

**Opening Remarks**  
**Mr. Nitin Desai**  
**Secretary-General for**  
**World Summit on Sustainable Development**

**Fourth Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development**  
**27 May 2002**  
**Bali, Indonesia**

Mr. Chairman,  
Honourable Minister,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates and Friends,

Let me begin by expressing my thanks to the many people who have been involved in organizing this meeting in Bali in the language of Indonesia: *terimakasih* Bali, *terimakasih* Indonesia. You have made excellent arrangements for us, and we truly appreciate it.

Mr. Chairman,

Our agenda for this two-week session is a very challenging one; it includes many elements. I do not propose to touch on all of these elements, but just to focus on one: we will be busy this week with coming to closure on the programme of strengthening implementation of Agenda 21 that is under discussion and negotiation. We can see that a great deal of useful progress has been made over the past few days in the informals and we can look forward to a lot of hard work over the rest of the week. As the distinguished Minister put it, I hope we will not follow the usual U.N. procedure of decision by exhaustion, but rather are tempted a little bit more by a quick decision for fear of pleasures foregone and that we will truly come to an early conclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

The central point of my statement is quite simply this: the issue is not only closure of negotiations on the programme of action, the issue is also one of whether what we come out with, is bold and firm enough to meet the high expectations that people have for the Johannesburg Summit in the end. That is the real challenge - the challenge is not just of agreeing, but also of agreeing on something that the world recognizes as being a major step forward for sustainable development. I want to try to spell out what this challenge is.

First, many people see the Johannesburg summit as part of a set of conferences that are defining a new multilateralism. We of course have the Millennium Summit which outlined the Millennium Goals stemming from all of the U.N. conferences held in the nineties. In Doha, we saw a major step

forward in the way in which at least some of the concerns of developing countries were give a central place in the world trade agenda. This is perhaps the first time that we will have a trade round whose primary focus is going to be the concerns of developing countries.

Then we came to the Finance for Development conference in Monterrey which sought to do the same thing for the world of finance – to put development at the center of the world of global finance. In large measure we succeeded in doing that in the Monterrey consensus. Even more than that, Monterrey was also marked by major commitments of additional resources by the European Union, the United States and others, reversing what has been nearly a decade of decline in ODA and reversing it in a very substantial fashion with a total increase in assistance pledged that could amount to as much as 12 to 13 billion dollars extra by 2006.

Johannesburg is the third leg of this exercise, where we are going to define how sustainability can be put into development in order to give the new multilateralism a programmatic basis for cooperation. This is your first challenge: to ensure that what comes out of Johannesburg is seen as a major step forward in outlining a new programmatic basis for development cooperation drawing on the principles that were set out in Rio and subsequently. What does this mean? It means that this conference, as we all have accepted, is not about renegotiating policy frameworks. We have done a great deal of that from Rio and beyond. Our real challenge at this conference is to see how we can put a commitment to credible action in what we negotiate. This focus on action, and this focus on implementation, which is universally accepted by all participants, has to have clarity about ends and means.

Yes, it is true that in many cases, we are talking about changes of policy, reorientation of policy and, in this, our statements will often essentially be qualitative in nature. But, there are also many areas where we are talking about programmatic matters and here we must be clear about ends and means, about goals and resources. I urge you to note this. That is what the world outside is expecting.

Let me read to you just one passage, just one small part of a document which the World Wide Fund for Nature has been circulating. I do not do this for any special reason but simply because it is a compact statement and I believe it reflects the sentiments and concerns of many of the nongovernmental organizations which will be participating in this meeting. Let me read this: “The Summit will be a failure if government leadership is not shown in the form of a strong action plan with targets and timetables, and commitment to the resources needed to support implementation of the action plan. New monitoring and reporting mechanisms are also essential to ensure responsibility and accountability.” The same message is coming from other groups who are participating in this exercise and I urge you to note that this is what the world out there is expecting. This is going to be their measure of success of the extent to which the programme that you will come to closure on at the end of this week reflects a credible commitment to action.

From the side of the United Nations, very recently the Secretary-General, in a speech at the American Museum of Natural History, outlined five areas. Five key strategic areas where we must have a sense that at the end of Johannesburg we have committed ourselves to action which goes beyond

incremental action - action which truly marks a quantum change of effort. The five areas that he had identified (which we put in the acronym WEHAB) are: water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity, standing more broadly for eco-system management.

I am not going to spell out the case for each one of these. This has been done several times earlier. It was highlighted in the S-G's speech and earlier it had its place even in the report that we had submitted to the Preparatory Committee for this conference. It is there in your programme of action that you are looking at now and it is very important that we would be able to say after you finish your work on this programme, that at least in these areas, in these five strategic areas, without which we cannot talk about moving towards sustainability, without which we cannot talk credibly about reaching the Millennium Declaration Goals and targets, we have a programme that truly marks a forward step in the commitment to action by the world community.

Mr. Chairman,

I am stressing this point because the World Summit on Sustainable Development has not been called to endorse business as usual in public policy or private activity. The Summit has been called because people want change in public policy and in private activity and we have to reflect this desire for change in what we negotiate here as well as in the various partnerships initiatives, which will come out of the process. We have to signal a commitment to change. We have to signal that there is a credible mechanism for ensuring that these changes will take place in the years beyond Johannesburg. That we will not meet ten years after Johannesburg with the same concerns that we have not been able to put sufficient energy into the implementation of what we agreed in Johannesburg; that we have not been able to retain high level political attention on what we agreed in Johannesburg; and that we have not been able to find resources to implement what we agreed in Johannesburg.

This is real challenge before us and I believe the challenge is great. But I am also convinced that the challenge can be met. Because in this process we have seen a spirit of accommodation to each other. Now, what we have to add to that spirit of accommodation is a boldness and a vision which seeks not simply agreement but seeks agreement at a higher level of commitment. What we have to aim for therefore, during this week, is for a programme for the implementation of Agenda 21 that we can feel proud about, that we can refer to with a sense of achievement as the Bali Commitment. That, I believe is the challenge for this week before you and in the language of Indonesia I wish you good luck "*semoga berhasil*"

Thank you.