

Banff Ministerial Statement

2002

On the World Summit on Sustainable Development

We, the Environment Ministers of the eight major industrialized countries, and the European Commissioner responsible for the Environment, met in Banff, Canada, from April 12 to 14, 2002, to discuss environment and development, environment and health, and environmental governance. Our goal in Banff was to advance preparations for the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from August 26 to September 4, 2002.



Since the 1992 Rio Summit, we have witnessed a growing awareness of the need to manage the environment in a sustainable manner to promote human dignity and well-being. We commend progress in this direction at the local, national, regional and international levels, and the commitment to sustainable development shared by all levels of society and the international community. However, we also recognize that more action is required if we are to achieve the goals of sustainable development. Despite encouraging signs, the state of the environment world-wide continues to degrade. Among the causes of environmental degradation, unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, poverty, conflict and pollution require urgent attention and threaten global prosperity, stability and security.

Toward A Successful World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)

The WSSD must arrive at action-oriented results, effectively responding to the new challenges that have arisen since the Rio Summit. It should be a point of convergence for the positive outcomes achieved at the Millennium Summit in New York, World Trade Organization negotiations in Doha and the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey. The goals of the WSSD will also be advanced by a positive outcome of the World Food Summit. The WSSD must build upon the active engagement of all stakeholders. Sustainable development benefits everyone, and is a shared responsibility.

The WSSD must be about implementation, partnership and concrete action. As such, we, the Environment Ministers of the G8, are committed to continue to demonstrate leadership, and to work with the international community to advance sustainable development to further implement Agenda 21 and to make every effort to ensure the early entry into force of environmental conventions and protocols. In particular, we are determined to take the lead by strengthening our action in order to fulfill our commitments under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

We are confident that the WSSD will result in a renewed global partnership to achieve sustainable development, delivering tangible results and mobilizing action at all levels. We will work together and with other partners to develop concrete proposals on specific sectors key to sustainable development. These should include, in particular, a strategic partnership to promote sustainable water resource management, including access to safe and sanitized water, and concrete action in the field of energy and sustainable development, to reduce the number of people without access to energy supply and to increase energy efficiency and conservation and the share of renewable energy in all countries. Attention should also be given to continuing to enhance the sustainable management of forests, including action to combat illegal logging and related trade.

Environment and Development

Better integration of the environmental dimension into economic and social development policies remains a challenge and is crucial for the achievement of the internationally agreed development

goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. We are committed to work with our respective domestic and international partners to ensure that globalization promotes sustainable development for the benefit of all. We are working to develop and implement innovative approaches to overcome this challenge. In particular we recognize the pressing need to continue to improve coherence among social, trade, finance, investment, bilateral and multilateral environmental assistance and international development assistance policies. We acknowledge the important contributions of multilateral environmental agreements to advance global sustainable development. These agreements have proven to be effective tools to shape national sustainable development policies and programs, and frame concrete action at all levels. We resolve to work with our partners at all levels to enhance their effectiveness. In this regard, we stress the need for adequate resources to the third replenishment of the GEF. We underscore the contribution to poverty alleviation that is made through community-based conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

We recognize the need to coordinate the mechanisms and tools that support development, particularly official development assistance, private investment, and trade, to achieve sustainable development objectives. We welcome the innovative approach to sustainable development put forward in the New Partnership for Africa's Development by our African partners, and commit ourselves to working with them to advance its implementation.

Environment and Health

Protecting human health is a fundamental objective of environmental policies and a precondition for sustainable development. The connection between health and the quality of our environment has become a key driver of environmental protection in both developed and developing countries. We underscore the importance of working in partnership with our health colleagues to strengthen efforts toward sustainable development. There is also a growing appreciation of the linkages between environment, health and poverty. We are particularly concerned about children and other vulnerable populations, in our own countries and globally, in the face of growing environmental pressures, notably from polluted air, water and soil, and the effects of climate change. Contaminated water and inadequate sanitation cause a large proportion of ill health and disease in the developing world, leading to millions of deaths each year.

We see the WSSD as a key opportunity to mobilize concrete actions to address environmental issues that threaten human health. Progress has been made through initiatives such as the 1997 G8 Miami Declaration on Children's Environmental Health, the programs developed by the European Environment and Health Committee, and the recent meeting of Health and Environment Ministers of the Americas. We are encouraged by the convening of Health and Environment Ministers of African countries and welcome other regions in the world to follow in this direction. We particularly welcome the conventions on Prior Informed Consent and Persistent Organic Pollutants. We also note the effective steps taken by organizations such as the Arctic Council in addressing health and environment challenges for northern peoples. Collectively, we will consider further areas of collaboration such as review of, and action towards, providing safe drinking water and sanitation, and improved air quality in urban areas.

Children's environmental health is of particular concern to G8 Environment Ministers. In 2002, we have taken stock of our collective and individual actions to implement the 1997 Miami Declaration on Children's Environmental Health and reaffirm our commitment to its implementation. Recognizing that the task of protecting children's health from environmental threats is ongoing, we agree to collectively advance work on the development of children's environmental health indicators as a means for monitoring progress, in consultation with relevant multilateral organizations.

We see a clear need to further the global science base, to increase understanding of environment and health issues and to build capacity to address them at all levels and in an integrated way. We resolve to work with partners throughout the international community, and with key international

organizations, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, to develop and implement constructive approaches to meet environment, health and poverty challenges. In this regard, we call for the launch, in Johannesburg, of an international initiative to synthesize existing information on environment and human health linkages, evaluate best practices and identify barriers to action with a view to strengthening policy responses and improving capacity at all levels.

National and International Environmental Governance

Solid policy, legal, regulatory measures and measures promoting voluntary initiatives are required to enhance sustainability and improve environmental performance. Each of our countries has taken important steps in this direction, and has made gains in terms of institution building, resource efficiency, citizen involvement, and cooperation with communities of interest, notably the private sector. We note in particular the critical role that those private sector players committed to sustainable development can play through investment, technology and corporate social responsibility. We need to explore ways to create opportunities for these visionary companies and to encourage them to play an active role in recruiting a greater number of private sector entities to adhere to the principles of sustainable development. The G8 Environmental Futures Forum on Corporate Sustainability, held in March 2002, was an excellent step forward for coordinated efforts by G8 countries. We will promote proposals and ideas that encourage foreign investment to make a greater contribution to environmental protection and sustainable development. We are committed to continue to improve our respective domestic environmental governance regimes and to further engage civil society on the merits of sustainable development. We will continue to share with the international community our successes and lessons-learned on environmental governance.

We welcome the recommendations emerging from the Intergovernmental Group on International Environmental Governance, under the leadership of the United Nations Environment Programme and are committed to their early implementation. These recommendations are essential to a strengthened international environmental regime, and as such represent an important contribution to the World Summit. We underline the importance of providing UNEP with stable, predictable and adequate funding, and of strengthening its political role through universal membership of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum/Governing Council. We will continue to collaborate with the international community and the UN bodies to put in place effective instruments of international governance, including multilateral environmental governance, conducive to sustainable development so as to enhance the coordination of our respective environmental, economic and social objectives.

Conclusion

Our commitment to sustainable development remains strong, and we will pursue that commitment through further action. Local, regional, national and global environmental challenges are growing in severity and complexity, and their resolution requires leadership, innovation and investment. We look forward to the World Summit in Johannesburg as a timely occasion to galvanize the international community and make further progress towards sustainable development. It is a unique chance to contribute to poverty alleviation, promote equity, make globalization work for sustainable development and reverse the current trend in the depletion of environmental resources. We will do our part, and welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with the global community to shape a prosperous, secure and sustainable future for generations to come.