



Scottish Executive Environment Group

**The World Summit on Sustainable  
Development 2002: Reports from the  
Scottish Civic Delegation**

March 2003  
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## FOREWORD

Sustainable development matters to the people of Scotland. That is why I attended the World Summit in Johannesburg last year. I want there to be no doubt that government in Scotland is committed to sustainable development at the highest level.

In Scotland, we have made important progress in recent months – making sustainable development an integral part of the Executive's Spending Review 2002, massively increasing our ambitions for the generation of electricity from renewable sources and setting new targets for recycling and composting – but we must keep up the momentum, and our engagement in the World Summit has helped us to do just that.

The World Summit reminded me how important it is that we drive forward sustainable development, not only because of the benefits for the people of Scotland, but because we also have a responsibility to tackle poverty and environmental degradation internationally.

While in South Africa we made real progress with the proposal for ScottishPower, the Department of International Development and the Government of the Eastern Cape to explore the potential of a green energy project in Eastern Cape. This aim is to assist with access to new electricity supplies, show local people the potential of renewable energy and develop skills in operation and maintenance. ScottishPower is well equipped to export its skill and expertise in developing wind farms and this type of project illustrates how Scottish business can become part of the sustainable development solution.

Community participation is central to sustainable development and environmental improvements. So, I was impressed to meet a community leader in Soweto who has turned a wasteland that was a haven for crime, vandalism, drug taking and all kinds of other activities into a conservation area that is used for the voluntary support of 200 young people. He is keeping them away from a life of crime, and involving them in a community regeneration project. Initiatives of that sort, which help young people to take responsibility for their community, augur well for the future.

The absolute highlight of my visit to South Africa was a visit to Banareng Primary School in Atteridgeville Township in Pretoria. There I met an outstanding and inspirational head teacher, Pauline Sethole, who has almost single handedly turned around school performance by creating an 'edible curriculum' as she calls it. In this extremely poor area, the hot meal provided by the school, from produce grown in the school garden, is often the only meal they get. It is a very real example of an eco-school and I hope that the email link which we established with one of Scotland's eco-schools, the Royal School of Dunkeld, will only be the start of Scottish support for Banareng and other schools, and a further boost to Scotland's important role in the development of eco-schools world-wide.

These are my impressions of the Summit. The Scottish Civic Delegation also travelled to Johannesburg and made an excellent contribution in sharing Scottish ideas and in learning from others. This document contains their impressions of the Summit and their views on how Scotland can help to achieve the outcomes.

While the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit did not generate the excitement of Rio de Janeiro in 1992 it clearly pushed sustainable development higher up the international agenda. And important commitments, targets and timetables were agreed.

But the targets and ambitions of the Summit must not be seen as maximum standards. I am determined that in Scotland we see them as the minimum contribution we can make in achieving sustainable development both at home and abroad.

**We can, we must and we will do more.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. McConnell', with a stylized initial 'J'.

**JACK MCCONNELL**  
**First Minister**  
March 2003

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## INTRODUCTION

The World Summit on Sustainable Development took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 26 August to 4 September 2002. It brought together tens of thousands of participants, including heads of State and Government, national delegates and leaders from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses and other major groups to focus the world's attention on actions to achieve sustainable development.

The First Minister, Jack McConnell, attended to represent Scotland within the UK Delegation and to reaffirm the Scottish Executive's commitment to sustainable development both at home and internationally. The Executive also supported the attendance of a Scottish Civic Delegation to make sure that the views of Scottish society were heard and that Scotland's participation would bring real benefits at home.

The Delegation was drawn from Scottish environmental NGOs, local authorities, children, social justice NGOs, business and bodies involved in overseas development. The delegates were chosen to achieve a balance of established leaders and fresh faces with particular commitment and dynamism.

The members of the Scottish Civic Delegation were:

- **Stephanie Wiseman**, Scottish Earth Champion from Lunnasting Primary School in Shetland
- **Ian Russell**, Group Chief Executive of ScottishPower
- **Kevin Dunion**, Chief Executive of Friends of the Earth Scotland
- **Belinda Miller**, Local Agenda 21 Co-ordinator at Aberdeen City Council
- **Dr Donald Bruce**, Director of Society, Religion and Technology Project of the Church of Scotland
- **Damian Killeen**, Director of the Poverty Alliance

Delegates were free to attend the events at the Summit that were most relevant to their interests and were asked to report back the lessons of the Summit to their own particular sector.

This document contains the reports of the Scottish Civic Delegates, their impressions of the World Summit and their thoughts on what needs to be done in each of their sectors to progress sustainable development in Scotland.

More information on the World Summit on Sustainable Development, including the official report and a summary of the outcomes, can be found on the internet at [www.johannesburgsummit.org](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org)

## **Stephanie Wiseman, Age 11, Scottish Earth Champion, Lunnasting Primary School**

Throughout the whole trip to Johannesburg the Earth Champions, Peter, Tim, Rhys and I, all met Tony Blair, Margaret Beckett, Jack McConnell, Robert Swan and Michael Meacher. We met Robert Swan at the Ubuntu Village where he gave a big speech about the "Mission Antarctica". We all found out that, a few years ago, he and some other people sailed over to Antarctica and cleared up all the rubbish and brought it back to the UK to be recycled. We also met Michael Meacher there. We interviewed him about what the government was doing about saving the planet. I asked him "what is the government doing about renewable energy in new houses?" I noticed that he didn't give me a straight answer and I never got a chance to ask again.

I think everything we saw was really interesting, especially the Water Dome which was all about different kinds of water pumps and ways for African people to get fresh, clean water to drink and wash themselves with. I liked the idea of the Hippo Project. It was a big tank that had a long handle so if a family needed some water that was quite a while away then, instead of the women and sometimes children carrying buckets on their heads, they would push the big tank along as if it were a pushchair. It carries up to about 90 litres of water in it. The best idea, I think, was the roundabout pump. Children sit on it and spin round like you would on a roundabout. At the same time, it pumps water up into a big water tower where it is stored until needed.

I hope that after the Summit, people throughout the world will have become more aware of environmental issues and start trying to help save the planet.

This is what I do to help make a difference:

- I switch off any lights that aren't being used
- I recycle everything that I can
- I try to walk or cycle everywhere unless where I'm going is miles away
- I don't litter
- I've stopped most of my friends from littering
- I take shorter showers than I used to because I figured out that it uses less water and less energy.

Anybody can use these ideas if they would also like to make a difference because every little thing helps.

My favourite experience was at the Eco School that Jack McConnell and I visited. The school had a massive garden with vegetables for making into school dinners, and plants for making into medicines. So if the children came to school ill and didn't have access to medical treatment at home, the school would be able to provide them with the correct medication. There were also flowers that the school could sell to local people to make a bit of money. They also recycled old tyres by making them into plant pots and hanging them outside. The people there were very friendly and laughed a lot. At the school, I got to experience my first African choir dance.

During my trip, I have learnt a lot about the ways of life in Africa. Like how the schools are different to ours. The fact that some people have to build their houses out of scraps of tin. And that families are so poor. In Soweto, which is a pretty modern and poor shanty town, a little boy came and begged me for 50 cents. I was pretty shocked by that.

## **Ian Russell, Group Chief Executive, ScottishPower**

The World Summit on Sustainable Development was never going to be as ground breaking as the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, where the concept of sustainable development was embraced internationally for the first time. But Johannesburg achieved its own successes – adding focus and momentum to those visionary goals from 10 years ago. While global targets for renewable energy were not specifically on the Johannesburg agenda, the need to achieve the Kyoto Protocol targets was restated and given fresh impetus.

The hallmark of the Summit was a pragmatic approach, which fuelled an agenda for action in the short and medium term to tackle some of the fundamental sustainable development issues, in particular measures to alleviate poverty in developing nations.

Agreements were reached to reduce by half the number of people without access to sanitation by 2015 and also to radically reduce the numbers without access to clean water. Together these represent a significant breakthrough in the war against hunger and disease, for those two billion people without access to clean water or basic sanitation and the 13 million people in Southern Africa who face extreme food shortages due to drought.

A clear message from the Summit was that we all must develop more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. Richer nations, like Scotland and the rest of the UK, can lead by example in this area. Taking electricity as an example, this means using cleaner forms of generation, transmitting and distributing power efficiently and reducing energy use by adopting energy efficiency measures in business and in the home. It also means reducing consumption of materials generally and minimising waste through recycling and reuse of resources.

A key strand of tackling global poverty will be enabling developing nations to benefit from trading in the global economy. Lack of energy, however, remains a key barrier to economic development in the world's poorest nations, while access to electricity plays a crucial role in supporting economic growth and transforming social welfare. Currently, two billion people worldwide do not have access to electricity. Developing countries, which have three-quarters of the world's population, account for just 25% of world electricity consumption. The world's 25 richest countries, with a population of 800 million, have a per capita electricity consumption and production capacity 100 times greater than the three billion inhabitants of the 40 poorest countries. Addressing this imbalance will require the global community to make trade-offs to ensure access to sustainable and affordable electricity for the world population. From a sustainable development point of view, having no electricity is the worst-case scenario.

Until now, the development of electricity has been closely linked to local availability of cheap energy sources, such as water, coal, gas or oil. Where those resources are not available, people may use firewood or dung as fuel sources in the home, creating local air pollution and deforestation problems. All forms of energy must therefore be considered to achieve mass availability of electricity. Without electricity there is no development, no improvement in standards of living, no access to modern health services and no access to the Internet and other telecommunication technologies – effectively excluding electricity-deprived areas from the benefits of globalisation.

Equal access to the benefits of electricity stands at the heart of sustainable development. For communities in sparsely populated areas, the most practical options are likely to be off-grid, distributed renewable power systems. The e7, a group of nine utilities from the G7 countries, is supporting projects of this nature to promote the use of sustainable technologies and provide people in previously unserved areas with access to electricity. A large part of these projects involves 'human capacity building' – teaching communities how to build, operate and maintain small-scale electricity systems. ScottishPower is extending its involvement in this area by supporting an e7 sustainable development project in the Galapagos Islands. In addition, in line with the Scottish Executive's interest in developing links with the Eastern Cape, one of the most deprived areas of South Africa, we have taken initial steps to examine the feasibility of leading a renewable energy project in the region.

Renewable technologies such as solar, wind and geothermal, however, remain relatively expensive and cannot provide sufficient electricity to meet demand in developing cities without other forms of generation. To address climate change while enhancing global access to electricity, it is imperative that low or zero carbon emitting technologies are utilised. These include efficient combined cycle gas turbine plants, new advanced fossil fuel technologies such as coal gasification, fuel cells and biomass, in addition to wind, geothermal, hydro and solar. It is possible the future will bring fossil plants with carbon capture technologies, to ensure best use can be made of the world's abundant coal resources.

To achieve sustainable energy systems in developing nations, the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) contained in the Kyoto Protocol may have a prominent role to play. The CDM rewards investment projects in developing countries which have no control obligations for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, by earning both the investor and the host country Certified Emissions Reductions (CERs). The CDM has the potential to generate massive international transfers of capital, technology and expertise and would provide incentives for developing nations to adopt greenhouse gas minimising technologies, rather than proceeding with cheaper GHG-intensive developments. In effect, this would enable developing countries to build electricity capacity with the least environmental impact, rather than following in the footsteps of the world's richer nations, which now have to undertake a radical review of their energy policies and generation capacity to fulfil their Kyoto commitments.

While access to electricity is the overriding energy issue in the developing world, the number one challenge for richer nations is to provide affordable and reliable supplies of electricity, with minimal environmental impact. Cleaner power sources, efficient use of energy and an increasingly interconnected society will be the key components in achieving this aim. The UK has taken a leading position on global climate change, going beyond the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in its domestic targets and, in his speech, Prime Minister Tony Blair said that to reverse the effects of global climate change a 60% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions world-wide may be necessary. This would require massive investment in renewables and stronger measures to reduce demand and encourage efficient use of energy.

Within the UK, Scotland is the pioneering force, through a combination of political will, geography and willingness in the industry to drive forward change. The Scottish Executive's proposed target of meeting 40% of the nation's electricity needs from renewable sources by 2020 is a challenging one. As the UK's leading windfarm developer, with 11 established sites in the UK and Eire, ScottishPower is supporting the Executive in its aim to keep Scotland at the forefront of the renewables renaissance now taking place. Currently we have renewable energy projects totalling approximately 500 megawatts (MW) in the planning process – more

than any other UK developer – and environmental assessments on our next round of eight windfarms will begin before the end of 2002.

In order to achieve Scotland's target for renewables and encourage improvement in related areas such as energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty, a partnership for progress needs to be developed between national and local government, the business world, NGOs and the people of Scotland. In addition, there is a requirement for integration between the sustainable development aims of energy policy and the economic brief of regulation. The benefits of competition must be balanced against achieving security and diversity of supply and environmental objectives. Although developments in wind turbine design have helped to improve the economic viability of wind power, continued support will be needed for renewable energy in the medium term, along with funding for the additional development work that will be necessary to bring wave, tidal, solar, biomass and other forms of renewable energy into the marketplace.

Cooperation between developers, planners, NGOs and local communities will be required to deliver the requisite number of renewable megawatts over the next 15 years. This will mean an approach from developers which is sympathetic to local people and ensuring that renewable energy developments, such as windfarms and small-scale hydro-electric plants, create community benefits. On the other side of the coin, it will require the planning authorities and local communities to embrace such projects and play a constructive role in the planning process.

It must be recognised also that network development will be required to support renewable energy developments. A long-term strategic plan which spreads the cost of network reinforcements between the developer and the network operators, possibly incorporating regulatory incentives for operators, would hasten the growth of renewable energy. But again, accelerated development would only be possible with the cooperation of the planning authorities. In the interests of fuel diversity, supply security and network stability, there is a limit to the extent that renewable energy can be used to displace large base load plants. Efficient gas-fired plants, along with cleaned-up coal in the medium term, will therefore continue to have a role to play. Again, market mechanisms may have a part to play in bringing more clean coal technologies into the marketplace.

During the mid-1990s ScottishPower pioneered the Gas Reburn technique, now in use at Longannet Power Station in Fife. This secondary form of NO<sub>x</sub> abatement can reduce emissions of oxides of nitrogen by up to 80% when used in conjunction with Low NO<sub>x</sub> Burners. Gas Reburn is the largest research and development project to have been undertaken by a UK utility in recent years. Its successful outcome was achieved with assistance from a number of international partners with similar needs and objectives and grant support from the EU's THERMIE programme. Coal is the most abundant of the world's energy resources and, at present, 80% of world energy consumption is dependent on fossil-fuelled generation. The search to develop carbon removal technologies and make them market-competitive must be encouraged. Partnerships such as ScottishPower's Gas Reburn project could have a key role to play in delivering such technologies.

Developing a national energy strategy that is sustainable will require significant investment. ScottishPower's immediate commitment, to build our wind energy portfolio from around 130 MW to more than 800 MW, represents an investment of £400 million. However, using the example of our recently commissioned 30 MW windfarm in Kintyre, it is clear that such

developments have the potential to create real economic, social and environmental benefits within Scotland's communities.

During the construction of Beinn an Tuirc windfarm £3 million was spent in the local economy. We have since established a community fund, which will be used to support projects of an educational, environmental or charitable nature to benefit the people of Kintyre. Part of the site at Beinn an Tuirc is rented from a local farmer providing a new income stream for the farm, while the land continues to be used for grazing sheep. In addition, as part of this project we have undertaken one of the UK's most ambitious biodiversity protection projects to provide a new hunting ground for Golden Eagles, at a safe distance from the turbines. But more crucially, the decision to build this windfarm and others – including a 240 MW development at Whitelee Forest near Glasgow – played a role in the inward investment of the Danish wind turbine manufacturer, Vestas, who established a factory in Machrihanish, creating 108 jobs in a rural area with a high level of unemployment.

If Scotland is to meet its target for renewable energy, at least 1,000 MW of new renewable energy will be needed. This will require plant purchase contracts of significant value and the availability of skilled contractors to undertake the work. Currently 30 countries, including EU members, have pledged a commitment to definite targets for carbon dioxide reduction and renewable energy. By taking a leading position in wind energy engineering and manufacturing now, Scotland will have the potential to compete in a lucrative export market for years to come. World Energy Council projections indicate that cumulative investment in renewables could create a market worth between £500 billion and £1,500 billion by 2020. This – and the Summit agreement to enhance water infrastructure in developing nations – will create new opportunities for Scottish manufacturers and engineers.

Taking electricity as an example, even after the first wave of investment in infrastructure has ended, the 20-year design life of wind turbines – and the quest for ever-improving technology – will ensure there is a continuing demand for replacement machines. Continued research, development and deployment of a broad range of energy technologies will be required to diversify our energy sources and reduce the environmental impacts of energy production and use. Achieving the large-scale delivery of renewable energy projects will require partnerships for action between government, industry, NGOs and the people of Scotland – all of whom could benefit long term from a world-class sustainable energy industry.

Since attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development I have been sharing my view with Scottish business organisations that the successful companies of the future will be the ones that embrace sustainability as an opportunity. Reducing energy use, avoiding environmental damage and subsequent clean-up costs, together with more efficient use of resources and minimising waste, are aims which benefit both business and the environment. Perhaps more crucially, trade, not aid, will lift developing nations out of poverty and in the future we will see new opportunities for overseas investment that will create joint benefits for the host nation and the investor.

ScottishPower hosted a visit recently by a delegation from the Indian Government. India is experiencing a power crisis and plans to build 20,000 MW of new generation capacity in the next decade, as well as introducing energy market reforms. Increasingly, other countries will look to the UK for expertise, investment, technology and products as their economies develop. Our politicians are contributing to world trade reforms and paving the way for Scottish and UK businesses to participate in the global economy.

My observations have concentrated on the energy sector and renewables in particular. It is clear that the drive towards greater sustainability in energy presents major business opportunities for ScottishPower and others. However the energy sector is not unique. The wider requirement, agreed at Johannesburg, to promote more sustainable production and consumption creates a much wider range of business opportunities for a much larger number of companies.

Ultimately, however, it will be up to Scottish businesses to grasp its share of these opportunities as they emerge.

## **Kevin Dunion, Chief Executive, Friends of the Earth Scotland**

Once South Africa agreed to host the World Summit, the organisers became particularly irritated when documents and websites circulated referring to the event as 'Rio Plus Ten'. This was in recognition of the ten years since the Earth Summit in Brazil, but the Johannesburg hosts wanted their event to be just as distinctive and memorable. Sadly it is unlikely ten years from now that anybody will remember what happened in Johannesburg. Yet I want to argue that the process was not a failure and even more so the Scottish presence there was a considerable step forward for us.

There is something uncomfortable about Summits. They are buoyed up by hype and over expectation on the part of those participating and a natural cynicism from those watching from afar (although it could be argued, on this occasion, it was the other way round). The contrasts at this World Summit were always apparent. The organisers had claimed that 60,000 people would descend upon Johannesburg to grapple with the pressing issues of the day. This number was repeated in press reports and indeed attracted a lot of criticism, for the bloated nature of the event. The reality is that only 26,000 were registered for the Summit itself. 12,000 from governments, 10,000 from NGOs and 4,000 from the press. Still a substantial gathering, but not extraordinary compared to other events. In any case, the Summit itself is not a single event - those people were never gathered all together. Myriad meetings and parallel conferences were held to discuss and negotiate specific aspects of the agenda. Government and NGO delegations included a variety of specialists who have been engaged in other international negotiating processes on trade, finance, climate, agriculture, education and so on. In some ways Johannesburg was simply a synthesising of what was happening in international affairs.

Even before arriving we knew the limits of what could be achieved at the Summit. In Rio the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Climate Change Convention were successfully negotiated, both of which continue to have an impact upon national and local policy. Agenda 21 was agreed, a comprehensive 273 page action programme to deliver on the commitments made at Rio. The United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development was set up to encourage and monitor implementation.

Nothing like that was on offer in Johannesburg. No conventions or other binding agreements were being proposed. Instead great play was being made of voluntary partnerships between national governments, companies and what was loosely called civil society, which might tackle some of the pressing issues that were still starkly evident at the summit briefings.

We should remind ourselves that more than 1 billion people are without safe drinking water and over 2 billion lack adequate sanitation. As a result 3 million people die every year from diseases caused by unsafe water. The urban infrastructure of drinking water is chronically deficient with losses of 40% or more in many cities.

It is perhaps less well known that just as many people die from the effects of air pollution as from contaminated water and a billion breathe unhealthy air.

Despite the Convention on Biological Diversity severe pressure is still being placed upon the planet with 75% of fisheries exploited to capacity and 65% of agricultural land degraded.

What we were promised at Johannesburg was targets and timetables to carry into effect Agenda 21, prioritising the most pressing issues like those above.

Unfortunately, debate and negotiation made little real headway in establishing these. Some Governments, principally but not solely the US, were implacably opposed to binding outcomes, although targets were set for halving the number of people without access to water and sanitation by 2015. Other proposals such as delivering 10% of electricity from new renewables as proposed by Brazil failed to be agreed, despite negotiations continuing all through the final night.

To anybody who was not there and who reads the final Summit document the language remains committed, optimistic and progressive, but the reality is that in many cases it is simply a restatement of the Rio commitments and in some places represents a diminution. A major battle had to be fought even to maintain the recognition that the lifestyles of rich industrialised nations represent unsustainable consumption and production, and the ten-year action programme committed at Rio was watered down.

The negotiations took place in the Sandton convention Centre that emphasised the contrasts between the haves and have-nots. Ironically South Africa had just replaced Brazil as the most unequal society on the planet. Sandton is an oasis of conspicuous wealth, a convention centre attached to a luxury shopping mall. It is surrounded by the wealthy residencies of rich South Africans most of which have razor wire and elaborate security systems in place against intruders. Beyond in the sprawling city of Johannesburg are shanty towns and further south still the degraded landscape from mining and heavy industry.

The Summit process itself was the usual kaleidoscope of scurrying delegates, mountains of paper, late night lobbying. The backdrop was provided by Friends of the Earth International's demonstration on behalf of those who could not be present, with 6000 papier-mâché figures lined up outside the convention centre. There was a street demonstration - noisy, passionate but entirely peaceful - which was confronted by a redundant phalanx of riot police and kilometres of razor wire. Black stretch limousine cavalcades of heads of state rolled in and rolled out. There are still some snatches of their speeches that register. Not the hand wringing reminders of the plight of the planet but the significant snippets like the Canadian and Russian commitments to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on cutting climate change emissions. There were bizarre moments like talking live to Newsdrive on Radio Scotland on my mobile phone from the men's toilet of one of the hotels in Sandton, the only place where I could get relative quiet and a decent signal.

It confirmed that a Summit is an artificial environment in which to tackle real life problems. It doesn't set the agenda, it responds to it.

What made the summit worthwhile from my point of view were two things. At an international level I think it is essential that the process of dialogue and hard negotiation continue. Despite the disappointments of Johannesburg, where it could be said that the event failed to live up to expectations, the process is still valid. Even though that disappointment was largely shared by the thousands of groups from around the world who were present, there was no violence because United Nations gatherings provide access to the negotiators, to the conference centre and an opportunity to make comment directly to the delegates on behalf of non-governmental organisations. This contrasts with the closed and intimidating gatherings

at Seattle where media attention focused on street demonstrations and violence. Meetings of the G8 in Gothenburg were similarly held behind closed doors.

At a more personal level it was hugely satisfying to be present with the Scottish First Minister. What was being discussed at Johannesburg was not foreign affairs, even though it took place in a foreign country. It was about national responsibilities, national performance on sustainable development and the common requirements on all of us to recognise that decisions taken here can impact upon people and environments far from our shores.

There was a stark admission from Jack McConnell, speaking at the Friends of the Earth International Environmental Justice side event, that Scotland is a northern nation but we still have poverty. We have chronically failed to reduce our wastes and have a legacy of past environmental degradation to make good by way of cleaning up contaminated land and pockets of urban air pollution. However, he was also able to set out his aspirations to rapidly expanding renewable energy generation in Scotland and his personal commitment to environmental justice as evidenced by his speech earlier in the year. This went down particularly well in South Africa where the concept is readily understood.

His itinerary included travelling down to Sasolburg, home of Sasol, one of South Africa's biggest companies which has recently invested in research at St Andrews University. It was particularly appreciated that he met with local environmental leaders. They were concerned about the effects of pollution from the refinery and the failings of the company elsewhere which had led to chlorine gas leaks. The environmental justice agenda means listening to people who are living next to potentially polluting activities or who are exposed to risk. That is what the Scottish delegation did in Johannesburg, and it is what needs to happen on a wider scale if we are to secure development, North and South, without degrading the living conditions of the poorest or vulnerable in society.

## **Belinda Miller, Local Agenda 21 Co-ordinator, Aberdeen City Council**

I attended the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) to identify its implications for Scottish local government. The 9 days I spent at the Summit was a real lifetime experience. There was so much going on every day and often miles apart. After spending a few hours observing the main UN negotiations at the Summit I realised it was outwith my scope. Since the Local Government International Bureau attended the UN summit as part of the UK's official delegation to the Summit to negotiate on local government matters, I decided to concentrate on other events taking place throughout Johannesburg. I participated in the Local Government Session that was held in the first week of the WSSD and I spent the second week gathering information on best practice.

### **Local Government Session in Johannesburg**

At the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, Agenda 21, the global plan of action for sustainable development was agreed. Local Governments across the world are seen as key players in achieving sustainable development at a local level and so Local Government named its role '**Local Agenda 21**'. It is a participatory, multi-stakeholder process to address priority local sustainable development concerns through the preparation and implementation of a long-term strategic plan. Since 1992, more than 6,400 municipalities in 113 countries have been working to accelerate the transition to sustainable, equitable and secure communities. Indeed all Scottish Local Authorities have a Local Agenda 21 in place.

The Local Government Session, '**Local Action Moves the World**', was a parallel event at the World Summit on Sustainable Development designed for Local Government to express its expectations for the Summit and to interact with national and observer delegations to present its positions. More than 600 mayors and local authority associations worldwide attended. The event was organised by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) in co-operation with other major international local government associations and United Nations agencies. It was the largest parallel event to take place during the WSSD.

### **The outcomes of the Local Government Session**

One of the main areas the Session concentrated on was the wish that national governments acknowledge the importance of local government as a main player in achieving sustainable development on the ground. Given their pivotal role, local authorities urged national and international bodies to make all efforts to strengthen local government. Throughout the Local Government Session representatives of national governments, the World Bank and UN officials - among them WSSD Secretary General, Nitin Desai - recognised local governments' significant strides towards reaching the goals and aspirations laid down in Rio in 1992.

Cities learn best from other cities and the Local Government Session provided delegates with the opportunity to share tools, experiences and approaches. It also provided the principles to guide policy through 'The Melbourne Principles for Sustainable Cities'. These are intended to guide thinking and provide a strategic framework for action. The Principles are not prescriptive and allow cities to develop sustainable solutions that are relevant to their particular circumstances.

The major announcements from the Session were:

- The launch of **Local Action 21**

Local Action 21 builds upon the worldwide successes of Local Agenda 21 since Rio. Following the Summit's theme of implementing the Agenda 21 agreements, Local Action 21 represents a move from *Agenda to Action*, from plan to practice. In re-affirming the Rio Principles of thinking globally but acting locally, it is hoped that the 6,400 local governments in 113 countries who are already involved in Local Agenda 21 activities will be joined by many more. In this way Local Action 21 becomes simultaneously:

- *a motto* for accelerated implementation of sustainable development in the decade following the Johannesburg World Summit;
  - *a mandate* given by the Summit to local authorities worldwide to engage in the implementation of local agendas and action plans; and
  - *a movement* of cities, towns and counties and their associations towards action for sustainability.
- The **Johannesburg Call** was a statement by Local Government Representatives at the WSSD on sustainable development. The final paragraph stated:

*'We, as local government from across the globe, acknowledge that ours is not an equal, fair or just world. If international gatherings like this one are to make a meaningful difference to people's lives, we the representatives of the people must be bold and unequivocal about making changes. We recognise that without political commitment, nothing will be achieved. We therefore pledge our unwavering commitment to eradicating poverty, correcting the imbalances between the developed and developing world and fundamentally reshaping our world. We also commit ourselves to developing very practical, realistic Action Plans and to implement them through Local Action 21 programmes to realise these goals. We challenge all Heads of State meeting in Johannesburg next week to do the same. The time to act is now. Let us not lose this opportunity: there may not be another.'* It also emphasised that *'local governments alone cannot save the planet'*.

- The final part of the Session was the presentation of **the Local Government Declaration** to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This document represents the considered view of world local governments. Part of the declaration stated:

*'We live in an increasingly interconnected, interdependent world. The local and the global are intertwined. Local government cannot afford to be insular and inward looking. Fighting poverty, exclusion and environmental decay is a moral issue, but also one of self-interest. Ten years after Rio, it is time for action by all spheres of government, all partners. And local action, undertaken in solidarity, can move the world.'*

### **The challenge for Scottish Local Government post Johannesburg**

The culmination of work undertaken at the Local Government Session is reflected in the final WSSD Plan of Implementation, agreed to by the main Summit. It stated that,

*'States should: Enhance the role and capacity of local authorities as well as stakeholders in implementing Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit and in strengthening the continuing support for local Agenda 21 programmes and associated initiatives and partnerships, encourage, in particular, partnerships among and*

*between local authorities and other levels of government and stakeholders to advance sustainable development as called for in, inter alia, the Habitat Agenda.'*

The following are areas that specifically relate to action by local government, and which have relevance to Scotland:

- Encourage relevant authorities at all levels to take sustainable development considerations into account in decision-making on national and local development planning, investment in infrastructure, business development and public procurement. Promote public procurement policies that encourage development and diffusion of environmentally sound goods and services.
- Prevent and minimise waste and maximise reuse, recycling and use of environmentally friendly alternative material.
- Promote an integrated approach to policy making at the national, regional and local levels for transport services and systems to promote sustainable development, including policies and planning for land use planning, infrastructure, public transport systems and goods delivery networks, with a view to providing safe, affordable and efficient transportation, increasing energy efficiency, reducing pollution, reducing congestion, reducing adverse health effects and limiting urban sprawl, taking into account national priorities and circumstances.
- Education is seen as critical for promoting sustainable development in the future. Therefore it is important to integrate sustainable development into educational systems at all levels of education in order to promote education as a key agent for change.

Other areas local government may wish to consider is to re-commit to sustainable development and Local Agenda 21, and to perhaps to ensure we are acknowledging our global neighbours as well as local in our functions. Also in line with Local Action 21 local government need to ensure policies are being put into action in an integrated way.

### **The World Conservation Union (IUCN)**

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) also held a parallel session during the Summit. As a Union, the IUCN seeks to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable. The IUCN Environment Centre, hosted the Futures Dialogue Series and an extensive exhibition. The dialogue series included leading figures from civil society and the public and private sector and focused on controversial and pertinent issues based on daily themes. I attended a stimulating day, which looked at how we can move into the future based on sustainable development. Speakers included Jose Maria Figueres, Managing Director of the World Economic Forum and ex-President of Costa Rica, who called for a reform of how markets dominate world economics and thus are often undermining sustainable development. Mrs van der Hoeven, the Dutch Minister for Development Co-operation, suggested that for trade in resources to be sustainable, the people who provide and rely on them must get the full economic benefits from them, – i.e. fairtrade.

### **And all the rest...**

Upon returning from the Summit, I realised that many people here were unaware of the **many successful events** that took place outwith the main conference centre at Sandton. The

following is an outline of some of the most interesting and useful meetings, visits and exhibitions that I came across while at the Summit.

I visited the two major exhibitions that took place during WSSD – the **Water Dome**, where the importance of water for all was emphasised, and **Ubuntu Village** where, along with arts and crafts, there was an inspiring project called **Mission Antarctica**. Robert Swan OBE, from the UK, made a pledge at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 to ‘think Global and Act Local’. He was tasked to report to the next Earth Summit in Johannesburg on what he had done. He, with others, removed over 1000 tonnes of waste from King George Island – thus helping animals like penguins to nest in safety. Then with the ‘Earthship’ he travelled across South Africa visiting towns and cities to ask young people to pledge to ‘Clean Up their Act’. More on these projects can be found at [www.missionantarctica.com](http://www.missionantarctica.com)

I also met lots of interesting people and groups. One of the most inspiring was a group of young people from Pretoria in South Africa. They were **Junior Rangers** and they are learning about how to produce food that does not destroy the environment – by using ‘permaculture’. Permaculture is a practical idea, which can be applied in the city, on the farm, and in the wilderness. It helps people to establish highly productive environments that provides food, energy, shelter, and other material and non-material needs. They are keen to hear if any other young people in Scotland are doing similar projects and to link up with ideas and support.

I visited the famous township of **Soweto**, to the south west of Johannesburg. The contrast between the modern Johannesburg and Soweto is enormous and a very sobering experience. Visiting was uncomfortable as we were intruding on real people who lived day to day in extreme poverty. However we were assured by those who live there, that it was important that people come and see it for themselves and most importantly that we do something about it when we go home. The settlement I visited had no running water or electricity. There was high unemployment and no public transport. However the people who live there have pride and the area was litter free, the houses (tin shacks) were clean and cared for. The priority for South Africa (and of course the World) is to provide well over a million people in this area with real homes and facilities.

I also visited some inspiring community projects, particularly the **Eco Circles** project in the nearby city of Potchestroom. Where using recycled materials for irrigation, thousands of urban households were learning to grow fruit and vegetables to help supplement their diet.

There were a number of chances to meet up with the **Civic Delegation**, and other people from Scotland attending the Summit. This was always a good opportunity to find out what they were doing and it always surprised me how much more was going on that I hadn’t heard about. We were also able to report to the Scottish press and other colleagues and contacts at home on what was going on outwith the main negotiations.

With over 60,000 people attending the WSSD, and with concern about the environmental impact on the local area, an initiative called ‘**Greening the WSSD**’ was established. The aims of the initiative were to organise the WSSD in a manner that supports sustainable development; leaves a durable legacy to South Africa and raises the profile of environmental and sustainable development issues in South Africa, Africa and the world at large. They aimed to make the Summit carbon neutral and all delegates were asked to contribute to a fund called the Johannesburg climate legacy. Any delegate could calculate the amount of carbon

dioxide they expended due to the Summit and by example the calculation for my own trip was 7 tonnes of carbon dioxide. The project aimed to raise US\$5 million. The funds will be used to support South African projects that permanently reduce carbon emissions.

Throughout the Summit there was a ‘**Consumption Barometer**’ that displayed the previous days consumption of waste, energy, and water. It was displayed on electronic billboards, and published in daily newspapers. Attempts were made to use local produce and minimise packaging. Unfortunately it failed totally to reduce the paper mountain at the Summit. Everyday in every location we were assailed by paper – it was used to report on what happened the previous day and what was to happen that day. I would have needed a crate to ship it back if I wanted to bring it all home.

The question I am regularly asked since returning is – **was it worth it** to send over 60,000 people to South Africa to discuss the future of the world? The only answer is – I really hope so, for ours and the planet’s sake. Overall it was disappointing that no real advance was made on Agenda 21, agreed at Rio 10 years earlier. The outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit will take time to filter into national legislation and action. But at least so much was achieved outwith the main event – including real promises by many organisations and governments to tackle the issues of poverty, biodiversity, energy, and climate change. I hope that these promises are met, unlike the many broken promises of the last 10 years.

## **Dr Donald Bruce, Society Religion and Technology Project, Church of Scotland**

I was invited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development to represent the Scottish churches and development agencies. I am a scientist, formerly doing risk regulation, research and policy studies in the energy industry, but since 1992 working full time for the Church of Scotland as the Director of its Society, Religion and Technology Project (SRT), and a member of Action of Churches Together in Scotland. The SRT Project is a unique unit set up in 1970 to engage with emerging ethical and social issues of technology. From the outset environmental matters have been a major part of our work. Currently we cover energy policy, renewables, agriculture, genetic modification and applying sustainable development principles in the churches. We have worked on sustainable development since the late 1970's, with the World Council of Churches programme for "just and sustainable societies" and more recently contributing to a series of reports on the interface of environment, economics and social affairs for the European Commission. After the Rio Earth Summit we produced a booklet for the churches in Scotland entitled "Seeing Scotland from the Summit". This is my report from Johannesburg, ten years on.

My brief from the Scottish Executive was to engage with relevant groups and issues in Johannesburg, to find out what I could bring back to Scotland to make difference in my constituency. I was fortunate to join the ecumenical team of the World Council of Churches with Christians from all over the world. The team was one of the accredited UN "major groups", and took part in the series of official preparatory meetings. I also made links with Christian Aid, TEAR Fund, Oxfam and other development agencies. I divided my time between following the main summit plenaries and negotiations - especially with energy and agriculture issues - attending some of the many fascinating side meetings, visiting displays of work in progress, and in grassroots contacts via the local churches around Johannesburg.

### **UK and Scottish Delegations**

A highlight of each day was an hour long briefing meeting for the UK NGOs hosted by the UK delegation, usually led by Michael Meacher or Margaret Beckett. They summarised the developments in the negotiations over the previous 24 hours and then opened it up to questions. This was done in a good open spirit, with frank discussion. Despite some obvious differences, there was a good deal of respect for the UK line on many issues, and a collective sense of *realpolitik* - that in negotiations only certain things were going to be possible. I pursued concerns on specific renewable energy targets, the removal of hidden fossil fuel subsidies, and the retention of the precautionary principle. The Scottish civic delegation met Jack McConnell at an informal reception, where we all had a good chance to talk to him about our experiences of the summit and what we would take back to Scotland. Next morning, Jack spoke well at a side event on Environmental Justice, where he reiterated his commitment to the 40% renewable electricity target and to turning round Scotland's poor waste record. Overall, I came away with a sense that there was much potential to work together in Scotland in our various sectors, and established some useful contacts.

### **Churches Connecting to the Grassroots**

I saw a very different angle on the Summit through grassroots events organised by the South African Council of Churches. These enabled us tap into the local situation in South Africa and Jo'burg in ways we would not otherwise have done, and gain insights into the political climate inside and outside the Summit. In stark contrast to the luxury of the conference halls

of the official summit, the Ecumenical Team were taken by coach across to the next valley to Alexandra township, where a population the size of Edinburgh is said to live in just three square miles. We took part in a special joint service to mark the Summit, in a Presbyterian church in the heart "Alex". Surrounding us, straight out of the church back door, was a sardine tin mass of tiny shacks made of whatever waste materials people could find. This unforgettable experience served as a reality check on the formal summit negotiations up the hill, seeing sustainable development as it relates to the global "South". Indeed we, representatives of churches all over the world, found ourselves guests at *their* worship. I was deeply moved by the sense of joy and hope in God as the people prayed, worshipped and, especially sang, like nowhere else I've ever heard. Later I joined a symbolic march of solidarity from Alex to the main Summit, presenting to delegates the findings of the parallel Global Civic Forum.

### **Outcomes and Agreements**

I came away from Johannesburg with deeply mixed messages. It was not the goal-setting platform from which governments, business and civil society could plan for long term sustainable development. The compromised international negotiations on issues of such huge and far reaching importance for the planet and the peoples of the world represented an opportunity missed. But it neither was it a complete failure. I saw much to encourage me from numerous practical environmental and social initiatives, which have sprung up all over the world since Rio. My conclusion is that the real action lay elsewhere than the fudged political agreements.

Perhaps more than anything the Summit expressed the conflict of two international streams over the last decade. One is the environment and social agenda pursued worldwide since the 1992 Earth Summit, which puts priority to addressing directly the degradation of our global environment, and insists that economic goals be set accordingly. The other is the rise of neo-liberal economic globalisation, which equates sustainable development with free market economic growth. It believes the environment and poverty will only be addressed as a consequence of freeing up markets worldwide and creating the conditions to let the private sector create wealth and consumer goods, with the minimum of state regulation. On the eve of Jo'burg I debated the issue on Radio Scotland with a noted free marketeer who said that environmental concerns were exaggerated and we should not worry if economic growth drove the rural poor off the land.

The Johannesburg Summit lay in both streams, in an unsatisfactory and unstable compromise. Inevitably the environmental agenda was much eroded from Rio, but the free market was restrained by a notable agreement that the trade rules of the WTO do not take supremacy over multilateral environmental treaties like climate change and biodiversity. While it remains to be seen what this means in practice, this was seen by NGOs as a critical and unexpected concession. The acknowledgement of the mutual role of government, corporations and civil society in sustainable development was important, but partnerships involving different sectors were seen as ambiguous. Some are genuine initiatives in sustainable development and others less so. The need for greater corporate responsibility was recognised but commitments to work towards binding frameworks were resisted in favour of voluntary actions.

The official programme of action and implementation to which Governments committed themselves is rightly criticised for having watered down the aspirations of Rio in a set of

political compromises. As a UN programme, it had to be agreed by consensus. The fear that negotiations could collapse hung heavily over South Africa as host, and the EU as the principal First World advocate of socially and environmentally enlightened policies. This gave a powerful bargaining tool for anyone minded to dig in over particular issues, like OPEC resisting the removal of trade distorting fossil fuel subsidies. It was depressing to see vital issues like sanitation and renewable energy targets being horse-traded like pawns in a diplomatic chess game. Indeed, many of the agreed goals had their specific timescale deleted (like renewable energy), or else retained a timescale but diluted the nature of the target to be achieved (like biodiversity loss), or ended up having neither, in the case of natural resources.

Among the key provisions agreed were:

- Recognising the social and poverty dimensions of sustainable development,
- Acknowledging that global environmental treaties are mutual with World Trade rules,
- Recognising the mutual and joint roles of states, companies and civil society,
- Initial steps towards setting up a system for international corporate social responsibility,
- Actions plans towards sustainable consumption, but nothing concrete,
- Halving those suffering hunger by 2015 and encouraging sustainable agriculture,
- Minimising adverse health and environmental effects of chemicals by 2020,
- Halving the number of people without safe clean water and sanitation by 2015,
- Only removing sustainability inhibiting fossil fuel subsidies “where appropriate”,
- Significantly reducing rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 but not reversing it,
- Reversing trend in natural resource degradation, but no targets or dates,
- Restoring fishstocks urgently, to levels to enable countries to produce "maximum sustainable yields",
- The effective removal of the precautionary principle from issues like biodiversity, resource use
- But there were no specific targets on agriculture, energy, transport, waste or natural resources.

Perhaps most disturbing was the erosion of some basic principles of sustainable development agreed at Rio. The precautionary principle, a foundation of the Climate Change Convention, was watered down to a precautionary “approach” and reference to it was removed from some major areas of policy. This reflects how the political climate has changed, in that the USA has adopted a dogmatic philosophical objection to the precautionary principle, seeing it as a credal issue in climate change and GM crop risks. Similarly, the notion of the global commons of nature, shared by all, was replaced by the expression of global “interests”. This shifts the orientation from a common goal of looking after shared natural goods, on which we all ultimately depend, towards an instrumental concept of resources and individual exploitation. Ten years after Rio alerted us to global environmental damage, are we reverting to the mindset which caused it?

## **Conclusions**

The most important thing about the World Summit on Sustainable Development was that it happened. Each government and leader had to prepare and say a credible piece about what they were doing about the issues, in the presence of nations suffering drought, poverty and starvation. It raised the profile of sustainable development in the international arena, in the media and with the public. The need is to ensure that it stays high on the political and personal agenda of Scotland for all parties and sectors. We can do better, both in

Government policy and in what can be done through networks across civil society. Here, I and many others found ample scope for encouragement and hope.

In the churches, our first practical response is to promote the Eco-Congregation Programme for practical environmental action in local congregations and communities which began last year. The churches are said to be the only institution still present and active in every community in Scotland. We have a unique role to play and we see this as a priority task. The Church of Scotland has appointed an Assistant Director for the SRT Project specifically to work on this programme and other sustainable development issues in Scotland, working alongside Keep Scotland Beautiful, local authorities, and other environmental and community organisations.

One of the visions carried back from Johannesburg was seeing the global aspect of sustainable development at first hand. The need to enable people in Scotland to make the same connections is strongly impressed upon me. It is not just a question of being environmental in our own back yards, but seeing the bigger picture. Again the churches are well placed to make the link between what we do in Scotland and our grassroots links to local churches across the world and with the development agencies. We need to connect our existing initiatives in poverty, mission and development to the environmental issues which are often part of the problem.

The third area lies in partnerships with Government and the civil society sectors in Scotland, including local authorities and business sectors, as well as major environmental NGOs. The churches will be playing an active part in the Scottish Civic Forum's new Future Scotland partnership and the Scottish Executive's Sustainable Development Forum. We are building on our contacts with agricultural, biotechnology and energy industries. Encouraging corporate responsibility is central to our ethos. We also want to help tackle waste, drawing on the churches' presence at the heart of both urban and rural communities. Last, but not least, we have a lot to offer on the cross-cutting issue problem of motivating people to change their lifestyles, where the churches have long experience! Together we can make a real difference in God's world.

## **Damian Killeen, Director, The Poverty Alliance**

### **Socially Sustainable Development**

*Social development is central to sustainable development and social justice is central to social development. Development of any kind is delivered by people in society, through formal institutions and informal arrangements of many kinds. Change that does not take account of its impact on people will not gain their support and will not be sustainable. Change that does not address injustice will only promote division and undermine the prospect of social cohesion on which sustainable development depends. This was highlighted at the Johannesburg World Summit where the government leaders acknowledged the growing dissatisfaction of many people with conventional political structures and where representatives at the Global Peoples' Forum called for opportunities for greater grassroots involvement in planning and building for the future.*

The Scottish Executive partnership agreement is based on a commitment to both sustainable development and social justice. The Scottish Executive's inclusion of a social justice representative in the civic delegation to Johannesburg provides recognition that social justice is relevant to sustainable development and that many groups beyond the established sustainable development 'community' have a contribution to make to meet the Executive's sustainable development objectives. However, it is also the case that few social justice organisations are aware of the contribution they already make to sustainable development or of the potential that they represent. Although many social justice organisations see their work as contributing towards the creation of a better society, they do not do this within the framework of a coherent programme for social development that contributes to sustainable development.

Social justice, support for human rights and equal opportunities, together with security, solidarity and participation are the underpinnings of socially sustainable development. One definition of a just society is a society into which you would be happy to be born, in any place, at any time of any gender, ethnicity or mixture of abilities. In a just society you would be confident that your human rights are protected and that you have an equal opportunity to fulfil your personal aspirations and your responsibilities to others. Your confidence would depend on knowing:

- that your physical environment will not harm your personal health and that previous generations have not consumed the resources that you will need;
- that social and economic structures and institutions will enable you to participate fully in all matters that affect your quality of life;
- that you can access the knowledge and skills you will need to turn your aspirations into reality; and
- that a shared basis of values will ensure that your rights and well being are protected and that you have adequate resources to meet your needs.

Self-evidently we do not live in a socially just society, in our own country or globally. Inequality, poverty, discrimination of all kinds and abuses of individual and corporate power undermine development everywhere to varying degrees. Agenda 21, the United Nations' core text for sustainable development identifies these divisive elements of human behaviour as the factors that place the human race at greatest risk on the planet. Agenda 21 identifies some key areas for development that must be addressed if human society is to be sustainable; these

include the responsible and equitable use of energy, poverty eradication and reductions in inequalities and the development of more participatory democracies.

Since the principles of Agenda 21 were agreed at the World Summit in Rio in 1992 national governments and non-government organisations have made selective use of them to define their own approaches to sustainable development. In the UK, as in most western or 'developed' countries, the focus has been on managing energy and pollution issues in ways that do not threaten current perceptions of economic priorities, including the pressures of competition in a globalised economy. Less attention has been paid to the domestic social development aspects of sustainable development in the belief that this is largely a third world issue – the UK sent its Overseas Development Minister to the UN's Social Development Summit in Copenhagen in 1995 – and the political dimension is largely ignored. There has been a failure on the part of western governments to question whether their 'developed' political structures support or undermine sustainable development. This is in sharp contrast to some 'developing' countries where the relationships between political, social, economic and environmental priorities are live issues for sustainable development. At the Johannesburg Summit, the delinking of environmental from social and other considerations, as well as the failure of governments to deliver on the environmental targets, were identified as amongst the key issues to be addressed if sustainable development is to be a reality.

Social justice organisations in Scotland can be excused if they do not appreciate their relevance to the national agenda for sustainable development. The Executive's statement on *'Meeting the Needs...Priorities, Actions and Targets for Sustainable Development'* identifies the priorities as Resource Use, Energy and Travel. Considerations of human rights and equality are reduced to a principle of having 'regard for others who do not have access to the same level of resources and the wealth generated'. The statement includes some targets for educational achievement, life expectancy, fuel poverty, homelessness, crime reduction and volunteering drawn from the Executive's Social Justice strategy but there is no discussion of any fundamental changes that might be required to the way in which our society is structured and operates if we are to achieve sustainable development and there are no proposals for auditing the social impacts of the actions that are proposed.

*'Meeting the Needs...'* recognises that achieving sustainable development will require us to confront and resolve some difficult conflicts of interests but, beyond an oversight role for a Cabinet sub-committee, does not address the wider political implications of sustainable development. *'Meeting the Needs...'* and the First Minister's contribution to the Johannesburg Summit have highlighted a concern for 'environmental justice' that links the negative consequences of waste creation and pollution with the poor health and disempowerment of the lower income communities who experience them disproportionately. This is not, however, a concept that questions more fundamental aspects of the distribution of environmental goods or resources or that leads to the development of more sustainable livelihoods for all. There are many points of linkage between the policies indicated in *'Meeting the Needs...'* and the concerns of organisations and community groups that want to achieve a more just and inclusive society in Scotland but much more needs to be done to make these linkages overt and to ensure that they work for sustainable development.

At the Johannesburg Summit the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) hosted a major event on 'Negotiating Social Sustainability' at which the question was explored 'Where is the Social in Sustainable Development?'. At this event DfID questioned the value of the conventional 'three pillars' approach to sustainable development based on the

idea of a social, an economic and an environmental dimension. DfID argues that 'the division in to three creates the illusion of clarity without defining what distinguishes the social from the economic and the environmental pillars'.

In a paper prepared for the World Bank and DfID by Neil Thin of Edinburgh University an attempt is made to clarify the 'social development' component of sustainable development and the way it engages with others elements. The common distinction between social and economic considerations is challenged on the grounds that economic activity is just one demonstration of the nature of societies and the values that guide them. The paper defines socially sustainable development as:

'...movement not only towards increased economic activity or better natural environment, but also along developmental pathways that meet poor peoples' needs and aspirations while guaranteeing future generations the right to define their own goals and pathways to progress. This means respecting difference now and in the future. The cornerstones of a socially inclusive society are:

- **Social justice** – to achieve equal opportunity and human rights for all, now and in the future.
- **Solidarity** – to generate empathy and co-operation between different groups of people.
- **Participation** – to build opportunities for everyone to improve their quality of life. – and
- **Security** – to create livelihood security and safety from physical threats.

Social sustainability reflects peoples' entitlements, especially the aspirations of the poor and the powerless. Pro-poor development depends on a commitment to social inclusion and civic engagement. Institutions that endorse empowerment, inclusion and security are promoted, allowing the voices of poor and marginalized people to be heard in political arenas with the power to make a difference.'

There is much that is happening in Scotland that addresses this social agenda; the Executive's adoption of the Human Rights Act and the definition of Equalities in the Scotland Act, the attack on sectarianism and the welcome for asylum seekers, the empowerment agenda of Communities Scotland and the introduction of Community Planning, support for childcare provision and community safety and many other aspects of the Social Justice programme. This social development agenda also reads across into other aspects of policy development in Scotland; the land reform programme contributes to social justice, equalising the rights of people to benefit from their environment; the transport agenda is not only about reducing emissions and congestion but also about tackling the 'remoteness' of communities both rural and those on the urban periphery; Scottish Enterprise's refocusing on 'indigenous' enterprise has the potential for building greater livelihood security as does the distinctive Scottish form of support for students and free personal care for the elderly. With all these policies, and others, it is possible to argue that not enough is being done and there are key issues, such as poverty, where substantive progress is not being made. What should be recognised, however is that these Executive policies are potentially consistent with socially sustainable development.

As is often the case, civil society in Scotland is ahead of the politicians in recognising the importance of a social dimension to sustainable development. The Future Scotland initiative,

undertaken for the Executive by the Scottish Civic Forum, identified a high level awareness amongst a variety of groups and individuals of the need to balance social and environmental considerations, of the need for the marginalized and excluded to be brought into the development agenda and of the need for a more participatory approach to thinking and planning for sustainable development. A Civic Forum working group, composed of representatives of groups with a wide range of connections to the sustainable development agenda, is currently identifying ways in which non-government bodies of all kinds can relate their objectives and activities more directly to a collective effort for sustainable development. This Future Scotland Group has identified a number of practical initiatives that will assist this process:

- developing an auditing tool to help organisations and groups identify the contribution they make to sustainable development and how this can be enhanced;
- developing communications that will help the supporters of organisations concerned e.g. with biodiversity to recognise the links between this and issues e.g. of human rights and social solidarity;
- sharing skills and resources e.g. we will undertake your energy audit if you undertake our social audit;
- working with the full range of Executive departments and agencies to create an interface between them and a wide range of non-government groups to identify opportunities and build sustainable development together.

A concern for social justice is deep seated in Scottish society; it has a central role to play in achieving sustainable development. What is needed is an overt social development strategy that ensures that decisions that are made to support environmental and economic objectives will contribute to building security and development for all of Scotland's people. The starting point for such a strategy should be peoples' own assessment of how social structures and institutions meet their needs and support their aspirations for themselves and future generations. Some of the key learning from the past ten years of the implementation of Agenda 21 has been that arriving at this assessment must be a participatory process, supported by government, not one in which governments use their power to maintain the status quo.

At Johannesburg some of the most powerful contributions came from children and elderly people feeling excluded from society, people who had lost their livelihoods and heritage because of dam projects and deforestation, women working for their liberation, disabled people demanding their place in society, landless people calling for the means to make a living, farmers and fishing people calling for a fair place in the world's food markets. Some were there to protest at their continued oppression; others were there to pay tribute to what had been achieved through participation and empowerment. The positive stories, some of them brought forward by DfID, were all ones where social development was an integral feature of a sustainable development programme, where there has been an investment in community capacity and in the capacity of professionals to listen to and work with communities and where the balance of power has been shifted towards the powerless with the granting of constitutional rights and the creation of greater transparency in the relationships between development partners. Scotland has its own rich history of mobilising communities and institutions for social change. We have the potential to draw on this learning from elsewhere and on our own experience to provide a model of social development in support of sustainable development that others will want to follow. This is the challenge we should take up from the Johannesburg Summit.

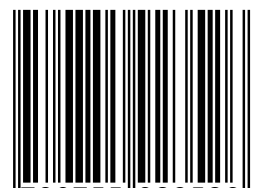


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