

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

The President's Office

*Address by
His Excellency Abdelaziz Bouteflika
President of the
People's Democratic Republic of Algeria*

*At
The World Summit
On Sustainable Development*

Johannesburg, 2 September 2002

Mr. President,

The holding of this Summit on the South African land is a tribute to your great country that plays an active role on the international arena. It is also an evidence of the African continent's mobilisation to take part fully to the international community's endeavours aiming at materialising the concept of sustainable development.

Mr. President,

Ten years after the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the challenge of sustainable development still needs to be addressed from the threefold point of view of lack of growth, poverty aggravation, and speeded up environment deterioration.

Despite the growing awareness of the risks posed by such trends on the economic and ecological security of the globe, the main changes needed to enter actually an era of sustainable development remain to be performed.

The development problematic has indeed been identified, and the solutions discussed and agreed on. Agenda 21, as a platform for action, remains topical and fully pertinent.

The basic objective is therefore to implement the platform in a coordinated manner at the national, regional, and international levels, building on the lessons of the last decade.

This period has highlighted the fact that environmental deterioration endangers the very prospects of growth. It has also focused the limits of partial and isolated approaches. This is why; it is necessary –when it comes to development policies and international cooperation- to consider the various factors that resulted in altering the natural cycles and affecting the vital resources such as air, water, forests, biodiversity, oceans and coasts.

Actually, the economic, social and ecological stakes are now global as they question the future of mankind itself. They require therefore the combination of efforts by the international community as a whole. Such efforts should tend to streamline and strengthen the international system to make it secure the sound bases of a sustainable and equitable development.

In this respect, the progress made in the fields of trade and development financing at the Doha and Monterrey Conferences should be consolidated and completed by the search of the necessary technological, human and institutional means for the effective implementation of Agenda 21.

Reinforcing national, regional and global environmental governance turns out to be indispensable. While pursuing the process of working rules and norms out, a better coordination among all the stakeholders will be needed.

More specifically, a better harmonisation is to be ensured between the United Nations Environment Programme, the Commission on Sustainable Development, and the monitoring bodies of the various conventions in force. The agreement in principle reached recently to develop the Global Environment Facility into a financial mechanism of the Convention to combat drought and desertification, and the replenishment of its resources at an increased level are encouraging steps and a

source of satisfaction for us who are experiencing serious problems of drought and desertification.

The scope and nature of the challenge of sustainable development imply the combined contribution of the States, the private sector and civil society in partnership. Civil society and the private sector play an increasingly vital role that is worth our encouragement and support. Algeria had the privilege, some months ago, to host a Conference of developing countries NGOs on sustainable development, which reached significant results.

It is also of great importance to make sure that market mechanisms take into account the need to preserve the environment, which will be twice profitable because the environment offers large investment opportunities that will contribute to wealth generation and to a sustained and qualitative economic growth.

Enhancing the multilateral framework, and promoting partnerships with civil society and the private sector will favour bold initiatives required in specific fields having a direct impact on environment, living conditions and economic growth.

In this regard, it is cardinal that our plan of action be based on firm commitments at the national, regional, and global levels, to taking concrete steps to address desertification, land degradation and deforestation. It also must give high priority to a more rational response to our countries' growing needs in terms of water and energy, through an optimal valorisation and an efficient management of these resources. Finally, fighting the deterioration of biodiversity and all forms of pollution must also be stressed on and integrated in our decision-making.

All these actions will certainly produce positive impact on poverty reduction, and will favour the emergence of schemes of production and consumption meant to be more respectful for nature and the needs of the future generations.

The issue of sustainable development in the African continent is addressed by a recent initiative of the African Union, now known as NEPAD. This is based on the concept of partnership with private or public-sector players inside and outside Africa. This undertaking is part of the global project of restoring and protecting the ecological asset of mankind. While aiming at extricating Africa from marginalisation, and eradicating poverty, NEPAD has the ambition to highlight Africa's contribution to the safekeeping of the planet's ecosystems.

Mr. President,

The Summit, by its scope and the high level of attendance, offers us an exceptional opportunity to achieve together the decisive advances required by the imperative protection of our planet, because the future of mankind is at stake. The potentials and means are indeed available to build a new civilisation where the human beings will finally live in harmony with themselves, and in symbiosis with their natural environment.

The community of Nations is expected to prove equal to such a wholesome endeavour. I am confident that the outcome of our proceedings will open such a hopeful prospect.

I thank you.