

Friends of the Earth International Political Declaration

Johannesburg, South Africa, August 26 2002

We, the members of Friends of the Earth International, a federation of environmental groups, with members in 70 countries and more than 1.1 million people in collective membership in the five continents, ask governments at the WSSD, to affirm the following principles in their Political Declaration:

- The present neoliberal economic model, is making our world unsustainable. Environmental and Social problems have worsened since the Rio conference, It is imperative to reverse this trend, towards the sustainability of our planet.
- There can be no sustainability for the North without sustainability for the South. Equity, particularly gender equity, is at the core of sustainability and it often requires the empowerment of peoples, communities, regions and countries.
- The recognition that individual and collective fundamental human rights is the foundation on which sustainability rests. Every human being has the undeniable right to all means required for a dignified existence. It is the duty of governments to guarantee these means.
- Environmental racism is a human rights violation. The equal right of all communities to a healthy environment must be affirmed and all governments must commit to ending environmental injustices.
- Sustainability can only exist in a democratic world; therefore, governments must take back the power that they have given to transnational corporations and give it back to the peoples that they represent.
- Sovereignty and free determination of peoples, is a prerequisite for Sustainability. It is imperative, to ensure effective participation mechanisms for civil society, particularly local communities in decision making on land and resource use policies.
- The social and environmental damage generated by the exploitation and use of resources, has generated an ecological debt from the north to the south. This debt must be recognized, reduced and

stopped.

- The cancellation of the financial debt of the Third World is a necessary requirement for sustainability.
- Cultural and biological diversity is an essential precondition for sustainability. Therefore, no investments or development projects that undermine this diversity should be considered. The health and stability of different ecosystems is essential for life.
- Climate change is among the greatest risks facing humanity and is undermining the stability of societies and economies. An urgent shift to renewable sources of energy is essential.
- Current developments in biotechnology present potential risks to the environment, agriculture and human health. A global moratorium on GMO releases into the environment should be established. The Cartagena Protocol must be ratified and national biosafety frameworks established.
- Clean water, a fundamental ingredient for life, is being reduced in many parts of the world. An urgent effort must be made to guarantee the existence of enough clean water for an harmonious existence of ecosystems, peoples and other species.
- The different life species are the result of million of years of evolution; therefore no commercial enterprise can claim ownership to any one of them. There should be no patents or other intellectual property rights granted on life.
- Peace is essential for sustainability. Peace requires not only the absence of war but also the fulfillment of individual and collective needs. Governments must move to abolish the military industrial complex. There can be no sustainability without peace and no peace without sustainability.
- Corporations must be accountable to all of those whose well being they affect. An international agreement on corporate accountability, including liability, transparency and rights for communities and citizens, is essential for securing the sustainability of the planet.

- The trade system must be reviewed and amended to achieve fairness, justice and environmental sustainability. Export-led development must be ended and instead local economies must be strengthened.
- International Financial Institutions often support projects in contradiction with the Río principles. They must assume investment criteria, in support of sustainability. Besides, international negotiations must prioritize multilateral spaces.
- Multilateral Environmental Agreements must never be subordinated to WTO rules.
- Corporate led globalization does not and will not lead to poverty alleviation, moreover it is undermining biodiversity. The UN must particularly be careful not to be hijacked by corporations.