

The Johannesburg Earth Summit and why Greenpeace is going

What is the Johannesburg Earth Summit 2002?

The United Nations' World Summit on Sustainable Development, otherwise known as the Johannesburg Earth Summit, will be held in South Africa from 26 August – 4 September, 2002. It is the 10th anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, where the world's heads of state and governments adopted Agenda 21 – an action plan for sustainable global development – that is still largely to be implemented and the Rio Declaration. In addition to Agenda 21, three major international conventions were adopted at Rio: the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Convention on Desertification.

The UN says:

The Earth Summit will bring together tens of thousands of participants, including heads of State and Government, national delegates and leaders from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses and other major groups to focus the world's attention and direct action toward meeting difficult challenges, including improving people's lives and conserving our natural resources in a world that is growing in population, with ever-increasing demands for food, water, shelter, sanitation energy, health services and economic security.

For more information see <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>

Greenpeace says:

If left to their own devices, governments of industrialised countries will work towards a Summit that has, at best, the appearance of decision-making and progress-making but little substance. The public will be led to accept the fact that the meeting is happening at all, as a sign of progress. In truth the political will to lead with significant environmental commitments is lacking. Some governments – led by the US, Australia and Canada - think they can get away with dropping environmental commitments. Greenpeace will run a campaign to ensure that the Summit brings about positive and radical change, and in particular provides the momentum to overcome what is arguably the most serious threat of all to industrialised and developing countries alike - global climate change.

Greenpeace will aim to force governments back into the position of environmental leadership. In short, the Earth Summit is a historic opportunity for real peace, based on environmentally sustainable development, global equity and environmental protection.

For more information see the Greenpeace Paper Who to Blame 10 Years After Rio – The Role of the US, Canada and Australia in Undermining the Rio Agreements

<http://www.greenpeace.org/politics/EarthSummit/html/docs.html>

What's happened since the last summit?

Since the Rio Earth Summit ten years ago, there has been more rhetoric than action in protecting the environment and natural resources upon which all of our lives depend. While waving the flag of "sustainable development" governments and corporations have continued largely with business as usual, pursuing a course of economic growth at any cost, with little

respect for ecological limits. When action on some issue has been taken, it has been either because the environmental damage was so gross that governments could not hide, or because activist organisations have forced the change. It is extraordinary that in the 21st century, gross environmental abuse still continues. Globally, we are conducting a war on the environment. We need to make peace with the planet, and with one another.

In the meantime, key promises, and treaty commitments and obligations, remain unfulfilled. Flagrantly unsustainable practices continue, unfair, unregulated and unpunished. *For more information see The Vision for Johannesburg – speech by Greenpeace Executive Director Gerd Leipold*

See <http://www.greenpeace.org/politics/EarthSummit/html/docs.html>

Money: The Rio Earth Summit highlighted the need to mobilize financial resources to implement Agenda 21 – the Summit’s blueprint for sustainable development. It was estimated that US \$125 billion a year was needed. In fact, very little new money was committed. Even the modest goal of increasing or maintaining Overseas Development Aid to 0.7% of GDP has been met by only handful of countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Luxembourg and The Netherlands. According to the Worldwatch Institute, “Foreign aid fell from \$69bn in 1992 to \$53bn in 2000, and the developing world’s debt has risen by 34% since Rio.

Development: Current definitions promote ‘economic’ development, which usually undermines balanced human and natural development. Unfortunately, governments have demonstrated as recently as the January preparatory committee for the UN Conference on Financing for Development that short term development is their only priority, with little or no regard for environmental sustainability.

Trade: Trade policies often encourage unsustainable practices. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has been undermining multilateral environmental agreements since its creation in 1994, two years after the Earth Summit. Perhaps most telling is the fact that governments currently subsidize ‘conventional’ energy sources – mainly fossil fuels – to the order of US\$250-300 billion a year, while simultaneously arguing that renewables are not financially competitive.

Corporations: Multi-national companies have global impacts and global responsibilities. The fact that the toxic chemical spill at Bhopal – 17 years after one of the worst industrial accidents in history - is still not cleaned up and the local drinking water supply remains contaminated, underscores the continued need for corporate accountability.

Governance: There is a need to protect both what is of local value and what has global value. Sustainability can be achieved only through wider public participation. Decision-making processes must encourage greater public participation and problem solving. Here, greater transparency, public access to information and official accountability are fundamental. The fragmentation of institutional responsibility for environmental protection and sustainable development makes it virtually impossible to hold public officials accountable.

In other words, it is time to put the Earth back into the Earth Summit!

For more information read the Greenpeace paper “The Lessons of History, a new foreword to the “Beyond UNCED” paper originally published in 1992.

<http://www.greenpeace.org/politics/EarthSummit/html/docs.html>

GREENPEACE CHECKLIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL EARTH SUMMIT

Climate and Energy:

- Ratify the Kyoto Protocol.
- Commit to new public finance for renewables: to bring clean, affordable, renewable energy to the 2 billion people who currently live without electricity.
- OECD governments commit to an immediate target of 20% of their energy sector lending and support via their Export Credit Agencies to renewable energy development.
- OECD governments commit to ensure that all International Financial Institutions they support commit to an immediate target of 20% energy sector lending for renewable sources, and a phase out of support for conventional (including nuclear) energy sources within 5-10 years.
- OECD governments set domestic renewable energy targets of 20% within 10 years.
- All governments commit to phase out subsidies to conventional energy sources, estimated at \$US 250-300 billion annually, within 10 years, with a transition plan to ensure that developing country economies are not damaged.
- Immediately stop any proposed construction of new nuclear reactors.
- Stop the reprocessing of plutonium and the production of mixed oxide plutonium fuel.

Forests:

- Commit to allocate the necessary funds for ancient forest conservation and sustainable use under the Convention on Biological Diversity's Forest work programme.
- Immediate establishment of moratoria on logging and other industrial scale projects in all remaining large ancient forest areas and other forest areas with key conservation values until representative protected area networks have been established in accordance with the Precautionary Principle and the application of the ecosystem approach.
- Commit to implementation of immediate measures to halt ancient forest degradation and loss, and promote ancient forest conservation and sustainable use.

Genetic Engineering

- Give priority to agricultural practices that respect traditional knowledge and the environment.
- Implement the FAO Plan of Action to preserve and protect agricultural biodiversity.
- Adopt a new instrument to prevent patenting on life and oppose the WTO's TRIPS approach.
- Ratify the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

- Commit to allowing no irreversible releases of GMOs.
- Commit to public control of agricultural biodiversity.
- Provide international support for in situ biodiversity conservation, improving livelihoods of rural and urban communities in developing countries, and to protect their agricultural biodiversity.

Toxics

- Ensure corporate responsibility and liability for ongoing production and use of hazardous chemicals, and clean-up and compensation of victims of existing toxic hotspots such as Bhopal.
- Ratify and implement the Stockholm Convention on POPs.
- Ratify and implement the Basel Convention waste trade ban of 1995.
- Ensure corporate accountability to implement clean production and products.

Oceans

- Moratorium on fishing on seamounts, deep-sea ridges, plateaus and other areas of high biodiversity on the high seas.
- UN General Assembly establish a conference to negotiate an international agreement for the protection of marine biodiversity on the high seas.
- Genetic Engineering free seas - no intentional or unintentional releases of GMOs into the marine environment.
- No 'sustainable utilization' or 'management'/culling of whales as competitors to commercial fishing operations.
- Agree that WTO must not to oppose efforts of regional fisheries management bodies to impose trade restrictions to enhance compliance with multilaterally agreed conservation measures.

Disarmament

- Reduce military expenditure in favour of increased expenditure on sustainable development.
- New initiatives on disarmament, in particular in relation to nuclear weapons.

Other

- Agree that trade rules must be subordinate to environmental rules, and not the reverse.
- Commitments from all governments to ratify by WSSD, and ultimately implement, the Rio and post Rio environmental treaties, conventions and protocols that they have not yet signed or ratified.
- Make corporations and governments accountable through increased liability, accountability and transparency.

- Improve international environmental governance, including mechanisms for the effective implementation of MEAs, financial assistance for capacity building, and consideration of institutional reform.

www.greenpeace.org/politics/EarthSummit