

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

**CLOSING REMARKS
BY
MR. SHA ZUKANG
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE 2012 UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)**

3rd Intersessional Meeting for Rio+20

New York, 27 March 2012

Ambassador Ashe,
Ambassador Kim,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues,

As the informal negotiations and the inter-sessional draw to a close, I want, first of all, to express our deep appreciation to the Co-Chairs.

Ambassador Ashe and Ambassador Kim have worked with you through day and night to complete the first reading and to push forward with the negotiations.

They deserve our thanks.

Under the guidance of the Co-Chairs, delegations have likewise worked hard on the outcome document.

Many of you have hardly had a break, as you often continued with your group consultations, after the plenary meetings.

Your dedication shows to the world how much you care about this conference, and about the opportunity it brings.

There is no doubt that you want to make the best of Rio+20 and ensure that world leaders renew political commitment at Rio.

Many of you have underscored the urgent need for changing course, for changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns, and for building a sustainable future - a future we all want, for us, and for our children.

Listening to the discussions from my office, I have been deeply touched by your commitment to the success of the Conference and moved by your spirit of candor and collaboration.

While on occasion some colleagues felt worried about the pace of discussion and about the introduction of additional issues to the zero draft, I have come to believe that this is a necessary phase of consensus building.

If anything, this broad-ranging discussion demonstrates the magnitude of the challenges our world faces and the eagerness of the stakeholders for shared action.

Simply put, the seven days of hard work have laid the foundation for consensus.

Frankly, as Conference Secretary-General, I can no longer join you as a negotiator.

And I miss the days when I could sit alongside you to move the process forward.

But not being personally involved has also afforded me an opportunity to observe.

So let me say this: I deeply appreciate delegations' positive approach for trying to understand the different positions.

I deeply admire your strenuous efforts to bridge the divergence.

In this room, there is a sense of purpose in seeking common ground.

Looking ahead, I am also keenly aware of the complexities of the negotiations yet to come.

It will be an arduous process.

The compilation text is long; the days of negotiations are limited; and the negotiations will engage colleagues from the capitals.

The General Assembly has called for a focused political document.

The discussions over the last week and a half have shown that Member States are committed to a high level of ambition for Rio+20, anchored on action.

Many argue that the outcome of Rio+20 should not merely be a repetition of Agenda 21 or other treaties or agreed outcomes.

They stress that the Rio+20 outcome should build upon the earlier achievements.

It should focus on actions and concrete steps forward that address implementation gaps and that give shape and form to our vision and to the future we want.

There is no support for business-as-usual.

I also hear repeated calls for bold action, bold ambition.

I agree and I appeal to all of you:

- to blaze a new path in negotiations,
- to be bold, imaginative, and innovative; and
- to inspire and be inspired.

I hope delegations will try your level best to accomplish deliverables of fundamental significance to poverty reduction and the common wellbeing of all nations, in priority areas:

- such as food
- water
- energy, and;

to deal with emerging challenges:

- such as urbanization,
- jobs,
- oceans, and;
- disasters.

Let us focus on action relevant to country circumstances in a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, be it called a framework for action or a roadmap.

Let us take bold steps in partnership.

I have also heard many of you call for sustainable development goals, and build the right institutional framework, including a sustainable development council and a strengthened UNEP.

This is a moment calling for a sense of history, a vision for our shared future.

This is a moment when what you say and do counts.

This is your moment – your finest moment. Please seize it.

As Conference Secretary-General, let me assure you that we at the Secretariat stand ready to support the Co-Chair, the Bureau and all of you in this difficult, complex and yet historic undertaking.

We are ready and we are here for you.

Thank you.
