance. When a non-profit foundation leader on the panel announced mandatory "sustainability education" for all Brazilian children enforceable by law, as well as the inclusion of "sustainable development" themes on national standardized tests, the reporters exhibited special delight.

Later that night, when the Rio+20 plenary session finally voted to adopt the highly controversial UN document known as "The Future We Want," the media section at the conference center erupted with applause, cheering, and whistling as if a goal had been scored in a soccer game. When asked on camera by *TNA* why they were celebrating, some refused to talk, others said they were happy because the summit was over, and still more claimed not to know.

Media outlets known to be especially reliable and relatively effective UN lapdogs — the state-funded BBC, for example — were given special, private areas to work in. They also obtained much greater access to the "VVIPs" in attendance, scoring exclusive interviews to ask soft-ball questions about why even more wasn't being done to save the world.

But despite the VIP treatment for select "media" outlets — in the United States, at least — the lack of press coverage about the summit was deafening. The day after the conference ended, neither the *New York Times* nor the *Washington Post* included front-page headlines mentioning the conclusion of Rio+20. "It seems the conference did not end as the editors wished," noted Ken Haapala, executive vice president of the Science and Environmental Policy Project.

Of course, most of the journalists celebrating Zukang's announcement at the press conference were almost certainly not aware at the time that <u>no officially "binding" commitments had been foisted on populations by their governments</u>. If they had known, based on discussions *TNA* had with reporters throughout the summit, they probably would not have been applauding.

Even with the cheerleading media, however, more than a few analysts and critics who spoke with *TNA* said the world was waking up to the UN's schemes and its <u>failed science</u> — especially in the United States, where opposition to the global agenda is building while the public largely rejects the alarmism being hyped to push it. Scientists, meanwhile, including many who have been affiliated with the UN, are jumping ship in growing numbers as well. And those trends, especially with the rise of the Internet and the alternative media, are likely to continue accelerating.

NGOs Demand Anti-liberty Global "Solutions"

As the summit got started on June 20, a 17-year-old NGO activist gave a speech to the national delegates about how it was their duty to decide the fate of her future and the future of her children. It was a dramatic opening — official dignitaries seemed impressed. Strong agreements and global measures were needed to save the world, she insisted.

Countless so-called NGOs were in attendance, supposedly representing "civil society." Much of the





funding for the groups comes from taxpayers, so, unsurprisingly, most of them loudly called for more and more government to stop poverty, environmental problems, gender inequality, class inequality, and innumerable other real and perceived issues affecting the planet.

The Brazilian government helped them along, spending millions of taxpayer dollars to create a "People's Summit." Immediately upon arrival, this reporter was approached by a man wearing a giant condom suit handing out taxpayer-funded condoms from the "Ministry of Health" to the taxpayer-funded activists at the taxpayer-funded "People's Summit." Military helicopters were swarming overhead the whole time.

The *TNA* team spent several hours perusing the whole area. We spoke to socialists of various persuasions ranging from a representative of the Movement for Socialism, who did not think Latin America's socialist despots were radical enough, to a spokesperson for the "Movement to End Capitalism," who said the group desired reform that was impossible to achieve through politics and that money should be abolished. When asked how it might be accomplished without the existing political system, however, they offered few details.

Many of the "People" at the "People's" summit, despite their overt government backing, saw themselves as rebels. There were dozens — probably hundreds — of natives from the Amazon, too. Most of them were selling trinkets or chanting, but they made for good photo opportunities for the NGOs seeking to advance various causes.

A partially tax-funded Danish artist with "Art in Defense of Humanism" was there as well, presenting a series of exhibits including a decent-sized replica of the Statue of Liberty with the words "Freedom to Pollute" written across it. Another piece he was showing off featured a young pregnant girl on a crucifix, which he said was a protest against the Catholic Church for its opposition to sex education, contraception, pre-marital sex, abortion, and other teachings.

"We must get a lot of tax on oil," he told *TNA* in an interview, proposing \$40 per gallon gasoline without really knowing what to do about the consequences such measures would have on the poor. After boasting of taking money from capitalists to use against them, he also said there was no "right to consume" and the standard of living in the West should decline dramatically — a common sentiment among the "people" at the tax-funded summit.

Greenpeace was at the "People's Summit" as well, offering presentations about mining and logging. The next day, however, we caught up with Icelandic investigative journalist Magnus Gudmundsson, who has studied environmental campaigns and their effects for more than two decades. His take on Greenpeace and other environmental groups was a real eye-opener.

According to Gudmundsson, many of the mega-"Green" groups use blatant deception. One example in particular that he spoke about was an allegedly bogus propaganda video created by Greenpeace purporting to show seal hunters in the far North. The video, he said, citing multiple experts, was staged for the camera. But the tragic effects on the some of the world's most vulnerable people were all too real.

"Communities have been destroyed economically and socially," Gudmundsson explained, pointing to Native American villages in the Arctic that had been completely devastated by "green" deception campaigns. "It brings in a lot of money" for the organizations, he said about the propaganda schemes. But the results are generally horror and destruction for the affected communities. More than 100 people out of less than 1,000 in just one village he visited committed suicide following a deceptive





propaganda campaign to stop their traditional seal hunting.

"Communities have suffered incredibly, all in the name of saving the Earth," Gudmundsson told *TNA*, wondering if Rio+20 was part of the same pattern. "Of course, it has no impact on saving the Earth, but a big impact on their wallets."

Ironically, the vicious anti-seal hunting campaign actually ended up hurting the environment, he noted: The increase in seals caused a drop in the supply of fish, which threw the traditional ecosystem off balance. The local human community was virtually destroyed. And the seals were never even endangered in the first place.

Despite the stories of lies and destruction, however, many of the activists at Rio+20 were no doubt sincere. *TNA* interviewed some young Brazilians wearing funny-looking pig costumes, for example, who were passionately representing "Rio+Veg." The swine-suit-clad trio was very friendly as they explained the environmental benefits of vegetarianism. However, their mission at the conference — lobbying governments and the UN to curtail meat consumption — was typical of the NGOs' mindset: coercive power must be used to reform and guide humanity.

As the whole conference came to a close, another almost certainly well-intentioned activist spoke to *TNA* as well. Organizing Partner Kiara Worth representing the UN sustainability commission's Major Group for Children and Youth, was supposed to read a short statement on behalf of so-called "civil society" to the delegates.

But according to the young South African activist, she was told that there was no time — "essentially meaning that civil society has no voice here at the conference," she said, clearly upset, as representatives of governments and assorted dictatorships shuffled by with smiles on their faces. So, instead of reading the speech to the planet's "sustainability" dignitaries, she <u>read it to TNA and answered a few questions</u>.

"If these sheets of paper are our common future, then you have sold our fate and subsidized our common destruction," she said of the final UN agreement, expressing the disappointment many "stakeholders" felt with a document which did not technically mandate anything new. "We have one planet. Our being, our thinking, and our action should not be constrained by national boundaries, but by planetary ones. You failed to liberate yourselves from national and corporate self-interest."

Critics of the UN say the NGO activists present at the international conferences — no matter how sincere or well-intentioned — serve a crucial function under the guise of representing "society." The role of those groups and their criticisms about the UN's alleged failure to do enough help to advance the global institution's agenda, partly by making the sweeping planetary agreements seem moderate by comparison.

This allows the cheerleading media to create a false paradigm for their audiences where the only critics seem to be people who wanted more government, more UN, and more of the global agenda. Then, opponents of the whole agenda itself can be glossed over as the debate is framed in terms of advancing the UN's goals, or, on the other side advancing them even faster to please "civil society."

Opponents of the environmental agenda have called for an end to all taxpayer subsidies for NGOs, calling the government-funded groups "AstroTurf" designed to apply pressure from below and create the impression of popular support for the UN schemes. Of course, not all of the organizations receive public funds, but many do, even amid an economic crisis that has left untold millions completely destitute.





A few NGOs were at Rio+20 actually promoting what seemed to be real solutions to real problems. The Brazilian Association for Sustainable Development (ABIDES), for example, gave a presentation explaining that true sustainability should mean protecting nature while lifting people out of poverty—and it should start at the local level.

"The UN is speaking at a level that is not close to reality," said ABIDES President Everton Carvalho in an interview with *TNA*, noting that the real issues — increasing food production, developing infrastructure, creating jobs, and promoting economic growth — should be dealt with by locals who understand what is needed. "You have to solve the problems that are real, right now, for us."

Other organizations with representatives at Rio+20 promoting market solutions, economic growth, private property, real science, and individual liberty included the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT) and the Competitive Enterprise Institute. However, such groups were a tiny, tiny minority — and they received virtually no establishment-press coverage. The vast majority of NGOs were busy calling on the UN and world governments to expand their powers under the guise of environmentalism, poverty, and more — exactly the opposite of what all available evidence shows can truly alleviate real problems. For those groups, though, the media cameras were always rolling.

Big Business Joins Forces With UN & World Governments

Despite the widely held misconception of Big Business and Big Government as being at odds with each other, many of the world's top corporate chieftains played a central role throughout the UN conference. Many literally begged the global institution and its member governments for new regulations and more economic meddling.

"Businesses like regulation," said General Electric Brazil CEO Adriana Machado during a World Business Council for Sustainable Business panel discussion, without mentioning, of course, how much the U.S.-based side of GE has benefited at taxpayer expense. "Regulation is necessary to show companies who want to get better on how to get there." Apparently the market is just not good enough.

In an interview with *TNA*, Infosys co-chairman Senapathy "Kris" Gopalakrishnan, who also served as chief of an international coalition of companies known as "Business Action for Sustainable Development," offered similar remarks on joining hands with government. "As we move forward we have to start thinking about some policy framework, including regulations," he said, adding that businesses — which participated at Rio+20 in "record numbers" — should partner with "civil society" and governments to create rules. "It should be a public-private partnership in creating those regulations."

Unilever Global Advocacy Director Thomas Lingard spoke approvingly of so-called "public-private partnerships," too. In fact, he told *TNA* in an interview, his company is already working through the "Consumer Goods Forum" with some of its top competitors and assorted government agencies to move the "sustainable development" agenda along faster.

"We're very excited that what started out as an industry initiative is now attracting interest from governments to develop into more of a public-private partnership," he explained. The EU's burgeoning anti-carbon regime, meanwhile, is a good start, and Unilever is now "pushing for the tightening of that scheme," he noted.

While Lingard said the final UN agreement should have been stronger with more concrete deadlines, he was still optimistic about increasing the public-sector role in the economy. "We are very interested in governments creating the right frameworks," he said, adding that coercive power could play a greater





role in reducing carbon dioxide, among other perceived ills. "We are encouraging governments to go further and to be more ambitious in the policy frameworks they set."

Countless CEOs and corporate leaders spoke of creating an "alliance" between government and enterprise — for "sustainability" purposes, of course. Indeed, there are now close to 10,000 corporations participating in the UN Global Compact, which aims to have businesses submit to the global body's schemes and "catalyze actions in support of broader UN goals."

Big tax-exempt foundations financed by some of the wealthiest people on Earth wholeheartedly agreed with the idea as well. "I think this is a moment of real transformational opportunity, that's why we are here and why we are partnering with the UN Global Compact," said Rockefeller Foundation President Judith Rodin at the Rio+20 Corporate Sustainability Forum. "Turning all this potential into kinetic and life-saving flows of capital will require a concerted effort by governments, by foundations, by large companies and investors committed to developing this space and harnessing it. That is our primary goal."

Mega-companies at the summit — some of which have received massive taxpayer bailouts even in recent years — were actually so enthusiastic about the UN agenda that many of them offered billions for the cause. Bank of America, after receiving some \$45 billion directly from American taxpayers, more than \$100 billion in government loan guarantees, and even more in bailouts from the Federal Reserve, for example, pledged \$50 billion to the agenda over the next decade. Many other top firms made similarly grandiose promises.

Governments and global bureaucrats were very pleased. UN chief Ban Ki-moon, for example, said he was upbeat about "these huge numbers" pouring into "sustainable development," adding that they were "part of a growing global movement for change." Now the global body must keep up the pressure. "Our job now is to create a critical mass, an irresistible momentum," he concluded.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who appeared briefly at Rio+20 to give a speech and <u>pledge billions</u> of taxpayer funds, seemed particularly enthusiastic about prodding the "private" sector to get on board, too. "Sustainability won't happen without business investment," she said. "Governments alone cannot solve all the problems we face … That's why we are so strongly in favor of partnerships." It seemed like just about everybody at Rio+20 was strongly in favor of partnerships.

So-called "multilateral development banks" — taxpayer-backed transnational institutions working to finance the erosion of national sovereignty while putting populations in perpetual debt for their leaders' extravagant borrowing — pledged around \$175 billion for "sustainability" schemes as well. The World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank were both among the participants.

"We commit our institutions' support for implementing the sustainable development for all agenda," the banks said in a joint statement, noting that they would help harmonize and build policies around the world to advance the controversial "green" schemes. "We will work together to support global transformation in line with Rio+20 agreements."

Apparently the public-private financing plan, as UN documents revealed before the summit even started, will use coercive power to "encourage" investors and companies into showering more resources on "sustainability" schemes. Everyone will benefit, it seemed — except, of course, the people paying the bills: taxpayers and consumers. Big Business and Big Government, though, will be lining their pockets.

The anti-tax competition "cartel" known as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and





Development was excited about all of the progress. "Without the private sector it's not going to work," noted OECD Secretary General José-Ángel Gurria. "While governments put up the seed money, the big numbers come from the private sector." Indeed.

One analyst, Ronald Bailey, who covered the summit for the libertarian *Reason* magazine, described the agenda of many Corporate Sustainability Forum participants as "green crony capitalism" — especially because virtually every panel touted so-called "public-private partnerships" as the way to achieve "sustainability." In recent years especially, Americans have become all too familiar with what Bailey described. Think Solyndra.

Obviously, not every corporate action taken under the guise of "sustainability" is necessarily wrong. Some firms, for example, are simply seeking to reduce costs by lowering water or electricity consumption, which would, in theory, benefit consumers by making production cheaper. However, for most of the businesses at Rio+20, benefiting consumers was — at the very least — not the main objective.

"The reason lots and lots of businesses are in Rio is they're rent-seeking," Copenhagen Business School Professor Bjørn Lomborg, author of *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, was quoted as saying. "They're looking for huge potential subsidies for everything they produce."

Other analysts described the open discussions on "collaboration" between business and governments as something even more alarming, pointing to Benito Mussolini's widely quoted definition of fascism: "a merger of state and corporate power." Some observers also used the term "corporatism" to describe the ever-deepening bonds between the private sector and coercive power.

Rio+20: Billions for the Cause, Paid for by You

In all, the Rio+20 summit collected more than half a trillion dollars' worth of so-called "commitments" from governments, big businesses, and other key players. That is more than at any previous UN environmental summit — ever. Unfortunately for taxpayers and consumers, they will be paying the tab, either through higher taxes, higher prices, or a combination of the two.

The conference ended with a <u>final agreement between virtually every national government in the world</u> to continue working toward "sustainability" through "education," population control, less economic freedom, implementation of past treaties, and more centralized power at the global level. Because there were no new binding measures, however, the agenda certainly did not leap forward as fast as the UN and its supporters had hoped.

Still, despite the apparent setbacks, the effort to control the human population — at the global level, with its own wealth, allegedly for its own benefit — is not dead yet. Instead, it slowly marches onward, more quietly now, but with an extra \$500 billion in the war chest after Rio+20. All, of course, paid for by the people themselves — much like the extravagant conference.

This article is the second installment in a three-part series adapted from the cover story article on Rio+20 in the July 23, 2012, print edition of The New American magazine. To read the other installments, go to: "The Real Agenda Behind UN 'Sustainability' Unmasked," and "Despite Setbacks, UN 'Sustainability' Agenda Marches on After Rio+20."

For more exclusive coverage of the UN summit, please <u>click here</u>.

Photo: Mayors from left to right, Franklyn Tau of Johannesburg, Won Soon Park of Seoul, Eduardo Paes of Rio de Janeiro, Michael Bloomberg of New York, Babatunde Fashola of Lagos,

Gilberto Kassab of Sao Paulo and Eduardo Macri of Buenos Aires pose for a photo during the Rio+C40: Megacity Mayors Taking Action on Climate Change, a parallel meeting during the





UN Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 19, 2012: AP Images





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