INTRODUCTION

After two years of intense preparations at the national, regional and global levels, the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) took place in Johannesburg (South Africa) from 26 August-4 September 2002, seeking to assess the implementation of the Rio Principles and Agenda 21—adopted ten years earlier in Rio de Janeiro at the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also known as the Earth Summit)—and to devise a plan for their further implementation.

Opening the WSSD, Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa and also of the Summit, said, “Ten years after the last gathering in Rio De Janeiro in 1992, the time has come to reflect anew on the state of the world. None of us cannot but be dismayed at what we see...” (see Box 1).

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EXTRACTS FROM THABO MBEKI’S OPENING ADDRESS

“This is a world in which a rich minority enjoys unprecedented levels of consumption, comfort and prosperity, while the poor majority endures daily hardship, suffering and dehumanization.”

“Out of Johannesburg and out of Africa must emerge something new that takes the world forward away from the entrenchments of global apartheid, to the realization of the goals of sustainable development.”

Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa and also of the Summit, speaking at the opening ceremony

Approximately 22,000 people attended the Johannesburg Summit, including 100 Heads of State and Government; 10,000 delegates from Member States, intergovernmental organizations, official observers, specialized agencies and associate members of regional commissions; some 8,000 representatives of major group organizations (Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous People, NGOs, Local Authorities, Workers and Trade Unions, Business and Industry, Scientific and Technological Communities and Farmers); as well as 4,000 media representatives accredited to the Summit.

Meeting over a period of ten days, the WSSD produced three main outcomes:

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (POI), negotiated among governments, which reaffirms a wide range of commitments and targets for action to achieve more effective implementation of sustainable development, including implementation of the Rio Principles, the full implementation of Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the outcomes of the major UN conferences and international agreements since 1992.

The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, in which Heads of State and Government agreed to “assume a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of
sustainable development—economic development, social development and environmental protection—at local, national, regional and global levels.”

“Type 2” outcomes, or partnerships and initiatives to implement Agenda 21 between different stakeholders such as governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and business entities. They are meant to supplement and reinforce “Type 1” outcomes, the intergovernmentally negotiated commitments agreed to in the POI and the Political Declaration. Over 220 partnerships were identified leading up to the Summit, with a combination of US$235 million in financial support, and 60 were announced during the WSSD.

As is customary at UN World Conferences and Summits, many governments, collectively or individually, announced their own initiatives or reaffirmed initiatives they had already taken. Principal among these in Johannesburg were the announcements by Russia and China that they were preparing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, and that Canada would soon put the issue before its Parliament, which means the treaty could come into force in the very near future.

The WSSD preparatory process encompassed a wide range of activities. Many Member States convened their own national preparatory arrangements, while regional meetings were held from September 2001-November 2001 in Geneva, Nairobi, Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, and Phnom Penh in an attempt to gather information on regional trends and policy findings.

At the international level, the tenth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-10) acted as the first global substantive Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting. Four PrepComs were held to determine the Summit’s agenda and negotiate its outcomes. The final preparatory meeting, PrepCom IV, was held at the ministerial level in Bali (Indonesia) from 27 May-7 June 2002.

In response to the challenge facing the WSSD of adopting an action-oriented approach to sustainable development, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in May 2002, launched the WEHAB initiative, focusing on the five thematic areas he identified as key to progress at the Summit: water, energy, health, agricultural productivity and biodiversity. At the time of the launch, negotiations among Member States on the Plan of Implementation were well advanced and contained sections addressing these issues. The WEHAB initiative aimed to provide focus and impetus to action in these five key areas by enlisting the support of the organizations of the UN system in developing framework papers and related areas of activity. Each of the five papers identified the key issues and challenges, including resource requirements; took into account the existing multilateral frameworks and agreements; and proposed a number of targeted actions and examples of related activities.

Many Member States followed the lead of the Secretary-General and prepared and launched in Johannesburg initiatives consistent with the WEHAB approach. This co-ordinated effort of the UN system enabled the WSSD to “jump-start” the follow-up and implementation process. The WEHAB issues also provided the structure around which the partnership plenaries, initiative announcements and high-level roundtables were grouped in Johannesburg (see page 11).

PrepCom IV in Bali drew upon the Chairman’s text from PrepCom III to prepare a document that aimed to emphasize the need for a global partnership to achieve the objectives of sustainable development; reconfirm the need for an integrated and strategically focused approach to the implementation of Agenda 21; and address the main challenges and opportunities faced by the international community. Although the session was supposed to conclude negotiation of the implementation plan, day and night negotiations by ministers during the last three days of the session failed to produce consensus on crucial areas of the plan, particularly trade, finance, globalization, governance and the Rio Principles.

During the three months between the last meeting of PrepCom IV in Bali and the Summit itself, it was very unclear how governments—deadlocked on over 150 paragraphs on key issues—would successfully conclude negotiations on a Plan of Implementation and Political Declaration. A meeting of the “Friends of the Chair” convened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa on 17 July 2002 in New York suggested that Johannesburg might see protracted negotiations over issues such as finance and trade, targets, renewable energy, the Rio Principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and the precautionary approach, good governance, and human rights.

Starting two days before the official opening of the WSSD, governments began negotiating these and other unresolved issues. This required establishing multiple points of negotiations that included the Main Committee, the “Vienna process,” which acted on behalf of the Main Committee, contact groups on the Means of Implementation and Governance, and flexible “bubble groups” that accommodated informal discussions on specific paragraphs. A week into negotiations it became clear that a set of issues would have to be referred to the ministerial-level meetings in order to be resolved. The South African Minister of Environment, Valli Moosa, then convened such meetings, which came to be known as the “Johannesburg Setting” for three days.

In the end, the WSSD resulted in an agreed Plan of Implementation, which, while not ground-breaking in the way that Agenda 21 established a completely new framework for the environment and development, nonetheless takes on the difficult task of translating
...There are several areas where WSSD also helped to advance a policy consensus substantially beyond what was achieved in Rio. One such area is that of sustainable consumption and production, where the Johannesburg outcome is more elaborate and more specific in terms of action and timetables than the rather general exhortation in Agenda 21. The Johannesburg plan calls for a ten-year programme on sustainable consumption. It refers to other areas, such as energy, biodiversity, and chemicals in a far more focused way than in the past.

Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of WSSD, addressing the 2nd Committee of the UN General Assembly on 30 September 2002

...political agreements into concrete actionable outcomes. Although the POI does not contain a comprehensive timetable for implementation as some had hoped for, it did add value to policy development in a number of areas that had not been adequately addressed in Agenda 21, such as energy, sanitation, corporate responsibility and accountability, and ocean fisheries (see Box 2). The Summit also provided renewed political impetus and mobilized the efforts of a wide variety of development actors.

In addition to the intergovernmental negotiations, the WSSD comprised a broad range of activities, which included seven thematic “partnership plenaries,” on issues such as health, biodiversity and regional implementation; statements by non-State entities (namely international, regional and non-governmental organizations); a three-day Summit of Heads of State and Government; a high-level roundtable; a host of side events; and a series of presentations of partnership initiatives, the Type 2 outcomes.

BACKGROUND

The WSSD took place at a time of assessment of the meaning and practice of multilateralism, and amid many calls for a “new multilateralism.” In the past, multilateral negotiations with consensus outcomes had provided a policy framework for global standard setting and a follow-up mechanism for supporting and monitoring national, regional and international implementation. During the ten years sinceUNCED and through the deliberations and reporting on Agenda 21 implementation at the annual meetings of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), doubts were increasingly expressed by governments and civil society about the effectiveness of consensusbased negotiations among Member States to move forward the sustainable development agenda, or capture and express the progress that had been made.

Over the decade since UNCED and as the process of follow-up fell short of providing the means and resources for reaching the standards and targets set, particularly in support of developing countries’ efforts, there was increasing reluctance to agree to global targets and timeframes. Some developing countries expressed scepticism about agreeing to targets and timeframes that could not be reached without additional means of implementation, yet could become the subject of future review and possible sanction. A multilateral mechanism to encourage the attainment of international standards became increasingly viewed as a tool of conditionality within a donor/recipient relationship. This development was accompanied by a growing scepticism among some parts of civil society, especially those focusing on advocacy and policy work, concerning the political will of Member States and international organizations to carry out the commitments made at global UN conferences.

Agenda 21 had been subject to a five-year review by the UN General Assembly at a Special Session held in June 1997. The President of the Special Session, Ambassador Razali Ismail (Malaysia), had underscored the need for a sober assessment and honest acknowledgment that “progress to operationalize sustainable development remains insufficient.” He had said that lack of agreement in many areas points to “the enormous difficulties of overcoming short-term and vested interests that would enable concrete commitments to specific targets and to global programmes...Since Rio we have seen a further continuation of North-South trench politics. Governments and NGOs from the developed world vigorously promote environmental protection, without shouldering the greater burden of adjustment on consumption and production patterns...Developing countries continue to emphasize their right to [economic] development, without placing sufficient stress on social equity and transparent participatory decision-making. Neither approach bodes well for the future.”

A few years later, the very difficult deliberations at the global preparatory committee meetings for the WSSD continued to raise questions in the minds of many governments and among civil society about the quality and value of the outcomes being negotiated. The fragile political consensus that was crafted in Rio in 1992 was seriously challenged by a radically changed geo-political environment, and the failure of governments, since Rio, to fully honour their commitments. But in the end—and despite very divergent policy objectives being pursued in the negotiations where in many areas consensus agreement could only be reached in very general terms—a number of action-oriented commitments of the international community were made in areas such as the new sanitation target and the restoration of ocean fish stocks.

At the same time, many Member States continued to express in their policy statements and negotiating positions the intent and capacity to do more than
what was agreed in the official document. Illustrating this, more than three dozen States, referred to by EU Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstroem as the “coalition of the willing,” unveiled an initiative to promote renewable energy, declaring they wanted to go beyond the more limited commitments of the POI. Similar initiatives and agreements in areas including water, biodiversity, and agriculture were also announced in Johannesburg by Member States and others. The status and significance of these agreements was not clear. Some viewed these commitments and initiatives as the beginnings of new forms of multilateralism, others as manifestations of its weakening.

In addition to being a Summit to combat poverty and environmental degradation, the WSSD was also held to address the “crisis of implementation” of the UNCED agreements, and was charged to agree to measures to move forward with implementation and action. “The purpose of this Summit is to tackle what has stood in the way of us making progress, and what we can do in order to get action, to get results,” said Nitin Desai, WSSD Secretary-General, on 26 August 2002.

During the preparations for the WSSD, government representatives, UN officials and NGOs had readily agreed that the ten-year record since 1992 for implementing Agenda 21 was poor. UNCED had launched a completely new framework for achieving sustainable development and had developed a detailed blueprint for making significant progress. The approach adopted for the WSSD was built on ten years of experience in the implementation of Agenda 21, which had demonstrated that much had been achieved at local levels around the world with the establishment of local Agenda 21 policies and programmes, and with the enactment of environmental legislation and follow-up at local and national levels. Yet the overall assessment was of little global progress towards sustainable development.

The follow-up to UNCED through the CSD had witnessed the development of different forms of engagement with various sectors or major groups of society, defined in Agenda 21 as business and industry, trade unions, indigenous peoples, farmers, NGOs, science and technology, women, youth, and local authorities. The preparatory process of the Summit, as well as its programme, emphasized these activities and approaches, and also built on CSD practices, including multistakeholder dialogues, panel presentations with experts, and the use of facilitators. More strikingly, it moved away from the more traditional UN pattern of a series of speeches from representatives of Member States, international organizations and NGOs, to one structured around contributions based on longer-term work commitments and engagement with the further implementation of Agenda 21.

WSSD Secretary-General Desai and his Secretariat were committed to bringing into the Summit process a broad canvas of commitments and actions, of participants and allies, new and old, and having a multiplicity of Summit outcomes more reflective of what had been happening on the ground in the ten years since UNCED. To achieve this, considerable emphasis was placed on developing partnership initiatives and on broadening the possible Summit outcomes to include what became known as “Type 2” outcomes that included as potential partners with governments and the UN system the nine major groups and others.

However, by the time the WSSD met in Johannesburg so much emphasis had been placed on partnership initiatives that some major groups, NGOs, women and indigenous peoples in particular, cautioned against this development as a potential distraction from the central role of governments and the increased power and influence they felt that this approach might accord to corporations and the private sector. Some Member States too expressed concern about the meaning and implications of this radically new departure in conducting UN business.

Some of the difficulties faced by the WSSD process in promoting the partnership initiatives were related to the newness of these approaches, some to the lack of understanding of the objectives, some to the fact that while allies of the UN, a number of the proposed partners could not be allies with each other. NGOs in particular warned of inequality within and between the “partner groups,” emphasizing the important role and responsibilities of Member States in creating enabling policy environments and investing the necessary resources in making progress on the sustainable development agenda.

As the ten-year follow-up to the path-breaking Rio Earth Summit, the WSSD created political expectations that proved impossible to entirely fulfil in a consensus-driven negotiating process among UN Member States with widely different, and sometimes conflicting, policy priorities. In the many Summit assessments, it is not surprising that many commentators cite as one of its successes that weaker outcomes had been averted, and that some backtracking from the agreements reached in Rio had been avoided. Some Summit participants and observers were disappointed by this, while others thought the political reaffirmation of the global sustainable development agenda a considerable achievement in the current geo-political climate.

**INTERGOVERNMENTAL OUTCOMES**

**Plan of Implementation**

The 170-paragraph Plan of Implementation is divided into ten principal sections: introduction; poverty erad-
ications; changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production; protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development; sustainable development in a globalizing world; health and sustainable development; sustainable development of Small Island Developing States; sustainable development for Africa and other regional initiatives; means of implementation; and institutional framework for sustainable development. The following sections of this Roundup provide an overview of how some of the most contentious issues at stake were resolved, as well as identifying a number of the significant elements that were agreed by the world’s governments as they emerged in the Plan.

Poverty Eradication

The section on poverty eradication reiterates several goals and targets established in the UN Millennium Declaration, including halving by the year 2015 the proportion of the world’s people whose income is less than US$1 a day; halving by the same year the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water; and improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers. The POI also contains a new target on sanitation, calling for the halving, by the year 2015, of the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation and proposing, among other things, the following actions:

- Develop and implement efficient household sanitation systems;
- Improve sanitation in public institutions, especially schools;
- Promote affordable and socially and culturally acceptable technologies and practices;
- Develop innovative financing and partnership mechanisms; and
- Integrate sanitation into water resource management strategies.

The POI also establishes a voluntary “world solidarity fund” to help eliminate poverty and promote social and human development in the developing countries. It calls for improving access to environmentally sound energy services and resources, and an increased use of “renewables, cleaner liquid and gaseous fuels and enhanced energy efficiency.”

Health

The last cluster of paragraphs to be completed centred on human rights and fundamental freedoms and their relationship to health. Going into the WSSD, governments disagreed over whether paragraph 54, which deals with health care systems and health care services, was still open for negotiation. According to those delegations that reject making the connection between “health care services” and human rights because it may be construed to include abortion, paragraph 54 was closed during PrepCom IV, while Canada, wanting to insert language on “human rights and fundamental freedoms” argued that it was still open. This resulted in substantive as well as procedural debates. Some delegations threatened to open up other paragraphs, particularly one on illicit drugs if the Canadian delegation persisted with its bid to amend the paragraph in question. Following a ruling by the UN Secretariat that paragraph 54 was still open for negotiations, it became clear that this issue could not be resolved in the negotiating room. Overnight, South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma came up with a compromise package in which three separate paragraphs, each dealing with some aspect of human rights and fundamental freedoms or health care services, would be adopted.

The final three elements are as follows:

- Promote women’s equal access to and full participation, on the basis of equality with men, in decision-making at all levels, mainstreaming gender perspectives in all policies and strategies, eliminating all forms of violence and discrimination against women, and improving the status, health and economic welfare of women and girls through full and equal access to economic opportunity, land, credit, education and health-care services. (7d)
- Strengthen the capacity of health-care systems to deliver basic health services to all, in an efficient, accessible and affordable manner aimed at preventing, controlling and treating diseases, and to reduce environmental health threats, in conformity with human rights and fundamental freedoms and consistent with national laws and cultural and religious values, taking into account the reports of relevant United Nations conferences and summits and of special sessions of the General Assembly. (54)
- Mobilize financial and other support to develop and strengthen health systems that aim at promoting equitable access to health-care services. (64a)

The POI calls for enhancing health education with targets on achieving improved health literacy globally by 2010; reducing HIV prevalence among young men and women aged 15-24 by 25% in the most affected countries by 2005 and globally by 2010, as well as combating malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases; and calls for the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPs) to “be interpreted and implemented in a manner supportive of WTO members’ right to protect public health and in particular to promote access to medicines for all.”

Changing Unsustainable Patterns of Consumption and Production: Energy

Another key issue requiring ministerial attention was whether or not to establish targets to diversify the global energy supply as well as targets for developed countries to increase the share of renewables in their energy consumption. Going into Johannesburg, outstanding language on the issue included a global target for renewable energy use of 15% by 2010 as well as a target of 5% by 2010 for industrialized countries.
Negotiating groups had varied and complex positions that became clear during a frank discussion at the ministerial level. The EU made well known its commitment to securing global targets. The Group of 77 developing countries and China (G-77/China) had to craft a fine balance among its large oil producing and exporting members, large industrializing members and some of its smaller members, in particular Small Island Developing States. In the end, the G-77/China aligned with the US, which was also opposed to targets, and argued that oil revenues helped many of its members drive their own development efforts and that targets on renewable energy would unduly penalize them.

The final language on this issue, which does not include a specific target, does nonetheless stress the urgency of increasing the global share of renewables and calls for the following:

“Substantially increase the global share of renewable energy sources with the objective of increasing its contribution to total energy supply...” The paragraph also calls upon governments to “diversify energy supply by developing advanced, cleaner, more efficient, affordable and cost-effective energy technologies, including fossil fuel technologies and renewable energy technologies, hydro included, and their transfer to developing countries on concessional terms...” (20e)

After accepting the compromise, the EU reiterated its commitment to renewable energy as an important way to reduce pollution, diversify and secure energy supplies and help provide access to energy in support of poverty eradication. It also announced that it would be putting together what it called a “coalition of the willing;” a coalition of countries including the EU, some other European countries as well as some Small Island Developing States of the G-77/China that intended to go beyond the agreement reached in the area of renewable energy. The Danish Minister indicated that members of the coalition had adopted or would be adopting “clear and ambitious” time-bound targets.

Other action falling under the consumption and production chapeau include: promoting the development of a ten-year framework of programmes to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production; identifying specific activities, policies and other tools for measuring progress; and taking action to phase out energy subsidies that inhibit sustainable development, paying particular attention to the “different levels of development of individual countries and considering their adverse effect, particularly on developing countries.”

Protecting and Managing the Natural Resource Base

While much of this chapter had already been agreed going into Johannesburg, outstanding language still to be negotiated centred on current trends in the loss of natural resources and biodiversity, the Kyoto Protocol and replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Biodiversity

Much of the attention around biodiversity issues centered on securing a target to stop or to reduce the loss of biodiversity, as well as establishing a regime for the sharing of benefits arising from the use of biodiversity.

Governments were able to agree on establishing a target date of 2010 for the achievement of a “significant reduction” in the current rate of loss of biological diversity. It was suggested that although governments were willing to agree that “biodiversity is presently being lost at unprecedented rates,” developing countries were only willing to accept the target date of 2010 because the text only called for a “significant reduction” in the current rate of loss of biological diversity rather than the stronger language from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that makes no allowance for further loss and speaks of “attacking the causes of loss of biodiversity.” A proposal for a target date to have instruments in place by 2010 to stop the loss of biodiversity was deleted.

Governments also agreed to negotiate an “international regime” to promote and safeguard the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. While some delegations, particularly those of the megadiverse group (the biologically richest countries of the world), had hoped to have language on a legally binding international regime, others suggested that international regimes by their very nature are legally binding and should not weaken the intent of the paragraph. Some anticipate that such negotiations will carry on for years to come as governments decide if and how to go beyond the voluntary Bonn Guidelines on access to genetic resources and benefit sharing, adopted by the Sixth Conference of the Parties (COP-6) to the CBD at The Hague (the Netherlands) in April 2002.

In this section, governments also agreed to promote discussions on the “relationship” between the CBD and the WTO and its related provisions. When this paragraph was originally under consideration at PrepCom IV, some delegations favoured focusing on the “relationship between the obligations” of the two entities while others were concerned that this might allow trade-related agreements, including the TRIPs agreement, to take precedence over the CBD. In the end, the paragraph in the POI reads: “With a view to enhancing synergy and mutual supportiveness, taking into account the decisions under the relevant agreements, promote the discussions, without prejudging their outcome, with regard to the relationships between the Convention [on Bio-Diversity] and agreements related to international trade and intellectual property rights, as outlined in the Doha [WTO] Ministerial Declaration.” (44r)
**Oceans and Fisheries**

The issues of oceans and fisheries are acknowledged as an area in which significant progress was made with governments identifying oceans, seas, islands and coastal areas as an essential component of the Earth's ecosystem, critical for global food security and for sustaining many national economies. During the negotiations, there was expected disagreement over language calling for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to be fully implemented, which was resolved when delegates supported the US proposal to delete the word fully. And while there was disagreement over setting an “unqualified” target date to restore depleted fish stocks, governments nonetheless called for action on an urgent basis and committed themselves to a host of new targets, including:

- Maintain or restore stocks to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield with the aim of achieving these goals for depleted stocks on an urgent basis and where possible not later than 2015. (31a)
- Urgently develop and implement national and, where appropriate, regional plans of action, in particular the international plan of action for the management of fishing capacity by 2005 and the international plan of action to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by 2004. (31d)
- Develop and facilitate the use of diverse approaches and tools, including the ecosystem approach, the elimination of destructive fishing practices, the establishment of marine protected areas consistent with international law and based on scientific information, including representative networks by 2012 and time/area closures for the protection of nursery grounds and periods, proper coastal land use; and watershed planning and the integration of marine and coastal areas management into key sectors. (32c)
- Establish by 2004 a regular process under the United Nations for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, both current and foreseeable, building on existing regional assessments. (36b)

**Atmosphere and Climate Change**

Much of the “buzz” about the Kyoto Protocol was not to be heard in the negotiating rooms but instead in the Plenary Hall as both Russia and China announced that they were preparing to ratify the Protocol, while Canada preferred by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in 2002. These announcements, as well as text from the POI “strongly urging States” that had not done so to ratify the Protocol, created an atmosphere of isolation for governments that have not yet ratified the Protocol and an atmosphere of forward momentum for its supporters.

The full text on the Kyoto Protocol reads as follows: "Change in the Earth’s climate and its adverse effects are a common concern of humankind. We remain deeply concerned that all countries, particularly developing countries including the least developed countries and Small Island Developing States, face increased risks of negative impacts of climate change and recognize that, in this context, the problems of poverty, land degradation, access to water and food and human health remain at the centre of global attention. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the key instrument for addressing climate change, a global concern, and we reaffirm our commitment to achieving its ultimate objective of stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, within a timeframe sufficient to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner, in accordance with our common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in which heads of State and Government resolved to make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases, States that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol strongly urge States that have not already done so to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in a timely manner.” (38)

Another action point on atmosphere includes:

“Enhance cooperation at the international, regional and national levels to reduce air pollution, including trans-boundary air pollution, acid deposition and ozone depletion bearing in mind the Rio Principles, including, inter alia, the principle that, in view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities…” (39)

Other action points on Protecting and Managing the Natural Resource Base include:

- Call on the Second Assembly of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to take action on the recommendations of the GEF Council concerning the designation of land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as a focal area of GEF as a means of GEF support for the successful implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD)...and consider making GEF a financial mechanism of the Convention. (41f)
- Accelerate implementation of the IPF/IFF [Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests] proposals for action by countries and by the Collaborative Partnership on
Forests, and intensify efforts on reporting to the United Nations Forum on Forests, to contribute to an assessment of progress in 2005. (45g)

Support efforts to address the environmental, economic, health and social impacts and benefits of mining, minerals and metals throughout their life cycle, including workers’ health and safety, and use a range of partnerships...to promote transparency and accountability for sustainable mining and minerals development. (46a)

**Rio Principles**

Negotiations over Rio Principle 15, the Precautionary Approach, and Rio Principle 7, Common but Differentiated Responsibility, in particular, were for some participants at the WSSD a gauge of governments’ commitment to building upon the achievements of UNCED or their willingness to undermine them. While difficult negotiation ensued on both, and governments could not agree to explicitly reaffirm their commitment to these principles, they did, nonetheless, agree to include them in full in the text.

**The Precautionary Approach**

The precautionary principle/approach found its way into the POI in two places. The central disagreement took place in relation to the production and management of chemicals and their adverse effect on human health and the environment. Some delegations suggested that this was an area in which the principle/approach had to be applied even in the absence of full certainty relating to production and management of chemicals and their effects. In order to close the gap between the “lack of full scientific certainty” and the need to take action, governments agreed to include language that calls for the use of “transparent science-based risk assessment procedures and science-based risk management procedures.”

A drawn out negotiation was also needed before governments agreed to establish the target of 2020 for the production of chemicals that leads to the “minimization” of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment. Negotiations involved Norway advocating for strong language calling for the end to the production of chemicals with harmful effects. This was countered by the US and the G-77/China who were in favour of more general language.

The final language reads as follows:

Renew the commitment, as advanced in Agenda 21, to sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle and of hazardous wastes for sustainable development and for the protection of human health and the environment, inter alia, aiming to achieve by 2020 that chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment...using transparent science-based risk assessment procedures and science-based risk management procedures, tak-

The precautionary principle/approach was included in full in paragraph 109 (f) related to promoting and improving science-based decision making. It states: “In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effectiveness measure to prevent environmental degradation.”

However, it was agreed that no mention would be made of the principle having been “further developed in international law,” (through the work of the numerous multilateral environmental agreements). Some delegations argued that by invoking multilateral environmental agreements, to which not all Member States adhered, the principle would be weakened.

**Globalization**

Going into Johannesburg, the two areas of the POI that contained the most unresolved issues were those dealing with globalization and means of implementation, particularly the sections on trade and finance. While there were some specific issues—including subsidies, corporate responsibility and the mutual supportiveness between trade, environment and development—which did prove very difficult, as a whole, these sections were resolved more readily than anticipated. Some suggested that this was a direct result of such issues as official development assistance (ODA) and debt having been recently negotiated in Monterrey at the International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD) and governments tacitly agreeing not to go much beyond this agreement. Two slight exceptions to this, however, were the calling for debt relief and debt cancellation, in some cases, for developing countries as a whole and not only highly indebted poor countries, as well as calling for the increased ODA commitments announced at the FFD to be made available.

Many governments, in most cases being represented by environment, development cooperation or foreign ministry personnel, preferred to defer trade-related issues to ongoing negotiations at the WTO.
Corporate Accountability

Corporate accountability was an area in which many NGOs and some Member States were hoping to see new language that could open the door to further efforts in this area. Interestingly, broad language developed in paragraph 49 does not focus solely on existing initiatives, such as the UN Global Compact and the United Nations Environmental Programme’s (UNEP) global reporting initiative, but also provides scope for the development of new agreements, measures, and initiatives in this area. Paragraph 49 reads: “Actively promote corporate responsibility and accountability, based on the Rio Principles, including through the full development and effective implementation of intergovernmental agreements and measures, international initiatives and public-private partnerships, and appropriate national regulations, and support continuous improvement in corporate practices in all countries.”

However, this became one of the last paragraphs to be resolved owing to differences of opinion over what happened in negotiations conducted by the contact group on the Means of Implementation and whether or not the group had agreed that the paragraph would relate to existing agreements and measures only. An interpretive statement to this effect was eventually disallowed by the Chair after several delegations questioned the consistency of the statement in light of the provisions in the paragraph calling for the “full development” as well as “effective implementation” of agreements, measures, initiatives, etc. At the closing plenary and after formal adoption of the POI, the US delegation said that it interpreted paragraph 49 as referring to “existing” agreements only.

Other action under this section calls for encouraging international financial and trade institutions to ensure that decision-making processes and institutional structures are open and transparent.

Means of Implementation

Common but Differentiated Responsibility

The Means of Implementation section opens with the assertion that achievement of the internationally agreed development goals will require a “substantially increased effort” by countries themselves and the international community, as well as a restatement of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. The interpretation of this principle/approach is always contentious as it goes to the heart of the balance of responsibility among developing countries themselves, and the obligations of the industrialized countries in light of their economic and technological strength.

The principle/approach was included in full in paragraph 81 and reads as follows: “In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustain-

able development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.”

Trade, Environment and Development

Protracted negotiations took place on a reference to the mutual supportiveness of trade, environment and development due to a qualifying phrase “in a manner consistent with WTO rights and obligations.” Some governments expressed fears that the phrase could be tantamount to formally establishing a hierarchy of obligations with WTO rules above those of multilateral environmental agreements.

The draft text proposed: “Continue to enhance the mutual supportiveness of trade, environment and development in a manner consistent with WTO rights and obligations, with a view to achieving sustainable development, including through actions at all levels ….” Negotiations produced a number of alternatives including “while ensuring WTO consistency” and the Norwegian proposal “Striving to avoid WTO inconsistency.”

Norway, being the most vocal advocate for deleting reference to the WTO, held out the longest, but finally agreed to withdraw its proposal when it became clear that it could garner no support for its efforts. However, three members of the G-77/China, Saint Lucia, Tuvalu and Ethiopia, reluctantly broke ranks within the group and stated their unwillingness to accept language that they said jeopardized prioritizing environmental and development concerns that were key to their survival and expressed similar concerns for those countries that are not members of the WTO.

The G-77/China finally agreed to support the deletion of reference to the WTO and allowed the paragraph to be adopted as follows: “Continue to enhance the mutual supportiveness of trade, environment and development with a view to achieving sustainable development through actions at all levels ….”

Other action points on Means of Implementation include:

- Strengthen ongoing efforts to reform the existing international financial architecture, to foster a transparent, equitable and inclusive system that is able to provide for the effective participation of developing countries in the international economic decision-making processes and institutions, as well as for their effective and equitable participation in the formulation of financial standards and codes. (86a)

- Explore ways of generating new public and private innovative sources of finance for development purposes…noting the proposal to use special drawing rights allocations for development purposes, as set forth in paragraph 44 of the Monterrey Consensus. (88)

- Bring international debtors and creditors together in relevant international forums to restructure
unsustainable debt in a timely and efficient manner, taking into account the need to involve the private sector in the resolution of crises due to indebtedness, where appropriate. (89c)

Support the completion of the work programme of the Doha Ministerial Declaration on subsidies so as to promote sustainable development and enhance the environment, and encourage reform of subsidies that have considerable negative effects on the environment and are incompatible with sustainable development. (97b)

**Sustainable Development of Small Island States (SIDS)**

Most issues related to SIDS were resolved by PrepCom IV in Bali. One outstanding issue was related to elaborating initiatives to define and manage coastal areas and exclusive economic zones within the context of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Another concerned establishing a target date for undertaking initiatives aimed at implementing the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment, as well as developing and promoting efficient use of local sources of energy.

Governments agreed that instead of assisting SIDS to “define” their coastal areas and exclusive economic zones (the area of sea that belongs to a coastal State and which it can exploit for economic benefit), they would assist to “delimit” such areas that could include continental shelf areas beyond 200 miles from coastal baselines. They also agreed to a target of 2004 to undertake initiatives to reduce, prevent and control waste and pollution and their health-related impacts for the protection of the marine environment.

The POI also requests the General Assembly to consider convening an international meeting for the sustainable development of SIDS. While the nature of such a meeting is yet to be determined, a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (adopted in 1994 at the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of SIDS) is scheduled to take place under UN auspices in 2004.

Other action points on SIDS include:

- Develop community-based initiatives on sustainable tourism by 2004. (58g)
- Support the availability of adequate, affordable and environmentally sound energy services for the sustainable development of SIDS, including through strengthening efforts on energy supply and services by 2004. (59)

**Sustainable Development for Africa**

Over the course of the last year or so, the international community has responded positively to the African government-led strategy, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), and placed Africa’s development prominently on the international development agenda. The WSSD, following in the footsteps of Monterrey (FFD) and the recent G-8 meetings in Canada, found governments welcoming NEPAD and pledging their support to the implementation of this initiative through financing, technical and institutional cooperation, as well as human and institutional capacity building.

Governments also agreed to assist Africa with technical support in the areas of environmental legislation, institutional reform, environmental impact assessments, negotiating and implementing multilateral environmental agreements, as well as afforestation and reforestation.

Another action point on Africa states a commitment to:

- Establish and promote programmes, partnerships and initiatives to implement NEPAD objectives on energy, which seek to secure access for at least 35% of the African population within 20 years. (62j)

**Institutional Framework and Follow-up**

Leading into Johannesburg, the section Institutional Framework contained many outstanding issues, notably good governance, reform of international finance and trade institutions, social dimensions of sustainable development policies and programmes, the role of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in FFD follow-up, replenishment of the GEF, targets for implementing national development strategies, and the relationship between environment and human rights.

The chapeau of this section states that an effective institutional framework for sustainable development at all levels is key to the full implementation of Agenda 21, the follow-up to the outcomes of the WSSD and meeting emerging sustainable development challenges. Measures to strengthen this framework, the chapeau says, should build on the provisions of Agenda 21 as well as the 1997 Programme for its further implementation and the Rio Principles. After much discussion, it was agreed that a reference highlighting the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities would be deleted.

This section also opens by stating that good governance is essential for sustainable development. Governments agreed that sound economic policies, solid democracies and institutions responsive to the needs of people, and improved infrastructure are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment creation. Additional essential factors identified include: freedom, peace and security, domestic stability, respect for human rights, including the right to development, and the rule of law, gender equality, market-oriented policies, and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies.
Other action points include:

- Efforts to reform the international financial architecture need to be sustained with greater transparency and the effective participation of developing countries in decision-making processes. (141)
- The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should increase its role in overseeing system-wide coordination and the balanced integration of economic, social and environmental aspects of United Nations policies and programmes aimed at promoting sustainable development. (144a)
- Ensure that there is a close link between the role of the Council in the follow-up to the WSSD and its role in the follow-up to the Monterrey Consensus. (144f)
- The Council should explore ways to develop arrangements relating to its meetings with the Bretton Woods institutions and the WTO, as set out in the Monterrey Consensus. (144f)
- In the section on the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the UN body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the UNCED agreements, the action points for the future include:
  - An enhanced role of the Commission should include reviewing and monitoring progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and fostering coherence of implementation, initiatives and partnerships. (145)
  - Take into account significant legal developments in the field of sustainable development, with due regard to the role of relevant intergovernmental bodies in promoting the implementation of Agenda 21 relating to international legal instruments and mechanisms. (148e)
  - The Commission should focus on actions related to implementation of Agenda 21, limiting negotiations in the sessions of the Commission to every two years. (147d)
  - The Commission should serve as a focal point for the discussion of partnerships that promote sustainable development, including sharing lessons learned, progress made and best practices. (148b)

The Johannesburg Declaration lists numerous conditions that are posing severe threats to sustainable development, including: chronic hunger; malnutrition; foreign occupation; armed conflicts; illicit drug problems; organized crime; corruption; natural disasters; illicit arms trafficking; trafficking in persons; terrorism; intolerance and incitement to racial, ethnic, religious and other hatreds; xenophobia; and endemic, communicable and chronic diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

In order to counter these problems, governments call for a number of actions including reaching internationally agreed levels of ODA, supporting NEPAD, continuing to work with major groups, as well as the need for the private sector to enforce corporate accountability.

Governments reaffirmed their support for the leadership role of the United Nations as the most universal and representative organization in the world, and called for more effective, democratic and accountable international and multilateral institutions.

The Plan of Implementation and the Johannesburg Declaration are available online (www.johannesburgsummit.org).

### Partnership Plenaries

A key innovative feature of the Summit was the holding of a series of “partnership plenaries” during the first five days of the conference. Instead of a conventional series of speeches by dignitaries, partnership plenaries were organized in the form of interactive dialogues among governments, UN agencies, experts, and major group representatives on the five WEHAB themes proposed by the Secretary-General, as well as on cross-sectoral issues and regional implementation. The sessions, which were moderated by the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy to the Summit Jan Pronk, focused on challenges of implementation in these five strategic areas.

### Water and Sanitation

The partnership plenary discussions on water and sanitation revealed the extent to which water-related issues are at the centre of sustainable development and intimately linked to health, agriculture, energy, biodiversity and poverty eradication. It was noted that there is growing international recognition that access to safe drinking water is a basic human right. As of now, some 1.2 billion people still have no access to safe drinking water. It was further noted that daily, some 6,000 children die as a result of deficient sanitation facilities. Despite this, water continues to receive low political priority, as evidenced by declines in ODA to this sector, by the reduction of investments by international financial institutions, by the low priority it receives in
national budgets, and by the absence of water as a central feature in major regional programmes. The need to come up with concrete plans of action to reduce the number of the 2.4 billion people that do not have access to adequate sanitation as a distinct development target was mentioned as one of the priorities for the WSSD.

A number of speakers emphasized that access to water for basic human needs was a fundamental human right and, along with improved sanitation, was a key component of any effective poverty-reduction strategy. The NGO representative insisted that partnership initiatives in the area of water and sanitation must: be developed in response to locally articulated needs through a democratic process; be in keeping with Type 1 outcomes; include mechanisms for democratic accountability for government partners; and include corporate partners only when enforceable and functional standards for corporate accountability are in place.

Many speakers suggested that the low priority currently assigned to water issues is linked to the fact that water shortages are primarily affecting low-income countries and population groups, while the better-off countries and income groups are not yet affected by such problems. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), said water availability in growing cities was in such a crisis situation that the poor were often paying four to five times more for water than better-off people connected to the water system.

Questions related to cost recovery—whether through tax transfers, user fees, or cross-subsidization—were one of the most hotly-debated topics during the discussion. The trade unions representative expressed reservations as to the role the private sector should play in meeting basic needs given the fact that the primary motive of business is profit and not welfare. The business representative argued that in his experience of public-private sector service delivery programmes, it was not only rich people who could pay for water. As a matter of fact, he said, the poor were willing to pay more, but it was often the politicians that were not willing to charge them. Ronnie Kasrils, the South African Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, said that appropriate financial systems were required to ensure that water services were financially sustainable. For the poor, she added, while there was a willingness to pay, there was not always the ability to pay for water. There was a need for subsidies, either from tax revenues or cross-subsidies from other water users.

Miloon Kothari, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, said that recent experiences with privatization of water services tended to reveal three sets of problems from a human rights perspective, namely: an overemphasis on profit-making and cost recovery; inadequate coverage of vulnerable groups, such as slum dwellers; and lack of accountability of service operators. These privatization schemes overlook the precise commitments that States have undertaken under specific human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. He also noted that once privatization has failed, it is difficult for local municipalities and governments to recover the initiative. He further warned that these issues were not adequately taken into account in the ongoing negotiations on liberalization of trade in services at the WTO.

Discussions also focused on the sustainability of water sources, which are fast becoming depleted in many parts of the world. Some said this required an ecosystems approach to water management that would integrate environmental protection and biodiversity concerns.

Energy

The partnership plenary on energy focused on the challenges of extending energy services to the poor and shifting to more sustainable energy production and consumption patterns (including a momentous increase in the use of renewable energy sources). Access to affordable energy services was pointed out as being critical for increasing agricultural productivity, encouraging economic activity, generating employment and income opportunities, and improving the quality of life, particularly for women and children. For instance, in many developing countries women and children spend many hours each day gathering firewood, time which is diverted from productive and educational activities. Such patterns of energy use contribute to biodiversity loss, and an increase in health problems related to indoor, firewood-based cooking methods.

According to one speaker, energy interventions in the past have not been efficient. Small-scale technologies, with costs ranging from US$50 to US$300, are available as a means for providing energy services to the poorest, particularly in rural areas. Such technologies include mechanical water pumps, solar dryers and bio-fuel furnaces. He encouraged developing countries to allocate a quarter to a third of their energy budgets to small-scale energy technologies, which he said should be as self-reliant as possible in terms of inputs, local equipment manufacturing and maintenance.

Moving away from fossil fuel-based technologies to combat pollution and climate change was noted as a major challenge. However, such a shift would not, in the immediate future at least, be driven by scarcity of oil reserves—thus many participants called for the need to focus on time-bound targets on increasing the
use of renewable energy. Commenting on the proposed (but eventually rejected) target on renewable energy being negotiated by governments, the UN representative said that such a target was feasible but depended on the structure of the energy sector.

The lack of consensus on a renewable energy target during the intergovernmental negotiations was reflected in the subsequent exchange by governments in the plenary. The minister in charge of petroleum from the Office of the President of Nigeria said it must be acknowledged that access to modern forms of energy was out of the reach of most developing countries. Economic development, he said, could not be achieved in the developing world without affordable energy sources. He added that it was presumptuous for the Summit to tell any government to establish numerical targets or timetables on energy. He urged the international community to focus its efforts on helping developing countries to enhance their capacity for affordable sources of renewable energy. In sharp contrast, the representative of Tuvalu insisted on the importance of such targets and timetables. He expressed his disappointment that Tuvalu’s proposal earlier in the WSSD preparatory process—to develop a legally binding arrangement on energy—was rejected.

**Health**

The inter-active discussion on health highlighted the fact that health is not only about lack of illness but is also about fundamental human rights to clean water, sanitation and equitable access to quality and affordable health services. Speakers noted that up to one-third of global diseases were caused by environmental degradation, whether linked to water impurities, poor sanitation or air pollution. They also noted a strong correlation between poverty and vulnerability to disease, thus stressing the sense of urgency to break the vicious cycle of inter-linked problems of environmental degradation, ill health and poverty, which would call for more integrated and inter-sectoral approaches to health, including the integration of gender dimensions. Health issues need to be tackled not only by health ministries and health sectors but also by sectors such as transportation, energy, industry and agriculture, participants stressed.

The discussion also emphasized major resource allocation questions. A representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) said that, according to a 2001 report of the WHO’s Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, an increase in domestic budgetary resources of 1% by 2015 and donor grant resources of US$27 billion a year by 2007 and US$38 billion by 2015 would be needed to effectively tackle the diseases of the world’s poor. A representative of the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) said that country-level coordination among partners in the field of immunization programmes was a good example of the effective use of funds through partnerships on the ground.

**Agriculture**

During the partnership plenary on agriculture, it was noted that around 70% of the poor in developing countries live in rural areas and depend in one way or another on agriculture for their survival. A sharp contrast was drawn by one presenter between two radically different models of agriculture: agribusiness-led agriculture driven by technology, capital and subsidies (“mass production”); and small-scale agriculture driven by peasants and local farmers (“production by the masses”). He stressed that an “ominous paradox” hovered over the perception of agriculture. In developed countries, agriculture evoked notions of pollution, overproduction and subsidies, while in practically all developing countries it was still the engine of economic growth, and the livelihood base for the majority of their populations.

Much of the discussion focused on international trade issues and problems related to the high level of agricultural subsidies in developed countries. Many called for the phasing out of such subsidies which are also environmentally harmful, and the dismantling of developed countries’ trade barriers to developing countries’ agricultural exports. However, the farmers’ representative stressed that what farmers were really asking for was to be able to earn a living by farming. If production costs were compatible with market prices, then no subsidies would be needed. It was not that farmers were clamouring for subsidies, he said, but subsidies were required in the current state of the world market.

Later in the discussion, the agriculture minister of Tanzania emphasized the fact that while rich countries were subsidizing their agriculture to the tune of US$1 billion a day, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank continued to pressure developing countries to remove subsidies to support their own farmers. It was noted in this regard that cheap subsidized food imports in liberalized developing countries’ markets were undermining local farmers’ livelihoods and cutting jobs in the domestic agricultural sectors. Improving the competitiveness and productivity of small farmers, while creating a level playing field vis-a-vis large agribusiness, was highlighted as a key priority by a number of speakers. Reversing the downward trend in ODA to agriculture was also emphasized. According to a representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the millennium development target of cutting hunger by half by 2015 will require additional public investments of US$24 billion a year over the next 13 years. One speaker noted that an enormous financial potential could be freed up to combat hunger and poverty in developing countries if only a small proportion of rich countries’ US$1 billion daily agricultural subsidies was allocated for that purpose.
The discussion also sought to draw lessons from the Green Revolution, which some described as technology-driven and input intensive. While it enabled the world to make a quantum leap in agricultural productivity, it also led to environmental degradation and favoured capital-intensive producers. It was suggested that the future agricultural revolution should be sustainable, small-farmer and low-input based. In this respect, many participants shared their experiences in organic farming and the use of indigenous farming methods, which they said offered great promise as a way forward in agriculture, but were often undermined by current trade practices and agricultural policies that favour resource-intensive mass production methods.

Although it did not receive much attention during the partnership plenary discussion on agriculture, the issue of biotechnology and genetically-modified (GM) foods was raised in the session on cross-sectoral issues, and hotly debated in the corridors of the conference and in the streets of Johannesburg. The issue became all the more controversial since the Summit was taking place in the midst of a food crisis in Southern Africa, in response to which the United States was offering genetically modified maize food aid to the affected countries.

**Biodiversity**

During the partnership plenary on biodiversity, it was noted that biodiversity and the Earth’s ecosystems generate a wide range of goods and services on which the world economy depends. With about 40% of the global economy based on biological products and processes, UNEP estimates the economic value of biodiversity to be some US$3 trillion a year, whereas that of ecosystem services is US$33 trillion a year—which was said to be the equivalent of the combined gross national products of the entire planet. Activities that reduce biodiversity, it was said, jeopardize economic development and often the survival of many who depend on biodiversity for their livelihood, particularly rural populations in developing countries.

A senior UNEP representative said that unless governments took immediate action to address critical matters related to biodiversity, particularly environmental degradation and overuse of natural resources, the future of the world could soon be irreparably undermined. He said there had been some achievements, particularly with the support of NGOs. Major treaties such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) had been developed, some species had been saved from extinction, and tracts of land were under protection. However, he expressed concern that protected areas were in fact not well protected and many treaties were not fully implemented. A representative of the secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands said it was “shameful” that international treaties related to biodiversity were negotiated at a very high level, but such instruments were subsequently handed over to small agencies with very little power to ensure implementation.

During the interactive session, some participants linked the lack of public awareness of biodiversity issues as an important reason for lack of progress and called for public education campaigns as a new phase of implementation. However, other participants insisted that beyond public awareness raising, it was the wider economic forces at play that needed to be tackled. Several speakers cited the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), which they said gave corporations monopoly over biological resources and the ability to patent life forms, adding that it needs to be rebalanced to ensure equitable benefit sharing. It was essential, one NGO representative stressed, to re-examine macro-economic policies which undermined sustainability, and to set limits to industrial exploitation of natural resources on which local communities’ livelihoods depend. In this regard, the UK environment minister emphasized the necessity to have incentives to reduce commercial pressures leading to the over-exploitation of natural resources. He said that in addition to the need to strengthen time-bound targets for biodiversity, effective mechanisms, monitoring and funding were also required.

A business representative said partnerships were at the heart of solutions. No single sector was responsible for biodiversity, he said. The root causes of biodiversity loss had to be addressed, which meant giving priority to equity sharing and giving local communities a stake in conservation. In this respect, the environment minister of India noted that his country’s conservation strategy had depended heavily on partnerships and cooperation with all stakeholders. However, the environment minister of Gabon cautioned that partnerships in his country had not always attracted “the most virtuous partners.” While Gabon had a product that could be useful to treat drug addiction, a transnational corporation wanted to patent that product, he said. The so-called “Type 2” outcomes, he insisted, must provide safeguards against such situations.

In closing, Mr. Pronk said that there was overall consensus that the international community was not on target. The necessary knowledge was present; what was needed was action to meet the commitments undertaken. The urgency of the matter could not be overstated. The greater the threat of further loss, he said, the greater the need to change the models and policies of the past.

**Cross-sectoral Issues**

The partnership plenary dedicated to cross-sectoral issues focused on the following themes: finance, trade and technology transfer; sustainable consumption and production patterns; and education, science, capacity building and information for decision making.
Introducing the themes, WSSD Secretary-General Desai said the purpose of this session’s discussion was to focus attention on those cross-sectoral dimensions of sustainable development that were vital to attaining effective results. How to effectively implement commitments already undertaken? What had stood in the way of fulfilling those commitments? He said he hoped that the discussion would address barriers to effective implementation and see in what way the processes of implementation could be strengthened by partnership initiatives.

A representative of the scientific community stressed the importance of partnerships between scientists and other stakeholders in all key areas. He said new lines of research were needed to address the links between natural systems, socio-economic systems and sustainable consumption and production patterns. A UNEP representative said a key example of the link between science and policy making was the problem of the ozone layer, where scientific evidence had led to an international agreement to phase out ozone-depleting substances.

An NGO representative, however, sounded a note of caution on the far-reaching effects of partnerships, noting that such arrangements can also produce harmful or inequitable results. By way of example, he cited the increasingly connected nature of the science/biological research community and transnational corporations—and the biases this may imply in partnership agreements. In this regard, the farmers’ representative argued that there was an increasing imbalance in scientific interests that were becoming more and more market-driven, while governments shied away from public spending on research and technology development.

Several speakers noted that the business community was much more present at Johannesburg than it was ten years ago in Rio. The business representative described this as a “transitional period in social history,” as awareness was growing about the ecological footprints left by current models of production and economic growth. Still, business needed to be more open and involved, he said, noting that its role is both facilitated and constrained by government action. Asked whether governments were not constrained by corporate pressure, he said that there were “myths” about those relationships, which he described as not valid. The corporate structure, he said, had proven to be sufficient for providing for the large-scale needs of society. The youth representative noted with concern that so few speakers had addressed the critical issue of sustainable consumption and production patterns. He argued that prevention was less expensive than the cure, adding that the key to changing production and consumption patterns was the younger generation. The NGO representative stressed that the Rio Principle of common but differentiated responsibility indicated that the North should take the lead in this area because it had the resources and capacity to do so, and should transfer that capacity to the South.

**PARTNERSHIP OUTCOMES**

Partnerships and initiatives to implement Agenda 21 became an important element of the Summit’s outcomes. Termed “Type 2” outcomes, the over 220 WSSD partnership initiatives identified so far between different stakeholders (including governments, intergovernmental organizations, civil society and business entities) are meant to complement and reinforce “Type 1” outcomes—namely the intergovernmentally negotiated plan of implementation and the political declaration.

The inclusion of partnership initiatives as part of the formal WSSD outcome was endorsed last year by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 56/226, which encourages “...global commitment and partnerships, especially between Governments of the North and the South, on the one hand, and between Governments and major groups on the other.”

Many participants viewed Type 2 outcomes as a potentially empowering and complementary way of making progress towards sustainable development. Various stakeholders could commit considerable resources, as well as the expertise and energy to invest in implementing Agenda 21. The Type 2 track opened the door for practical ways to make concrete commitments, without being held back by the limitations of the intergovernmentally-agreed POI.

Over 220 partnerships (with US$235 million in financing) were identified in advance of the Summit and around 60 partnerships were announced during the Summit by a variety of countries and organizations. They include multi-million dollar initiatives in a host of domains, including the five WEHAB areas identified by the Secretary-General, as well as other issues such as environmental governance, the development of small-and medium-sized enterprises, and marketing communications programmes to promote the concept of sustainable development. A number of initiatives publicized at the Summit will support the POI commitment to halve the proportion of people without access to sanitation by 2015 together with the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) to halve the proportion without access to safe drinking water. The US has announced US$970 million in investments in water and sanitation projects; the EU announced its “Water for Life” initiative; the UN has received an additional 21 water- and sanitation-related initiatives with at least US$20 million in funding. Similarly, the
POI commitment on energy access will be accompanied by financial commitments from the EU (US$700 million), the US (US$43 million), and 32 separate partnership initiatives garnering up to US$26 million in investment. The latest list of partnership initiatives is available on the WSSD website (www.johannesburgsummit.org).

**Guiding Principles for Type 2 outcomes**

- Partnerships should be international in their impact and have a multistakeholder approach, preferably involving a range of significant actors in a given area of work. They can be arranged among any combination of partners, including governments, regional groups, local authorities, non-governmental actors, international institutions and private sector entities.
- Partnerships are to complement the intergovernmentally agreed outcomes of WSSD: they are not intended to substitute commitments made by governments. Rather they should serve as mechanisms for the delivery of the globally agreed commitments by mobilizing the capacity for producing action on the ground.
- Partnerships are of a voluntary, ‘self-organizing’ nature, based on mutual respect and shared responsibility of the partners involved.
- Partnerships should integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their design and implementation. Where applicable, they should be consistent with sustainable development strategies and poverty reduction strategies of the countries, regions and communities where their implementation takes place.
- Partnerships should be developed and implemented in an open and transparent manner and in good faith, so that ownership of the partnership process and its outcomes is shared among all partners, and all partners are equally accountable. They should specify arrangements to monitor and review their performance against the objectives and targets they set and report in regular intervals (‘self reporting’). These reports should be made accessible to the public.
- Partnerships should keep the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) informed about their activities and progress in achieving their targets. The CSD should serve as a focal point for discussion of partnerships that promote sustainable development, including sharing lessons learnt, progress made and best practices.
- Opportunities to develop partnerships for sustainable development will continue after the WSSD. Submissions of partnerships after the Summit will be considered in the follow-up process.


During the preparatory process a wide range of concerns were expressed by a number of governments and NGOs on the nature of Type 2 outcomes, their relation to Type 1 outcomes, and the criteria used to determine which partnership initiatives should qualify to be part of the formal Summit outcome. In the course of PrepComs III and IV, a series of informal consultations were conducted by the PrepCom’s Vice-Chairs, Jan Kara (Czech Republic) and Diane Quarless (Jamaica). On this basis, they produced a set of guiding principles for Type 2 outcomes, against which partnership submissions to the Conference Secretariat were checked before being posted on the Summit website (see Box 3).

Concerns about the nature and content of partnership outcomes were vigorously debated during the multi-stakeholder dialogue on partnerships held during PrepCom IV in Bali. NGOs and a number of other major groups expressed serious reservations as to the involvement of transnational corporations in partnership initiatives. These concerns related to what they perceived as the rapid rise of transnational corporate power and efforts by corporate lobby groups to “greenwash” their activities by claiming to contribute to sustainable development with a few isolated flagship projects. Would Type 2 partnerships give carte blanche for transnational corporations to obtain UN endorsement under a voluntary scheme? Was this part of a trend by governments to abdicate more power to the corporate sector without mechanisms of regulation, accountability and enforcement corresponding to this increased power? In their statements, NGO representatives expressed concern that talk of partnerships in the WSSD process was diffuse and distant from the realities of power inequalities.

In closing the session, Mr. Desai underlined that Type 2 partnerships were no substitute for strong commitments between governments. “The real action,” he said, “is out there in the negotiating room.” (See also Box 4).

On the eve of the Summit, the ECO-Equity Coalition (regrouping Consumers International, the Danish ‘92 Group, Greenpeace International, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED), Oxfam International and WWF International) released a discussion paper entitled “Critical considerations about Type 2 partnerships.” The paper stresses a number of issues not covered in the Vice Chairs’ guiding principles for Type 2 outcomes.

These include questions such as:

- Adequate external monitoring and accountability mechanisms;
- Whether the partnership initiatives will involve funds additional to existing bilateral and multilateral funds, or whether current aid money would be reshuffled and presented as new initiatives;
- Specific mechanisms to address unequal leverage between partners and other asymmetries in light of what the paper calls “a history of power inequalities in partnerships,” in terms of competencies, power, resources, capacities and information;

In the paper these themes are discussed in the context of the guiding principles of the Vice Chairs as well as in the context of concerns that have been raised by NGOs and other stakeholders. The principles and concerns are outlined in a series of questions that the paper seeks to address.

**Box 3**

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<td>Specific mechanisms to address unequal leverage between partners and other asymmetries in light of what the paper calls “a history of power inequalities in partnerships,” in terms of competencies, power, resources, capacities and information?</td>
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<td>Adequate external monitoring and accountability mechanisms?</td>
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**Source:** “Guiding Principles for Partnerships for Sustainable Development,” Annex to the Vice-Chairs’ Summary of the Informal Meetings on Partnerships for Sustainable Development, 7 June 2002
The risks associated with "an overwhelming number of fragmented partnerships," including the establishment of parallel or alternative (and potentially unaccountable) mechanisms to those of public services; these possible consequences could further aggravate what is already widely-recognized as the uncoordinated nature of the current international aid system, and which the donor community is attempting to address through the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Civil Society Events

Approximately 3,500 NGOs were accredited to the WSSD. Throughout the preparatory process they played a prominent role, mobilizing their constituencies, lobbying governments, and raising awareness around the world of the issues at stake.

The Sustainable Development Issues Network (SDIN)—which was a joint collaborative effort between several NGO groupings, such as the Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI), ANPED and Third World Network—played an important facilitating and information disseminating role for major groups, notably through their daily plenary briefing and strategy sessions. Other networks, such as the Stakeholder Forum, focused more on facilitating discussions on partnership-based implementation issues.

During PrepCom IV in Bali, a two-day Multistakeholder Dialogue was held among all major groups with the participation of governments and international institutions. The objectives of the Multistakeholder Dialogue included a discussion on partnerships and providing inputs into the intergovernmental negotiating process. However, because of the slow pace of negotiations during earlier PrepComs, many of the dialogues took place while governments were negotiating the draft Plan of Implementation in another room.

During the closing plenary of the Multistakeholder Dialogue in Bali, NGOs delivered a sobering statement on the nature of the much discussed "lack of political will" in implementing the Rio agreements and those of the other major UN conferences of the 1990s. It captured many of the major concerns of NGOs throughout the WSSD process (see Box 5).

Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and Secretary-General of WSSD, addressing the 2nd Committee of the UN General Assembly on 30 September 2002
enormous range of topics, including: the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); the Social Dimension of Globalization of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

At different stages of the conference, safety-related access restrictions at the Sandton Convention Centre led

Extracts from the NGO statement at the closing plenary of the Multistakeholder Dialogue in Bali, June 2002, delivered by Chee Yoke Ling of Third World Network

"...Everyone openly laments the lack of political will to implement sustainable development. There is a struggle to agree to timeframes and targets for concrete actions. But many NGOs see strong political will in other parts of the international system.

"There is political will in the World Trade Organization to set specific timeframes and obligations, and failure to comply triggers a powerful enforcement machinery that comes with sanctions. Member States are obliged to change national laws and policies, even their constitutions in some cases, with developing countries being the net losers, and within them the small farmers and producers, in particular women, being the biggest losers.

"There is political will to enforce decades of repayment in debt servicing by indebted countries where interest payments far exceed the original sum borrowed. The debt burden continues and even worsens, while middle-income countries are now drawn into the debt trap too, as economic liberalization contributes to new vulnerabilities. But there is no political will to resolve the debt crisis. Just as there is no political will by the rich countries to make the much-needed reforms to the international financial system. NGOs had hoped for the inadequacies of the diluted Monterrey Consensus [the intergovernmental outcome of the March 2002 International Conference on Financing for Development] to be addressed by the WSSD, but some countries are adamant that this will not be done....

"At the same time, there is waning political will to ratify multilateral environment treaties, especially among developed countries, but there is political will to dilute and to subvert treaties from their original intent and objectives, and even reject treaties. This we see in the Kyoto Protocol....

"The ‘rights-based’ approach is strongly endorsed by almost all major groups and reiterated here. But instead of rights, there is now the concept of ‘stakeholders’ that assumes equality among all parties. The multistakeholder discussions on partnerships have stressed these unequal power relationships. In an era where corporate rights are expanding disproportionately to peoples’ rights, many NGOs are thus insisting on legally binding corporate accountability and liability, and not partnerships with big business....

"Perhaps we should not view Johannesburg as an event for grand outcomes, but rather a moment for a frank assessment of the fundamental obstacles that have led to the crisis of implementation of sustainable development. Let us please have an honest appraisal.”

The Global People’s Forum

In late 2000, following confirmation that South Africa was going to host the WSSD, a national process was initiated among South African civil society organizations to prepare for a global civil society forum to be held parallel to the official Summit (and later called the Global People’s Forum). The South African National NGO Coalition (SANGOCO) took the lead in coordinating preparations for the Forum that took place from 19 August-4 September at the Johannesburg Expo Centre (NASREC), located at about a 30-minute drive from the official WSSD venue. Some 20,000 participants took part in the hundreds of workshops, plenaries and parallel meetings organized throughout the two weeks. The main structure of the Forum was a series of thematic commissions, which produced various sections of a programme of action that was adopted on the final day, along with a Global People’s Forum Civil Society Declaration entitled “A Sustainable World is Possible.”

Civil Society Declaration and Programme of Action

The Civil Society Declaration notes that, ten years after Rio, lack of progress on implementation is exemplified by “the growing gap between North and South, and the ever-growing socio-economic disparity between rich and poor, with particular impact on the people of African descent, and the ongoing degradation of natural resources.”

Core issues outlined in the document include the following:

- A reaffirmation of the equality of all people, with special attention to historically disadvantaged groups with a plea for their meaningful participation in sustainable development policy formulation, design, programme and project planning, decision-making and implementation processes.
- A demand that international human rights and labour conventions and multilateral environmental agreements be respected and enforced, “including by the rich and powerful.”
- A call for “fair trade” (as opposed to current “free trade” system, which is described as “far from free and not fair”). Fair trade would reaffirm the Rio Principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibility and support the rights of developing countries to protect their own industries and national resources against financial and trade-related externalities.
- A call to rich countries to reduce excessive consumption of the world’s resources and to share their incomes in the interests of present and future generations.
A call to develop legally binding global rules and obligations to regulate corporations, especially multinationals, with respect to economic, social and environmental concerns.

The affirmation that multinational companies and governments that have “benefited from exploitation of the human and natural resources in underdeveloped countries are morally bound to repay the ‘economic, social and ecological debt’ that has been accumulated as a result.” The text also insists on “debt cancellation, reparations and the revision of existing conditionalities associated with current and future debt obligations, to reflect the principles and guidelines of Agenda 21.”

An insistence that natural resources and basic services such as water and sanitation, health care, education and housing should be held in the public domain.

An insistence on the need for “prior notice, consultation and participation and public disclosure on all transactions and agreements affecting the lives of people in communities at risk.”

A call to address the “economic injustices that often lie at the root of conflict” and to divert “the massive spending on armaments and war” to sustainable development initiatives.

An insistence that “all communities and peoples must have control over biological resources as well as their rights to direct all development, including agriculture and aquaculture, towards models that are ecologically and socio-culturally sensitive, and which conserve or enhance biodiversity and biodiversity-based livelihoods.” In this context, “traditional and indigenous knowledge systems developed over the ages should be recognized as legitimate.”

A call for the remaining countries that have not ratified the Kyoto Protocol to do so.

A categorical rejection of the use of genetic engineering (GE) “until the specified uses are proven safe.” In accordance with the Precautionary Principle, “governments must ensure a GE free environment in our countries and in farming systems and support our efforts to raise awareness amongst farmers and consumers about real and potential impacts of GE to the environment and to human health.”

A call for “the phasing out of the fossil fuel industry and the promotion of the use of renewable forms of energy according to clear timelines for the conversion.”

In the programme of action adopted at NASREC, comprised of 20 thematic sections, the action points are mostly directed at governments, but also to the UN, international financial institutions, the WTO and civil society.

Towards the end of the two weeks of various civil society activities around Johannesburg, a number of NGO declarations emerged, at least one of which dissociated itself from the outcome of the Summit.

Both the declaration and programme of action of the Global People’s Forum can be found on its website (www.worldsummit.org.za).

Kofi Annan’s Address at the Global People’s Forum
On the afternoon of 2 September, as Heads of State were gathering at the Sandton Convention Centre, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan was given a standing ovation at the Plenary of the Global People’s Forum in NASREC as he addressed the thousands of civil society representatives present in the following terms:

“...Like you, I am deeply troubled by the slow pace of progress over the past decade. Like you, I am alarmed at what may be in store for us 10, 20 or 30 years from now, if we continue with business as usual. I am baffled when urgent issues are ignored, when common sense suggestions fall on deaf ears, or when available solutions are not pursued. And I am disappointed when old and long unfulfilled promises are trotted out as new proposals, or when it appears that those with power to do the maximum profess to be able to do only the minimum.

“The question is what to do in a world of entrenched interests, political inertia, and hard-to-break habits on the part of governments and individuals. Dire predictions, apocalyptic talk and doom-and-gloom scenarios are not enough to inspire change. But it would be irresponsible to downplay the problems we face, or to think that a technological breakthrough will come to rescue us.

“Do not underestimate the role you have played in these negotiations. Without the pressure you have put to bear, the conference outcome would have been weaker than it is.”

Nitin Desai, WSSD Secretary-General, answering questions following Kofi Annan’s address to the People’s Global Forum

“Your challenge, or our challenge, is to calibrate the strategies and actions required. Purism and pragmatism both have their place, as do market solutions and mandates set out by governments. There will be days when bold action is called for, and times when more nuanced approaches are more effective. Civil society, too, in challenging business as usual, must also be ready to make difficult adjustments in its own perspectives and points of view.

“Sustainable development will not happen of its own accord—and certainly not without the efforts of civil society and the legions of volunteers who bring such energy to the cause. Whether working to advance women’s rights or to build more liberal and liveable societies, whether you find yourself in air-conditioned conference halls or hot zones of despoliation and despair, your initiatives hold many of the keys to the future. Indeed, civil society occupies a unique space where ideas are born, where mindsets are changed, and where the work of development and conservation doesn’t just get talked about, but gets done.”
Human Rights and Sustainable Development

During the decade since the 1992 Earth Summit, the value of applying human rights approaches to meeting sustainable development objectives has become better understood and tested in numerous national, regional and multilateral settings (for a detailed review, see NGLS Roundup 90). As (now former) UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson stated in her address to the WSSD Plenary, “first and foremost a human rights approach adds value because it provides a normative framework of obligations that has the legal power to render governments accountable.” The integration of a human rights approach into the WSSD outcomes documents proved one of the most contentious parts of the negotiations. The final text adopted in paragraph 169 under the section on the participation of major groups says that States should “acknowledge the consideration being given to the possible relationship between environment and human rights, including the right to development....”

It is likely that NGOs working on this nexus of issues will continue pressing for such integration at the national, regional and global levels. This would include working through the UN human rights charter- and treaty-based bodies, as well as other organizations such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)—which, with the Office of the High Commissioner, held an expert meeting on human rights and the environment in January 2002 in preparation for the WSSD (see NGLS Roundup 88). The expert meeting had been mandated by the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR). It is worth noting in this regard that the UNCHR subsequently decided in Resolution 2002/75 that it would continue consideration of the question: “Human rights and the environment as part of sustainable development” at its March-April 2003 session in Geneva, taking into account the relevant outcomes of the WSSD.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

UN officials are currently preparing the groundwork for a system-wide approach to implementing the targets, timetables and commitments that were agreed upon in Johannesburg.

The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), which was established to oversee implementation efforts after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, is expected to see the biggest changes. As agreed in Johannesburg, the CSD will continue to meet every year, but hold negotiations on substantive matters every other year. Although no new substantive negotiations are envisioned in the near future, the GA, in its deliberations this November, is expected to take several procedural decisions that will help maintain the momentum of Johannesburg, such as setting a date for an organizational session of the Commission.

The responsibility for tracking partnerships—the more than 220 voluntary initiatives by governments, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations and business—that were launched prior to and during the Summit will also fall under the CSD. While the Commission has to “nurture” the partnerships, JoAnne DiSano, Director of the Division for Sustainable Development at the UN in New York, has said it cannot hold the initiatives accountable through the same formal processes used to monitor government action. There will still be a measure of accountability, however, although the partnerships are voluntary. One option, Ms. DiSano suggested, would be to have the partnerships report to the CSD periodically. If they wanted to showcase themselves, she said, they would then have to demonstrate tangible results.

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Selected NGO websites:

- ANPED, Northern Alliance for Sustainability (www.anped.org)
- Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (www.ngocongo.org)
- Consumers International (www.consumersinternational.org)
- Friends of the Earth International (www.foei.org)
- Greenpeace (www.greenpeace.org)
- Integrative Strategies Forum (www.isforum.org)
- International Forum on Globalization (www.ifg.org)
- Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future (www.stakeholderforum.org)
- Sustainable Development Issues Network (www.sdissues.net)
- Third World Network (www.twnside.org.sg)
- The World Conservation Union (www.iucn.org/wssd/iucn_site.htm)
- World Resources Institute (www.wri.org)

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