Is the challenge for Rio+20 to build the collective political will to respond to the current crises? Or is it to bring the social dimension back alongside the economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability? Or is it now time to expose ‘green economy’ as an attempt to cover up the role of contemporary capitalism in promoting systemic inequality and worsening global environmental problems?

According to the articles by UNRISD Director Sarah Cook and research analyst Kiah Smith, policy analyst Tariq Banuri and award-winning academic Bram Buscher, these are among the key issues that the development community needs to debate in the lead-up to Rio+20 in June 2012. In publishing these provocative articles along with interviews and opinion pieces, Development (Volume 55, Number 1) on ‘Greening the Economy’ continues its tradition of publishing on timely and relevant issues to ‘take the conversation further’ on today’s major topics.

This edition of Development is produced in partnership with the UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) and includes papers presented at the UNRISD conference ‘Green Economy and Sustainable Development: Bringing Back the Social Dimension’, held in October 2011, on topics ranging from global crises to grassroots conservation and development projects.

A strong message of the journal is that transforming our current unsustainable production and consumption patterns requires major long-term changes in our individual and collective behaviour and lifestyles. For this we need not only a ‘green economy’ but also ‘green governance’ that creates synergies among diverse values, local governance and macro-level policy.

Read the table of contents. Read the editorial.

SID is a global network of individuals and institutions committed to the promotion of participative, pluralistic and sustainable development. Since its inception in 1957, SID has sought to facilitate dialogue between different development actors and bridge the gap between development theory and practice. Its journal Development is the flagship publication of the Society and has been published continuously for 54 years. It enjoys a broad readership within the development community and is published by Palgrave Macmillan on behalf of the Society.

The UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) was established in 1963 to create an independent, autonomous space within the United Nations system for research and dialogue on important social issues. The UNRISD mission is to generate knowledge and policy alternatives on contemporary social development challenges and processes. Through a global network of research partners, the Institute works in support of policies and practices that reduce poverty and inequality, advance well-being and rights, and build more democratic and just societies.