

AFRICAN MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

ADVANCED COPY

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. We believe that holding the Summit in Africa will provide a unique opportunity for a genuine international partnership to achieve the development goals enunciated in the Millennium Declaration and in the outcome of United Nations conferences and summits held since Rio, as well as those regional initiatives that Africa has adopted. We affirm that the achievement of those development goals is contingent on an enabling international environment premised on the legitimate development priorities of developing countries, that addresses the fundamental challenges of financing for development, globalization, and market access in the sectors of export of interest to them, thus reaching a comprehensive and lasting solution to their crippling external debt problems.
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 fulfillment 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. We believe that a system of monitoring contributes to the effectiveness of implementation. We therefore call upon the World Summit on Sustainable Development to establish a follow-up mechanism as an integral component of all the elements of its programme of action in terms of resource flow and implementation, and to create the system required to make that possible.
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. We note with appreciation the role of the business sector and civil society, including the youth and labour segments in pursuit of the sustainable development agenda in line with our commitment to multi-stakeholder dialogue. In this regard we acknowledge their significant contributions to the preparatory process in the African region.
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. The NAI, which is a pledge by African leaders, is based on a common vision and a firm and shared conviction, that they have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to place their countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustained growth and development, and at the same time, to participate actively in the world economy and body politic. This programme is anchored on a determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalising world.

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 continents’ population have access to safe water.

16. We note the increased incidence of natural disasters in Africa, that have resulted in significant human, social and economic losses, thereby posing a major obstacle to the African continent's efforts to achieve sustainable development, especially in view of the region's insufficient capacities to predict, monitor, handle, and mitigate natural disasters.

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 in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD) 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 and 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

Eradication of poverty

20. We observe that while Africa is an indispensable resource base that has been serving all humanity for many centuries, poverty in Africa stands in stark contrast to the prosperity of the developed world. The process of globalization has further marginalized Africa and this has contributed to the increasing incidence of poverty in the continent. It is in this regard that the New African Initiative calls for the reversal of this abnormal situation by changing the

relationship that underpins it. Achieving the poverty reduction goals of the Millennium Declaration is a joint responsibility of the North and the South. It requires the adoption of a comprehensive approach that addresses key priority areas, including: the removal of obstacles preventing the access of exports from developing countries to the markets of developed countries, debt reduction/cancellation, a review of the conditionalities of the Bretton Woods Institutions, promoting industrial growth especially through small and medium- sized enterprises, ensuring, particularly in rural areas, access to sources of energy at affordable prices, micro-credit and savings, promoting micro-finance, enhancing access to basic health services, sustainable rural development, agricultural development and food security, greater access to safe water and sanitation, reducing the vulnerability of our people to natural disasters and environmental risks, as well as access to and improved standards of education at all levels.

21. We acknowledge the abundant skills and potential that exists in Africa for the development and realization of the crafts, art and endogenous technology industry. Development of this industry will contribute to the fight against poverty. Financial, technical and organizational support could also enable this sector to make a notable contribution to sustainable development in the continent.
22. Moreover, and within the framework of the world attachment to international solidarity, the acceleration of the setting up of the necessary mechanisms of the World Solidarity Fund, whose main aim is to contribute to the eradication of poverty and to the promotion of the most under-privileged areas in the world, more particularly in the poorest countries, is highly recommended.

Industrial development

23. We note with concern that national economies have a narrow industrial base and that the performance of the manufacturing sector over the last decade has shown a decline when compared with the previous decade. In general, Africa is sliding into a “de-industrialization” phase at the time when it needs to expand its manufacturing basis.
24. We acknowledge the fact that African countries have considerable resources, and in all fields: mineral and oil resources, agricultural resources, fishery resources, forestry resources, but unfortunately, these resources are not processed in a beneficial way in Africa. This constitutes a major lost opportunity for Africa. Consequently it is urgently necessary to develop and foster industry, to make it possible to add value to our resources before they are exported. SMEs/SMIs have helped many emerging and developed countries to industrialize and to develop. Today there is an emergence of SMEs/SMIs to address this, but the lack of finance, supervision and organization prevents them from playing the real role which

should fall to them to initiate sustainable development in Africa and therefore institutional support must be established and sustained.

25. We recognize the contribution of industrial development to poverty eradication and efficient natural resource management. We call upon the international community to:

- Assist in enhancing the industrial productivity and competitiveness of African industries through a combination of appropriate financing and technological support services;
- Promote the development of micro, small and medium-size enterprises with a special focus on agro-industry as provider of livelihood for rural communities;
- Support multilateral and regional organizations in their programmes to support industrial development in Africa.

Agriculture and food security

26. We recognize that the African continent is endowed with sufficient natural resources for food self-sufficiency. However, taking into account current levels of food production and the projected population growth in Africa, it is apparent that those levels are insufficient and will not allow the achievement of the goal of halving the number of under-nourished people by 2015, as enunciated at the World Food Summit. It is imperative, therefore, to reverse the current trends of land degradation and dwindling water resources for irrigation, as well as to improve the development and dissemination of agricultural technologies within African countries, and the transfer to them of applied agricultural research and technology at affordable prices.

27. We emphasize the minimum need to double agricultural production in Africa within five years. In this respect, we resolve to increase national financing for the agricultural sector, and call upon the international financial institutions and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to substantially increase the finance provided to the agricultural sector and for the full implementation of the UNCCD and other relevant conventions.

28. While we recognize the need to enhance the availability and accessibility to food by poor households, we emphasize that Africa should not be a dumping ground for subsidized food products from developed countries, nor for genetically modified food. In this connection, we call upon the developed countries to remove their agricultural subsidies and to apply the precautionary principle.

Human development

29. We acknowledge that Africa is currently straining under the burden of communicable diseases that are disabling our economies. Endemic, parasitic and infectious diseases have retarded the quality and productivity of Africa's human resources. Many have roots in the environmental conditions under which people live, in poor environmental hygiene, inadequate access to resources, such as water and sanitation, and inadequate nutrition.
30. We recognize that the growing threat of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is no longer merely a health issue, but a serious threat to sustainable development. HIV / AIDS should be incorporated in overall poverty reduction/ eradication, sustainable development and economic growth strategies. At the same time, Africa is faced with an emerging epidemic of infectious diseases and diseases of lifestyle.
31. We call for a holistic approach to health that addresses its multiple determinants (social, environmental, economic). Efforts in Africa to ensure greater access to affordable, primary and secondary health care and medical technology, improve environmental and social conditions that contribute to diseases, and build appropriate capacity in local communities, are of paramount importance. To this end, we call upon the developed world to offer greater assistance in making both preventative and curative health care available to Africa. We underscore that, in the context of the Agreement on Trade Related Intellectual Property (TRIPS), African countries should be allowed to take all necessary measures to provide access to medicine at affordable prices and to promote public health and nutrition.
32. We emphasize the importance of empowering women in social and economic development by reinforcing their capacity in the domains of education and training, by developing revenue generating activities through facilitating access to credit, and by ensuring their participation in the political and economic life of African countries.
33. We believe that the empowerment of women and improving their health status should be prioritised, because they have key roles in all societies with respect to healthy living conditions.

– Youth

34. We recognize that participation by young people in sustainable development is the foundation of the success of this strategy to combat poverty for the future of Africa. Young people make up half of the population of Africa; education, training, health protection, professional employment, communication, etc. are insufficient in this category of dynamic actors. There is therefore a need in the framework of sustainable human development to ensure strengthening the skills of young people in all areas.
35. We emphasize that education and information dissemination are major priorities in ensuring improvements in the quality of life, the eradication of poverty and placing the African continent on a path of sustainable development and growth. Human resources development and capacity building are crucial elements of sustainable development and it is important to develop clear policies in relation to training, education and research in the region. It is essential to (a) upgrade the quality of education to be able to respond to challenges of the market ; (b) strengthen capacity-building as a critical component of human resource development; (c) launch literacy campaign to cut the percentage of illiteracy to 50 per cent of

the current figures, with major emphasis on women; (d) strengthen and, if needed, establish well-equipped and strongly-supported specialized research and technology development institutes; and (e) promote the role of women in strategies for investing in people. In this regard, we call upon the international community to assist African countries in their need to respond to new and longer term challenges by making education and training relevant to national needs in the context of a globalizing world. Emphasis must be placed on improving the access of girls to education and training, with the aim of attaining parity with boys.

Trade and market access

36. We emphasize the need for the multilateral trading system to ensure that issues of development are addressed adequately and decisively. For the global economy to remain stable, there must be resource flows to developing countries, and World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements can and should promote this through the following :

- Contributing to structural change in the location of production globally to enable developing countries, including Least Developed Countries (LDC), to diversify their production and export in existing and potential areas of competitive advantage;
- Leveling the playing field by addressing concerns and imbalances in existing WTO Agreements;
- Operationalizing, as a matter of priority, the special and differential treatment provisions in favour of developing countries including providing assistance to developing countries to build their required capacities for the implementation of their commitments under various WTO Agreements.
- Ensuring the universality of the WTO, as well as its transparent, non-discriminatory, equitable and predictable conduct of proceedings, and ensuring the full participation of developing countries in decision making;

- Expediting the completion of the mandated negotiations on agriculture and services, without adding new issues on the agenda of multilateral negotiations especially non-trade issues

37. We call on developed countries to open their markets and eliminate subsidies on agriculture, textiles and other export products of interest to African countries so as to enable them to reach the Millennium Declaration poverty-reduction target by 2015.

Financing for sustainable development

38. We note with concern that a major limitation in the implementation of Agenda 21 has been the lack of the necessary means of implementation particularly financial commitments made in Rio. We therefore emphasize the importance of mobilizing in a coherent manner all available sources, including new and additional resources, for the financing of development, inter alia domestic resources, foreign direct investment, debt relief and official development assistance. We note that the international conference on financing for development, to be held in Mexico, in March 2002, will, among other items, consider in an integrated manner all sources of financing for sustainable development.

Investment

39. We stress the need for increased foreign direct investment in African economies as an essential component of a sustainable long-term approach to poverty eradication. Developed countries should recognize African economic reforms towards macro-economic stability and put adequate measures in place to mobilize more financial resources, especially private capital for African economies. Sustained efforts should be made to assist African countries to create the necessary conditions for foreign direct investment, especially in infrastructure and production capacity.

40. We call upon the international community to support African countries in their efforts to enhance domestic investment through measures such as (a) increasing revenue mobilization, (b) reducing capital flight, (c) encouraging increased inflows of remittances from Africans living abroad, (d) improving public efficiency to increase national saving and investment.

Debt relief

41. We call for existing debt relief measures for African countries to be evaluated appropriately, taking into account the special needs of Africa, especially those countries that have high debt burdens, including Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs). The cancellation of debt for the poorest countries should be considered to allow them to concentrate their resources on poverty reduction programmes. While the enhanced HIPC initiative will provide relief, it is

imperative that African countries be assisted to find a lasting exit from their external debt situations.

42. Furthermore, developed countries need to commit themselves to providing more meaningful market access to products of HIPCs to increase their export earnings and diversify their production and export bases and provide development assistance on highly concessional terms, in order to keep the debt situation sustainable and safeguard the benefits of HIPC relief. We call on the international community to support the African initiative that seeks to secure a negotiated agreement, to provide further debt relief for countries participating in the initiative .

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Increased official development assistance (ODA)

43. We urge that ODA to Africa should be increased and that developed countries should adhere to the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of Gross National Product (GNP). ODA should be untied and supportive of recipient countries objectives to enable them to take ownership of their development programmes. The New African Initiative calls for the reform of ODA to ensure that ODA flows are more effectively utilized.

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

44. We recognize the importance of the GEF in financing sustainable development. In this connection, we call for an improvement in its operational procedures and project implementation, so as to make it more responsive to the needs of development in Africa, including financing the implementation of UNCCD other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). We call for a substantial increase in the resources of GEF in the context of the on-going Third Replenishment Negotiations so as to enable it to allocate a greater share of its resources to Africa. We recognize the need to amend the GEF instrument and to review the issue of incremental cost and environmental issues of global concern during its Second Assembly, to be held in China, in October 2002.

Infrastructure and sustainable human settlement

45. We affirm the importance of infrastructure development for Africa's continued socio-economic growth and development. We call on the international community to assist African countries in their efforts to: improve access to and the affordability and reliability of infrastructure services;

attract investment in public transport and communication systems, ports, roads, schools and hospitals.

46. We reaffirm our commitment to implement the Habitat Agenda and the outcome of the United Nations Special Session on Human Settlements and emphasize our full support for the two global campaigns on urban governance and secure tenure. We call on the international community to mobilize the necessary resources for the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the Declaration of the 25th United Nations Special Session to achieve sustainable human settlements in Africa.

Science and Technology

47. We recognize that harnessing science and technology requires action in several areas, including adequate financing, promoting the culture of innovation and science in our societies, appropriately managing intellectual property rights to promote increased science and technology activities within African countries, whilst minimizing barriers to access to knowledge worldwide.

48. We therefore urge the international community to assist African countries in their efforts to gain access to new technologies, particularly information and communication technologies and to create conditions for the development of indigenous technologies that are important for enhancing economic development.

Desertification and land degradation

49. We recognise that the majority of people in Africa directly depend on land resources for their livelihoods. To varying degrees, however, there are poor land management practices and, in some countries, inappropriate land tenure systems. This leads to land degradation and non-optimal use of land. We therefore reaffirm the importance of a timely and effective implementation of the UNCCD in addressing the issue of poverty deriving from land degradation. In this regard, we invite the World Summit on Sustainable Development to acknowledge the UNCCD as a sustainable development convention and to proclaim it as a prime tool in the eradication of poverty in Africa and in other dry and arid lands.

50. Accordingly, we call for substantial and predictable financial resources to be available for its implementation. We congratulate the GEF Council for its latest decision in this respect and invite its Assembly due to meet in Beijing shortly after the WSSD, to open up the Facility to become the UNCCD financial mechanism.

Coastal and marine environments

51. We observe that coastal communities and some national economies, particularly small island developing states, are highly dependent on their coastal and marine resources. The integrity of coasts and oceans is under threat from unsustainable development and over exploitation. We note the impact of climate change on coastal zones and especially on small island developing states.

52. We call for the harmonization, coordination and compliance of regional and international laws and agreements related to the seas. We reiterate our support for the protection and development of marine and coastal environments and the revitalization of the Nairobi and Abidjan conventions as the two vital instruments for their protection, management and development in Africa. We recognise that this requires technology for monitoring levels of fish stocks, guarding against illegal fishing and supporting the efforts of developing countries in the area of capacity building. The Johannesburg Summit must incorporate the outcomes of the African process for the protection and development of the marine and coastal environment, including concrete projects, programmes, resources commitments and partnerships.

Biodiversity

53. We believe that the wealth of biological diversity, including marine biodiversity, found in the region are a major resource for Africa and most of our economies are highly dependent on this resource.

54. We note the scientific and economic opportunities attached to this source of wealth and the imperative of ensuring that these opportunities directly benefit the region. We commit ourselves to developing and implementing national legislation for the protection of the rights of local communities, farmers and breeders, and for the regulation of access to biological resources, and for bio-safety in line with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Model Law.

55. We are convinced that wetlands are areas of high agricultural, fishery and forestry productivity and that they are currently subject to considerable pressure from man, and we commit ourselves, with the support of our development partners, to rehabilitate them.

Forests

56. We welcome the establishment of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and emphasize that it should not become a forum for statements, but a vehicle for the full implementation of the International Panel on Forests (IPF)/International Forest Forum (IFF) proposal for action for the sustainable management of all types of forests, including addressing the special needs of low forest cover countries. To this effect, we call for the provision by the international community of the requisite financial resources and technology transfer to developing countries, particularly in Africa. We believe that any examination of the possibility of a legal binding instrument for forests is contingent upon the realization of the above measures. We look forward to the first Ministerial Meeting of the UNFF to be held in Costa Rica in March 2002.

57. We are convinced that bush fires contribute to the reduction of forest cover and nullify afforestation efforts. We recognize therefore the need to initiate a large-scale campaign to combat bush fires, and to do so with the support of GEF and other funding agencies.

Mineral resources.

58. We note that mining activities contribute significantly to the economic development of many economies in our continent. The benefits arising from this resource will depend on how countries in the region harmonize policies and regulations on agreed minimum levels, operational practices and information on mining, in order to assist in reducing risks, and to develop an information and capacity development framework that can also benefit small-scale miners.

Climate change and atmosphere

59. We note with concern the current impacts and potential future impacts of climate change on Africa, including the constituent small island states, particularly sea level rise and extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. We call upon the international community to finalize agreement on the Kyoto Protocol and operationalize the Climate Change Fund for developing countries, as well as the Special Fund for Least Developed Countries.

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Disaster prevention

60. We stress the need to reduce the vulnerability of our countries to natural disasters and in particular drought and floods in Africa. The World Summit should support the strengthening of Africa's institutional capacity for the assessment, prevention, preparedness and management initiatives, establishment of early warning systems, and the promotion of public involvement and information exchange. In particular, the Summit should call for the establishment of regional and subregional institutions and networks to support the above initiatives.

Waste

61. We note that poor waste management is a core contributor to environmental degradation, health hazards, over-exploitation and depletion of scarce resources. We call upon the international community to support the efforts of the African countries to put in place the required funding and capacity to effectively manage non-hazardous waste.

62. Of critical importance for Africa is the question of the management including generation, storage, transport, and transboundary-movement and disposal of hazardous waste, including radioactive waste. We call on the international community to fully implement the international and regional conventions, taking into consideration Africa's needs.

63. We call on the developed countries, in the framework of the implementation of international agreements, to take steps to counter the export of obsolete capital goods and equipment to the developing countries, to prevent Africa from becoming the Northern countries' dumping ground for these products.

Environmentally sound management of chemical products

64. In accordance with chapter 19 of Agenda 21, the Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (PIC and POPs), African countries should be assisted and supported in the management of chemical products. The strengthening of the technical, financial, institutional and juridical capacities of African countries is necessary to ensure sustainable development in the agricultural and industrial sectors which use these products and to prevent cases of poisoning (human health) and pollution and well-known nuisances.

Fresh water and sanitation

65. We observe that the majority of people in Africa still lack access to safe water and sanitation services. Consequently, morbidity and mortality due to waterborne and water-related diseases

are still very high. We emphasize that the international community should encourage cooperation among countries sharing a transboundary water resource, through the provision of financial resources and technology transfer to assist them to implement regional cooperation projects and initiatives and to develop the quality and quantity of water resources for the benefit of all riparian states, including assisting African countries in protecting the quality of water.

66. The Summit should deliver a programme of action for the achievement of the Millennium Assembly target on access to water and sanitation services, and for the support of regional shared water initiatives.

Energy

67. We note that energy plays a critical role in facilitating development. We recognize that at least 80 per cent of the people in Africa are still dependent almost exclusively on traditional sources of energy. There is a need for access to affordable energy, especially in rural areas and in sustainable industrial development.
68. We call for support for research and development, for clean energy technologies, efficiency of energy supply and usage, and affordable uptake of renewables. Furthermore, we call on the Summit to deliver a deal that promotes global access to energy for sustainable development in a form that minimises impact on air quality.
69. We strongly call on the World Summit to revitalize the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and to provide the necessary support for its effective and timely implementation.

Support for regional cooperation and economic integration

70. We strongly call on the World Summit to endorse the provision of urgent international support to the newly established African Union. We make this call in recognition of the fact that economic ties among the members of the sub-regional or regional groupings prevent disputes and tensions between them from becoming conflicts, thereby ensuring the peace and stability necessary for sustainable development.
71. We recognize that still greater policy convergence and harmonization is required if these efforts are truly to gain momentum. In this connection, we call for support for specific activities at the regional level, including cooperative projects that link two or more countries in common economic enterprise zones, common infrastructure projects, and joint tourism efforts.

Governance

72. We believe that the democratization of international governance is essential to promoting and implementing sustainable development at all levels. In this connection, we urge the Summit to reach agreement on the need for an effective governance regime for sustainable development and that the international preparatory process should examine this critical issue.
73. We recognize that peace, security and stability, are prerequisites for sustainable development in all countries and regions of the world. In that respect, the international community should provide resources and support for mechanisms to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts as developed by African states, and to satisfy the needs of refugees and displaced people and their host countries.
74. We recognize the need for an effective international environmental governance regime. We note the on-going process in this regard and expect that its outcome will lead to meeting this objective, and will ensure the effective participation of African and other developing countries. WSSD should call for a greatly strengthened UNEP with a financial base that is more sustainable and predictable.
75. We recognize that ignorance on the part of people, especially in rural areas, is at the root of environmental degradation. Consequently, we commit ourselves to increase our support to our development partners and campaigns of environmental information, education and communication.

Stakeholders participation

76. We invite the organizers of all forthcoming intergovernmental meetings held in preparation for WSSD to ensure that the agendas and organizational modalities of such meetings provide for timely and direct involvement of major groups and consideration of their views and proposals in a way that they can effectively contribute to the intergovernmental deliberations. In this connection, the conference took note of the offer by the Senegalese delegation to host a youth forum in Dakar.

Johannesburg Vision

77. 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.