

# TOWARDS A GREEN SOCIETY? PARTICIPATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

18 June / 12:00-14:00 / milton santos tent

Active citizenship, contestation and diverse forms of participation have a crucial role to play in transforming relations of power and patterns of inequality underpinning poverty and unsustainable growth, and are thus central to Rio+20 negotiations. Public action is essential for forging solutions that are compatible with goals of social justice, equity and poverty eradication.

This workshop will consider the forms of participation, contestation, coalitions, alliances and compromises that are emerging—or might need to emerge—to promote green economy approaches that contribute to sustainable development and poverty eradication. It will be a mix of conceptual debate, concrete examples and discussion time, emphasizing the role of collective action, civil society, broad-based participation and coalition building in contestation around green economy.

## Speakers

**Peter Utting** (UNRISD)

**Laura Rival** (University of Oxford)

**Nicola Bullard** (Associate, Focus on the Global South)

Speaker from **Via Campesina** (tbc)



# Towards a Green Society? Participation for Social Change

Recent UNRISD research indicates that broad public action and diverse forms of participation play an important role in contesting green economy and in forging solutions that are compatible with goals of social justice, equity and poverty eradication.

Which green economy model prevails will depend not simply on rational decision-making by leaders and technocrats informed by consultations with stakeholders; it will emerge from political processes and governance arrangements, and reflect the balance of social forces. Civil society has a crucial role to play in crafting transition paths that are green and fair through the social organization of disadvantaged groups, social movements activism, participation in knowledge networks and policy processes, and building broad-based coalitions for change.

Civil society organizations can act as a conduit for local knowledge to shape public policy; they draw attention to the need for active citizenship in making claims on the state or other power-holders, in order to shape policies that are just and, in particular, address the needs of vulnerable citizens.



Illustration by Aine Cassidy

## Agenda and speakers:

**Peter Utting, Deputy Director, UNRISD**  
Contestation, participation and alliances; building coalitions and social pacts; the role of civil society, business and UN coalitions in pressuring for social change.

Film #1: 'Green Economy Coalitions for Change' (10 mins)

**Nicola Bullard, Focus on the Global South**  
Tensions between climate justice and green economy from the perspective of building an oppositional movement; Where does the potential lie? What are the constraints?

Film #2: 'Sustainable Futures, Alternative Visions' (10 mins)

**Laura Rival, University of Oxford**  
Grassroots efforts to shift the terrain of green economy policy making, with emphasis on civil, business and state relationships; potentials and constraints, successes and gaps.

Open debate with panelists and audience