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OUTCOMES OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Paper by Steve Gibson

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper is intended to give Committee preliminary briefing on the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The paper is a summary provided by the Institute for European Environmental Policy. The statement by the Secretary of State is appended at Annex 1.
- 1.2 DEFRA advise that a high-level officials meeting will take place w/b 16 September, and a Communications meeting w/b 23 September, after which we will have a better idea of when detailed analysis will be available from Government. A verbal update will be provided to the Committee meeting on this matter.
- 1.3 A copy of the (54) page implementation plan resulting from the Summit can be made available to members on request.
- 1.4 Finally, members may wish to note the increase in funds for Darwin projects announced by the Prime Minister, and attached at Annex 2.

2. Summary provided by IEEP

- 2.1 The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) drew to a close on 4 September 2002 with a speech by South African President Mbeki. Following extensive negotiations, starting on 26 September, the Summit produced mixed results, with new commitments on biodiversity, fisheries and sanitation to some extent overshadowed by disappointments on renewable energy. While many regarded the WSSD as offering little new and substantive progress, the Danish Presidency has publicly concluded that the Summit was an overall success and that the challenge now is to turn the agreements into concrete action.
- 2.2 Heads of State and Government adopted a 4 to 5 page Political Declaration reaffirming their commitment to sustainable development and their collective responsibility to a 'humane, equitable, and caring global society'. Building on the results of Rio, they acknowledged the importance of major international conferences, linking trade ('Doha Development Round'), financing for development (outcomes of the spring 2002 Monterrey meeting) and governance issues. The Declaration re-affirms the need for inclusive,

democratic and accountable systems, and re-emphasises the need to monitor progress towards sustainable development.

- 2.3 The detailed negotiations in fact focussed on a Plan of Implementation covering a number of key areas, and including a few targets and timetables, though arguably some missed opportunities. New commitments include the following:
- i. **Poverty** - to halve the number of people without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015, and to significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020;
 - ii. **Consumption and production** - to promote the development of a ten-year framework for programmes supporting sustainable patterns of consumption and production;
 - iii. **Climate** - increasing the global share of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency. No targets were specified due to US blocking, but the EU has subsequently announced a 'coalition of the willing' to promote targets without US help;
 - iv. **Chemicals** - operationalise a new globally harmonised system for classification and labelling of chemicals by 2008, and by 2020 minimise the harmful effects on human health and the environment from the production and use of all chemicals;
 - v. **Natural resources** - to significantly reduce biodiversity loss by 2010, to produce integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005; to encourage the ecosystem approach in marine management by 2010, to restore depleted fish stocks to maximum sustainable yields by 2015 'where possible', while establishing a regular UN system for marine monitoring by 2004, and establishing representative marine protection networks by 2012;
 - vi. **Trade** - re-affirmation of the need for voluntary environmental impact assessment, access to information and the precautionary 'approach', as well as the urge for greater coherence between the multilateral trading system and environmental agreements. The importance of maintaining the integrity of both trade and environmental instruments was recognised;
 - vii. **Globalisation** - to ensure inclusive and equitable globalisation by encouraging greater corporate responsibility and accountability;
 - viii. **Means of implementation** - to facilitate greater flows of foreign direct investment and meet the overseas development aid target of 0.7 per cent of GNP;

ix. ***Institutional framework*** - re-affirmation of the need to strengthen the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and commitment to start implementation of national sustainability strategies by 2005.

2.4 In addition there were numerous side events, often promoted by industry. One side event attracting considerable attention involved the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and Greenpeace together recommending that the Kyoto Protocol be ratified.

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STATEMENT BY MARGARET BECKETT - 2 SEPTEMBER 2002

The overall outcome of this Johannesburg Summit is truly remarkable. We had to give it our best shot - to get the best deal we could - and we did. It's easy to make promises about the future: it's more difficult to take responsibility for the planet. I am in no doubt that our descendants will look back on this summit, and say we set out on a new path.

Sustainable development is the greatest challenge of our times. Johannesburg shows emphatically that not only do we need global solutions to global problems, but that we can achieve them. And that environment and development policy must be mutually reinforcing.

Tonight, after a marathon ministerial negotiation, we have effectively finalised the Programme of Implementation. This is a victory for everybody who wants to put sustainable development at the heart of everything we do.

Right from the outset Tony Blair has set a lead on sustainable development, not least with the 5 path-breaking UK sectoral initiatives for this summit. We were ambitious - and rightly so.

As in all negotiations, we aimed high, and we ended up with more than we might have expected. I have always said that this summit should be more than fine words; it should be about a concrete step-change. This summit has clearly achieved targets and action plans for sanitation, fish stocks, chemicals, biodiversity and natural resources.

Johannesburg has seen the launch of a wide range of partnerships to deliver real outcomes in the pursuit of the agreed aims of the summit. This is a major new development in the international system, with government, business and NGOs accepting mutual responsibility for sustainable development.

The **headlines** are:

- i. agreement on water and sanitation, which should save millions of lives, halving the number of people without access to clean water and basic sanitation by 2015;
- ii. better management of the oceans, action to conserve fish stocks, and development of marine protected areas;
- iii. action to protect biodiversity and natural resources;
- iv. action plans for sustainable production and consumption which will set us on a path to using resources more efficiently;
- v. strong reaffirmation for action to ensure that in the review of the trade round, environment concerns are properly taken into account;
- vi. agreement on joint action to improve access to sustainable energy services for the two billion people who lack them;

- vii. agreement on the urgent need to increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix;
- viii. increased technological co-operation to fund support for developing countries;
- ix. agreement to phase out energy subsidies which inhibit sustainable development; and
- x. a commitment to monitor, follow up and report transparently on how we meet our commitments on targets and action plans;

We came to Johannesburg to make a real difference to people's lives. I believe that we have succeeded. This is a victory for multi-lateralism, building on the success of Doha, Marrakech and Monterrey. Johannesburg was a critical step along the way and we must, and will, keep moving forward.