

Countries Agree on Novel Formula for High-level Forum to Boost Follow-up of Rio+20 Outcomes on Sustainable Development

New York, 9 July— United Nations Member States agreed today to establish a new High-Level Political Forum to boost efforts to achieve global sustainable development that will improve people’s economic and social well-being while protecting the environment. The decision by the General Assembly follows up on a key recommendation of ‘The Future We Want,’ the outcome document of last year’s Rio+20 Conference in Rio de Janeiro.

The Forum will convene annually at the ministerial level under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council and, every four years, it will bring together Heads of State to provide added momentum for sustainable development.

“Establishing the Forum marks a major step forward in implementing ‘The Future We Want,’” said UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “The Forum can provide the political leadership and action-oriented recommendations we need to follow up on all the Rio recommendations and meet urgent global economic, social and environmental challenges. Countries must do their utmost to realize the Forum’s potential.”

“We are simply not doing enough to meet the fundamental challenges of our time: to end extreme poverty in this generation and significantly narrow the global gap between rich and poor, without inflicting irreparable damage to the environmental basis for our survival,” said UN General Assembly President Vuk Jeremić. “The new Forum must be more than just a meeting place—it must be the place where countries and civil society generate the momentum for change.”

Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said “This is a great opportunity to advance the sustainable development agenda. There is so much that we need to do in concert—to accelerate action on the Millennium Development Goals, to eradicate poverty and promote prosperity, to ensure that everyone has a chance for a better life, while addressing important environmental challenges that threaten progress, such as climate change and biodiversity loss and developing a new set of sustainable development goals.”

The High-Level Political Forum will replace the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. The Commission, formed after the 1992 Earth Summit, helped generate action on a range of issues that led to international agreements or treaties. The Commission was also in the forefront in promoting the involvement of civil society in its work. However, governments and civil society actors came to share a belief that a higher-profile body was needed to guide sustainable development towards the future we want.



RIO+20
United Nations
Conference on
Sustainable
Development

The Forum will review progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, enhance the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development—economic, social and environmental - focus on themes consistent with the post-2015 development agenda and ensure that new sustainable development challenges are properly addressed.

The General Assembly resolution stresses the need to enhance the role and participation of major groups of society and other stakeholders, while retaining the intergovernmental character of the forum. The first meeting of the Forum will be held in September, during the Assembly's forthcoming 68th session.

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