

WSSD/PrepComs

African Ministerial Statement*

- Excerpts -

FROM RIO DE JANEIRO TO JOHANNESBURG

1. We, Ministers of African States, met in Nairobi, Kenya from 17 to 18 October, 2001, in the context of the African regional preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 11 September 2002. The aim of the meeting was to assess the progress made, the constraints encountered, areas where further efforts are needed and the new challenges confronting Africa within the framework of the implementation of Agenda 21. In doing so, we took into consideration the concerns of our continent's industry, and civil society, including NGOs, Trade Unions and youth.
2. We are convinced that the WSSD should reinvigorate the commitment of the international community to the goals of sustainable development and give effect to a new vision based on a concrete programme of action for the implementation of Agenda 21 in the next decade. To this effect, we reaffirm that poverty eradication is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development and reiterate our commitment to address all three components of sustainable development – namely economic growth and development, social development and environmental protection, as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars – in a balanced way, in conformity with the fundamental principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.
3. ...
4. We recall that success in meeting the objectives of development and poverty eradication depends, *inter alia*, on good governance both within each country and at the international level, as well as on transparency in financial, monetary and trading systems. We are also committed to an open and equitable rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multi-lateral trading and financial system.
5. We note with concern the limited progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, which stems from the lack of fulfilment by the international community of its commitments made in Rio with regard to the means of implementation, thereby hampering the achievement of sustainable development in developing countries, particularly in Africa. The implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States has similarly been hampered. We reconfirm that the Johannesburg Summit should not renegotiate the outcomes of Rio but should result in a concrete programme of action with time-bound measures and well-specified sources of funding to implement them.
6. ...

* Adopted at the African Preparatory Conference. The full text of the Statement is available for download at http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/prep_process/africa.html. See also article on page 43.

7. We emphasize that poverty, underdevelopment, marginalization, social exclusion and economic disparities are closely associated with the legacy of colonialism as well as the continued exploitation of African resources. We recognize the negative economic, social and cultural consequence thereof, that have contributed significantly to the underdevelopment of developing countries and, in particular, of Africa. We urge the Summit to reaffirm the right to development and to adopt concrete mechanisms to free the entire human race from want.
8. We recognize the important role played by civil society and the need to ensure their full participation in achieving sustainable development.
9. ...
10. We affirm our commitment to partnership for the implementation of the WSSD outcomes, the mobilization of major groups and appropriately capacitating these groups to fruitfully engage in the implementation of the sustainable development agenda, perhaps in the form of the Johannesburg Programme of Action.
11. We invite governments to work together with major groups to prepare concrete inputs to a programme of action.
12. We propose that the theme "People, planet, prosperity" underpins our focus on the three pillars of sustainable development, and it is therefore proposed as the slogan for the Johannesburg Summit.
13. We believe that the New African Initiative (NAI) should be a framework for sustainable development in Africa. ...

ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS SINCE RIO

14. We acknowledge that since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, there has been increased awareness of the fragility of the African environment and its natural resources. Many countries have established and strengthened policy, legislative, and regulatory frameworks, including the ratification of regional and global environmental conventions, and the formulation and implementation of various environmental action plans.
15. We note that life expectancy in many African countries remains low despite some improvements since Rio. However, in some countries life expectancy has deteriorated. Whilst the overall literacy rate remains low, access to education has increased, especially for females, who have come to play a crucial role and are increasingly acting as agents for change for sustainable development. However, only 58 per cent of the continent's population has access to safe water.
16. ...
17. We further note that the level of food insecurity in Africa has reached a critical level, as the number of undernourished presently exceeds 200 million people, and 500 million hectares of land have been affected by soil degradation, including as

much as 65 per cent of agricultural land. These unfavourable developments compound the problem of poverty in Africa, as the agricultural sector includes 70 per cent of the poor and represents 40 per cent of regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP), thereby making the full implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification ... an urgent priority in the post-Johannesburg era.

18. We observe that most African economies have declined both in qualitative and quantitative terms. The rate of GDP growth in at least half of the region has stayed below 2 per cent per annum. Africa, unlike other regions of the world, continues to receive extremely low foreign private capital investment, declining levels of official development assistance while facing an increasing debt burden.
19. We also note that wars, civil conflicts and the proliferation of small arms, and the continued presence of landmines, have hampered the efforts of many African countries to achieve sustainable development.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

(Note by the Editor: only the titles of the Priority Areas are listed here)

...	
Eradication of poverty	Coastal and marine environments
Industrial development	Biodiversity
Agriculture and food security	Forests
Human development	Mineral resources
Youth	Climate change and atmosphere
Trade and market access	Disaster prevention
Financing for sustainable development	Waste
Investment	Environmentally sound management of chemical products
Debt relief	Fresh water and sanitation
Increased official development assistance (ODA)	Energy
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	Support for regional cooperation and economic integration
Infrastructure and sustainable human settlement	Governance
Science and Technology	Stakeholders participation
Desertification and land degradation	...

Johannesburg Vision

76. We call on the Summit to agree on what we may call the "Johannesburg Vision": a practical expression of the political commitments made by the international community in the Rio principles and Agenda 21, and the Millennium Declaration. These commitments envisage a global consensus on the eradication of poverty and global inequality. The World Summit on Sustainable Development provides a unique platform for the realization of this vision and must adopt a results-orientated, Johannesburg Programme of Action with clear time frames and specific targets. For the effective achievement of this programme, concrete global partnerships between governments on the one hand, and between governments, business and civil society on the other hand, are required. We believe that, through these outcomes, the Summit will provide practical meaning for the achievement of the hopes of the African Century.

