



The Road from Johannesburg

World Summit on Sustainable Development

What Was Achieved
and
The Way Forward



United Nations

An Implementation Summit

Hopes were high and expectations were great after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro that the world would take major steps towards sustainable development, a forward-looking approach that integrates economic growth, social development and environmental protection. Yet in the decade that followed, progress did not match these expectations, as poverty deepened in many areas and environmental degradation continued unabated.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development—held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002—sought to overcome the obstacles to achieving sustainable development and to generate initiatives that would deliver results and improve people's lives while protecting the environment. The Johannesburg Summit did not aim to renegotiate Agenda 21, the blueprint for sustainable development that was unanimously adopted at the Earth Summit, but it did fill some key gaps that have impeded its implementation.

By every measure, there was substantial interest in the Summit. Some 100 world leaders addressed the Summit and over 22,000 people participated, including more than 10,000 delegates representing 193 countries and intergovernmental organizations, over 8,000 representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), business and other civil society groups, and 4,000 members of the press. At least as many people again are thought to have attended parallel events relating to the Summit in Johannesburg organized by civil society, the private sector, Governments and others.

Beyond the agreements that were reached in the conference outcome documents, which set priorities, targets and timetables, the Summit identified not only what has to be done, but also who will do it—with many Governments, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations and the private sector launching partnership initiatives aimed at achieving results. Some of the Summit's major accomplishments include:



- A universal reaffirmation of the commitment to the full implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals—a set of eight targets aimed at reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development. Governments adopted a Political Declaration and a 54-page Plan of Implementation detailing the priorities for action.
- Strengthening of the concept of sustainable development and the important linkages between poverty, the environment and the use of natural resources. It also marked progress on issues that were not adequately handled at the Earth Summit, such as energy and patterns of production and consumption.
- The emergence of partnerships—by and between Governments, civil society and the private sector—as a viable mechanism to pursue sustainable development in a way that complements government action. More than 300 partnership initiatives were announced during the Johannesburg Summit process, committing more than \$200 million in new and additional resources.

An Action Agenda to Reach New Goals and Targets

In the lead-up to the Summit, several issues were identified by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan as priority areas for action: water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture, and biodiversity protection and ecosystem management—known as the WEHAB initiatives. The Summit concluded with countries committing themselves to a wide range of actions in these areas—and others—and setting firm targets and timetables to achieve results. Some of the highlights are set out below.

Water and sanitation Over one billion people lack access to safe drinking water and two billion lack access to proper sanitation. Recognizing that clean drinking water and adequate sanitation are necessary to protect human health and the environment, Governments reaffirmed the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water by 2015, and matched this with a new target to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation by 2015.

WATER AND SANITATION INITIATIVES

- The United States announced \$970 million in investments over the next three years on water and sanitation projects.

- The European Union, which currently spends over 1 billion euros (about \$1 billion) a year for water and sanitation projects in developing countries, announced the Water for Life initiative, which aims to engage partners to meet goals for water and sanitation, primarily in Africa and Central Asia.
- The Asian Development Bank provided a \$5 million grant to UN Habitat and \$500 million in fast-track credit for the Water for Asian Cities Programme.
- The UN has received about 21 water and sanitation initiatives submissions with at least \$20 million in extra resources.

Energy Some two billion people lack access to electricity and rely on traditional fuel sources, such as firewood, kerosene or biomass, for their cooking and heating. At the Summit, countries committed themselves to increasing access to modern energy services, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, and to phasing out, where appropriate, energy subsidies. There was also agreement to support the target set out in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to ensure energy access for at least 35 per cent of Africans within 20 years.

ENERGY INITIATIVES:

- The European Union announced a \$700 million partnership initiative on energy and the United States stated it would invest up to \$43 million in 2003. Germany announced a contribution of 500 million euros over the next five years to promote cooperation on renewable energy.
- Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirmed a pledge to use renewable energy to meet 10 per cent of their energy needs by 2010.
- An association of nine major electricity companies, the "e7," signed a range of agreements with the United Nations to facilitate technical cooperation for sustainable energy projects in developing countries. The South African energy utility Eskom announced a partnership to extend modern energy services to neighbouring countries.
- A partnership on Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles was announced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the US Environmental Protection Agency, with broad support from partners in the private sector, the NGO community and Governments from developed and developing countries.

- UNEP launched a Global Network on Energy for Sustainable Development to promote the research, transfer and deployment of cleaner energy technologies to the developing world.
- During the Summit process, the UN received a total of 32 partnership submissions for energy projects with over \$26 million in resources.

Health Recognizing an urgent need to address the causes of ill health, at the Summit, Governments:

- Reaffirmed the Millennium Development Goals to reduce, by 2015, mortality rates for infants and children under 5 by two thirds, and maternal mortality rates by three quarters.
- Recommitted themselves to agreed targets to reduce HIV prevalence among young men and women aged 15-24 by 25 per cent in the most affected countries by 2005 and globally by 2010, as well as to combat malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases.
- Set new goals: to ensure, that by 2020, chemicals are not used and produced in ways that harm human health and the environment; to enhance cooperation to reduce air pollution; and to improve developing countries' access to environmentally sound alternatives to ozone depleting chemicals by 2010.

HEALTH INITIATIVES:

- In addition to programmes on water and sanitation that will directly affect health, the United States announced a commitment to spend \$2.3 billion through 2003 on health, some of which had been earmarked earlier for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.
- The UN has received 16 partnership submissions for health projects with \$3 million in resources.

Agriculture Since most of the world's poorest people eke out a living through subsistence agriculture on marginal lands, improving agricultural productivity was a major Summit focus. As a result, countries agreed that the Global Environment Facility should help finance and support the implementation of the Convention to Combat

Desertification. In addition, it was agreed that food security strategies should be developed for Africa by 2005.

AGRICULTURE INITIATIVES:

- The United States announced that it will invest \$90 million in 2003 for sustainable agriculture programmes.
- The UN received a total of 17 partnership submissions relating to agriculture projects with at least \$2 million in additional resources.

Biodiversity and ecosystem management

To confront the continuing decline of the world's biodiversity and deterioration of ecosystems, Governments committed to take action that will:

- Significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010.
- Reverse the current trend in natural resource degradation.
- Restore fisheries to their maximum sustainable yields by 2015 and prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by 2004.
- Crack down on illegal logging that contributes to deforestation.
- Establish a representative network of marine protected areas by 2012.
- Improve developing countries' access to environmentally-sound alternatives to ozone depleting chemicals by 2010.
- Undertake initiatives by 2004 to implement the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land Based Sources of Pollution.



BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES:

- The UN has received 32 partnership initiatives in this area with \$100 million in resources.
- The United States announced a commitment of \$53 million, particularly for forests in the Congo Basin, in 2002-2005.
- Jordan and Israel announced that they were pursuing a joint \$1 billion project to restore the Dead Sea ecosystem with water pumped from the Red Sea.
- Canada and Russia announced they intended to ratify the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which would allow the Protocol to enter into force. Thailand said that it had just ratified the Protocol, and India announced it had deposited its instrument of accession.
- Costa Rica announced that it would ban open gold mining, would not promote oil exploitation in the country and—with Colombia, Ecuador and Panama—had created a marine corridor for conservation and sustainable development.

Finance, trade and globalization Decisions taken at the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting in Doha, Qatar, put development concerns at the centre of trade negotiations, and the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, put development at the centre of discussions on finance. Building on this, the Johannesburg Summit worked to ensure that global economic and financial rules, systems and markets support sustainable development. At the Summit, Governments agreed that opening up access to markets is key to development and committed themselves to:

- Support the phase-out of all forms of export subsidies, as well as subsidies for fossil fuels and for agricultural products.
- Give special attention and support to Africa and NEPAD, to better focus efforts to address the continent's development needs.
- Establish a 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production.
- Support the establishment of a world solidarity fund for the eradication of poverty.

- Actively promote corporate responsibility and accountability.
- Develop and strengthen a range of activities to improve natural disaster preparedness and response.

FINANCE, TRADE AND GLOBALIZATION INITIATIVES:

- Governments agreed to replenish the Global Environment Facility with a total of \$3 billion, \$2.92 billion of which was announced before the Summit and \$80 million added by the European Union in Johannesburg.
- Norway pledged an additional \$50 million towards following up the Johannesburg commitments, and the United Kingdom announced it was doubling its assistance to Africa to £1 billion a year and raising its overall assistance for all countries by 50 per cent.
- The European Union announced that it would increase its development assistance by more than 22 billion euros in the years to 2006 and by more than 9 billion euros annually from 2006 onwards.
- Canada announced that, as of 1 January 2003, it would eliminate tariffs and quotas on almost all products from the least developed countries, and that by 2010, it would double development assistance.
- Japan announced that it would provide at least 250 billion yen (about \$2.02 billion) in education assistance over a five-year period and emergency food aid amounting to \$30 million to save children in southern Africa from famine. It would also provide training in environment-related areas to 5,000 people from overseas over a five-year period.
- Ireland announced that it was allocating nearly 8 million euros for emergency humanitarian needs in Africa.



The Way Forward

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said, at the end of the Summit, "It is on the ground that we will have to test how really successful we are. But we have started off well. Johannesburg is a beginning... If we maintain the momentum, and we all keep pressure on the stakeholders with ability and capacity, and we play our role, I think this Conference would have made a major contribution."

Most implementation efforts will take place at the local, national and regional levels, with Governments bearing the primary responsibility. The Summit called on all countries to take immediate steps to formulate national strategies for sustainable development, and to begin implementation efforts by 2005, with international cooperation supporting the special needs of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries. It recommended that Governments immediately enact and enforce "clear and effective" laws that support sustainable development, develop and strengthen the necessary infrastructure, and promote public participation in implementation.

At the international level, the Summit called upon all major global institutions, such as the United Nations system, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the Global Environment Facility, to contribute to the implementation process. But the main responsibility for monitoring and reviewing progress in carrying out the Johannesburg decisions falls to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

The Summit called for a strengthened Commission to play a larger role in promoting implementation, including by facilitating partnership initiatives and the sharing of best practices. Meeting annually and negotiating every second year, the Commission has been charged with establishing indicators that will help determine the state of conditions around the world and will be the basis for discussions on how to overcome obstacles to implementation. The Summit also recognized that the Commission, with its dialogue between Governments and major groups, would be an appropriate venue to promote corporate responsibility and accountability.



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