

The World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

**Speech by Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen,
President of the EU, for the Plenary on 2 September 2002**

Check against delivery

Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

We are gathered here in Johannesburg for a distinct purpose - to take action against poverty and step up our protection of the environment.

And I am here to reaffirm the commitment of the European Union to combat poverty, to protect the environment and to contribute to ensuring free trade and sustainable development. We must make globalization a positive force for all.

I am here to represent the wishes and intention of the European Union and its Member States as well as Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey.

Before I continue, I would like to thank president Mbeki and the people of Johannesburg for their grand hospitality. And I also wish to thank Secretary General Kofi Annan for his determined leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our world has always been full of challenges, great and small. One of the biggest challenges of our time is poverty. We must fight it!

We must fight poverty because human decency requires it. Because hope for each individual is essential for human dignity. Because it is unsustainable, and unacceptable, that 15 percent of the world's population dominate the world's wealth and receive 80 percent of its income.

The European Union has three messages here in Johannesburg:

First, our top priority should be to eradicate poverty through sustainable economic growth and increased market access.

We believe that a key factor towards a cleaner environment and sustainable development is to raise standards of living in the developing countries. And we can achieve this without detriment to our environment.

Free trade and increased market access to all nations in the world is key to achieve this. That is why the EU will work hard for a comprehensive and early conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda. And we are ready to take further steps.

The EU has already agreed to free access for all goods, with the exception of arms, from the least developed countries. It is time for others to follow suit.

Furthermore, we will support developing countries in building up their capacity to benefit from free trade negotiations and market access.

Because – when trade advances, poverty retreats.

But trade alone is not enough.

The second part of the EU message is that the industrialized world must increase development aid and finance. More resources are needed.

The richer countries should live up to their long-standing commitment to reach the 0.7 percent target for development assistance.

We must cooperate with the developing countries in order to improve education, health, public administration and services. We must fight HIV/AIDS and other major diseases. We must foster an environment where private initiative and business can thrive. We look forward to developing close partnerships on these goals.

The European Union already provides the highest level of official development assistance to developing countries. And we will increase our combined development assistance towards the 0.7 percent target.

In the years until 2006 the EU will increase its development assistance with more than 22 billion Euros. And from 2006 onwards with more than 9 billion Euros annually. We urge all international partners to follow our lead towards the UN goal of 0.7%.

Even more important is mobilization of domestic resources and foreign direct investments.

That is why good governance is essential for sustainable development. Sound economic policies and solid democratic institutions are crucial.

All countries should observe fundamental freedoms, democracy and rule of law. It is necessary in order to create the best conditions for business and sustainable growth.

When aid and trade are linked to good policy, more people are lifted out of poverty.

Our third main message concerns our environment. The world we live in.

If we don't enhance the protection of our environment and ensure sustainable use of our natural resources all of our other initiatives will be wasted.

We have an obligation to do the right thing – take steps to secure biodiversity, safe chemicals, clean water and sanitation, renewable energy and our climate.

The EU has already ratified the Kyoto Protocol. We support the establishment of clear targets on water and sanitation, energy, biodiversity and chemicals. We support programs for sustainable consumption and production.

A key challenge is to solve the serious problem of providing clean drinking water and sanitation to every village, town and city on the planet. This should be our primary goal.

By doing this we could save many million lives every year. We could prevent hundreds of million people from suffering from serious diseases each and every year.

“And how much would this cost?” you may ask. It would be a one-off expense of around \$200 billion. But it may very well be humanity’s best investment to achieve development and sustainability. We have the technology and talent. It is achievable.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Aid and trade. Good governance. A better environment. These are the key elements in the European Union’s call for a global deal in Johannesburg.

Let us make a deal which provides the developing countries with better opportunities and our environment with a better protection.

Let us invest our energies in economic growth and development of new technologies. And let us use this growth and technology to the benefit of all people and the world environment.

Growth and development are vital to us all – because it is only when people can feed themselves and their families, see their children go to school and grow up with a real future, and face life with a feeling of hope, that they too can afford themselves the luxury of taking care of their forests, their air, their water and their food.

Let us create this link between economic growth and protection of our environment.

Let us make a deal which could replace despair and darkness with hope and light for hundreds of millions of people.