



# JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT 2002



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

Press Release

## Turning Pledges from Monterrey into Action at Johannesburg: Summit Negotiations to Hammer Out Action Plan

25 March, New York — Turning the new commitments made at Monterrey to fight poverty into result-oriented initiatives will be the focus of the latest round of negotiations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, beginning today and running through 5 April.

The results of the Monterrey conference on financing for development provide a boost for the Summit, which will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, this August. Building on a new spirit of north-south cooperation, governments, along with partners from business, citizen groups and other major players in society, will seek to marshal resources to carry out realistic and practical initiatives to promote sustainable development.

In Monterrey, leaders from the European Union and the United States promised to increase resources to fight poverty, a major objective of the Johannesburg Summit, while developing countries committed themselves to mobilize domestic funds for development, and to use resources more efficiently and effectively.

Based on broad agreement among representatives of governments, businesses and citizen groups that the Summit must lead to actual result-oriented initiatives, the new round of negotiations for the Summit will aim at reaching a consensus on exactly what needs to be done to put sustainable development into practice – to promote economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

Much is at stake at the Summit. In Johannesburg, the international community will determine how far it will commit itself to promoting economic growth in a globalized world, while fighting problems such as poverty, environmental degradation, diseases such as AIDS, and unemployment.

“If we think ahead and act now,” Johannesburg Summit Secretary-General Nitin Desai said, “we can change from business as usual to a new way of conducting political business, so that everyone—including future generations—can benefit.” He called Johannesburg “an historic opportunity to forge a non-military alliance to secure a safer, more secure and just world.”

But to achieve progress, Desai said that world leaders must demonstrate the political will to move forward, and there must be practical measures on the table that can be implemented through partnerships.

The negotiations at this preparatory meeting, PrepCom III, are expected to be challenging. While there is a consensus that Agenda 21, the blueprint for sustainable development adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit, remains a valid long-term vision, implementation has been sluggish and the participants maintain widely varying positions on how to move forward.

There are many seemingly competing interests. Poorer countries, where 1.2 billion people live on less than one dollar a day, want the Summit to focus on fighting poverty. Small island developing States are concerned that present production and consumption patterns are contributing to global warming and rising sea levels, which threaten their existence. Environmentalists are seeking action to protect and preserve the world’s ecosystems. Others want to focus on health, social development, economic growth and human rights. Some want stronger international action and others look to greater domestic responsibility.

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After this PrepCom, there will be one more preparatory meeting at the ministerial level in Bali, Indonesia, from 27 May to 7 June, where participants will consider a political declaration to be endorsed by heads of State and Government in Johannesburg.

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