

Environment and Poverty:
Outcomes from the Fourth Global Civil Society Forum,
Kenya

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Statement of the Fourth Global Civil Society Forum to the 22nd Session of the Governing Council

3 February 2003

*Presented on behalf of the Forum by
Sr. Victor Hugo Ricco*

Civil Society provides fresh air, action, and advice to UNEP. We have gathered from all over the world and from different major groups to share our perspectives with you and delegates. We are grateful for having this opportunity, but we also believe it is time to enhance our participation in your important work for people and earth.

On behalf of the Global Civil Society forum, I have been given the honor to present a number of ideas and demands:

- The Forum welcomes the Strategy Paper on **UNEP relations with Civil Society**. But the strategy *must* be implemented. Most important of all is to transfer words into action.
- We want Forums to be convened prior to each Governing Council, also in the future. The main ideas of participation underlined in the proposal on a Global Environmental NGO Forum must be implemented. It is also important to open a possibility for nationally based CSOs to be accredited with and by UNEP.
- We also endorse the prompt creation of a CSO Advisory Panel to the Executive Director. The ED, on the basis of nominations from Major Groups, should appoint this panel.
- Further, preparatory consultations on national and regional levels are needed. UNEP National Committees and Regional Offices should help in this. Regional partnership with CSOs should be given increased funding.
- UNEP) is lagging behind on civil society relations.
- With regard to the **inter-linkages between poverty and the environment**, civil society supports the adoption of the "Poverty and Ecosystems: A Synthesis of Conceptual Framework" (UNEP/GC/INF/30), to analyse the linkages between poverty and the environment, in keeping with GC Decision 21/15.
- Civil Society recommends the Governing Council further examine the relationship between poverty and environment and develop a freedom/rights based approach to sustainable development and poverty reduction, in keeping with Paragraph 152 of the WSSD Plan of Implementation.
- Based on UNEP's conceptual framework on poverty and ecosystems, UNEP should consider further developing understanding of the inter-linkages between poverty and environment that puts people first and recognize CSO as agents of institutional transformation. They could help formulate guidelines for policy options and responses and tools for implementation at local, national and regional levels.

- In accordance with UNEP's conceptual framework, we must empower local communities by respecting, promoting and supporting the active participation of civil society in UNEP's approach to poverty reduction, using national strategies for sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies.
- On **Consumption and Production Patterns**, UNEP should have the mandate to develop, facilitate, and monitor implementation of the ten-year framework of programmes to promote sustainable consumption and production, in close co-operation with the Commission on Sustainable Development. Key challenges are:
 - Building clear political will and leadership at national and local levels
 - Enhancing multi-stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes through consumer information
 - Building capacity in developing countries to elaborate Sustainable Consumption and Production systems that support job creation, decent livelihoods and value traditionally sustainable practices
 - The development of an integrated approach for meeting human needs and key functions such as mobility, nutrition, shelter and so forth.
- On the issue of **cultural diversity and environment**, we would like to emphasise that culture is not a luxury of our development, but a precondition for sustainability and that it is not a prerogative of only a minority, but fundamental to all people.

As stated in the Introduction of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation, the respect for cultural diversity and human rights and fundamental freedoms is essential for achieving sustainable development.

We appreciate the work that UNEP has undertaken in this regard and strongly recommend a continued effort in the following areas:

1. We would like to propose that UNEP launch an Initiative on Cultural diversity and biodiversity and establish regional working groups to develop its work, in partnership with the CBD and other institutions, such as FAO, UNESCO and UNCHR, and civil society.
2. UNEP should also consider the development of an Internet portal on local and indigenous knowledge and assess the importance to cultural diversity and biodiversity, using an ecosystems mapping model, such as the Millennium Ecosystem approach, to protect cultural diversity.

These ideas are just a few of what came up during the Forum. As said, we are grateful for having been given this opportunity to present them to you. But as was also said, if you open the windows even further and let us truly participate with hearts and minds, we promise to contribute even more to the objectives we all support.

**Fourth Global Civil Society Forum
UNEP Headquarters, Nairobi
February 1-2, 2003**

**Declaration of the meeting, regarding the
22nd Session of the United Nations Environment Programme
Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum**

We, the participants, comprising representatives of civil society organizations from 40 countries, of the Fourth Global Civil Society Forum, held from 1 to 2 February 2003 at UNEP, headquarters, Nairobi, Kenya, and hosted by UNEP,

Recognizing that civil society is a diverse and multi-faceted collective, that not all civil society organizations were represented at the Forum, and that we do not have a mandate to speak on behalf of organizations not present,

Affirming that the present declaration serves to confirm our capacity and responsibility as world citizens to take the initiative in implementing strategies for sustainable development in the face of environmental challenges,

Recognizing the desirability of the partnership approach to sustainable development and the common but differentiated responsibilities of governments, UNEP and civil society,

Make the following declaration on the issues of the engagement of civil society in UNEP's work programme, the linkage between poverty and the environment, sustainable patterns of production and consumption, and cultural diversity for the environment.¹

¹ Although the recommendations of the Fourth Global Civil Society Forum reflect, in general, the consensus of the participating organizations, one Major Group noted that they were not in a position to accept the recommendations in their entirety.

1. With regard to the engagement of civil society in UNEP's work programme:

Recalling the Plan of Action of the World Summit on Sustainable Development recommending stronger focus on regional and sub-regional realities and priorities, as well as stronger emphasis on partnerships and co-operation with the civil society,

Referring to the Policy Statement of the Executive Director of UNEP to 22nd Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment (UNEP/GC. 22/9),

Referring to the Strategy Paper on Enhancing Civil Society Engagement in the Work of UNEP (UNEP/GC.22/INF/13),

Having considered the discussions during the Civil Society Forum prior to the GC 22 of UNEP,

The 4th Global Civil Society Forum **recommends to the Governing Council** in its 22nd session that:

- The Governing Council endorses the above Strategy Paper, and give the mandate to UNEP to implement its provisions
- The Governing Council increases the support for the functioning of the Regional Offices with special emphasis to their outreach activities in order to enhance the involvement of Civil Society Organisations in shaping UNEP's policy as well as on the implementation level.
- It be reaffirmed that Global Civil Society Forums are convened prior to each next session of the GC/GMEF, starting with the 8th Special Session of the GMEF to be held in Korea, as well as for the future GC/GMEF sessions in other regions respectively;
- Preparatory consultations are convened at sub-regional and regional level prior to the Global Civil Society Forum and the GMEF; preparatory consultations have to be held on national levels as well. UNEP National Committees where exists should play a substantial role in the preparation of national forums and bring the national conclusions to sub regional and regional level. In case the National Committees do not exist, their establishment should be considered (UNEP/GC.13/33 paragraph 2(f) from 1985, 15/1 paragraph III, and 15/42 paragraph 6);
- Increased funding and support to enable UNEP to develop and maintain regional and sub-regional partnership with civil society organizations; and their involvement in the development and implementation of UNEP's activities in the region;
- Nationally based CSOs should have the possibility to be accredited to UNEP, taking note of the need of UNEP to become instrumental on national level; and
- The Governing Council to endorse UNEP and its regional offices to develop Medium Term Action Plan for the implementation of the Revised Strategy Paper (UNEP/GC.22/INF/13) for the period 2003-2005 in consultation with international NGOs and UNEP National Committees.
- The setting up as soon as possible of the proposed CSO Advisory Panel to the UNEP Executive Director, as a complement to other forms of civil society involvement. Such a panel should be appointed by the Executive Director based on the nominations made through the Regional offices and major groups.

2. With regard to the Implementation of the Outcomes of WSSD regarding the linkage between poverty and the environment,

Mindful of the need to provide better linkages between the Millennium Development Goals aimed at Poverty Eradication and environmental commitments and targets,

Recalling that UNEP has a Mandate from the 21st Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to promote the understanding of the linkages between poverty and the environment on poverty eradication,

Recognising that a partnership approach is fundamental to tackle poverty and the environment and that therefore the need to engage with civil society and the grassroots levels must be truly addressed,

The 4th Global Civil Society Forum **recommends to the Governing Council** in its 22nd session that:

UNEP:

- Based on UNEP's conceptual framework on poverty and ecosystems, further develop the understanding of the inter-linkages between poverty and environment at all levels from a socio-economic perspective that puts people first and recognizes CSO as agents of institutional transformation and policy change.
- Engage civil society in UNEP's on-going work on GUIDELINES for policy options and responses and tools for implementation at local, national and regional levels.
- Conduct an assessment from micro to macro levels of the linkages between poverty and environment, including the impacts of globalization, and make recommendations to tackle these issues in future.
- Encourage national Poverty Reduction Strategies, where they exist, to better reflect the linkages between poverty and environment.
- Support the establishment of a legal framework for partnerships including adopting a multi-stakeholder process to ensure more a formal and lasting system of partnership processes.
- Support greater grassroots engagement and harnessing of local knowledge of poverty and environmental linkages, including supporting initiatives by Civil Society.

Governments:

- Support an integrated ecosystem management approach to understanding poverty and environment linkages.
- In accordance to UNEP's Conceptual framework, empower local communities through respecting and promoting the importance of local knowledge and supporting public participation, through such mechanisms as the National and Local Councils for Sustainable Development.
- Sensitize and train local communities in sustainable development principles and issues through information and capacity building, as a necessity and social incentive of social transformation that will free minds and attitudes of marginalized and vulnerable communities.

- Ensure the active participation of civil society in the approach to poverty eradication within national strategies such as PRSPs for sustainable development and national plans to implement the international environmental agenda.
- Focus on the links between social, economic and cultural rights and environmental rights to achieve sustainable development and further focus on enhancing the capabilities and sustainable freedoms of the poor. This can be achieved, in part, by strengthening international sustainable development law, such as ensuring MEAs contributing to eradication of poverty, and by transforming local, sub-national, national and regional legal regimes.
- Seek to transform current legal systems to incorporate issues of environmental rights and equity within national to international agreements, and establish a legal framework for partnerships, to adopt a multi-stakeholder processes to ensure more formal arrangement and lasting system of partnership processes.
- Review economic production and growth models and make adjustments to existing strategies and tools that are inclusive of the environment and technology with an emphasis on poverty eradication.
- Give specific emphasis to understanding micro-macro linkages, especially with regard to globalisation, through studies at the grassroots level and ensure transmission of their findings to international organisations.

Civil Society:

- Undertake a more active role in the implementation of the WSSD Plan of Implementation, notably in the implementation and strengthening of programs and policies related to sustainable development and poverty eradication, including initiatives which promote community-based sustainable use of biological diversity.
- Encourage the use of a 'carrot and stick' approach to poverty and environment, particularly in the area of health, through supporting government legislation and providing assistance to companies and organizations in complying with these agreements, such as through training and technology transfer.
- Continue their key role in providing education, knowledge and awareness raising, through *inter alia*, workshops and training programmes to empower the poor to better understand the linkages between poverty, the environment and human rights.
- Should co-ordinate activities relating to poverty and environmental areas more effectively. For example, southern NGOs need to address the negative impacts of globalization the poor more effectively.
- Serve as a bridge between the poor and public bodies and can help to build trust between these groups by helping to present a more bottom-up approach in tackling poverty and environment issues.

And that together, UNEP, Governments and civil society:

- Develop guidelines through partnerships between CSO, UNEP and governments. The many positive projects taking place at grassroots level need to be transmitted and incorporated into the policy development process.
- Further examine the relationship between poverty, environmental degradation and human rights violations and develop a rights-based approach to sustainable development and poverty eradication, in keeping with Paragraph 152 of the WSSD Plan of Implementation.

3. With regard to Implementation of the Outcomes of WSSD regarding sustainable production and consumption patterns, the Forum recommends that:

UNEP:

- Working closely together with civil society, should have a key role to develop and facilitate implementation and monitoring of the ten-year framework of programmes to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, in close co-operation with the Commission on Sustainable Development, bearing in mind the key challenges to remove existing barriers, namely:
 - The need for clear political willingness and leadership at national and local level
 - The establishment of multi-stakeholder involvement in decision-making
 - Building capacity among key decision-makers in developing countries to develop SPC systems that support job creation, decent livelihoods and value practices that are traditionally sustainable
 - The need to develop an integrated approach for meeting human needs for critical services and fulfilling key functions, such as mobility, nutrition, shelter, clothing, health, knowledge, leisure and security
 - The need to empower and strengthen capacity of civil society as an ally in the development and implementation of SPC solutions.
- The Governing Council should adopt the following policy initiatives for immediate implementation, taking into consideration the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities:
 - (a) Set effective and efficient targets and timelines for SCP based on human needs. Policy frameworks should be established that will include the policies described below, keeping in mind the Millennium Development Goals and the need to find SPC solutions that also serve poverty reduction.
 - (b) Implement policies for cost internalisation to reflect environmental and social costs and benefits in consumer goods and services through:
 - Ecological tax reform: placing the tax burden on resource use and away from labor, with specific arrangements to avoid adding an extra burden to the poorer sectors of society
 - Subsidy reform: removing subsidies for harmful production processes and placing them in support of social adjustment schemes in sectors such as fossil fuels, fisheries, agriculture and transport
 - Implementing extended producer responsibility measures.

UNEP and CSD should be mandated to monitor this process, and provide guidance on the national level on how to do this correctly.

Governments:

- Should demonstrate their strong political commitment to increase accountability and take measures to:
 - (a) Enhance corporate accountability through binding global frameworks.
 - (b) Create an information environment to empower consumers, based on the Rio Principles 10 and 15, the precautionary principle and the principle on participation and access to information and justice.

- (c) Implement sustainable procurement for public authorities' consumption of goods and services at all levels, from local to global.
- (d) Implement the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection.
- (e) Improve and enable UNEP's policies related to Major Groups' involvement with increased human and financial resources. This will enhance co-operation and improve partnerships with Major Groups to help carry out capacity building work and target setting.
- (f) The specific role of Consumer Organisations needs to be emphasised. Increase consumers' access to products and services that fulfill high social and environmental standards.
- (g) Improve mechanisms for knowledge sharing and information exchange at all levels.
- (h) Establish and improve policies to promote a culture of SPC among consumers through:
 - Capacity building that should include education and training for public authorities at all levels for consumers and for NGOs including youth
 - Public information and awareness campaigns (on waste, energy, water, transport, leisure), education, public debate and participatory decision making processes (such as Local Agenda 21), support of voluntary citizen initiatives and partnerships involving a wide range of actors (private sector, and other major groups such as local authorities, women, youth).

4. With regard to Implementation of the Outcomes of WSSD regarding cultural diversity and the environment

Recalling the mandate given to UNEP during the GC/GMEF at Malmö to integrate respect towards cultural diversity, and the Millennium Declaration which calls for the achievement of the full protection and promotion of social and cultural rights for all people.

Recognising that peace, security and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development as well as the respect for cultural diversity, are essential for achieving sustainable development, as stated in the Introduction of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Plan of Implementation,

Stressing that biodiversity and cultural diversity are at a dramatic stage of reduction. Languages, the carriers of culture, knowledge and natural resources management are under great pressure. 2500 languages in the world are in immediate danger of extinction. 60% of the world food consumption depends today only on 4 species of the over 7000 originally existent,

Acknowledging that strong evidences of linkages between biodiversity and cultural diversity exists, and that planning for sustainable management cannot disregard the relationship with the natural resource base,

Recognising that cultural is not a luxury of our development, but a precondition for it, that it is not a prerogative of only a minority, but fundamental to all people,

Acknowledging the importance of ethics and respect in matters of cultural diversity,

Taking note of the outcomes of the UNEP-UNESCO joint high level roundtable on cultural diversity, biodiversity and sustainable development during the WSSD,

Appreciating the work already done by UNEP in this field, especially through the publication "*Cultural and Spiritual Values of Biodiversity*":

The Fourth Global Civil Society Forum recommends that:

UNEP:

- Continue to integrate cultural aspects in all its programmes of work, in recognition that culture is a precondition of sustainability.
- Assess the importance of cultural diversity and biodiversity, using an ecosystems mapping model, such as the Millennium Ecosystem approach, to protect cultural diversity.
- Develop sample studies of remnant special ecological systems and life systems, in order to discover general principles for application in sustainable development.
- Launch an Initiative on Cultural diversity and biodiversity and establish regional working groups to develop its work, in partnership with other institutions, such as FAO, UNESCO and UNCHR, and civil society.
- Consider the development of an Internet portal to support and coordinate such an initiative.

Governments:

- Give a clear mandate to UNEP to pursue the proposed Initiative on Cultural Biodiversity.
- Promote the dynamic expression and creativity of diverse cultures, as well as the dialogue among these cultures. This promotion of culture should enrich debates in a global world, and not help to build barriers between cultures.
- Address the need to educate people, especially Youth, to appreciate and valorize their own cultures, raising awareness of the value and potential of local knowledge, through education, capacity building and inclusion of cultural and biodiversity concepts in educational curricula.
- Harmonize legal frameworks with article 8j of Convention of Biodiversity and the rights-based approach.

Civil Society:

- Strengthen existing programs for education, awareness raising and capacity building on cultural diversity and biodiversity, and develop new ones.

And that together, UNEP, governments and civil society:

- Promote a programme of actions in the field of cultural diversity and biodiversity, as for example the sustainable use of our ecosystem.
- Develop regional model laws for the protection of the Rights of Local Communities, Farmers and Breeders and for the regulation of Access to biological resources.
- Always remember that culture for biodiversity must be considered in a holistic manner, with ethical and spiritual values.
- Recognise the impact of production and consumption patterns on different cultures and the need to change consumption behaviour at all levels.
- Address the specific needs of urban cultures, which are a dynamic force with specific impacts and benefits.

AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT INITIATIVE OF NEPAD

3 February 2003

*Presented on behalf of African Civil Society Organizations by
Ms Grace Akumu
Executive Director
Climate Network Africa*

1. We, representatives of the African Civil Society, met in Nairobi, Kenya from 01-02 February 2003 in the context of the Fourth Global Civil Society Forum organized by UNEP during its 22nd session/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for civil society organisations to discuss recommendations to be integrated into the Action plan of the NEPAD Environment initiative, which is under preparation.
2. We note with appreciation that UNEP with support from the GEF, is putting special emphasis on Africa and NEPAD during this GC which is indicative of its determination to accelerate implementing the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg (South Africa) in August- September 2002.
3. We, the members of African Civil Society, commit ourselves to the vision of the sustainable development and environmental governance.
4. We note the framework for Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the NEPAD, which is being further developed into action plans for program areas.
5. Whereas, the framework for action provides a sound basis for the development of action plans, we noted significant gaps which include among others:
 - a. The five principles of the Framework are too broad and lacking in specificity to provide meaningful guidance for actions.
 - b. NEPAD can be more useful by increasing the level of implementation carried out through CSOs. These CSOs must be adequately funded to work with the communities.
 - c. CSOs are not represented on the Steering Committee on the Environmental Initiative of NEPAD.
 - d. The plan does not specify the role of civil society/NGOs.
 - e. The necessary integration between environment and social and economic development is not present in the action plans.
 - f. The social and economic dimension of poverty and environment is not clearly articulated in the programme area and does not reflect the ongoing initiatives on poverty and environment.
 - g. The Environment and Health action plan does not include activities on the most pressing health concerns of Africa, like HIV/AIDS and lack of access to clean water sanitation.
 - h. The imbalance in funding between Desertification and Climate change conventions are not addressed.

- i. The need for partnerships and building of frameworks to enable investments to take place is recognised sufficiently.
 - j. The potential to exploit synergies amongst existing conventions is not sufficiently addressed.
 - k. Empowerment of CSO's to take advantages of new mechanisms like the CDM to forge relationships and secure resources from industry and other partners needs to be achieved.
 - l. The definition of forestry needs to be further elaborated and the vision for this element needs to be more global.
 - m. The threats to biodiversity in Africa need to be expanded and issues like conflict, community access, cultural diversity and benefit sharing need to be included.
 - n. In respect of water resources the Dams and Development Programme and the recommendation of the World Commission on Dams needs to be integrated into the Action Plans.
6. We note with concern that the principle of participation by civil society is not included in the principles in the Framework. We therefore urge that this principle be recognised as the underpinning of +all action plans and that national governments include CSP's in their national NEPAD initiatives.
 7. We strongly believe that for the Governing Council to achieve sustainable development and environmental governance in Africa, it should take into account the recommendations made by the African Civil Society with respect to the NEPAD Environmental Plan of Action.
 8. We not that the overriding problem with previous development initiatives in Africa was implementation, therefore we believe that NEPAD can be very useful if it undertakes project implementation with the collaboration of CSOs.
 9. We recognize the need for adequate capacity for CSOs to be actively involved in the implementation of the NEPAD Environmental Plan of Action. We therefore recommend that a major capacity building initiative towards the CSOs and the communities is developed under the NEPAD Environmental Plan of Action.
 10. We acknowledge that eradicating poverty is a priority for achieving sustainable development in Africa. Accordingly, we civil society organizations of Africa, recommend that the NEPAD Environment Initiative Plan of Action fully addresses poverty eradication as a cross-cutting issue.
 11. We Civil Society Organizations, are in the process of establishing a structure of CSOs to enable our engagement in the NEPAD Environment Initiative Plan of Action. It is therefore our submission that CSOs should be represented in the various working groups, the steering committee and other decision-making mechanisms within the NEPAD process.
 12. We strongly believe that peace is a pre-requisite for sustainable development and call on African governments and the international community to adopt measures within the NEPAD Environments Initiative Plan of Action to ensure adequate conflict prevention and resolution of conflicts over transboundary natural resources management.

13. We urge the Governing Council to ensure that traditional knowledge, practices and innovations are included in the action plans for natural resource management.
14. We reaffirm that sustainable development requires active participation of women and men on an equal footing and at all levels of decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. We therefore, call for the integration of gender equality in all activities encompassed within the NEPAD Environmental Plan of Action.
15. We reaffirm our engagement with NEPAD, despite our insufficient involvement in its formulation, and urge African leaders to partner with African Civil Society.

Dated this Saturday, 01 February 2003 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Statement of the third UNEP Global Youth Retreat to the 22nd Session of the UNEP Governing Council

"Now and for the Future, Youth Action for Sustainable Development"

The theme for International Youth Day 2002, highlighted the increasingly important role that youth can, must and will play in ensuring a more sustainable world. We are full of ideas, energy and passion for the environment that we have utilized for positive action in our communities. Youth as a group is vulnerable to the degradation of Mother Earth - and yet we are important agents for change.

On this occasion of the 22nd UNEP Governing Council it is time for you to recognize us as full and respected partners in sustainability.

Youth participation

Youth are actively participating for a more sustainable world but are hindered by the lack of resources and funding. Governments should work towards building youth capacities by guaranteeing full youth participation of all national delegations, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the General Assembly. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, we submit that governments by this process can take advantage of the knowledge and experience of youth.

We request that governments implement the UNEP Long-term Strategy on Engagement and Involvement of Young People in Environmental Issues (UNEP/GC.22/3/Add.1/Rev.1). Foremost in this regard is to provide requested funding for the Tunza Trust Fund, which includes funding for national youth networks and councils, youth interns and junior professional officers at UNEP.

Furthermore, we request governments to increase the support both technically and financially to grassroots initiatives. We feel youth driven educational programmes are one of the most important initiatives that deserve recognition from governments.

To set an example in transparency; we plan to be accountable for the support we receive by developing evaluation mechanisms, from initial project development to final reporting.

We urge governments to adopt and implement a 10-year framework of programmes to reverse unsustainable consumption and production patterns as called for in the 3rd chapter of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. We commit to awareness raising campaigns for lifestyle changes at a community level and request governments to implement economic instruments to further encourage sustainable consumption. We support the UNEP YouthXChange programme as an excellent example of work in this field.

We request governments to mandate UNEP to develop an internationally binding framework for corporate responsibility and accountability including legally binding standards for the environment, human rights and labor. This is in accordance with paragraph 45.ter of the World Summit on Sustainable Development's Plan of Implementation.

Poverty and the Environment

Another significant issue addressed at the Johannesburg Summit was the link between the environment and poverty. As more than 1 billion people cannot provide for their basic needs, effective strategies to eradicate poverty are urgently needed. In line with this, we recommend two major steps to be undertaken:

- First, cancel the debts of Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and least developed countries by 2015 to help eradicate poverty.
- Second, promote equal access of products and services from poor countries to the global market place, ensuring that trade meets environmental and human rights agreements. One positive step in this direction has come from certain developed countries that eliminated tariffs and quotas on almost all products from least developed countries.

NEPAD

We call for the immediate commitment of governments to the New Partnership for Africa's Development and furthermore, the establishment of a youth unit at the NEPAD secretariat to actively incorporate youth in policy and decision making.

Environment and War

In relation to conflicts and the occupation of territories and countries, we propose that governments take concrete and measurable action to prevent environmental damage by creating and implementing relevant legislation in the framework of International Law.

Conclusion

Now and for the future; youth for sustainable development;

We commit to working towards a sustainable future, but will you help us achieve it now?

Participants of the 2003 UNEP Global Youth Retreat

Nairobi, Kenya

3 February 2003