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UN official highlights role of business sector in sustainable development



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The business and industry sectors play a key role in leading countries towards sustainable development, a top United Nations official said today, adding that their collaboration and partnerships with governments are essential to accelerate progress around the world.

“Business leaders have the power to make decisions today that can affect the planet and its inhabitants for decades,” the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Sha Zukang, [said](#) during the ‘Realizing Inclusive and Green Growth’ forum in The Hague, the Netherlands.

The two-day forum, which started today, attracted some 300 participants, mostly members of the business community from developed and developing countries, are taking part. The event is a part of the consultation process with business and industry, governments, and civil society in

preparation for the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, which takes place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June, and for which Mr. Sha is serving as Secretary-General.

In his remarks, Mr. Sha underlined the role of the private sector in providing employment and livelihood opportunities, as well as in better managing the planet's natural resources.

“Business and industry can adopt and implement cleaner production technologies and greener value chains,” he said. “Indeed, some pioneering corporations have already shown the way towards a greener, more just economy.”

Mr. Sha emphasized that business leaders in particular have the power to have an impact on issues relevant to sustainable development, such as the transfer of technology between countries, intellectual property, integrating women into the workforce, and creating local jobs, among others.

“[Rio+20] will be your opportunity to persuade the public, and policymakers, that business and industry can help accelerate the pace towards sustainable development,” Mr. Sha said.

Over 130 Presidents, Vice-Presidents and Prime Ministers, along with more than 50,000 participants from governments, the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other groups will attend Rio+20, which seeks to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date, and address new emerging challenges.

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