

**Speech of Chairman of South Centre at opening of South Centre workshop on
Rio Plus 210, Geneva 6 July 2012**

Dear friends and colleagues

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to this workshop. The UN Conference on Sustainable Development, better known as the Rio Plus 20 Summit, has concluded successfully in Brazil. This is good news. I must congratulate the Brazilian government for effectively steering the negotiations at the last stages in Rio to produce an outcome that is fair and which is welcomed by the developing countries.

We all know that the world is facing multiple crises, including the global financial crisis, as well as the environment crisis, with climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution of the seas.

Twenty years after the original Rio Summit, the world leaders met again in the beautiful town of Rio. After long and difficult negotiations, they adopted an outcome document that reaffirmed the Rio Principles including common

and differentiated responsibilities. This was a significant achievement because it appeared as if the developed countries were very reluctant to accept this.

Unfortunately the commitments of the developed countries on finance and technology were weaker in the Rio Plus 20 outcome than what they were at the original Rio Summit.

There were however other bright spots. Rio plus 20 did not complete the negotiations on sustainable development goals but it launched a process to consider what these goals are to be over the next one to two years.

Rio plus 20 also started a process to establish a new institution, called the high level political forum on sustainable development. It is our hope that this new institution will be effective in managing all the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental.

And although the developing countries did not get what it wanted in financing and technology transfer, the Rio plus 20 summit did mandate that negotiations begin at the UN to establish a strategy for financing developing countries and a process to determine a technology transfer mechanism.

Therefore although the actual results at the Summit were not very concrete, the Summit did start many processes that we hope will lead to real concrete outcomes within one or two years.

In other words the real work is yet to come. The South Centre played a significant role in assisting the developing countries including the G77 and China during the process leading to Rio plus 20, and also in Rio itself. We will continue to help developing countries in the follow up process, both in New York and in Geneva.

We hope that this workshop will throw light on the results of Rio plus 20 and on the tasks ahead in the follow up after Rio. We thank all of you for coming, and we also thank the speakers who will speak on various aspects of the Rio Plus 20 process.