



G8 Environment Minister's Meeting Paris, April 2003 Communiqué

We, the Environment Ministers of the eight major industrialised countries and the European Commissioner responsible for environment met in Paris (France) from April 25 to 27, 2003.

Eight months after the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), a few weeks after the 3rd World Water Forum and its Ministerial Conference (Kyoto, Shiga and Osaka, Japan) and bearing in mind the upcoming G8 Summit of Evian, our discussions focused on least developed regions and countries, particularly in Africa, sustainable production and consumption, strengthening environmental governance and cooperation, as well as oceans and maritime safety.

On these various themes, specific attention has been paid to water issues, and notably to the issues of transboundary river basin management and integrated water resource management in Africa, water efficiency, governance principles for access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, and disaster prevention and mitigation. We note that the universal provision of safe drinking water is a complex global challenge requiring our ongoing attention.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the follow up of our Ministerial Statement on the World Summit on Sustainable Development adopted in Banff last year, as well as the Ministerial Declaration adopted before the conclusion of the 3rd World Water Forum, guided our work.

1) Africa

Rich by its people and cultures, its biodiversity, by the variety of its natural conditions, the African continent has defined a framework for sustainable development. This is the ambition and the meaning of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) adopted by the Heads of State and Government during the Lusaka Summit and further endorsed in the JPOI. The international community including the G8 Member States already made clear that they support the goals and principles of NEPAD and are determined to implement the Plan adopted in Johannesburg and, in particular, its chapter for Africa.

G8 Heads of State and Government welcomed NEPAD as a commitment by the African leaders to consolidate democracy and good governance, and to promote peace, security and people-centred development. They set out actions they will take in support of African countries that demonstrate commitment to NEPAD principles in the G8 Africa Action Plan agreed at Kananaskis. We, G8 Environment Ministers, welcome the work underway by the Senegalese presidency to develop an action plan on the environment in the framework of NEPAD in cooperation with national governments, appropriate regional African institutions and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

We particularly welcome the recognition of:

- the close relationship between environmental management issues and poverty reduction efforts, and
- the need to integrate these issues into economic development through the action plan implementation.

In the light of the work carried out within the framework of multilateral environmental agreements and the preparations for the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III), and following the 3rd World Water Forum and the WSSD, we consider access to safe drinking water and basic

sanitation, access to energy, reducing air and water pollution, combating climate change through mitigation and adaptation, desertification and deforestation, as well as biodiversity conservation to be priority fields for action.

With regard to water, we give full support to the WSSD objective to promote integrated water resources development and optimise the upstream and downstream benefits therefrom, the development and effective management of water resources across all uses and the protection of water quality and aquatic ecosystems. In this context, recognising that cooperation between riparian states on transboundary and/or boundary watercourses contributes to sustainable water management and mutual benefits, we encourage all those states to promote such cooperation. Particular attention should be paid to transboundary river basin management in African river basins including the Niger, Senegal, Nile, Okavango and Congo.

On energy, we will take action to improve access to energy services, while promoting the deployment of renewable energy sources and the transformational energy technologies including cleaner and more efficient fossil fuels, in a way that is compatible with sustainable development. We will work in accordance with NEPAD and, among others, through WSSD partnerships to deliver this and promote innovative market mechanisms.

We recognise the crucial role of biodiversity in the livelihoods of the poor and the importance of promoting its conservation and sustainable use in efforts to reduce poverty. We will continue to support transboundary cooperation, notably in the Congo basin where we are focusing on sustainable forest management, and will work with developing countries to help them fight illegal logging.

We will firmly continue to support efforts to mainstream action against desertification into relevant national policies and plans.

We also recall the interest of assisting research and capacity building for science and technology on environment and sustainable development in Africa, following a shared approach, in order to elaborate joint knowledge and advanced technologies.

We support a process by which the environment can be better taken into account in public policies of our African partners. We strongly support the development of sub-regional and national sustainable development strategies, which could be based on the integration of the environment into existing development frameworks, in particular Poverty Reduction Strategy processes, considering that such strategies represent good opportunities to make known and share with the various civil society actors the importance of the environment. Convinced that these strategies must be, rapidly, turned into concrete actions, we will endeavour to facilitate their implementation.

2) Sustainable production and consumption

In Johannesburg, our Heads of State and Government made a commitment, to encourage and promote the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift towards sustainable production and consumption.

In this context, we G8 Environment Ministers, will take the lead in the discussion, at the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), to consider how to best support these initiatives and progress to sustainable production and consumption, including by:

- supporting UNEP, within its mandate, to take an active role, working in cooperation with Governments, other relevant United Nations agencies and intergovernmental organisations and involving other stakeholders, in pursuit of the development of a 10-year framework of programmes in support of regional and national initiatives to accelerate the shift to sustainable consumption and production patterns, as set out in paragraph 15 of the Plan of Implementation;
- encouraging the further development and implementation of specific programmes at the regional and sub-regional levels;
- working with governments, financial institutions, local authorities, NGOs and the private sector.

In order to delink economic growth and environmental degradation, so as to promote both economic growth and environmental protection, through improving efficiency and sustainability in the use of resources and production processes, and to stimulate the use of cleaner, more efficient technologies and practices at the local level and in everyday life, we consider the promotion of partnerships and the involvement of all stakeholders as well as international agencies and organisations, as essential elements in the development of activities and programmes.

When developing or revising sustainable development strategies, plans or programmes, including local Agenda 21, measures for the promotion of sustainable production and consumption should be highlighted, in particular, where appropriate, the integration of the environmental dimension into sectoral policies, the promotion of local initiatives and the use of economic incentives. Public participation in decision-making will help ensure the implementation of these measures.

Attention should be given to the promotion of an integrated approach to policy-making at the national, regional and local levels for transport services and systems to promote sustainable development, including policies and planning for land use, infrastructure, public transport systems and goods delivery networks, with a view to providing safe, affordable and efficient transportation, increasing energy efficiency, reducing pollution, congestion and adverse health effects and limiting urban sprawl, taking into account national priorities and circumstances.

We recognise that improved understanding of the linkages between environment and health will ensure more effective policy responses. We will work together to assess and share knowledge in order to help build capacity at all levels in this regard.

We will encourage sustainable local production and consumption patterns which can help preserve landscape diversity and biological diversity, and contribute to poverty eradication. Tourism, sport, recreation and leisure activities, if consistent with environmental protection and social development, can also be engines for local sustainable development.

We recognise that it is essential to improve resource productivity. In that regard, we note with interest Japan's proposal to launch an international joint research project on economy-wide material flow accounts to develop a common measurement system of material flow, building on existing work at the international level.

Bearing in mind the increasing pressures on the limited freshwater resources in many parts of the world, water efficiency, integrated water resource management, more efficient use of irrigation water and demand management should be paid particular attention and mainstreamed into national, local as well as transboundary development plans. We should notably protect and use in a sustainable manner the ecosystems that naturally capture, filter, store, and release water, such as rivers, wetlands, forests, and soils. We are committed to assist those countries that demonstrate a political commitment to draft national plans for the integrated management of water resources and the efficient use of water by 2005.

Research, technologies and innovation are central to moving towards sustainable consumption and production. We believe new cleaner and more efficient technologies can contribute to ongoing efforts by countries to increase the quality of life, reduce pollution, improve resource efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and will play an important role in achieving the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. We note that, in the run-up to the Evian Summit, specific concrete and co-ordinated actions by governments to stimulate and facilitate the research and technological development of cleaner, more efficient energy use are being considered.

We stress the need to implement the commitment reached at the WSSD concerning a sustainable energy future, including – with a sense of urgency – to substantially increase the global share of renewable energy resources. In this context we welcome the offer of Germany to host a ministerial conference on renewable energy in June 2004.

We, G8 Environment Ministers, reaffirm our commitment to actively promote corporate environmental responsibility and accountability and support continuing improvement in corporate practices in all countries. While governments and international organisations should establish a supportive and enabling environment

for sustainable development, we welcome efforts by multinational enterprises, both in developed and in developing countries, to increase their contribution to the protection of the environment by continuing to develop methods to manage their operations in cleaner and more resource efficient ways, initiating dialogues with all stakeholders and reporting publicly on their efforts to do so.

We strongly support the successful completion of the World Trade Organisation negotiations. We see specific opportunities in the negotiations on environmental goods and services.

The greening of government at all levels is imperative. We will continue to work on the adoption of:

- public procurement policies that encourage development and diffusion of environmentally sound goods and services; and
- where appropriate, on a voluntary basis, effective, transparent, verifiable, non-misleading and non-discriminatory consumer information tools to provide information relating to sustainable consumption and production, including human health and safety aspects, bearing in mind that they should not be used as disguised trade barriers.

We acknowledge that environmental education is essential to meaningful public participation in the formulation of sustainable development policies. In this context, we welcome the adoption of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development at the 57th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Encouragement of public participation in concrete actions at the community level is equally important to advance and enlarge the efforts in promoting education on sustainable development at the country or global level. Consumers, citizens and workers must be informed about the challenges ahead and we will develop awareness-raising programmes on the importance of sustainable production and consumption patterns, particularly among youth and the relevant segments in all countries, especially in developed countries, through, inter alia, education, public and consumer information, advertising and other media, taking into account local, national and regional cultural values.

Finally, we consider that a common approach has to be elaborated in order to identify and develop indicators and indices to monitor the shift in consumption and production patterns, and invite the OECD to play a supportive role in that respect.

3) Strengthening environmental governance and cooperation

Pursuant to our Banff discussions, we recall:

- the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) Cartagena decision of 2002 on International Environmental Governance (IEG), which set an agenda to be developed and followed up, while defining itself as «the commencement of a longer-term enterprise to develop international understanding, commitment and resolve towards ensuring the sustainability of the global environment in accordance with the Rio principles»,
- and the JPOI, which asked the international community to fully implement the outcomes of the above mentioned Cartagena decision, and which stated that each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development, that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized and that all countries should strengthen governmental institutions, including by providing necessary infrastructure and by promoting transparency, accountability and fair administrative and judicial institutions.

In that context, we welcome the measures already agreed at the WSSD and in other relevant fora to strengthen IEG as regards:

Institutional structure. We support:

- current efforts to enhance universal participation for UNEP GC/GMEF and involvement of civil society in relevant international fora, bearing in mind ECOSOC rules and procedures;
- an increased coordination at the international level (broad policy guidance and advice of UNEP GC/GMEF with full respect for the independent legal status and governance structure of other entities, environmental mainstreaming within the United Nations system by Environmental Management Group, integration of the

environment in the development programmes of United Nations Development Group, UNEP/Global Environment Facility (GEF) Action Plan on complementarity) as well as at the domestic level (improved coordination at the national level of positions on, and implementation of, Multilateral Environmental Agreements - MEAs);

- strengthening the scientific base of UNEP by improving its ability to monitor and assess global environmental change; and

- the current efforts to strengthen compliance with and enforcement of MEAs as well as current efforts undertaken by MEA bodies to strengthen their cooperation.

We recall the necessity to strengthen the framework for coordinated international action on sustainable development, ensure integrated follow-up in the UN system of WSSD, Monterrey and the Millennium Development Goals and also to ensure that the limited resources available are deployed in the best possible manner for optimal effect.

Financing. We recall our discussions in Banff where we underlined the urgent need to improve the financial situation of UNEP, which remains hampered by insufficient and unpredictable resources, by such ways as providing it with more predictable funding, a broadened base of contributions, more efficient and effective use of available resources, and greater mobilisation of resources from the private sector and other major groups. We also recall ongoing efforts and welcome progress in this regard. We note that a Member State may contribute based on a voluntary indicative scale (for which a pilot phase has been launched) or any other basis it identifies.

We underscore the primary role of the GEF as a financial mechanism for MEAs, and welcome its replenishment as well as the extension of its mandate to new MEAs, approved at its 2nd Assembly in Beijing.

We reaffirm the importance of WSSD's call for the CSD to place greater emphasis on actions that enable implementation at all levels and to limit the number of themes addressed at each session, as well as the importance of enhancing the linkages between the strengthening of IEG and the other aspects of sustainable development governance:

- at the policy level, notably by further developing cooperation with World Trade Organization and the International Financing Institutions,

- as well as at the programme level, particularly in the area of capacity building.

Water is a key area for action in that respect, since it is crucial to poverty eradication and economic development. The international community has pledged at the WSSD to halve by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. It was also agreed in the plan of implementation that integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans should be prepared by all countries by 2005. In order to achieve these objectives, all sources of financing, both private and public, national and international, must be mobilised and used in the most effective and efficient way. Progress towards an institutional framework that is stable, transparent and based on the rule of law must be achieved. In managing water, we should ensure good governance with a stronger focus on household and neighbourhood community-based approaches. With these in mind, we call on each country to develop strategies to achieve the objectives on water and sanitation. As regards developing countries, and countries with economies in transition, we stress our commitment to support their efforts to that end.

With respect to flood prevention and management, the exchange of experience between experts should be increased. Setting up regional centres or networks as well as intensifying exchanges between existing centres could play an important role and should therefore be further examined.

4) Oceans and maritime safety

Life on our planet is dependent upon the oceans. Seas and oceans resources are not inexhaustible and not of an infinite regenerative capacity. Therefore at their Summit in Okinawa (2000), G8 Leaders had agreed that « strengthening international maritime safety is vital for the protection of the ocean environment, a global heritage. »

We will continue our efforts in ocean and coastal protection, including sustainable fisheries, the conservation of biodiversity, the strengthening of marine science, the reduction of marine pollution, control of invasive alien species, and greater maritime safety.

Despite the measures taken during the last years, the serious accident of the oil tanker PRESTIGE has again demonstrated that the existing rules on tanker safety and pollution prevention need to be further improved. The damage to the marine and socio-economic environment and the threat to the livelihood of thousands of persons are of serious concern.

We acknowledge the commitment made in the JPOI urging the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to consider stronger mechanisms to secure implementation of its instruments by flag states.

We recall the invitation of the UNEP GC/GMEF for IMO to consider establishing a supplementary compensation fund for oil pollution victims, as well as, for remediation of environmental damage.

We urge the IMO to take a lead in implementation of necessary measures. We underline the importance of integrating environmental considerations into the maritime transport policy of the IMO and recall the need:

- to apply appropriately to maritime transport the principle that environmental damage should be prevented, reduced and controlled, as well as the polluter-pays principle;
- to invite IMO Member States to work towards, among other issues, accelerating the phasing out of single hulled tankers.

We express our serious concerns and welcome further G8 cooperation in addressing these issues.