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-- Thomas L. Harris/Impulse Research Survey

MAJOR, IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE TO HUMAN, SOCIAL, AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH, LIKELY, CIVIL LEADERS SAY

One in five surveyed believe it may already be too late

Toronto, Ontario and New York, NY (Tuesday, April 19, 2005) An extensive international survey of over 1,000 leaders of non-governmental organizations, private corporations, the public sector, academic and research institutes from over 60 countries has found that a strong majority (72%) expect we will incur major damage to human, social, and ecosystem health because society is failing to make its transition to sustainable development quickly enough. Alarming, one-in-five of these global 'stakeholders' believe major irreversible damage has already occurred.

Most criticized for failing the development challenge include the United States, multinational companies, the IMF, World Bank and developing country governments.

Despite the dire forecast, a majority (61%) also believe there are real opportunities to accelerate society's progress toward sustainable development through initiatives such as the creation of a social marketing campaign and a global social movement to champion sustainable development.

The findings are contained in *What Global Leaders Want: Priorities for Development, Governance and UN Reform*, the largest non-academic survey of civil society leaders ever conducted. The survey was undertaken by GlobeScan Incorporated on behalf of The 2020 Fund, with the support of leading charitable foundations in North America and Europe.

The survey also found that there is resounding support from leaders of all sectors to achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. Despite their importance, only 7 percent believe that achieving these goals by the target year of 2015 is very likely, given current efforts.

The findings also reveal strong support for, but also dissatisfaction with, the UN, among global stakeholders, who view it as having failed to meet their expectations, particularly with regard to creating effective development programs, and in terms of its management and accountability to the global public. Respondents called for reforms aimed at greater operational efficiency and program innovation. Amid this criticism, however, it is clear that stakeholders care enough to want the very best from the UN.

"This survey shows that a wide range of civil society leaders believe we can no longer wait to save the planet and our civilization," said Doug Miller, President of GlobeScan. "These results call on leaders worldwide to mobilize concerted action to achieve a sustainable world. Meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 is seen as a critical step."

Salil Shetty, Director of the UN's Millennium Development Goals Campaign, said:

"While the findings confirm our own understanding of the challenges and sentiments surrounding the MDGs, the recognition of their importance by stakeholders in such diverse geographic contexts and sectors is heartening."

Copies of the report may be downloaded from www.2020Fund.org.

About the 2020 Fund's Global Stakeholder Panel Initiative

The 2020 Global Stakeholder Panel initiative was officially launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos Switzerland and the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre Brazil in January 2003. The objective of this initiative was to establish an inclusive, transparent dialogue amongst a broad cross-section of leaders working in NGOs, corporations, research and academic institutions, and the public sector, from both the developed and developing world, by undertaking survey research in the hopes of identifying common themes and priority actions to promote sustainable development, effective global governance, and more equitable globalization.

Funding for the 2020 Global Stakeholder Panel initiative was provided by an international group of philanthropies including the King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium) the Rockefeller Foundation (US), the Mott Foundation (US), the Sam and Mary Mills Fund (US), Dow Canada, and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

About the Survey

The 2020 Global Stakeholder Panel initiative involves the most extensive quantitative research of this type ever undertaken. Three surveys were fielded between August 2002 and October, 2004. A total of 1120 respondents from more than 60 countries completed the final survey, and their responses were analyzed through a matrix that tested how evenly they were represented across geographical and sector distribution.

About GlobeScan

GlobeScan Incorporated is a global public opinion and stakeholder research firm with offices in Toronto, London, and Washington. GlobeScan conducts custom research and annual tracking studies on global and corporate issues. With a research network spanning 50+ countries, GlobeScan works with global companies, multilateral agencies, national governments, and non-government organizations to deliver research-based insights for successful strategies.

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