EARTH SUMMIT

The Johannesburg Declaration

AFP, Johannesburg

Following are extracts from the political declaration approved by world leaders at the Earth Summit on Wednesday:

We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2-4 September 2002, reaffirm our

commitment to sustainable development. We commit ourselves to build a human, equitable and caring global society cognisant of the need for human dignity for all.

Recognising that humankind is at a crossroad, we have united in a common resolve to make a determined effort to respond positively to the need to produce a practical and visible plan that should bring about poverty eradication and human development...

Thirty years ago, in Stockholm, we agreed on the urgent need to respond to the problem of environmental deterioration. 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, social and economic development are fundamental to sustainable development, based on the Rio

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

The deep fault line that divides human society between the rich and the poor and the everincreasing gap between the developed and developing worlds pose a major threat to global prosperity, security and stability...

The global environment continues to suffer. Loss of biodiversity continues, fish stocks continue to be depleted, desertification claims more and more fertile land, the adverse effects of climate change are already evident, natural disasters are more frequent and more devastating and developing countries more vulnerable, and air, water and marine pollution continue to rob millions of a decent life...

Globalisation has added a new dimension to these challenges. The rapid integration of markets, mobility of capital and significant increases in investments flows around the world have opened new challenges and opportunities for the pursuit of sustainable development. But the benefits and costs of globalisation are unevenly distributed, with developing countries facing special difficulties in meeting this challenge..

We risk the entrenchment of these global disparities and unless we act in a manner that fundamentally changes their lives, the poor of the world may lose confidence in their representatives and democratic systems to which we remain committed, seeing their representatives as nothing more than sounding brass or tinkling cymbals..

We reaffirm our pledge to place particular focus on, and give priority attention to, the fight against the worldwide conditions that pose severe threats to the sustainable development of our people... (including) foreign occupation, armed conflicts... terrorism... (and) chronic diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS.

We welcome the Johannesburg Summit focus on the indivisibility of human dignity and are resolved through decisions on targets, timetables and partnerships to speedily increase access to basic requirements such as clean water, sanitation, energy, health care, food security and the protection of biodiversity. At the same time, we will work together to assist one another to have access to financial resources, benefit from the opening of markets, ensure capacity building, use modern technology to bring about development, and make sure that there is technology transfer, human resource development, education and training to banish forever underdevelopment...

We are committed to ensure that women's empowerment and emancipation and gender equality are integrated in all activities encompassed within Agenda 21 (the Rio Summit's action plan), the (UN) Millennium (Summit's) development goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementa-

(...) to contribute to the achievement of our development goals and targets, we agree to make determined efforts towards the internationally agreed levels of Official Development Assistance...

We agree that in pursuit of their legitimate activities the private sector, both large and small companies, have a duty to contribute to the evolution of equitable and sustainable communities and societies.

We agree that there is a need for private sector corporations to enforce corporate accountability. This should take place within a transparent and stable regulatory environment...

Multilateralism is the future... To achieve our goals of sustainable development, we need more effective, democratic and accountable international and multilateral institutions...

We reaffirm our commitment to the principles and purposes of the UN Charter 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 organisation in the world, which is best placed to promote sustainable development...

We further commit ourselves to monitor progress at regular intervals towards the achievement

of our sustainable development goals and objectives... From the African continent, the Cradle of Humankind, we solemnly pledge to the peoples of the world, and the generations that will surely inherit this earth, that we are determined to ensure that our collective hope for sustainable development is realised...

Summit waffle may spark green awareness

By any reasonable standard, the political outcome of the Earth Summit for curing the planet's worst problems was a triumph of style over substance -but there were still a few nuggets of gold in the dross, writes Richard Ingham of AFP from Johannesburg



Environmentalists, who left the morning session to protest against an action plan for the future of the planet, pinned placards reading "Betrayed" in several languages on Wednesday on an art action called "Hear Our Voice", an installation of sculpture and sound, a few metres away from convention centre hosting the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

environment, the world's 189 states loudly declared their concern at the dark clouds overshadowing our future and issued a voluminous programme to tackle those problems.

Sprawling over tens of thousands of words and 65 pages, the bible vows action on 163 issues of astonishing diversity, some of them instant triggers for political friction -- and not a single goal is binding

The topics include trade, farm subsidies, development aid, climate change, marine pollution and soil erosion, women's access to health, providing clean water, electricity and sewerage to the poor, protecting biodiversity, averting warfare and terrorism, outlawing child labour, and encouraging public-private initiatives on sustainable development

Many environmentalists derided the document as a technocrats' charter, where with rare exceptions, glittering hopes slowly drowned in a grey fudge of weasel-words.

"Delegates, can you look at yourself in the mirror tomorrow?" asked WWF. "What have you done for the

Even the leaders, who signed up to the compro-

mise, generally admitted it lacked ambition. But they argued it was the best deal available, given a chronically overloaded agenda and the need to

accommodate rival national interests. French President Jacques Chirac -- who on Monday had dramatically declared mankind's house was "burning down" -- admitted on Tuesday the blue-

print might have "limited range" but insisted it represented a step forward. European Environment Commissioner Margot

N the biggest yet conference on poverty and the Wallstroem said it was wrong to paint too dark a picture, saying the goals to halve the number of people living without water and sanitation by 2015 and combat

biodiversity loss by 2010, were "extremely important". And, she said, the summit had kept sustainable development in the centre of the political arena, and the Plan of Implementation could be used by campaigners as a prod to help make governments honour

heir promises

"You cannot say that from now on the whole sustainable development issue is marginalised, it is there and we have a document to work on," she said.

Another benefit of the summit was at the grassroots level -- of charity workers, financiers, community officials and companies meeting and building the contacts and cooperation which lead to innumerable projects rarely mentioned in the media.

One small example: two groups, one in Zimbabwe and the other in South Africa, which have been working separately, in ignorance of each other, on bold initiatives to grow oilseed trees whose fruit can be harvested and turned into diesel oil and soap.

By accidentally meeting at the summit, the teams are now poised to work together, exchanging skills and experience

British campaigner Andy Atkins said that green awareness would be spurred by summit failure, drawing attention to environmental and developmental problems arouind the world.

"Even if it is seen to fail, at least that will make everybody much, much more aware than they were two weeks ago that we have very big problems as a planet and as a people. We should not go for that option. But there is nothing like a summit to get public attention.'

Plan of Implementation

AFP, Johannesburg

Following are the main points from the Plan of Implementation adopted by world leaders at the Earth Summit on Wednesday.

Water and sewerage: Halve, by 2015, the number of people living without access to clean drinking water and decent sanitation.

Energy: Take action to help the poor gain access to electricity and "substantially increase" the global share of renewable energy; but no percentage or deadline are set.

Wildlife loss: Work to achieve "a significant reduction" in the planet's loss of biodiversity by 2010.

Aid: Says countries need a substantial boost in development help and urges rich countries, but without setting a deadline, to make "concrete efforts" to give 0.7 percent of their national income in development aid, a target first set in 1970 and which has been met by only five countries.

Fisheries: Restore depleted fish stocks by 2015 at the latest, "on an urgent basis and where possible" Chemicals: Ensure that by 2020, chemicals are made and used

in ways that minimise harm to the environment and human health;

promote sound management of hazardous waste. Precautionary approach: Reaffirms that a state has a duty to protect the environment from a new product, even if there is no conclusive evidence that it could damage the ecosystem.

Good governance: Encourages developing countries to establish "transparency and accountability" in its financial system, but does not tie this to a boost in aid for them, and says democratic institutions, the rule of law, the fight against gender inequality and an encouraging environment for investment are essential

Poverty eradication: Calls for the creation of a World Solidarity Fund to eradicate extreme poverty, whose modalities would be determined by the UN General Assembly, and to which contribu-

tions would be voluntary. **Trade:** Restates the willingness of rich countries to negotiate an agreement by January 1 2005 within the World Trade Organisation for "substantial improvements in market access" for Third World food products.

Subsidies: Reaffirms rich countries' position that they are willing to launch WTO talks on eventual phase-out of all export subsidies as well as "substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic sup-

Globalisation: Praises globalisation for encouraging trade and growth and raising living standards, but acknowledges that there are "serious challenges, including serious financial crises, insecurity, poverty, exclusion and inequality" and that developing and former Soviet economies "face special difficulties".

Private capital: Encourages "public-private partnerships" in which private capital, skills and technology can team up with governments and non-government organisations in sustainable devel-

Responsibilities of rich: Stands by the notion of "common but differentiated responsibilities," which means that rich countries should take up more of the financial burden than the poor for achieving the plan's goals.

Consumption and production: Says "fundamental changes" are need in the way societies produce and consume and says developed countries should take the lead to ensure that the cycle is

Climate change: Says "change in the Earth's climate and its adverse effects are a common concern of humankind." In a facesaving compromise for the United States, it says that states that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol on global warming "strongly urge" states that have not ratified to do so "in a timely manner."