

The Access Initiative: Rio+20 Call to Action

1. The Access Initiative is the largest global network promoting the right and ability of citizens to influence decisions about natural resources that sustain their communities -- over 250 civil society organizations in over 50 countries. We work to implement Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992) by reforming laws, institutions and practices to enhance transparency, citizen engagement and accountability. Our strategy has been (a) to benchmark the performance of governments on Principle 10, (b) to assess and document the gaps in laws and practices and (c) to advocate for reforms through evidence-based advocacy. Through this process we have successfully worked with governments to improve decision-making on sustainable development and to obtain improvements in international institutions.
2. Our Network has worked for national level governance reforms in the Rio +20 process through a global "3 Demands Campaign", and by active participation in the formal negotiation process of the conference. We seek specific international and regional governance outcomes from the Rio +20 conference and commitments for national environmental governance reform.
3. Our Call to world leaders, international institutions and civil society is to place governance at the center of sustainable development. In order to achieve that goal we call for:
 - a. World leaders to issue a clear mandate to negotiate a global convention on access to information, public participation and access to justice in sustainable development decision-making;
 - b. The leaders of Latin American and Caribbean nations to commit to the negotiation of a regional convention on access to information, public participation and access to justice in decision-making on sustainable development giving effect to Principle 10;
 - c. The leaders of UNECE nations to commit to expanding the geographical coverage of the Aarhus Convention by actively promoting signature and ratification by non-UNECE countries, and by removing barriers to such signature and ratification (e.g. Article 19(3));
 - d. UNEP to develop a robust program, together with other partners, to implement the 2010 Bali Guidelines on Principle 10;
 - e. The outcome documents from the Rio+20 conference to recognize unequivocally the importance of good governance for sustainable development and to ensure that transparency, engagement of civil society and accountability mechanisms are part of the reforms of international environmental institutions.
4. We, partners of The Access Initiative across the world, commit ourselves at Rio+20 to work towards achieving the above outcomes by 2018. We call upon all government, civil society organizations, international agencies, business and industry and individuals to join us in our commitments and efforts and to support us and our partners.