



World Summit on Sustainable Development

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The Johannesburg Commitment on Sustainable Development

From our origins to the future

1. We, the Heads of State and Government assembled at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 4 September 2002, declare our commitment to build a humane and caring global society in pursuit of the goal of human dignity for all.
2. We affirm our commitment to the achievement of sustainable development.
3. As representatives of the world's peoples, we assume a joint responsibility to advance and strength the three inseparable pillars of the protection of the environment and social and economic development at the local, national, regional and global levels.
4. From the African continent, the cradle of humanity, we declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to future generations.
5. Meeting in the great African city of Johannesburg, which bears testimony to how industrial activity can change the environment in a matter of decades, we recall the great social and economic divides we have seen.
6. This is a mirror of our global existence. If we do nothing, we risk the entrenchment of a form of global apartheid. Unless we act in a manner that fundamentally changes their lives, the poor of the world may lose confidence in the democratic systems to which we are committed, seeing their representatives as nothing more than sounding brass or tinkling cymbals.
7. We pledge to implement a global sustainable development programme that gives absolute priority to bridging the deep fault lines that divide human society into the rich and the poor.

From the Rio Principles to the Johannesburg Commitment on Sustainable Development

8. Ten years ago at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, we agreed that the protection of the environment and social and economic development are the three inseparable pillars of sustainable development. To achieve such development, we adopted the global programme Agenda 21.

9. Between Rio and Johannesburg, the world's nations have met in several major conferences under the auspices of the United Nations. The outcomes of those conferences have provided important inputs into the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

10. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, we have introduced new conventions and protocols to implement Agenda 21.

11. We agree that no individual and no nation should be denied the opportunity to benefit from development.

12. We also commit ourselves to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and related international agreements concluded at the major United Nations conferences held since 1992.

13. We note the relevance of the challenges posed in "The Earth Charter".

14. We collectively commit ourselves to address the urgent challenges of sustainable development agreed here in Johannesburg.

The challenges we face

15. The most pressing challenges of our time remain poverty, underdevelopment, environmental degradation, and social and economic inequalities within and among countries.

16. We recognize that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, protecting and managing the natural resource base for the sustenance of life and social and economic development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.

17. The ever-increasing gap between the developed and developing worlds poses a major threat to global prosperity, security and stability.

18. We share a collective sense that we need to change how we govern ourselves as humans on this planet.

19. We acknowledge that the goals we set ourselves at the Rio Earth Summit have not been met.

20. We are also deeply concerned that progress towards achieving sustainable development has been slower than anticipated.

21. As we collectively face the challenges of the new century, the World Summit on Sustainable Development has provided a platform both to review our progress and to shift our focus towards implementation.

The Johannesburg Commitment on Sustainable Development

22. The Johannesburg Commitment on Sustainable Development is the product of distinct and comprehensive processes that comprised intergovernmental negotiations, multi-stakeholder dialogues and partnership announcements. The World Summit on Sustainable Development has produced the coherent and integrated Johannesburg Commitment on Sustainable Development.

23. In adopting the Johannesburg Commitment, we reaffirm our commitment to uphold the Rio Principles and fully implement Agenda 21, all of which constitute a central part of our global agreement.

24. We recognize that democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and freedoms, and the achievement of peace and security are essential for the full achievement of sustainable development. Together, these objectives are indivisible and mutually reinforcing.

25. The Johannesburg Commitment on Sustainable Development reaffirms that despite our diversity a constructive partnership for change is possible.

26. We respect cultural diversity and different value systems, as well as the promotion of the interests of indigenous peoples.

27. We reaffirm that indigenous people and local communities are important for the sustenance of biological diversity and the preservation of indigenous knowledge systems, and must participate in and benefit from the implementation of the Johannesburg Commitment.

28. We reaffirm the continuing relevance of the principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

29. We welcome the focus of the Johannesburg Commitment on the basic requirements of human dignity, access to clean water and sanitation, energy, health care, food security and biodiversity. At the same time, we acknowledge the central importance of technology, education and training and employment creation.

30. We accept the reality that global society has the means and is endowed with the resources to address the challenges of sustainable development confronting all humanity.

31. We recognize the need for capacity-building as well as adequate resource and technology transfers to end poverty and underdevelopment.

32. We commit ourselves to work towards the achievement of the time-bound socio-economic and environmental targets we have agreed.

33. In this regard, to contribute to the achievement of our development goals and targets, we agree to make determined efforts to speedily achieve the internationally agreed upon targets for official development assistance.

34. We recognize the critically important role of foreign direct investment in making resources available for the economic growth and development of the developing countries.

35. We welcome and support the emergence of stronger regional groupings and alliances, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, to promote

regional cooperation, improve international cooperation and promote sustainable development.

36. We will continue to pay special attention to the development needs of the small island developing States and the least developed countries.

37. We also recognize that the debilitating debt burden carried by the least developing countries in particular and the developing countries as a whole, as well as middle-income countries, constitutes a major obstacle to sustainable development.

38. We agree that achieving food security for all human beings is a vital component part of the struggle to eradicate poverty and enhance human dignity. We are therefore concerned that not enough has been done to create conditions for the development of sustainable agricultural systems in poor countries.

39. We agree that an equitable, comprehensive, rule-based and predictable multilateral trading system is an essential means of implementing the Johannesburg Commitment.

40. We agree that water is essential for life. It is the key resource for good health, irrigating crops, providing hydropower and protecting ecosystems. Adequate supplies of water and sanitation, given rapid rates of urbanization and the needs of the rural poor, are therefore central to the achievement of the objective of sustainable development.

41. We reaffirm the Rio Principle that human beings are entitled to healthy and productive lives in harmony with nature. We are therefore concerned that as a result of poverty, underdevelopment, inadequate shelter, adverse environmental conditions, the unavailability of affordable medicines and vaccines and weak health infrastructures, billions of people continue to be exposed to avoidable illnesses and suffer early death particularly from communicable diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and a variety of childhood illnesses.

42. We accept that various energy uses lead to such adverse environmental consequences as desertification, acidification, air pollution and climate change. We therefore commit ourselves to implementing all existing international agreements relating to these matters, as well as to continuing the search for a global long-term commitment to address climate change. In this regard, we recognize the special concerns of small island States.

43. We commit ourselves to address the energy deficit affecting the developing countries.

44. We agree to protect and restore the integrity of our planet's ecological system, with special emphasis on preserving biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain all life on earth, as well as addressing the process of desertification. The significant reduction in the rate of current biodiversity loss at the national and global levels is a priority to achieve sustainable livelihoods for all.

45. We are committed to the reduction of the economic, social and environmental impact of natural disasters by strengthening international cooperation, deploying sound technologies and further developing early warning systems.

46. Sustainable development requires a long-term perspective and broad-based participation in policy formulation, decision-making and implementation at all

levels. As Governments, we will continue to work for stable partnerships with the private sector, labour, civil society and all major groups, respecting the independent and important roles of these social partners.

47. We welcome the announcement of a diverse range of new partnership agreements and activities, involving all relevant stakeholders, which form part of the Johannesburg Commitment.

48. We recognize that the process of globalization is accompanied by the emergence of leading private sector corporations, which have a responsibility to contribute to the evolution of equitable and sustainable communities and societies, even as they pursue their legitimate activities.

49. We therefore agree that there is a need for the private sector to operate within a transparent and stable regulatory environment to reinforce its corporate responsibility and social contribution.

50. Accordingly, we agree that the United Nations General Assembly should pursue the matter of corporate responsibility and the social contribution of the private sector.

51. We undertake to strengthen and improve governance at the local level for the effective implementation of Agenda 21, the millennium development goals and the Johannesburg Commitment.

52. We recognize the central place of women in human society and their key role in promoting sustainable development. We agree that women's emancipation and gender equality should be integrated in all activities encompassed within Agenda 21, the millennium development goals and the Johannesburg Commitment.

53. Recognizing the importance of building human solidarity, we urge the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among all the world's peoples and civilizations, irrespective of race, disabilities, religion, language, culture and tradition.

54. We respect human diversity and recognize it as a cause for celebration.

55. We reaffirm our commitment to opposing racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination and intolerance.

56. We affirm that armed conflict and warfare are inherently inimical to sustainable development.

57. We agree to combat terrorism, organized crime and corruption, singly and collectively.

58. We reaffirm our opposition to foreign occupation, and assert the right of all peoples to sovereignty and the control of their natural resources.

59. We oppose the denial of food to any people in need for the achievement of political objectives.

60. We further reaffirm the positions contained in the Millennium Declaration regarding the management of United Nations economic sanctions.

Multilateralism is the future

61. To achieve our goals of sustainable development, we need a democratic system of global governance, with enhanced and accountable international and multilateral institutions.

62. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as the strengthening of multilateralism. We support the leadership role of the United Nations as the most universal and representative organization in the world, which is best placed to promote sustainable development.

63. We further commit ourselves to monitor progress towards the achievement of our sustainable development goals and objectives at regular intervals.

64. We stress the need for systematic monitoring of the implementation of Agenda 21, the millennium development goals and the Johannesburg Commitment on Sustainable Development.

Making it happen!

65. We call on the United Nations General Assembly, as the world's foremost multilateral forum, to institute a follow-up mechanism to facilitate, evaluate and monitor the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in accordance with the Johannesburg Commitment on Sustainable Development.

66. We are in agreement that this must be an inclusive process, involving all the major groups which have participated in the historic World Summit on Sustainable Development.

67. We commit ourselves to acting at all the levels that are required to save our planet, promote human development and achieve universal prosperity and peace.

68. We fully endorse the Johannesburg Commitment on Sustainable Development and resolve to implement all its elements.

69. From the African continent, the cradle of humankind, we declare to the peoples of the world that we are determined to ensure that our collective hope for sustainable development is realized.
