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AFRICAN PREPARATORY CONFERENCE
FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
Nairobi, 15-18 October 2001

DRAFT REPORT ON THE AFRICAN PREPARATORY CONFERENCE
FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ministerial Segment

I. OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The Ministerial Segment of the African Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in Nairobi, on 17 and 18 October 2001.
2. The segment was officially opened and Chaired by Mr. S.K. Walubita, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zambia and Chair of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), on 16 October 2001. He welcomed the participants to the meeting and expressed appreciation to the Technical Segment for the excellent work achieved on the draft ministerial statement. He said that participants were gathered to assess progress in the implementation of the Rio Summit and Agenda 21 and to identify areas where further efforts were needed to address challenges on the road from Rio.
3. He recalled that the Rio Declaration had proclaimed the need to ensure equity for sustainable development and Agenda 21 had provided for environment and development programmes with policy measures for sustainable development. The hope had been that Agenda 21 would assist in halting underdevelopment in Africa and encourage burden sharing between developed and developing countries, transfer of technology and an environment conducive to investment. He said that the task ahead was to undertake an assessment of achievements and failures in order to chart the course to the Johannesburg Summit and beyond. There was a need to focus on the new African vision through the New Africa Initiative adopted at the OAU Summit. The New Africa Initiative had its roots within Africa and the full backing of African leaders as well as the European Union. He urged participants to ensure that Africa's needs were reflected on the agenda of the WSSD.

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4. In his statement, Mr. C.D.K. Arap Kirui, the Assistant Minister of Finance, Kenya, said that almost ten years after the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) it was time to take stock of achievements and constraints, strategies and ways forward, for the future implementation of Agenda 21. He said that there was a wide array of challenges in Africa, some of which had preoccupied Governments and made the environment a low priority. One of the major challenges was to integrate environmental concerns into development. The time was ripe for Africa, he said, to put forward a united front for the common good and sustainable development. He said that Kenya supported the view that WSSD should call for a strengthening of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the existing Regional Office for Africa (ROA) against the backdrop of wide ranging environmental threats.

5. Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP, welcomed the participants and said that it was an honour to host such an important African ministerial conference in preparation for WSSD. He said that it was important that the summit should take place on the African continent and the main task would be to fight poverty. There had been a broad-based preparation process, needing integration on a regional and subregional level, of economic, social and environmental capacity. Ten years after the Earth Summit it was time to assess developments with regard to the three economic, social and environmental pillars. He said that the most important topic in the globalized world was sustainable development.

6. Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Assistant Secretary-General and Director, Regional Office for Africa, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), said that he had been asked by Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, the UNDP Administrator, to convey to the meeting that UNDP would always continue to work for “globalization with a human face”, as the United Nations Secretary-General had said. With offices in every country, UNDP considered itself to be the operating arm of Agenda 21, and had always endeavoured to provide a catalytic effect across all sectors and borders. During the past year, two-thirds of all its activities were capacity-building actions. It would lend support to South Africa to host the Summit, and would reinforce the key strategies needed and the means to put them into practice.

7. Mr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, expressed appreciation for the input of the members of the Expanded Joint Secretariat in preparing for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. Commending the efforts of those who have done much to reverse environmental damage on the continent and improve its prospects, he pointed out the global community’s failure to heed the warnings from the Rio summit. He identified six subject areas that would need to be addressed: control of population growth, climate change, water, desertification, soil degradation and biotechnology. In closing, he called on the developed world to share with Africa its biotechnology and medication for HIV/AIDS at affordable prices.

8. Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary General, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), said in his statement that it was important to ensure that the preparations for Johannesburg were built on the aspirations, commitment and ideas of all African nations and that the summit should result in a strong sense of collective ownership of the outcome. He said that despite some progress in sustainable development many fundamental concerns remained and the Summit must achieve tangible results in making sustainable development operational; dealing with the challenges of globalization; finding innovative means of funding, technology transfer and capacity-building and for the management and conservation of natural resources.

9. Mr. XXXX, representing the African Development Bank, said that environmental development and the fight against poverty should mutually sustain each other. For that reason the Bank had focused on such areas as an integrated water policy and an integrated poverty reduction strategy. It had also stressed capacity building and had given assistance to the implementation of conventions. A major development crisis was that of HIV/AIDS, the control of which would require huge investment. He said that local, national, regional and global environment issues were inextricably linked, and therefore developing countries must become fully fledged partners in a globalizing world. The African Development Bank reiterated its dedication to sustainable development and to the livelihoods of people in Africa.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. Attendance

6.10. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following countries:
A full list of participants is shown in annex I.

[TO BE COMPLETED]

7.11 Representatives of the following international and intergovernmental organizations also participated: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),

[TO BE COMPLETED]

B. Election of the Bureau

8.12 The following Bureau was elected:

Chair: Hon. Keli Walubita (Zambia)

Members: Baskouda J. (Cameroon)
Gilbert Bleu-Laine (Côte d'Ivoire)
Tarek El Kouny (Egypt)
Katana Ngala (Kenya)
Imeh Okopido (Nigeria)
Mohammed Valli Moosa (South Africa)
Zouleir Allagui (Tunisia)

Rapporteur: Laurent Nkusi (Rwanda)

C. Adoption of the Agenda

13. The following agenda was adopted:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Organization matters
 - (a) Attendance
 - (b) Election of the Bureau
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda
3. Overview of Africa WSSD preparatory process
4. Presentation of reports of key preparatory meetings
5. Review of recommendations of the Technical Segment
6. Informal discussion and consultations

7. Review and discussions on the draft WSSD African Ministerial Statement
9. Strategic discussion, way forward and plan of action
10. Adoption of the final documents
11. Closing ceremony

III. OVERVIEW OF AFRICA WSSD PREPARATORY PROCESS

- 9.14. Mr. V. Mohamed Moosa, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, South Africa, gave an overview of the preparatory process towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development and described the strategy that could be followed and its main components. He outlined what he called “the legacy of Rio”, mentioning those elements that militated against reversing the trend towards global inequality, and delineated the factors that would determine “the legacy of Johannesburg”. He spelled out South Africa’s blueprint for poverty reduction, and outlined what, in his view, the World Summit needed to achieve in order to facilitate sustainable economic development.
- 10.15. Advocating the implementation of social development programmes, he drew attention to society’s commitments for protecting the environment. He reiterated the importance of peace, democracy, security and stability as key factors in the promotion of sustainable development, and described the various issues that needed to be addressed in further preparations for the Johannesburg meeting. His closing remarks included a call for a global partnership to address inequality and poverty and for the integration of trade, finance and investment issues into a sustainable development agenda that would focus on “People, the Planet and Prosperity.”
- 11.16. Several representatives mentioned the terrorist acts that has been perpetrated in the United States of America in September 2001. All agreed that terrorism was a global concern and that peace and security were prerequisites for sustainable development, which in turn was the best answer to terrorism.
- 12.17. One representative indicated that more should be done to take UNEP recommendations to the grassroots level.
- 13.18. Several representatives talked of the need for Africa to take responsibility for the mobilization of financial resources.
- 14.19. A number of representatives supported the call for a campaign of awareness raising for the people of Africa to ensure that they were not marginalized and felt included in the WSSD. It was suggested that the Joint Expanded Secretariat and the United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organization could help implement such an action.
- 15.20. Many representatives emphasized the need to focus on the problem of desertification, which they considered to be a major concern for the WSSD to deal with and said that the issue of poverty should be linked to it. One representative called for existing viable structures to combat desertification to be strengthened. Several representatives said that the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification had been neglected when it came to funding and implementation, and agreed that its role should be defined in the fight against poverty.
- 16.21. Several representatives mentioned that the numerous meetings leading up to WSSD would be costly and proposed that some meetings be held back-to-back.
- 17.22. One representative said that there had been a lack of implementation since the Earth Summit in Rio and asked which body would be responsible for ensuring implementation.

~~18.23.~~ Another representative mentioned terrorist acts in Africa which caused great instability and asked the conference to issue a declaration regarding terrorist acts in African countries and their effects.

~~19.24.~~ The problem of bush fires in tropical Africa was also highlighted as a major problem requiring analysis in Johannesburg.

~~20.25.~~ Several representatives spoke of the need for Africa to put forward proposals with one voice at the WSSD with no discrepancy in demands.

~~21.26.~~ Mention was also made of variables other than the environment such as health, poverty, education, illness, that were linked to sustainable development.

~~22.27.~~ One representative spoke of the need to examine former commitments by the global community and see whether they had been implemented. He said that there had been a commitment to give 0.7 per cent of the total income of developed countries as aid to African countries, but this had not been honoured, with the exception of a few Scandinavian countries. He spoke of the need to have a concrete plan for debt reduction and said that developed countries must be persuaded to cut or cancel debts. This view was echoed by several representatives.

~~23.28.~~ One representative said that the problem of landmines should be addressed as an impediment to sustainable development.

~~24.29.~~ Another representative called for attention to be focused on marine and coastal environment and protection.

~~25.30.~~ Several representatives spoke of the need for capacity-building at the institutional level to prevent natural catastrophes such as droughts, earthquakes, and floods and enhance surveillance and warnings to the general population.

30. Mr. Moosa, replying to the debate, said that, in reference to peace and stability, the New African Initiative had made reference to peace and security, and had laid the necessary basis for action. Many representatives had mentioned desertification; he believed that the Convention to Combat Desertification had inadequate funding for implementation, and needed wider support, including from those African countries not suffering from desertification, as it was a global issue, that should be included in the Johannesburg programme of action. The protection of equatorial forests was similarly a global issue. He agreed concerning the importance of access to safe drinking water, which was a major cross-cutting issue, being social and economic as well as environmental. He concluded by stressing the importance of Africa speaking with a united voice.

31. In a brief intervention at the invitation of the Chair, Mr.Hama Arba Diallo, the Executive Secretary of the Convention to Combat Desertification, said that to fight rural poverty, it was necessary to fight soil degradation. He said the time had come to convince all partners that the tool for that was the Convention, which still did not have the necessary level of financing.

IV. PRESENTATION OF REPORTS OF KEY PREPARATORY MEETINGS

~~(Reports to follow.)~~

1. Industry report

32. Ms. Laurraine Lotter, Chair of the African Industry Workshop, delivered a statement to the Ministerial Segment, and Mr.Chris Buckley (South Africa) made a presentation of the Africa Industry Report.

2. Civil Society/Nongovernmental Organization Report

33. Mr....., Chair of the African Nongovernmental Forum, which had held a parallel meeting on 15 and 16 October 2001 made a presentation stating the African Civil Society Position to the Ministerial Segment.

3. Trade Unions report

34. A representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which had held a parallel meeting on 15 and 16 October 2001 made a presentation stating the Trade Union Position to the Ministerial Segment.

4. Youth statement

35. A representative of youth attending the WSSD African NGO Forum, 15 and 16 October 2001, made a statement on behalf of the youth.

5. Statement by the United Nations Secretariat for the International strategy for Disaster Reduction

36. A representative of the United Nations Secretariat for the International strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) made a statement on behalf of her organization on the prevention and mitigation of natural hazards.

[TO BE COMPLETED]