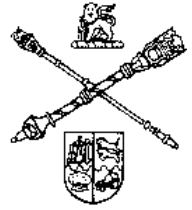




PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF
THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
*The role of Parliaments in ensuring implementation
and accountability*

Johannesburg, 29 and 30 August 2002



Toward Sustainability: Implementing Agenda 21

**Parliamentary Declaration on the occasion of the
World Summit on Sustainable Development**

*Adopted by acclamation on the occasion of the
Parliamentary Meeting organized jointly by the
Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliament of South Africa
(Johannesburg, 29-30 August 2002)*

Preamble

While the rich twenty percent of the world's population consume eighty percent of the world's resources at an unsustainable rate, some three billion people must struggle to survive on less than two dollars a day, without adequate access to education and health care, food, water, sanitation and shelter, decent employment, productive technologies, clean energy sources, and ultimately a liveable environment.

Poverty must be acknowledged as a serious threat to humanity. Not knowing where the next meal will come from, the fact that one's children and their children will be condemned to a life of abject poverty, starvation, illiteracy and ill health is inhumane, unjust and unacceptable.

In spite of progress on many fronts, the ten-year old *Agenda 21* remains for the most part unfulfilled: oceans are more polluted and fish stocks depleted; forests are being cut faster than they can regenerate themselves; some agricultural lands are overexploited; land degradation and desertification continue unabated; natural disasters are occurring with greater frequency and intensity; global warming and climate change threaten to undermine livelihoods, political stability, and the quality of life for entire populations. The cost, human and environmental, of all this damage is incalculable and, increasingly, irreversible.

To correct the dangerous course on which the world is now set, it is more than ever incumbent on us, the representatives of the legislative branch of government, to work together toward the common objective of sustainability - social, economic, and environmental. Setting aside our individual differences, and in the name of the people we represent, we declare our commitment to the following principles and means of action.

Principles of Implementation

We renew our commitment to the Rio Declaration, and particularly to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities inscribed therein. We likewise commit ourselves anew to the war on poverty, as declared at the Copenhagen Summit.

We reaffirm the need for governments, acting in partnership with civil society and the productive sector, to promote sustainability without abdicating their fundamental responsibilities to the disadvantaged and most vulnerable both within domestic jurisdictions and globally.

We consider that investing in the environment and in people is key to creating a more prosperous economy capable of providing for the needs of everyone on the planet today and in future generations.

We are committed to building a society based on the fundamental principles of solidarity, equality, non-discrimination and tolerance, as well as respect for all human rights. We recognise the primordial importance of education in this regard.

We recognize the necessity for all public policies in the area of sustainable development to include implementation targets and deadlines in order to force effective action and provide for measurable results.

Priority Actions

Given the key role of financing in the implementation of *Agenda 21*, we endorse the spirit of the *Monterrey Consensus* of the United Nations as a starting point for mobilizing additional resources for the developing world. With the aim of implementing that consensus to promote sustainability, we will:

- Channel a greater portion of ODA into projects that integrate the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of development, including poverty eradication, and ensure that export credit guarantees are limited to such projects;
- Promote initiatives aiming at eliminating the debt of both poor and middle income countries, including through debt for sustainable development swaps, in order to enable them to meet the *Millennium Development Goals*, and as an additional measure to increasing ODA;
- Regulate investments to protect nature and bio-diversity so as to promote sustainable livelihoods in local communities and vulnerable groups, including indigenous peoples;
- Move forward with the full implementation of the Uruguay Round of Agreements to bring about a fairer trade regime, consistent with the principles of the WTO Agreements, facilitate further trade negotiations to enhance market access for developing country exports, and ensure that respect of intellectual property rights does not impede access to life-saving drugs.

Recognizing the evolution of civil society over the last ten years, we stress the importance of partnerships between government and civil society organizations, including private business entities, as a way of further implementing sustainable development in both developed and developing countries. To this effect, we will:

- Enact the necessary guidelines and legal framework to promote such partnerships and ensure transparency, fairness, and accountability, as well as add value to national and local capacities;
- Help strengthen innovative local and workplace partnerships;
- Give our support to regional partnerships such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Noting the inter-relationship between human security and sustainable development and the fact that human security as a relative concept is perceived and experienced differently in the North and the South, we will give our greatest priority to the following human security issues in implementing the economic and social aspects of *Agenda 21*:

- Realizing the *Millennium Development Goals* by the required deadlines by, *inter alia*, giving due priority in our budgets to education for children, ensuring equal access for boys and girls, as well as life-long education, food security, access to reproductive health services, people with disabilities, safety nets for all people, and amenities such as safe water and sanitation and cleaner energy sources;
- Taking strong preventive and curative measures, based on UNAIDS guidelines and with a particular focus on young people, women and people with disabilities, to counter the HIV/AIDS pandemic, reduce its effect on human suffering and sustainable development, and meet the global targets for the year 2015;
- Similarly, taking measures to counter the increase in diseases such as malaria, TB and other epidemics that threaten the survival of communities;
- Implementing measures conducive to peace at all levels, including in the domestic sphere, and to the prevention of conflict. Reducing the worldwide annual military expenditure of \$900 billion so as to release more resources for sustainable development;
- Recognising cultural diversity and promoting the rights of cultural, linguistic and religious communities;

- Promoting human security as a universal interdependent concept that incorporates early prevention of conflicts and poverty eradication, gender equality, empowerment and protection, and which requires fair and equitable trade and a rights-based approach to human needs;
- Ensuring a shift away from a national state-centred security approach to one that places people at the centre of sustainable development and, to this end, consider the enforcement of second and third generation socio-economic rights on the same basis as first generation political and civil rights.

As members of parliament, we consider it our foremost duty to strengthen governance by reforming its institutions, including parliaments and decision-making processes to meet the imperative of sustainable development. We recognise the unique role of parliamentarians in scrutinising, monitoring and holding national governments to account in respect of the implementation of international agreements. We will work to put into place:

- New regulatory and administrative foundations to make the integrated approach of sustainable development permeate every act of government;
- National strategies for sustainable development that include a measure of decentralisation of public and private institutions for appropriate local decisions to provide a coherent policy framework and measurable targets;
- Requirements for thorough environmental and social impact assessments based on sustainable development indicators and procedures for land and coastal planning, as well as legal frameworks to adjudicate environmental disputes;
- Systems that provide access to relevant information to people and decision makers;
- Regulations to implement new and rigorous methods of green accounting in both public and private sectors;
- Democratic institutions and processes that are accountable, allow for consultation with and input from civil society, abide by the rule of law and respect fundamental human rights and human dignity.

Our Pledge

We, the members of parliament gathered in Johannesburg on the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, pledge our continued support for *Agenda 21* as the blueprint for parliamentarians working for a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable world, and to work towards ratification of multilateral environmental agreements, including the Kyoto Protocol.

We pledge to formally review in our respective parliaments the *Plan of Implementation* of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to speedily implement, through legislation, including budgetary measures, the provisions of the *Plan* that come under our purview.

We commit ourselves further to working through our world organization, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, for a more sustainable and equitable world, and to bringing a parliamentary dimension to the United Nations, the WTO, the Bretton Woods Institutions and all such multilateral organizations engaged in implementing the outcome of the Summit.