

UNITED NATIONS



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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO 27TH SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL AND
GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM**

Nairobi, 18 February 2013

I am pleased to send greetings to this historic gathering. For the first time, all United Nations Member States are participants in the UNEP Governing Council and Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Universal membership – an outcome of the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development and endorsed by the General Assembly – reflects your key role as a policy making forum on the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

I urge you to make the most of this opportunity. You understand how the environment underpins all social and economic development – past, present and future. It is a recurrent motif throughout the Millennium Development Goals and will be an indispensable component of the post-2015 development agenda. When the environment is neglected, poverty and instability follow. When it is nurtured, well-being and prosperity flourish.

You have a responsibility to articulate these truths and to help craft the policies and programmes that will benefit all people – and especially those most at risk from environmental degradation and climate change. To do so, you will need to engage closely with your counterparts in government to enable them to see that investing in the environment and a green economy is not a cost but a sound insurance policy for the future we want.

UNEP has the mandate to help you make the case. Its work over the years has already had a profound influence – from helping alert the world to the growing threat of climate change to building partnerships to phase out harmful lead in petrol. It is now time to build on this solid record of achievement.

In the General Assembly, discussions are taking place to provide additional resources for UNEP from the Regular Budget. Universal membership and predictable funding will greatly empower UNEP to provide the science and analysis we need to sustainably manage the developmental demands of a growing population while protecting and restoring essential ecosystems and tackling the root causes of climate change.

In the coming months I will count on UNEP to help carry forward some of the key Rio+20 outcomes, including the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production and the formulation of sustainable development goals – which must have a strong environmental dimension. I will also continue to rely on UNEP's support for important initiatives such as Sustainable Energy For All and the Zero Hunger Challenge.

We live in a time of profound transformation. The challenges are great, but so are the opportunities. We can afford no wrong turns. Under your wise stewardship, UNEP can be the guiding light we need to navigate to a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable world.