

WORLD SUMMIT



JOHANNESBURG

SOUTH AFRICA

26 AUGUST

TO

4 SEPTEMBER

2002

ON

SUSTAINABLE

DEVELOPMENT

“

We have tempted fate for most of the past two hundred years, fuelled by breakthroughs in science and technology and the belief that natural limits to human well-being had been conquered. Today we know better, and have begun to transform our societies, albeit haltingly. With some honourable exceptions, our efforts to change course are too few and too little. The question now is whether they are also too late. In Johannesburg, we have a chance to catch up. Together, we can and must write a new and more hopeful chapter in natural – and human – history.

”

– United Nations Secretary-General
Kofi Annan

The World Summit on Sustainable Development

is bringing together world leaders, citizen activists and business representatives to work on an agenda for ensuring that the Earth can sustain a decent life for all its inhabitants, present and future. New efforts are needed because the present model of development has brought privilege and prosperity to some 20 per cent of humanity but left millions in poverty, while exacting a heavy price by degrading the planet and depleting its resources.

- ⊕ A third of the world's people live on an income of less than two dollars a day.
- ⊕ Use of fossil fuels is rising rapidly.
- ⊕ Patterns of production and consumption continue to eat up natural resources faster than they can be replenished.
- ⊕ Three quarters of the world's fisheries are fished to their sustainable limits or beyond.
- ⊕ Mountain glaciers are slowly melting away.
- ⊕ The world's forests have shrunk in the last decade by an area larger than Venezuela.

The Johannesburg Summit is calling for a different approach to development and a different type of international cooperation. This new approach will recognize that decisions taken in one part of the world may affect people in other regions, and require far-sighted actions that support progress and benefits for all.

Outcome

The Summit's main objective is to reinvigorate political commitment to sustainable development. The Summit will conclude with world leaders committing to work towards sustainable development. An agreed implementation plan will outline priority actions needed. Governments, civil society and businesses will propose partnership initiatives to address specific problems with measurable results that will improve people's lives around the world.

Millennium Development Goals

The overall agenda of the United Nations remains the Millennium Declaration – a blueprint for improving the lives of people everywhere in the twenty-first century.

The world leaders who gathered at the United Nations Millennium Summit in New York in September 2000 decided that the first 15 years of this century should be used for a major onslaught on global poverty. These world leaders set a number of targets – the Millennium Development Goals – for doing so. But they also resolved to free future generations “from the threat of living on a planet irredeemably spoilt by human activities”. The Johannesburg Summit aims to find practical ways for humanity to respond to both these challenges – to better the lives of all human beings, while protecting the environment.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg will mark the culmination of a cycle of major intergovernmental meetings aimed at helping us translate the Millennium Declaration into action.



"Floating Kids at Manila Bay"
Mr. Harmut Schwarzbach (Germany)
UNEP International Photographic Competition 1999-2000
Adult Division, Gold Prize Winner
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The World Summit on Sustainable Development aims to move from commitments to action. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has identified five specific areas where concrete results are both essential and achievable. By concentrating on these five areas, the Summit could produce an ambitious but achievable programme of practical steps to improve the lives of all people while protecting the global environment. As stated by the Secretary-General, "These are five areas in which progress would offer all human beings a chance of achieving prosperity that will not only last their own lifetime, but can be enjoyed by their children and grandchildren too."

WATER AND SANITATION

More than one billion people are without safe drinking water. Twice that number lack adequate sanitation. And more than 3 million people die every year from diseases caused by unsafe water. Without swift and decisive action, by 2025 as much as two thirds of the world's population may be living in countries that face serious water shortages.

ENERGY

Energy is essential for development. Yet two billion people currently go without modern energy technologies, such as electricity and clean fuels, condemning them to remain in the poverty trap. People in the developed countries use far more energy per capita than those in the developing world.

HEALTH

The links between the environment and human health are powerful. Toxic chemicals and other hazardous materials are basic elements of development. More than one billion people breathe unhealthy air, and three million people die each year from air pollution – two thirds of them poor people, mostly women and children, who suffer from indoor pollution caused by burning wood and dung. Tropical diseases such as malaria and African guinea worm are closely linked with polluted water sources and poor sanitation.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Land degradation affects perhaps as much as two thirds of the world's agricultural land. As a result, agricultural productivity is declining sharply, while the number of mouths to feed continues to grow. Nowhere are strategies for sustainable agricultural and rural development more important than in Africa, where nearly 200 million people – 28 per cent of the population – are chronically hungry. Indeed, today – for the first time in a decade – several countries in southern Africa face a risk of outright famine over the coming months.

BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate – as much as a thousand times what it would be without the impact of human activity. Half of the world's tropical rainforests and mangroves have already been lost. About 75 per cent of marine fisheries have been fished to capacity, and 70 per cent of coral reefs are endangered.



"Artificial Nature"
Miriam Koebler (Germany)
UNEP International Photographic Competition 1999-2000
Junior Division, Gold Prize Winner
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