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Looking to Rio+20, world must act on sustainable development, says UN forum



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The international community must “reset the global development agenda” and strengthen its commitment to sustainable development, a United Nations-backed conference in Istanbul heard today.

Organized by the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)) in conjunction with Turkey’s Ministry of Development, the Global Human Development Forum gathered more than 200 leading development experts, civil society activists, private sector representatives and UN officials from around the world to tackle the need for reinforced global and national sustainable development strategies.

“Sustainable development recognizes that our economic, social and environmental objectives are not competing goals that must be traded off against each other, but are interconnected objectives that are most effectively pursued together in a holistic manner,” said [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon in a message addressed to conference participants.

The two-day Forum concluded with the adoption of the unanimously-approved Istanbul Declaration calling on the international community to take bold action against social inequities and environmental deterioration when delegates meet at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, also known as Rio+20, in Brazil in June.

“We need an outcome from Rio +20 that reflects this understanding and that relates to the concerns of all,” Mr. Ban added.

Noting that economic development has frequently meant environmental degradation and increased inequality, the Declaration also urges members of the global community to ensure that their development strategies promote key elements such as social inclusion, social protection, and equity.

In addition, it also endorses UNDP’s 2011 Human Development Report –“Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All” – stressing the need to maintain progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 while building a consensus for a new post-2015 global development framework.

“In 2011 and so far in 2012, we have heard clear warnings from nature that humanity is arrogantly pushing her boundaries, just as we have heard societies demanding human rights and justice, opportunities and decent jobs, affordable health care and energy access,” said the Director of UNDP’s Bureau of Development Policy, Olav Kjørven.

“Responding successfully will require decision-makers from across the environmental, social and economic divides coming together to create the future we all want,” he concluded.

More than 100 Heads of State will be attending the conference, making it one of the largest such high-level gatherings in recent times.

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