



Environment Minister, John Griffiths is ready to tell Governments from across the world about Wales's efforts to put Sustainable Development right at the heart of decision making.

The Minister will shortly set off for the Rio+20 United Nations conference on Sustainable Development. The conference will see world leaders, along with thousands of participants from governments, the private sector, NGOs and others, coming together to consider how world wide poverty can be reduced and how the protection of the world's environment can be ensured, despite an ever growing population.

Speaking ahead of the conference, the Minister said:

“Sustainability is much more than a green idea, it is about developing the best long term path for Wales that will deliver a good, healthy sustainable quality of life for all people in Wales both now and in the future.

“It means that when we are faced with difficult choices, we choose the option that is best for the long term future of Wales, rather than the option that is quickest, easiest or cheapest.

“Things like investing now in better early education and support for families, to prevent social hardship, and all the health and economic problems that come with it, later. Or helping Welsh householders and businesses to become more energy efficient, so they can save money and prepare for inevitable energy price rises in the future.

“I believe such an approach will help us to achieve economic, social and environmental wellbeing for all.

“Wales might be a small country but we are genuinely championing some leading sustainability policies. I believe these must be fed into the global debate and whilst I am in Rio I will be canvassing other Governments for their views on our SD policies in an effort to inspire them into similar action and so we can all learn from any relevant experiences.”

The Minister will represent Wales at meetings of the Climate Group and the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, two international networks that Wales plays a key role in. He will also speak about the Welsh Government’s consultation on ground breaking proposals for a Sustainable Development Bill and the importance of using legislation to ensure change.

The Welsh Government’s is currently consulting on plans to place a legal requirement on organisations delivering public services in Wales to ensure their strategic decision making is informed by sustainable development principles. This is aimed at ensuring a more consistent and integrated approach to improving long term economic, social and environmental outcomes for Wales.

At a seminar on the green economy the Minister will also showcase the Welsh Government’s energy performance programme arbed, which has seen £66 million being invested to boost the green economy and improve the energy efficiency of 7500 homes. This will be supplemented by the recently launched second phase of Arbed, which will see the Welsh Government investing £45m to reduce fuel bills for 4800 homes in deprived areas of Wales.

arbed also offers valuable support to Welsh businesses as they can tender for contracts to supply and install the necessary energy efficiency measures.

Whilst in Rio the Minister will meet leading Government Ministers from the Basque Country, Catalonia, Quebec, Rhone Alps, and Abruzzo to discuss and develop policies that will support sustainable development and people’s quality of life.