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## **With a Sense of Urgency, Johannesburg Summit Sets an Action Agenda**

Johannesburg, 3 September—In the face of growing poverty and increasing environmental degradation, the World Summit has succeeded in generating a sense of urgency, commitments for action, and partnerships to achieve measurable results, according to Johannesburg Summit Secretary-General Nitin Desai.

The Summit is expected to adopt the ten-chapter Plan of Implementation, aimed at detailing the actions needed to fight poverty and protect the environment, at its final session tomorrow. The document was negotiated in meetings held in New York, Bali, and finally Johannesburg.

By any standard, participation and interest in the Summit has been high. The 104 Heads of State and Government that took part in the Summit were joined by more than 21,000 people, including more than 9,000 delegates, 8,000 NGOs and 4,000 members of the press.

As a result of the Summit, governments agreed on a series of commitments in five priority areas that were backed up by specific government announcements on programmes, and by partnership initiatives. More than 220 partnerships, representing \$235 million in resources, were identified during the Summit process to complement the government commitments, and many more were announced outside of the formal Summit proceedings

For example, Desai said, for water and sanitation, countries agreed to commit themselves to halve the proportion of people who lack clean water and proper sanitation by 2015. These commitments were backed up by a United States announcement of an investment of \$970 million in water projects over the next three years, and a European Union announcement to engage in partnerships to meet the new goals, primarily in Africa and Central Asia. The UN received 21 other partnership initiatives in this area with at least \$20 million in extra resources.

In energy, Desai said countries committed themselves to expanding access to the two billion people that do not have access to modern energy services. In addition, he added that while countries did not agree on a target for phasing in renewable energy, they did commit to green energy and the phase out of subsidies for types of energy that are not consistent with sustainable development. And to bolster these commitments, a group of nine major electric companies signed agreements to undertake sustainable energy project in developing countries. In addition, the EU announced a \$700 million partnership initiative on energy and the US announced investments of up to \$43 million for energy in 2003.

On health issues, in addition to actions to fight HIV/AIDS and reduce water borne diseases, and the health risks due to pollution, countries agreed to phase out, by 2020, the use and production of chemicals that harm human health and the environment.

Proposals for the Global Environment Facility to fund implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification have already been adopted, and will have a major impact on improving agricultural practices in the drylands. The United States said it would invest \$90 million in 2003 for sustainable agriculture and 17 partnership submissions to the UN contained at least \$2 million in additional resources.

There were many commitments made to protect biodiversity and improve ecosystem management, Desai said. These include commitments to reduce biodiversity loss by 2010; to restore fisheries to their maximum sustainable yields by 2015; to establish a representative network of marine protected areas by 2012; and to improve developing countries' access to environmentally-sound alternatives to ozone depleting chemicals by 2010. These commitments are supported by 32 partnership initiatives submitted to the UN, with \$100 million in additional resources, and a US announcement of \$53 million for forest management in 2002-2005.

“It’s impossible to know just how many resources the Summit has mobilized,” Desai said, “but we know they are substantial. Furthermore, many of the new resources will attract additional resources that will greatly enhance our efforts to take sustainable development to the next level, where it will benefit more people and protect more of our environment.”

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