

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**OPENING REMARKS
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ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)**

THIRD PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF UNCSD

Rio de Janeiro, 13 June 2012

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy to see you here in the beautiful city of Rio.

Let me thank our hosts for providing us with this spacious venue and the accommodating facilities.

Now it is up to us to make the best use of them.

Two weeks ago, we had an intense week of negotiations in New York. We saw real progress. And, I don't actually mean in the number of paragraphs that were agreed. Rather, it is in the way that negotiators discussed and clarified issues and showed flexibility.

Most important, we all witnessed a shared commitment to a successful outcome of Rio+20 and to doing our part for a sustainable future. It gave me confidence that we will indeed have a forward-looking document that charts the way to sustainable development, for years to come.

So the spirit was encouraging and I hope it continues and leads to concrete outcomes here in Rio.

For that, we must drastically accelerate the pace. We only have three days of negotiations... three make-it or break-it days.

Now, is the time to look at the big picture, to focus on key deliverables.

What can we concretely agree upon now – in this moment – that would validate all our effort?

A big responsibility is on our shoulders. The whole world is watching. We simply cannot afford to falter.

This planet is our most profound common denominator. Simply put, its health and well-being unite us and remind us that ultimately, what benefits you, benefits me and what benefits me, benefits you.

At the last informals in New York, I told you in my closing remarks that we need an outcome document that represents a “step change” on the road to sustainable development.

I laid out some deliverables such as:

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development;
- Sharing experiences and knowledge of green economy policy options, as tools to advance sustainable development and poverty eradication; and
- Action-oriented outcomes in areas such as energy, water, oceans, food security, cities, women’s empowerment, education and others.

I also said that we need to make further progress on the means of implementation. And we must ensure that the Framework for Action is not merely a document that looks good on paper.

In this regard, we must reaffirm our past commitments. And we must strengthen financing, technology transfer and capacity building in support of sustainable development.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of strong engagement from civil society and the business sector.

Only by working together can we achieve real results.

Governments bear primary responsibility but cannot do it alone, neither can other stakeholders working in isolation.

This needs to be a compact, a partnership.

Here and now, we must all commit to action.

Our commitments define who we are. They are symbols of our integrity.

This is why at the end of the Conference, we will announce all voluntary commitments and initiatives that have been made that complement the official commitments.

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Time is precious. And we have little left to ensure we deliver.

We need ambitious and historic outcomes.

So let us use our time well.

And let us deliver a vision and action framework that guides us to a future that honours all humanity on our one shared planet, our most profound common denominator.

Thank you.
