



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



Ban stresses need to address social inequity while promoting sustainable development



13 December 2011 –

[Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon stressed today that sustainable development cannot be achieved without addressing social inequalities and called for fresh ideas and international commitment to fairly sharing global resources.

“One billion hungry people – one in five people without access to electricity – nearly 80 million young people out of work – 67 million children not in primary school – pervasive poverty – egregious disparities in access to sanitation and adequate health care,” said Mr. Ban in an [address](#) to the Fifth Meeting of his High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability.

“This is not equitable. It is not sustainable. Nor can we live with deteriorating ecosystems. Science tells us that we are approaching, and increasingly over-stepping certain planetary boundaries. This, too, is not sustainable,” he said.

Your recommendations will help shape the UN system's policies on sustainable development for years to come.

The 21-member panel, which is co-chaired by President Tarja Halonen of Finland and her South African counterpart Jacob Zuma, is expected provide its final report next month after 16 months of work. It is tasked with finding ways to lift people out of poverty while tackling climate change and ensuring that economic development is environmentally friendly.

“Your recommendations will help shape the UN system's policies on sustainable development for years to come,” said the Secretary-General.

“I look for your guidance on governance issues in particular. How can the UN system work more effectively – and with other institutions – to make sustainable development a reality?”

He said the panel's report will also be a major contribution to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Brazil in June next year. He described the conference as “a once-in-a-generation opportunity that we cannot afford to waste.”

“All the issues that will be on the table in Rio – climate change, demographics, water, food, energy, global health, women's empowerment – are intertwined. And all the pillars that underpin the Rio process – stabilizing the global economy, safeguarding the environment, and ensuring social equity – are parts of a single agenda.

“We cannot make progress in one without progress in the others. At Rio the world should act on this fundamental understanding,” he stressed, adding that the current economic crisis should not be an excuse for inaction.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[UN launches global conversation on sustainable development](#)