



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark

Message on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

17 October 2011

This month, as we mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the number of people on our planet is estimated to reach 7 billion. A secure and peaceful future for our world requires that they all have access to sustainable sources of food and water, and the means to enjoy a decent living.

Investing in sustainable development is no longer a question of choice. It is the only option. That is why a meaningful outcome from the Rio +20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Brazil next June is so critical.

Twenty years after the 1992 Rio Earth Summit set a forward looking agenda for sustainable development, we have a unique opportunity at Rio+20 to review progress on that agenda, examine the gaps in it and the new needs, and reach agreement on how to move ahead together.

At UNDP we believe that truly sustainable development for present and future generations must safeguard ecosystems while also enabling economic and social progress. Sustainable development will also build countries' resilience to external shocks and protect development gains.

It is particularly critical to ensure that the most vulnerable are not left behind. Social protection systems are a vital investment in sustainability, as they enable poor people to keep their children in schools during economic downturns, maintain their health, and better plan for and invest in the future.

UNDP works across the three pillars of sustainable development in 177 countries and territories. We partner with governments and communities to build institutional capacity, strengthen governance for sustainable development at national and local levels, catalyze finance, advance access to clean and affordable energy for all, promote women's empowerment, reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and support recovery from shocks and disasters, including during and after conflict.

In India, for example, UNDP supported the Government of India in their implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, whose benefits spread to over 52million poor, rural households in 2010-11. In Malawi, UNDP helped implement agricultural subsidies to raise maize production. In Bangladesh, we have long worked with governments on disaster risk reduction – with good results.

By committing to action on sustainable development, we can tackle the many challenges our world faces – economic crises, climate change, ecosystem decline, continued energy poverty, and conflict and despair in many places.

UNDP will be an active participant in the whole Rio+20 process, and in delivering on a vision for sustainable development in which equity, sustainability, and inclusiveness are secured for all.
