



# United Nations Environment Programme

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PROGRAMME DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L'ENVIRONNEMENT • PROGRAMA DE LAS NACIONES UNIDAS PARA EL MEDIO AMBIENTE  
ПРОГРАММА ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБЪЕДИНЕННЫХ НАЦИЙ ПО ОКРУЖАЮЩЕЙ СРЕДЕ

## PRESS RELEASE

### Industry Progress Towards Sustainable Development

#### **New UNEP Report: “*Class of 2006: Industry report cards on environment and social responsibility.*”**

**New York, 10 May 2006** – A growing number of business and industry groups are making efforts to improve their environmental and social performance according to a new report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The challenge today, says the report, is to speed up progress in moving towards the life cycle economy, doing accountable reporting against corporate responsibility commitments and strengthening engagement of business and industry from rapidly industrialising developing countries.

In most cases, significant steps have been taken towards putting policy, programmes, new technologies and reporting systems in place, says the report, “*Class of 2006: Industry report cards on environment and social responsibility.*”

“The progress is especially evident with respect to key global issues, notably climate change, and in high impact industries that face heavy criticism from stakeholders and public institutions,” says Monique Barbut, Director of UNEP’s Division of Technology, Industry and Economics, which produced the report.

The report, released today to coincide with the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN’s Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in New York, provides an update on progress across some thirty industry sectors since the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

The report cards were prepared by 45 business and industry organisations and initiatives – including newcomers to the process such as cement, coffee, detergents, mining, paper, postal services, public transport and renewable energy - who volunteered to participate in the review facilitated by UNEP.

“Four years on from WSSD there are some signs of hope coming from the class of 2006,” said Mrs Barbut. “If numbers and statistics are not always available, at least new policies, technologies and programmes have been introduced in a number of instances. The first steps towards measurement of sustainability impact and improved management are being taken.”

“Having said this,” Barbut added, “it must be mentioned that some industry sector organisations appear to stick to old models of industrial development and are not on track towards sustainable development. In this respect, more needs to be done, and we must continue to strive for greater progress,” she said.

Four years ago, a UNEP report prepared for the WSSD concluded that there was a growing gap between the efforts of business and industry to reduce their impact on the environment and the worsening state of the planet.

The 2002 report said the gap was partly due to the fact that in most industry sectors, only a small number of companies were actively striving for sustainability, i.e. actively integrating social and environmental factors into business decisions.

“The latest report released by UNEP today shows that while more needs to be done, the gap between words and deeds is starting to close,” said Mrs Barbut. “The real challenge now is implementation of environmental practices by smaller companies in industrialised countries and strengthened engagement of business and industry from emerging market economies,” she said.

### **Note to Editors**

Copies of the report, “Class of 2006: Industry report cards on environment and social responsibility”, can be downloaded from <http://www.unep.fr>

Business and industry sectors contributing to the report cards process included: Accounting, Advertising, Aluminium, Automotive manufacturing, Cement, Chemicals, Coal, Coffee, Construction, Consulting Engineering, Detergents, Electricity (mainstream), Electricity (renewables), Fertilizer, Finance, Food and Drink, Forest and Paper, Information and Communications Technology, Iron and Steel, Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), Mining, Oil and Gas, Postal services, Public Transport, Railways, Refrigeration, Road transport, Tourism and Waste Management. The Labour sector also contributed.

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