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Press Release

New Support for Result-Oriented Partnerships as Third Round of Johannesburg Summit Negotiations Concludes

New York, 5 April -- Proposals to launch action-oriented partnership initiatives at the World Summit on Sustainable Development have gained significant support and momentum during the third round of preparatory meetings for the Summit, which ended today after two weeks of talks. The partnership initiatives, between governments, the private sector and citizen groups, are now seen as a major part of the outcome of the Summit that can lead to tangible results in fighting poverty and improving living standards while preserving natural ecosystems and resources for future generations.

The Summit, which will be one of the largest gatherings of world leaders ever held, will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September. The Summit is expected to provide the impetus for specific actions that will comprise a major departure from business as usual, towards a new approach that simultaneously promotes economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

"Countries at the Financing for Development conference in Monterrey committed themselves to almost \$12 billion a year in new resources for development," Johannesburg Summit Secretary-General Nitin Desai stated at a press conference today. He added, "If we can come up with a good programme of action, we can get money for new initiatives on such challenges as safe drinking water and energy."

It is estimated that close to a third of the world's people live on less than two dollars a day and lack access to clean water, sanitation and electricity. One of the major goals of the Summit is to meet the needs of these people in an environmentally friendly manner.

Desai called the partnership initiatives "a major innovation" that, along with a solid action programme, could spark a dramatic increase in efforts to carry out sustainable development projects and which, by including a wide range of stakeholders, could vastly improve the quality of those efforts.

"The partnerships can go a long way in raising the resources and expertise that we need to meet our goals," Desai said, but he cautioned that "the partnership initiatives are not substitutes for government action or government responsibilities."

The process of negotiations on the action programme has been challenging, according to Dr. Emil Salim of Indonesia, Chairman of the Summit's Preparatory Committee. He said governments were still engaged in determining which proposals are realistic, and added, "What I want is a programme of action that is deliverable." The negotiated text, he said, would likely be completed during the next preparatory meeting in Bali, Indonesia, to be held at the ministerial level from 27 May to 7 June.

In addition to the negotiated action programme, at the Bali meeting governments will hammer out a political declaration that will be endorsed by the heads of State and Government that attend the Summit in Johannesburg.

Note to Media: Press accreditation forms and instructions for the Johannesburg Summit and Bali preparatory meeting, as well as hotel information, can now be found on the Summit website, www.johannesburgsummit.org, under Media Info.

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