

**STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR OF THE OAS DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON WORLD  
ENVIRONMENT DAY  
June 5, 2012**



This year's observance of World Environment Day coincides with intense preparations for the UN's Rio + 20 Conference to be held later this month, when the spotlight will fall on policies and strategies for achieving a "Green Economy" in the context of sustainable development and poverty reduction as well as on an institutional framework for sustainable development.

The focus on the green economy is welcomed. There is no doubt that global community needs to decisively move from the failed micro and macro-economics of the past and the present, in which human and natural resources are seen solely as factors of production and economic growth; to the economics of the future where mankind and the earth become the primary beneficiaries of the economic system and where economic growth and development is subordinated to human development and environmental sustainability.

Over the past decade in particular, we have witnessed steady and encouraging progress, especially by the businesses community, towards the adoption of Green policies and practices. Some of this progress is partly due to pressure from a growing number of environmentally-conscious consumers. But it is also due to an increasing awareness within the business community that greening offers Triple Bottom Line benefits in helping to improve competitiveness, and increase profitability and market share without compromising the natural resource base.

Hardly a day goes by without some revelation of new more sustainable ways of doing things: such as the financial and environmental benefits of white roofs, to the use of cradle-of-cradle technologies that significantly reduce waste and that increase efficiencies during the production process.

Still, numerous challenges abound on the road to sustainable consumption and production. It will not be easy to jettison the old, entrenched, counter-productive and unsustainable ways of doing things. There are still too many Governments and businesses around the world that are yet to be convinced of the need for urgent action to rid the world of the threat of Global Climate Change. There are still too many corporations that are unconcerned about the negative social and environmental impacts of their operations and who are unwilling to invest in simple and affordable technologies that can significantly reduce the pollution from their factories.

And so, each World Environment Day offers yet another opportunity for Governments businesses and citizens of the world to reflect on how the world can be made a safer, more sustainable place for us, for our children and their children, to live, work and play.

The OAS Department of Sustainable remains irrevocably committed to contributing to this vision, and will continue to assist the Governments, businesses and people of the Americas through its programs in sustainable energy, sustainable cities, water resources management, hazard risk management and environmental law, policy and governance.