

ANNEX 2

Rio+20 - FORUM ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Opening Remarks by WFEO Representative, Engr. Jorge Spitalnik (Chair, WFEO-UN Relations Committee)

In the Scientific & Technological Communities Major Group at UNCSD, WFEO has conducted, together with ICSU, a comprehensive program of activities in the preparation of the Rio+20 Conference by providing scientific knowledge, engineering expertise and information on appropriate technologies that are timely and up-to-date, towards supporting the main objectives of the Conference and aiming at substantiating concepts under discussion.

We consider that our Major Group was included as one of the nine Major Groups to provide governments, policy makers and Society, the understanding of the limitations and parameters imposed by the Laws of Nature, and to tell them what is achievable scientifically and technologically, based on what we now know and on what we can do with the technological tools we have in hand, as well as with those being developed and demonstrating success potential.

We are certain that progress in all topical areas of the sustainable development debate will require substantial innovative advances in science and technology and a thorough analysis of the feasibility of proposed solutions.

We are very pleased for having been invited by ICSU to be a partner of this Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation that will highlight the role of science, engineering and technology in addressing the issues of the Conference. It is our hope that, with such a gathering of top class expertise, by laying out the current expanse of scientific knowledge and the state of the art of engineering resources and innovation, this Forum will provide governments and civil society the required information on the feasibility of solutions for sustainable development, as well as the limits we are going to encounter in trying to maximize the results of such solutions.

It is our understanding that, for tackling the issues related to sustainable development, our role is to provide policy-makers and Society, updated, unbiased and reliable information on the different technical paths and technologies, based on scientific principles, engineering criteria and demonstrated technological development.

Notwithstanding, development and application of technologies will not always be culturally accepted, thus requiring extensive research from social science to determine the appropriate conditions for their uptake.

In conclusion, let me express the WFEO deep thanks to the Brazilian Government, UNESCO, ICSU and PUC for this opportunity to have the Engineering professional actively contributing to the debate on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development and, thus, subsidizing the deliberations of the Rio+20 Conference.