

**STATEMENT BY MRS. VIJAY THAKUR SINGH, COUNSELLOR IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF  
THE 56TH UNGA UNDER AGENDA ITEM 98(A) ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21 AND THE PROGRAMME FOR THE  
FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF AGENDA 21 ON OCTOBER 30, 2001**

Mr. Chairman,

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Iran on behalf of G-77. We have heard with great interest the perceptive remarks of Under Secretary General, Mr. Nitin Desai, and join others in congratulating him on his appointment as the Secretary General of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

2. The Johannesburg Summit is a landmark in our journey to achieve the goal of sustainable development for all. The Summit must, in our view, mark a definite shift away from rhetoric and words to concrete actions and measures to implement commitments in a time bound manner.

3. An international consensus already exists on the basic principles, concepts and pillars of sustainable development. These were agreed upon at the UN Conference on Environment and Development, nine years ago, at Rio, where the global partnership on environment and development was launched, the principles for this partnership enunciated, and Agenda 21 adopted, as the comprehensive blueprint for action to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. The Rio principles and Agenda 21 still remain relevant. For developing countries, economic growth and poverty eradication remain the overriding priorities. We strongly believe that at WSSD, we should not attempt to re-negotiate Agenda 21.

4. At Johannesburg, India would seek to address issues related to the full implementation of Agenda 21, the difficulties and constraints encountered in its implementation and to the exploration of practical ways and means of implementing Agenda 21. The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should continue to determine the nature of our respective undertakings and commitments.

5. At the UNGA Special Session in 1997 to review the implementation of Agenda 21, it was acknowledged that considerable progress had been made at the national levels in implementing Agenda 21. At the same time it was acknowledged that there was an urgent need to address the disappointing lack of fulfilment of the international commitments voluntarily entered into by developed countries either to assist developing countries or to meet their own obligations on account of their historical industrialisation as well as their current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. We recall this not to find fault but to draw attention to the factors that have constrained the implementation of Agenda 21.

6. Domestic action is important but, given the limited resources and lack of institutional capacity in developing countries, they require international assistance in their efforts directed towards sustainable development. We hope that at Johannesburg, we can agree on time-bound commitments on the means of implementation, particularly on transfer of environmentally sound technology on favourable & concessional terms to developing countries, and on making financial resources available to them. Equally important is an enabling international environment supportive of development that ensures the

participation of developing countries in norm setting and economic decision-making processes as well as a fair, rule-based and non-discriminatory trading system. We hope that the International Conference on Financing for Development at Monterrey will make available to the developing countries stable and predictable financial resources for development, and that the Doha WTO Ministerial meeting will bring the much needed development dimension into trade issues.

7. We believe that UNGA resolution 55/199 and the organizational session of the Prepcom in May this year provide the road map to the Johannesburg Summit. We support the “bottom up approach” that has been agreed upon. In India, we have begun preparations for WSSD and established a 3-tier institutional structure, including a High Level Committee chaired by the Minister for Environment and comprising NGOs, academicians, scientists and other major groups. India participated in the South Asian sub-regional meeting held in Colombo in September and looks forward to the Asia-Pacific regional meeting in Cambodia in November. We believe that the the outcomes of regional meetings, the decisions of the Conference of Parties of the Multilateral Environment Agreements, contributions of the major groups, the results of the International Environment Governance process and the UN Forum on Forests should all feed, well in time, into the preparatory process to enable the Summit to take effective and coordinated decisions.

8. Governance issues, including international environment governance, have to be examined in the broader context of governance for sustainable development. While considering environmental governance, we must recognise the existence and the role of several other international institutions, which contribute to the process of sustainable development. Any governance structure that ignores this primary consideration would be out of tune with realities and would not work.

9. Mr. Chairman, we have daunting tasks ahead of us and there is no luxury of time. We hope that the Johannesburg Summit will re-invigorate a global partnership that takes into account the special needs of developing countries and contributes to the achievement of the Rio objectives and the targets of Millennium Summit. India, on its part, will contribute constructively to make WSSD a success.