



**UN NEWS CENTRE**

With breaking stories and  
newswire products from



## **Deputy Secretary-General urges action to achieve sustainable development**



Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro addresses Interactive Dialogue with the Global Sustainability Panel

16 March 2011 – Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro today called for a global development model that tackles poverty reduction, job creation, inequality, climate change and environmental degradation, while ensuring adequate access to water, energy and food for all.

“We have to ask; will the 9 billion people who are expected to inhabit this planet in 2050 have the opportunity to thrive,” said Ms. Migiro in [remarks](#) to the General Assembly’s interactive dialogue with the High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability.

“Or will vast numbers merely struggle to survive, or worse, see their world descend into chaos? This is the fundamental question of sustainable development,” she said.

The 21-member High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability was created by [Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon](#) in August last year and tasked with finding ways to lift people out of poverty while tackling climate change and ensuring that economic development is environmentally friendly.

The Panel is co-chaired by Finland’s President Tarja Halonen and South African President Jacob Zuma and brings together representatives from government, the private sector and civil society in countries rich and poor.

Ms. Migiro said the current global economic recession, instability and natural disasters should not be used as excuses to delay the transition towards sustainable development.

“On the contrary, these events should inject renewed urgency. Changing direction can bring new risks, but our greatest risk is to do nothing, leaving challenges unattended, opportunities unrealized and unsustainable trends accelerating to the detriment of all,” she said.

The Deputy Secretary-General stressed that sustainable development had three pillars – economic, social, and environmental, and that it was not a topic for environment ministers only. All government departments should be involved, she said.

“In short, it requires a holistic approach to address the multiple, intertwined and complex challenges of our time,” she added.

The President of the General Assembly, Joseph Deiss, called for firm political commitment and resolute action to tackle the interlinked challenges of climate change and poverty eradication, while ensuring adequate financing, technology transfer and partnership.

“We all aspire to reach better living conditions,” said Mr. Deiss in his [remarks](#) at the interactive dialogue. “Yet, this will not be possible by following the current growth model. We urgently need a new development paradigm,” he said, calling on humanity to “behave differently and stop being self-destructive.”

At a meeting with Ms. Halonen, Mr. Deiss expressed his appreciation of her contribution and that of other members of the Panel to the dialogue on sustainable development.

The High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability is expected to deliver its final report by the end of this year, ahead of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development scheduled for 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Transition to ‘green economy’ must aim at poverty eradication – UN official](#)