

7 WONDERS

MEETING THE GOALS

1 High in the Himalayas, the small kingdom of Bhutan has probably done more than any other country in the world to integrate the principles of sustainable development into its policies and programmes. Placing the environment at the heart of its constitution and all its development plans, it has remained a green oasis in an increasingly eroded mountain chain. Almost three quarters of its land is still covered by forest, which teems with wildlife. A quarter of this is in protected areas. Tourism is limited and industry is developed in harmony with the environment.

photo: Topfoto

2 When democracy came to South Africa in 1994, more than 12 million of its people still did not have safe drinking water and 20 million had no sanitation. The new Government made this a priority. Within ten years it had brought clean water to almost 10 million, and will be providing it to all its people by 2008. Providing sanitation, an even greater task, is not far behind; the country intends to eradicate its backlog by 2010. In both areas it is far ahead of the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals, showing what can be done if the political will is there.

photo: S. Sprague/Still Pictures

3 'Stop treating soil like dirt', read a bumper sticker. But in Africa, as in much of the world, hundreds of millions of acres of it have been overused. Harvests diminish on the denuded earth. Now researchers from the World Agroforestry Centre have developed crops that add nutrients to the soil. These 'green fertilizers' have doubled and tripled harvests for tens of thousands of poor farming families in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

photo: E. Tobisch/Still Pictures



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4 After its tragic civil war and genocide, Rwanda has been building a new society for women as well as men. It adopted a new constitution guaranteeing equal rights for women, and has been repealing laws biased against them. By the end of this year equal numbers of boys and girls will be entering primary and secondary schools, meeting one of the targets of the goals. Nearly half the members of the lower house of parliament, and nearly a third of those of the upper house, are female, and special women's councils, elected only by women, have been created.

photo: Topfoto/Imageworks



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5 Brazil is famous for its *favelas*, the slums clinging to the hillsides of Rio de Janeiro and proliferating through its major cities. But now it may become equally well known for improving the lives of their people. The Brazilian Government has recently shown extraordinary commitment to making *favelas* better, and in 2001 passed a special law to create more equitable cities. It has set up a \$1.6 billion fund to build new houses and improve slums, partly through small loans to help families improve their own homes. It started by upgrading 30 slums and the programme is to be greatly expanded.

photo: Topfoto/Imageworks



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6 China has the world's fastest growing economy. But it is also trying to grow while doing as little damage as possible to the earth's climate. Between 1996 and 1999 its emissions of carbon dioxide – the main cause of global warming – actually fell by a minimum 6 per cent, while its economy grew by more than 22 per cent. It has cut the amount of energy used for each dollar of production fourfold since 1980. And earlier this year it slowed or stopped the construction of some 20 power stations while investigations were carried out into their effects on the environment.

photo: H. Schwarzbach/Still Pictures



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7 Millions of people in India no longer have to use bucket latrines, thanks to a voluntary organization that has developed a new, cheap, but sanitary lavatory. Sulabh International has installed the lavatories – which also save scarce water by needing only 2 litres of water for each flush, instead of the normal 10 – in a million homes, and has set up another 5,500 as public lavatories used by 10 million people each day. Some towns are so impressed that they have asked the organization to take charge of providing sanitation in their areas.

photo: Sulabh International