



The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), or the Earth Summit as it was called informally, was held in Rio de Janeiro 3-14 June 1992. At the time, the Earth Summit was unprecedented for a UN conference in terms of both its size and the scope of its concerns. 172 states were represented, 108 of which at the level of heads of state or government. In addition, some 2,400 representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended, with 17,000 people at the parallel NGO "Global Forum".

Breaking significantly with the previous thinking, it was recognised that economic development needed to take place together with social progress and protection of the environment, while also respecting every country's right to develop. The Earth Summit addressed issues ranging from patterns of production, alternative energy sources, reliance on public transportation systems, to the growing scarcity of water.

The conference resulted in several important documents and agreements, including Agenda 21, a blueprint to rethink economic growth, advance social equity and ensure environmental protection. It also produced the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the Statement of Forest Principles, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, an agreement on the Climate Change Convention which in turn led to the Kyoto Protocol. Moreover, the idea of sustainable development revolutionised the thinking of millions, and contributed to world leaders agreeing to the Millennium Declaration in 2000, paving the way to the Millennium Development Goals.



Road to Rio



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