



## Governments Meet to Assess Progress Since Johannesburg Summit

### Focus on Action Needed to Reach Targets for Water, Sanitation, Slums

(New York, 14 April 2004) — More than 60 Ministers will be among the hundreds of Government delegates who will meet at the United Nations over the next two weeks to assess how the world has fared since the Johannesburg Summit in its efforts to implement goals for sustainable development.

To be held from 14 to 30 April 2004, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development's Twelfth Session (CSD-12) is the first substantive review of progress since the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002. It aims to critically review what action has been taken towards meeting the targets agreed at the Summit, which include and expand upon the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"There is no time to lose to make sure these goals become a reality. We see ourselves as playing a 'watchdog' role to see how far we have come, where we may be falling short and what our priorities should be to get the process back on track," said H.E. Børge Brende, Norwegian Minister of Environment, and Chair of the Commission session.

The Commission will focus its review this year and policy response next year on three of the world's most pressing problems: water, sanitation and human settlements. Progress in each of these areas will be assessed, highlighting obstacles and constraints to meeting the agreed goals. These include halving by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

#### PROGRESS REPORT: HOW IS THE WORLD FARING?

Reports issued by the United Nations Secretary-General in preparation for the Commission session show that, in the short time since the World Summit, there have been mixed results in terms of progress towards meeting the commitments on sustainable development.

"Some regions are making good progress and are on track to reach the targets while others are falling far behind," said Mr. José Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, whose office prepared the reports. "We need to look closely at what has been achieved to date and assess where we need to significantly increase our efforts," he continued. Findings include the following:

- **Improving access to safe water and sanitation**

During the 1990s, improved drinking water supply and sanitation reached an additional one billion people in developing countries, roughly one-sixth of the world's population.

Major deficits remain in rural areas, where three out of five people still lack access to improved sanitation and 30 per cent lack access to an improved drinking water source.

Deaths from diarrhoeal diseases have declined by 60 per cent over the past 20 years; still, they remain a leading killer in developing countries, claiming 1.8 million lives, mostly children, in 2002.

In Africa, guinea worm disease has been almost eradicated through improved water and hygiene initiatives, public awareness campaigns, and improved monitoring. Reported cases dropped from 3,500,000 in 1986 to 75,000 in 2000, a decline of 98 per cent.

To achieve the MDG targets by 2015, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs estimates that \$30 billion could be needed annually in the next eleven years to provide safe drinking water and improved sanitation to an additional 1.6 billion people and 2 billion people, respectively.



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- **Improving the lives of slum dwellers**

Almost one-third of the world's urban population, or more than 900 million people, are estimated to live in slums. Without concerted action now, the number of slum dwellers could swell to 1.4 billion by 2020.

Even by meeting the target of significantly improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by that year, this will only affect less than 10 per cent of the projected slum population.

East Asia has been especially successful in reducing slums, thanks to high economic growth, poverty reduction policies, targeted slum upgrading, and shelter programmes.

North Africa and parts of Latin America have also undertaken major slum upgrading, with regularization of land titles increasingly seen as essential to promote infrastructure investment and facilitate slum dwellers' access to credit for home improvements.

Some countries in Central America have managed to expand the stock of low-cost housing in step with demand, significantly slowing the expansion of slums.

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

A key aim of the Commission session will be to drive forward partnership initiatives involving Governments, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies and the private sector. As part of the Johannesburg Summit process, more than 200 partnerships, with over \$235 million in resources, were launched. At CSD-12, a "Partnerships Fair" will showcase innovative approaches and provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to create synergies and explore new opportunities.

Another feature of this session is the "Learning Centre" which will offer a series of capacity-building courses by well-known institutions and organizations. Among them are the universities of Harvard, Columbia, and Hokkaido (Japan), the World Bank, and the Global Environmental Facility as well as several UN entities.

## **FOCUS ON SMALL ISLANDS' CHALLENGES**

From 14 to 16 April, the CSD-12 session will be devoted to preparations for the United Nations International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Mauritius from 30 August to 3 September 2004. This Programme includes the following issues: climate change, tourism, natural disasters, wastes, marine resources, freshwater, land resources, energy, biodiversity and transport. Other emerging issues that affect small islands which are to be examined in Mauritius include: trade, HIV/AIDS, information technology, new security concerns and island cultures.

For more information on CSD-12 including the full programme, press kit and to **view webcast proceedings** of the Session visit <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd12/csd12.htm>

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UNDP, UNDP/PI and the World Bank will be hosting an issue-based webcast during CSD 12. Interviews and documentaries will be available, focusing on water, sanitation and human settlements. **For more information please go to [www.developmentvoices.net](http://www.developmentvoices.net) or E-mail: [olga.ioffe@undp.org](mailto:olga.ioffe@undp.org)**

To access the press kit on small islands "Small Islands Big Stakes" and additional information on the Mauritius conference, **visit [www.un.org/smallislands2004](http://www.un.org/smallislands2004)**

For media queries regarding sustainable development and the CSD, story ideas and interviews, please contact:

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