

Earth Summit plans for global protection

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — With world leaders pushing for action, negotiators at the Earth Summit agreed on a plan Monday to protect the environment and fight poverty.

"Humanity has a rendezvous with destiny," French President Jacques Chirac declared. Alarms are sounding across all the continents. We cannot say that we did not know!

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged the more than 100 world leaders in Johannesburg to commit to firm action to solve problems identified a decade ago at the first Earth Summit in Rio.

"The focus from now on must be on implementing the many agreements that have been reached," he said.

Though President Bush declined to come — sending U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell in his place — U.S. officials say they are firmly committed to the summit's success.

"We've reached a real breakthrough with the summit in our collective attempt to ensure that this is a successful gathering of the global family," said Assistant Secretary of State John Turner.

After more than a week of bargaining, the European Union lost its push for targets on the use of wind and solar energy — the last major sticking point in the summit's action plan.

The agreed text includes a commitment to "urgently"

increase the use of renewable energy sources and report back on progress, diplomats said.

Developing countries had sided with the United States and Japan against including the targets.

South Africa's environment minister, Valli Moosa, said such targets were a rich country's luxury. "We will not support binding targets for renewable energies for developing countries," he said.

Japanese foreign ministry

"The focus from now on must be on implementing the many agreements that have been reached"

— General Kofi Annan
U.N. Secretary-General

official Hidenobu Sobashima said: "It is very important for a country to have flexibility."

U.S. officials said the final wording "properly reflects" how a "diversity of clean energy resources" will contribute to sustainable development.

"The document clearly highlights the need to increase access to modern energy services

and signals the valuable role renewable energy will play in the future," said Undersecretary of State Paula Dobriansky, head of the U.S. delegation.

Compromises were also reached in three other key areas: climate change, trade and sanitation.

Despite the Bush administration's refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on climate change, it accepted language that says nations backing Kyoto "strongly urge" states that have not done so to ratify it in "a timely manner."

Kyoto got another boost Monday when Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien, who had been wavering on whether to ratify, confirmed he would submit it to parliament by the end of the year.

But the accord cannot go into effect unless Russia — the crucial holdout — signs on too. The EU issued a "solemn appeal" to Moscow to join them in ratifying, but Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov said his government was not ready to decide.

Negotiators agreed to texts on trade that urge countries to reform subsidies that are environmentally harmful, such as those for the fishing industry that contribute to overcapacity.

They also committed to reducing the number of people living without sanitation from 2 billion to 1 billion by 2015, diplomats said.

Killer whale Keiko swims Norwegian fjords freely

OSLO, Norway (AP) — Keiko, the killer whale who became famous as the star of "Free Willy" movies, has turned up in a Norwegian fjord, six weeks after he was returned to the wild from his pen in Iceland.

"It's definitely him. We have tracked him from Iceland," Fernando Ugarte, part of the team monitoring the orca's progress, said by telephone Monday from a ship in the fjord.

Keiko is arguably the world's best-known whale, given his starring role in the three "Free Willy" films that were released in the 1990s, as well as a brief animated series shown on television.

Having spent most of his life in captivity, volunteers spent years training him for life in the wild. He was released from his pen in Iceland in July and swam nearly 870 miles to a western Norway fjord.

The orca surprised and delighted Norwegians, who petted and swam with him, and climbed on his back as he splashed in the Skaalvik Fjord, about 250 miles northwest of the capital, Oslo.

"He is completely tame, and he clearly wants company," said Arild Birger Neshaug, 35.

Neshaug said he was in a small rowboat with his 12-year-old daughter, Hanne, and some friends when they spotted Keiko on Sunday.

"We were afraid," Neshaug said. "But then he followed us to our cabin dock. At first we were skeptical, and then we tried petting his back.

Finally the children went swimming with him."

He said the orca stayed by their dock all night and into the day on Monday, happily eating fish tossed to him by the families.

Newspapers expressed tongue-in-cheek surprise over the whale coming to Norway, since the oil-rich Scandinavian nation of 4.5 million people is the only country that commercially hunts whales despite a global whaling ban.

Norway's whalers only hunt minke whales.

Ugarte is monitoring the whale on behalf of the Ocean Futures Society and the Humane Society of the United States. He said Keiko was in excellent shape, but still seems to prefer humans to other whales.

Keiko, which means "Lucky One" in Japanese, was captured near Iceland in 1979 when he was two and spent most of his life in captivity in Canada and Mexico.


His appearance in the 1993 film "Free Willy" and later sequels helped spark a campaign to free him.

He was rescued from a Mexico City amusement park in 1996 and rehabilitated at the Oregon Coast Aquarium in Newport, Ore., before he was airlifted back to Iceland in 1998 and taught to catch fish. Keiko's rehabilitation cost \$20 million.

Ugarte said his team will continue monitoring Keiko's progress and movements.

"It's definitely him. We have tracked him from Iceland."

— Fernando Ugarte
Orca Monitor



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