

**Intervention of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands,
Dr. Jan Peter Balkenende,
at the World Summit on Sustainable Development,
Johannesburg, 3 September 2002**

Mahatma Gandhi once said, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." It is up to us to make the difference. The difference between poverty and development. Between destroying the earth and sustaining it. To make the difference we must be clear and decisive. Clear about the future we want. And decisive to make it happen.

Let us first of all be clear about our ambitions. We set ambitions for this Millennium. We now added crucial targets on sanitation and chemicals. Let's be clear about biodiversity as well. We must stop looting the treasure house of the Creation.

Let us also be clear about our principles. The Rio-principles and human rights and fundamental freedoms, for men or women, are non-negotiables. And let's be decisive. Education is a right and our best investment in the young generation. Boys and girls alike must be able to finish primary school. Within our ODA budget we will increase the allocation to education from 6 to 15 %.

Next we have our commitment to solidarity. Again nothing to negotiate, but something to be pursued decisively. Put your money where your mouth is. It is possible, as we know. The Netherlands has been living up to it for years already. We will continue to dedicate 0.7 percent of the Dutch GNP to development aid, and 0.1 percent to international environmental policy.

Let us also be clear about business. Business can generate financial flows many times greater than development aid. The investment schemes must be sustainable. Employers must offer decent terms of employment, comply with environmental norms and denounce corruption in all its forms. We should encourage business to commit them to accountability. Not because they have to. But because they want to, inspired by sustainable development. Inspiration that might be drawn from the Earth Charter.

We share the responsibility for the future. Therefore, I favour partnerships and involvement of civil society. They can support actions by governments. Responsibilities can also be differentiated. The degradation of the environment is largely on our account. So we will have to encourage sustainable production and consumption. The reform of unsustainable subsidies is a contribution to that end.

To achieve food security and poverty reduction we have to reform our agriculture. Developing countries must be able to benefit from increased access to our markets. We have to take decisive actions. The Netherlands together with other countries will launch a public-private partnership to improve market access in the form of institution and capacity building, especially in the field of food safety standards and quality control systems.

I talked about being decisive.

We've done the talking, so let's start walking!

The Netherlands will focus on water and energy and continue to support measures in the field of sustainable agriculture and bio-diversity. We

support these goals by raising our contributions to the Global Environmental Facility adding up to 93 million dollars.

There is a wind of change in Africa, expressed by NEPAD. We must all stand together to support this new leadership, committed to good governance and poverty reduction. Only in this way Africa can deal with the challenges of famine, conflict and AIDS.

I salute President Mbeki for his crucial role in making these changes happen.

More than ever before, the choice facing the world is a united future, or no future at all. The prospect of that united future, free of poverty and environmental degradation, is what has brought us here to Johannesburg.

We know what we have to do. So let's do it.

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