

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 Development...

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 ever-increasing 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 Implementation...

(...) 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.

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 contributions 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 support".

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 development.

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 sustainable.

Climate change: Says "change in the Earth's climate and its adverse effects are a common concern of humankind." In a face-saving 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."