



The Foundation for the Economics of Sustainability

"Designing systems for a changing world"

The Greenhouse, 17 St Andrew St, Dublin 2 and AE House, Main St, Cloughjordan, Co. Tipperary, Ireland.
Tel 353 (0)505 42826 Mob 353 (0)86 364 2728, www.feasta.org info@feasta.org Skype feasta

22/09/11

Kevin Greene,
Environment International and Sustainable Development Section,
Department of the Environment,
Community and Local Government, Custom House,
Dublin 1.
Email: RIOPLUS20@environ.ie

**Consultation on Rio +20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development.
Submission from FEASTA.**

Dear Kevin,

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation call.

Much of the discussion in relation to the "Green Economy", including the communication from the European Commission quoted on page 4 of your consultation document, refers to a green economy generating economic growth (presumably in developed as well as developing countries).

Increasingly the evidence is that there is no prospect for green growth in developed countries. We attach a copy of *Low Carbon and Economic Growth – Key Challenges* commissioned by the UK Department for International Development from the Institute for Integrated Economic Research (2011) which reaches this conclusion and indeed questions the feasibility of green growth as a development model in general given the constraints which the climate crisis places on fossil fuel use.

Therefore we would caution against adopting any position in relation to Rio +20 which would propose that the international community attempt to achieve what appears to be impossible.

It is increasingly evident that we are meeting the limits to growth predicted almost 40 years ago. In particular the peaking of oil supply is profoundly disrupting to the global economy and financial system.

This has major consequences for human welfare across the planet. While it is not possible to disregard or bypass the limits to growth, it is possible to alleviate and adapt to the consequences of the resulting economic disruption. In particular we need to work to identify critical infrastructure and take the necessary steps to ensure it continues to operate. We attach a copy of David Korowicz's paper *Tipping Point* (2010).

Ireland should work to achieve a recognition at Rio +20 of the existence of the limits to growth and the initiation of a process to develop appropriate responses.

In addition to building resilience to the various forms of economic disruption we are experiencing, we need to reshape our money systems to operate successfully in an economy which isn't growing or is contracting. It has long been evident that our debt-based money system can only function in a growing economy.

For a discussion of the necessary fundamental reforms to our money system, we attach a copy of Richard Douthwaite's book *The Ecology of Money* (2006). The global community will need to discuss the creation of money systems compatible with a sustainable economy and capable of operating as humanity meets the limits to growth.

In conclusion, we hope that this consultation call will be part of an ongoing dialogue in relation to putting sustainability at the core of Ireland's activities both nationally and internationally. We are eager to continue discussion on both the theoretical and practical aspects of the "great transition" to sustainability, including the issues raised above.

Regards,

Morag Friel

References

Douthwaite, Richard, 2006, *The Ecology of Money*, Schumacher Briefings <http://www.feasta.org/documents/moneyecology/index.htm>

Institute for Integrated Economic Research, 2011, *Low Carbon and Economic Growth – Key Challenges*
<http://www.iier.ch/content/green-growth-oxymoron>

Korowicz, David, 2010, *Tipping Point*
<http://www.feasta.org/2010/03/15/tipping-point-near-term-systemic-implications-of-a-peak-in-global-oil-production-an-outline-review/>