

The Johannesburg Call

30 August 2002

A statement by local governments of the world at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, August 2002

We, the leaders and representatives of local governments from across the globe, gathered in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August 2002, commit ourselves to the sustainable development of our planet and people.

Since 1992, local governments have made significant strides towards realising the goals and aspirations of the Rio Earth Summit. Today, we pledge to intensify those local efforts to realising the aspirations, goals and targets of the Johannesburg Summit, as well as all existing international protocols and declarations, including Agenda 21, the Millennium Declaration and the Habitat Agenda. As the interface between government and people, we are dedicated to the attainment of a more just, equitable and caring world.

We realise that local actions alone will not save the planet. We therefore urge our national governments, representative international bodies and the United Nations to enhance our capacity and ability to launch a frontline attack on poverty and underdevelopment. Given our pivotal role in this universal battle, we also urge these national and international bodies to make all efforts to strengthen institutions of organised local government. In the African context, we call on all international institutions, including the United Nations, to work through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to support local government in the continent.

We call upon national governments to recognise local government as a vital sphere of government that is the most visible face of the developmental state.

We call for a new form of global solidarity where all like-minded individuals, organisations and spheres of government rally together to build a new tomorrow.

We are deeply concerned about the impact of globalisation at the local level, especially within the developing world and countries with economies in transition. We have witnessed firsthand the devastating effects of aspects of our international system on local communities and our local spaces.

We therefore call for a fundamental restructuring of international relations in order to realise a just and more humane world order. We believe that the current structure of the world economy limits local governments' ability to fulfil our developmental mandate. Inadequate access to international markets, an inequitable global trade regime, unsustainable debt, declining levels of Overseas Development Assistance and the digital divide impede our efforts to govern with authority and humanity.

We urge the world's states and international representative organisations gathered in Johannesburg in 2002 to heed the voice of international local government. As we venture into the new millennium, we commit ourselves to:

- Halving the number of people without access to safe water and sanitation;
- Undertaking active steps to address public health problems, in line with the WTO/TRIPS agreement;
- Improving access to affordable modern energy services;
- Increasing market access for goods from the developing world;
- Moving towards technology and knowledge partnerships in the context of a fair and accessible intellectual property regime
- Ensuring equitable access to quality education at all levels for all

We commit ourselves to achieving these targets by 2015.

We, as local government from across the globe, acknowledge that ours is not an equal, fair or just world. If international gatherings like this one are to make a meaningful difference to people's lives, we – the representatives of the people – must be bold and unequivocal about making changes. We recognise that without political commitment, nothing will be achieved. We therefore pledge our unwavering commitment to eradicating poverty, correcting the imbalances between the developed and developing world and fundamentally reshaping our world. We also commit ourselves to developing very practical, realistic Action Plans and to implement them through Local Action 21 programs to realise these goals. We challenge all Heads of State meeting in Johannesburg next week to do the same.

The time to act is now. Let us not lose this opportunity; there may not be another.

LOCAL ACTION 21

Implementation Framework for the post Johannesburg decade of Local Agenda 21

Ten years after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, Implementation of Agenda 21, the Rio conventions, and the Habitat Agenda is proceeding so slowly that the horrors of global poverty and environmental disruption are becoming ever more overwhelming. We demand, therefore, a profound shift in the current development model to one based on true equity and deep reverence for the processes of nature. We commit ourselves to the Earth Charter and the Melbourne Principles, and assert the following.

- Local Governments implementing sustainable development are determined to enter a decade of accelerated, effective action to create sustainable communities and protect the global common goods.

- Local Governments will work to ensure viable local economies, just and peaceful communities, eco-efficient cities, and secure and resilient communities able to respond to the change, while ensuring safe and accessible water supplies and protecting our climate, soil, biodiversity and human health.
- Local Governments call for Local Action 21 – the *motto* for accelerated implementation of sustainable development in the decade following the Johannesburg World Summit.
- Local Governments call for Local Action 21 – a *mandate* given by the World Summit on Sustainable Development to local authorities worldwide to engage in the implementation of local agendas and action plans.
- Local Governments call for Local Action 21 – a *movement* of cities, towns, and counties and their associations towards action for sustainability.
- Local Governments will reinforce their commitment to Local Agenda 21 and its implementation throughout the next decade of Local Action 21.