



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

STATEMENT BY

**H.E. ALHAJI ALIU MAHAMA
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA**

AT THE

**WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT (WSSD) JOHANNESBURG**

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MR. PRESIDENT,
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE
UNITED NATIONS,
YOUR EXCELLENCIES,
DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

It is with great pleasure that I express to you my delegation's deep gratitude for the warm welcome extended to us since our arrival in this beautiful city. We applaud you, Mr. President, for the leadership you have provided in the process leading up to this important Summit which we hope would shape the course of international cooperation for development for decades to come.

Ten years ago, world leaders and civil society groups assembled in Rio de Janeiro for the UN Conference on Environment and Development. The Rio Conference resulted in the adoption of Agenda 21, a comprehensive programme of action to be implemented by governments, development agencies, business and civil society, in every area where human activity affects the environment.

Rio held many promises, given the high expectations at the time, including the promise of a calm world enjoying the peace dividends of the cold war, the increasing awareness in the international community of the imperative need to address poverty in the South, the emergence of globalisation as the engine of world growth, and the promise of economic reforms and democratisation in Africa.

However, a decade later, it has become abundantly clear that the high hopes of Rio have remained largely unfulfilled and so much remains to be done. The gains of globalisation have not been equitable; economic reforms have not yielded the desired growth as poverty has not reduced; trade liberalization has become the target of protests as Africa's already small share in world trade has regressed into insignificance.

All these negative trends notwithstanding, the national, regional and global assessments have undoubtedly indicated that some modest progress has been made since 1992.

Mr. President, Ghana has since Rio ratified most of the conventions for the protection of the environment. As a result, we have developed a comprehensive legislative and institutional framework as well as social policies to meet the requirements of Rio. Ghana has also created a Ministry of Environment with agencies to coordinate issues on various conventions. The Environmental Protection Agency has been legally empowered to monitor activities likely to have adverse effects on the environment. Environmental Impact Assessment for all economic and commercial projects is gradually becoming an accepted norm.

Under the conservation and management of natural resources of the country, programmes have been put in place to conserve biodiversity, manage biotechnology, protect oceans and coastal waters and their resources, protect freshwaters and their resources and manage chemicals as well as hazardous waste. Other areas are management of liquid and solid radioactive waste where Ghana has acceded to the relevant conventions and treaties as well as their associated protocols.

Mr. President, Ghana's experience over the past decade has shown that achieving these goals is difficult even where the commitment exists at the national level. We are therefore convinced that a supportive international environment in the areas of macro-economic policy-making, market access, debt relief and other conditions for leveraging private capital flows, capacity building and human resource development, are critical for us to accelerate the growth of our national economy.

Implementation issues are key to reversing the uneven progress since Rio. Ghana therefore expects this Summit to secure a commitment to increase funding for project financing for participating countries to develop physical infrastructure as well as science and technology. This will require specific partnerships with developed countries and providers of private financial flows as has been proposed in the plan of implementation.

We also believe that effective implementation requires greater emphasis on local, national and regional initiatives. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) represents a key framework for Africa in this respect and must be fully supported by the international community. International support will also be critical in such areas as the protection, management and development of coastal, marine and forest ecosystems of Africa.

In the light of our national experience, we welcome the roles assigned to the UNEP, UNDP, UN HABITAT and others in the plan of action and the proposed extension of their mandates to further support capacity building at the local level in developing countries. By strengthening and extending the mandate of these institutions, it is believed that they will constitute the most solid mechanism for implementing the global agenda for sustainable development.

Ending poverty remains the over riding objective for ensuring Sustainable Development. This Summit should focus on delivery by negotiating a tangible programme of realistic outcomes with time bound measures, monitorable deliverables and identified financing sources and levels to implement agreed outcomes that will accelerate the achievement of sustainable development goals including those of the Millennium Summit.

Mr. President,

What we agree at this Summit is of cardinal importance. But even more important is what we do in the post-Summit period. We must put an end to the endless debate on the challenges of development. We must exercise the courage of our convictions to change our world through bold leadership and committed partnerships, not through pious decisions that are never implemented. And we must agree to mutual accountability of actions and outcomes for sustainable development. Let us leave Johannesburg with the resolve to exercise leadership for the sake of all humanity, born and unborn.

Thank you, Mr. President.