



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on July 9, 2012

The Real Agenda Behind UN “Sustainability” Unmasked

RIO DE JANEIRO — During the United Nations Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development in late June, Christ the Redeemer — the city’s most famous landmark, a massive statue of Jesus Christ on top of Corcovado mountain overlooking Rio — was illuminated using bright green lights. It was a fitting symbol for the controversial summit in more ways than one.



Shortly before the conference began, green legend James Lovelock — the scientist and environmentalist who first came up with the whole “Gaia” concept — warned that the “green religion” was now “taking over from the Christian religion.” While it may sound absurd to most Americans, for many Rio+20 summit participants, the stunt with green lights shining on the statue of Christ no doubt had a special meaning.

UN critics and many Christians, at least, were outraged. Lord Christopher Monckton, a policy advisor to former U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and one of the most well-known opponents of the UN’s supposed environmental agenda, [called it](#) “a kind of childish message that the environmental religion is now replacing Christianity.” According to Lord Monckton, those who have lost the “true faith” nevertheless felt the need for religion and a common bond between themselves — and thought they had found it “in the spurious nostrums of Marxist environmentalism.”

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The Real Agenda

According to the UN, the summit was about making the world more “sustainable.” Of course, there are literally hundreds of definitions of that term. Critics, including prominent environmentalists, say “sustainability” has largely become meaningless — it can be whatever somebody wants it to be. And that was evident throughout the conference. When asked by *The New American*, no two respondents offered the same vision. Instead, each activist and delegate essentially saw the term as a way to advance his or her own agenda. So, if “sustainability” means anything or nothing, what was the conference really about?

The Players:

For starters, it helps to look at who was running the show. The Secretary-General of Rio+20 was a [notorious anti-American Chinese Communist](#) known as Sha Zukang, a man who spent decades working for the mass-murdering regime ruling over mainland China before starting his career as a senior UN official. He has openly proclaimed his hatred of Americans. And the fact that he gave an award to the Chinese general responsible for the mass slaughter of protesters at Tiananmen Square offers even more



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insight into his character.

In terms of Zukang's vision, the day before the summit began, China's state-run propaganda organ Xinhua quoted him as saying that the totalitarian-ruled nation had made "great progress" on "sustainable development." His close connection to the ruthless regime was never revealed, with the report referring to him only as a UN official. But according to the high-ranking Communist Party operative, the Chinese dictatorship has "broad prospects" for participation in "international cooperation" on the issue of so-called "sustainability."

The executive coordinator of the Rio+20 summit, meanwhile, was French socialist Brice Lalonde, a reliable advocate of bigger and more centralized government, using whatever pretext might be most effective. Apparently a cousin of U.S. Senator John Kerry and a well-known figure in France, Lalonde also has a long history of using environmentalism to advance a collectivist agenda. Throughout Rio+20, his mindset was on open display.

Finally, the other Rio+20 executive coordinator was a little-known "green" activist and former government minister from Barbados named Elizabeth Thompson. In interviews, she spoke of building partnerships between governments and other players — "non-governmental" organizations (NGOs) and big business — to create what she called "Earth Incorporated." The UN, of course, would guide the whole process.

The Reports:

Aside from an examination of the Rio+20 bosses themselves, UN documents on the conference released before the summit also shed light on what the true agenda was. A report prepared by some three dozen UN agencies entitled "Working Towards a Balanced and Inclusive Green Economy: A United Nations System-wide Perspective," for example, detailed the scheme to [foist a "green" world order](#) on the planet by making every level of government — regional, national, sub-national, and local — subservient to the agenda.

According to the document, the transition toward a global "green economy" was expected to cost trillions of dollars per year. Every aspect of human life — lifestyles, opinions, behavior, education, health, consumption, production, agriculture, diet, law, taxation, industry, governance, and more — would have to be reshaped to conform to new international standards. On the same note as sentiments expressed by billionaires like George Soros, Ted Turner, and David Rockefeller, certain Communist Chinese policies were described as a "good example."

"Specifically, in a transition to a green economy, public policies will need to be used strategically to reorient consumption, investments, and other economic activities," the document explained of the UN's desired central-planning schemes, touting the reduction of carbon emissions and new educational programs to teach humanity why it must become what the UN considers sustainable. "Transitioning to a green economy requires a fundamental shift in the way we think and act."

To enforce its controversial vision, the UN said it would have to [assume vast new powers](#), including global regulatory authority and enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance. National regulations would have to be replaced with global ones, the report explained. Other global powers touted in the document included carbon taxes, trillions of dollars annually in wealth redistribution, population-reduction schemes, and a barrage of programs dealing with everything from poverty and education to health and resource allocation.

To pay for it all, aside from new world taxes and higher prices across the board, a new global currency



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run by the International Monetary Fund might have to be considered, according to the document. “Efforts need to be made to explore the potential for an innovative use of [an IMF proto-world currency known as] Special Drawing Rights (SDR), international reserve assets, and pools of concentrated assets to serve the aim of financing green economy investments with attractive social as well as private returns and increasing the provision of global public goods,” it stated.

In leaked minutes of a secret meeting of top UN officials including Zukang, Lalonde, UN boss Ban Ki Moon, and an assortment of senior global bureaucrats, the true Rio+20 agenda was clear as well. All of them [called for expanding the role of international institutions](#) to create what Lalonde described as “One Planet” with the UN as “the voice of the planet and its people.” The participants also described the most effective ways to get people and national governments on board with the plan — marketing gimmicks, re-distribution of wealth, and outright deception.

Another dubious UN report was released less than two weeks before Rio+20 began. Dubbed the fifth “Global Environmental Outlook” (GEO-5), the document [claimed](#) that humanity’s failure to adopt so-called “sustainability” schemes threatens the Earth. Among its controversial recommendations: less people, less consumption, “lifestyle modifications,” and a “shift” toward new “equity-based values.”

The Earth, the UN claimed, is in danger. And as always, it’s your fault. Humanity is the enemy. There are simply too many people consuming too many resources, and they would eventually bring about a cataclysm. However, if the global population promptly submits to the international body’s myriad demands, the UN implausibly alleged, it might still be possible to save the world.

Of course, it would not be easy. Or cheap. Individual liberty, self-governance, national sovereignty, and the human population — that means you and your family — would all have to be curtailed, according to the report. Meanwhile, the fortunate people who remain would have to consume a lot less — in other words, become much poorer — to be what the UN considers “sustainable.”

“Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean share the common problems of population growth and increasing consumption,” noted the UN, bizarrely attacking human beings and decreasing levels of poverty as “problems” to be solved. In the developed world, meanwhile, more poverty is needed as well: “Europe and North America continue to operate at unsustainable levels of consumption,” the global entity claimed.

To hide the fact that the planetary central-planning schemes would, if adopted, be making everyone except the elite and UN bureaucrats poorer, the report suggested ditching traditional indicators of progress and well-being such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Instead, governments must adopt new measurements: “a redefinition of wealth ... to a more sustainable metric,” as the UN put it.

“Scientific evidence shows that Earth systems are being pushed towards their biophysical limits, with evidence that these limits are close and have in some cases been exceeded,” the global body alleged. “International cooperation is essential, since environmental problems do not follow national boundaries.” In other words, the world is doomed unless nations submit to the UN — immediately.

Over a dozen respected scientists and university professors, including several who worked with the UN science apparatus in the past, offered TNA their thoughts on the over 500-page report. All of them said the document was nothing but UN fear-mongering — lies, exaggerations, and political propaganda.

In essence, then, the true agenda had little to do with “sustainability,” poverty, or a so-called “green economy” — participants in the secret meeting admitted that the term itself was still largely undefined. Instead, Rio+20 was more about eroding national sovereignty, concentrating coercive power at the



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global level, centrally planning the world economy, chipping away at private property rights, reducing the population, spreading abortion and contraception worldwide, using “education” to brainwash future generations into accepting the state of affairs, building more bureaucracies, and more.

That agenda, of course, was known before the summit even started — at least by anyone who cared to read about it from the UN’s own documents. *The New American* reported on it extensively in the months and weeks before the conference. The Swiss and Qatari governments both pointed to TNA reports on the issues, as did the UN itself, so at least some of the official delegates at Rio+20 were aware of the agenda, too.

The Summit Agenda

Throughout the confab, the controversial agenda was again on full display. Assorted global agencies all touted their own roles in the new “green” world order. Non-governmental organizations, science groups, the press, mega-corporations, billionaires, and governments all played their roles in advancing the narrative.

CNN founder and UN Foundation boss Ted Turner, for instance, [spoke of banning plastic internationally](#) and — presumably joking — instituting a global ban on human breathing. In the past, he has come under fire for speaking approvingly of China’s brutal “one-child” policy and proposing dramatic reductions in the number of people on Earth to save the environment — literally eradicating billions to “save the environment.” When asked about population by *The New American* at a panel discussion, the billionaire UN enthusiast with five children suggested a tax-funded UN contraception regime. He also called for the worldwide promotion of feminism to discourage motherhood in an effort to help slash the number of humans.

Before and throughout the conference, reducing the population through global institutions was a predominant issue. The UN Population Fund, for example, unveiled a new report calling for “universal access” to “reproductive health” services for women and girls to ensure fewer human births. “Slowing population growth can have a positive impact on environmental sustainability in the long run,” explained UNFPA Executive Director Babatunde Osotimehin, apparently unaware that the planet has already reached so-called “peak child” and that after rising by a few more billion, the global population is set to decline.

Former Norwegian Prime Minister and World Health Organization boss Gro Harlem Brundtland, a key driver behind the UN “sustainability” agenda and Socialist International, [offered similar](#) comments when asked about population by TNA: More feminism and more “family planning” are needed. Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland, also proposed expanded “education” and “reproductive health” to ensure fewer pregnancies in a brief interview with TNA.

The anti-human attitude was encapsulated by a poster in one of the main halls of the conference showing a doctor diagnosing a “sick” Earth. The diagnosis, according to the image: “You have humans,” implying that humanity itself is a disease afflicting the planet that must somehow be “cured.”

In addition to reducing the population, the people who do exist now and in the future will have to consume a lot less if the UN gets its way — especially in the developed world. In the words of UN Development Program boss Helen Clark, “in the West, we don’t need more cars, more TV, whatever.” It was not immediately clear whether she was including the millions of homeless and unemployed in her sweeping statement, but the controversial comments were echoed in various forms by countless officials and UN documents.



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Indeed, slashing consumption through coercion, described by critics as spreading poverty by force, was a top issue at Rio+20. According to advocates, it should be done at the global level, including by reducing the number of consumers, regardless of whether it is moral or accepted by the public.

“For too long, population and consumption have been left off the table due to political and ethical sensitivities,” complained U.K. Royal Society fellow Charles Godfray, the chairman of a coalition of science groups that released a [bizarre attack on humanity and prosperity while calling for the UN to take action](#). “These are issues that affect developed and developing nations alike, and we must take responsibility for them together.”

A key part of reducing consumption involves making energy — especially fossil fuels — much more expensive, or, for people of poor countries, off-limits altogether. Virgin Group CEO Richard Branson, when asked by TNA about what he wanted from Rio+20, called for planetary carbon taxes and global treaties supposedly to protect the environment. In a press conference later, he reiterated his support for the schemes while lobbying against new oil drilling.

More than a few heavyweights, meanwhile, spoke of creating a “new economic model” for the world — another one of the top themes of the conference. “In terms of the international community ... we need to change the economic model,” former Soviet Union boss and “Green Cross International” Founding President Mikhail Gorbachev said in a video statement, essentially claiming that what remains of the free market was somehow responsible for the financial crisis while blasting profits and “hyper” consumption. “We badly need a new economic model.... We must consolidate all our resources to create such a model.”

Government negotiators who spoke with TNA off the record, as well as the endless parade of bureaucrats and representatives of dictators giving speeches and hosting press conferences, all called for “global” solutions to alleged “global” problems. Rulers of poorer nations insisted that taxpayers in richer countries give them more money. Developed-nation governments promised to reward Third World regimes with more tax-funded aid if they continued to keep their people in poverty by denying access to cheap energy and economic freedom.

Anti-capitalist heads of state had a different, though also critical, view of the schemes as well. “Environmentalism of the green economy is the new colonialism for the subjugation of our peoples,” socialist Bolivian President Evo Morales told delegates, who responded with a round of applause. “The capitalist environmentalism is a new colonialism ... put an end to the capitalist system.”

National sovereignty and property rights, meanwhile, when mentioned at Rio+20, were largely frowned upon. Citing UN documents, Lord Monckton said the summit and its broader agenda were actually about the ambition of the “governing class” to “rule the world with as few constraints as possible.” Of course, there are real environmental problems, he added. But they should be addressed at the local and national level — and by the free market — not by out-of-control planetary bureaucrats who, he said, were seeking to create a “world socialist” regime.

The summit, Lord Monckton explained, had nothing to do with the environment. “It’s all about extending the power and reach of the global-government wannabes,” he said. What is going on at Rio+20 was actually an “attempted coup on a global scale by the governing class against the people.”

Climate Scare Dying, Plan Remains the Same

In recent years, global warming, climate change, and carbon dioxide were the main justifications for the agenda. But after the [spectacular implosion](#) of the alleged “science” behind the climate alarmism, very



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little was said on the subject throughout Rio+20. Even before the summit, top officials [said they would avoid the whole “climate” subject](#) due to the controversy it caused. Indeed, the UN finally dropped environmentalism as the top rationale for its agenda, saying in the [final agreement](#) that poverty was now the “greatest global challenge facing the world today.”

As the poor took center stage, supposed loss of “biodiversity” and humanity’s alleged “unsustainability” became the new environmental rallying cries. Of course, the agenda of global control remained the same. The suggested schemes would likely exacerbate poverty and would almost certainly do little or nothing to help deal with true environmental problems, as evidenced by the fact that free markets consistently reduce poverty and help preserve the environment while socialism creates poverty and environmental chaos. The biggest difference between past global conferences and Rio+20 was simply the reasons cited by participants to push the same old agenda.

Critics on Both Sides:

On the political Right, activists and critics widely denounced the Rio+20 agenda as a dangerous effort essentially to create a global socialist authority. One of the most prominent opponents of the UN agenda, U.S. Senator James Inhofe (R-Okla.), the ranking member on the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, appeared at the conference via video and blasted the worldwide “far-left” agenda to impose global carbon taxes and redistribute wealth. “Whatever happened to sovereignty?” he asked.

Others had even stronger criticism. “No matter the eco-cause — you can go back and look at overpopulation, you can go back and look at global cooling, global warming, species extinction, deforestation — all of these eco-scaries, they all blame it on man, and the only way we can solve it is to give away our sovereignty and our freedom to the United Nations in the form of global governance,” Climate Depot editor Marc Morano told TNA, citing Czech Republic President Václav Klaus to point out that since the fall of the Soviet Union, “ambitious environmentalism” had become the greatest threat to freedom.

On what could be considered the other side of the political spectrum, well-known Indian activist Vandana Shiva told TNA she had a [similarly negative view of the agenda behind Rio+20](#), albeit from a different perspective. “This whole green economy thing, interpreted as a planetary grab of the remaining resources, is not going to solve anything,” said Shiva, an author, physicist, and environmental champion. She said the elite class of the world was essentially seizing the planet for itself.

“They are seeing greed in the green economy, and that is why Rio+20 hasn’t addressed the crisis, it has deepened the crisis, and in every one of our countries, democratically, we will have to correct these errors,” she noted, saying the biggest corrections would have to be reversing the “corporate hijack of the planet’s resources and our democracy.”

“If that continues, there will be no freedom and no life,” she concluded. “The real agenda is privatizing the planet — that’s what they call the green economy.... For the one percent, as the occupy movement said it.” Had she used different terminology, more than a few American Tea Party members would probably agree.

On the Left more broadly, sincere opponents of the summit largely said that it was all actually a scheme by mega-capitalist elites to make even more profit at humanity’s expense. Countless NGOs and spokesmen for big government-minded environmental groups, for example, decried the alleged



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“corporate hijacking” of the summit to enrich the elite on the backs of the poor and the environment.

Both sides were angry for different reasons — at least on the surface. But in reality, the Rio+20 agenda was more likely something in between: an attempt by the elite of the world — super-capitalists using socialistic policies for their own benefit — to further solidify their control over the planet at the expense of the people’s freedom, national sovereignty, and prosperity. What was blatantly obvious, at the very least, was that saving the environment and the poor had little to do with the summit’s true purpose.

The Outcome:

As might be expected, despite no new binding agreements, the [final document agreed to by world governments](#) — dubbed “The Future We Want” — contained a broad range of controversial, unpopular, and even outright dangerous statements; all in accordance with the real agenda. A reference to “Mother Earth” made it in. Contraception and abortion, for example, were also key issues — especially because of the obsession among attendees with curbing the number of humans on the planet.

Moving forward with the implementation of past treaties — including more than a few which represent serious threats to property rights, liberty, and national sovereignty — was emphasized in the final agreement as well. Environmental problems and poverty, meanwhile, will only get worse; at least if the final agreement offers any sense of the future to come.

This article is the first 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 in the series, go to [“UN Sustainability Summit Exposed: Big Business, Dictators, and NGOs,”](#) and [“Despite Setbacks, UN ‘Sustainability’ Agenda Marches on After Rio+20.”](#)

For more exclusive coverage of the UN summit, please [click here](#).



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