

Trond Vedeld. 2011. ([Grønn økonomi og Rio+20. Business-as-usual eller nytt paradigme?](#); NIBR)

Summary

Green Economy and Rio+20: Business-as-usual or a new paradigm?

This report discusses green economy as a concept the way it is utilized by UNEP and the UN, and reviews the related agenda for development "A Global Green New Deal" (GGND). Green economy - within the framework of sustainable development and poverty reduction - has been chosen as main theme for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) in Rio in 2012.

Green economy is particularly concerned with the degradation of natural capital, rising ecological scarcity and environmental risks, and the need to internalize environmental costs in economic analysis and macroeconomic policy. Green economy is accompanied by a set of principles and economic instruments and incentives that might enhance investment in natural capital, low energy and low emission societies.

The report discusses the green economy concept in relation to sustainable development. It argues that the focus in the Rio+20 negotiations should be on sustainable development, more so than on green economy, reflecting demands from developing countries. Sustainable development is perceived as a more fruitful concept in that it places conditions for social and institutional transformation at the center of analysis and reform. Hence, it directs attention to political leadership, governance and the roles and responsibilities of elites for a crisis ridden political economy.

Development strategies should thus be formulated through political and institutional analysis, and not be based on one-sided economic analysis that tends to provide insufficient answers to environment, resource, and economic crisis.

The report provides an overview and critical assessment of GGND as an agenda for transition to a green economy. It shows that even if most countries have accepted green economy as a possible strategy for sustainable development, and important green investments are underway, many observers from developing countries argue that the agenda is not well adapted to their specific demands, and they perceive environmental issues that may threaten national sovereignty.

In the concluding section, the report presents a set of implications the green economy agenda might have for Norwegian development policy and the negotiations towards the Rio Conference in June 2012. The report has been produced on the basis of an assignment with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and uses secondary sources and data.