



Resolution 1292 (2002)¹

World Summit on Sustainable Development: ten years after Rio

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Since the First United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, the environment and its position in relation to economic development have given much cause for concern and a growing awareness of the problem has developed. This was reflected in the united and committed stance adopted by the countries participating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which favoured a more determined approach to increased international co-operation.
2. The Rio conference had the merit of providing the international community with a newly-defined framework for study, according to which real sustainable development should take the form of an integrated approach of action combining economic and social development and the protection of resources, in a spirit of equality and solidarity of purpose. Nearly ten years later, however, on the eve of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 26 August-4 September 2002), the state of our planet is no less alarming, and the results of the undertakings given in Rio de Janeiro have been, to say the least, disappointing.
3. Climate change is one of the gravest challenges to sustainable development, the health and well-being of humanity and the global economy, and necessitates the implementation of a co-ordinated world strategy by the international community. It was in response to this particular challenge that the United Nations drew up the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol. The convention's primary aim is the stabilisation of greenhouse gases at safe levels, whilst setting specific objectives for reducing gas emissions in the countries with the highest levels.
4. On 17 June 2002, 186 states are parties to the framework convention, 84 have signed the Kyoto Protocol and 74 have ratified it (including only 24 Council of Europe member states), which only accounts for 35.8% of emissions. However, before the protocol can enter into force it must be ratified by 55 countries, which would account for 55% of industrialised countries' carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels.
5. Particularly disappointing is the fact that President George Bush announced that the United States of America now no longer intends to comply with the Kyoto Protocol, despite the fact that America, the world's largest economic power, is responsible for over 25% of all greenhouse gas emissions, even though its inhabitants number only 5% of the world's population.
6. Such an about-face by the USA and its withdrawal from the Kyoto mechanisms continue to cause legitimate concern amongst the international community, which believes the protocol to be the first worldwide practical measure to combat global warming.
7. In spite of this regrettable unilateral decision, efforts made at the recent conferences of the parties and elsewhere have resulted in an agreement establishing an international regulatory framework to make the Kyoto mechanisms operational, allowing all the signatory states to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and to define and implement their national action plans.
8. Consequently, it is important that the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by as many states as possible, enough at the very least to ensure its entry into force, should be a powerful political signal sent to the Johannesburg Summit.

1. Assembly debate on 26 June 2002 (21st Sitting) (see [Doc. 9481](#), report of the Committee on the Environment and Agriculture, rapporteur: Mr Meale). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 June 2002 (21st Sitting).



9. Dialogue must nevertheless continue with the United States, the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the developing countries (particularly China, India and Indonesia) with a view to consultation on emission reduction policies and, in particular, multilateral programmes for the transfer of clean technologies and fuel efficiency know-how towards the developing countries.

10. The Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament and others are aware in this context of the role that can be played by multilateral parliamentary bodies and national parliaments. This has already been reflected in the spirit of co-operation and support for the Kyoto Protocol in many parliaments and in particular at the last conference of the parties, held in Marrakech in November 2001, at which a round table, organised jointly by the Parliamentary Assembly and the European Parliament, was very successful.

11. The Assembly welcomes the decision, taken in co-operation with the European Parliament, to organise a further round table for parliamentarians at the Johannesburg Summit to discuss its main issues, in particular those relating to sustainable development. This initiative will provide the opportunity to significantly step up parliamentary co-operation on this important issue and should allow the coherency of actual policies and current trends in the signatory states with the protocol's aims to be monitored.

12. In the same spirit, the Assembly called upon the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to ensure that the topic reaches a broader geographic audience, so as to secure a united and committed approach amongst parliamentarians.

13. The Assembly asks its own and the IPU's national delegations as well as national parliaments to closely follow up the process of ratification of the Kyoto Protocol in their own countries and to ensure that it is completed before September 2002. It calls on the national delegations to help guarantee coherency between their countries' political, economic and budgetary choices and industrial, energy and transport policies and the commitments entered into on signing the protocol. It also asks the countries which have not signed the protocol to work on reducing emissions.

14. The Assembly further asks all parliamentarians present at the Johannesburg Summit to take part in the parliamentary round table to be organised by the Assembly and the European Parliament.