



UNITED NATIONS

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

**PRESS BRIEFING FOR BRAZIL-BASED MEDIA**

**Rio de Janeiro, 13 June 2012**

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

Thank you for taking part in this press briefing.

We now have exactly one week until the opening of the Rio+20 Conference.

Let me extend my appreciation to you, the Brazil-based media, for your extensive coverage of the Conference and of sustainable development in general, over the past months.

Your coverage has been helpful in raising awareness and expectations for what will be achieved here. And it is encouraging that sustainability is such an important issue for your audiences.

It is no exaggeration to say that Rio+20 is an historic event.

This is evident in the total number of participants involved in the high-level commitment, the broad engagement of civil society – also known as Major Groups – and the dedication of the host country, and the seriousness of negotiations and the topics being discussed.

Over the next ten days, tens of thousands of people will descend on Rio with the same goal: to renew our shared commitment to sustainable development and to act upon what we agreed. There is growing expectation for a transformative outcome – an outcome that can lead to more jobs, improved living standards for all while preserving our shared planetary home.

Over 130 Heads of State and Government and many more Ministers will sit down to finalize negotiations and adopt a focused, action-oriented political document.

Roughly 20,000 members of civil society will be engaged in various activities of the Conference.

Over five thousand of them are Brazilians – proof of the high value Brazilian civil society places on this Conference.

In all, some 50,000 people are expected in Rio to attend the Conference or take part in various side events.

And what can we expect as a result?

Foremost, Member States are expected to launch a process for establishing Sustainable Development Goals. This will be one of the main outcomes of the Conference, and we can all be proud of it.

The Millennium Development Goals have mobilized the international community around shared objectives for more than a decade.

I expect no less of the SDGs. They should be the guideposts that lead the way to the future we want.

There are also calls for committing, in Rio, to SDGs that are of fundamental importance to poverty eradication and sustainable development, such as job creation, food security, energy, water, oceans, and sustainable cities.

Beyond the SDGs, there are expectations for: one, agreed framework for action in priority areas of green economy; two, means of implementation, and three, strengthening institutions for sustainable development. While negotiations are still going on – in relation to SDGs and all these other issues, I am optimistic they will be resolved in time for Member States to adopt the Summit outcome.

I should be honest with you: negotiations in New York were challenging. Even still, the determination and dedication to work together for the common good, were encouraging.

From today, we begin the final stretch in the marathon of the preparatory process. Delegations will clear brackets and fine-tune the text prior to the official Conference opening next week.

But we must drastically accelerate the pace of negotiations. The whole world is watching us. And we cannot afford to let them down.

The most challenging issues should not come as a surprise: framework for action and means of implementation – development finance, capacity building and technology transfer.

The United Nations Secretary-General has appealed to negotiators to focus on the Big Picture, the must-haves, and to rise above narrow and short-term interests. There is too much at stake: nothing short of the future well-being of humanity and the planet we call home. Make no mistake – Rio+20 must inspire all nations and all stakeholders to act and act now. And each one of you can help reinforce this message.

That is why Rio+20 is different. It is not focused on new treaties or other legal agreements. It is focused on tangible action. Another critical Rio+20 deliverable, in addition to the Outcome Document, is the registry of commitments. Governments, international organizations, major groups, including NGOs and business and industry, are launching new voluntary commitments and initiatives for sustainable development. They will complement

the official agreed actions and will be compiled into a compendium of voluntary commitments and initiatives.

This will be an important part of the Conference legacy.

These new initiatives are being launched at the numerous side events organized by international civil society and various organizations. Many of them will promote sustainable transport, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. I invite you to attend the events and determine what initiatives you would most like to share with your readers.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With Rio+20 set to open in a week, time is precious.

We need an ambitious, historic Outcome Document, and strong commitments that generate positive global change for decades to come.

And we should not underestimate ourselves. Nothing in the world has been – or will ever be – stronger than collective human ingenuity harnessed for the purposes of good.

Let's use these final days to turn our most aspirational visions – of prosperity, equality, inclusion, opportunity and social responsibility – into reality.

Thank you very much, Ladies and Gentlemen.

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