



UNITED NATIONS

# JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT 2002

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

Press Release

## SECRETARY-GENERAL OUTLINES VISION FOR BUILDING SECURE FUTURE IN REPORT FOR WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(20 December 2001, New York) —The global economic growth that propelled many economies during the 1990's did not promote sustainable development, or the kind of development that encompasses economic growth, social development, and environmental protection, according to a new report issued by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan today.

The report explains that, although the economic statistics for the 1990's were impressive overall, with a flourishing world trade resulting in exports amounting to more than \$6 trillion in 2000, and where even developing countries as a group saw the gross domestic product increase by 4.3 percent, the numbers masked the difficulties faced by many regions, notably Africa.

And while some progress has been made to protect the environment, the report found that “the state of the world's environment is still fragile and the conservation measures are far from satisfactory.” It added, “In most parts of the developing world there has been, at best, limited progress in reducing poverty.”

The Secretary-General's report will serve as one of the key factual documents for the negotiations for next year's World Summit on Sustainable Development that will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa.

The report offers a critical assessment of progress towards the objectives of Agenda 21, the landmark plan of action on sustainable development adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The report affirms that Agenda 21, which will be the basis for commitments for action made at the Johannesburg Summit, remains a powerful, long-term vision for the future.

However, the Secretary-General's report also states that, “despite initiatives by governments, international organizations, business, civil society groups and individuals to achieve sustainable development, progress towards the goals established at Rio has been slower than anticipated, and in some respects conditions are worse than they were ten years ago.”

According to the report, the gap in implementation of sustainable development is especially visible in four areas:

- The current approach to development remains fragmented and piecemeal and does not integrate the economic, social and environmental concerns that are vital to sustainable development.
- Unsustainable patterns of consumption and production continue to overburden the world's natural life support systems.
- Policy approaches to finance, investment, technology and resource development are not coordinated or coherent, and are driven by short-term considerations rather than a long-term interest in sustainability.
- Financial resources for sustainable development remain insufficient, with official development aid (ODA) actually declining since 1992, and with flows of private investment highly volatile and focused on a small number of countries.

The report focuses on the challenge of translating Agenda 21 into practical steps, concentrating on key areas where faster implementation is required and where it will have the greatest impact in promoting sustainable development.

### **Ten-Point Plan for Action**

Looking forward to a Summit that produces action and initiatives rather than rhetoric, the Secretary-General's report includes a comprehensive set of principles for countries, business leaders, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to consider as they work towards developing the Johannesburg agenda. Stressing that sustainable development must benefit the poor, who often live in areas facing major ecological pressures, the report supports:

- **Making globalization work** for sustainable development through measures such as better coordinated macroeconomic policy management, removal of trade distorting subsidies and improved access to markets for developing countries.
- **Eradicating poverty and improving livelihoods** in rural areas through sustainable agriculture and rural self-help development programmes, and in urban areas through economic opportunities, social programmes, and meeting urban environmental challenges such as urban air quality, waste management and transport.
- Changing unsustainable patterns of **consumption and production** by, among other measures, a four-fold increase in resource efficiency in developed countries in the next 20-30 years.
- Promoting **health** through efforts to provide clean and affordable water and to improve indoor air quality and advance food and animal husbandry.
- Providing access to **energy and increasing energy efficiency** through more renewable and energy efficient technologies and changing unsustainable energy consumption patterns.
- Improving the regime for management of **ecosystems and biodiversity** through implementation of programmes, development of more effective legal protections and better management of land, fisheries and forests.
- Improving the management and use of **freshwater** resources through measures such as river basin and watershed management and improved management of shared water resources.
- Mobilizing **financial resources** and the transfer of environmentally-sound technologies for sustain-

able development, particularly through increasing both the amount and the effectiveness of official development assistance (ODA) and foreign investment.

- **Sustainable development for Africa.** The nations of Africa have encountered formidable barriers to sustainable development, including health crises, declining levels of development assistance, and extremely low levels of foreign private investment. Key areas in which initiatives can promote sustainable development in Africa, including measures to extend the benefits of globalization to the region, are also identified.
- Strengthening international **governance** for sustainable development.

### **Johannesburg Summit Preparations Advanced**

This report by the Secretary-General is a critical step in the preparatory process now underway for next year's World Summit on Sustainable Development. Upcoming preparatory meetings for the Summit, including one from January 28 to February 8 in New York, will incorporate the report's findings and principles into the Summit agenda, through an inclusive multi-stakeholder process.

"The Secretary-General's report is essential to our understanding of how best to move the sustainable development agenda forward," said Nitin Desai, Secretary-General of the Johannesburg Summit. "It will also prove invaluable to governments and other major groups working to implement Agenda 21 in their own regions, nations, and communities."

### **About the Johannesburg Summit**

Johannesburg Summit 2002—the World Summit on Sustainable Development—will bring together tens of thousands of participants, including heads of State and Government, national delegates and leaders from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses and other major groups from 26 August to 4 September 2002, to address the challenges of sustainable development. For the full text of the Secretary-General's report and for additional information about the Summit, see the official website for the Summit, [www.johannesburgsummit.org](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org).

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