



JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT 2002



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Fourth Session of the Preparatory Committee, Bali, Indonesia, 27 May – 7 June 2002

United Nations Press Release

Significant Progress Made at Bali PrepCom for Sustainable Development; Key Unresolved Issues Left for Johannesburg

8 June, BALI, Indonesia—Two weeks of intensive negotiations over the plan of action that governments will adopt at the World Summit on Sustainable Development concluded in the early hours of the morning today with substantial agreement on a wide range of issues that could boost efforts to fight poverty and protect the environment. However, the talks could not bridge differences on several key issues that will still have to be resolved at the Summit.

The Bali negotiations, while largely successful, underscored the obstacles and challenges faced on the road to Johannesburg, South Africa, where the Summit will be held from 26 August to 4 September. The negotiations resulted in agreement of about 80 per cent of a plan of action for Johannesburg, yet disagreement over a series of contentious issues, particularly concerning trade and finance, foreclosed an opportunity to seal agreement on the plan in Bali.

With the process now moving from Bali to Johannesburg, Preparatory Chairman Emil Salim stressed that there were still three months before the Summit for governments to reconcile their positions. “Significant agreement has been achieved,” he said, adding that, “we can expect Johannesburg to be a success.”

Speaking for the Group of 77 and China, which represents over 130 developing countries, Venezuelan Minister for the Environment and Natural Resources Ana Elisa Osario said, “We think it would have been better to finalize the agreement in Bali,” but added that the Group was still hopeful that complete agreement will be reached in Johannesburg. And Margot Wallström, the European Union’s environment commissioner, said, “We have achieved a whole lot in Bali. I would have liked to see more progress,” she said, “but indeed, we did make progress.”

An historic opportunity, the Johannesburg Summit provides a chance for world leaders and representatives of citizen groups, business and governments to forge initiatives that will reduce the ranks of people living in poverty and address the relationship between human society and the natural environment.

“The agreements reached in Bali are substantial,” Johannesburg Summit Secretary-General Nitin Desai said, “and they provide governments—and citizen groups and businesses—a firm foundation to plan action-oriented programmes and projects to achieve recognizable results that people can see.”

“We now have agreement,” Desai said, “on a plan of action for water and sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity. We can still improve on the plan, but the real test ahead of us is not in the words of a document, but in the actions that are undertaken.”

The plan of action under consideration in Bali will be one of the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit. In Johannesburg, world leaders will also adopt a political declaration, and new voluntary partnership initiatives by and between governments, the private sector and non-governmental organizations will be launched in an effort to mobilize implementation efforts.

The partnership initiatives, based on the government commitments in the plan of action, represent a major departure from standard international conference practice, and raise the possibility for generating additional resources and momentum for achieving results.

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