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- Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

In mapping our future towards the WSSD and beyond, we should recall the vision presented in the Malmö Ministerial Declaration, which emphasized that:

"At the dawn of this new century, we have at our disposal the human and material resources to achieve sustainable development, not as an abstract concept but as a concrete reality. The unprecedented developments in production and information technologies, the emergence of a younger generation with a clear sense of optimism, solidarity and values, women increasingly aware and with an enhanced and active role in society - all point to the emergence of a new consciousness. We can decrease poverty by half by 2015 without degrading the environment, we can ensure environmental security through early warning, we can better integrate environmental considerations in economic policy, we can better coordinate legal instruments and we can realize a vision of a world without slums. We commit ourselves to realizing this common vision."

This vision of opportunities and optimism should guide us towards the WSSD and beyond.

The theme of the Stockholm Conference in 1972 was the human environment. Its outcome was the establishment of UNEP. The Rio Summit in 1992 on environment and development, and was based on the overarching concept of sustainable development. In follow up to the Rio Summit the Commission on Sustainable Development was established.

The Johannesburg Summit is about sustainable development. The Summit has four important features.

- It should be the Summit of implementation. There is the urgent need to address the gaps between the commitment and implementation. The Summit should become a milestone for breathing new life into the implementation of Agenda 21, and other outcomes of the Rio Summit.

- It should be the Summit of partnership. Local, national, regional and global partnership should be strengthened among governments, organizations and all stakeholders.

- It should be the Summit of responsibly prosperity and opportunities for all. Clear commitment should be made to eradicate poverty. Globalization must (the) benefit all. Environmentally responsible action should generate a sound environmental resource basis for promoting equity and equality in economic and social development.

- It should be the Summit of integration. Environmental policies and economic and social development policies should become more coherent, and integrated into policies for sustainable development.

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Overall, it should be the Summit for concrete action to realize those goals. A Johannesburg Programme of Action or a "Global Pact" should be developed, setting out targets with measurable benchmarks.

Ten issues should be addressed in determining the components of the programme of action or the Pact. UNEP has been working actively on these issues, and looks forward to contributing to the WSSD, and its outcomes.

Firstly, assessment and monitoring of global changes should be strengthened. We need to map the future course of action and policies on the basis of scientific information and analysis. IPCC has been an excellent example of the science-policy linkages to address global climate change. Millennium Eco-system Assessment is another good example of important assessment of ecosystems. GEO-3 provides an authoritative assessment of global environmental changes and implications of such changes for policy-making purposes.

Secondly, we cannot over-emphasize the importance of capacity building. Capacity building should be further promoted at all levels in all pillars of sustainable development. The GEO process has involved a network of assessment and monitoring in countries around the world, and contributed to enhancing capacities of participating institutions in developing countries, and countries with economies in transition. UNEP provides national governments with advice on policy, law, technology, and in key areas of institution building, and environmental management. We will work further to ensure that environmental policy works for sustainable development

Thirdly, technology progress and scientific findings must be used for the benefit of all humanity. Technology can help find a solution, if there is information on its availability, and terms of transfer. UNEP through its International Environment Technology Centre in Osaka, Japan seeks to overcome this barrier. The use of technology is linked to scientific analysis, risk assessment and awareness, and ethical responsibility. Clean production, increasing energy efficiency, decreasing wastes and better use of water - all require environmentally sound and responsible use of technology, and technology transfer.

Fourthly, the links, between health and the environment, need to be addressed. Water is a primary concern, as it sustains peoples' living and welfare, and enables them to work for economic and social development. Water is critical also for sustaining the environment, and its sustainable resources, which are the basis for economic and social development. A plan of action should be developed to provide legal and technical assistance for better use of water resources. UNEP is working to address these problems, through integrated water resources management. UNEP's Water Policy provides a strategic direction for its work on water. The regional seas programmes and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities provide concrete measures to address the interface between freshwater, coastal areas management, and marine environment.