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World lags far behind on sustainable development goals, Ban warns



Old Ships and Obsolete Computers Part of Major Transition for Global Waste Management

14 May 2010 – The United Nations commission entrusted with harmonizing economic development with environmental conservation wrapped up its annual session today with Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon **warning** that the world is way behind schedule in setting its ecological house in order.

“Few of the challenges identified at the Rio Earth Summit have been adequately tackled,” he told delegates attending the **18th session** of the Commission on Sustainable Development, referring to the 1992 UN conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which sought to recast development and halt the destruction of irreplaceable natural resources and the pollution of the planet. “New ones have gained added urgency.”

Mr. Ban announced the appointment of UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Sha Zukang as chairman of the “Rio+20” conference, to be held in Brazil in 2012 in an effort to spur further action.

“Let us recapture the solidarity and creativity of the Earth Summit. We have a responsibility to future generations to implement what we have pledged. Good ideas are not enough. We need focused action. We know what we need to do. We know what works. The time for delay is over. The time for delivery is now,” he concluded.

The Rio+20 Summit, mandated by the UN General Assembly in 2009, will focus on four areas: review of commitments; emerging issues; green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development; and institutional framework for sustainable development.

The Commission is the main UN forum addressing the inter-linkage between the need to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that seek to slash eight major social ills from extreme poverty and hunger to maternal and infant mortality to lack of access to education and health care, all by 2015, and the equally imperious need to save the planet.

Mr. Ban called for concrete, practical decisions, with time-bound goals, enhanced links with other international bodies and key forums, and a continual assessment of progress.

Since it opened its 18th session on 3 May, the Commission has heard an array of warnings on the dangers ahead. Commission Chairman Luis Alberto Ferraté Felice told a news conference last week that the global community must summon the political will to tackle a whole raft of challenges, from mineral extraction to waste recycling to the more than 200 toxic chemicals entering the blood of fetuses.

In a sign of some progress, a meeting in Geneva of the 172-party Basel Convention, whose Secretariat is administered by the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)), today [recommended](#) a new 10-year vision for trans-boundary movement of hazardous wastes, with greater emphasis on the links between waste management, achieving the MDGs, and human health and livelihoods.

Other key outcomes of the five-day meeting included moves to ensure strong controls on the rapidly growing ship dismantling industry, progress developing global recycling guidelines for used computers and support for enforcing the ban on the export of hazardous waste from developed countries to developing nations.

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