



UNITED NATIONS

# JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT 2002



WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT | JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA | 26 AUGUST–4 SEPTEMBER 2002

## UN Secretary-General Calls for Change at Summit

Johannesburg, 2 September—Calling the present model of development “flawed for many,” United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he hoped the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg would mark the opening of a new chapter of responsibility, partnerships and implementation.

The Secretary-General delivered his remarks at the opening meeting of more than 100 world leaders who have come to Johannesburg to participate in a major global undertaking to improve living standards while protecting the environment.

For the last week, government delegates have negotiated a Plan of Implementation, now complete, that sets forth commitments, some to be implemented by partnerships of governments, NGOs and the private sector. In particular, governments have committed themselves to take action to reduce the number of people who lack access to clean water, proper sanitation and modern energy services such as electricity, to promote a healthy environment and reduce the incidence of disease, to increase agricultural productivity, and to protect the world’s biodiversity and ecosystems.

“Let us face the uncomfortable truth,” Mr. Annan said. “The model of development we are accustomed to has been fruitful for the few, but flawed for the many. A path to prosperity that ravages the environment and leaves a majority of humankind behind in squalor will soon prove to be a dead-end road for everyone.”

Urging action and implementation toward sustainable development, Mr. Annan said action starts with governments, and that the richest countries must lead the way. “They have the wealth. They have the technology. And they contribute disproportionately to global environmental problems,” he stated.

But he said governments cannot do the job alone, and civil society groups have a critical role to play, along with commercial enterprises. “We are not asking corporations to do something different from their normal business; we are asking them to do their normal business differently.”

South Africa President Thabo Mbeki said in opening the high-level segment, ““I am certain that the billions of people of the world expect a very clear and unambiguous answer to the question of whether we are ready and able to respond to the pressing challenges of sustainable development.”

Several European leaders announced that they would increase their assistance to developing countries. United Kingdom Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that his country would double its assistance to Africa and raise its overall assistance by 50 per cent. French President Jacques Chirac said assistance should be increased to 0.7 per cent of its gross national product in 10 years. German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder said Germany would contribute 500 million euros to promote cooperation on renewable energies.

Costa Rican President Dr. Abel Pacheco de la Espriella told the Summit that Costa Rica will not allow open gold mining, the exploitation of oil, and the destruction of primary forest and the misuse of water resources. Namibian President Dr. Sam Nujoma said his country was seriously implementing the Convention to Combat Desertification by providing a safety net to farmers and rural peasants.

**Media Contacts for the Johannesburg Summit:**

Klomjit Chandrapanya, tel. (27 11) 508-0371, cell 083-296-2428; or Pragati Pascale, tel: (27 11) 508-0923, cell 083-296-2393

E-mail: [mediainfo@un.org](mailto:mediainfo@un.org); Website: [www.johannesburgsummit.org](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org)