

WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

STATEMENT
BY
MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY
AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE
WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
AT THE 42ND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

OCTOBER 19, 1987
NEW YORK, USA



NORWAY

PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY TO THE UNITED NATIONS 825 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY, 10022 – TEL: 421-0280

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S T A T E M E N T

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ON

19 OCTOBER 1987

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,

It is a great pleasure for me to present to the General Assembly the unanimous report of the World Commission on Environment and Development - "Our Common Future".

The World Commission on Environment and Development was given a challenging mandate by the General Assembly. We were asked to take a fresh look at the interrelated issues of environment and development and to define shared perceptions on long-term environmental issues and aspirational goals of the world community to the year 2000 and beyond. During the 1000 days since our Commission's inception there has been an endless information flow about increasing threats to the global environment and about environmental disasters often caused or aggravated by our own policies and actions.

Early, we came to recognize that poverty is the main cause and effect of environmental degradation in many developing countries. Clearly it is totally unacceptable and incompatible with human decency and solidarity to even suggest that the poor must remain in poverty in order to protect the environment. What is needed are national and international

strategies that offer real options, that secure and enhance incomes as well as the environment on the local, national, and international level.

The Commission became collectively convinced that present development patterns cannot be allowed to continue. While economic and social development suffer from severe national and global imbalances, threats to the environment are becoming global in scope and devastating in scale. The survival of this planet requires that we act now!

The Commission came out equally convinced that the necessary changes are also possible. Our report is not a prophecy of doom, but a positive vision of the future. Never before in human history have we had greater possibilities. The time and the opportunity has come to break out of the negative trends of the past. We need not only a new vision, but political commitment and a broad mobilization of human ingenuity. We need intensified multilateral cooperation based on recognition of the growing interdependence among nations.

I believe that today's meeting conclusively demonstrates that the idea of sustainability and the interlinked issues of environment and development have now risen to the top of the international political agenda. Our common concerns for the future can create a momentum for change.

The overriding political concept upon which our report is founded is that of sustainable development. It is a broad concept for social and economic progress. We define it as paths of human progress that meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of

future generations to meet their needs. It requires political reforms, a fair access to knowledge and resources, and a more just and equitable distribution within and among nations.

Poor people must not be condemned to remain in poverty. It is mass poverty which drives millions of people to overexploit thin soils, overgraze fragile grasslands, and cut down yet more of the rapidly disappearing tropical forests, these great lungs vital for the global climate and thereby for food production.

I need not dwell here on the familiar catalogue of environmental deterioration. Global warming is expected to change agricultural and settlement patterns and flood seaports. Acidification is moving into the developing world. Six million hectares of productive dryland turns into desert each year. Against this grim backdrop, we welcome the recent achievements in Montreal on the protection of the ozone layer.

All nations will ultimately share the same destiny. Our environment and economies have become so intertwined that we may no longer choose to remain apart. The environment respects no national boundaries. We cannot act as if it did.

Sustainable development recognizes that there are thresholds imposed by nature, yes, but not limits to growth itself. In a world ridden by poverty, growth is absolutely necessary. Growth is the only answer to the problems of developing countries. But the contents of growth must be changed. Growth cannot be based on overexploitation of the resources of Third World countries. Growth must be managed to enhance the resource base on which they all depend. The environment and the natural resources of developing countries

must cease to be the victims in a world economy troubled by serious imbalances. The victims must instead become allies in the struggle for survival.

Debilitating debts, soaring interest rates, interrupted financial flows, and adverse terms of trade offer developing countries few options but to overuse their resource base while their capacity to address environmental issues remains low. These trends have too long been working against developing countries. New international economic conditions must be designed to enhance the resource base of developing countries.

The industrialized world must take a full share of responsibility to ensure that the international economy helps rather than hinders sustainable development. This is also in their own interest. Commodity markets must be strengthened. Restrictive trade practices should be abolished. Terms of trade must change to favour developing countries rather than to impoverish them.

Urgent action is necessary to alleviate the debt crisis in ways that represent a fairer sharing between debtors and lenders. The massive drain of resources from developing countries must be reversed. What is needed is new loans on concessional terms, new investments, and economic reform.

In many countries massive assistance from external sources will be needed. Donors, lenders, and investors must make a fundamental commitment to sustainable development. There is no alternative to substantial increases in financial flows. Additionality - both in quantity and in quality - must be based on equality and mutual self-interest. Internationally agreed targets are far from being met. The concern for our environment and our common future can help us to move forward.

Sustainability objectives should be of serious concern to us all. Our report aims at raising global awareness among governments, aid agencies, and others concerned with development of the necessity of integrating environmental considerations into economic decision-making and planning at all levels.

The Commission was emphatic in coupling its demand for higher quality and environmental sensitivity in aid and lending with substantially increased aid flows.

Some countries might be sceptical about the application of the Commission's sustainability criteria in aid and lending and perceive it as a new form of conditionality.

It is clear, however, and I emphasize this point, that this integrated process must be made operational by the governments themselves as part of their national strategies for development. External assistance will be needed to help many countries establish their professional and institutional capacity to conduct this integration in practice. Such assistance must come at the request of countries concerned and must be assisted by the international community.

Growth must promote a fair distribution of income. It must be firmly based on the stock of natural capital that sustains it.

To achieve this the Commission advocates full integration of environment and economics into decision-making at all levels, nationally and internationally. We must attack the problems at their source. We must clearly recognize that the policies of sectoral ministries such as Ministries of Finance, Industry, Energy, Agriculture are the ones that determine the state of the environment and consequently our

options for the future. Sustainable development objectives must be integrated into the goals of all branches of public administration as well as the legislative bodies and municipal democratic institutions.

We must break away from our sectoral ways of viewing economy and ecology. We must learn to accept the fact that environmental considerations and economic growth are parts of a unified management of our planet. The one is dependent on the other.

In this connection, I believe that a very special role is to be played by our Secretary General. In exercising his overriding and coordinating responsibilities for implementing sustainable development in the UN system, he needs our total support. We should all give the Secretary General that support.

It is indeed appropriate that our leading international civil servant assume a key role in pursuing the basic objectives for our survival: peace, development, and environment.

The United Nations system was brought into existence to provide multilateral solutions to shared problems. At this point in history, when we face the prospect of genuinely cooperative relations between the major powers, should we not have the courage to use the global international organization we have created to provide political and intellectual leadership in saving this planet from degradation and collapse? Should we not adopt sustainable development as a central goal of the United Nations itself, assisted in that process by a strengthened UNEP, which can then fully perform its catalytic role?

The Commission has proposed that 'Our Common Future', upon due consideration, be translated into a UN Action Programme for Sustainable Development. We are heartened by the large number of countries that have spoken favourably about our call for action.

Time has come to move forward towards a true revival of multilateralism. Time has come to restore the authority of the United Nations.

A broad and genuine process of global change will entail a further evolution of open societies, based on more effective popular participation in decision-making. The status of women will have to be further enhanced. Political reforms and broad access to knowledge and resources are required.

Disabled people, whose handicaps may come from hunger, war, or environmental decline or disasters, must participate on an equal basis.

The NGOs play an essential part. Their access and influence are central to sustainable development. They play an active role in translating political programmes into action.

Industry should be at the forefront and be encouraged to develop more sustainable techniques. Trade unions must be engaged in this essential process.

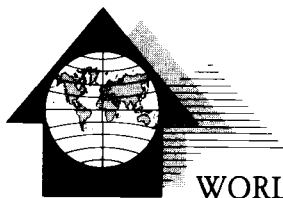
Most important of all is the interaction between all these key players based on exchange of information, creative dialogue, and inspiration.

The Commission's open method of work has generated great hopes and expectations in many parts of the globe. This General Assembly has the opportunity to respond to these expectations.

I cannot mention all the groups, organizations, or governments who have supported us and placed faith in us. We have received political, financial, and intellectual support from a broad spectrum of sources. The Commission benefited from endless hours of committed people's hard work. I offer a brief thank you to all from this rostrum as a humble gesture of profound gratitude.

The Secretary General himself has been a most ardent supporter. His role and the close cooperation with UNEP and its Executive Director Dr. Tolba gave us all an additional measure of mutual strength, conviction, and dedication.

Mr. President, the Commission commends the report 'Our Common Future' to the peoples of the United Nations. I thank you.



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AT THE JAMES MARSHAL MEMORIAL LECTURE

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JAMES MARSHALL MEMORIAL LECTURE

19 OCTOBER 1987

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This has been a most memorable day for all of us who have been working on the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. This morning I had the pleasure of presenting our report - Our Common Future - to the General Assembly. I welcome this opportunity to share the results of our work and to deliberate with you over what needs to be done to assure this work bears fruit.

Over three years we looked into the future and found that so many current human activities are blind alleys down which lie increased poverty and decreased options for future generations. You will find the details in our chapters on the international economy, on population growth, on the production of food, energy, and industrial goods, on our efforts to manage the global commons, and on peace and security.

The Commission concluded that international imbalances, which are at the root of the environment/development deadlock, must be corrected. In a world ridden by poverty, only economic growth can offer hope for a better life for the poor and create the capacity to solve environmental problems. Sustainable development itself - the overriding political concept of the Commission - is, in fact, a new concept for economic growth.

A new era of growth is what we call for. This new growth must be substantial but its content needs to be changed. The ability of future generations to meet their needs can be compromised as much by affluence - the excesses of industrial and technological development - as by the environmental degradation which is the result of underdevelopment. A new era of growth must be supported by a

broad process of change and of policy reforms. It requires more equal access to knowledge and to resources. It requires a more equitable distribution - not only among nations but also within nations.

I am gratified to end this day by speaking to the world community of non-governmental organizations, and I wish to thank the NDRC for making this possible. You have a crucial role in carrying our message forward.

We found, after careful consideration, that major changes are not only crucial but are well within the realm of present human possibilities. We have the technology for increased economic growth within the framework of ecological realities. We have the communications facilities to allow us to cooperate in achieving such growth and spreading its benefits more equitably. For as our report notes, present human and national inequality is "the planet's main environmental problem; it is also its main development problem".

Today, in speaking to the General Assembly, the focus was on the challenges to governments. Tonight we should be concerned with the challenges for the non-governmental community - the NGOs.

We have the ability to change toward sustainable paths of progress, and I discern a readiness to change. You will note that many governments have welcomed the Commission's conclusions in the present General Assembly debate.

There is so much work to be done, work that covers a broad spectrum which stretches from individuals, homes, and villages to the decision-making chambers of governments and their multilateral institutions. The NGOs are crucial in

keeping the lines of communications open all along that spectrum.

The Commission found that a major prerequisite to sustainable development is a political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision-making. The NGOs have shown what an effective force they can be in bringing the realities and the concerns of local people to the attention of national governments. This happens not only in the North where communications and affluence can ease the process. It happens to an increasing extent in the developing world as well.

A major theme of Our Common Future is that a new multilateralism will be crucial for progress. NGOs, especially those that operate internationally, can be and are a force for change in this respect. The NGOs have been effectively informing the government's decisions of the northern industrialized nations for decades. They have more recently expanded their activities into the international forums, as demonstrated by the innovative work of our hosts, the NRDC. Such work sets examples for other NGOs and for the governments themselves. In the developing nations, a younger NGO movement has been increasingly effective in opening and deepening channels of communication between governments and their citizens. We came into contact with such efforts in India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and many African and Latin American nations.

Our report strongly advocates that flows of resources from the industrialized to the developing world must be increased. At the same time, the North must be more prepared to listen to and act upon the concerns of the South. Can the NGOs help to show the way in these areas? Can the wealthy organizations of North America and Europe share their resources with the newer, poorer NGOs of the South? Equally important,

are the Northern groups open enough to learn from the South - to follow their lead in areas that most directly affect them, such as deforestation, desertification, and the realities imposed by debilitating debt?

There is a third way in which the NGO community keeps lines of communication open in the struggle towards human progress which meet the needs of this and future generations. Up until a few years ago, the fragmented concerns of NGOs all too accurately mirrored the too fragmented concerns of the governments and their institutions. There were conservation groups, development groups, relief groups, women's rights groups, population groups, and disarmament groups. Too often they competed against one another more often than they cooperated; too seldom did they seek out common ground.

Today, there is a chance for all of these groups to work together on a broad front. All of our concerns - your concerns - have fallen together. Conservation groups have realized that they cannot conserve species when international trade patterns force agricultural nations to destroy natural habitats to plant cash crops. Relief groups who used to ship food and blankets to growing numbers of environmental disasters of droughts, famines, and floods now increasingly act upon their underlying causes as well. Women's groups are protecting forests and planting trees to provide fuelwood and protecting crops. And development groups find that their efforts are often wasted in a world which devotes so much of its scientific creativity and cash to weapons systems rather than health, education, nutrition, and communication systems.

The many issues of the many non-governmental organisations come together in the one issue of sustainable human progress. Are we equal to the opportunity? Are our

visions broad enough to look beyond our traditional mandates and see how all issues and all peoples are now united in a common concern for our common future?

There is a most obvious, but no less important, way in which the NGO community can play a part in directing the planet down the path of sustainable development. That is by using your considerable communications skills and facilities to spread the word. I did not say "to spread our word". You may disagree on particulars. You may feel that we have not gone far enough, or have gone too far. Such debate must be part of the process itself.

The Commission's report is a consensus document drawn up by Commissioners from 21 countries. It is designed to sound an alarm and to encourage and lay the foundation for the debate which must follow. But it was never intended as an operational manual. It is up to others to translate into action and adapt its analysis to local, national, and regional needs. Governments should do this, but so should the NGOs. And we should all inspire one another.

For instance, we call upon national governments to make their central economic and sectoral agencies directly responsible and fully accountable for ensuring that all of their activities support development that is socially, ecologically, and economically sustainable. With the advice and watchdog role of the NGOs, the chances for real change will be greatly increased. We inserted a section in our final chapter entitled "Making Informed Choices" in which we call for a strengthening in the roles of the scientific community and non-governmental organizations to help governments do just that: make better-informed choices of options.

I therefore challenge the NGO community tonight to take advantage of this atmosphere and to test our report and government reactions to it to the utmost. Did we weaken our argument in places by being too general, by not naming names? Name them. You have a reputation for being frank and direct. Put it to good use now.

Are the governments and international organizations publicly committing themselves to the ideals of sustainable development and privately going on with business as usual? Judge them; prepare report cards. We have of necessity presented a general case for sustainable human progress, for planetary stewardship for the future. But this is meaningless unless sustainable development is woven into the fabric of national policies and laws. I challenge all national NGOs to work with governments in preparing national strategies for sustainable development and national audits of environmental resources and their uses. Examine governmental and industrial operations and see how they match the recommendations of the report. If there is a divergence, is it the government at fault or is it the report?

The government of Canada has already acted upon this recommendation. Recently environment and resource ministers there teamed up with scientists and NGOs in a task force on environment and economy. A similar exercise has been mounted in my own country. I know of several national and international NGOs which are working on national sustainable development strategies and checklists of national sustainable development indicators.

Our Common Future emphasizes the need for the involvement of other types of organizations which are also "non-governmental", but are rarely referred to as such. I am

thinking now of industry and trade unions. Already top industrial leaders have been meeting to analyze our report. One such group which came together in Colorado endorsed the concept of sustainable development and accepted the invitation to cooperate with governments and international bodies in combining the goals of economic growth and environmental maintenance. The final statement of that gathering in Aspen mentioned unspecified reservations concerning some of our recommendations. I am not surprised. Industry will have difficulties marrying the needs of future generations with their own needs to show their share-holders annual profits. We must encourage them in their attempts to do so.

Trade unions have been quick to respond to our call, with novel ideas covering issues as diverse as hazardous wastes and the spread of technology from North to South.

In the foreword to the report, the need for basic education campaigns is stressed. Unless we are able to translate our words into a language that can reach the minds and hearts of people young and old, we shall not be able to undertake the extensive social changes needed to correct the course of development.

NGOs have already taken a lead in making our world more accessible to people everywhere. There have been Readers Guides, Media Guides, videos, several international television series, and popular articles; in many countries NGOs are preparing material for classroom use. There have also been teach-ins and symposia organised by NGOs of all persuasions. One such meeting in London was organized by groups as disparate as the Quakers, the Other Economic Summit, and the national chapter of the World Wildlife Fund, a mixture demonstrating the

point about the melting pot of issues forged by the concept of sustainable progress.

The Commission recognized that you often work without adequate financial or technological resources. You also work often without adequate information.

We thus have called upon governments to recognize and extend NGOs' rights to know and have access to information on the environment and natural resources; their rights to be consulted and to participate in decision-making on activities likely to have a significant effect on their environment; and their right to legal remedies and redress when their health or environment is being seriously affected. Let us tonight renew that call upon governments to recognize these basic rights of citizens' groups.

It is necessary not only for logistical reasons that the message reach the citizens of this world. It is part of a debt we owe to them. For our report was written by the people of the world. Look at the final pages of the report and you will see the wealth of human and organizational ingenuity which entered our deliberations through our public hearings. It is our duty to recycle those findings. And this must be done by you, because our official work is over.

In the beginning of our work, right now, and in the future, our success depends on the efforts of others. It is for this reason especially that I am pleased to be ending this most important day for the World Commission by speaking to those who must help spread the message.

There is another reason why this is a most appropriate forum. We meet here tonight in honor of the late James

Marshall, a founding trustee of the Natural Resources Defense Council. He was a lawyer, an educator, and an environmentalist. He personified the motto of "Act locally, think globally" in his work in conserving the Adirondacks and his proposals for the foundation of UNESCO. His achievements demonstrate what can be accomplished by one person of broad vision and deep conviction.

This address in honor of his memory also reflects the breadth of issues common to all NGOs; my predecessors at this rostrum have included jurists, conservationists, and astronomers. Tonight you have invited a physician who became a politician. I hope that my presence here is an indication that environment and development issues have now risen to the top of the political agenda. Their effects upon economic progress, upon national and international stability and security, and upon trade are now so obvious that we can no longer treat them as side issues.

The message of sustainable development is a political necessity and an intellectual imperative. Let us all, government and non-government, sharing insights and informing the choices of one another, work together in broadening the options for the present generation and in keeping open the options of future generations.

Thank you.

A.J. Meyer Memorial Lecture

Harvard

18 September 1987

Gro Harlem Brundtland

THE POLITICS OF OIL: A VIEW FROM NORWAY

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to speak to such a distinguished audience. At the same time, it is with a sense of humility that I assume the role of lecturer at my old alma mater.

This year the world's population passed the 5 billion mark. Careful assessments suggest that the global population could stabilize somewhere between 8 and 13 billion some time in the next century. The supply of energy required to meet the needs of tomorrow in a world free of poverty will be enormous. Our success in providing adequate supplies largely depends on our present policies. One aspect is clear: we cannot multiply today's patterns to serve a world economy five to ten times as large as the present one. Such a course of action would rapidly deplete our petroleum reserves and destroy the global environment. In fact, we probably cannot even continue today's patterns with the present world population.

In the industrialized countries we have long taken for granted that energy would be available in sufficient quantities to permit us to realize our social and economic aspirations. Until the early 1970s ever increasing supplies of cheap energy were among the main factors behind economic development and progress in the world. That supply situation is not likely to ever come back. Still, future global economic development is

crucially dependent on increasing the availability of energy. We face the great challenge of finding sustainable energy pathways. By this I mean safe, dependable and environmentally sound energy production and consumption patterns.

The primary sources of energy today are mainly non-renewable, i.e. natural gas, oil, coal and conventional nuclear power. Renewable sources are widely used, and include hydro power, geothermal, solar and ocean energy, and fuelwood, on which 70 per cent of the people in developing countries depend. In theory all the various energy sources can contribute to the worldwide energy mix of the future. However, each source of energy has its own economic, health and environmental costs, benefits and risks - factors that interact strongly with other national and global priorities. While energy choices in the 1950s and 1960s seemed rather straightforward, and were for the most part directly contingent on production costs, these other aspects have become increasingly important. In order to achieve sustainable development in the future, we must now be much more careful, looking more to the future when we make our choices.

The global character of energy supplies, and the challenges facing us as regards the use of energy create new imperatives: Every nation should implement domestic and international energy policies that duly reflect the importance of energy to the environment and to general economic and political development. Progress in the world of today and tomorrow will be fundamentally dependent on our ability to cooperate despite differences in culture and political systems and the narrow interests of individual nations.

In order to find solutions of benefit to us all energy policies must be based on what could be called the principle of mature behaviour among nations. In point of fact, however, this is really in the self-interest of all nations.

Let me underline that there has been little domestic political disagreement over the broader lines of Norwegian petroleum policy. Our depletion policy is moderate and

long-term. A strong competent national petroleum industry has been built up and will be sustained. We appreciate the pioneering efforts of international oil companies on our Continental Shelf. International oil companies can expect to be awarded interesting tasks in the future as well, in close cooperation with Norwegian partners. Also with regard to goods and services, petroleum activity in Norway is open to foreign competition in pact with the international agreements to which Norway adheres.

Thus we expect and hope that Norwegian petroleum supplies and policy will be a stable and significant factor in the world's energy picture well into the next century. The 21st century is likely to become a transition period when oil will become more scarce and consequently a more valuable resource. Oil production outside the OPEC countries is expected to fall by the mid-1990s. As mentioned earlier, the USA and the Soviet Union are mature oil production regions, and so is the North Sea. Already within a few years the industrialized world will become increasingly dependent on oil supplies from the OPEC nations and other developing countries. Thus it seems obvious that the transition starting in the 1970s from the oil-intensive economies of the 1960s towards more energy-efficient and energy-diversified economies is likely to continue and indeed must continue.

International aspects are important as regards my own country's energy policies. As you know, Norway is a relative newcomer as an oil and gas producing country.

"You can disregard the possibility of there being oil on the continental shelf off the Norwegian coast". This was the considered expert opinion which the Norwegian Government received in 1958. Eleven years later the first commercial oil discovery was made at what was to become known as the Ekofisk Field. By 1975 Norway was a net exporter of oil, and two years later Norwegian natural gas was being pipelined to Great Britain and Central Europe.

Rich in maritime tradition, Norway quickly adapted to its new situation and pioneered sophisticated petroleum technology for use under strenuous conditions, right on the doorstep of the European markets.

Our traditionally open economy provided a good basis for dealing with new challenges and opportunities. Close to 50 per cent of our national earnings had originated from exports. The petroleum discoveries gave new dimensions to Norway's internationalization.

In recent years the expression "energy country" has frequently been used to characterize Norway. I think it fits well. For almost a century our abundant supplies of electricity based on hydropower have been the driving force behind our industrialization. Last year about 15 per cent of our gross national product and 27 per cent of our export earnings came from the petroleum sector. In 1985, before the fall in oil prices, the figures were 20 and 40 per cent, respectively.

Last year our combined production of energy reached 1.5 million barrels of oil equivalents a day, which is more than four times the total Norwegian energy consumption. Production of crude oil accounted for somewhat less than 900,000 barrels a day or about 60 per cent of total energy production. Natural gas comprised about 30 per cent, while production of electricity, previously our most important energy source, now makes up about 10 per cent of the total, though it has increased in real terms. Due to our rich endowment of hydropower resources, our energy consumption pattern is highly atypical. This 10 per cent hydropower share covers our total electricity consumption, providing the basis for our vital energy-intensive industrial sector. About 90 per cent of our petroleum production is exported. Norway's oil production at today's level could last for about 30 years based on proven reserves, while proven gas reserves could last for about 100 years.

The only significant petroleum reserves in Western Europe are those in the North Sea basin. The Norwegian reserves

comprise about 35 per cent of known crude oil and 50 per cent of natural gas reserves in Western Europe. Today total production from the North Sea is equivalent to about 25 per cent of total European energy requirements. It is in our interest, and I believe also in the interest of our partners in Western Europe, that those reserves are effectively developed and used.

Norway's position as a petroleum exporter has been achieved in a short period of time. Current production and all the fields coming on stream in the near future are the result of discoveries and development decisions made during the 1970s and early 1980s. Oil production capacity may gradually increase to 1.6 million barrels a day in the 1990s, depending on development decisions in the years to come. Increases in the Norwegian production will take place parallel to an expected decline in production on the British shelf.

The rise in our production to date has taken place parallel to the decline of market shares for the OPEC countries. From 1980 to 1985 OPEC's market share was reduced from 60 to 35 per cent. During this period Norway became an oil producer of the same magnitude as a medium-sized OPEC-exporter, representing 2 per cent of world oil production.

These facts and figures depict Norway's unique position. We belong to the community of Western industrialized nations. We have common interests and cooperate actively in the International Energy Agency (IEA). We have the resources necessary, and we have expressed our political desire, ability and willingness to make positive, substantial and reliable contributions to the security of our trading partners' energy supplies. At the same time, as a producer and exporter of oil, we also share many common interests with other oil exporting countries in and outside OPEC. In a global energy perspective we see challenges that must be resolved through global cooperation across traditional economic and political affiliations.

To be able to play a positive and stable role in the global energy picture, and to avoid becoming too dependent on the

petroleum sector, we have decided to deplete our petroleum resources on a moderate and long term-basis. In the light of technological, climatical and ecological challenges on the Norwegian continental shelf, we will remain, like most petroleum producing areas outside OPEC, a high cost area. Consequently Norway's position and its ability to perform its role as a reliable long-term supplier of energy largely depend upon stable and reasonably higher oil prices.

The importance of the oil sector to our economy, together with the high capital cost involved, speak for taking a long-term view in our policies. About 20 per cent of the proven oil reserves on the Norwegian continental shelf have already been produced. According to the production plans, 75 percent of the remaining proven oil reserves will have been produced by the end of this century. This clearly illustrates the need for continued exploration in order to secure stable activities into the next century as well.

Allow me to offer some illustrations of the importance of prices to our own economy. The expansion of the petroleum sector in Norway has been a focus of interest in our country. In the early 1970s it was argued that maintaining activities at the present level would be like putting too many eggs in one basket. Although a long term depletion policy was chosen, some argued that a small economy like ours would be highly vulnerable to developments in the international oil market. That point was indeed clearly illustrated last year when, over the course of a few months, oil prices dropped from about \$30 to about \$10 a barrel. Considering that in 1985 the oil sector constituted 20 per cent of our national product and 40 per cent of our export earnings, Norway faced a severe economic situation. Income equal to \$7,500 per family per year would have vanished overnight if prices had stayed at about \$10 per barrel. A foreign trade surplus of 5 per cent of the GDP in 1985 turned into a deficit of about the same magnitude in 1986. We could not meet this situation by relying on foreign borrowing, hoping for an early rise in prices. We had to adopt a range of austerity measures and we will continue our efforts to stabilize the economy.

But that was only part of the situation. Had prices continued at the low 1986 level, further development on our continental shelf would have been put in jeopardy, entailing even more undesirable results for our national economy and for future petroleum supplies from Norway.

Development of the Troll Field, a field that alone could sustain our present level of gas production for 50 years, and other new fields, would have been postponed if estimates of future prices had remained low. The result would have been a dramatic fall in oil production from about 1.2 million barrels a day to 0.5 million barrels a day over a few years in the mid-1990s at the precise moment when all projections indicate that it will be most needed. Our natural gas production would have shown about the same decline, and the market for construction and offshore services would have suffered serious blows. The transition back to a non-petro economy would have been rather painful. Equally important, it would have taken many years before successful exploration would have led to the development of new projects. Rebuilding the petroleum sector in Norway would have been expensive. It is difficult to see how we could have maintained our role as a stable petroleum producer and supplier of energy in the face of risking wild fluctuations similar to those we have experienced in the recent past.

Thus Norway has a clear interest in stable and reasonably higher oil prices. We also believe that this is in the interest of the global economy. Crude oil prices which reflect the long-term value of oil would facilitate planning for continued economic growth and would thus benefit consumer and producer countries alike. We are aware that many countries experienced some short-term economic benefits from the low prices last year. Having suffered balance of payment problems and inflationary pressures during the 1970s, it is understandable that importing countries welcomed the immediate benefits of a drop in oil prices.

It does not seem, however, that the price drop has produced the stimulus to economic growth that was predicted a few years ago. Within the IEA Norway has stressed the need to focus more on the negative effects of low oil prices on the energy security of member countries than on the short-term economic benefits. Low prices discourage investment in exploration and development. They will lead to lower indigenous production and increased dependence on imports from the outside. In the OECD countries, investments in the petroleum sector fell by 30 per cent last year. This is out of line with the objectives behind the IEA which is to promote the development of domestic resources. As you know, the decline in investments hit the oil industry here in the United States particularly hard.

Due to the fact that most of the proven oil reserves are concentrated in the Middle East and that most of the consumption takes place in distant markets, energy security will most certainly be an important issue in the decades ahead. By the late 1990s, it is not unlikely that as much as 3/4 of Western oil trade will originate in the Middle East.

From being a rather small petroleum producing country, simply adjusting to the events which took place in the oil market during the 1970s and early 1980s, the growth in our production has given Norway a more significant and influential role. It became clear that the dramatic developments in the oil market in the mid-1980s required a careful rethinking of our petroleum market policy.

In general this was the background to the new policy line introduced by the Norwegian Government's declaration last year that Norway should contribute to stabilizing the international oil market at a reasonably high price level. Of course, with only 2 per cent of the world oil production, Norway, despite its increasing importance, can only exercise limited direct influence on the oil market. Thus, any Norwegian measure presupposes that other oil exporting countries also take realistic measures to stabilize the market. Our impression is that the psychological impact of our new direction in policy was important in itself,

and helped in the process of creating sufficient strength among oil exporters to influence the market. Norwegian production control measures are unilateral in character and limited in time.

The Norwegian Government regarded the decisions taken by OPEC in Geneva last fall as important steps towards stabilizing the market. With due regard to the market situation and our national interest, the Government decided to withdraw 80,000 barrels a day from the crude oil market during the two last months of 1986. We chose to do this by refining royalty crude oil and storing the oil products as permanent emergency preparedness stocks.

In January this year the Government decided to prolong our measures by reducing crude oil production by the equivalent volume for the first half of 1987. In July the measures were extended for the rest of the year. This reduction does not mean a reduced total production volume, but rather a reduction in the rapid growth that would otherwise have taken place. The measures effectively defer production to what is expected to be the more needy 1990s.

So far we are satisfied with the results of the efforts to stabilize the oil market.

It is important to Norway that OPEC pursue a moderate and responsible policy. The present pricing policy is recognized by most parties as responsible, taking due regard for both producer and consumer interests.

It is Norwegian policy to maintain good bilateral relations with other oil producing countries in and outside OPEC. We do not have any formalized relations or agreements with the organization, and we do not adhere to their present fixed price system. Norway is firmly anchored in the community of Western industrialized nations. As an oil-exporting country, we also share interests with oil-exporting countries outside the group of our traditional partners. Therefore Norway is in a position to make endeavours to bring about the discussions between

oil-importing and oil-exporting countries which are necessary if stable and predictable conditions in the oil market are to be secured. Norway intends to contribute to global energy policy interrelations based on greater contact and deeper mutual understanding between oil-exporting and oil-importing countries.

We believe that it is not only in Norway's self-interest to pursue such interrelations in our foreign and petroleum policy. Orderly conditions and operations are significant for global economic development, and important if oil is to be exploited in an environmentally sound manner. We believe that this policy serves the best long-term interests of all countries.

In the present situation Norway can look to the future with more confidence than we could only a year ago. The oil companies seem genuinely interested in continued participation as we proceed with the development of the Norwegian continental shelf. Prices, together with changes in the Norwegian petroleum taxation system and reduced costs, have brought about enough exploration and development to secure a production level of more than 1 million barrels a day throughout most of the 1990s. Last year it was decided that foreign oil companies would not be required to carry the Norwegian Government's share in the exploration phase. The price of seismic packages was substantially reduced. The royalty was reduced to zero for future fields. Depreciation was allowed in the year of investment and the special tax was reduced from 35 per cent to 30 per cent. For future fields there will be a production allowance of 15 per cent.

I think it is fair to say that the Government showed flexibility in a situation which was as difficult for the Government as for the oil companies, and thereby helped produce a positive climate. Long-term commitments and long lead times are characteristic of the petroleum activities on the Norwegian continental shelf. Cooperation with foreign oil companies has been and will continue to be a vital part of our policy. We expect that the oil companies will take the same long-term view and that their decisions will reflect the clear potential that exists in Norway.

But the greatest challenges still lie ahead of us, as exploration and development activities move into increasingly hostile and difficult areas. We must find technologically safe and cost-effective solutions to the problems posed by natural conditions as we penetrate increasing depths under severe climatic conditions.

The major area of future exploration is up North in the Barents Sea. The number of applications for licences indicates that the companies assess the potential there to be high. The Barents Sea is an area of considerable political interest. For Norway, a member of NATO and a neighbour of the Soviet Union, it is a major foreign policy objective to contribute to stability and predictability in the Northern areas. It is also in our interest and a firm policy objective that the exploitation of resources takes place in an orderly manner. It is also essential that the strictest and most modern environmental standards of our legislation be applied under such vulnerable Arctic environmental conditions.

One of the main objectives of Norwegian policy is that foreign and security policy interests along with fishing and environmental considerations, be prudently managed as petroleum activities move north and east on the Norwegian continental shelf.

A solution to the unresolved questions concerning delimitation of the Norwegian and the Soviet continental shelf in the Barents Sea would contribute greatly to stability and orderly management in these areas. Norway maintains that according to international law the delimitation must be based on the median line. The Soviet Union maintains that the so-called sector line should apply. The size of the disputed area is of a magnitude comparable to the state of Colorado. In the ongoing negotiations we have indicated our willingness to find a compromise, but so far the Soviet Union has not responded to this. Pending a solution to this question, Norway has adopted a positive attitude to supplying goods and services, in a commercial context and

within the framework of Norway's international obligations, to petroleum activities on the undisputed parts of the Soviet continental shelf in the Barents Sea.

Let me now turn to natural gas developments. Almost half of Western Europe's proven gas reserves are on the Norwegian continental shelf. Norway has been exporting natural gas since 1977. In 1986 production exceeded 2.5 billion cubic feet per day. Our proven reserves can sustain today's level of production for about 100 years. Exploration activities are likely to expand these prospects. All Norwegian gas is exported - approximately one half to the United Kingdom and the other half to four countries on the European Continent: France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Norway's gas exports correspond to about 11 per cent of gas consumption in Western Europe.

In 1986 about 50 per cent of the natural gas consumption in Western Europe was covered by indigenous production in the consuming countries. Net exports from the Netherlands and Norway supply another 25 per cent, while the Soviet Union, together with Algeria, covers the remaining 25 per cent.

In 1986 important new long-term natural gas sales agreements were concluded between the licencees on the huge Troll and Sleipner Fields on the one hand, and a consortium of gas companies in the present European Continental market on the other. Contracts for smaller volumes were entered into with Austrian buyers.

Gas contracts have long-term implications not only for the commercial parties, but in a foreign policy context as well. They require investments in infrastructure and have a life span that links buyers and sellers together in a broader political, economic and security policy framework. We expect that buyer countries will see a close connection between the credibility of Norway as a dependable supplier of gas and Norway's credibility as a dependable political and economic partner.

The Troll/Sleipner gas contracts of last year open the way for major contributions to secure natural gas supplies to Western Europe. These gas fields will be linked to the Central European gas grid by two offshore pipelines and will be a cornerstone of the European gas industry by the turn of the century. Gas deliveries will start in 1993 and reach a plateau level of about 1.9 billion cubic feet per day by the turn of the century. The supplies will continue beyond the year 2020. Before the agreement expires the parties shall meet to decide whether to extend the contract. These substantial deliveries will tie Norway - a non-member of the European Community - closer to Europe politically and economically. The Norwegian Government welcomes the opportunities thus being created.

In Europe, increasingly remote sources of supply and lack of substitution possibilities in the short run are the basis for buyers' concern about security of supply. A buyer may diversify sources of supply, as has indeed happened in Western Europe during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Norway has the resources to make such substantial deliveries on a long-term basis. Demands in Western Europe are already large and may be expected to grow moderately in the years ahead. The Norwegian reserves position does permit a substantial increase in sales. The market is the limiting factor.

In addition to the large gas consuming countries, other Western European countries too are in the process of introducing natural gas into their energy systems. Spain in the South and Denmark and Sweden in the North are developing their gas markets. The status of Norway as one of the few remaining non-consumers of natural gas will probably change, through the planned introduction of natural gas-based electricity production.

Natural gas has received significant international political attention in the 1980s. The conclusions reached by the ministers of the member countries of the International Energy Agency (IEA) in 1983 recognize that gas has an important role to play in reducing dependence on imported oil. Furthermore, the IEA noted the potential risks associated with high levels of

dependence on a single supplier. Member governments are committed to diversifying the sources of future gas supplies with emphasis on indigenous OECD sources, encouraging the strengthening of their ability to deal with disruption, and encouraging the development of indigenous gas resources with particular reference to North America and the Norwegian Troll Field.

It should not be denied that the oil industry is characterized by a production capacity which far exceeds the consumption demand. However, capacity level should not be the guideline to employ for a non-renewable resource where future needs must be taken into account. This could lead to a misinterpretation of future energy balances and an overexploitation of petroleum resources.

Policies should be guided by the need to conserve oil for future generations and by concern for the environmental impact of burning fossil fuels.

Governments have a clear responsibility here. Considering the expected scarcity of oil in the longer run, this energy source should as far as possible be saved for use in vital sectors and where it is difficult to find alternatives. In practice this means that oil should be used for non-energy purposes and for the rapidly growing transport sector. In most countries the price of oil eventually determines the price of alternative energy sources and has a considerable impact on the energy mix. Consequently, prices should be allowed to increase above the level of cost for alternatives in the boiler and heating sector, and be high enough to ensure continued improvements in energy conservation.

In view of the inevitable shortages of oil to come, the achievement of a smooth transition into the future without the kind of price shocks experienced in the 1970s and their severe effects on economic growth, employment and inflation, is a tremendous challenge. Volatility, whether in the energy markets, currency or financial markets, increases risks, reducing the

outlook for entrepreneurial and government planning and investment. It may also induce growth in the mis-allocation of economic resources.

Furthermore, the era when it was possible to assume that the environment had an unlimited capacity to absorb contamination and other damage caused by human activities is gone forever. Our ability to live and cooperate with our fragile ecological system has become increasingly important. There has been a growing realization among national governments and in multilateral institutions that it is not possible to separate economic development issues from environmental issues. In several cases the harm caused to our environment and well-being by the production and use of traditional goods and services far outweighs the benefits gained from consumption of these goods.

This year the World Commission on Environment and Development, which was set up by the United Nations, issued its report after 900 days of work. It has been my privilege to chair this independent commission, whose report will be considered by the General Assembly of the United Nations for the first time this fall. The report, entitled "Our Common Future", is a document of political consensus. It is the result of a broad process of analysis, learning and debate. Commissioners from 21 countries, developing and developed, oil-exporting and oil-importing, managed to reach unanimity.

It is not a scientific report, but it has had the benefit of the best available scientific evidence and minds.

The Commission noted the decisiveness of energy supplies to economic development and the fight against poverty. Energy consumption is, however, also the source of our most serious environmental problems: acidification of forests and lakes, warming of the atmosphere, deforestation in the Third World and the danger of radiation. The Commission stressed the importance of energy policy decisions taking place on an environmentally sound basis.

Differences in energy consumption between the North and the South are vast. On the average, a person in the industrialized world uses 80 times as much energy as a person in Southern Africa. More than half of the world's population rely on fuelwood for cooking, light and heat. A safe and environmentally sound energy programme that will sustain human progress into the distant future is clearly called for. To achieve this goal, new dimensions of political will and international cooperation are required.

The Commission found that while developing countries will need much more energy to continue to develop, we in the North should strive to stabilize our energy consumption. A low energy future is our only viable option. This need not mean shortages. Some energy studies indicate that we can reduce our consumption by up to 50 per cent and still obtain the same benefits. This would be possible if nations would make energy efficiency the cutting edge of their energy policies.

In order to ensure the necessary investments in energy conservation and in the development of alternative sources of energy, the Commission recommends that oil prices be stabilized at a reasonable level and that new mechanisms for encouraging dialogue between consumers and producers be explored.

Renewable, not yet developed sources, will have to play a more dominant role. Far more funds must be allocated to research in new and renewable sources. Broad international cooperation is needed to direct, guide and fund the large-scale research necessary.

I have endeavoured to highlight some of the priorities in the field of energy described in "Our Common Future". The task which the Commission set out to accomplish was to make an analysis of the global situation and recommendations about the actions required to change the present unsustainable trends and policies.

The Commission is sounding an alarm, but it does not paint a gloomy picture of the future. Quite to the contrary: We believe that human resources and ingenuity, our capacity to address the issues in a responsible concerted manner, have never been greater and that we can indeed solve both energy and environmental problems in a new era of economic growth - an era in which economy and ecology are merged at all levels of decision-making and where there is a more equitable distribution of wealth within and among nations.

Thank you for your attention.

PRIME MINISTER GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

PRESENTATION OF 'OUR COMMON FUTURE'
TO THE 4TH WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS
ESTES PARK, COLORADO

Thursday, 17 September, 1987

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen

I see this 4th World Wilderness Congress as a vivid and strong response to the call for action of the World Commission on Environment and Development . Having followed this Congress from a distance over the past few days, I know I am speaking to an audience that is very familiar with the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. I am heartened by your overwhelmingly positive response to it, and I can't express how pleased I am to be with you here today.

Our Common Future is also your report. It was formed through an open process as we heard and received hundreds of submissions from people and their organizations in all parts of the world. Our public hearings were as important as our

private deliberations. Without continuous interaction with the people who cultivate the land, live in the slums, direct the companies, do the research, hold high political office, work in the media, etc., our report would not have been the same.

The process through which the report was formed has been of vital importance to its message and perspective. Bill Ruckelshaus, who was in Denver a few days ago and so eloquently summarized our report's major conclusions, Minister Salim of Indonesia, a Soviet member of the Academy of Science, the Finance Minister of Zimbabwe, a Chinese and a Saudi Arabian scientific director, a Colombian environmentalist, and Maurice Strong, to mention but a few, all agreed on a common analysis, on shared perceptions and concrete recommendations addressed to the global community.

As we worked, nationalism and artificial divides receded. In their place emerged a common concern for the planet and for the interlocking ecological and economic threats facing humanity. This experience is one that must be shared by millions of people around the globe. Only if mutual understanding can replace mutual mistrust, only if mutual respect and solidarity can prevail will we be able to take the necessary corrective action. We offer our own consensus as one on which the international community can build.

Throughout the history of man a number of great political changes have taken place which have proven to be irreversible. Even temporary setbacks cannot detract from the fact that universal suffrage, large-scale decolonization and the establishment of a universally recognized set of fundamental human rights stand out as such great historic achievements.

The present world situation calls for new leaps forward. The world's political map and agenda have changed. The environment- previously viewed as a theme of protection - has now become a theme of survival. We must recognize that the interrelated issues of environment and development belong at the very top of the international political agenda on a par with the vital issues of disarmament and security. If the Commission succeeds in establishing this world agenda, gaining an irreversible foothold for this work, we will indeed have fulfilled our mandate.

On the screen we have seen the tragic examples of unsustainable practices which are the direct consequences of economic and social conditions and of mismanagement of natural resources; the slash and burn of vegetation, the felling for forests, the overuse of lands - causing soil erosion and desertification and ultimately threatening the carbon dioxide cycle which in turn threatens to alter the global climate. We have seen how the excesses of affluence in the North, the burning of fossil fuels, the use of chemicals and the treatment of industrial

wastes threaten lakes and soil and cause damage to human health. We have seen how the atmosphere's ability to absorb our emissions is approaching its limits. We have seen how all these phenomena interact, across national borders and between continents.

Clearly these trends demonstrate that we have come to a point in our history where we can no longer act primarily as citizens of any single nation state. We have to behave as world citizens. We are entangled in the same destiny, and we have been brought closer together, so much closer that we no longer have the option of placing more distance between us - even though some gaps between us are widening.

We are drifting further apart as the gaps between the rich and the poor are widening. But we have been brought closer through communications, capable of bringing news about people's life and destiny around the globe in seconds. This gives hopes of building identification and a feeling of human responsibility. We have become closer through the sheer force of numbers. 100 million people are added to the global population every year. We have come so much closer that we run the risk of ruining our future, but together we can also save it.

Since the Stockholm Conference frustration has been growing over our inability to deal effectively with crucial environment and development issues. We have had a number of political

conferences, but sufficient political action has not yet been forthcoming.

The establishment in 1983 of the World Commission as an independent body reflected the high priority assigned to environment and development issues by the General Assembly of the United Nations. This happened at a time when we experienced the paradox of a decline in international cooperation and multilateralism parallel to an obvious increase in global interdependence.

Our analysis covers the entire political agenda. It discusses the international economic relations system, food security, industry, energy, the urban challenge, the protection of genetic resources and international institutions. How can we assure enough food for a growing world population, while at the same time avoiding environmental damage from large-scale agriculture? How can industry produce all the goods required to remove poverty and squalor without depleting the world's natural resources? How can we meet the growing energy requirements of developing countries without a global environmental breakdown? How can we curb rapid urbanization and get rid of urban slums? Is it within our reach to protect the genetic resources of the planet's plants and animals?

The international imbalances which are at the root of the environment/development deadlock must now be corrected. In a world ridden by poverty, only economic growth can offer hope for a better life for the poor ~~people~~ who now number close to 800 million and create the capacity to solve environmental problems. Sustainable development itself- the overriding political concept of the Commission's report is, in fact, a new concept for economic growth and we have called for a new era of growth. This new growth must be substantial but its content will need to be changed. The ability of future generations to meet their needs can be compromised as much by affluence - the excesses of industrial and technological development - as by the environmental degradation which is the result of underdevelopment. A new era of growth must be supported by a broad process of change, of policy reforms across the spectrum of human imagination. It requires more equal access to knowledge and to resources. It requires a more equitable distribution within and among nations. There are no limits to growth itself, but it can and must be managed in such a way as to enhance the resource base on which we all depend.

To pursue a new era of economic growth, we need to breathe new life into the multilateral approach to problem solving. There is no alternative to concerted and coordinated action. Deteriorating terms of trade, soaring interest rates, protectionism, declines in financial flows, and debilitating debts strangle development potential in the Third World and

threaten to destroy our environment. Clearly, the developing countries will have real opportunities to follow sustainable paths of progress only when external conditions offer them reasonable hopes for a better future. We in the industrialized countries must do more to ensure that the international economy serves the interests of developing countries rather than leaving them behind in the poverty trap.

Consequently, commodity prices, which are now showing slight signs of recovery following the recent record lows, must be further increased and interest rates must come down. The debt crisis must now be seriously addressed, taking due account of the legitimate interests of both lenders and borrowers. Increased capital transfers and development assistance are clearly necessary, and new funds must be forthcoming for projects that aim at sustainable development.

Sustainable development is possible through a more equitable international economic regime. We must establish a world order based not only on equal rights among nations and people, but on more genuinely equal opportunities.

Our analysis is clear. Environment is not a separate sector distinct from key economic sectors such as industry, agriculture and energy. It is not a question of environment or development. It is both or none. Ecology and economy will have to merge. Environmental concerns must become an integral part of decision-making at all levels.

These goals will require changes also in the policies of the international organizations responsible for trade, aid, technological and financial assistance. Further reorientation of the policies of the World Bank, the IMF, the regional development banks, GATT, UNCTAD, UNDP, WHO and FAO, to mention a few very key agencies, will be at the core of the process we call for.

During the international debate this year about the Commission's report, some scepticism has been voiced about certain implications of the Commission's call for the incorporation of sustainability criteria into international financing. Applied to North-South issues, this has been perceived by some as implying a new form of conditionality, a constraint imposed on the developing countries from the outside.- an assymetric burden-sharing, since the North would seemingly be exempted.

It must be noted, however, that the Commission was emphatic in coupling its call for higher quality in aid and lending with substantially increased financial flows. Recipient countries bear an obligation equal to that of lenders and donors as regards setting their development priorities on the basis of long-term sustainability criteria. The notion is not one of

unilateral conditionality, but of solidarity and equality among nations. It is one of common pursuance of mutual self-interest.

This integration of sustainability criteria into the decision making process must be made operational by governments themselves as part of their national strategies. Developing countries will need external assistance from UNEP and other organizations in order to increase their capacity to manage this integration in practice. Such assistance must come from the international community at the request of the countries concerned.

Ladies and Gentlemen

When our report was launched in April, we had worked together for 900 days. Since then the Commission has conducted a broad public outreach programme. The response and the interest generated by this work have strengthened us in our conviction that is possible to reach the minds and hearts of people, irrespective of where they live or their economic situation. I know all the Commissioners carry with them a strong sense of dedication.

We have presented our report and discussed it with governments and NGO's in Eastern and Western Europe. We have also presented it in China and Latin America, in South Asia and Africa; and now we are here in North America. Our Common Future offers motivation and a challenge to governments and peoples alike. We have sounded a message of warning and hope, and we have set in motion a process which will motivate governments to act. And act they will, if presented with enough broad public pressure to that effect.

In my country, a broad campaign of information and education on environment and development has been launched as a joint venture between private organizations and public authorities. Our government has also asked all ministries, including the ministries of finance, justice, defense and others not normally perceived to be close to these issues, to review and study the Commission's report and compare our domestic and foreign policies against its principles and recommendations. They have been asked to note where our present policies differ, and if they do, to consider what steps can be taken to bring them into line with the report's recommendations.

You are aware that the United Nations General Assembly will begin its consideration of 'Our Common Future' in about a month's time in accordance with the resolution which established the Commission.

But what are the practical implications of this coming UN Debate? What can the United Nations do?

The Commission has called on the General Assembly to transform our report into a UN Programme of Action on Sustainable Development. We believe that responsible action by the world organization will strengthen its standing and authority. We believe it can breathe new life into the multilateral approach to international cooperation and that the United Nations has a unique opportunity to demonstrate leadership in making a fundamental commitment to sustainable development.

The Secretary General himself should be the pivotal force for environment and development. What could be more appropriate than international civil servant number one taking responsibility for the basic elements of human survival, peace, environment and development?

In mentioning the UN, let me add that critics of the UN have long dominated the debate on its role, and it is true that there have been setbacks due to inefficiency, bureaucracy and lack of support. But, at this juncture, where multilateral cooperation is at a low ebb, we need a renewed commitment to multilateralism and we need governments infused with a moral vocation which goes beyond pursuance of national interests. The time has come to restore the authority of the international

institutions we have created. My work on the Commission has further strengthened my own conviction that we need the United Nations now, more than ever before.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We should ask ourselves: What happens next? Who should do what? What is my role in this? What can my organization do? My appeal to all of you is this: Use your influence. Do whatever is possible to create awareness and promote change.

Our report places a powerful tool in the hands of all interested citizens' groups, institutions, trade unions, businesses, executives, company boards, nations, the media and, not least, individuals. I call upon each of you to use that tool. You, indeed, all of us, face a challenge and an opportunity. Sustainable development should be taken out of books and reports and implanted into decision-making processes. Sustainable development will depend on a decision-making process capable of securing effective citizen participation. It is the concerned public that can put environment and development issues onto the political agendas.

We must build on the present momentum. In particular we must build on the enthusiasm of young people.. We must all do our part in launching a global campaign to inform and to educate. We need a new motivation for a global transition to sustainable development. We must secure a constructive debate and persuade public opinion to heighten its pressures and hold governments, institutions and policy-makers responsible and convince them of the merits of our overriding goal of sustainable development.

In light of the critical thresholds we are already approaching, the next decades are crucial. This one very finite earth must provide food and energy, and meet the needs of a doubled world population. It may be required to sustain a world economy five to ten times as large as the present. It is quite clear that this cannot be done by multiplying present patterns. Changes are needed. Decisions are due now. We must chart a sustainable course of action.

To secure our common future, we need a new international vision, one which looks beyond narrow and short-sighted national and entrepreneurial ambitions. We must have a new deal in international cooperation. Timing is urgent. The environment/development crisis is real. We must all join forces in a new partnership and start acting together. We are dependent on one another and we share a common future.

Before concluding, I want to say that we are all very grateful to Colorado State University for their dedicated assistance during the last three years in planning this Congress. Deep thanks and appreciation are also due to the International Wilderness Leadership Foundation for sponsoring this Congress and to all of the members of the Executive Committee and the hundreds of volunteers who have worked on this Congress for their untiring work, the success of which we witness this week.

Upon the 200th anniversary of the Constitution of the United States of America, what could be more timely for this congress than to acclaim the pioneering role played by this great nation in the field of environment. The names of Theodore Roosevelt and John Muir are firmly engraved in the history of conservation. More recently, the evolution of various interrelated questions of environment and development into major issues on the international political agenda owes a great deal to the initiatives and the leadership of the wide variety of citizens groups and organizations that give the US environmental community so much of its vitality and dynamism. The United States will play a crucial role in translating the central message of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development into practice. The echo from Denver, your response to 'Our Common Future' will provide a great stimulus from within, which will ultimately extend far beyond the borders of the United States.

Addis Ababa

27 July 1987

Prime Minister

Gro Harlem Brundtland

Chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT TO THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY, ADDIS ABABA, 27 JULY 1987

Mr. Chairman,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a privilege for me to have been given this unique opportunity to address this 23rd Assembly of the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity and to present the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. As Prime Minister of Norway I also value the invitation to address you as a token of the longstanding bonds of friendship and cooperation between my own country and the countries of Africa.

I venture at the outset to state that the interrelated questions of environment and development today clearly stand out as the major issue on the international political agenda, equalled in importance only by the vital issues of disarmament and security. Nowhere are the issues of environment and development more relevant and critical to humanity's prospects for the future than on this vast continent, the focus of centuries of exploitation and of current struggles for economic and social progress.

True, significant achievements have been made in many countries of Africa. There are countries where food production has increased rapidly, countries where more people can read and write than ever before, where health and education are improving and life expectancy is increasing. Yet we can speak of a development crisis in Africa. There are more people hungry and malnourished today than ever before, more people who lack safe water, proper shelter, food and energy. And the continent's capital, its environment and natural resources are seemingly caught in a downward spiral of degradation: drought, desertification, deforestation, soil-erosion and loss of genetic resources are increasing at alarming rates.

In the 1960s newly independent African nations set out with high hopes for a better, independent future. They attained remarkable growth rates. In the early seventies, however, these growth rates and international economic cooperation reached an apogee, leading into a decade and a half of stagnating cooperation and of isolationism. The gap between the rich and the

poor nations of the world is widening. A complex set of circumstances is now working against the interests of Africa and its people.

Since the Stockholm Conference frustrations about our present institutions' inability to deal effectively with the crucial development and environment issues has been growing. The global conferences on water supply, food, women, human settlements, new and renewable energy resources and population, all offered hope that progress could be achieved despite of temporary setbacks. Yet the frustrations have prevailed.

It was against this background that the General Assembly of the United Nations welcomed the establishment of our Commission. The UN General Assembly asked the Commission to take a fresh look at the interrelated issues of environment and development and to formulate concrete recommendations for action based on shared perceptions of long-term environmental issues.

The World Commission's report, "Our Common Future", is a political document which covers the global political agenda and which carries the consensus signature of commissioners from 21 countries, most of them from developing countries and five of them from Africa.

During our work we came to focus very strongly on Africa, its plight and possibilities. We benefited greatly from views expressed by African governments and African organizations, not least during our public hearings in Harare and our meetings in Nairobi. While we were working, the drought and famine which led Africa and millions of its people through an ordeal inconceivable to many outside the continent, were brought home to us. Few other single catastrophes have more clearly demonstrated the links between environment and development, the links between international and national economic conditions and their impacts on the environment, and between environmental degradation and its long-term effects on the prospects for development.

We on the Commission came to recognize that while pollution problems, mainly a Northern or urban feature, have significant effects on the global environment, poverty is the main cause of environmental degradation in many developing countries. It is also one of the main effects of environmental degradation. Viewed in the context of short-term needs, each decision by the individual poor is rational, even if it means eating next year's seed corn to stay alive, overexploiting soil when faced with ever shrinking incomes from agriculture, or over-grazing fragile pastures or cutting scarce forests for fuelwood. These might simply be the only ways to survive. Clearly it is totally unacceptable and incompatible with human decency and solidarity to even suggest that the poor must remain in poverty in order to protect the environment. What is needed are national and international strategies that offer real options, that secure and enhance incomes as well as the environment on the local, national and international level.

While the Commission emphatically warns that changes must be made if disastrous mistakes, with global implications, are to be

averted, the Commission also believes that it is possible to make changes which are so urgently needed. We point to the fact that human resources, knowledge and capabilities have never been greater, that indeed it is possible to create a future that is more prosperous, more just and more secure for all.

The overriding political concept upon which our report is founded is that of sustainable development. It is a broad concept for social and economic progress. We define it as paths of human progress that meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It requires political reforms, a fair access to knowledge and resources, and a more just and equitable distribution within and among nations.

Sustainable development can only be achieved if we realize that there are thresholds that cannot be crossed without dire consequences. We in the North have too long neglected the signs that our paths of development have been playing lethal games with important life-support systems. We have used the atmosphere as the ultimate sink of our industrial excesses. Too long have we discarded the warnings that global heating caused by industrial emissions may disturb the global climate and consequently also agricultural and settlement patterns. Too long have we overlooked the devastating effects of acidification, of overuse of chemical products and pesticides, and too long have we exported our first generation of environmental problems to the Third World.

Sustainable development recognizes that there are thresholds imposed by nature, yes, but not limits to growth itself. In a world ridden by poverty growth is absolutely necessary. Growth is the only answer to the problems of developing countries. But the contents of growth must be changed. Growth cannot be based on overexploitation of the resources of Third World countries. Growth must be managed to enhance the resource base on which they all depend. The environment and the natural resources of developing countries must cease to be the victims in a world economy troubled by serious imbalances. The victims must instead become allies in the struggle for survival.

But for this to happen, fundamental changes are necessary in the international economy. A revival of the multilateral approach to solving problems is essential. All of us - in developing and industrialized countries alike - need to realize that it is in our mutual interest to chart a new course of action. The industrialized countries will have a critical role to play. They will have to accept an obligation to ensure that the world economy enhances rather than hinders possibilities for sustainable development.

Nowhere is this obligation more evident than in respect of the debt crisis still facing much of the developing countries. Debt servicing is placing intolerable burdens on the economies and the environment of many African countries that currently depend on commodity exports in their struggle to earn foreign currency. Under present conditions many countries are caught in a vicious circle of having to tax their natural resources at rates that

will lead to rapid depletion and devastation. The alarming tendency that more and more exports are tied to debt servicing will have to be reversed. Interest rates must come down. In the face of commodity prices, which have never been so low in real terms since the thirties, urgent action is needed to alleviate debt burdens in ways that represent a fairer sharing between debtors and lenders. North and South must both realize that it is in their own best interest to expand trade with and increase capital flows to developing countries.

Let us be frank. Much of the debt will not and cannot be paid back in any real sense. What is needed are new loans on concessional terms, new investments and economic reforms. New policies must comprise debt relief, long-term rescheduling and conversion to softer terms.

The UN Program of Action for African Economic Recovery adopted last year has been followed by efforts on the part of African governments. Many have taken enormous burdens on themselves to restructure their economies.

The crucial question is: Will the international community be able to come to Africa's assistance in such a magnitude and scope as to fulfill the African people and governments' earnest desire and commitment to the continent's recovery and accelerated development - not just in terms of official development assistance but also and more importantly in terms of addressing the commodity issue and the debt problems?

The flows of finance will have to be turned back to Africa. In that regard, I would note that too long donor countries have neglected to make serious efforts to reach internationally agreed aid targets. I take the liberty of pointing my finger on the basis of the fact that for several years my country has contributed more than 1% of GNP to ODA. The 0.7 per cent GNP target, reiterated recently at the summit of the seven major Western industrialized nations, must be followed by concrete commitments. Developing countries need much larger financial inflows, and new funds must be forthcoming for projects that aim at sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,
Some countries might be sceptical about the application of the Commission's sustainability criteria and perceive it as a new form of conditionality.

Our Report aims at raising global awareness among governments, aid agencies and others concerned with development of the necessity of integrating environmental considerations into economic decision-making and planning at all levels.

It is clear, however, and I emphasize this point, that this integrated process must be made operational by the governments themselves as part of their national strategies for development. External assistance will be needed, from UNEP and other organizations, to help many countries establish their professional and institutional capacity to conduct this integration in practice. Such assistance must come at the request

of countries concerned and must be assisted by the international community.

The Commission was emphatic in coupling its demand for higher quality and environmental sensitivity in aid and lending with substantially increased aid flows. Our report cannot be read or implemented à la carte. Donors or lenders cannot unilaterally impose environmental conditions in flows of aid or lending that go against the sovereign priorities of developing countries.

Borrowers carry an equal obligation with lenders and donors to set their development priorities on the basis of long-term sustainability criteria. These notions are inherent in our concept of sustainable development, which is based on equity and the joining of forces rather than on the imposition of external will and power.

The Lagos Plan of Action - which was an ambitious, but in wide circles outside Africa a far too neglected design for a better future - Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery and the recently issued Abuja statement all clearly demonstrate the determination of African countries to agree on development goals for the future and their ability to establish priorities which are in line with sound sustainability criteria. The similarities between these documents and our report are striking in many respects, not least in the setting of priorities. Cooperation on sustainable development in Africa should come in response to those priorities.

Mr. Chairman,

Lending and aid alone will fail to bring about the common objectives unless the developing countries are secured a fairer income from their traditional exports. Commodity prices must be increased. The terms of trade must be reversed to favour Africa rather than to impoverish it. Commodity agreements must be strengthened and new ones must be established. The expansion of many countries into manufacturing and high technology, so far oppressed by external conditions, must be based on more equitable economic exchanges.

The ongoing negotiations in UNCTAD and GATT, as well as in other fora such as the World Bank, the IMF, regional development banks, UNIDO, UNDP, WHO and FAO will be at the core of the process we call for. A new international consensus must provide the basis for integrating the concept of sustainable development into all policies and programmes.

The Commission's report focuses on food security as essential to human progress. We have the possibility of feeding a doubled world population some time during the next century, and many experts believe that parts of Africa could in fact become a granary sufficient to serve the whole continent. Presently, international policies have hampered future possibilities. The Commission calls for a shift in agricultural production patterns to where the demand is. Only then will we be able to secure access to food for those who need it. Agricultural practices can be made compatible with environmental requirements. Greater resources must be directed towards developing techniques adapted to local conditions. Prices on the national as well as the

international level must increase the income of smaller subsistence farmers. Policies should provide the incentives for sustainability in agriculture.

The Commission dealt at length with the energy challenge. How can we possibly secure sufficient energy for the enormous unmet energy needs in many developing countries, and how shall we in the North stabilize and even decrease our consumption while maintaining high growth levels?

The fuelwood crisis is the reality with which the majority of people in Africa now grapple. In many regions vast afforestation campaigns are needed which involve people more closely in the process. Trees must be treated as a subsistence crop. But policies should explore the dissemination of more efficient, economical techniques, while increasing regional and local efforts to secure adequate supplies from internal and external sources of hydrocarbons. Renewables can become an increasingly important factor in the future, but large-scale research supported by joint international efforts are needed.

The energy and food crises are felt most strongly by women, who in many countries bear the main responsibility for providing for their families. Their status and real participation must be improved, as must their access to education. Unless the status of women is improved, it is difficult to see how living standards in many regions will improve.

Only if the full potential of human resources is realized, only when people have real hopes for a better future will they have real choices, including the choice of limiting the size of their families.

Population strategies, which need to be developed by many countries, must deal with the underlying social and economic conditions of underdevelopment, and differ from country to country as does the carrying capacity of the land. Policies must comprise better health services and education. But the population issue is not one of numbers alone. It is also one of consumption patterns and life styles. Many people - mainly in the North - use the world resources at rates that cannot be sustained, while hundreds of millions consume far too little.

Nowhere are these inequalities more extreme, more unjust and more obscene than in the south of this continent, in South Africa. The minority regime in Pretoria is holding the majority of South African citizens hostage to a political system that is an insult to basic principles of civilization. One of the many ways by which the apartheid regime institutionalizes both conflict and environmental degradation is by allocating, through the homeland system, 14 per cent of the nation's land to 72 per cent of its population. Thus racist marginalization has become a source of tension, and the conflict is being pursued by the Pretoria government into neighbouring states.

These trends and threats also demonstrate the interdependence between environment, development and armaments which consumes far too

much of scarce resources. The frontline states in particular have been forced to uphold and expand their defence efforts in the face of threats and aggression from South Africa, thereby demanding even larger yields from their scarce resources.

The apartheid regime must and will come to an end. The black population will no longer tolerate the oppressive apartheid system and will demand to be treated as equals and to be given their inherent right to political equality. The black population and the frontline states deserve our firm support in the face of apartheid aggression. So far we have not seen any evidence of a genuine dialogue emerging in the region. It is not enough to insist that "doors are open" when the reality is the opposite.

Sanctions against South Africa have been all too leniently imposed. This spring my own country adopted a comprehensive trade boycott against South Africa. We have prohibited sales of oil and oil transport on Norwegian and Norwegian-controlled ships. We have further strengthened our cooperation with the SADCC countries, and we are prepared to increase our assistance in the event of further South African reprisals against these countries.

We have responded to the laudable initiative of the Non-Aligned Movement by contributing 10 million Norwegian kroner to the newly established Africa Fund, and we urge other countries to respond in a similar manner. The international community as a whole has an unfulfilled responsibility towards the oppressed people of Southern Africa. We need to be firm in our action to bring down apartheid. The North has a special moral responsibility as well as the means to do this.

The fact that apartheid exists speaks for the inadequacy of present international cooperation. Ten years ago the United Nations Security Council adopted the only mandatory measure against South Africa. The time has now come to move forward. The time has now come to restore the authority of the international institutions we have created.

Mr. Chairman,
Unlike previous independent commissions, the World Commission has a mandate from the United Nations. Following its positive reception at the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, our report now moves to the General Assembly of the United Nations where it will be dealt with this fall.

In our report we call upon the UN General Assembly, as a step towards sustainable development, to transform "Our Common Future" into a UN Action Programme for Sustainable Development. Needless to say here, before one-third of the members of the world organization, Africa is essential to "Our Common Future". Your support is vital.

In concluding, let me say that during the 900 days we worked as a commission, we gained renewed confidence in people's ability to cooperate. We went to five continents, to Harare and Nairobi, to Moscow, Oslo, Jakarta, Sao Paulo, Tokyo and Ottawa. We heard

the views and concerns of people from all walks of life who face the real problems, be they farmers, scientists, politicians, or ordinary people. During our process of learning and sharing, the nationalism and artificial divisions between East and West, between North and South receded. In their place emerged a strong sense of unity and common responsibility. There also emerged a deep awareness that existing threats to sustained human progress demand that we realize we are all neighbours on a small and fragile planet and that it is not only our duty, but also in our own interest to care for each other.

It is my hope that a transition towards sustainable development, as called for by "Our Common Future", will lead to a new deal in international cooperation.

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Address by

GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

Prime Minister of Norway and
Chairman of the

WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

to

UNCTAD VII

Geneva, 10 July, 1987

Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,

Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, upon your election. I do so with a very special knowledge of your personal qualifications after having worked closely with you on the World Commission on Environment and Development. Let me also express my sincere gratitude to the Secretary General of UNCTAD for inviting me to address this assembly and to present the report of the World Commission - 'Our Common Future'.

I do so with a keen awareness that there is a very strong relationship between UNCTAD's present agenda and our report and call for action. The Commission is ending its work, but UNCTAD will continue to serve as a constant reminder of the weaknesses, the deficiencies and the injustices inherent in the world economic system. UNCTAD should remain a centre for global understanding and solidarity - a common conscience in particular with regard to the weakest and the poorest.

Today, we are becoming increasingly aware that development depends upon the environmental resource base, and that development also affects the environment. Many development trends have a devastating impact on environment. These interactions clearly stand out as the major concern on the international political agenda, on par only with the vital issues of disarmament and security. The interlinkages are close between these issues. In our report, we have also pointed at the non-military threats to peace and the military threats to the environment, topics that are highly relevant, also for the forthcoming UN Conference on Disarmament and Development later this year.

Few would have anticipated a quarter of a century ago that environment and development would be ascending to the very top of international priorities.

We remember the sixties, when development optimism prevailed globally. Growth rates were high in all countries. There were success stories of a number of newly independent states who gained self-confidence as free nations, and made ambitious leaps to catch up economically with the industrialized countries.

At the end of that decade we saw the heavy impacts of the first generation of severe pollution problems. The Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 was met with scepticism among many developing nations. What was the intention of the North? Was it yet another quest for luxury? Were we, in fact, trying to slow development in the interest of protecting exotic scenery and species? Was conservation to be achieved at the expense of economic and social development in developing countries? Many of the environmental concerns of the industrialized nations seemed far removed from the preoccupation which the majority of humanity had with basic living standards and, in some cases, with survival itself.

In the seventies, we witnessed discussions on the question of actual limits to growth. In that period, North and South seemed to be fighting completely different battles. Frustrations about the inabilities of our institutions to deal effectively with the most crucial issues were growing. The conferences on water supply, food, women, human settlements, new and renewable energy sources, those involving people's rights to choose the size of their families, all offered hope of improved cooperation on major issues. Yet, the sense of frustration prevailed. The world was growing closer, but the gaps between us seemed to be widening.

It was against this background that the General Assembly gave the Commission its ambitious task. And the call from the General Assembly was an urgent one. Our report back to the General Assembly - 'Our Common Future' - is a political document that covers the whole global political agenda and which carries the consensus signature of Commissioners from 21 countries, most of them from developing countries.

Our report contains a strong message of warning and urgency. We found that present trends and policies cannot continue. They will destroy the resource base on which we all depend. There are presently few signs that we are about to win our battle against poverty, which continues to tie hundreds of millions to an existence irreconcilable with requirements of human dignity and solidarity. We also found that there could be no question of environment versus development. Environmental degradation and the unequal distribution of wealth and power are in reality different aspects of the same set of problems.

Our second, and equally important message, is one of hope and optimism. We believe very strongly that changes are not only necessary - they are also possible. Humanity has the knowledge, technology, ingenuity, and resources. If we use them correctly, we can adjust the course of development so that it enhances the resource base rather than degrades it. Never before in our history have we had similar capacities. But for the necessary decisions to be made, we need a new vision, a new courage, and a stronger political will and determination. We need a new global ethic - a practical ethic - one that can transcend governments, non-governmental organization, the scientific communities, financial institutions, trade unions, and human thinking and behaviour.

The overriding political concept of "Our Common Future" is the concept of sustainable development. It goes beyond sustainability in the environmental sense. It is a broad concept for social and economic progress which we believe can provide new insights and inspiration for global cooperation.

We define sustainable development in simple terms as paths of progress which meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In a world ridden by poverty, the goal of sustainable development can only be pursued successfully under conditions created by a new era of economic growth. Our report clearly recognizes that there are natural limits which we cannot exceed without dire consequences. It thus sets requirements for the content of growth, yes, but no limits to growth itself.

I shall not repeat here the painful list of environmental disasters and grim statistics which have alerted us to the grave crisis facing our planet. Suffice it to remind us that the atmosphere is a fragile, closed system, not a limitless garbage sink for by-products of industrialization. Global heating, and the threat of climatic change must be countered in a joint determined effort in view of the risks of rising sea-levels and ensuing severe impacts on food-production and settlement patterns. Acidification, hitherto a disease of the rich countries, is also making its impact felt in many newly industrialized areas in the developing world. The loss of tropical rain forests, which continues at alarming rates, not only threatens vast numbers of living species with extinction, but affects the global climate as well. Over 11 million hectares of forest are destroyed yearly, which means forests the size of Denmark are lost every 12 weeks. Each year 6 million hectares of productive dryland are turned into worthless desert, in other words, dryland the size of Switzerland is turned into desert every 9 months. Soil erosion is regarded as problem No 1 by the Food and Agricultural Organization.

The Commission focused on poverty as one overriding issue - not least as a major cause and effect of environmental degradation. This is not to say that the developing world is the main source of present global pollution. Severe threats to the global environment come from excesses of affluence in many countries in the North which consume the earth's resources at rates that can lead to their rapid depletion. But international economic inequalities are a root cause of the environment-development stalemate. Clearly, the developing countries will have little opportunity to follow sustainable paths of progress unless external conditions allow them to develop their human and economic potential.

The environment and natural resources of developing countries, the capital on which they depend, has become the ultimate victim in a world economy troubled by serious imbalances. That victim must now become an ally.

A new era of economic growth, which the Commission strongly calls for, can create the capacity to solve environmental problems and alleviate mass poverty. It must be based on international economic conditions that can enhance the resource base rather than degrade it. Trends have all too long been working against these objectives. Slow growth in the industrialized countries, the collapse of commodity prices, the debt crisis and the decline in financial flows have caused immense problems for developing countries. The pressures on budgets have forced many countries to axe environmental programmes. The pressure to export more in order to service debts and finance imports has led to over-exploitations of natural resources, that only in the short term can alleviate payment problems and current account deficits.

To pursue a new era of economic growth we need a revival of the multilateral approach to solving the problems. We need to realize that it is in our own self-interest, in developed as well as in developing countries - to chart a new course for action. The industrialized world will have to accept an obligation to ensure that the international economy helps rather than hinders the possibilities for sustainable development.

The present level of debt service in many countries, in particular in Latin America and Africa, is a serious obstacle to sustainable development. Urgent action is necessary to alleviate debt burdens in ways that represent a fairer sharing between debtors and lenders. The massive drain of resources from developing countries has increased the pressure on the environment and dramatically increased the numbers of urban and rural poor in desperate struggle for survival.

Let us be frank about this: much of the debt will not be paid back in any real sense. To maintain such a demand will entail political disturbances in many countries of such magnitude that they would be completely unacceptable. What is needed is new lending on concessional terms, new investments and economic and social reforms. Major debtors also need more loans on commercial terms. New policies must comprise debt relief, long-term rescheduling and conversion to softer terms.

But lending alone will not suffice. Aid must be expanded after years of decline. Developing countries need significant increases in financial and other contributions. But even internationally agreed targets are far from being met. The 0.7 per cent GNP target, reiterated at the summit of the seven major western industrialized nations, now must be followed by concrete commitments by all major donors. Additional resources must be forthcoming for projects that aim at sustainable development.

Aid and lending efforts are essential. In the longer term, measures to secure increased income from commodity exports and the abolishment of protectionism in international trade are equally important. Real commodity prices have never been so low since the 1930s. A growing number of developing countries are making notable success in expanding into manufacture and high technology. But the basis for diversification must be provided by a fair income from the traditional and current exports. We need to consolidate and improve commodity agreements and establish new ones.

UNCTAD has been dealing with these issues for more than two decades. The negotiations which will take place in UNCTAD, in GATT, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, regional development banks, UNIDO, UNDP, WHO, and FAO, to mention some very key agencies, will be at the core of the process of change that we call for. Sustainable development must become a goal and a guideline for international cooperation. Sustainability criteria must be integrated into policies and programmes.

In the light of recent debate about our report, where scepticism came out about the implications of what some conceived as new conditionality as an underlying element, it is necessary to underscore some important elements of the Commission's thinking.

It is more than understandable that it would give rise to considerable resentment if environmental assessments of international organizations and other aid agencies were conceived as imposing yet another tier or

pretext for delaying or cutting aid flows. I emphasize very strongly, therefore, that the Commission was quite emphatic in coupling its demands for a higher quality of more environmentally sensitive aid with increased aid flows, and wider international economic exchange. Developing countries will evaluate their own needs and define their own priorities. External conditions must be designed to allow them to make choices that will keep options open for the future.

I have a clear impression that the World Bank is looking at its own structure and capacity to be able to take on this challenge. It is a challenge that it should be given by the international community. What is needed is the bridging of the knowledge and experience at the grassroot level in many countries with the broader economic assessments of the institutions of the Bretton Woods system. The integration of sustainable development into the various organizations must come in response to hopes, expectations and priorities of the developing countries.

Policy adjustments are needed that allow the developing countries to grow at rates far beyond the present. This will have consequences for many important sectors.

The impacts of agricultural policies are examples of the world-wide interlinkages. The Commission calls for a shift in global agriculture production patterns to where the demand is. The production of enough food to feed a doubled world population is within reach. The real problem now is securing access to food for those who need it and ensuring environmentally sound agricultural practices in all countries.

Therefore, northern subsidy-driven agricultural production systems must be reconsidered. Much greater resources are needed to promote sustainable agriculture in the Third World, using techniques adapted to local conditions. The income of the small subsistence farmer must be a common objective.

The fuelwood crisis is a reality with which hundreds of millions of people grapple. The only solution in many areas is to launch vast afforestation campaigns involving people more strongly in the process. Policies, including industrial and trade policies, must be adjusted to treat trees as a subsistence crop.

The role of women is crucial. In many countries they are the ones who have to meet the daily needs for food and fuelwood. They are the ones who first of all suffer the consequences of agricultural conditions and forestry practices and who have to work even more hours to provide for their families.

An important priority is to slow population growth. It is difficult to see how a disastrously declining living standard and further deterioration of the environment can be averted if present trends continue. However, there is no short-cut to lower birth rates. Population strategies must deal with the underlying social and economic conditions of underdevelopment, and must be based on improved health service and education. In many countries little can be done until the status of women is raised, their economic contribution recognized and their literacy increased. Only in a world which is safer and which gives the poor more self-respect and hope for their future, will they have real choices, including the choice to limit the size of their families.

But the population issue is not one of numbers alone. It is also one of consumption patterns and lifestyles. We know only too well how some people - many of them in the North - use the world's resources at rates that cannot be sustained, while hundreds of millions consume far too little.

Energy is of vital importance. The Commission recognizes that developing nations will require far more energy, while the industrialized world must aim at stabilizing and reducing its consumption. Energy efficiency must now become the cutting edge of national strategies. Still energy efficiency is not a final solution. No present mix of energy sources is available today that are dependable, safe and environmentally sound. Large scale research in renewable energy and transfer of energy technology to developing countries is imperative.

The Commission advocates a full integration of environmental considerations in economic decision-making, at all levels, public and private. Environment and economics are not in contradiction but should be seen as mutually supportive allies. We must break away from our traditional sectoral approach. Sectoral organizations tend to pursue sectoral objectives, and to treat the impacts on other sectors as more or less irrelevant for their own. Sustainable development requires that such fragmentation be overcome.

We must attack the problems at their source. We must clearly recognize that the policies of sectoral ministries such as Ministries of Finance, Industry, Energy, Agriculture are the ones that determine the state of the environment and consequently our options for the future. Sustainable development objectives must be integrated into the goals of all branches of public administration as well as the legislative bodies.

A new deal in international cooperation is equally called for. The process of integration must also take place at the global level. International organizations must be made responsible and accountable for ensuring that their policies support sustainable development.

Our hope is that the United Nations and the Secretary General will provide guidance and leadership and that the coming General Assembly will respond responsibly and constructively to "Our Common Future".

The report from the World Commission on Environment and Development is - above all - a strong call for renewed international cooperation. At this juncture, where multilateral cooperation, particularly in the North-South field, is at a low ebb, we need countries or governments infused with a moral vocation which goes beyond pursuance of narrow-minded national interests. The time has come to restore the credibility and authority of the international institutions we have created.

Mutual interests bind us all together. The interrelationships between national actions and their international implications are becoming all the more obvious. The environment respects no boundaries. We cannot act as if it did.

I have little doubt that as we approach the twenty-first century, our perceptions of the future will increasingly cease to be defined essentially in national terms. The stability of human progress will depend on our realization that we are all neighbours on a fragile planet and that 'OUR COMMON FUTURE' depends upon how we subordinate our separateness to our oneness.

Mr. President,

Your conference will during the next three weeks deal with many of the crucial issues that the Commission has taken up. The setting is urgent. The development crisis is real. UNCTAD and the whole international community are at a cross-roads. Business as usual will not do. We must all join forces in a new partnership between North and South in the fight against poverty and for a sustainable development. UNCTAD VII could make a fresh start for invigorated multilateral cooperation. Following a decade and a half of stand-still and even decline in our ability to jointly address the real and crucial issues of our time - the time has come to act together. Thank you.

NOTE EMBARGO

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF
WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
TO
INDIAN AND SOUTH ASIA NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

by

MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY
AND
CHAIRMAN, WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday, July 7, 1987
New Delhi, India

On behalf of the Commission I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you and to say how pleased we are to have this opportunity of hearing your views on our report and discussing with you the role that NGOs can play in implementing the recommendations and conclusions it contains.

All of us here are professionally and personally dedicated to breaking free of out-dated and short sighted approaches to development. We see a new chart with new and different paths for the future. An important challenge is to add new and sufficient strength to create a real momentum for change.

The concept of sustainable development is our central theme. The Commission defines this simply as paths of progress which meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

To achieve sustainable development the Commission calls for a new era of economic growth. A new and more sustainable international economic regime is essential, one which emphasizes the need for a more equitable and just distribution of income and resources. This growth must in several ways be different in quality from our past experience. It must enhance the resource base instead of overusing it and create a new capacity to solve environmental problems.

To secure this goal, and thereby our common future, we need a new international ethic which looks beyond narrow and short sighted national ambitions.

The role of NGOs is central. The Commission is itself an NGO, established by the United Nations to act independently in reaching its conclusions and in making its recommendations. Though coming from many different nations and disciplines and bearing different national and international responsibilities, the Commissioners hammered together over three years a unanimous political document. It is, in retrospect, surprising but first of all a great achievement, that such unanimity could evolve. It is also evident how closely our findings match the vision of many of the world's environment and development NGOs. Our unanimity of vision encourages us to believe that if many more national policy-makers could be removed from the necessity of day-to-day decisions, and be directly exposed to the problems of the world - and to cultures, traditions and peoples from all corners of the globe as we were - then they would reach similar conclusions and a vision so like that of many of you in this room.

Today we possess the information, the understanding, the technology and the sheer human ingenuity to cope with these major challenges and to launch our World on paths of development that will be consistent with the parameters of our environment and resources. This opportunity is one we should not squander.

The task will not be an easy one. The obstacles which we face are political and institutional, rather than technical.

Our existing political structures are not designed to cope adequately with the management of global environment and development problems. Our Common Future says frankly that most of the institutions facing the challenge of rapid global change "tend to be independent, fragmented, working to relatively narrow mandates with closed decision processes."

We also have an international economic system which yearly widens the gap between rich and poor nations - each year increasing, rather than decreasing, the number of poor and hungry people. Environmental degradation is steadily becoming more serious and widespread, and is now approaching critical thresholds.

Our report does not lay direct blame at the door of any government or institution. It has been criticised in some circles for not "naming names". I believe it was well-considered and wise not to do so. First, it would not be correct to name some and not others, and we could never have been complete. Secondly, our mandate was to initiate an international discussion on ways to deal effectively with environment and development concerns, and how to cooperate to solve them.

Our report places a potentially powerful tool in the hands of all interested citizens' groups, institutions and nations; a tool I call upon you to use. It is a challenge to the NGO community and the press.

It is also your challenge to provide the necessary information for your own nations and regions. How are local people affected by the decisions of the development banks and other multilateral development agencies? Do those national agencies which carry the main responsibility for environmental degradation have the mandate to prevent and to deal with this degradation, or is this job left to an under-funded, under staffed environment agency? Are energy policies, industry policies and agricultural policies in your countries in support of social equality, and are they sustainable into the next century?

In your publications you can provide the local information to fill out the themes of our Commission's report. Already, NGOs in various countries are taking data from scientists and from their own governments and making it available to the people. They are writing the annual reports and audits on changes in environmental quality which our report calls upon governments to produce. One such example is the Indian State of the Environment Reports produced by Anil Agarwal's Centre for Science and Environment.

This leads me to another important role for both NGOs and journalists to play in taking the concept of sustainable development out of books and reports and placing it into the political decision-making process. One of the main themes of our report is that sustainable development cannot be achieved without - and I quote - "a political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision-making". The necessity for effective citizen participation runs throughout the report. NGOs and the media are essential for this fundamental process. Public concern puts environment and development issues onto the national and international political agendas. NGOs have played a powerful role here. They have helped to create awareness and to communicate the growing concern over environment and development issues to decision makers.

We must now build on this foundation, not least on the enthusiasm of young people. We must set forth on a worldwide campaign to inform and to educate. We must secure a constructive debate and persuade public opinion, governments and all policy makers of the overriding goal of sustainable development.

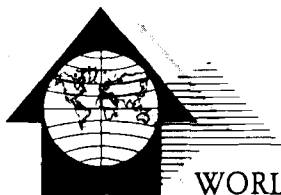
Our report makes it plain that a successful transition to sustainable development will intensify public participating. NGO's in developing countries need international support - professional political and financial - to carry out their roles effectively. In many countries, governments need to

recognise and extend NGO's right to know and have access to information on the environment and natural resources. Our call for increased freedom of information will be as much of a challenge for some industrialised nations as it will for some developing nations. Participation in decision-making and consultation must be improved. Your central role here which you share with other community groups and the scientific community, is to support the aim of making informed choices at all levels.

The right to self-determination can only be fulfilled in a truly democratic process based on the right to information.

I thank you.

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WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE
WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
TO
UNEP'S 14TH GOVERNING COUNCIL SESSION

by

MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY
AND
CHAIRMAN, WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Monday, June 8, 1987
Nairobi, Kenya

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,

First, Mr. President, allow me to congratulate you upon your election and to thank the Governing Council for this opportunity to present the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled "Our Common Future".

On behalf of the Commission, and on my own personal behalf, I also take great pleasure in expressing our sincere gratitude to the Executive Director, Dr. Mostafa Tolba, for his continuous interest, advice and support.

Our Commission, like the Intergovernmental Intersessional Preparatory Committee, originated in the General Assembly of the United Nations which gave us challenging terms of reference in its resolution 38/161. At its inaugural meeting in October 1984, the Commission decided to meet these challenges in an open, receptive and responsive manner. We invited the views of individuals, scientific institutions, NGOs, business and trade unions, governments and intergovernmental organizations on the critical issues we were to address.

We have benefitted greatly from the exchanges of ideas with the IIPC and from the views of governments expressed to us through the IIPC. Our meetings with its governmental representatives were essential for us, and I hope useful also for them. I would also like to extend the Commission's gratitude to the past Chairmen of the IIPC, Ambassador Bencheikh of Algeria, High Commissioner Rana of India, Ambassador de Medicis of Brazil and to the current Chairman, Ambassador Choudhury of Bangladesh. Each of them has been most helpful in facilitating our continuing dialogue with the IIPC. The Commission is grateful and happy that the Environmental Perspective, which the IIPC has developed, builds upon a range of perceptions and recommendations discussed and formulated by the Commission.

We have conducted public hearings in all parts of the globe. We have been hearing and sharing as many views as possible. The result, and the political characteristic of our report, is a broad consensus on shared perceptions and concrete recommendations addressed to the international community.

The first message we want to convey is that the present pattern of development cannot continue and must be changed.

On the one hand, it does not solve the acute problems of mass poverty. The numbers of absolute poor have passed 700 million and are increasing every year. The per capita income of many

of the least developed countries has not been so low since the sixties. The gap between the rich and the poor nations is widening.

On the other hand, we witness growing threats to the environment, many are regional and even global in scale. Some raise crucial questions of planetary survival.

I will not repeat here today the painful list of disasters and grim statistics of which the Governing Council is well aware. They have surely alerted all thinking people to the grave crisis facing our planet.

The Commission fully recognizes the vast achievements since environmental protection became a primary concern of the United Nations. But the complexity, the magnitude and the apparent irreversible trends of environmental degradation surpass present conceptions. Available remedial means are clearly insufficient.

A second message - and one of hope - is that change is not only necessary - it is also possible. Humanity has the knowledge, technology, ingenuity and resources. Never before in our history have we had similar capacities. What we need is new concepts, new values and to mobilize will. We need a new global ethic.

The overriding political concept of "Our Common Future", is the concept of sustainable development.

Sustainable development is a familiar concept to people concerned with environment. Still I venture to say that sustainable development, as defined by the Commission, is an elaborated and much broader concept. We believe it could be the key to open new doors of perception and entail new inspiration for humankind in its quest for progress and survival.

We define sustainable development in simple terms as paths of progress which meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Contrary to widely held beliefs, sustainable development does not imply absolute limits to growth itself, though it clearly recognizes that we are approaching critical thresholds in many areas. It is not only a new name for environmentally sound management, it is a social and economic concept as well. Sustainable development, as seen by the Commission, is a new concept for economic growth.

It is conceived as a broad process of change, comprising every field of human activity. It requires policy reforms across the spectrum of human imagination. It requires fair access to knowledge and resources and a more equitable distribution within and among nations. It requires broad participation in decision-making.

The ability of future generations to meet their own needs can be compromised as much by affluence - the excesses of industrial and technological development - as by the environmental degradation of underdevelopment.

Sustainable development must be a goal for all nations, developed and developing alike. Indeed it is a goal for the global community as a whole.

Based on this broad concept of sustainable development, the Commission has analysed the major problems facing us, which at the same time are crucial for development and poverty alleviation, and critical for the globe's natural resources and ecosystems.

The report discusses food security, industry, energy, the urban challenge and the protection of genetic resources. How can we assure enough food for a growing world population and at the same time avoid environmental damage from large-scale agriculture? How can industry produce all the goods to remove poverty and squalor without depleting the world's natural resources? How can we meet the rapidly growing needs of energy in developing countries without a global environmental breakdown? How can we curb rapid urbanization and remove the urban slums? Is it within reach to protect the genetic resources of the planet's plants and animals species?

The report clearly demonstrates and underlines the close interlinkages between all these issues, as well as the relationship between peace, security, development and environment, and the need for improved management of the global commons.

We came to focus on poverty as one overriding issue - not least as a major cause and effect of environmental degradation.

International economic inequalities are the root cause of this problem. Clearly the impoverished developing nations will not have opportunities to follow sustainable paths of progress unless external conditions offer them reasonable choices and hopes for a better future.

Deteriorating terms of trade, soaring interest rates, and strangling debts place intolerable burdens on poor people. These conditions force developing countries to apply measures that only in the short term can alleviate payment problems and current account deficits. They have no choice but to overuse their lands and forests. Consequently the resource base of many countries, and thus the welfare of future generations, become the real loser in present international economic relations.

Against this background, the Commission calls for a concerted action to launch a new era of economic growth.

It has been a surprise to many that a group studying the environment, seemingly has turned on its head the zero growth dogma of the early 70's, and even made growth a clear imperative.

I believe this call is an important eye opener. It has the potential of inspiring a new debate and new insights into the key issues of the global challenge. It carries the hope of a new deal and revival of common concern for our planet, for humanity, for survival.

Growth is absolutely necessary to overcome mass poverty. And when there is superimposed on present needs those of a vast additional population in the next century - perhaps as much again as the world's current population - with 90 per cent of the increase occurring in the Third World - how else, without growth, can we hope to cope? Developing countries have no option but to seek to grow by at least 5 per cent a year - far faster than in the 1980s so far - if they are to escape the poverty trap.

At the same time as we call for a revival of economic growth, we urge that the quality of growth be changed. Growth must promote a fair distribution of income. It must be soundly based on the stock of natural capital that sustains it, instead of overusing it. It must respect limits to environmental resources such as clean air and water, forests and soils; it must maintain genetic diversity; it must be based on more effective uses of energy and raw materials. The environment must become an ally, not a victim of development.

To pursue a new era and quality of growth we need to breathe new life and foresight into international economic relations, which now work against the interests and opportunities of the developing countries in so many ways.

We in the industrialized world have to accept an obligation to ensure that the international economy helps rather than hinders the possibilities for sustainable development. Commodity prices must provide a fair international distribution of income. Increased capital transfer and development assistance are equally necessary.

This will require changes in the policies of the international organizations responsible for trade, aid, technological and financial assistance, with the general objective to increase incomes in developing countries. The negotiations which will take place in GATT, in UNCTAD, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, regional development banks, UNIDO, UNDP, WHO, and FAO, to mention some very key agencies, will be at the core of the process of change that we call for.

The impacts of agricultural policies is one example of the interlinkages that are in operation. The production of enough food to feed a doubled world population may be within our reach. But securing access to food for those who need it, and

ensuring environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, will require fundamental policy changes. To realize the full potential of the small family farmer is a major priority in many developing countries. Therefore, the Commission calls for a shift in global agricultural production patterns.

In many countries another major priority is to slow population growth. It is difficult to see how a disastrous cycle of declining living standards and a deteriorating environment can be averted if present trends continue. We feel convinced that there is no short cut to lower birth rates. Population strategies must deal with the underlying social and economic conditions of underdevelopment, and must be based on improved health service and education. In many countries, little can be done until the status of women is raised, their economic contribution recognised, and their literacy increased. Only in a world that is safer, one which gives the poor more self-respect and hope for their lives and future, will poor people have real choices, including the choice to limit the size of their families.

But the population issue in the context of environment and development is not one of numbers alone. It is also one of consumption patterns and lifestyles. We know too well how people in the North use the world's natural resources at rates that cannot be sustained, while hundreds of millions consume far too little.

Policy changes will require revisions of institutional and legal arrangements. The Commission advocates a full integration of environment and economics in decision-making, at all levels, public and private. We must recognize that environment and economics are not in contradiction to one another. They are parts of a unified management of our planet. In practice, this means that we must break away from our traditional sectoral approach. Sectoral organizations tend to pursue sectoral objectives, and to treat impacts on other sectors as more or less irrelevant for their own. Sustainable development requires that such fragmentation be overcome. It also requires a new deal in international cooperation.

Firstly, we must prevent environmental degradation by getting at the sources. We must recognize that the policies of sectoral ministries and agencies such as Ministries of Finance, Economy, Industry, Agriculture and Energy are the ones that in fact determine the size of the problems. Therefore, sustainable development objectives must be incorporated into the goals of all branches of government and the legislative bodies.

Equally, at the regional and global level all international organizations must be made responsible and accountable for ensuring that their policies support sustainable development. This will have implications for their budgets, mandates, recruitment and programmes. The UN and the Secretary General

should provide guidance and leadership. Responsibly meeting humanity's goals and aspirations will, however, require the active support of us all.

Secondly, we need to strengthen the role of environmental protection and resource management agencies, both at the national and international level.

In this connection, the Commission has discussed thoroughly the essential role of UNEP within this broad international action for sustainable development.

UNEP has assured leadership, advice and guidance on protecting the ecological basis for sustainable development. This role should be strengthened.

UNEP should be given greater possibility to monitor, assess and report on changes in the environment and natural resources.

It should be given a more central role in guiding and supporting scientific research.

UNEP should also be given the means for increased support to countries that seek advice and assistance in the management of key ecosystems, and in setting up and strengthening institutional capacity.

It should encourage and promote international agreements and cooperative arrangements on critical environment issues. It should be the active advocate for further development of international environmental law.

The catalytic role of UNEP is needed most strongly in guiding the development banks, the UNDP, and other UN agencies about the environmental dimension of their programmes. As we succeed in raising awareness that the development-environment link is the most important issue on the international political agenda today, demands on UNEP will only increase. Governments must give active support to allow it to perform this vital role.

A key concern for the Commission has been to improve and widen the basis for making informed choices. The roles of NGOs, trade unions, the media and the scientific community must be central in the broad political debate on environment and development issues. This requires access to information and improved co-operation and exchange between the different players. Industry should be at the forefront and be encouraged to move into new eras of resource-efficiency and shared responsibility.

A better and safer future will not come free of charge. Developing countries will need massive assistance to free themselves of poverty and realize their full human and economic potential, while protecting and enhancing the resource base. Donor and lending agencies must make a fundamental

commitment to sustainable development. New trends in the World Bank and the regional development banks offer great promise, and should be further encouraged.

Mr. President,

The report from the World Commission on Environment and Development is a strong call for renewed international cooperation. Mutual interests bind us all - rich and poor - together.

Disappearing forests are not of concern only to the countries where the forests are cut. The depletion of the earth's ozone layer, acid rain and nuclear fallout are common concerns. Human progress now demands that we realize that we are neighbours on a small and fragile planet, and that our duty of care for each other is not only a mutual moral obligation, but also in our self-interest.

We are convinced that sustainable development is a goal and obligation that will strengthen the UN and its specialized agencies, and help to enhance their credibility and status globally. Sustainable development should give a strong impulse to the revival of multilateralism.

We call upon the UN General Assembly, as a step towards sustainable development, to transform "Our Common Future" into a UN Action Programme for Sustainable Development.

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How, then, can countries in practice, on the national level, use our report and work towards sustainable development? We offer a series of concrete recommendations, but our overriding ideas must be interpreted and adjusted to the situation of each individual country.

My country, Norway, has initiated such a process. Recognizing the imperative necessity of information and education, a broad campaign for environment and development has been launched as a joint venture of private organizations and public authorities.

We have asked all ministries, including the ministries of finance, justice, defense and others not normally perceived to be close to these issues, to assess "Our Common Future" and to identify where we can improve. We intend to develop a consistent foreign policy for environment and development.

We have all experienced how sectoral, national, ministries tend to picture national policy priorities in their international work. A concern by all nations, across the board, and by cabinets as a whole, would be a great benefit also to the international community and to future generations.

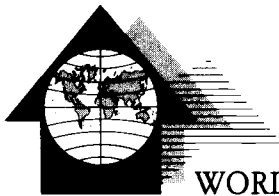
The report will now be in the hands of the whole international community. When you at this Governing Council meeting transmit

the report to the General Assembly, I hope that the process that created it - the building of consensus among individuals from 21 countries - will inspire a responsible and enlightened follow-up.

We would like to share our own experiences with as many as possible. As the Commission worked, nationalism and artificial divides between industrialized and developing countries, between East and West, receded. In their place emerged a common concern for the planet and the interlocked ecological and economic threats with which its people, institutions and governments now grapple.

Our process of debating and learning proves that it is possible to agree on the analysis of the problems and what needs to be done to build a world that is more prosperous, more just and more secure. But the necessary changes require action - and they require it now.

Thank you.



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF
WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
TO
AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

by

MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY
AND
CHAIRMAN, WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Sunday, June 7, 1987
Nairobi, Kenya

On behalf of the Commission I would like to extend our appreciation to the Environment Liaison Center for having organized this event today.

Many of you who are here, participated in the public hearings the Commission held, and played a role in the development of the Commission's thinking. We look forward to the opportunity of hearing your views on our report.

All of us here are professionally and personally dedicated to breaking free of out-dated and short sighted approaches to development and to charting new and different paths for the future. We must all do whatever possible to add new strength to a momentum for change.

The concept of sustainable development is a central theme of our report. The Commission defines this simply as paths of progress which meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

To achieve sustainable development the Commission calls for a new era of economic growth. This is necessary in order to eliminate mass poverty in the world. A new international economic regime is essential, emphasising the need for a more equitable and just distribution of income and resources. This growth must in several ways be different in quality from our past experience. It must enhance the resource base instead of overusing it, and create a new capacity to solve environmental problems.

To secure this goal, and thereby our common future , we need a new international ethic which looks beyond narrow and short sighted national ambitions.

Today we possess the information, the understanding, the technology and the sheer human ingenuity to cope with these major challenges and to launch our World on paths of development that will be consistent with the parameters of our environment and resources. This opportunity is one we should not squander.

The task will not be an easy one. The obstacles which we face are political and institutional, rather than technical.

Our Common Future says frankly that most of the institutions facing the challenge of rapid global change "tend to be independent, fragmented, working to relatively narrow mandates with closed decision processes." Our existing political structures are not designed to cope adequately with the management of global environment and development problems. We have an international economic system which yearly widens the gap between rich and poor nations - each year increasing, rather than decreasing, the number of poor and hungry people . Environmental degradation is steadily becoming more serious and widespread, and is now approaching critical thresholds.

Our report does not lay direct blame at the door of any government or institution. It has been criticised in some circles for not "naming names". I believe it was well-considered and wise not to do so. First, it would not be correct to name some and not others, and we could never have been complete. Secondly, our mandate was to initiate an international discussion on ways to deal effectively with environment and development concerns, and how to cooperate to solve them. It is not always the best idea to initiate constructive debate by apportioning blame.

Yet, when the Emperor has no clothes, someone must point that out - so that the Emperor can take steps to remedy the lack. That certainly is an important job for the non-governmental organisations and the press. Our report places a potentially powerful tool in the hands of all interested citizens' groups, institutions and nations; a tool I call upon you to use.

It is also your challenge to provide the necessary information for your own nations and regions. How are local people affected by the decisions of the development banks and other multilateral development agencies? Do those national agencies which carry the main responsibility for environmental degradation, have the mandate to prevent and to deal with this degradation, or is this job left to an under-funded, under-staffed environment agency? Are energy policies, industry policies and agricultural policies in your countries in support of social equality, and are they sustainable into the next century?

In your publications - and many NGOs today run influential periodicals and newsletters - you can provide the local information to fill out the themes of our Commission's report. Already, NGOs in India, Malaysia, Turkey and other nations are taking data from scientists and from their own governments and making it available to the people. They are writing the annual reports and audits on changes in environmental quality which our report calls upon governments to produce.

This leads me to another important role for both NGOs and journalists to play in taking the concept of sustainable development out of books and reports and placing it into the political decision-making process. One of the main themes of our report is that sustainable development cannot be achieved without - and I quote - "a political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision-making". The necessity for effective citizen participation runs throughout the report. NGOs and the media are essential for this fundamental process.

Public concern puts environment and development issues onto the national and international political agendas. NGOs have helped to create awareness and have helped to communicate the growing concern to decision makers.

We must now build on this foundation of public concern, not least on the enthusiasm of young people. We must set forth on a worldwide campaign to inform, to educate, to advise. We must promote constructive discussion and debate, and thereby persuade public opinion, governments and all policy makers of the overriding goal of sustainable development.

The role of NGOs in this campaign is central. The Commission is itself an NGO, established by the United Nations to act independently in reaching its conclusions and in making its recommendations. Though coming from many different nations and disciplines and bearing different national and international responsibilities, the Commissioners hammered together over three years a unanimous political document. It is, in retrospect, surprising but first of all a great achievement, that such unanimity could evolve. It is also evident how closely our findings match the vision of many of the world's environment and development NGOs. Our unanimity of vision encourages us to believe that if many more national policy-makers could be removed from the necessity of day-to-day decisions, and be directly exposed to the problems of the world - and to cultures, traditions and peoples from all corners of the globe as we were - then they would reach similar conclusions and a vision so like that of many of you in this room.

Our report makes it plain that a successful transition to sustainable development will require a substantial strengthening of the capacities of NGO's. NGO's in developing countries need international support - professional, political and financial - to carry out their roles effectively. In many countries, governments need to recognise and extend NGO's right to know and have access to information on the environment and natural resources. Our call for increased freedom of information will be as much of a challenge for some industrialised nations as it will for some developing nations. Participation in decision-making and consultation must be improved. Your central role here, which you share with other community groups and the scientific community, is to support the aim of making informed choices at all levels.

As we have pointed out in our report, NGO's can often provide an alternative to public agencies in the implementation of programmes and projects. They often reach target groups and mobilize people more effectively than public agencies. The major bilateral and multilateral assistance groups, especially the World Bank and UNDP, could draw more heavily upon NGO's in executing programmes and projects. Similarly, at the national level, governments, foundations and industry could also extend their cooperation with NGO's in planning, monitoring and evaluating as well as in carrying out projects. To this end, we say governments should establish or strengthen procedures for official consultation and more meaningful participation by NGO's in all relevant intergovernmental organizations.

We also call for substantially increased support for international NGO's to enable them to expand their special roles and functions. We have recommended that governments and other - private and public - sources of funding should give priority to the NGO's.

It is a great pleasure to address this meeting, and particularly to do so here on African soil, in a continent which has witnessed, perhaps more dramatically than any other in recent years, the full consequences of misguided development and of policies resulting in abuse of the environment. You on this continent have seen how poverty can be the chief cause of environmental destruction and how the destruction of your precious environment and resource base in turn begets increasingly desperate poverty.

Impressive efforts have been made in Africa to try and correct past errors. More than in any other region perhaps, governments here in Africa need the kind of service from NGO's which I have been outlining. Equally, NGO's need the confidence and support of governments and institutions in Africa, as in other world regions.

I believe that if we cooperate in the work of changing human attitudes, we shall prevail. We cannot afford to fail. Together, we must now transform theory into reality and acceptance into action.

This call should not be seen simply as a statement of the faith our Commission places in the NGO community. It also constitutes a challenge to your abilities and determination.

I thank you.

Stockholm

Gro Harlem Brundtland

SPEECH AT THE NORDIC CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND
DEVELOPMENT, 9 MAY 1987 IN STOCKHOLM

Who would have thought a quarter of a century ago that environment and development would stand out clearly as the major challenge facing mankind today, when we have only half as many years left to the turn of the millenium. In the early sixties our view of development was so much simpler than it is now. Indeed, it was unconditionally optimistic. And - seemingly - with good reason. Our material well-being was improving at a rapid rate. Health was improving all over the world. Peoples who had endured centuries of domination were gaining self-confidence, establishing their own identities as free and sovereign nations. Man's belief in his own power reached a new peak as he penetrated outer space. Growth rates were soaring.

But during these past 25 years we have witnessed an ever-increasing body of evidence that development has not been only beneficial. We have become increasingly aware that human activity systematically has been destroying important life-support systems. We have certainly been on a fast track, but not on the right track.

The Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 was the result of growing concern among an informed public and of a political cry for action.

And the Stockholm conference was only the first in a series of international conferences which have been held in response to frustration among people and nations. The United Nations' Environment Programme emerged from a strong sense of urgency. The conferences on water supply, food, women, human settlements, new and renewable energy sources, those involving people's access to the means to chose the size of their family, all offered a hope of improved cooperation on major issues. Yet, a sense of frustration and inadequacy prevailed. The world was growing closer, but the gaps between us were widening.

The World Commission on Environment and Development was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1983. The call from the General Assembly was an urgent one and the Commission's broad mandate reached around the globe. When the Secretary General asked me to establish and lead

the Commission, I was afraid that the task set for us was perhaps too ambitious.

We were asked to re-examine the critical environment and development problems of the planet and to formulate realistic proposals to solve them. Commissioners from 21 countries initiated a series of thorough investigations on all continents including the broad participation of ordinary citizens through our public hearing. Our findings were indeed mixed. We found success, we found failure and we found a range of in-betweens.

The success stories are many. Infant mortality is declining, human life-expectancy is increasing, the relative number of adults who can read and write is growing, so is the number of children starting school. Global food production is increasing faster than the population is growing. Isolated achievements of momentous importance such as the green revolution and the eradication of small-pox reconfirm our faith in mankind. And our capacity to deal with the first generation of pollution problems is improving although only a few countries have so far succeeded in controlling pollution, and even the rich industrialized countries have not managed to deal with the backlog.

But in dealing with the new generation of environmental issues, all countries are falling behind. Many of the new threats are regional and even global in scale and many raise crucial questions of national security and planetary survival.

In spite of immense progress in many regions, 700 million people are still living in poverty and their numbers are growing every year. Reliable UN predictions leave no doubt that many of the least developed countries have experienced serious economic set-backs in recent years. The per capita income in many of them has not been so low since the sixties, and many countries are caught in a vicious circle of economic decline, increasing poverty and environmental degradation.

Falling commodity prices, debilitating burdens of debt, high interest rates, declining financial flows and reductions in aid, all add up. They have forced developing countries to overtax their environment in order to pay for imports and accommodate creditors. The gap between North and South is growing. In trying to keep up, the poor countries have no alternative but to produce more raw materials and agricultural goods for export. The system forces them to deplete their mines, and we call it "income". It forces them to harvest twice a year in areas where the soil can hardly sustain one harvest. They clear the forests to cultivate new land, often ill-suited for agriculture. They cut down forests to sell the timber. All this is called "income". And surpluses on the world market press prices down, leaving these countries little option but to apply more of the same medicine.

Poverty is both a cause and effect of environmental degradation.

Population growth is inextricably linked to environment and development issues and our success in the fight against poverty will largely determine our success in stabilizing the world's population some time during the next century. This year it is estimated that the global population will exceed 5 billion. Close to 100 million people will be added to the world every year.

90 per cent of this growth will take place in developing countries. The demands for education, health, housing, access to food and energy, especially by the poorest of the poor in rural areas, where population growth rates continue to increase, represent enormous challenges. While demand in the rural areas will continue to increase, we can expect millions of poor people to move to the cities, to a life they believe will entail opportunities to leave poverty and misery behind.

But what they leave behind often consists of remnants of once arable lands which are now threatened by desertification. That threat is more than real. Forests the size of Denmark are lost every twelve weeks, every nine months an area the size of Switzerland is turned into desert, and world-wide soil erosion is now considered to be Problem No 1 by the Food and Agricultural Organization.

If we continue to burn fossil fuels at present rates we can be almost certain that at least the world's oil reserves will be used up during the coming century. The combustion itself releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The resulting greenhouse effect threatens to gradually warm up the globe as solar heat is trapped near the surface of the earth. Global climatic changes could well be the outcome, entailing dramatic implications for food production and settlement. There is scientific evidence which indicates that a global warm up would raise the level of the sea enough to flood many low-lying coastal cities and river deltas.

Acidification, which is too well known to us in this part of the world, is gradually becoming a global problem. Other industrial gases threaten the protective ozone shield, and we know of no method that can restore it. We face the possibility of its depletion, which could result in an increase in the incidence of cancer and in the extinction of life forms at the base of the marine food chain.

All these phenomena stand out as solid evidence of serious mismanagement of vital global issues. They make it absolutely imperative for us to choose a new and better course for the future.

Faced with the facts, one could perhaps expect that the Report of our Commission would paint a gloomy picture; that we would see no way out; that we would join the ranks of the pessimists

who have the current evidence and trends on their side. - But we didn't. Instead, we found grounds for hope. We became convinced that people can cooperate to create a future that is more prosperous, more just and more secure. But for this to happen we must tap human resources and ingenuity and we must design new approaches to managing environmental resources and to sustaining human development.

Two weeks ago when I presented our report to the Secretary General of the United Nations, he said that the name itself, "Our Common Future", represented a challenge to him and to the United Nations. Yes, it is meant as a challenge. But it also imposes an obligation.

"Our Common Future" is not a detailed final blueprint. It is not a scientific report, although it benefitted from having the latest scientific evidence available to the Commission. Nor is it another book about environment and development. Instead it is the result of a broad political process of analysis, learning and debate. It is a unanimous report. Above all it is a political document. The Commission included a Soviet academy member, an American republican, a Chinese professor, a former revolutionary who is now minister of finance and planning of Zimbabwe, a Columbian environmentalist, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Nations, an Indonesian minister of population, to mention just a few of the members and to indicate some of the variety of background and experience. Nevertheless, we all managed to arrive at a common analysis of the means by which policies can and must be changed to match present and future realities. Our consensus report shows that it is possible to work together for common goals, to find solutions that go beyond national confines and redefine what many regard to be self interest.

As you know, the overriding political concept upon which our report is founded is that of sustainable development. We define sustainable development most simply as paths of progress which meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

Contrary to widely held beliefs, sustainable development does not imply absolute limits to growth, though it clearly recognizes that we are approaching critical thresholds in many areas imposed by the patterns of technology and social organization. Nor is it a new name for environmental protection. Sustainable development is a concept for economic growth. It reaches far beyond the mandated area of any single international organization, with the possible exception of the United Nations itself.

Sustainable development does not imply a fixed state. It is a process of change in which economic and fiscal policies, trade and foreign policies, energy, agricultural, industrial and other sectoral policies all aim to induce development paths that are economically, socially and ecologically

sustainable. It requires more equitable distribution and equal opportunities within and among nations. It must be a goal for all nations, developed and developing alike. Indeed it is a goal for the global community as a whole.

But sustainable development cannot, and will not, be achieved in a world ridden by poverty. Our Commission has therefore called for a new era of economic growth, one that is forceful, global and at the same time environmentally sustainable, with a content that enhances the resource base rather than degrading it. We are deeply convinced, as Sonny Ramphal so eloquently illustrated yesterday, that world wide growth is the only remedy for overcoming mass poverty. But we are equally convinced that sustainable growth can create the capacity to solve environmental problems. The process of economic development must be more soundly based on the realities of the stock of capital that sustain it. The environment must become an ally, not a victim of development.

To pursue a new era and quality of growth we need to breathe new life and foresight into international economic relations, which, beset by a variety of problems, work against the interests and opportunities of the developing countries in so many ways. The challenge to the future lies partly in the complex web of national policies, both in rich and in poor countries. And it lies not least in some genuine dilemmas we face when trying to attack the problems. For example, as industrialized countries use less materials and energy in their production, they provide smaller markets for commodities and minerals from the developing countries. Yet, if developing nations focus their efforts upon eliminating poverty and meeting essential human needs, then the domestic demand will increase for agricultural products, manufactured goods and services. The very logic of sustainable development requires internal stimulus to Third World growth.

On the global level, growth is being stifled by heavy debt burdens, depressed commodity prices, protectionism in many industrialized countries and stagnating flows of development finance. Certain short-term positive developments have been offset not least by a considerable worsening of terms of trade. Real commodity prices have not been as low since the international economic depression in the 1930s. The countries of Africa that are almost entirely dependent on one or two commodities for export revenues are drawing especially heavily on non-renewable resources in order to obtain the trade surplus needed to service their debts.

We in the industrialized countries will have to accept the obligation to see to it that international economic relations help rather than hinder the possibility of ecologically sound development. This is our duty. But it is also in our own self-interest.

Many of today's trading patterns contain a massive transfer of environmental costs from the industrialized world to developing countries. A large part of the most environmentally damaging production processes today takes place in developing countries, where they are not subjected to the more modern and stricter environmental requirements of many industrialized countries. The realities of this is that in the difficult trade-off between the need for foreign currency in the short term, and longer term sound environmental policies, many developing countries feel compelled to sacrifice the environment to gain comparative advantage in international trade. This can also be seen as a subsidy from developing countries to the industrialized world. The pollution cost thus absorbed by developing exporters amounted to approximately US \$ 14 billion in 1980 alone. By comparison, total annual ~~developing~~ *development* assistance flowing in the other direction amounts to about US\$ 35 billion

These trends will have to be reversed. Commodity prices must be influenced in order to provide a fair international distribution of income. Official development assistance will have to be improved, both in quantity and in quality. Increased capital transfers are absolutely necessary and the transfers must take place in ways that are sensitive to the environment. Thus sustainability criteria should be an integral part of financial support. Policies will have to be changed accordingly, both nationally and internationally, to realize our full potential for a new era of economic growth. Increased co-operation among developing countries entails opportunity for economic and social progress and has a great potential that needs to be further explored. The new Commission on South-South co-operation which is being established by Julius Nyerere offers promise for this important dimension of international co-operation.

Clearly, sustainable development also requires that we attain a balance between the population and the carrying capacity of our planet. Only in a world that is safer, one which gives the poor more self-respect and hope for their lives and future, will poor people have real choices, including the choice to limit the size of their families.

Fortunately, discussions of these issues are becoming more nuanced and comprehensive. As an example of discussions that are taking place I mention that during the Commission's public hearings in Harare, the Economic Commission for Africa stressed that demographic factors will constitute a daunting challenge in the years ahead as the race between population and economic growth intensifies. There is an urgent need for far-reaching population policies to be vigorously implemented by African governments.

Population is not a question of numbers alone. Population policies clearly need to comprise education and health policies too, if we are to realize the potential of future generations. Education for all, especially for women, and family planning services is an absolute must for

people to exercise their right to choose to limit the size of their families.

The production of enough food to feed a doubled world population seems within our reach. But securing access to food for those who need it, and ensuring environmentally sustainable agricultural practices, will require fundamental policy changes. The Commission calls for a shift in global agricultural production patterns. Northern agricultural production systems often run on the basis of large-scale and short-sighted subsidies, and on the intensive use of fertilizers and pesticides. It over-exploits farmland and introduces harmful chemicals into food and water. The rich industrial countries need to examine very carefully the impact of their agricultural surpluses. The practice of dumping surpluses must be halted. At present, these surpluses often go to developing countries in ways that depress prices for local farmers, marginalize the poor, undermine agriculture and suppress the political reform which is so desperately needed.

We call for a reorientation of these policies, to secure farm income, while enhancing rather than undermining, the resource base. Much greater resources are needed to promote sustainable agriculture in the Third World, using techniques adapted to local conditions. Western style plowing has been a major cause of soil erosion in many areas. Furthermore, overgrazing, land clearance, commercial logging, and slash-and-burn agriculture rob soil of its cover and reduce agricultural yields. We call for a shift of the centres of food production to where the demand is, in Third World countries, and to promote this, for a change in the terms of trade in agricultural products.

The threat to the diversity of living species - the genetic resource base - is as closely linked to unsustainable agricultural practices as it is to industrial practices and energy use. Today scientists believe that living species are becoming extinct at alarming rates. On the average, nature's own extinction rate is estimated at 1 species a year. Due to the activity of man the present rates are a hundred times higher, and the species that we endanger are those which have been least documented.

The genetic material in wild species contributes billions of dollars yearly to the world economy in the form of improved crops, new drugs and medicines, and raw material for industry. We cannot afford to continue losing these resources that cannot possibly be restored. We commend the UNEP and other organizations for their untiring efforts to promote the conservation of species and ecosystems, but the collective endeavours are tiny given the magnitude and implications of the problem. The Commission calls for a broad spectrum of measures at all levels, local, governmental, regional and global. We call for sanctuaries to be established, inventories to be kept, agreements to be worked out, including the investigation of a global species

convention supported by financial arrangements. Failure will limit options for the future.

Energy supply and use are decisive for economic development, for the environment and for the fight against poverty. The differences in energy consumption between the North and South are vast. On the average, a person in the industrialised world uses 80 times as much energy as a person in Southern Africa. More than half of the world's population rely on fuelwood for cooking, light and heat.

A safe, environmentally sound and economically viable energy programme that will sustain human progress into the distant future is clearly called for. And it is possible, but new dimensions of political will and international cooperation will be required to achieve it.

Developing countries will need much more energy to continue to develop, but we in the North should strive to stabilize our energy consumption. A low energy future is our only viable option. This need not mean shortages. We in the industrialized countries could reduce energy input by 50 % and still obtain the same benefits. This would be possible if nations were to make energy efficiency the cutting edge of their energy policies.

A rational approach to energy pricing would promote this. Very rarely do energy prices reflect the cost of damage to health, property and the environment connected with energy consumption. If the recent momentum of energy efficiency is to be maintained, governments will have to designate it as their explicit goal. Oil prices are crucial also for energy efficiency. In order to ensure necessary investments in energy conservation and in the development of alternative sources of energy there is a strong need to stabilize the oil prices at a reasonable level. We recommend that new mechanisms for encouraging dialogue between consumers and producers be explored.

Energy efficiency is not, however, the final solution. No single combination of energy sources that could be sustained into the future exists today. In its search for the policies of tomorrow, the Commission devoted much time to the unresolved problems of nuclear energy. I believe that our discussions of this issue stand out as an example of how minds met as we worked our way through the realities of the arguments. We concluded that the generation of nuclear power is only justifiable if there are solid solutions to the presently unsolved problems to which it gives rise.

Consequently, renewable sources not yet available or developed will have to play a dominant role. Far more funds must be allocated to research in new and renewable sources of energy. If we are to succeed in providing energy for a global population of 10 billion people, broad international cooperation is needed to direct, guide and fund the large-scale research necessary.

I have endeavoured to highlight some of the priorities described in "Our Common Future". The task which the Commission set out to accomplish was to make an analysis of the issues and recommend actions about what needs to be done to change the present clearly unsustainable trends and policies. One of the greatest barriers to change is the organisation of society on the national as well as the international level.

Our analysis is clear. Environment is not a separate sector, distinct from key economic sectors such as industry, agriculture and energy. Environmental agencies need to be upgraded politically and expanded financially, yes, but the real changes will only come about when central economic agencies, such as ministries of finance, energy and others, are held responsible for the environmental effects of their policies.

This implies that economy and ecology will have to merge. Environmental concerns must become an integral part of decision making at all levels. Sustainable development must become the overriding goal of all governments - also in their external relations. Development assistance agencies which manage and direct 4/5ths of the total ODA must reorient their policies and ensure that all projects support sustainable development.

Our Report can, and I hope, will serve as a new motivation in a global transition to sustainable development. But success in achieving this transition will require increased political will and heightened public pressure to hold governments and institutions responsible.

The Norwegian Government has now requested all ministries to review and study the Commission's Report and to compare our domestic and foreign policies against its principles and recommendations. They have been asked to note where our present policies differ, and if they do, to consider what steps can be taken to bring them into line with the Report's recommendations. This process will be guided by a Board of State Secretaries and taking advice from a broad national hearing soliciting the views of trade unions, industry, farmers' associations, fishermen, municipal authorities and private organizations, etc. A broad information campaign is already under way seeking to inspire a nation-wide discussion of the report and its implications. A concrete example of national political steps that need to be stimulated was yesterday's decision to propose to Parliament an import duty reduction for cars which satisfy the strict US exhaust gas requirements.

We will pursue "Our Common Future" on a broad international basis. We will use it actively to influence the policies of international organizations. The coming months will provide ample opportunity for this. The meetings of the UNDP, UNFPA, UNCTAD VII, UNEP's Governing Council, WHO, ILO, FAO, etc., will be events this year, where Norway, in concert with other countries, will promote the concepts and

Development

principles contained in "Our Common Future". Recent examples of cooperation, in particular with the other Nordic countries at meetings of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, were excellent starting points of a lasting process.

We believe that sustainable development is a goal and obligation that will strengthen the UN and its specialized agencies, and help restore their credibility and status globally. Sustainable development is a major challenge. It should give added impulse to a revival of multilateralism, a crucial issue, after years of isolationism and lack of understanding for our common responsibilities.

In this way Norway has entered into a process of national and international follow-up and implementation, a type of process that we would hope all countries would choose to initiate.

*the principal source
of the UN on environmental
data*

Sustainable development should not require the creation of new international institutions. At the multilateral level, there is considerable institutional capacity available which should be redirected to serve the cause of sustainable development. This will have implications for budgets, mandates, recruitment and programmes of all international organizations; particularly for the UN system and its specialised agencies. The UN itself and its Secretary General should take the lead in this, coordinating the process of making the transition to sustainable development. We call for a UN Board on sustainable development under the chairmanship of the Secretary General. We call upon the General Assembly to transform "our Common Future" into a UN Action Programme for Sustainable Development. We call for a strengthening of UNEP to be the principal agent, BUT its Fund must be increased considerably to allow it to perform a catalytic and coordinating role.

*for change and
co-operation on
critical development
and resource
protection
issue.*

The role of multilateral finance institutions is the key to the transition towards sustainable development. The World Bank has taken a positive attitude toward the World Commission and its report, and I have a clear impression of determination to make a fundamental commitment to sustainable development. The World Bank can become the trendsetter for other finance institutions.

It is not only governments or international institutions that face a giant challenge. The call for change should rest on a broad consensus. Scientists, industry, trade unions, teachers, non-governmental organizations, all have important roles to play. I would call upon them as well as I did in London, Washington and Brussels in meetings with the NGO community and the European and international trade union movement, to use "Our Common Future" as a basis upon which to judge their governments' and the international institutional community's efforts and commitment to sustainable development. In this way the Report can engage the creativity and energies of millions of committed people

in a global effort to begin the process of change that is called for. Humanity has come to a historic crossroads. We have the capacity to change planetary systems, for better or for worse. The interconnected issues of environment and development aptly illustrate the fact that national and political borders will have to be made more transparent. Ecosystems respect no boundaries. We cannot act as if they did. ✓

Environmental issues teach us that we are all simply neighbours, and that our acts and omissions affect everybody. There is time for a new solidarity, and a new ethic. But we must begin now.

The Nordic countries have a special responsibility. We live in a corner of the globe where social tensions are low. We value equality and the just distribution of income.

We are few in number, but our opportunities are many, and our responsibility is great. If we succeed in cooperating with each other and with others, we can serve peace and we can improve its quality.



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF
THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
TO
EUROPEAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

BY
MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY
CHAIRMAN, WORLD COMMISSION ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

6 May 1987
Brussels

Yesterday marked the coming of a new phase in the work of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Here in Brussels we met with the Commission of the European Communities, EC and EFTA countries to present and discuss our report, "Our Common Future".

Today marks the widening of this new phase as we meet with European non-governmental organizations. We meet you with the conviction that without your attention and support, your dedication and your criticism the chances are less that our report will motivate and inspire the changes so urgently needed in the ways we manage this our only one earth. But we are also convinced that you are ready to take on your part of the responsibility and to work for common goals.

On the screen you have seen some of the critical problems that threaten humanity's future, our environment and our capital for development. The picture may seem gloomy, but if we all work together our Commission believes that it is possible to build a future that is more prosperous, more just and more secure and that a new era of growth is possible, one which enhances the resource base rather than depletes it.

This belief rests on many things: human ingenuity; men and women's proven capacity to innovate and adapt; the significant reduction in the energy, resource and environmental content of growth that some industrialized countries have experienced; many new and emerging technologies which offer enormous opportunities for raising productivity and living standards; opportunities for increasing food production; conserving the natural resource base and managing the environment; and the advent of global communications which makes it possible for people to see and begin to exercise their responsibilities for every part of the planet.

While the underlying message of the report is one of hope, that hope is not unconditional. The Commission states repeatedly that the means available cannot be applied at the rate and scale needed without significant changes in certain social goals, in certain critical policies and in institutional arrangements and processes of decision making.

This is the background for our inviting you to come here today. We politicians know too well that without political pressures, very little can be changed. We on the Commission also know that changes are absolutely imperative. We will rely on you, the NGOs for making the necessary contributions to the ongoing process of change that we define in our report as sustainable development.

Sustainable development, which we define most simply as paths of human progress that meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, is not a fixed state but a process of change. The concept of sustainable development is the overriding global political concept that this Commission presents and call for.

What we have undertaken is to elaborate upon this concept, to analyse what it should mean and to draw conclusions as to how our behaviour must change so that development can be sustainable. It is a goal for the global community as a whole, not only for the developing countries. Many practices of the industrialized nations are clearly unsustainable. The need for change is compelling. The will for change must be created.

As you have seen on the screen, the acidification of the environment, the reliance on industrial chemicals which deplete the ozone layer, which no known method can restore, the use of energy technologies which warm the globe, and many patterns of international trade and finance ravish ecosystems upon which the global economy depends. We need a change of policy and behaviour.

Likewise, those who look for finger-pointing, for naming the culprits, will look in vain too. Our aim was fairness, name them all or name none. Only the latter was feasible. This constraint should not, however, apply to you. You, the NGOs, should take "Our Common Future" and tell us, what are the implications of this? How do concrete policies and practices conform with our analysis and our recommendations? You have the opportunity to make our report even more operational. I challenge you to take this opportunity.

Our report is first and foremost a political document, as the outcome of a process of learning and debating. As we worked, nationalism needed, North and South, East and West agreed on a common analysis and on common recommendations for action. But the transition to sustainable development will require a range of public policy choices that are inherently complex and difficult. Reversing unsustainable development policies at the national and international level will require immense efforts to inform the public and secure its support. The scientific community, private and community groups and you, the NGOs can play a central role in this as we aim at making informed choices at all levels.

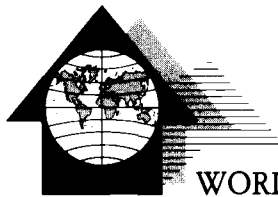
We need to assess the impact on soil from intensive agricultural practices. Likewise, we need to broaden our information base on the threats to the species, including wildlife stocks, on impacts of industrial production practices and how we deal with hazardous wastes, on the threats to the atmosphere - which we must come to recognize is limited and vulnerable, like the dew on an apple - on the ways we manage the commons and on risks that threaten complex ecosystems. Fortunately the governmental capacity to monitor, assess and to alert is growing. Data from remote sensing in space, digital communications and advanced information analysis, photos, mapping and other techniques can help us making the choices on a duly informed basis. Concerted efforts should be made to ensure that all nations gain access to them, either through UNEP, its Earthwatch programme, which should be recognized as the centre of leadership on risk assessment in the UN system, or other special programmes.

But such work by the institutions that governments have created are not meant to replace the role of NGOs. Governments and NGOs work on a complementary rather than a contradictory basis. This relationship broadens the democratic basis for decisions and promotes public participation.

Our Commission states that a successful transition to sustainable development will require substantial strengthening of the capacities of NGOs. NGOs in developing countries need international support, professional, political and financial to carry out their roles effectively. In many countries, governments need to recognize and extend NGOs right to know and have access to information on the environment and natural resources. Their participation in decision making and consultations must be improved as must their rights to legal remedies.

The next few decades are crucial. In the next century humankind will have the first opportunity in history to stabilize its own numbers. But that chance will also be the last in history and whether we succeed or not will depend on decisions taken now. The industrialized world has the chance to stabilize its energy consumption around the turn of the millenium. But to succeed in this, decisions for energy conservation and large scale research in renewables will have to be taken now. Genetic resources provide us with vast opportunities in medical research, agricultural improvements and technological progress. We have yet to explore the majority of living species, but to maintain their variety will require conservation action now.

Recently I was asked which single word I believed to be the most important one of our report. I pointed to the final word of the final chapter. That word is now. Our report is a call for action now - and I hope and expect that you will respond to that call.



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF
THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
TO THE
COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,
THE EC AND THE EFTA COUNTRIES

BY
MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY
CHAIRMAN, WORLD COMMISSION ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

5 May 1987
Brussels

I am grateful for this opportunity to present the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development here in Brussels today. Last week we launched our Report publicly in London. That event marked the end of one process; the preparation of the analysis and recommendations of our Commission, and the beginning of a new process, equally, if not even more important. The process which started is one of presenting the report to the international community, to important international bodies and for a parallel with national presentations in a number of countries.

The initiative in the UN that led to the creation of our Commission was a clear demonstration of a wide-spread feeling of frustration and inadequacy in the international community about our own ability to address the vital global issues and deal effectively with them. During the 900 days we were working, the world was hit by a number of crisis that confirmed the compelling need for a critical look at the way in which we manage our planet; the drought and famine in Africa, the Bhopal accident, Chernobyl, Basel, steadily increasing numbers of poor people, continuing acidification, desertification, new evidence about the "greenhouse" effect, and the discovery of the dimensions of the threat to the ozone layer - all strengthened our view that changes are necessary now. This is our message here today, and the one which we will seek to spread worldwide.

This meeting is the first in a series of discussions planned for this summer in every region. I believe it is appropriate that the first should be in Brussels, and with governments of EC and EFTA countries represented.

Our Commission has received substantive support from European countries and indeed from the Commission of the European Communities. It is also appropriate that we present our Report here in Brussels in the context of the European Year of the Environment which reiterates that the Community is now an important player in the world's environment policy.

The culture and the collective economic power of Europe speak for the immense opportunity and the obligations of the old world to promote sustainable development, in Europe itself and on a global scale. In Europe we still suffer from the aftermath of World War II. The East-West divide, and the implications of many national borders stand out in sharp contrast both to cultural and historical realities, and to the functions of ecosystems, rivers and air currents.

Long-range, or rather intermediate-range transport of air pollutants, handling and trade in hazardous wastes and industrial accidents all demonstrate how short-sighted interests lead to unsustainable practices also on this continent. We speak about the arbitrary borders elsewhere. Yet we enforce our own with rigour. But the real world clearly demonstrates how national borders are becoming increasingly impractical when dealing with environment issues.

Yet there are many success stories in Europe. We have come further than any other region in practical cooperation and integration, politically and economically. Still I believe that Europe has far from reached its full potential. Our cultural heritage and values place upon us a great opportunity and challenge to take a lead also in a global transition towards sustainable development. Our aid and trade policies, energy, industry and agricultural policies - and the budgets which give expression to these policies - determine whether development will be environmentally and economically sustainable. This is true not only in Europe, but given the reach of European policies, on a global scale.

A CONSENSUS REPORT

The Commission's Report demonstrates that in the future, the critical issues of survival and sustainability need to be defined in terms of their sources in economic trade and sectoral policies, as well as in terms of their effects on health, property, cultural heritage and the environment. These are the real "environmental" policies. I hope that our report will provide the Community and all governments with inspiration for a fresh look at these policies, and for needed changes in the direction of sustainability.

Our Report is not a scientific report; it is not a book about environment and development written by environmentalists or economists. It should not be read as such. It is instead the result of a broad political process of analysis, learning and debate. It is a unanimous report. And above all it is a political document. It was formulated by people with different backgrounds and experience, with a broad range of national and international political responsibilities, most of whom come from developing countries. The Report gives recommendations that Commissioners from 21 countries collectively feel are necessary, and that they feel are politically within possible reach.

What, then, are the main policy issues of our Report?

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The overriding political concept, the "Leitmotiv" of our report, is the concept of sustainable development. This is not a prescription only for the catastrophe-ridden South. It is a goal for the whole global community. Its essence is progress which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

It is not a fixed state. It is a process of change in which economic and fiscal policies, trade, and foreign policies, energy, agriculture, industry and other sectoral policies, and the political decision processes underlying them, all aim to induce development that is both economically and ecologically sustainable.

Looking back on the sixties we remember the optimistic tone, growth rates were soaring, and environmental concerns and policies were still in their infancies. In the seventies the question it was asked if there were clear and definite limits to growth. Environment and economic growth were seen by many as contradictory. Today our Commission calls for a new era of Growth. It believes that growth is a prerequisite for sustainable development, that economic growth can create the capacity to solve environmental problems and that worldwide growth is the only remedy to overcome mass poverty.

Such growth must be sensitive to the environment. Sustainable development requires changes in the contents of growth to make it less material and energy-intensive and more equitable in its impact. Changes are required in all countries as part of a package of measures to maintain the stock of ecological capital, to improve distribution of income and to reduce vulnerability to economic crisis.

Agriculture is a field in which the Community is a very large player on the world scene, along with several other western industrialized countries, and a field in which small steps in a new direction is under sometimes heated debate. In looking at global food security, we found a complex web of unsustainability. Northern agricultural production systems are

often driven by too short-sighted and often contradictory subsidies. When it comes to deciding whether to crop or to graze marginal lands or to plant them to forests, the subsidy structures, backed by multi-billion dollar budgets, provide far more powerful signals to farmers than do small grants for soil conservation. Subsidy structures should not encourage activities which undermine the land, water, and forests base of agriculture in large areas of the North. But they do. They also produce surpluses that go to developing nations in ways that marginalize the poor, undermine their own agriculture and make reform politically difficult.

Our recommendations in this field involve reorientating these policies to secure farm income while enhancing rather than undermining the resource base, shifting the centres of food production to the growing centres of food demand in Third World countries, and changing the terms of agricultural trade to promote this.

Energy is another area in which the Community and countries of Europe are major actors. At present, virtually all of energy scenarios but one are unsustainable. That one is a low scenario. It is achievable without loss of growth, indeed with a gain in growth potential. Energy efficiency gains have been largely price driven and our Commission recommends forms of "conservation pricing" to recover and maintain this momentum.

Energy efficiency is not the final solution, but it is an absolute must until nations can develop a mix of sources that is dependable, safe and environmentally sound. We propose a number of measures to that end, including a shift in consumption patterns of fossil fuels towards lighter components such as natural gas. Our discussions about nuclear energy, its risks and potential concluded: "The generation of nuclear power is only justifiable if there are solid solutions to the presently unsolved problems to which it gives rise". And we make a strong call for much higher levels of funding for research into and development of new and renewable energy sources.

The zone of life, the biosphere, has been described as a film covering our planet as thin as the dew on an apple. We are entering a period when growth pressures within this film will increase at rates and scales never before experienced. And we are entering this period following a period of historically unprecedented growth.

Many believe that there has already been fundamental change within this zone of life in the relationships between the economy and the biosphere. What is the biosphere telling us when it provides evidence of man-made climatic change, destruction of the ozone layer, acidification of the environment, chemicals in the food chain, the net loss of area of forest the size of Denmark every twelve weeks, and a massive deterioration of the soil base worldwide? We may in fact be witnessing the rapid unification of economics and ecology, not

just at the local level that has been long evident - but, in some instances, at the regional and even the global scale.

PLANETARY PERIL AND CONDITIONS FOR HOPE

This change in the relationships between the biosphere and the economy raises the question of whether the growth needed to meet future needs and aspirations can be sustained without crossing critical thresholds and placing the entire planet in peril. The Commission is convinced that it can and, because of this, I think you will find that the underlying message of this report is one of hope.

This conviction rests on many things; human ingenuity; men and women's proven capacity to innovate and adapt; the significant reduction in energy, resource and environmental content of growth that some industrialized countries have experienced; many new and emerging technologies which offer enormous opportunities for raising productivity and living standards; opportunities for increasing food production, conserving the natural resource base and managing the environment; and the advent of global communications which makes it possible for people to see and begin to exercise their responsibility for every part of the planet.

The European Commission is also a major player of the world trade scene. It is in a strong position to influence future trade patterns through UNCTAD and GATT. So are Community countries.

Many of today's trading patterns - in tropical forests, in agricultural products, and in certain minerals - serve to reduce rather than increase the future development potential of Third World countries.

Moreover, many of these trading patterns contain a massive transfer of the environmental costs from the industrialized to the developing countries. Our experts found that in 1980 pollution costs being transferred from OECD importers to Third World exporters amounted to \$14.0 billion. And this figure does not include the economic damage costs associated with resource depletion or deterioration.

The figure of \$14 billion represents a hidden environmental subsidy from the developing to the developed countries. In comparison the total development assistance flowing annually in the other direction amounts to \$35 billion.

The Community has played an active role in one attempt to shift trading patterns in more sustainable directions. The International Tropical Timber Agreement is the first commodity agreement designed to capture revenue to support the sustainable management of the resource it uses. Its potential is significant, but it will need a strong leadership from governments to get it off the ground.

These and other models urgently need to be extended to other areas through UNCTAD and GATT, the multilaterals and bilaterals, and in direct country to country relations. Trade, more than aid, and certainly more than classical, add-on environmental measures, must be at the heart future strategies for sustainable development.

We in the industrially-developed world have to accept an obligation to ensure that international economic relations help rather than hinder the possibilities for ecologically sound and sustainable development. It is our duty, but it is also in our own self-interest. Commodity prices must be influenced to provide a fair international distribution of income. Official development assistance and private loans and investments to developing countries have to be improved, - both in quality and in quantity.

The Community also is an important donor, and Community countries are important donors in their own right. We all agree that aid should serve to increase rather than decrease the future development potential of a community, a country or a region. The challenge is to ensure that our policies are in line with this objective. Increased capital transfers are absolutely necessary in a world ridden by debt crisis, and they must take place in ways that are sensitive to environmental impacts. Sustainability criteria should be an integral part of all financial support. Policies will have to be changed accordingly, both nationally and internationally.

Looking at our institutions our Commission recommends that all central economic and sectoral ministries, national and international, be made responsible for ensuring that their policies are ecologically as well as economically sustainable.

Our concept of environmental policies and of environmental budgets must be widened to include those of the central and sectoral agencies. We believe it is essential that the ecological dimensions of policy be considered at the same time as the economic, trade, energy, agricultural, industrial and other dimensions - on the same agendas and in the same national and international institutions.

Still, existing environmental protection agencies also need more capacity and more power to cope with the effects of unsustainable development policies. They must also monitor results.

This is a call for institutional reform. At the international level, the crucial task is to make sustainable development the overriding goal of the entire UN system, including the World Bank and the Regional Banks, the IMF, the FAO and other specialized agencies. Last wee, I discussed this with the President of the World Bank. He is now looking into his organization, and I believe that he is committed to the goal of sustainable development.

Given the problems of coordination in the UN system, the Commission believes that the Secretary General will have to assume leadership in this area. Our report calls for a UN Board for Sustainable Development under the Chairmanship of the Secretary General.

Our report also calls for a strengthening of UNEP to provide leadership in the UN system on environmental protection issues. UNEP's priorities need to be better defined, and its capacity in the area of global environmental assessment and reporting needs to be enhanced.

We also propose that the General Assembly transform our report into a UN Programme for Action on Sustainable Development.

Within an appropriate period, we suggest that regional meetings and, later, an international conference be convened to review progress and promote further follow up. My country would be willing to convene such a conference for the region of the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

Last week, our report was considered in the OECD and I understand that the Environment Committee proposed that OECD should undertake a system-wide review of the report.

But in the final analysis very little will be achieved without general public support. We need to generate this. Raising public awareness will be a crucial task. A story is told about a public survey asking "what is the greatest threat to modern society, ignorance or apathy?" One of the answers was "I don't know and I don't care." Our Commission's ambition is to change apathy to commitment and ignorance to enlightenment.

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MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

Speech to IIED Sustainable Development Conference

London, 28 April 1987

The launch of our Commission's report yesterday was the end of one process - that of defining a new consensus for environment and development issues. It was the beginning of another - getting down to the details of solving the pressing problems that threaten our common future.

Today, I want to concentrate on what happens next. This is particularly appropriate in this audience, for nearly everyone here is concerned with development assistance at the government, academic, or non-governmental level. You are the practitioners responsible for carrying forward a substantive part of the findings and recommendations of our report, for bringing it down to earth. You are the door through which finance for development passes and the catalysts for ensuring that its results are positive, both in terms of enhancing environmental resources and securing the livelihoods of those who depend most directly upon those resources. You are the agents for change. We on the World Commission on Environment and Development have signalled what policies must change. We made recommendations. But how it happens, place by place and circumstance by circumstance, is up to you. The how is all important.

There are real grounds for hope. As we on the Commission listened during our public hearings on five continents, one thing above all else came home to us time and time again. People, millions upon millions of them, care about the condition of their local environment and the plight of the poor who live by it. Regardless of religion or political philosophy, it did not seem to matter. All care, and all know about the causes of the adverse trends we all face. There were great differences in policies for solving problems, that too was obvious. But at least the idea of making development and environment compatible is widely understood. This is particularly so for those who live most directly off the

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land and the sea, those most directly in touch with nature. They hold a deep respect for the power of nature, its ability to provide, its great variety, its resilience, but above all its timelessness and abundance. They know that the only way forward for them and the world is to live within nature's means.

I think this basic drive of the common people to live within nature's limits is our greatest hope for the future. It is also your greatest hope for success, provided that we - who so often in the past have encouraged the wholesale abuse of nature in the interest of economic gain - can now build upon and with that basic wisdom.

Many complain that development assistance has little impact. However, it is in fact changing the nature and pace of people's lives and their livelihoods. But who chooses the directions of that change? Is it the people who are the recipients of that development assistance, or is it we who rightly are appalled by the vision of suffering and hunger that we so often see on our TV screens, that you see first-hand in your daily work?

The difficulties that increasing human numbers combined with increasing poverty cause for human beings and for nature are all too apparent. The temptation - perhaps the duty - is to carry our technology and science-based solutions south. But all too often that has meant that people are driven to futile attempts at cheating nature rather than working within it: the ploughing of marginal soils, the harvesting of two crops from fields that can barely provide one, deep pumps and dams to secure today's water with little thought for tomorrow's water or for today's effects upon poor local farmers. Development assistance has tried - but always in a hurry and too often on too grand a scale - to lift people out of the cycle of poverty. All the checks and

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balances we try to apply to our own efforts at development for ourselves have not always been considered. Development - to be sustainable - must take a longer term perspective. Nature evolves to fit new realities; so too must our ways of living with nature.

It is clear that in our rush to get results we have cut two corners, with often disastrous results. First, we have taken little time to understand cultural realities, and at our worst have cast aside whole cultures as if they counted for nothing. Second, we have taken little time to understand nature's systems, and to then establish and manage our projects within those systems. Before we drain swamps, dam rivers, irrigate deserts, introduce new crops and varieties, and change the face of the landscape, we should pause to count the environmental and social costs. Often parliaments demand that we spend more year by year on the very poor, yet they also cut and cut the numbers employed to spend it wisely, and demand that more be spent on Northern goods and experts' services. As a result, schemes have grown ever bigger and ever more remote from the real needs of the poor.

So what must change?

This meeting is about the concept of sustainable development. As a complement to the World Commission's report, it is an important event. We in the Commission of necessity spent most of our time debating issues at a level well above the village, the community, or the tribe. A major part of our brief was to examine and detail the global or international conditions for a higher level of sustainability. This conference must help to define sustainability at the level of the project, the community, and the nation-state. I would like to cast certain of our recommendations in the form of challenges to you, asking your guidance on ways to now proceed.

Our report, Our Common Future, emphasizes that reviving economic growth so as to provide sustainable livelihoods is a first requirement. This must be accompanied by efforts to

- * assure that the benefits are spread equitably;
- * change the quality of growth so that it conserves rather than rapidly depletes resources;
- * slow population growth, where necessary;
- * reorientate technology towards a less vulnerable future; and
- * reconcile and merge environment and economics in all decision-making.

I ask you today to consider in the course of this conference and your future work what these requirements imply in practice - in the day-by-day planning and organization of projects, programmes, and policies.

The first and most obvious implication is partnership and participation in decision-making. If I am correct in maintaining that the people who work with nature know for themselves many of the answers, then these very people must be the senior partners in development decision-making. That is difficult. How is it to be done? What successful mechanisms exist for this to occur? How can Northern consultants find the time to engage in such cooperation? Is it only possible through the work of NGOs or community groups, or can an aid agency achieve it too? What help is needed in developing institutions for participation at the country and county levels?

Part of the work of building people into the process is tied up with the real progress towards self-reliance. Aid is not a permanent intervention, nor should it be. It is no more or less than seed capital to enable people to achieve their own aspirations. Nowhere is this concept more apparent than in the energy sector. How can we help the poor to be more self-reliant in securing energy, while reducing their dependence on wood resources freely available? About 15 per cent of all energy consumption is derived from biomass sources; 70 per cent of developing country people use it as their primary fuel. Yet the resource is collapsing. How can its production be accelerated? Where is substitution possible - and desirable? What improvements in efficiency of use can be achieved in the village?

Self-reliance also implies a healthy resource base, a base that is not only not degraded, but conserved and even enhanced to meet growing needs. Wider access to this resource base must be ensured as it improves. Food security must depend upon maintaining the resource base necessary for agriculture. Past achievements in this area are dramatic, but there are signs of crisis. The small producer has been neglected. Soils are being degraded and eroded. Water is being mis-used and over-used. The diversity of ways to generate rural income is being narrowed. But how do we encourage sustainable agriculture alternatives within national priorities? How do we use aid to conserve soils? How do we accelerate agroforestry? How do we plan and execute projects for livelihoods rather than cash-crop production? That is the challenge to you.

And in the urban sector, how do we also generate employment and incomes so that people themselves can upgrade the appalling squalor in which many now live, and suffer, and die. No governments can do it for them.

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Improvements can come only through work which helps the poor to help themselves. But how?

Understanding the environmental and social impact of all we do is vital. Not in any high science sense but as common sense. If depleting trees leads to depleting soils then we must find ways to motivate people to replant trees or leave a few more behind. This requires programmes whereby such work generates wealth for those involved, or why should they bother? Planting trees by social forestry schemes that in fact do no more than remove trees from the poor is no solution. All the solutions must involve wealth creation for the poor as the incentive for environmental conservation.

These ideas - of participation, environmental conservation, self-reliance, and equitable wealth creation - are at the heart of our report and of the agenda of this meeting. How do we integrate the economic, social, and natural systems we all live within? Not in theory but into particular projects and plans. We desperately need to share ideas that work; to get the successful examples replicated; to work together on the how. There are thousands of examples around. This week you will discuss and define just 30 of them. But I most sincerely hope that the results will spread.

You know as well as I do, if not better, of the urgent need for such solutions. They must be found today, replicated today and tomorrow, to assure the common future of all. Thank you ... and I wish you every success.

SPEECH BY MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

Washington

April 1986

Global Tomorrow Coalition USA - NGOS

Let me say how happy I am to be invited to address you here in Washington, you call it "The Nation's Capital", but it is also one of the world's most important centres of international influence. You, the non-governmental organizations of the United States have a place of high honour in the record of the environmental movement. You have a fair claim to have started it and you wield enormous influence today.

It will always be a matter of definition as to where and when environmental consciousness began in our modern world but citizens' action groups have been the prime catalyst in its spread. It is you who have brought governments to address the problems. I know that one of your pioneers, Dave Brower, who founded Friends of the Earth, regards the small black briefcase that he, with hundreds of other participants, was given at Stockholm in 1972 at the UN Conference on Human Environment as a treasured symbol of

success in that long fight to raise public awareness. One of our tasks for the future is to build on the achievements of the NGOs and seek out new ways in which your energy and insight can be applied to the better management of the planet by us all.

You know perfectly well that the battle for the environment - for the management of the planet on a sustainable basis - will be a battle that will go on beyond our lifetimes. It might be a battle that will go on, essentially, for ever. And the ground on which we fight will change as time goes by. It has already shifted from the overriding concern with pollution at the time of "Silent Spring" to something more radical and more holistic today encompassing styles of economic development, population pressures and basic needs.

There will be more than one occasion when we have to reconsider everything we have done in the light of new perceptions, new problems or new possibilities. Clearly, the Stockholm Conference of 1972 was one such occasion and it had many positive consequences all over the world - the creation of ministries of the environment, a widespread apparatus of regulation aimed especially at controlling pollution, an upsurge of academic research, a new focus among non-governmental organizations, the creation of a new international institution, the United Nations Environment Programme and a boost to regional treaties and agreements - those are some among many which spring to mind.

In the last few years however, there has been a growing feeling that the machinery created was not working. And it was evident that not only was environmental action starved of funds and short of political will but that new kinds of environment and development problems were looming ahead. It was clearly time for a reappraisal, a new reconsideration.

I think many of us also see the Year 2000 - the beginning of a new millenium - as a great opportunity for a reckoning. Where is the human race going? Can it survive or change its own character which has led it to destroy so much of the environment in pursuit of economic and military security?

Many such ideas came together in the minds of governments represented on the Governing Council of UNEP. As a result of discussions there and elsewhere, a resolution was formulated by the United Nations General Assembly which called for a "special commission" to take a fresh look at the critical issues of environment and development and work out practical proposals for appropriate action. It suggested the proposal of long term strategies for achieving sustainable development to the Year 2000 and beyond.

The World Commission on Environment and Development was created as a result of that General Assembly Resolution passed at the end of 1983. The Secretary General of the United Nations invited me to be Chairman and Mansour Khalid, former Foreign Minister of the Sudan to be Vice Chairman. We chose the rest of the twenty two Commissioners on a geographically equitable basis from around the world. There are 5 from Asia, 5 from Africa, 4 from Latin America, 2 from North America with 3 from Western Europe and 3 from Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia. Our Inaugural Meeting was held in Geneva in October 1984, and at it, we adopted our Mandate which you have all seen. Our Final Report will be ready a year from now and will be submitted to the General Assembly for discussion in 1987.

In the debates in the General Assembly on the resolution itself, it was made quite clear that there was a widespread feeling not only that current forms of international collaboration were not working but that commitment to them was falling. All forms of multilateralism were growing weaker not stronger. It was therefore felt that the fresh look needed to come from outside the United Nations system but to be formally linked to it. I think that establishing the Commission outside has underlined its independence and has enabled our discussions to be free of many familiar constraints. The Commissioners speak in their personal capacities and

embody a wide range of expertise and leadership experience. Some of them are Ministers of Environment in office, others hold ministerial appointments in fields such as finance, foreign affairs, one of them is President of the International Court of Justice, others have prominent positions in science, business and academia.

What is the thrust of our work? You, perhaps, know that we have followed an agenda which we have called an Alternative Agenda - alternative to the standard agenda which we have seen, broadly, as focussed on effects. Items on the standard agenda have been, and are the subject of countless meetings all over the world, within and between governments, in academia, NGOs, industrial companies, political parties - hazardous waste, water pollution, acid rain, genetic resources, land use, depletion of forests - you know the list very well.

The limitations of the standard agenda are several but it has produced imaginative responses. Many of our problems are now far better defined in scientific and technical terms, and environmental monitoring is a developed discipline. Institutions have been created and policies set out at national and international levels to combat environmental problems. In addition, thanks largely to non-governmental organizations, public awareness has been greatly raised.

React-and-cure, a direct response to effects, has been, and is, the principle style of action arising from the established standard agenda. It is clearly the first step and will continue to be an essential part of public policy. But it does mean that there is a lack of inducement to anticipate problems. It means that environment and development problems tend to be seen as isolated problems and their interlinkages ignored. It has also meant that environment has been seen as an add-on to public policy directions which have continued essentially undisturbed. Only recently and in a very few countries has a Department of Energy, say, come to think about environment in the early stages of policy formulation. In areas like trade and international financial flows environment is scarcely heard of.

The alternative agenda we are following is an attempt to look towards the sources of environment and development problems so that "anticipate-and-prevent" strategies become more feasible. We are looking at key issues like carbon dioxide, trace gases, climatic change, acid rain, air pollution in terms of energy policy which is their common source. The linkages to transportation policy, settlement policy, rural fuelwood problems and others are part of the same nexus of environment and development problems.

This broader view of environment and development shows up some transcending themes such as the growing interdependence of the international economic and political system, the need for considerations of equity in access to resources to satisfy basic needs, and the relation of security to the environment. One of the most fertile of these themes is clearly, the concept of sustainability.

I was therefore very pleased indeed to hear of your intention to present a unified submission to us on this cardinal issue. And I look forward to discussing it with you at our meeting in Ottawa. In pursuing our policy of maximum openness, we shall hold that debate in the presence of the media and thus help to fulfill another of our objectives, which is to use the Commission's activities to help raise public awareness.

To this same end, we have met in various parts of the world, in Asia, Europe and Latin America so far. Our meeting in Ottawa will be our only meeting in North America. We shall also meet in Africa, the Soviet Union and Japan. In this way, we will have absorbed regional perspectives and will have given the opportunity to a wide range of people to express their views through the mechanism of Public Hearings.

In some areas of our work we have used panels of worldscale experts in, for instance, Food Security led by M. S. Swaminathan, Industry led by Umberto Colombo, Energy led by Enrique Iglesias and in International Economic Relations led by Maurice Strong. Certain of these Panel Reports will be complete by Ottawa and will be made available after the meeting.

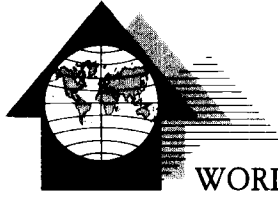
Our work is on schedule and we are now beginning the synthesis of the Final Report.

Let me conclude these brief remarks by returning to the subject of the non-governmental organizations and their role in the future. I hope that the Commission's Report will foster their efforts and increase their impact in both the rich countries and the Third World. We have received and are studying a substantial report from the Environment Liaison Centre in Nairobi. It makes many useful suggestions. It calls for the multilateral system to engage in true policy dialogues with NGOs working for sustainable development and for the identification of opportunities for co-ordinated system-wide working partnerships. It lays great stress on networking and the establishment of support mechanisms for networking under the control of NGOs themselves. It also calls for "an immense mobilization of public opinion" in which NGOs

could play a central role. I hope you will contribute to this fund of ideas, and help to cement the central principle of the democratic approach in the way the world community deals with environment and development. That's what citizens' action is all about.

N.B. -

- a) Paragraphs about book to be filled in later - sending by telex
- b) Dave Brower's name pronounced as in "eyebrow"



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Check Against Delivery

OPENING ADDRESS

by

GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

CHAIRMAN

THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

AND PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY

ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF THE REPORT

'OUR COMMON FUTURE'

London, Monday, 27 April 1987

Why have so many of us, from different nations and different generations, gathered before you today? It is to make the world aware that humanity has come to a crossroad.

When the century began, neither human numbers nor human technology had the power radically to alter planetary systems. As the century closes, not only do vastly increased human numbers and activities have that power, but major, unintended changes are occurring in the atmosphere, in soils, in waters, among plants and animals, and in the relationships among all of these. These changes outstrip our present ability to cope; our financial and political institutions are out of step with the workings of nature.

This morning we release our report on these vital issues. 'Our Common Future' is not a scientific report; it is not just a book about environment and development, written by environmentalists or economists. It should not be read as such. It is instead the result of a broad political process of analysis, learning, and debate. It is a unanimous report. And above all a political document. It was formulated by people with different backgrounds and experience, with a broad range of national and international responsibilities. I believe that its greatest strength lies in the process which formed it. As we worked, nationalism and the artificial divides between industrialized and developing nations, between East and West, receded. In their place emerged a common concern for the planet and the interlocking ecological and economic threats with which its people, institutions, and governments grapple.

'Our Common Future' should be taken seriously for its new insights into environment and economics, but even more so for its analysis of the ways in which policies and practices can and must change to match present and future realities. We offer this consensus as one upon which the international community can and must build.

Our unanimity arose not just from discussions among ourselves, but from our public hearings on five continents. We listened in various ways to thousands of people. The evidence of the scientists persuaded us of the inescapable reality of the global environmental problems you have just seen dramatized on the screen. But the human mind and spirit have difficulty grasping the reality of such environmental destruction. I know that we on the Commission were more deeply moved by the testimony of the many ordinary citizens: farmers, herders, fishermen, city-dwellers. It was they who convinced us of the human costs of this destruction, of how it impoverishes them, how it limits their potential to build their societies and nations, and how it robs their children of the means to prosper - in some cases to survive. Families sense the unity of their own local environment; they know it cannot be divided politically, or into separate sectors and systems. The same unity is true for the global environment.

But their view of their world, and our own report, is founded upon the concept of 'sustainable development', which we define most simply as paths of progress which meet the needs and aspirations of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

It is not a fixed state, but a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all made consistent with present as well as future needs. Nor is it a goal for the so-called developing nations only. Many practices of the industrialized nations are clearly unsustainable, globally as well as nationally: the acidification of the environment, the reliance on industrial chemicals which deplete the ozone layer, and the use of energy technologies which warm the globe. Many present patterns of world trade and finance are unsustainable, in that they ravish ecosystems upon which the global economy depends. Thus, sustainable development is a goal for all nations - industrialized and developing - a goal for the world community.

Poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental problems. It is futile to seek solutions without a broad perspective that encompasses the factors underlying world poverty and national and international inequalities.

For developing countries, poverty lies at the heart of all issues. The poor are forced to eat next year's seed corn, to cut scarce forests for fuelwood. These are rational short-term means of survival; in the longer term, they can only result in disaster.

It is both futile and an insult to the poor to tell them that they must remain in poverty to 'protect the environment'. We conclude that the sustained economic growth which is a precondition for the elimination of mass poverty is possible within a more equitable international economic regime. More importantly, such growth is possible by means that enhance the environmental resources upon which development must be based.

To secure our common future we need a new international ethic which looks beyond narrow and short-sighted national ambitions, which realizes that the issues with which we wrestle are globally inter-connected. We must have a new international vision and new international cooperation. This is not only a moral ethic based on fairness and humanitarianism. It is a practical ethic, it is the only way in which we can pursue our own self-interests on a small and closely knit planet.

The problems we face today are the results of the management and the mismanagement of this planet. We remember the tone of the optimistic sixties, when growth rates were soaring. Then we had development, but without much concern for the environment.

The seventies asked the question of limits to growth. We entered an era when environment and economic growth were perceived as plainly contradictory, and North and South seemed to be fighting completely different battles.

Today, we on the Commission call for a new era of economic growth, with a content that enhances the resource base rather than degrades it. We know now that new and sustainable growth does not need to be environmentally degrading; that growth, in fact, can create the capacity to solve environmental problems; that growth is the only way that mass poverty can be overcome.

And without growth, how can we provide for twice the present population some time in the next century, when we cannot provide for everybody today?

The world population will grow to at least 8 to 10 billion in the next century. But it might increase by billions more, and all would suffer the consequences, if we do not realize in time that our own future requires a reorientation of policy in the developed and developing world alike. Only in a world that is safer, one which gives the poor more self-respect and hope for their lives and future, will poor people have real choices, including the choice to limit the size of their families.

We in the industrialized world have to accept an obligation to ensure that international economic relations help rather than hinder the possibilities for ecologically sound and sustainable development. It is our duty, but it is also in our own self-interest. Commodity prices must be influenced to provide a fair international distribution of income. Official development assistance and private loans and investments to developing countries have to be improved - both qualitatively and quantitatively. Increased capital transfers are absolutely necessary in a world ridden by debt crisis, and they must take place in ways that are sensitive to environmental impacts and contribute to long-term sustainability. Policies will have to be changed accordingly, both nationally and internationally.

In looking at global food security, a complex web of unsustainability results in record harvests at the same time that record numbers of people go hungry and malnourished. Northern agricultural production systems, often driven by short-sighted and contradictory subsidies, over-exploit farmland and introduce harmful chemicals into foods and water, but they also produce surpluses expensive to store. Much of this surplus goes to developing nations in ways that undermine their own food production there. Our recommendations in this field involve reorienting policies to shift the centres of production to food-deficit areas, to give systematic attention to the renewal of natural resources, and to change the agricultural terms of trade so that they favour local farmers.

Energy is another area of vital importance. Sustainable development recognizes that developing nations will require more, not less, total energy. Their industrialization and rapidly growing populations depend on this. But even the

present global energy consumption creates serious environmental risks. Energy efficiency policies must therefore become the cutting edge of national energy strategies even at a time of temporarily cheaper energy.

Energy efficiency is not the final solution, but will be an absolute must in the years to come, if the world is to develop a low energy future where renewable resources play a dominating role. This will require large-scale research, and much strengthened international cooperation.

We conclude that no present mix of energy sources is at hand to meet future needs in ways that are dependable, safe, and environmentally sound. We also conclude - and I quote - that 'the generation of nuclear power is only justifiable if there are solid solutions to the presently unsolved problems to which it gives rise'. We further call for mechanisms to encourage dialogue between oil consumers and producers, and for much higher levels of funding for research into and development of new and renewable energy sources.

Despite the very real threats to human survival and these imperatives for change, we bring before you today a message not of pessimism but of optimistic possibilities. The many challenges which the growing human family faces can be systematically met. Human ingenuity has provided, just when it is most needed, the technology in agriculture and energy, advances in science and technology, faster and more efficient communications and transport.

We found no absolute limits to growth. We found instead limits imposed by the impacts of present technologies upon our biosphere - soils, waters, atmosphere, and green plants - and limits imposed by present social organization. But we have the ingenuity to change technologies and policies. And change we must. The environment does erect barriers to present forms of development; thus we must break the present social and political barriers which make it impossible for us to cooperate and work together for the common good and the needs of the future.

One of the greatest barriers to change is the organization of our present institutions. Too much of our concern with the environment has been based on the environmental effects of economic growth: polluted air and water, desertification, deforestation. We ask often politically weak, under-funded environmental agencies and ministries to clean up these effects for us. But we do not hold the more powerful central economic agencies, whose policies are often the sources of environmental degradation, institutionally accountable and responsible for it.

There will be increasing challenges for the environmental agencies, national and international. We recommend that they be upgraded politically and expanded financially. But the most crucial task is to make the concept of sustainable development an overriding goal of all governmental and international agencies, of the World Bank, of

the International Monetary Fund, and of the entire United Nations system. It must also be the linch-pin of national energy, industrial, and trade policies. Foreign policies must be based as much on the permanent realities of an interdependent global environment as on the more transient interdependent political and economic alignments of nations.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, when I presented the report to him last week, said that it would provide important guidance for the future.

We offer governments and international institutions a challenging agenda for change. After a decade and a half of standstill and even deterioration in global cooperation, the time has come for higher aspirations, for increased political will to address our common future. The United Nations system with all of its specialized agencies offers an extensive institutional capacity to reach our common goals. We call for a fundamental commitment by all governments and institutions to transform this report into a United Nations Programme of Action on Sustainable Development, to be followed by an international conference to set benchmarks, to assess progress, and to promote follow-up.

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Our generation is the first to have seen its own planet from a distance, as indeed we have seen just now on the video screen. The impact of this vision on human thinking may surpass the 16th century discovery that the Earth is not the centre of the universe. We see a tiny, fragile globe floating in space. And we realize that it is upon this closed, vulnerable system that we all depend.

Our report offers, as I have said, a challenging agenda. But it is not a final blueprint. Such a blueprint was never our goal. We were asked to offer strategies and motivation for adopting new policies. In demonstrating the real threats to both our present and our future, and showing that workable solutions are at hand, our report offers that motivation. We hope that it will achieve its purpose of generating the debate and discussion which can revitalize international cooperation. New dimensions of multilateralism are essential to sustainable human progress.

I want very much to thank all of those who made this report possible. I remember doubting three years ago that any group could fulfil the ambitious mandate set for this Commission. It was only after I started to work with my fellow Commissioners, when I sensed their dedication and benefited from their knowledge and enthusiasm, that I became convinced that we could produce the agenda for action and change that had been so urgently called for.

The process that produced this unanimous report proved that it is possible to join forces, to identify common goals, and to agree on common action.

I and my fellow Commissioners together want to thank the many others who guided and supported our work. Yet I find it almost impossible to do them anything like justice on this occasion. You will find in the final annexe of the report almost 30 pages of the names of individuals, organizations, and institutions, governmental and non-governmental, who helped us. I have said that this is not a scientific report, but it did benefit from the best scientific advice available today, from men and women who offered their knowledge out of deep feelings of commitment. It also benefited, more than I can say, from the ordinary citizens on the very front lines of environment and development issues, who shared with us their experiences and insights. It is in their names, hoping to pass along to you and to others their wisdom and real sense of urgency, that I launch our report today. Thank you.

PRESENTATION TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Our report and its recommendations are founded upon the aspiration and insights of the thousands of people we met during our public hearings. Many of these people were young. Our task was to provide a framework of action into the 21st century, and we were specifically mandated to seek the views of youth. We have therefore decided to offer 'Our Common Future' to the world in a manner appropriate to our task and our mandate. I would like to offer it to, and through, 12 young people, all of whom have participated in the work of the Commission in their own nations.

Let no one misinterpret this gesture. We politicians and policy-makers of today are not dodging a difficult chore by passing it along to the next generation. Human well-being and survival will depend on decisions taken by us, today.

But I now place this report into the hands of these young people, who will present it to their governments back home. Securing our common future will require new energy and openness, fresh insights, and an ability to look beyond the narrow bounds of national frontiers and separate scientific disciplines. The young are better at such vision than we, who are too often constrained by the traditions of a former, more fragmented world. We must tap their energy, their openness, their ability to see the interdependence of issues. Their energy must also be tapped to spread this message. The young are more frank, more outspoken. Already organizations of young people around the world are planning rallies, conferences, and teach-ins to respond to this report.

We ask that they continue to monitor our actions, comment upon our progress, and inform our consciences. Our generation has too often been willing to use the resources of the future to meet our own short-term goals. It is a debt that we can never repay. If we fail to change our ways, these young men and women will suffer more than we, and they and their children will be denied their fundamental right to a healthy, productive, life-enhancing environment.



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland's Address
at the Welcoming Session of the
Eight Commission Meeting
24 February 1987
Tokyo, Japan

- Honourable Minister
- Your excellencies
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Here in Tokyo the World Commission on Environment and Development is meeting for its last formal session.

This week's meeting is, as I am sure you are all aware, absolutely crucial to the success of our three-year task, and it is particularly appropriate and indeed a great pleasure that we are here in Japan, a country which has done so much to encourage and support us in our work.

The warmth and goodwill with which we have been received here is something that we will not forget. The vision of the Japanese government in choosing to put its weight behind the Commission and its challenging task demonstrates how profoundly Japan felt the importance of our work.

The determination and faith with which you have continued to support us throughout the three years has sustained us also through difficult moments, and I take this opportunity to say that, for me personally as chairman, it is a very happy and a moving culmination of our work. In your kind words this morning, you have made all of us in the Commission feel that, in coming to Tokyo, we are coming home.

The creation of the Commission grew out of a feeling that our perception of the themes and issues that had determined the organization of the international community and national policies do not constitute the effective tools that we so sorely need. We have been organized according to our own concepts, sectorwise - compartmentally. But is it effective?

We have been working to improve economic indicators, but have we asked ourselves often enough - and critically enough what those economic indicators actually indicate? Where is the defence attorney for the basis for all human endeavour - the environment and the resource base. Can we face a future where there is a conflict between economic activity and development on the one side, and the basis for future generations on the other?

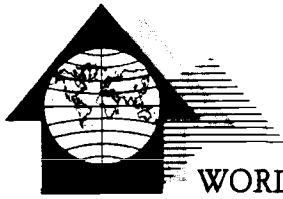
We on the Commission have been addressing the essential task of making the environment an ally, not a victim of our economic progress.

Between us during these three past years, we have forged a strongly felt sense of our common duty as human beings to the people of the future, people we will never know who will inherit from us the lasting effects of our activities on the planet.

We have all seen clearly that we have a choice. We can bequeath to those future generations a ruined Earth, its resources plundered, its environment damaged beyond repair and a future of poverty and decline. Or we can bequeath to them an Earth where Man and Nature are in harmony, where natural resources flourish and the environment is secure for all living things. Those are our choices.

In conveying our message and reaching out to people, nations and institutions, we continue to need and rely on the stalwart support of Japan, and of people of good will everywhere.

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WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND'S MESSAGE

TOKYO MEDIA SEMINAR

20 February 1987

Tokyo, Japan

Next week, in this great city, the World Commission on Environment and Development of which I am Chairman will be completing two and a half years of minute investigation into what we have come to see as the overriding issue facing humanity in our time.

Because the issue is both the most important and the most urgent Mankind may ever have faced, it also has been, paradoxically, the issue we have most readily avoided, postponing it, in our human way, and relegating it to a place low down on our agendas.

And so the decision the United Nations General Assembly took three years ago to create a World commission, independent, able to call upon some of the best minds on Earth, and unfettered by narrow government or national constraints, was a most significant and positive one.

It was also a very major investment in our common future as human beings, an act of determination by the World community to re-draw the policies on which the future, and the long-term health, of our species and of our planet depend. It was to be our Commission's task to draw up detailed policy recommendations for the good management of this Earth in which we are today all neighbours.

Our investigations have been conducted in all the World's great regions. They have drawn on the findings and views of countless organisations, individuals and statesmen.

In all these regions we have encountered a high level of awareness of the problem. I am sure that you also are aware of what the problem is - in short, that not only are we destroying the environment on which we all depend, but that in our rush towards more and more ambitious development we have been eliminating many of the precious resources that would be needed for future development. We have been destroying the potential for the health and prosperity of our children and of all the generations who will live on the Earth after we have left it and who have no say.

As a result of our two and a half years of investigation, certain facts will be laid before the governments of the World which I am convinced will leave them with a profound sense of urgency. But we cannot, and will not, leave matters there.

We will indeed be taking matters much further. We will go far beyond merely reporting back. The time has long since passed for stating and re-stating the size of the problem in ever greater and more frightening detail.

We are now drawing up the principles of good management on which the development of our planet must be conducted in future.

And this is why we have come to Tokyo, where our final - and crucial - meeting will take place next week. Within two months of that meeting, the Commission will have published its report, a report which can be a major step towards achieving the urgent task of forging a truly global concept of, and approach to, the future management of the Earth.

My message to you today is a message of hope and of opportunity.

Today we really do have an opportunity - one we dare not miss. And there is hope because, while we possess the means to go on indefinitely laying waste our seas, our rivers, our rain forests, our atmosphere, our soils, our own bodies even, we also today possess the knowledge and means to halt the deterioration of our environment.

More than that, we have the means to do so in ways which will encourage, not halt or even slow down, the development of planet Earth for the good of all her people.

This is the concept of sustainable development - the means of using development to enhance and improve the environment and the resource base so that further development can take place. It must replace the plundering of resources which has marked so many development practices in the past.

Our precious natural resources must become the ally - not the victim - of our economic advancement.

Sustainable development is a global concept. It incorporates development strategies which benefit the whole Earth, not just a country or locality regardless of the impact of neighbours across the border, or the planet as a whole. It supersedes the notion that if factors in development damage the environmental resource base, then we take steps afterwards to try and undo the damage. Such policies have no future.

The cycle of human poverty and deprivation in so many parts of the World which causes people to plunder the precious resources on which their future depends can only be broken through global planning and management.

If the aims and objectives of sustainable development are to become reality, some very far-reaching changes must first take place in our institutions, at government, NGO and international level.

At the international level, the extensive institutional capacity which already exists must be redirected towards pursuing the objective of sustainable development. The United Nations must take a lead in this. Our other great institutions likewise must play their part. The World Bank group has a very crucial role to play in this. And at government level, new structures are needed urgently to make the centres of power responsible for the environmental consequences of their development practices.

Since we now know that we have the means to develop industries and agricultural methods which are environmentally secure, let us introduce them in practice, and let it be the responsibility of the relevant ministry to guarantee environmental security in all its undertakings. The ministry responsible for generating electric power must for example also accept responsibility for the elimination of acid rain.

An examination of past practices demonstrates that in general such government ministries and agencies are not responsible for the consequences of their actions. Too often, that responsibility has been left to some other agency, with the task of cleaning up afterwards. All that has to change.

With all these considerations in mind, and their countless implications, it is therefore exactly appropriate that you are here today to consider your role, as journalists, in the vast process of challenging and changing human attitudes which must now take place.

As writers and broadcasters concerned with the issues of development and the environment, you have the opportunity to join with us in bringing to the attention of all mankind the concept of a new phase of human progress, through truly sustainable development.

Your role in this is an absolutely crucial one. In fact, I would go so far as to say that without you, our Commission's work would be largely wasted.

For we are not a secret body, reporting back to some shadowy international forum. On the contrary, the issues we are all here concerned with today confront every man, woman and child on Earth, and therefore we in the Commission have made it our business to conduct our hearings, wherever they have taken place in different parts of the World, in as open and public a way as possible.

Like you, we feel it to be a duty, an inescapable duty, to bring the truth about our global situation to anyone and everyone who will listen.

It is you, the press, who have it in your power, through your microphones, your cameras and typewriters, to take this message out to the wider World.

And so, I urge you to seek a true understanding of the issues and to bring those issues, with all their implications, to your readers and audiences.

In this way, you have the opportunity to serve our generation, and the people of the future.

I wish you well in your endeavours.

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WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

**Opening Address by
MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
CHAIRMAN
OF THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
AND PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY**

**Seventh Meeting
Monday, 8 December, 1986
Moscow, U.S.S.R.**

Mr Vice-Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development and on behalf of its members, I wish to express to you personally and to the government and peoples of the Soviet Union our warmest greetings and our sincere appreciation for hosting our seventh official meeting here in Moscow. We are deeply grateful for the co-operation and support extended to us by your government - and the hospitality of the Soviet people. I wish in particular to extend our appreciation to our fellow Commissioner, Academician Sokolov, for his outstanding work on the Commission and for helping make this meeting possible.

We have looked forward with great anticipation to our meeting here in the Soviet Union and to the dialogue we shall be having during the Public Hearings with the representatives from the Soviet Union and other countries in Eastern Europe who are gathered here with us today. We want to thank all of those who will be contributing to our sessions. We have much to learn from their experiences and many questions to pose.

The World Commission on Environment and Development was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1983. Our Commission is an independent body, free to address any issue and to present any view and recommendations. We come from all corners of the globe, North and South, East and West. Although many of us are active ministers in government, we serve on the Commission in our personal capacities.

The Commission was created out of a feeling that the present machinery for the management of our small planet was not working as it should, and that it was necessary to rethink the issues from new perspectives. We were mandated to re-examine the critical issues of environment and development and to propose innovative, concrete and realistic action to deal with them.

As many of you know, we on the Commission have made it our policy to visit all regions of the world and to use the occasion of our visits to obtain first-hand insights into the problems facing our planet and the threats to its survival. We have had the unique opportunity of listening to people from all walks of life who have openly shared with us their concerns and hopes for our common future. Our experience has strongly confirmed our view that many of the issues we have been

called upon to address know no national boundaries, transcend cultures and touch the lives of all those who inhabit this planet, from the rural pastoralist, to the industrial manager and cabinet minister. Indeed, we have become ever more aware of the intricate web of mutual self-interest which binds us together. It is our common endeavour to achieve a world which is more prosperous and just for all.

I come to you as a neighbour but, in fact, all the Commissioners are neighbours of yours.

For we live in a global neighbourhood in which the earth is united, but the world of mankind is not. The human family has been slow to recognize its global interdependence, slow to learn that we are all simply neighbours.

However, the message is becoming increasingly clear: a doubled population creating a perhaps ten-fold bigger economy based on new industries, agricultural policies and life-styles. Superimposing these transitions one on top of another and compressing them in time onto our finite planet creates one vast "Global Transition" far bigger than the sum of its parts. It is marked by a pace of change, a scale of impacts and degrees of uncertainty and irreversibility unknown to human experience. Consequently, the time has come for taking common action. We have no time to lose. Environmental deterioration is already now affecting not just the quality of life in some localities, it is eroding the potential for development and endangering essential life-support systems on a global scale.

In many developing countries, poverty is presently the principal source of environmental degradation. Poverty-induced environmental destruction is growing in countries throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, especially in the least-developed rural areas where, in order to escape the disaster of hunger today, the poor must sow the seeds of tomorrow's disasters by over-drawing on forests, soil and water. The most dramatic result of these dangerous trends is increasing desertification, the environmental plague which threatens enormous areas of arable land and pastures.

The human populations at risk, because their lands are turning into deserts, are expected to reach 1.2 billion by the turn of the century - almost twice as many as in 1977. The world's deserts are moving forward at a rate of six million hectares each year - and each year sees the productivity of an additional 21 million hectares reduced to zero.

Another aspect of deforestation and desertification is the extinction of plant and animal species. There is strong evidence that if we continue to destroy our tropical forests and other biologically rich areas we may, over the next decades, witness a mass extinction of species with scarcely a thought for what we are doing. This would be particularly tragic at a time when bio-technology opens up vast possibilities to exploit genetic variability to the benefit of mankind in such vital areas as food production, medicine, industry and energy.

Many other critical survival issues are related to uneven development, poverty and population growth. They all place unprecedented pressures on the planet's lands, waters, forests and other natural resources, not least in the developing countries. The downward spiral of poverty and environmental degradation is a waste of opportunities and of resources. In particular, it is a waste of human resources. What is needed is a new era of economic growth - a growth which is forceful and, at the same time, socially and environmentally sustainable.

Sustainable development will set limits to resource use, yes, but not limits to growth. Sustainable development means the elimination of mass poverty and the assurance of equitable opportunities for all. An essential, but not sufficient condition for providing such opportunities is a rapid rise in per capita incomes in developing countries. We need a revival of economic growth, a reversal of the stagnant and declining growth trends of the 1980s, and a concept of development which must be widened to include environmental concerns.

Look at the developing efforts of the poor countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. What they are really seeking is a sound ecological base for development. But what happens to the ecosystems of these countries is largely determined by world commodity prices, financial flows and the transfer of technology.

We in the industrially-developed world have to accept an obligation to ensure that these international factors help rather than hinder the possibilities for ecologically sound and sustainable development. This must be our duty in order to contribute towards the creation of a human future for all the people of the world. It is our duty, but it is also in our own self-interest. Consequently, commodity prices must be influenced to provide a fair international distribution of income. Official development assistance and private loans and investments to developing countries have to be improved, - both qualitatively and quantitatively. Increased capital transfers must take place in ways that are sensitive to

environmental impacts. Sustainability criteria should be an integral part of the financial support. Policies will have to be changed accordingly, both nationally and internationally.

Mr Vice-Chairman, a new era of growth will imply that governments really recognize the environmental issues. They will have to receive far more attention in policy making than in the past, and at the appropriate, highest level.

Most governments now pay systematic attention to the effects of air and water pollution in urban areas and around large industrial complexes - the effects on human health, and on property and ecosystems. Over the past few years a variety of legal, institutional and technical means have been used to control and reduce and even prevent these effects - the symptoms of resource waste and faulty development policies.

With it, in many countries industry is developing a wide range of low and non-waste technologies that reduces substantially our use of mineral resources, particularly petroleum, per unit of output. As a result, new industries can be both more environmentally efficient and more economically competitive. The industrial enterprises of the future will be those who today recognize that Pollution Prevention Pays.

But only a few countries have so far succeeded in controlling pollution. Not even the rich industrialized countries have managed to deal with the backlog. Most of the world, including the developing countries, have suffered a steady and rapid deterioration of their environment - the resource base for their future development. And, today, all countries are falling behind the new generation of environmental issues racing towards them. Most of them are regional and global in their dimensions and many raise crucial questions of national security and planetary survival.

In October 1985, scientists from 29 countries met in Villach, Austria, to review the latest evidence about carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. They concluded that global climatic change must be considered a "plausible and serious possibility" during the lifetime of our children.

The results of global warming, they warned, could be catastrophic in many regions, affecting the climate, shifting the geography of agricultural production, inundating many low-lying cities and coastal areas, and altering conditions for natural growth and economic activity.

Lately, scientists have confirmed earlier evidence of a large hole in the Earth's protective ozone layer. Discovery of this hole over Antarctica - and indications of similar holes over Europe - have sent shivers through the scientific community. Depletion of the ozone layer, allowing more ultra-violet radiation to reach the earth, could increase skin cancers and reduce the effectiveness of our immune system. It could have adverse effects on crops, plants, on the living resources of the sea - and even on the plankton, which provides the essential base for the sea's food web and its life-support system. If the ozone layer is depleted, scientists know of no human action that can restore it.

Ecosystems know no human boundaries, whether political or administrative. The life-support systems of the earth are shared by all living creatures. All that impinges on them must be a matter for common concern.

Harmful industrial activities are mainly concentrated in the more prosperous countries. But all countries, rich and poor, share the risks. And many of those who share in these risks have little influence on the decision processes regulating such activities. The "lesson from Basle", the fire at the Sandoz chemical plant last month demonstrated how we share the risks and how environmental programmes in one country can be disrupted from one day to the other when an accident occurs in another country.

The starting point for a new international commitment must be the recognition that national decisions have international consequences - and therefore require a measure of international responsibility. The global problems need global answers.

To illustrate this approach we can look at certain aspects of energy use. Nuclear energy is today one of the potential sources for the centralized production of electricity for the future. An expert Panel advising the World Commission noted that nuclear energy is part of the quest for clean power.

But the Chernobyl accident strengthened the view of our Panel that no nation should make decisions about energy matters without careful consideration of nuclear safety issues as they have regional and even global implications. A country may decide that lower safety levels may be tolerated in a nuclear reactor. But if an accident occurs, the radioactive fallout does not respect national boundaries.

After Chernobyl, new agreements were negotiated within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency in a remarkably short time - agreements about warning and mutual assistance. The co-operative attitude

of the Soviet government during those negotiations made a very positive impression on other participating countries. The new agreements were a step forward. But they can only represent a first step in a new beginning.

Looking at energy policy in general and from a global perspective, we cannot simply consider the production end alone. Energy consumption in itself generates vast quantities of waste products. The smoke from our factories, exhaust fumes from our automobiles, by-products of our power plants - all spew out into the atmosphere. Some of the effects on a local level are now being controlled. As we now see, the regional and global impact is more difficult to contain.

The effects of accumulating acidification of the environment are no longer confined to Europe and North America. Evidence of damage is beginning to emerge from the newly industrialized countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Beyond the immediate damage, scientists are expressing a greater fear. Reports show how European soils have become so acid that they liberate aluminium in forms which are toxic to plants. The death of the forests may be the first indication that the soil has tripped over into irreversible acidification. If so, restoration measures may be beyond anyone's economic reach.

Acidification of the environment is a clear consequence of the world's present energy policies. My country and your country, Mr Vice-Chairman, both suffer from the effects. And as you know, these consequences of our energy policies cannot be remedied with the usual tools of environmental policy. It is essential to attack the problems at the source. The causes of our energy problems can be found in pricing and fiscal policies that foster wasteful use of resources. They can be found in our industrial and technological policies, in our life-styles, and in a host of other factors well outside the traditional jurisdiction of environment agencies.

This means that responsibility for protecting the environment must be shared by those agencies whose policies impact most directly on it. For example, environment should be a main concern of ministries of finance and energy.

To sum up, Mr Vice-Chairman, the framework for environmental policy needs to be broadened in two directions if we are to tackle the issues in the future.

First, we must, as a matter of urgency, integrate environmental and development considerations into our key decisions on central economic policies. Environmental sustainability must become an integral part of development in all countries and in all economic sectors: agriculture, industry, energy. The "react-and-cure" attitude to

environmental problems must give way to "anticipate-and-prevent" - in our international policies concerning trade, development assistance, transportation, and with regard to peace and security. We must attack the problems at their source rather than react to the symptoms.

Second, we are forced to recognize the accelerating ecological interdependence among nations. On many fronts, we are approaching natural thresholds which we cannot cross without threatening essential life-support systems. Today, we risk endangering the survival of life on earth. The causes and effects are inherently transnational. International co-operation is absolutely essential.

Speaking now from this rostrum in Moscow, I would like to take this opportunity to say that we are gratified to learn that several of our ideas on the World Commission are already shared by the Soviet Union. Secretary General Gorbachev, in his speech to the 27th Party Congress last February, spoke of the need for rational use of the world's resources as assets belonging to all humanity. He too noted that it is becoming increasingly apparent that we must develop effective international procedures to achieve this aim, and has called for co-operation on a worldwide scale for close and constructive joint action.

Secretary-General Gorbachev has described pollution of the environment and exhaustion of natural resources as global problems affecting the very foundations of the existence of civilization. He has pointed to the growing interdependence between countries, and underlined the need for constructive and creative relations between states and peoples.

The Soviet Union is giving increasing attention to environmental issues such as long-range air pollution, marine pollution, low-waste technologies and soil erosion. Eastern Europe has an outstanding network of national parks and a deeply-entrenched concern for nature. Obviously, you have much to contribute to our deliberations.

Mr Vice-Chairman, my basic theme of global interdependence also applies to the questions of peace and security.

Everyone is aware of the threats to the Earth's environment from the risk of nuclear war, the arms build-up and its possible spread to outer space. The consequences are horrific. We have therefore been encouraged by the perspectives for radical reductions of present levels of nuclear weapons discussed in Reykjavik by the Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the President of the United States of America.

But the pursuit of peace requires not just an effort to reduce and eliminate weapons. It also requires measures to reduce and eliminate potential sources of conflict.

We must learn to think of security not merely in military terms but in a broader environmental and economic context.

We all accept international responsibility for preventing war. I say we must broaden that global sense of responsibility to include the environment - because the environment underlies all issues of peace and security. History provides many examples of states which collapsed in an environmental crisis leading to famine, migration and rebellion. Today, the disruption of the ecological balance could well become a threat to regional and global security. The issues of development and environment are also issues of peace.

Therefore, in the future, governments striving for security will have to reorient their priorities towards the critical issues of environment and development.

Two world wars and countless regional conflicts have taught us that national security requires effective multilateral institutions. This acceptance of multilateralism has been extended to economic questions such as trade, finance and development.

But in recent years multilateralism has been on the decline despite the fact that now, more than ever, we need international co-operation to put an end to poverty and to avert the threats to our survival.

The acceptance of a joint responsibility for the environment, which belongs to all human beings, will give us a fresh start in the search for peace and coexistence. In this sense the work of the World Commission is a step towards this great but elusive goal.

WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Address By .

Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland .

Chairman

World Commission on Environment and Development

Sir Peter Scott Lecture

8 October 1986

Bristol

W0021K/13.10.1986

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT: A CREATIVE CHALLENGE

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We who are assembled here today are living through profound changes in the relationship between our planet and its biosphere and the world of man and its development.

We all know about the population explosion or, to give it its correct name in a world of finite resources, the population implosion. Since the main phase of population growth is still to come during the course of the next few decades, this means we must try, during the same short time span, to adjust to a dramatic increase in our numbers - bearing in mind that even though we have laboured long and hard to construct our present world, its environmental foundations and, therefore, its economic basis are all too shaky. Are you conscious of the fact that more people will be added to the planet in the five thousand days between now and the end of this century than those living in 1900? That growth is unavoidable. But the growth need not be unmanageable. Beyond the turn of the century, nations can influence the levels at which their populations stabilize, and today most are trying to do just that. According to the UN, the size of the human family could stabilize during the next century at somewhere between 8 and 13 billion people.

To bring about such stabilization, which must take place during the next century, national population policies must now be adopted. And I believe that such policies will be adopted in the light of the growing awareness of the interlinkage between population numbers and the possibility to develop our human resources. How will we be able to give primary and secondary education to new billions of children over the next few decades?

The projected growth in the world economy is another indicator of the massive changes we face in this generation and the next. We are now approaching a \$ 15 trillion global economy, perhaps 20 times greater in real terms than at the start of this century and over the next half century it could well grow another five, possibly ten times. We and our children must plan to squeeze at least two new human worlds into this only one earth, and to assure them of acceptable living conditions in a very short period of time. We need to do it in ways that are sustainable and that do not lead to our own collapse.

The next short half century is, therefore, crucial for the future of mankind: Pressures on the environment and the resources base of development are now unprecedented and we are entering a period when those pressures will increase at rates and scales never before seen. These pressures are in many cases forcing us to pursue short-term policies that will in the longer term lead to destruction of the ecological basis for life on this planet. We are running mounting risks to our own survival. At the same time, however, we are developing enormous opportunities for peace and for more sustainable forms of growth and development. New technologies and virtually unlimited access to information offer great promise. But we have remained in the grip of old fashioned ideas, institutions and concepts of sovereignty which act as powerful restraints on sustainable growth and development. The time has now come to break out of these restraints.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I was deeply honoured and pleased to be invited to present this First Sir Peter Scott Lecture within the context of the Wildscreen '86 Festival. Few living figures have so captured the hearts and minds of people and deepened their appreciation of the importance and necessity of maintaining a harmonious balance between man and nature as Sir Peter. For more than half a century, he has dedicated himself to the cause of

conservation, and through his lectures, writings and illustrations has evidenced his own deep understanding of that delicate balance.

In accepting the WWF Gold Medal in Assisi two weeks ago, Sir Peter challenged us to "concentrate on the future and what we can do to ensure that there is a future worth having, for mankind and for the living world". To do this, he said, we need more than ever to get to the decision makers, politicians, businessmen, aid agencies and governments and to make them think on a much longer time scale. And indeed we do.

Inspired by pioneers such as Sir Peter Scott, it is not surprising that the conservation movement has chalked up a vast record of achievement over the past several decades - the creation of IUCN and the World Wildlife Fund, the Stockholm Conference, the launch of the World Conservation Strategy, and the adoption of the World Charter for Nature to name but a few. The Wildscreen Festival represents perhaps the most important arm of the conservation movement - the film media. Free and independent, they bring the issues of conservation into the homes of the world's peoples, personifying them through the lives of the species under threat, including man himself. Underlining the imperatives for action.

The World Commission on Environment and Development, which I have the honour to lead, believes that the outstanding films from many countries along with their thousands of predecessors, have played a major role in the increased public awareness that has led to action on these issues by governments, by industries and by non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations. The most recent demonstration of this was the worldwide response to the crises in Sub-saharan Africa. Film and media power were the keys that opened the hearts, minds and pockets of millions of people and public treasuries, and thus enabled a rescue operation that saved millions of lives.

So convinced is the World Commission of the power of this medium, that throughout the two years of our deliberations we have been working with other groups to encourage film makers to produce special series on the critical issues of environment and development that we are addressing. Two of your great institutions were among the first to respond. BBC-2 and Channel 4 are each producing a series to be shown in over 30 countries next year. A US company is also producing a series. They will provide effective airings of our recommendations as they are being debated en route to the General Assembly of the United Nations next Fall.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The World Commission does not believe that a dismal scenario of mounting destruction of national and global potential for development - indeed, of the earth's capacity to support life - is an inescapable destiny. The problems are planetary - but they are not insoluble. I believe that history will record that in this crisis the two greatest resources, land and people, will redeem the promise of development. If we take care of nature, nature will take care of us. Conservation has truly come of age when it acknowledges that if we want to save part of the system we have to save the system itself. This is the essence of what we call sustainable development.

There are many dimensions to sustainability. First, it requires the elimination of poverty and deprivation. Second, it requires the conservation and enhancement of the resources base which alone can ensure that the elimination of the poverty is permanent. Third, it requires a broadening of the concept of development so that it covers not only economic growth but also social and cultural development. Fourth, and most important, it requires the unification of economics and ecology in decision-making at all levels. This may sound obvious, as obvious as it is to live within one's budget without overdrawing one's account, and getting into the red. But until very recently, consideration of the environment was perceived

by most governments as something external to the development process. How mistakes were those views! Soon, they were amply contradicted by unfolding human tragedy and ecological stress.

Indeed, one of the outstanding impressions that we as a Commission have acquired during our visits and deliberations in different continents is precisely the critical role that environment plays in economic, social and political development. Environmental protection and development, far from being in conflict, are in fact closely interdependent - locally, nationally, regionally and globally. Our chosen title reflects this. We are the World Commission on Environment and Development. It is not one or the other, but it is both, or neither.

Julius Nyerere reminded us in Harare recently that he himself and other African leaders, not so many years ago, regarded environmental concerns as ideas imposed from the North, ideas that would hamper development and slow it down, thereby cementing existing structures to the benefit of the North. Now, Nyerere gave a direct appeal on behalf of the environment and concluded that if the World Commission could succeed in placing the environment solidly on the African political agenda, it would in fact have made a major achievement in fulfilling its mandate.

We need high aspirations. If we are to adopt development paths that are sustainable rather than unsustainable, we must mobilize an unusual array of skills, re-informed by a new sense of vision. This new vision must begin with a deeper appreciation of the Earth and its environment, the source of all life and all development. Sir Peter has been preaching this principle for years. Astronauts, viewing the planet from space have provided us with that essential perspective: The Earth is one.

And although the world of man is not one, this new vision must address squarely the new dominant characteristic of the world of man - interdependence. Until just a few decades ago, nations and even entire continents could more or less go their own way. But today, we live with a global economy, where the economic pressures of one country can generate pressure through international trade and finance on the economies and resource systems of others.

The ecosystems on which these economic patterns depend are similarly linked, and firmly interlocked with our economies and, in fact, the decline or growth of many economies depends increasingly on the decline or enhancement of the ecosystems from which they draw their food, fish, energy, woodproducts, minerals and other materials. Increasingly, however, for modern nations, these ecosystems are to be found within the borders of other nations or in the global commons. And in large parts of the world, these ecosystems are in a state of rapid decline.

These emerging new issues require us to completely change the way in which we think about environment and the economy, and about international co-operation. In the past, our main concern centred on the effects of development on the environment. Today, we need to be just as concerned about the links from the environment to the economy. In one area after another, it is these reverse effects that condition the potential for development.

Local communities have known this for generations. If a community ran out of water, it ran out of economic potential. The same thing is now evident at the regional scale:

- In Africa for instance, with desertification, famine and ecological refugees;
- in Asia and Latin America with deforestation;
- in Europe with acid rain and radioactive fallout;
- and it is also evident at the global scale;

- in the dispersion of certain chemicals and their concentration in food chains;
- in the rapid disappearance of forest cover and in the loss of genetic resources;
- in the rising levels of greenhouse gases and the growing risk of climate change;
- and in the loss of soil productivity in both industrialized and developing countries.

In the real world, we are witnessing a complete unification of environment and development and of economics and ecology. In our governments and international institutions, however, and in our industries, which pride themselves on being in touch with the real world, we find the reverse. Those responsible for managing natural resources and protecting the environment are institutionally divorced from those responsible for managing the economy. The real world won't change. Our insight and institutions must.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The issues I am raising ought to be the issues for the next election, not the next century. Yet it is characteristic of environment and development problems that they look as if they can wait until something more urgent is dealt with. Until, that is, the situation has become a crisis or clearly catastrophic. Then there is a scramble to find the cheapest solution and take action. Nobody then likes to admit that the cheapest solution would have been to heed the warnings 10 or 15 years before and prevent the situation.

But you might ask, did we not begin in 1972 with the creation in Stockholm of the United Nations Environment Programme? Do we not have the machinery in most governments already functioning? Do we not have various multilateral organizations grappling with trans boundary air pollution, freshwater and marine pollution, potentially toxic chemicals, ozone, carbon dioxide, deforestation and a host of other matters? The answer is yes, of course we do.

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But is it all working effectively? The answer definitely is no, it is not.

During the past 15 years, only a few countries have managed to improve the quality of their environment and the ecological basis of their development. Even within these few countries, the improvements have been spread unevenly. Some richer industrialized nations have suffered a severe degradation in parts of their environment and resource base. And all have been left with a long unfinished agenda of older issues: air and water pollution, especially from non-point sources like agriculture, depletion of groundwater, chemical and hazardous wastes, industrial and nuclear safety.

As for developing countries, they simply have not been able to afford the react-and-cure policies that have dominated approaches to environmental management in industrialized nations. Most have experienced a massive deterioration of their environment as the problems associated with sudden industrialization and explosive urbanization have been added to those associated with underdevelopment and poverty. In fact, in the Commission's view, during the past 15 years the locus of critical environment and development issues has moved South toward developing countries.

Sustainable development can rectify this situation, but achieving it will require a fundamental shift in thinking in many areas. One of the most crucial areas is the way we are able to grasp the time relationship between the environment and economic development. The intellectual fashion that tailored most of our existing environmental institutions, laws and regulations held that investments needed to sustain environmental quality and the natural resources used in development were essentially non-productive.

Whether the development involved an industry, urban transportation, agriculture or energy, any investment to protect the resource base, man and the environment was seen as

essentially non-productive, even a luxury. Certainly it had no positive economic contribution to make to the development itself.

This intellectual fashion is not so often defended any more, at least in its raw form. Indeed, my own observations are that the attitudes of many key people in central government agencies, corporate head offices and international organizations - even banks - have changed significantly on this question. They have been disturbed, if not convinced, by the growing evidence in energy production, agriculture and forestry, that development without environmental considerations is often non-sustainable. Such investments can end up as economic white elephants, reducing rather than increasing the future economic potential of an industry, a sector or a region.

Since environment was seen largely as an add-on economically, agencies which were created nationally and internationally during the -70s were simply tacked on to the existing bureaucratic structure - they were an add-on institutionally and an add-on politically.

They were seen to have a role largely separate from development, a role reflecting a very narrow interpretation of environmental policy. They were asked to deal with the symptoms because the symptoms had got out of hand. They were given a limited role or even no role at all in the formulation or assessment of economic, trade, energy, agricultural, industrial or other policies.

Yet, as we know today, these policies are the real environmental policies, influencing fundamentally the form, character and distribution of the impacts of economic activity on resources and the environment.

Today, the United Nations, and over 140 governments have set up environmental agencies of one kind or another, and a number of international bodies have been established by global

or regional treaties. With a few exceptions, hardly any have the institutional capacity, the funding, the political muscle - to argue their case cogently when they encounter colleagues from industry, agriculture, energy and trade and when macro-economic trade and development policies are formulated. All too often they remain Cinderella agencies - and even though their ecologically minded experts may know a lot about the flows of energy through ecosystems, they seem to be less in command of the pathways of influence through the corridors of power.

The need for a major shift to anticipate-and-prevent strategies has been recognized by some governments, by parts of certain industries, by certain institutes and by non-governmental organizations. And recognition is important. But if anticipation and prevention is to become a reality, the divorce of those responsible for managing our environment from those responsible for managing our economies must end in industry and government, both nationally and internationally. Indeed what is required is the full integration of the two sets of values, those of environment and those of economics.

An obvious illustration is the case of acid rain - an issue that, if I might say so, both our countries feel strongly about. In southern Scandinavia thousands of lakes and streams have become so acidified that fish population are extinct or in the process of dying. In my country alone, an area 3/4 the size of Switzerland is heavily affected. Another alarming aspect of the acid rain problem is the release of heavy metals into the ecological cycle. In Norway and Sweden concentrations of heavy metals in the livers of wild game is so high that they are unfit for human consumption. Effects on human health could be next. Can there be a better reason why we should rather anticipate and prevent, and can there be a clearer reason why acid rain is on par with trade and defence issues as matters of top-ranking international importance for my country? In Central-Europe, at least 43 500 square miles of forest, or an area almost the size of England, are injured if not dying. In

the worst hit country, The Federal Republic of Germany, the overall costs are conservatively estimated somewhere around \$ 1 billion a year, and corrosion of buildings at more than \$ 500 million, and possibly several times more.

The acid rain problem seems to be spreading widely and fast. There are signs of it in China, Malaysia and Brazil - even of an acid haze over the Arctic. Could there be more vivid evidence that we need to integrate environment and economics, until a unified system of accounting reflects the world outside the window, a seamless world that does not recognize man-made divisions of reckoning?

When we make use of man-made assets, such as equipment and buildings, we write off our use as depreciation. But we forget to evaluate our environment as productive capital, even though we utilize it as such. When we cut down forests, over-harvest fisheries, over-work croplands until the soil erodes, and utilize our skies as a free garbage can and our rivers as sewers, our measured income as revealed by GNP actually registers an increase! Yet we eventually have to pay, often more heavily than if we had acknowledged the cost in the first place.

An exceptionally graphic instance of the penalties of inadequate environmental accounting can be found in Ethiopia where in 1940 forests covered 25 per cent of the land. Today the forest covers only 3 per cent. The resulting loss of soil with its plant nutrients can be estimated to cut the country's agricultural output by at least one million tons of food per year, equivalent to two-thirds of all relief food shipped to the country in 1985. Moreover, as trees disappear and sources of fuelwood go too, people turn to burning cattle dung and crop residues. So much material is now being used as fuel instead of fertilizer that there is a further loss of agricultural output worth some US \$ 600 million a year, or no less than 30 per cent of the agricultural value. To restore tree cover and safeguard topsoil, would, if undertaken in due time, have cost

some \$ 50 million a year. Yet in 1985, the outside world spent almost \$ 500 million on relief food alone.

Let us look forward, then, to the day when a finance minister presents a regular total accounting both of a nation's economic transactions and of changes in its natural resource base. The key point - little recognized though it may be - is that the natural resource base ultimately underpins economic activity. Norway is among those countries that have tried to establish natural resource accounts and integrate them as far as possible with macro-economic accounts and planning models. Such resource accounts and budgets were published last year in connection with the government's long-term programme. We need a similar set of accounts globally, from the World Bank, the United Nations or some other appropriate agency.

There are many examples of economic failure and social tragedy stemming from inadequate or non-existent resource accounting. Energy planners often fail to account for the resource costs of their projects, not just fossil fuels but also hydro. Here there are clear links between deforestation, development and hydro power. Of all electricity now consumed, about one-third comes from hydro power, and the proportion could grow a good deal higher by the end of the century. But a recent World Bank survey of 200 major dams reveals that sedimentation in the reservoirs caused by washoff of soil in the wake of deforestation, leads to an average of 2 per cent loss of storage capacity every year. Corresponding reduced output of electricity, were it to be generated by burning oil at a price of \$ 15 per barrel, would cost \$ 7 billion in the single year of 2000 - or a sum equivalent to 20 per cent of all OECD and OPEC aid per year right now.

Even though these policy areas are often construed as matters of strictly national concern, their capacity to undermine the essential ecological basis for development in other countries makes them matters of international concern.

Agriculture is one of the best examples of a sector for which national policies have been designed year after year to secure short-term gains in production and profitability, without regard to their longer term international consequences. The links between the rich, incentive-driven agriculture of the industrialized market economies and the poor and often neglected agriculture of developing countries helps explain the growing degradation of soils and other resources in both.

In most Western nations, agricultural subsidies were introduced mainly for social reasons, to sustain the income of farmers in various ways. Few would disagree with the objective. But the policies to achieve it have gone astray. In order to increase agricultural production and profitability in the short-term, the incentive structures have grown in a way that encourages farmers in many areas to occupy marginal lands and to clear forests and woodlands essential for water and soil conservation.

They induce farmers to over-use pesticides and fertilizers and to mine underground water and waste surface waters for irrigation. In several countries they subsidize practices that accelerate erosion and other forms of permanent degradation of the soil and water base. The result has been lower productivity and great economic loss to the agricultural community.

The system has now become extremely expensive. It has created vast surpluses and a context in which it is politically attractive, and often cheaper, to ship those surpluses at subsidized prices rather than store them.

Among the most serious consequences are the depressive effects on the difficult measures to re-orient agricultural policies in some developing countries. Rising numbers of rural poor find themselves remaining on the fringes of the development process. Their marginal status drives them to seek

their livelihoods in marginal environments. They over-harvest fuelwood stocks, and their livestock over-graze grasslands. They may engage in slash-and-burn farming of forest lands, induce erosion and stimulate the spread of deserts.

These are policies, well-intentioned in their origin, that end up accelerating the degradation of the resource base for agriculture not only in the industrialized market economies but also in developing economies. Everyone loses.

Looking to the year 2000 and beyond, it is clear that these policies are not sustainable. They must be changed. Is there any reason why we cannot support farm income in industrialized countries through an incentive structure that both eliminates costly surpluses and encourages farm practices that sustain, and even enhance, the essential soil and water base of agriculture? Is there any reason why we cannot provide essential assistance to governments in Africa and other developing regions in ways that will enable them to create incentive structures for their own farmers - that would encourage them to reverse ecologically destructive farm practices and to grow more of their own food, knowing that they have an assured market? Is there any reason why we cannot remove protectionist measures against food products, such as sugar, on which many countries of the Third World depend, and in which they have a clear comparative advantage?

There are no good reasons. Too many agricultural and related trade and aid policies today, in all countries, are ecologically blind. They need to be re-thought and re-oriented. They need to be given new foundations in both environment and economics. The two are inseparable. Environment needs to be built firmly into the agriculture, economic and trade agendas of national and international bodies. The absurdity of our present behaviour as a world community is obvious.

Let us beware of those who assert that we can somehow get by until we have restored full-blown economic growth, whereupon we shall have the discretionary funds to deal with environmental problems. This view suggests that environmental problems are sideline affairs that can wait until we have the luxury of wealth to spare. But if economic growth is based on misuse and over-use of environmental capital, then we shall find we are undercutting the very capacity of our economies to keep on growing. The question to ask about environmental protection is not can we afford to do it eventually? It is, can we afford not to do it immediately? Equally to the point, the question about our economies is not: Shall we forfeit growth in light of the environmental costs? It is: What new forms of growth shall we pursue in order to ensure that growth becomes sustainable?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us also beware of those who underestimate the need for change. The order-of magnitude changes sweeping over us and our biosphere demand quantum changes in our attitudes, our policies, and in the way we run our societies. More importantly, these changes carry entirely new imperatives for both multilateralism and international co-operation.

The United Nations General Assembly has asked our Commission to consider and make recommendations on strengthening international co-operation on these issues; and our work on this aspect of our mandate has moved into high gear following our recent meeting in Harare. It is clear to us, however, that in the future no nation should be free to pollute the common environment and inflict severe ecological and economic damage on other states. In fact, we need a new concept of national security that goes beyond the narrow confines of military security, to embrace economic and ecological inter-dependence and global environmental hazards. In the field of environment and development there is no such thing as benign neglect. We can no longer live with the

pursuit of unilateral advantage at the expense of our common future.

It is also clear that the post-war international economic system has fundamental weaknesses and that our most urgent task is to persuade nations of the need to return to multilateralism. The task of reconstruction after the Second World War was the real motivating power behind the establishment of the post-war economic system. The challenge of environment and development should provide the impetus - indeed the imperative - behind a renewed search for multilateral solutions and a reconstructed international economic system of co-operation.

We must strive to promote a fundamental change of attitude. We know that this cannot come from the top down. Change evolves deep in the hearts of people responding to the elemental vision of life as they see it. And change is on the way. I believe that society's dominant belief structure is ready to shift. The old dominant mind set characteristic of the industrialized west saw the pursuit of "progress" founded on four dominant beliefs: That people dominate the earth. That they are masters of their destiny. That the world is vast and unlimited. And that history is one of progress with every problem solvable.

A new environment and development ethic is being formed. It calls into question those four basic dominant beliefs and emphasizes instead concern for the world's environment as the essential basis for sustainable development. It sees citizen participation at all levels in the care of the planet and, based on this deeper and wider perception of the basis of life and human activity, it promises profound changes in economic and social attitudes. The Commission is a symptom of this process and will itself do all it can to facilitate the process that can create a better world for us all.

If Sir Peter will allow me to paraphrase a statement he frequently uses when describing the efforts of conservationists around the world: "We won't accomplish all we should like to, but we shall accomplish a great more than if we've never tried."



NORWAY

PERMANENT MISSION OF NORWAY TO THE UNITED NATIONS 825 THIRD AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY, 10022 - TEL. 421-0280

ADDRESS BY

MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY

IN THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON

22 SEPTEMBER 1986

Mr. President,

Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Mr. President, upon your election to the high office as President of the 41st session of the General Assembly. I am convinced that the work at this General Assembly will benefit from your experience and knowledge.

At the beginning of this General Assembly, the future of East-West relations is a central concern in all corners of the globe.

The future of East/West relations encompasses the decisive questions of our times: war or peace, disarmament or continued arms race, peaceful cooperation or confrontation, mutual confidence or distrust. The East/West relationship largely determines the international climate and sets limits to what can be achieved also in other areas which are in urgent need of attention such as the North/South relationship and the global challenges of development, environment, trade and finance. These are questions of fundamental importance to the future of mankind and which we cannot afford to go on neglecting. Also for this

reason we need a new beginning in East/West relations which can liberate energies and resources.

Achievements that have already been made must be carefully guarded, such as the ABM treaty, that plays a vital role and needs to be strengthened.

The Geneva negotiations are of fundamental importance to the future of East/West relations. They must give the answer to the key question whether it will be possible to turn the tide of the arms race. Without real progress in the field of disarmament and arms control, our efforts towards dialogue and cooperation in other areas will be seriously limited.

So far, we have not seen tangible results in the form of any decisive progress in arms negotiations. From the Norwegian side we have wholeheartedly endorsed the broad aim of the Geneva negotiations which should be conducted with a view to "...preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth by limiting and reducing nuclear arms and strengthening strategic stability ..."

This very promising result of last years summit between President Reagan and Secretary General Gorbachev is an agreement on broad objectives that it is essential to retain.

Mr. President,

The Helsinki process now sorely needed a vitamin injection and new impetus to become a positive, dynamic factor in East/West relations. The news today of a breakthrough at the Stockholm Conference is not only an important achievement, but also has a potential for further progress. If we experience an improved atmosphere in the vital area of arms control and disarmament, it could mark a historic moment.

In Stockholm, a new generation of confidence- and security-building measures have been adopted, and major concessions have been given - concessions that will lead to reduced risks, greater openness and predictability all over Europe.

But we need higher aspirations. Regularity in the political dialogue at the highest level between the superpowers is an imperative for stability and predictability in East/West relations. Pending questions that hamper a new summit now urgently need solutions, to pave the way for new agreements in Geneva.

Mr. President,

The work undertaken in multilateral disarmament fora is also of crucial importance, both as an expression of world public concern and for negotiating global disarmament agreements. The nuclear test ban issue remains a vital question. Efforts here should be further intensified. It is our hope that this session of the General Assembly will contribute to expedite the work of the Conference on Disarmament in order to reach agreement on a comprehensive test ban.

It still has not been possible to reach agreement on a treaty banning chemical weapons, although important progress has been made. Recent use of these abhorrent weapons underline the need to eradicate them once and for all.

As we work towards an end to the arms race on Earth, we must at the same time seek to prevent a spread of the arms race into outer space. It is our firm belief that space must be reserved for peaceful purposes exclusively. We fully support the efforts towards this end in the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament.

The irrationality of the arms race is most amply demonstrated by the global imbalance between the resources spent

on armaments and what is devoted to development. This fundamental problem should indeed be a matter of concern for the entire world community. Norway therefore supports the idea of holding the UN conference on disarmament and development as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

Last year the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations was solemnly commemorated in this Assembly Hall. Political leaders from all over the world were here to pay tribute to the Organization. It was seen as an expression of support for multilateralism as a basic concept and working method in international affairs.

Past experience has shown that there is no alternative to global cooperation in the striving for peace and security, for economic and social development and for the protection of human rights.

Mr. President,

In spite of the many pledges made in this Hall last year it is a fact that the political and economic problems on the agenda of the United Nations persist, and there has over the last

year hardly been any progress on major issues before the Organization. In addition to this, the United Nations itself has for some time experienced severe financial problems caused by significant withholdings of assessed contributions on the part of several Member States. These withholdings, together with the lack of budgetary discipline threaten to seriously undermine the viability of the United Nations.

The Norwegian Government is deeply committed to multilateralism and a strong United Nations; and the objective need of the world community is greater today than when it was created 41 years ago and the financial crisis is the manifestation of a fundamental crisis of credibility which has been festering for some time. There has been a widespread and deepening loss of confidence in the United Nations on the part of many member states and their publics, who believe that the Organization is not sufficiently effective in meeting its original objectives, or in serving the interests of its members.

Even the strongest champions of the United Nations, countries like Norway and many others must concede that these concerns have some validity. The political and economic issues on the agenda of the United Nations persist. Its budget is burdened by unnecessary duplication and overlapping of functions, and the budgetary process lacks the discipline required to evoke the full support of all member states.

The task of renewing the effectiveness of the United Nations is basically political in nature. It requires that member states manifest the political will to place the financing of the organization on a viable basis, and provide the Secretary-General with a mandate and the support he needs to carry out the major Organization, staffing and budget changes which will reduce costs, improve effectiveness and restore confidence. At this 41st session we have a unique opportunity to do exactly this. It is an opportunity we must not miss.

We have before us the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts - the group of 18 - established last year by unanimous decision of the General Assembly to examine and suggest improvements in the Organization's administration and finances. The Norwegian Government fully supports these recommendations and urge the Assembly to approve them in their entirety.

These recommendations are only the beginning of a reform process in the United Nations, a process which will be painful and which will necessarily take time. It is essential that this transformation is allowed to take place in an orderly and responsible manner, and that member states cooperate closely with the Secretary General in the difficult task he faces in implementing these changes.

Mr. President,

Earlier this year, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, attention was focused on the economic and social problems of one single continent. The Special Session on the critical economic situation in Africa, was an important element in the United Nations efforts to assist African countries in surmounting their grave economic and ecological crisis.

Based on the thorough preparations made by the Organization of African Unity and its member states, the Special Session adopted unanimously a programme of action for African economic recovery and development for 1986-1990.

We managed to set up a common point of reference, where the mutual commitments of Africa and the international community are elaborated. The consensus reached on this document must be seen as a notable achievement. However, the final evaluation of the session can only be made in the future. The follow-up action must be pursued energetically on the national, regional and international level.

We witness, with respect and admiration, the valiant efforts undertaken by African countries to initiate new economic policies. However, interdependence is today a living reality. The

African countries will only succeed if the international community agree to complement these efforts with new and increased assistance.

Norway pledges its full and continued support to the African development efforts.

Mr. President,

One area where the United Nations has a special responsibility and where we do hope that the Organization may play a decisive role is the question of South Africa and Namibia.

The situation in South Africa has reached an explosive stage. The black majority is no longer willing to tolerate the aggressive apartheid system and is demanding the obvious right to be treated as equal citizens with full political rights. Instead of addressing these legitimate demands, the South African Government has once again resorted to the desperate means of declaring a state of emergency and detaining hundreds of apartheid opponents. This policy will only lead to prolonged suffering and bloodshed in South Africa.

The dramatic events should not make us forget that South Africa continues its illegal occupation of Namibia, in violation

of Security Council resolution 435. This issue was dealt with extensively at last week's special session on Namibia and I would only like to repeat our demand to the South African Government to agree to the implementation of the UN plan for Namibia without any further delay.

The policy of trying to abolish apartheid through a dialogue with the South African Government has been tried repeatedly and without success. The Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group draw the depressing conclusion in a recent report that the South African Government does not seem to be prepared for a genuine dialogue with the opposition and that outside pressure is essential for any prospect of peaceful change. My Government strongly supports these conclusions.

Some countries continue to argue against sanctions, on the grounds that sanctions will create increased suffering for the black population and cause economic difficulties for the neighbouring countries of South Africa. We do not underestimate these difficulties. But even though sanctions may cause hardships in the short run, representative black leaders argue that this is preferable to the prolonged suffering that apartheid implies. We think it is wise to listen to these leaders; in fact we feel it is an obligation to do so. The Norwegian Government therefore urges the Security Council to impose comprehensive mandatory sanctions

against South Africa. We also propose that the UN prepares a contingency plan for assistance to South Africa's neighbours in the event of South African reprisals against these countries.

Norway has repeatedly advocated comprehensive and mandatory sanctions against South Africa. I take this opportunity to urge those countries who still oppose sanctions to reassess their attitude.

Mr. President,

The absence of binding sanctions should not be used as a pretext for failing to act against apartheid. Measures by individual countries or groups of countries are also important, in order to signal disapproval of apartheid and express solidarity with those who work for changes in South Africa.

My Government believes that an effective oil embargo would be an important measure against South Africa. For this reason we were pleased to host a UN seminar on the oil embargo in Oslo in June this year as a preparation of the UN Conference on Sanctions against South Africa, held in Paris. The proposal to set up an international monitoring mechanism on the supply of oil to South Africa, was included in the final declaration of the Paris Conference and we hope that the Security Council would be

able to support this idea with a view to achieving an effective oil embargo against South Africa.

In addition to the measures contained in the Nordic Programme of Action, Norway has adopted a number of unilateral measures. My Government is now preparing a Bill on an economic boycott against South Africa, a Bill which is expected to be decided upon by the Norwegian Parliament this fall. In this way we want to make our contribution to bring about a South Africa with equal rights and opportunities for all. We also hope to inspire other countries follow suit, to increase the total international pressure against apartheid.

Time is running out for peaceful solutions. If apartheid is not abolished soon, the whole region of Southern Africa may explode in a bloody upheaval. I appeal to every nation to move forward in taking effective actions against apartheid.

Mr. President,

From this rostrum leaders of the world have rightly been warning against the threats to the survival of mankind caused by existing nuclear arsenals, regional conflicts and failures of the development process.

Interdependence is becoming the dominant characteristic of the whole range of issues relating to development. It encompasses broad security concerns, environmental and ecological issues, economic and cultural relations. There is also the geographic dimension of interdependence, regionally and globally. The nuclear accident in Tchernobyl highlighted the awesome problems we will face across the borders in the event of a nuclear disaster occurring in any one country. The rapid population growth in many countries is creating migration patterns which strain both national and cross-national systems. In the trade and financial area we see the mutual dependence between creditors and debtors as well as the vital link between a non-protectionist trade regime and the ability of debtor countries to meet their debt obligations and generate the necessary resources for their own development.

This is really the essence of the North-South dialogue: how the growing interlinkages between issues and interdependence between nations create an increasing number of problems which transcends national systems, and require solutions of a global nature. The need for a global approach is clear. Such an approach does not mean that all problems have to be negotiated and solved simultaneously. What it means is that global perspectives must permeate all the processes and work we are engaged in, and that this work is becoming more and more urgent. Protection of the environment and development are essential and mutually re-

inforcing goals. This requires that environmental considerations be built into development projects at the earliest possible stage. Otherwise they will neither be economically nor ecologically sustainable.

In recent years the world has become increasingly aware that the negligence of interactions between environment and development is already seriously threatening the ability of this planet to sustain life for present and future generations.

The threats of war and regional conflicts are the concern of us all, but so is also critical life support systems are at stake.

The World Commission on Environment and Development, which is going to report to the General Assembly next year, is convinced that these new imperatives can only be seriously addressed by defining the goals of economic activity in terms of sustainable development.

Sustainable development will require a recovery from the economic stagnation of recent years and a new era of growth in the world economy. But it cannot be a repetition of the non-sustainable development patterns of the past decades which resulted in the development crisis of the 1980s. A new era of

growth must be built on new patterns of development and a unification of ecology and economics.

Mr. President,

The earth is one, but the world of man is not. Mankind share a common origin and a common future. Shortsighted self-interest has misled the human race to over-exploitation of this troubled planet. We have heavily been overdrawing the account which nature opened to us. But the unsustainable trends can be rectified. We must formulate and adopt new strategies to secure a sustainable and common future.

Mr. President,

The opportunities are in fact there. Now it is time for us to act!

Thank you, Mr. President

WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

ADDRESS

by

MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
CHAIRMAN
OF THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
AND PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY

PRESS SEMINAR

Nairobi, Kenya

Sunday, 21 September, 1986

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Press,

Although you have already been welcomed to this media session, I would like to say, on behalf of the World Commission on Environment and Development, how happy we are to have this opportunity to meet so many distinguished members of the press and to provide some information about the state of the work of the Commission and of some of the important issues that we are dealing with. Last week in Harare and here in Nairobi, we have obtained and will obtain at first hand, the insights and advice of leading African institutions and individuals on the issues that concern us, to learn more about steps that have already been taken, and what measures they feel are needed to put development on a sound and sustainable path.

The first and most urgent task facing the world community is to manage the risks which threaten the survival and well-being of the human community. The threats, of war and regional conflict are the concern of us all, but also critical life support systems are at stake.

The Commission is convinced that these new imperatives can only be seriously addressed by defining the goals of economic activity in terms of sustainable development.

Cooperation for mitigating these problems is essential for our own survival.

But ensuring survival is not enough. The quality of life is as important. A most urgent task is to accelerate the process of development, remove widespread poverty and raise living standards in the developing countries. This will require a recovery from the economic stagnation of recent years and a new aera of growth in the world economy. But it cannot be a repetition of the non-sustainable development patterns of the past several decades which ended up in the development crisis of the 80's.

What we have seen in recent years is not just a cyclical fluctuation in the growth process. It is a deeper crisis caused by a variety of internal and external factors which have been operating for a long time:

First, the processes of savings and investment were interrupted in most of the developing countries and led to a recourse to unsustainable levels of foreign borrowing.

Second, the neglect of the ecological factors led to unsustainable pressures on land and water resources which, in Africa, resulted in a serious food emergency.

Third, these impacts have been aggravated by rising interest rates, falling commodity prices and the general decline in development co-operation.

Fourth, most developing countries do not as yet have the economic, organizational and technical flexibility which can make them less vulnerable to crisis.

Fifth, in many countries, social tensions have increased because of the co-existence of poverty and consumerism.

Finally, the relative neglect of the social, cultural dimensions of development has led to a waste of human resources.

We do not discard the many positive aspects of development.

However, the roots of many development failures lie in the neglect of environmental factors in the design of projects, programmes, policies and plans.

Equally, the failure of many efforts at environmental improvement lies in the fact that the efforts were not integrated with developmental activities. The solution to these problems is not to be found in technical fixes, but in more basic changes in the orientation of all economic policy. Similarly, the long-term objectives of economic and social development require the conservation and enhancement of the ecological base for such development.

Sustainable development requires that we manage this planet and our Lives in a way which secures the basic needs and a decent quality of life for present and future generations. Today, we are constantly overdrawing the account which nature has opened for us. To reverse unsustainable trends, we must INTRODUCE the concept of sustainable development at all levels of decision-making.

The situation in Africa is both a major concern and a serious reminder that we have no time to lose. Until very recently, conservation of the environment has been perceived as something external to the development process. In fact, Julius Nyerere reminded us in Harare that he himself and other African leaders, not so many years ago, regarded environmental concerns as ideas imposed from the North, ideas that would hamper development and slow it down,

thereby cementing existing structures to the benefit of the North. Now, Nyerere gave a direct appeal on behalf of the environment and concluded that if the Commission could succeed in placing the environment solidly on the agenda in Africa, it would in fact have made a major achievement in fulfilling its mandate.

In the past few decades we have seen the leaders and the people of newly independent nations of Africa set out with hope to develop this continent. And we have seen this development take root and begin to grow, only to be choked by strangling international economic trends. There are added difficulties posed by the fast growth in population and by the demand for more food and fuel. All this leads to insupportable inroads on the environment, followed by a decline in production, ecological stress and the tragedy of catastrophic famine. To meet these problems, short-term solutions have been forced on governments against the long-term interests of the land and its capacity to provide for people. It is not just economic development which is at risk. Social development, political stability and even peace become threatened.

The Commission knows that there are many success stories in Africa. There are countries where food production has increased quite rapidly. There are also countries where, despite very low incomes, major improvements in health and education have been achieved. Yet, one can

speaking of a crisis in African development. This will have to be overcome, not by national measures alone, but through strengthened co-operation with and among regional institutions as well as on a global scale.

The OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in reviewing the continent's economic situation, emphasized the priority need to ensure survival of the many millions of Africans who are victims of environmental, economic and political disasters. Their concern is the concern of us all. We must all understand the reasons for their plight and formulate innovative, concrete and realistic plans to ensure their future. And we must all work hand in hand to see that those plans are carried out. We are still discussing these issues, but believe the key lies with helping the rural sector to increase food and energy production without taking more out of the land than can be maintained for the use of generations to come.

During our meeting in Harare it was strongly underlined that the poor of Africa do violence to their environment because they have no alternative. Yet investment in land management and services, provision of seeds, tools, fertilizers, irrigation and above all, reform of inequitable land holding systems and pricing policies can provide those alternatives. So can erosion control and soil regeneration. So can promotion of family planning and the education of the rural population, especially women.

These are some of the things that we know relatively quickly will rehabilitate the land, raise food production and rural income, check the migration to cities and enhance the quality of life. Redirecting financial resources to provide the considerable investment required involves political decisions and responsibility at the national and international levels.

Such decisions, however, must be taken in consultation and full partnership with the rural populations who will co-operate enthusiastically only when they have a stake in a sustainable future.

What we should aim at is sustainability in relation to the available resource base and adequate living standards. It is in this context that the Commission has been dealing with the issue of population and development of human resources.

In its submission to our Public Hearings in Harare, the Economic Commission for Africa stressed that demographic factors will constitute a daunting challenge for Africa in the years ahead as the race between population and economic growth intensifies. And it posed some critical questions: How can Sub-Saharan Africa produce enough food for an additional 15 to 20 million people each year when it is unable to feed its present population?

Can Africa provide primary education to 137 million children who will require it in in the year 2000? And **can it provide secondary education for the 80 million** who will require it by the end of the century?

I believe that the conclusion drawn is one that should be taken very seriously. "These demographic phenomena constitute the heart of the African development problematique. They are the data that lead most analysts to project a continuing ~~and deepening~~ crisis in Africa. There ~~is no doubt that there~~ is an imperative and urgent need for a far-reaching population policy to be adopted and vigorously implemented by African governments."

A broad attack on all the important sources of environment and development degradation must also include the realization that there are considerable areas in Africa where population growth is in urgent need of being more effectively addressed. I say this knowing that the choice of national policies can differ and requires sensitivity to cultural and social patterns. However, the problem should be taken very seriously by all concerned with the future of Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let me again underline that to ensure the survival of Africa, industrialized nations must rethink their role. What good does it do to force a developing country to distort its use of land resources, clearing forests and replacing food crops with cash crops to repay loans if

this distortion eventually results in the need for more relief aid? What good does it do to dump agricultural surpluses on a recipient country at prices that drive local farmers out of the market and out of production if this, too, results in the need for more relief aid?

Where is the common sense in the fact that industrialized countries, even at the height of the flow of aid to Africa, were taking more money out of the stricken continent than they were putting in? If we take care of nature, nature will take care of us. This is the essence of sustainable development, an idea whose time has now come.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It will have been noted, I think, that I commented on South Africa in my opening speech in Harare. One of the reasons for doing this was to point out that now more than ever, it is crucial that the Southern African region devote its energies and resources to environment and development issues for the survival of its nations and peoples. But we all realize that Southern Africa will remain a troubled region as long as apartheid exists.

As Prime Minister of Norway I said that the case for sanctions against South Africa is a strong one and that the Norwegian Government is preparing a bill on economic boycott of South Africa, and is prepared to increase its assistance to the Southern African region in the event of South African reprisals against the SADCC countries.

WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

OPENING ADDRESS

by

MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND
CHAIRMAN
OF THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
AND PRIME MINISTER OF NORWAY

SIXTH MEETING

Harare, Zimbabwe

Wednesday, 17 September, 1986

Check against Delivery

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Mugabe, Minister Chitepo,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I should like, on behalf of all of the Members of the Commission, to express to you personally, and to the people of Zimbabwe, our gratitude for hosting our meeting in Africa. Here in Harare and next week in Nairobi, we expect to obtain at first-hand the insights and advice of leading African institutions and individuals on the issues that concern us, to learn what steps you have already taken, and what measures you feel are needed to put development on a sound and sustainable path.

We have already noted with particular interest that the Government of Zimbabwe only a few days ago launched an ambitious new National Plan for conservation of resources and sustainable development. We again congratulate the Government of Zimbabwe on this progressive venture which brings out a true sense of responsibility for a common future.

The experiences we are here to share will help to broaden our understanding and, I have no doubt, inspire us in our conviction that it is possible to build a more prosperous, just and secure world for all.

Indeed, it was out of this conviction that the General Assembly of the United Nations established the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1983. The World Commission on Environment and Development is a completely independent body, free to address any issues and to present any views and recommendations. We come from all corners of the globe, North and South, East and West. Although many of us are active ministers in government, we serve on the Commission in our personal capacities.

When we were created, there was a feeling that the machinery created by governments and peoples for the management of our small planet was not working. It was necessary to re-think the issues from new perspectives, and we were asked to propose national strategies and new forms of international co-operation.

In the course of our work, we have travelled to hear the views of governments and public officials, and to interact with people through public hearings. We are particularly grateful to see so many of your people in the audience today. You are

really truly welcome. Our Commission has been specifically mandated to speak to and to hear the views of youth. During our travels, we have met with youth from many parts of the world, and they have shared with us their concerns and hopes for the future.

We are meeting today at a time when the global family is faced with a unique combination of adverse forces and challenges - a breakdown in the international economic system, underdevelopment in many parts of the world and over-consumption in others, widespread poverty, exploding population growth, severe ecological stress, a spiralling arms race, and here, in Southern Africa, racism. These forces interact. All are interdependent, none can be dealt with in isolation. In many ways, they are most evident in Africa. It is therefore fitting that our Sixth official Meeting is being held in Zimbabwe. Southern Africa occupies a central position in the network of regional solidarity that has been created to find lasting solutions to the difficult challenges facing this continent. Our mandate is a mandate for change, and the need for change in the way we manage this planet, the way we perceive and define our own national self-interests and the way nations relate to, and interact with, each other is no more evident or urgent than in relation to Africa.

It is also appropriate that we begin our discussions here today in the same venue where the Government of Zimbabwe earlier this month - and with great success - hosted the Summit of the Non-Aligned Countries. The non-aligned movement embodies principles of international co-operation which lie at the core of the Commission's mandate. In its Economic Declaration the Summit welcomed the establishment of our Commission and its objective of focussing global attention on the interrelated issues of environment and development. It expressed the hope that our work would help to mobilize a large volume of resources to enable developing countries to pursue long-term policies harmonious with environment and development objectives.

The Commission is heartened to see that the Non-Aligned Countries recognize the critical importance of incorporating environmental considerations into the development process, and we are pleased to learn of their high expectations for our work.

Mr Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'd like to share with you some thoughts I had on my long trip from the North. The geography of Africa makes a profound impression on any visitor. The sense of the land is overwhelming. The vast brown plains, the great rivers, impenetrable forests, huge lakes and desert wastelands. The

land that gave birth to mankind seems scarcely changed at all by its offspring. The majesty of the land reduces man's traces to insignificance seen from this perspective. On the ground, though, it is man - and especially woman - that impresses. In the countryside one sees that much of the land is too dry, too steep, too stony or too carved by erosion for agriculture. And yet, with enormous daily effort, families are growing food, collecting fuelwood and water, always in motion, working very hard, carrying heavy loads, digging the earth and hacking at bush. This, too, is Africa where the people and their traditions of hard work and community spirit are the richest resource.

In the past few decades we have seen the leaders and the people of newly independent nations of Africa set out with hope to develop the continent. And we have seen this development take root and begin to grow, only to be choked, as vines choke a young tree, by strangling international economic trends - falling prices for exports, rising debts to pay for imports, and misdirected aid projects. There are added difficulties posed by the fast growth in population and by the demand for more food and fuel. All this leads to insupportable inroads on the environment, followed by a decline in production, ecological stress and the tragedy of catastrophic famine. To meet these problems of sheer survival, short-term solutions have been forced on governments against the long-term interests of the land and its capacity to provide for people. It is not just economic development which is at risk. Social development, political stability, and even peace become threatened.

we know that there are many success stories in Africa. There are countries where food production has increased quite rapidly. There are also countries where, despite very low incomes, major improvements in health and education have been achieved. Yet, one can speak of a crisis in African development. The statesmen of Africa have expressed this concern in the deliberations of the Organization of African Unity and the meeting of the African Ministers of Environment. The international community has recognized the special nature of African problems in the Action Plan which emerged from the recent Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly. In fact, the governments and peoples of Africa have travelled much further along the path of self-examination and self-criticism than the rest of us.

Mr. Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this point in human history Africa occupies a special position in the global concern for development and the environment. Africa is today preoccupied first of all with survival. The OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government,

in reviewing the continent's economic situation, emphasized the priority need to ensure survival of the many millions of Africans who are victims of environmental, economic and political disasters. Their concern is the concern of us all. We must all understand the reasons for their plight and formulate innovative, concrete and realistic plans to ensure their future. And we must all work hand in hand to see that those plans are carried out. We are still discussing these issues, but believe the key lies with helping the rural sector to increase food and energy production without taking more out of the land than can be maintained for the use of generations to come.

The poor do violence to their environment because they have no alternative. Yet investment in land management and services, provision of seeds, tools, fertilizers, irrigation and, above all, reform of inequitable land holding systems and pricing policies can provide those alternatives. So can erosion control and soil regeneration. So can promotion of family planning and the education of rural populations, especially women - the food and fuel and water managers of many societies.

These are some of the things we know will relatively quickly rehabilitate the land, raise food production and rural income, check the migration to cities and enhance the quality of life. Redirecting financial resources to provide the considerable investment required involves political decisions and responsibility at the national and international levels. Can anyone here argue that we really have a choice? The decisions have been put off too long already and the results of temporizing have been tragic.

These decisions, however, must be taken in consultation and full partnership with the rural populations who will co-operate enthusiastically only when they have a stake in a sustainable future. They must not be pawns in the game, but key players.

Industrialized nations must rethink their role too. What good does it do to force a developing country to distort its use of land resources, clearing forests and replacing food crops with cash crops to repay loans if this distortion eventually results in the need for more relief aid? What good does it do to dump agricultural surpluses on a recipient country at prices that drive local farmers out of the market and out of production if this, too, results in the need for more relief aid? Where is the common sense in the fact that industrialized countries, even at the height of the flow of aid to Africa, were taking more money out of the stricken continent than they were putting in?

Environmental stress and developmental failures are not unique to Africa. Our Commission has seen variations on these themes in all the countries we have visited. The problems are planetary, but they are not insoluble. I believe that history will record that in this crisis the two greatest resources, land and people, will redeem the promise of development. If we take care of nature, nature will take care of us. This is the essence of what we call sustainable development, an idea whose time has now come.

There are many dimensions to this idea of sustainability. First, it requires the elimination of poverty and deprivation. Second, it requires the conservation and enhancement of the resource base which alone can ensure that the elimination of poverty is permanent. Third, it requires a broadening of the concept of development so that it covers not merely economic growth but also social and cultural development. Fourth, and most important, it requires the unification of economics and ecology in decision making at all levels.

This may sound obvious, but until very recently, conservation of the environment was perceived as something external to the development process. How mistaken were those views! Soon, they were amply belied by unfolding human tragedy and ecological stress. Indeed, one of the outstanding impressions that we as a Commission have acquired during our visits and deliberations in different continents is precisely the critical role that environment plays in attaining key economic, social and political development objectives. Environmental protection and development, far from being in conflict, are in fact closely interdependent - locally, nationally, regionally and globally. Our chosen title reflects this. We are the World Commission on Environment and Development. It is not one or the other, but both, or none.

The issue is not merely one of a link between environment and development but between both of these and the threats to peace. With environmental degradation deepening in many parts of the world, it is likely that hazards to peace will multiply, with military means being used or threatened to tackle what are non-military problems. Unless we deal with environment and development far more seriously than we do at present, such threats could become a reality and shatter peace, with environmental bankruptcy adding new and unpredictable twists to global and national insecurity. Armaments will not remove these threats to peace, but sustainable development and wise environmental management can.

Mr Prime Minister,

Here in Zimbabwe and in Southern Africa, countries live under the constant shadow of South African aggression. Yet, now more than ever, it is crucial that the region devote its energies and resources to environment and development issues for the survival of its nations and people. But we all realize that Southern Africa will remain a troubled region as long as apartheid exists. Many of the Members of the Commission play active parts in politics, also outside the World Commission. As Prime Minister of Norway, I would also like now to address the situation in Southern Africa.

The black population in South Africa is no longer willing to tolerate the oppressive apartheid system, and demands the right to be treated as equal citizens with the same political rights as the white population. History shows that these aspirations cannot be suppressed indefinitely. The question is not whether the apartheid system will fall, but when it will fall. The South African Government would be well advised to look to Zimbabwe in this regard.

South African attacks against Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe represent a further escalation of the conflict in Southern Africa. The Frontline States deserve our firm support in the face of South African aggression. In their recent report, the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group drew the depressing conclusion that the South African Government does not seem prepared for a genuine dialogue with the opposition, and that outside pressure is essential for any prospect of peaceful change.

I believe this is a correct conclusion and that the South African Government will only abolish apartheid when it feels it has no choice.

The case for sanctions against South Africa is a strong one. Apartheid is a flagrant violation of the most basic human rights. In today's interdependent world, the practice of race supremacy cannot be accepted, and the international community has a clear responsibility to act against apartheid and South Africa's aggression against the people of Namibia and the Frontline States. The adoption of sanctions would send a powerful message to South Africa that apartheid cannot be reformed, but must be abolished.

The Norwegian Government is presently preparing a bill on an economic boycott of South Africa, and is prepared to increase its assistance to the Southern African region in the event of South African reprisals against the SADCC countries.

The international community has an obligation to create an atmosphere conducive to peaceful change by showing determination in the fight against apartheid. By being firm in our actions we will hasten the downfall of apartheid and shorten the suffering in South Africa. Let us all join our forces to achieve this noble goal. We have no time to lose!

Mr Prime Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speaking again as the Chairman of the Commission, as we formulate our suggestions on strategies for enduring environmental security and sustainable development, we shall not forget that our primary task where Africa is concerned will be to build on and strengthen initiatives arising from Africa's own institutions. We support the initiatives taken by the Cairo Environment Ministers' Conference. We follow closely the work of the Organization of African Unity, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, and the efforts of all African governments. The task facing these organizations and governments is how to implement the strategies they have proposed in the Lagos Plan of Action. That is also the task facing the World Commission on Environment and Development and all world governments to whom the Commission, through the General Assembly, will be making its proposals.

Perhaps Africa's ordeal of drought and famine is a turning point, a shock that will bring men and nations to their senses. This wonderful planet has been likened to a living organism. In Africa it has called to us with a warning that applies to everyone, everywhere. We are not, and never can be, masters of the earth. We are merely a part of its intricate life-supporting networks. The land was here before us and it will remain when we are gone. It will sustain us if we take from it only our share - and with our ingenuity and organization, we are capable of making that share provide a good life for every man, woman and child in this and in succeeding generations. If Africa can help the rest of the human family to understand this, then we have come a long way.

Thank you.



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

THE ETHIC OF INTERNATIONALISM
A CHALLENGE TO YOUTH

Address by
Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland
Chairman
World Commission on Environment and Development

at the Graduation Ceremony
College du Lemman
Versoix, Switzerland
26 June, 1986

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a distinct pleasure and, indeed, an honour for me to be here to participate in the College du Lemman's 1986 Graduation Ceremony. Through my political work, both nationally and internationally, I have become deeply conscious of the problems which today confront our world and the challenges those problems pose for the leaders of tomorrow. I am, therefore, particularly pleased to have this unique opportunity to communicate with youth from so many countries, youth who may, and I hope will, not only be decision makers in their own countries in the years ahead, but decision makers who are committed to building a future that is more prosperous, more just and more secure for us all.

Indeed, it was out of a conviction that it is possible to build such a future that the World Commission on Environment and Development was established in 1983. At the time of the Commission's creation there was, and there still is today, a feeling that the machinery created by governments and peoples for the management of our small planet was not working; that perhaps it could not work and that we needed to re-think the issues from new perspectives.

My colleagues and I were therefore given the task of looking ahead into the next century at critical environment and development problems and proposing better ways and means for the world community to address them. We were asked to assess and propose new forms of international cooperation and whilst doing that to raise the level of peoples' understanding and to create conditions for mobilizing political will to deal with these issues in an enlightened manner.

In performing its work, the Commission is travelling to the different regions of the world not only to hear the views of governments and people, but also, to raise their commitment for the creation of a better world, a world which assures equitable distribution and access to the resources needed to satisfy human needs.

It is also important to note that our Commission has been specifically mandated to speak to and hear the views of youth. Another reason why my being here today is so important. During our travels we have met with youth from many parts of the world and they have shared with us their concerns and hopes for the future. We are also fortunate to have as our Special Advisor on Youth, Mr. Olivier Segond, the President of the Swiss Federal Youth Commission and a resident and former mayor of

Geneva who is preparing and will shortly be submitting to the Commission a report on the concerns and aspirations of young people for the future of this planet.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are today living in an era of great global concern and emergency. We are convinced of the need to respond to the challenges we confront with a global agenda for change. That is what the World Commission is all about, formulating an agenda for change, leading to practical proposals for dealing with the essential goals of environment and development, goals which if not attained will expose this world and the people who inhabit it to a continuing series of life threatening situations.

Each of you gathered here today has an important role to play in the efforts undertaken by our Commission, but I hope you will permit me to address my remarks first and foremost to the members of the student body who are present, and in particular to the members of the 1986 Graduating Class, for it is they, together with the hundreds of millions of other young people from around the globe, who constitute more than 50% of the world's population; and it is they who embody the future hopes

and aspirations for this planet into the next century. More importantly, it is they who will be called upon to exhibit the creativity, ingenuity and commitment necessary to manage our globe into the 21st century and beyond - a daunting responsibility to be sure, but a responsibility which we as parents, as educators and as political leaders must be ever conscious of their having to assume.

Members of the Graduating Class of 1986, it is to you and to many millions of others like you, that I and my political colleagues from around the world will pass the mantle of global leadership. Your success on assuming those responsibilities rests upon your awareness and understanding of the challenges you will confront and the opportunities for progress that will be placed before you.

Those of us who have closely followed the development of mankind have come to realize and understand that we are living through a profound change in the relationships between the human world and its economic and social development on the one hand and the planet earth and its biosphere and natural resources on the other. The scale and impact of our human interventions on the biosphere have reached unprecedented levels; and as we approach the gateway to the next century, the century during which you, your children and your grandchildren

will assume the responsibility for the continued progress of life on this planet, we find ourselves confronted with a situation unprecedented in human history, a situation fraught with risks but laden with opportunities. Indeed, the world's transition into the next century can, and with your understanding and commitment, I believe will, prove to be a turning point in the evolution of man and his relationship to his natural habitat.

For most of human history the pace of change in technology, social organization and material production has been quite slow and the major transformations required to adjust to these changes have taken place over many generations. In the last several decades, however, this pace of change has accelerated greatly placing immense pressures on both man's and his biosphere's ability to adapt. Changes in production and resource use, in technology, in communications and in the level and distribution of the world's population are today proceeding at a breathtaking pace; and as we look beyond the next fifteen years and into the 21st century there is little evidence to indicate that this pace of change will significantly lessen.

As an example, we can note that since the turn of this century industrial production has increased sixty fold and that four fifths of that increase has taken place in the short period between 1950 and today. Since 1950 world income has grown at

an annual rate of about 4 1/2%. In absolute terms, that means that every year we add to global production an amount equal to the total product of France and we are now approaching a \$15 trillion world economy, perhaps twenty times greater than at the beginning of this century. Over the next fifty years, the world economy could grow another 5 to 10 times, with a corresponding increase in the amount of raw materials needed to support that production and in the amount of investment needed for housing, transport, agriculture and industry. Yet isn't it not only ironic, but a persuasive indication of the malfunctioning of our global system of management, that in spite of the tremendous growth in the production and economies of nations, politicians like myself and young people like you the world over are still grappling with the problem of unemployment. To secure your future and that of your fellow students around the globe, we must find a way to balance economic growth with peoples' right to work.

The accelerating pace of population growth is equally disturbing. For centuries a doubling of population took place over a one hundred to one hundred and fifty year period, permitting adjustments to this increase to be spread over generations. Today, in many parts of the world a doubling of population now occurs within a twenty five to thirty year period, meaning that adjustments have to be made within the life span of one generation. It is hard to imagine, but true,

that more people will be added to this planet in the five thousand days remaining between now and the end of this century than existed at the beginning of this century.

The distribution pattern of this exploding population rate is also a matter of deep concern. The urban population in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, for instance, is increasing by more than 40 million people per year, meaning that every twelve months it will be necessary to create an urban infrastructure equivalent to two to three Mexico cities.

The effects of these recent trends on the world's environment and correspondingly on its development potential have been equally profound. Every year over 6 million hectares of land are degraded to desert-like conditions. In this century alone, half of the forest cover of the earth has been lost and each year 11 million hectares of tropical forests, which are now known to function as the lungs of the earth, are destroyed. Acid rain, another result of our rush to increase production and the benefits of development, is destroying our lakes and forests at an alarming rate and evidence is mounting that in northern Europe it may be rendering the soil incapable of supporting vegetation.

Every year our industries are releasing into the atmosphere more than 1 ton of carbon emissions for every man, woman and child on earth, making it, if not a certainty, then a distinct probability that before the middle of the next century global temperatures will increase sufficiently to cause a significant rise in sea levels and an inundation of coastal areas. In fact, leading scientists testifying before a U.S. Senate sub-committee just two weeks ago warned that global warming is inevitable noting that only its magnitude and timing were in question. According to their predictions, a three foot rise in sea levels causing permanent flooding of cities like Cairo and New Orleans and inundation of huge tracts of land in places like Bangladesh, California and the Netherlands can be expected within the next 30 - 40 years - a time when you will have arrived at the peak period of your lives and be looking forward to the hopes and aspirations of your children. The economic and social consequences of this eventuality, not only for the countries most immediately effected but for the globe as a whole, are almost beyond comprehension; and yet in the face of such strong evidence of an almost certain catastrophe, many governments still stand idly by and wait to be convinced of the need to act. Fortunately for them, most of the political leaders of today will not be here to face the reality and consequences of their indecision. Unfortunately, you and your children will be.

The impacts of the recent trends I have described are, of course, felt by nations and peoples the world over. But their effects are not distributed equally throughout the globe. Rather they hit hardest those countries and regions of the world least able to absorb them. And here I speak of the developing countries, many of which have seen a massive deterioration of their environment and the natural resource base required for their future development. The situation which has unfolded in sub-Saharan Africa is but one example of the effects of misguided environment and development policy. The terrible famines there are the worst disasters since the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands, a figure that could reach millions, have paid with their lives, after weeks and months of starvation and agony, for failures in environment and development policy. Nothing could illustrate more starkly the need for new direction, and the urgency for us all to take a new, independent look at these crucial global issues.

In recent decades, the rising pace and scale of human interventions on the earth's natural systems have been coupled with a rising level of international economic interdependence between nations. Indeed, we now live with a global economy, where the domestic economic policies of one country (or group of countries) generates immediate pressures through international trade and finance on the economies and resource systems of other countries. In many developing countries the

entire complex of environment and development problems they face is linked to their position in the world economy. This is particularly true in those developing countries saddled with debt, where their compelling drive to produce export crops and primary products to obtain foreign currency to service their debt is severely degrading the resource base necessary to sustain their future development.

Overriding all of these concerns is the ever present threat of nuclear destruction, which hangs over our planet like a dark cloud and affects the lives and expectations of people the world over, particularly you, the young, who look to the future with such high hopes and expectations. In fact, the prospect of nuclear destruction is the ultimate reminder of our need to work together to ensure a common future. In a world where basic human needs are beyond the reach of millions, it is impossible to comprehend the rationale for governments spending billions of dollars a year on a spiralling arsenal for human destruction. Will yours be the first generation to bring a halt to the arms race the ultimate consequences of which could be the destruction of our planet's life support system on which the needs of future generations depend? This is indeed a challenge that we, your elders, have not succeeded in fulfilling. It is a challenge that is so compelling, so great and so decisive that you have every reason to expect those who are responsible for the negotiations on this issue and who meet

here in Geneva, a city which has for decades been associated with the spirit of peace, to pave the way for a real breakthrough. Indeed, to achieve true global security you must call upon those responsible to embrace "the spirit of Geneva".

It is obvious that the combination and confluence of all of these recent developments are severely restricting the world's potential for future development. But more disturbingly they are exposing all of us to an ever increasing threat of destructive conflict and ecological stress that could deprive future generations not only of their right to participate in the benefits of development but even of their right to live.

The pace, scale and complexity of our interventions in the earth's natural systems, the growing economic interdependency of countries and peoples and the ever present threat of nuclear annihilation has brought many of us to the realization that we can no longer think of the world as a conglomerate of independent, economic, social and political units, each endowed with the unfettered freedom to decide its own destinies. Instead, we must now recognize that we live in an ever shrinking world, one which is increasingly interdependent and one in which we have an ever growing need to rely upon each other. Indeed our world has been described, and I think accurately so, as a global village, where reliance on, and respect for, the skills, contributions and talents of all inhabitants is essential to achieve a common good.

Regrettably, however, our global village still contains enormous inequities. While some of us consume the earth's resources at a rate that would leave little for future generations, others, many more in number, consume far too little and live a life of hunger, squalor, disease and early death. These inequities must also be ameliorated if we are to create a world which is secure for us all. But this will not and cannot happen unless each one of us accepts a share in the responsibility for achieving the removal of these disparities. We must all, each of us, join in a concerted effort to manage the welfare of this planet for the benefit of all who inhabit it.

As young people poised on the threshold of professional and political maturity, you might well ask why we who hold the mantle of national and world leadership have not yet resolved these problems? I must tell you that man's inability to solve the problems he now confronts is not defined by physical science or his lack of understanding of what needs to be done. It is determined rather by his refusal to draw political conclusions and to make that possible which he knows to be necessary. Vested interests, both of individuals and nations and plain lack of vision and imagination have barred him from using his ingenuity and applying his creativity to find the solutions which we all know are attainable. It is our task, yours and mine, as free thinking, concerned individuals to remove these constraints and change the way this world is managed.

As you turn the pages of history into the 21st century your imperative must be to accept the responsibility for managing this planet in such a way that it assures not only that future generations in all societies can look to the middle of the next century and beyond with a feeling of security but also with the knowledge and assurance that their basic needs will be met and met in a way that does not diminish the needs of other societies or the needs of future generations to come.

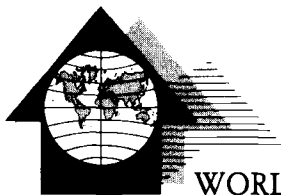
We on the Commission can and shall in our report chart a course for the sustainable development of this planet into the next century, but it will be you, the students of today, who will have the responsibility to take our framework for action and translate the opportunities it presents into human progress. The challenges you face are immense, but the opportunities for change are equally as great. I am convinced that you can successfully confront the challenges and benefit from the opportunities, but to succeed you will need to adopt a new ethic, accept a new moral imperative and achieve a new level of international awareness. Above all else, you will need to apply a new way of thinking, a new mind-set that has as its basic tenet a commitment to uphold the right of all peoples and nations to participate equitably in the resources of this planet and the benefits of the development processes that they support.

During your time here at the College du Lemman each of you has shared your life with fellow students from 75 countries and been exposed to the challenges and opportunities that only international living can provide. Indeed, you are all fortunate in having had the opportunity to begin your early lives as emerging internationalists.

While following your studies, you have been able to forge relations and establish trust with your classmates from different countries and different cultures. Indeed, I suspect that many of the relations formed between yourselves have transcended existing political boundaries and conflicts and have been forged on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. As you leave the College du Lemman and proceed towards the 21st century to take on positions of responsibility within your own countries you must carry the lessons of these experiences with you and remember that international cooperation begins in the hearts and minds of people, people like yourselves.

Through your experiences here at the College du Lemman you have been exposed to and shared in the new ethic of internationalism. The challenge before you, is to return to your countries and to assume your future professional and political responsibilities while retaining a deep commitment to that ethic.

In closing I would like to call upon you to join with me in making a commitment to strive for a more livable, non-violent planet. To share with me a deep concern for the world's poor and to affirm with me both the integrity, stability and beauty of the ecosystems we have inherited and the imperative of social justice for all of the world's people. This is the ethic of internationalism which if embraced by you can make our world's transition into the 21st century a landmark in human history.



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Address by
Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland
Chairman
World Commission on Environment
and Development

at the Opening Session of the
Fifth Meeting of the Commission
Ottawa, Canada
26 May, 1986

Mr Minister, Your Excellencies, Ladies
and Gentlemen,

I want to thank the Government of Canada for its generous invitation to the World Commission on Environment and Development to hold its fifth meeting in Ottawa. During the past few days, the Commission has seen a great deal of your enormous and magnificent country. Before we leave, we will have been exposed to many of your environment and development problems, some of which are very familiar in many other parts of the world. Indeed, if I may be allowed a personal note, during my five years as Minister of the Environment, I found that Canada and Norway were almost invariably allies in the battle for a better global environment. In Vancouver, Edmonton and Toronto, we met and talked with leaders from all the Provinces, the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Next week, the Vice Chairman and other Commissioners will be meeting with leaders in Eastern Canada.

Canada's invitation to host our meetings is further evidence of your leadership on environment and development issues, leadership which began in the mid-1960s, some would say much earlier. You were a leader in

the Stockholm Conference in 1972. You hosted the Habitat Conference in 1976. You have provided many citizens who have achieved distinction as international leaders in environment and development. Maurice Strong, now a member of the Commission; Jim MacNeill, now our Secretary General; David Munro, an active leader on the World Conservation Strategy; and others. You played a prominent role in the establishment of the Commission, and you have been a major source of support for our work, for which I wish to express our full appreciation.

The Commission feels very strongly that it is meeting here among kindred spirits and friends.

This atmosphere is important to us because our meetings this week are the most crucial in the work of the Commission to date.

During the past eighteen months, we have been engaged in a major effort of fact-finding on the critical issues of environment and development. Our meetings this week, including these two days of Public Hearings, will mark the peak of this phase of our work. We have been very impressed with the submissions that have been prepared for us, and we are looking forward to meeting with those who are on the leading edge of North American thought and leadership on environment and development questions.

THE GREAT TRANSITION

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I doubt that there has ever been a time, including the period prior to

the 1972 Stockholm Conference, when the world was in such great need of leadership on the interrelated issues of environment and development.

We are living through a very profound change in relationships between the human world and its development on the one hand, and the planet earth and its biosphere on the other.

For the past two centuries our numbers have increased and our economies have expanded largely on the presumption that the world and its development was comfortably separate from its environment. Develop we must. On that we had no choice. But the environment was something else. On that we had a choice, or so we argued and so we acted. Should we add on measures to protect the environment and sustain and renew our resources, or should we not? The truth is, we really never did have that choice. Now we have entered a new phase in the relationship between economic development and the environment, locally, regionally and globally, but to persist in the myth that we still have a choice will place both environment and development in peril.

The dominant characteristic of this new phase is interdependence, an accelerating and irreversible interdependence between economic development on the one hand and the ecosystems on which it depends on the other. The two are now completely intermeshed, united by the dynamics of technological, ecological, economic, demographic and other forces.

The momentum of population growth is one measure of this new phase. It is hard to grasp that more people will be added to the planet in the five thousand days remaining between now and the end of this century than existed at the beginning of this century.

Do we need to worry about the environmental consequences of population growth? The issue is not primarily that it could pose ultimately unmanageable pressures on global resources. Frankly, the small

number of affluent people on the earth consume by far the greater part of the world's resources. The real issue is that population growth is increasingly concentrated in resource-poor households and in regions facing ecological stress. The greater gains from an active development-based population control policy will be the improvement in living standards in such poor households and disadvantaged regions.

But the demographic momentum is only one measure of the great transition through which we are living. The projected growth in the world's economy is another. We are now approaching a \$15 trillion world economy, perhaps twenty times greater in real terms than at the beginning of the century.

Over the next half century, the world economy could grow another 5 to 10 times, with a corresponding increase in the stock of planetary investment in houses, transport, agriculture, industry. Fortunately, the resource and environment content of growth has gone down, thanks to technological advances and certain economic and other circumstances. And it is vital that the resource and environment content of growth continues to be reduced in the future.

A NEW CLASS OF ISSUES

The transition is evident in many other areas: technological, social, cultural, political, and it has given rise to a new class of issues that are not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively different from anything in our historical experience.

These issues are marked by the same characteristics as the transition itself; a fast, rising pace of change along with an enormous increase in the geographical reach of the impacts of that change. And a growing interdependence between economic development and the ecosystems on which it depends.

The transition has changed the conditions for successful management and created new imperatives for international co-operation. The environmental effects of agriculture, industry, energy and transportation were once largely local in character, and could be managed on that basis. Today, they are inescapably regional and global, and must be managed accordingly. The seventy per cent of the planet that make up the global commons will not escape the impact of the transition. The oceans, outer space, Antarctic can only be managed on an international basis, and we must urgently derive effective means for that purpose.

The transition has changed completely the way in which we must think about environment and development. In the past, our main concern centred on the effects of development on the environment. Today, we need to be just as concerned about the links from the environment to the economy. In area after area, it is these reverse effects that condition the potential for development.

The new issues are much more difficult to deal with than those of an earlier generation. Recent events demonstrate, for example, that these issues are plagued by questions of uncertainty and raise fundamental questions about the limits of sovereignty. Does one nation have the right to employ technologies, and processes and designs that impose on its neighbours high levels of risk from accidents, even if the probability of that accident is very low? Does our generation have the right to impose such risks on the next generation, or even to impose the high costs of managing such risks over several generations, long after any possible economic and social benefits have been captured by our generation?

NEW ISSUES ARE INHERENTLY INTERNATIONAL

The new issues cannot be separated from the policies that underpin them. Even though these policies may be considered matters of

strictly national concern, their capacity to undermine the essential ecological basis for development in other countries makes them matters of international concern.

Agriculture is one of the best examples of a sector for which national policies have been designed year after year to secure short-term gains in production and profitability, without regard to their longer term international environmental consequences.

These policies have been on the agenda of many international economic organizations over the years and the recent Summit in Tokyo considered them. In its communique, the Summit recognized that the nations of Europe, Japan and North America face a common and highly intractable problem in agriculture, which also harms the economies of certain developing countries. What the Summit did not recognize was that the world can no longer deal with the international economic and trade consequences of national agricultural policies without at the same time, and on the same agenda, dealing with their environmental consequences.

There are clear links between the incentive-driven farm surpluses of North America and Europe and the growing threats to sustainable agriculture in these regions and in many developing countries.

These policies were originally intended to sustain the income of farmers in various ways, an objective that most nations feel is essential for social, economic and, even, environmental reasons. But these policies have lost their way. In order to increase agricultural production and profitability in the short-term, they have caused the occupation of marginal lands in many areas and the clearance of forests and woodlands essential for water and soil conservation. They have induced farmers to over-use pesticides and fertilizers, to mine underground and to waste surface waters for irrigation. In a growing number of areas, they have led to erosion and

other forms of permanent degradation of the soil and water base. The result has been lower productivity and great economic losses to the agricultural community.

Your own Canadian Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forests and Fisheries recently reported that "soil degradation is costing Canadian farmers \$1.0 billion per year in lost farm income", and the "current agricultural system is obviously not a sustainable one." Reports from the United States and Europe tell a similar story, only worse.

Virtually the entire food cycle in North America and Western Europe now attracts direct or indirect subsidies. The system has become extremely expensive, has created vast surpluses and has also created a context in which it is politically attractive, and often cheaper, to ship those surpluses at subsidized prices or as food aid on a permanent basis rather than store them.

Let us be clear - there is no doubt that food aid is essential to meet temporary deficits and in emergency situations - and Canada and other countries have a proud record in this regard. But outside of emergency situations, food aid must be provided with great care and under conditions which reduce continuing dependency and support efforts to increase local production. Otherwise, continuing food aid will only compound the real problems of receiving countries.

In fact, the most serious consequence of this cluster of policies is the depressive effect they have on the difficult measures needed to reorient agricultural policies in the receiving nations. Rising numbers of rural poor thus find themselves remaining on the fringes of the development process longer than they otherwise would. Their marginal status drives them to seek their livelihoods in marginal environments. They over-harvest fuelwood stocks, and their livestock over-graze grasslands. They may engage in slash-and-burn farming of forest lands, inducing erosion and stimulating the spread of deserts.

And so this cluster of policies, fragmented in their origin, ends up accelerating the degradation of the resource base for agriculture and food security not only in the industrialized market economies but also in developing economies. Everyone loses.

Looking to the year 2,000 and beyond, it is clear that these policies cannot be sustained. They must be changed. Is there any reason why we cannot support farm income in industrialized countries through an incentive structure that both eliminates costly surpluses and encourages farm practices and sustain, and even enhance, the essential soil and water base for agriculture? Is there any reason why we cannot provide essential assistance to governments in Africa and other developing countries in ways that will enable them to create incentive structures for their farmers - incentive structures that encourage them to reverse ecologically-destructive farm practices that remove the forests, erode the land and advance the deserts; incentive structures that would encourage them to grow more of their own food, knowing they have an assured market? Is there any reason why we cannot remove protectionist measures against food products such as sugar on which many countries of the Third World depend, and in which they have a clear comparative advantage?

There are no good reasons. Too many agricultural and related trade and aid policies today, in all countries, are ecologically blind. They need to be rethought and reoriented. They need to be given new foundations in both environment and economics. The two are inseparable. Environment needs to be built firmly into the agricultural, economic and trade agendas of national and international bodies.

Policies in many other areas tell a similar story. The processes of tropical deforestation and loss of genetic resources are similarly rooted in a complex mix of settlement, economic, aid and trade policies. So are certain processes of

industrialization based on old resource and energy consuming, unsafe, environmentally inefficient and, hence, economically uncompetitive technologies.

These processes can all be reversed. We have the means. In every industry, including agriculture and forestry, or chemicals and steel, we have many leading examples of success in achieving economically and ecologically sustainable forms of development.

Let me turn to another complex of policies centred on energy. Until now, as we all know, air pollution and acidification of the environment have been generally treated as two separate and distinct issues. Measures taken by industrialized countries to control air pollution (high stacks, for example) very often simply transferred the problem to the interland of their own country or to another country.

This is quite clear from the rapid rise in transboundary air pollution in Europe and North America and in the widespread acidification of the environment that has followed - sterile lakes, dead forests and, scientist now fear, sour, acid soils. But both air pollution and acid rain are in fact linked through their common sources in the combustion of fossil fuels, whether in stationary power plants, industry and homes, or in mobile transportation.

If we could use less fuel for the same level of economic activity, we would do something significant to lessen both air pollution and acid rain. And on this front, there is good news. During the past decade, a unit of growth in the gross national product started to take less than a unit of growth in energy consumption. Economic growth no longer implies a parallel growth in smoke stacks. In fact, the energy content of growth fell in some countries from 1.2 to 0.5 units. The result is substantial gains in overall economic efficiency and competitiveness, and substantial reductions in environmental damage and the economic costs of that damage.

But the momentum that produced energy efficiency gains of, latterly, 2 per cent per year is now threatened by the third oil shock. With the falling price of oil, the past gains could quickly be lost. That would be tragic because both air pollution and acidification have reached dramatic levels that now threaten the basis for future development in main areas.

The experience of Tokyo, London, New York, Montreal and many other cities - those in the Ruhr, for example - demonstrate that gross air pollution can be rolled back. But most of the world's cities have not shared in this experience. In fact, in many cities today, air pollution has reached levels that exceed by far the worst case of the 60's in the western industrialized countries, and they are intensifying daily.

The evidence underlying the urgent need for action on the sources of acid rain is mounting faster than scientists and governments can assess it. Up to now, the greatest damage has been reported over Eastern and Western Europe, but evidence of acid rain damage is now beginning to emerge in the newly industrialized countries of Asia and Latin America. This is part of a general trend in which the locus at the world's environmental problems is moving South. China and some other countries basing their industrialization on high sulphur coal, are particularly vulnerable to acidification and so, of course, are countries downwind from them, such as Japan. All of these countries have time to prevent what is happening in North America and Europe.

There is today absolutely no excuse for inaction on the interrelated issues of air pollution and acid rain.

We know the sources. We know the effects. We have the technologies. The costs of inaction are too high to be sustained. Action is easily within our reach. It would generate jobs in the short run and greatly increase the potential for future growth of our economies.

In the industrialized countries, we are paying the costs of inaction; we must now begin to pay the costs both of restoring reversible damage and of preventing future damage. Developing countries can't afford to pay the environmental costs of energy development three times. Once is enough. But that means building in prevention from the start.

The experience of the past decade demonstrates that the most effective measures to prevent future damage is to establish energy prices high enough to encourage both a steady increase in energy productivity and a shift away from fossil fuels. If the present low price of oil lasts for too long, we could rapidly lose the gains that we have made in these areas over the past decade. Worse still, planning the future on the basis of cheap energy will rebound with a vengeance against both development and environment when prices rise, as they will.

If we could sustain increases in energy productivity over the next 50 years or so, and there is good evidence that we could, without any reduction in the tempo of growth, we could halve the output of carbon dioxide globally. This would buy time desperately needed to remove some of the real uncertainties concerning perhaps the greatest pending threat to the global environment - climatic change from rising levels of "green house" gases.

Many governments, many people see nuclear energy as one answer to reducing the environmental costs that arise from fossil fuel consumption. These same nations, however, have found it difficult to come to grips with many of the issues raised by nuclear energy; the issues of risk and safety, I mentioned in the beginning; the technology and siting of the facilities for the permanent disposal of long-lived, high-level nuclear wastes; the separation of peaceful and military uses of the nuclear plants.

The tragedy of Chernobyl could have happened anywhere, and it ensures that the debate on these issues will

continue in all countries. But the perspective will be different. Chernobyl has dramatized once again that, as Marshall McLuhan said, we are living in a Global Village and that our Only One Earth compels us to share a common destiny.

On behalf of the Commission, I asked the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency to provide us with their report on the accident and its implications, and we will be considering it carefully, before drawing our conclusions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations General Assembly asked the Commission to take a fresh look at the critical issues of environment and development and to work out some concrete recommendations for action now.

During the meetings this week, the Commission will receive the final reports from the Advisory Panels we established to advise on three of the complex issues on the Commission's agenda, namely: energy, food security and industry. These reports prepared by a group of world scale experts from around the globe have taken eighteen months to compile, and we are most anxious to discuss the recommendations they contain. We will also be considering international economic relations as they relate to these and other areas on our agenda, including science and technology.

The United Nations General Assembly also asked us to consider and make recommendations on strengthening international co-operation on these issues. Our work on this aspect of our mandate will move into high gear after our meeting here in Ottawa, but it is clear that it is in this area that we face the greatest challenge.

The Commission is not a doomsday body - it is a body marked by optimism and realism, based on the remarkable achievements of the past few decades, based on the capacity of science and technology, based on the growing awareness of the mutual

interdependence of the environment and the economy, and based on the demonstrated capacity of man to adapt and adjust to changing circumstances.

Man will certainly get through the great transition now underway, but if we are to seize more of the opportunities and avoid many of the crises on the road, we will need to consider significant changes in many areas and most particularly, in the area of international co-operation.

There is a large gap between our capacity to change the biosphere through development, which is leaping ahead at unprecedented rates, and our capacity to manage those changes in the interests of both the biosphere and development. This is true at all levels, local, regional and global.

And the gap is growing. One of the paradoxes of the past decade has been the decline in commitment to international co-operation and multilateralism in face of the growing need for it. This is perhaps most evident in the fields of environment and development, where the transition carries entirely new imperatives for both multilateralism and international co-operation.

Some of our present difficulties probably arise from the feeling that many of our institutions were designed to deal with an earlier generation of issues. Today's issues require comprehensive approaches, but these are impeded by institutional independence, fragmentation and narrow mandates. And, as we have learned from our Public Hearings, there is today a need for open involvement of citizen, groups, non-governmental organizations and industry with a much more open access to information critical to health, safety and the environment. This too often is impeded by closed processes and secrecy.

We have a twentieth century need and a twenty first century imperative to manage issues that reach across frontiers and that involve the global commons. But this clashes with concepts of sovereignty and security

inherited largely from former centuries. We need new concepts of management that both preserve the essential sovereignty of the individual, his culture, community and nation, and permit the degree of management at the regional and global level needed to guide our common destiny on our One Earth.

The conditions for successfully governing ourselves and our affairs have changed - locally, nationally and internationally. The forces which condition the new reality belong less and less to simple local or national systems and more and more to complex and interdependent regional and world systems. We must reform and adapt our institutions in time so that we can manage the new issues, confront the challenges and seize the opportunities they present.

While the Commission is concerned about the critical trends, it is equally impressed by the opportunities that exist for a new era of positive and sustainable growth. We have the means and we can provide measures and incentives to encourage forms of growth that continually enhance the potential for development, human and social. Only in this way can we build a future that is more just, more secure and more prosperous for us all.

OPENING STATEMENT

by

MRS GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

CHAIRMAN

WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

PUBLIC HEARINGS - BRASILIA

30 OCTOBER 1985

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here in Brasilia, the beautiful capital of a magnificent country.

We have all been looking forward to coming here, after spending an interesting week in the State of Sao Paulo.

Our Commission, the World Commission on Environment and Development, is an independent body. It cooperates with, and addresses itself to, governments, concerned citizens, non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

Its establishment reflects the high priority assigned to environment and development by the international community. It has been set in place at a time when the world is witnessing a decline in multi-lateral cooperation, in spite of the fact that the need for such cooperation is rising.

The Commission has made it a matter of policy to hold its meetings in different countries so it can be exposed to a wide variety of views. In this way, it can get acquainted at first hand with problems at a field level and can enrich its understanding with direct and practical experience.

From these perspectives, our meeting here, in the largest country of Latin America, is important for two reasons: the first, is the critical position ^{of} in this continent in the global perspectives of development and environment for the year 2000 and beyond. The second, is that your present position illustrates dramatically the condition of developing countries today - particularly with regard to the impact of the international economic crisis and the debt burden.

That is why the Public Hearings we have been conducting here in Brazil are so instructive and illuminating for the Commission. During its visit to Cubatao, the Commission witnessed at first hand the consequences of industrial policies which do not incorporate a sensitivity and awareness of their environmental impacts. From this arises the need to react to an unsustainable situation and cure it at great expense, after substantial damage to people, and to the natural environment has been done. Would it not have been much better to incorporate environmental concerns as a forethought rather than as a far more expensive afterthought?

Indeed, environment must become the essence of political forethought.

Some of us will be visiting Amazonia. We look forward to experiencing first hand the tropical forests of the Amazon which, as you well know, are famous the world over. It is there that you confront today the problem of achieving a rational process of sustainable development rather than unintentional desertification. As we have seen in another major continent, desertification means poverty, conflict and death.

Ours is a world commission. Our perspective is international and our main theme is how to achieve sustainable development. We recognize that poverty is at the core of most of the problems in the field of environment and development. Poverty is the worst pollution of all. It is also the major source of pollution.

Although they may seem remote, international economic relations bear heavily on the plight of poor people. Those who can least afford it have to carry the heaviest burdens. We do need improved and more equitable international economic relations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Developing countries used to think of the environment as a concern of the rich nations of the world - something to worry about after industrialization - not before.

Experience has taught us something different. There are some who may still hold such views, but most countries are now coming to recognize that any development which does not take environment into consideration is unsustainable.

As a Commission, we shall not confine ourselves to considering the effects of environmental problems. We shall focus, rather, on their sources - in economic policy, industrial policies, energy policies, agricultural policies - thus indeed, in most of the policy fields of government. We are not just addressing governmental agencies responsible for environment. The Commission intends to communicate directly with all those authorities which shape the fundamental policies which impact on the environment.

Our Public Hearings have been a mechanism for us to listen directly to societies and to people. We have heard people from all walks of life express their concern about the degradation of their environment and we have heard them advance proposals for stopping it in the future. The Public Hearings have been an exercise in democracy, and we have seen democracy work.

It is important for the Commission to be able to visit Brazil at a time when this great country has entered upon a new and democratic phase in its development.

It matters to all of us that you succeed.

Without democracy the problems of environment and development will even be more intractable than they have become already.

But with democracy the energies of the people can be mobilized for the construction of a better future - our common future.

ADDRESS BY MRS GRO BRUNDTLAND, CHAIRMAN OF THE
WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT
FOR PRESS SEMINAR, SAO PAULO 27 OCTOBER 1985

It is a great pleasure to be with you here today, in Sao Paulo.

The Brazilian colleagues here, and those of you who work in Brazil, will already be familiar with the environment and development challenges faced by this great country, which is so rich in human resources, and natural resources.

Those of us who come from other continents, but who have just visited Cubatao, Serra do Mar and Piracicaba, already have a first-hand idea of the size of the problems, and the effort that is going into their solution.

We will learn more in the course of this seminar about some of the pressing environmental issues of Latin America.

Our perspective is that of sustainable development.

Brazil's population, now some 137 million people, is likely to grow to 281 million before the growth levels out. Brazil is a rich country in terms of natural resources and choosing environmentally sound paths to development constitutes a major challenge.

Brazil can hardly afford not to develop its natural resources. In the Amazon basin, for example, there are enormous hydropower and mineral resources to be exploited.

Yet at the same time, Amazonia contains the biggest area of tropical moist forest in the world. Its ecological riches, its potential wealth as a pool of genetic resources, and its climatic role, are most wholly unexplored. Three-fifths of the Amazonian forest are part of the sovereign state of Brazil, but its future is also of global concern.

What little evidence there is suggests that the size of the Amazon rain forest may be halved by the year 2000. This, it seems, may affect the climate of the whole Amazon basin, and the surrounding areas, which will become much drier.

Is this a problem only for Brazil? I do not think so. We live in an intricate and inter-dependent world, where the clearing of tropical forest for timber, or for cattle-raising, has global repercussions.

These repercussions are complex and hard to document. But we know, from the day to day reports of the media you write for, that they are real.

A first problem in the South and East of the Amazon basin is : how to set up a rational process of sustainable development, rather than an unintentional process of desertification, which would lead to poverty and conflict.

A second, and tougher problem is : What is the responsibility of the world community to foot the bill for the costs of environmental action? Not only in the sense of the costs conservation and protection, but in the much wider sense of international relations on a just and equal basis.

Another example of our agenda is that of the "mega-cities" of Latin America. Sao Paulo, by the year 2000, may be a megalopolis of 26 million people, and Rio a city of 19 million. Already, the major cities of the so-called "Third World" are surrounded by slums and shanty-towns. If they continue to grow, where is their drinking water supply to come from, or the housing for the poor, the transport, the schools and health services?

These are not "environmental" questions in a narrow sense. In any large, modern democratic society they are key political issues: of resource management, of social equity, and of the distribution of the proceeds of investment in industrial or agricultural development.

I know there is a lively debate on these issues in Brazil. In the next few days we will be able to see the thinking and management which are being used to tackle them by those responsible for the Brazilian environment.

I am giving Brazilian examples, because we are here as guests in Sao Paulo. But as Chairman of an independent international Commission, I will return to the global aspects of environment and development problems.

Almost all environment problems are interlinked, complex processes which cannot be tackled only at a national level.

One hundred years ago, my own country, Norway, had a farming and fishing economy, of isolated and scattered communities. We have since industrialized, and discovered vast reserves - one hundred year's worth of proven reserves - of that

And yet, our forests and lakes and soils are being destroyed by acid pollution. At least 63 percent, and maybe as much as 92 percent, of the sulphur emissions which are acidifying our land, killing our trees and poisoning our lakes, come from other countries in Europe: from Britain, Germany, from Poland and elsewhere.

Norway cannot act by itself to stop acid pollution. It can do so only in agreement with other countries, by recognizing an international problem, and seeking an international solution. I wonder whether the same is not true for Brazil, where trees in the forest reserve of Serra do Mar are dying from the acid pollution of imported industrial technologies in Cubatao.

For a full understanding of the threat to tropical rain forests, or the urban problems of the Third World, we cannot ignore international economic relations.

Forests are being cut down, for example, to earn the export revenues from tropical timber in order to service foreign debt. And when the prices of major export commodities in the world market are depressed, there is pressure to turn yet more land to cash crops, reducing forest cover, food production and food security.

There is no doubt that international economic relations work in favour of the rich countries, and at the expense of poorer countries. Worse still, the international monetary system ensures that the burden of "adjustment", in order to keep an international credit-rating, falls on the poor. Cuts in public spending, and increases in the prices of basic necessities, hit hardest the rural poor and the shanty-town dwellers.

These external pressures on the development of the Third World countries cannot be denied. They also have a far-reaching effect on the environment: not least because of more "slash and burn" destruction of forests by hungry farmers, and a bigger influx to the cities, of people who can no longer survive in an impoverished rural environment.

The debt burden is increasing and the poor countries find it very difficult to obtain credits. It is clear that if more resources go into debt servicing, or if the terms of trade deteriorate, or if development aid is cut or comes with more strings, there are less resources available for development.

And then everyone is poorer, there is less to invest, and the investors cut corners at the expense of the environment. Quick returns become the order of the day, regardless of the longer-term needs of sustainable development for planet earth and its people.

Sustainable development calls for extra investment, considerable political will, and broadly-based support. These conditions become that much harder at a time of global economic crisis, austerity plans and a general drift away from international co-operation. Better North-South relations, and a more equitable international economic order, are essential if we are to build a future for our children which is more prosperous, more just and more secure. In an age of weapons of mass destruction security can no longer be achieved at the expense of adversaries. Nations have to cooperate in order build a common security.

Let me finish this introduction by talking briefly about the Commission and its work. The Commission was setup in 1984, as an independent body, to look at critical environment and development problems, and propose better ways for the world community to tackle them.

We are still at a stage of fact-finding and discussion, which we are making as open as possible. I think it is the first time a Commission of this kind has held public hearings, for individual experts and non-governmental organizations to be able to voice their concerns. We have already held such hearings in Indonesia and in Norway, and will look forward to the sessions in Sao Paulo and Brasilia in the next few days.

During this and further meetings we will prepare our report, which we expect to release early in 1987.

The Commission has members from 22 countries, and of course there are sometimes differences of view. We are still talking, and do not yet have firm conclusions, as a Commission. But many of us do have strong views on a number of the issues we are examining, and I and my colleagues will be glad to share them with you in the next few days.

Let me conclude by saying how important I believe your own role is, as journalists.

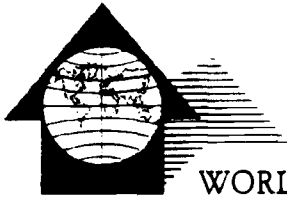
The Commission itself, especially in this fact-finding stage, is maybe not the most newsworthy. But we are developing a report which must be a clear and credible "message" for the world community, and we will need your professional help in broadcasting that message, as widely as possible.

Sound environment and development policies will only be given the priority they deserve by governments, by businesses and by the world community if they are not put much, much higher on the political agenda.

We all know the media have a key role in this : both by informing, so that the issues can be discussed by an informed public: and because of the role journalists play as leaders of opinion.

So, as we start our seminar, I would like to say: I and my colleagues are here to be briefed, not just to brief: to listen, not just to talkö and to learn from you, especially, the best ways of communicating our concerns to the widest possible public.

With which, let me thank you all for coming, let me thank our Brazilian hosts for their very open and hospitable welcome: and let us start our discussion.



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Address by
Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland
Chairman
at the Opening Session of the
Fourth Meeting of the Commission
Sao Paulo, Brazil
October 28, 1985

Ladies and gentlemen, your
Excellencies,

It is with excitement and a great sense of satisfaction that I and my fellow Commissioners embark on our Fourth Meeting here in Sao Paulo. I wish to express our heartfelt thanks to the State Government of Sao Paulo for having taken the initiative to extend the invitation to the Commission and for making this gathering possible, to the Federal Government of Brazil for giving us its support and full co-operation, to the people of Brazil for embracing us with their traditional hospitality and warmth, and to CETESB and the State Council for the Environment for hosting and helping us organize the meeting. I thank you all for being here this morning. My special thanks go to our Commissioner Paulo Nogueira-Neto who had such an important role in bringing the Commission to Brazil and in making our stay an eventful and interesting one.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The World Commission on Environment and Development was established, following a recommendation by the General Assembly of the United Nations, as an independent commission, composed of eminent individuals from public life, acting in their personal capacity.

The establishment of the Commission reflects the high priority assigned to the environment and development issues by the General Assembly, as well as its concern about current trends. It has been established at a time when we have the paradox of a decline in international co-operation and in multilateralism even though global interdependence is increasing. There are many reasons for this which I will not go into but I believe that a common sense of responsibility for the global environment can form the basis for a new phase of international co-operation for development. But this requires a better understanding of problems and constraints. And that is why our Commission places so much importance on meetings like this.

Our Commission has made it a matter of policy to hold its meetings in different countries, to be exposed to a wide variety of views, to get acquainted first hand with problems at a field level and to enrich our understanding with practical experience. By the end of our assignment, we will have acquired a unique first hand global perspective which will be invaluable in forging our common statement and recommendations.

Our meeting here on Latin American soil represents a key link in this process. Not only because Latin America plays a very central and critical role in the evolving global environment and development perspective for the year 2000 and beyond; but also because its experience, in particular the effects of the international economic crisis and of the debt burden, have a great deal to tell us about the situation in the developing countries and about the North-South dimension of environment and development issues.

Being in Brazil adds a very special meaning and value to this fourth, midway meeting of the Commission. Brazil assembles within a single nation a whole spectrum of issues and challenges, ranging from those that have to do with underdevelopment, poverty and the related environmental degradation, to those related to the leading edge of science, technology and industrialization.

Let me mention a few points arising from our site visits, which are relevant to our global inquiry, and especially to our agenda here in Sao Paulo. As you know, here we shall be discussing in particular human settlements, tropical forests and the link between international economic relations, environment and development.

In the few days we have already spent here in Brazil, we saw Cubatao, a drastic reminder and an alarming illustration of where industry and investment oblivious to environmental considerations can lead. It also vividly and pungently illustrates the fact that many of the pollution-related environmental problems have become very serious in many localities in the developing world, contrary to widespread popular belief.

We are holding our meeting in Sao Paulo which is one of the world's great "mega-cities". It offers us a glimpse of one of the most rapid and radical social transformations that history has seen, namely the urbanization of the developing world. It is estimated that the urban population of the Third World will almost double between now and the turn of the century. Many cities are growing so rapidly as to outpace and overwhelm their infrastructure, pose tremendous problems of management and employment, and result in marked social and environmental deterioration. The Sao Paulo and the Brazilian experience in general has a lot to contribute to rethinking the role of and approaches to the process of urbanization and the management of mega-cities.

Brazil, like most countries, has also witnessed the effects of cash crop agriculture on soil and on local environment. Cash crop agriculture is not bad per se. In fact, it often is the best way of using land and increasing incomes. However, when it is export oriented, it is subject to a great deal of uncertainty about demand and about prices. In this situation, a short-term calculus prevails and there is a tendency to pay little or no attention to the sustainability of agriculture. The end result can be total degradation of land. The very base of development is thus undermined hurting most the poor and accentuating rural poverty and deprivation. In the case of Brazil, where land is abundant, the pressures move elsewhere, possibly to lead again to the vicious circle of land degradation and rural poverty. In many other developing countries, where similar processes occur, land may not be so abundant; the end of the line will be reached very quickly with disastrous effects for the society and its people.

We visited an alcohol factory, an impressive testimony of Brazil's self-reliant and pioneering effort to create an indigenous source of energy from biomass, starting from local conditions and needs and based on its own technological capabilities. The successes and shortcomings of this programme and the questions that it has given rise to, touch upon some of the core issues of how developing countries should respond to energy and resource dilemmas. Gasohol has eased some of Brazil's problems and given it more time to adjust. However, it has by no means removed from the agenda the need to evolve a comprehensive social response and a development style that is less wasteful of energy and resources.

At the end of our stay, we shall travel to Amazonia to get a glimpse of one of the world's last great frontiers, containing a substantial part of the world's remaining tropical forest and untold mineral riches. Brazil, together with the other countries of the sub-region grouped in

the Amazonian Pact, faces one of the great challenges of our age, that of the developing Amazonia and drawing on its wealth, and at the same time preserving its developmental and environmental potential for the future and the generations to come.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Brazil is unique. At the same time, Brazil is also representative of the challenges that environment and development issues have placed in front of all of us, and in particular before developing countries.

I think that the examples cited above demonstrate clearly that these issues have come to stay and have become very central to the development process. Yet, you will remember that some 15 years ago, at the beginning of the international debate on environment and development, in the heat of the argumentation and in response to extreme conservationist and anti-growth arguments, the view prevailed among most developing countries that development comes first, and that environment is something that could be left for later. A concern for the environment, it was argued, is a luxury which the poor countries could not afford.

This was, and unfortunately sometimes still is, the view commonly held among politicians and decision-makers, not only in the developing world but also in industrial countries. It is a consequence of a still superficial perception and understanding of environment and development issues.

We have advanced a considerable distance since then. We have learned a lot and experienced a good deal. We have come to understand that environment is not a luxury, nor can it be postponed for later. In some cases, these issues represent matters of immediate survival; in other cases, today's actions or failures to act can be very costly to society and undermine its development prospects. It is now clear, and more and more

people accept that a sound development policy and a sound environmental policy are the same both with respect to means and ends. Yet we still have a long way to go. The challenge really is to see that this basic principle is reflected fully in international economic relations, in development plans and in economic and social policies.

In many parts of the world, economic growth is necessary also for the management of the environment. But growth and development are not sustainable if we ignore environmental considerations. Yet these considerations do get ignored, and there are basically two reasons for this: Firstly, short-term pressures dominate policy-making and this generally means that environmental concerns are suppressed. Secondly, many governments do not respond to the needs of the poor who suffer most when the environment deteriorates or when disaster strikes.

The poor do not have the power to influence policy, nationally or internationally. We can see this starkly in the crisis of sub-Saharan Africa, in the destruction of tropical forests, and also in other so-called environmental problems like urban degradation.

The fundamental connection between environment and development is obvious. And yet we carry on as if the two were separate. I believe that the most urgent task we face today is to build a consensus, within and among nations, on basic environment and development goals. That is one of the major tasks before our Commission.

But building a consensus on goals is not enough. There are important differences when it comes both to understanding the causes of problems and to recommending appropriate actions and policies to deal with them. A useful starting point is acceptance of the fact that dealing with environmental problems will not be effective if we limit ourselves to symptoms only and that

their root causes also have to be tackled.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I think that it is high time environmental considerations gain full entry into the global political and economic dialogue, instead of being left waiting in an ante chamber.

The importance of the international economic context for the environment and development situation in developing countries is all too obvious. The Public Hearings that we are to embark upon will feature the effects of the international economic crisis and of the debt situation on the countries of the region, on their social and development goals and process, and on their environment.

But we must also recognize that the likelihood of international action on sustainable development is not very high, unless the whole process of development and growth is given a new impetus.

We are faced today with a profound and serious crisis in multilateral international co-operation. The system which was built-up in connection with the reconstruction after World War II is obsolete, inadequate and is not functioning properly. It has not been adequately adjusted to cope with new challenges. Attitudes to international co-operation in many countries have changed in favour of short-sighted selfishness and cynicism. We need a new deal for international co-operation, as the United Nations prepares to enter the fifth decade of its existence and deal with issues that will shape the 21st century.

In my view, a new phase of international co-operation must respond to three basic challenges: The first is the assurance of sustainable development through the integration of environmental and developmental policies. The second is the task of fashioning a viable system

of global security. The third is the urgent need to halt the arms race. These three challenges are closely interlinked. The ways we deal with them will determine our common future.

Friends,

We have a responsibility to the young who will take over the management of our planet by the turn of this century and for whom we must prepare a viable future.

We need to give them an opportunity to express themselves and to affect the policy and decision-making process. This is why education, communication and participation are of such critical importance and hold the key to our common future.

The challenges of environment and development require action by people in all spheres: direct action at the grassroot-level is essential, so is watchdog monitoring, and political action.

Our Public Hearings provide a unique resource for the Commission. But they are more than that. They are also an attempt to link directly ordinary people all over the world with the highest levels of policy-making nationally and internationally. We now see that the environmental imperative, the need to do something about the deterioration of our surroundings, is a requirement and test of democracy in our age. We must rise to the challenge in order to ensure sustainable development. We need sustainable development if we are to create a viable and equitable future for all people who inhabit Spaceship Earth.

I wish to end on this note, by saluting the Brazilian people and their representatives, and bidding well to their renewed democratic experiment which holds a high promise of a better tomorrow and of meeting the environment and development challenges which will figure so prominently in your country's destiny and that of the world at large.

Thank you.

EARTHSCAN PRESS BRIEFING SEMINAR

23 June 1985

Oslo, Norway

Address by

GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

On this day of Midsummer I am especially glad to welcome you to Norway. The day and night of maximum light seems well chosen to throw maximum light on some critical issues of our time.

We know you will be helpful in this very important task of the World Commission on Environment and Development, that has brought us together in such a difficult, but challenging undertaking. Journalists are critical to the success of our work, and it is a great pleasure for me to be with you today.

One of the earliest decisions that I and my colleagues made, at our first meeting in October 1984, was that we should be as open as possible. We do not intend just to meet behind closed doors between now and early 1987, and then present a report. On the contrary, we are determined to involve as many people and organisations as possible in our thinking. We need to develop our ideas within a broad community, in the developing countries as well as in the industrialised world, so that when our report is finally published it will also reflect the views of concerned people all over the world.

Tomorrow and on Tuesday the World Commission is holding two days of public hearings, inviting the views and perspectives of governments, international agencies, research institutions and - above all - of non-governmental organisations, NGO's. I believe we are the first world commission to take this approach, which we pioneered at our second meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, in March this year. A wide spectrum of Indonesian opinion spoke to us, most particularly from the vigorous environmental NGO community there.

Obviously, there is a limit to the number of individuals and organisations we can talk to ourselves, although we expect to hear from organisations representing many thousands of people over the next two days. Each of the four main speakers at your seminar today is here in Oslo to advise the Commission. We have invited many more people and organisations to submit their thoughts to us in writing.

In this process, we are heavily dependent on you. We want to share our thinking with you as it develops, knowing that we shall need your help to share it with the public.

The Commission's meeting here in Oslo is only our third, and our report will not be completed until the end of 1986. So at present we do not have any firm collective conclusions. But among 23 individual Commissioners from 22 countries many of us do have views on some of the issues

we shall be addressing, and I and my colleagues will be happy to share them with you. Jim MacNeill, a member of the Commission and our Secretary-General, will be with you all day, and some of the other members will be joining you for lunch. You will have the opportunity to meet others over the next few days. But let me stress again that at this stage in our work we are listening more than talking, and that while most of us bring strong viewpoints as individuals, we have not yet formulated collective judgements.

The World Commission on Environment and Development held its first meeting in Geneva last October at a sadly appropriate time, for the tragedy in Africa was already starting to unfold - the biggest environment and development disaster of all time.

In human terms, the terrible famines are the worst disaster since the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands of Africans, a figure that could reach millions, are paying with their lives, after weeks and months of starvation and agony, for failures in development and in environment. Nothing could illustrate more starkly the need for our Commission, and the urgency of taking a new, independent look at these crucial global issues.

The famines in Africa are too often presented as the result of drought. But lack of rain has only been the trigger. The causes of the famine stretch back over the decades, in patterns of misdevelopment - overcultivation, overgrazing, soil erosion, deforestation, poor agricultural policies - which have severely damaged the African environment,

and reduced its capacity to grow food. The misery of millions of the African poor has through television and the press reached every home in the rich countries, and the public has responded with tremendous generosity.

But we owe Africa more than generosity. We must ruthlessly analyse what has gone wrong, and formulate innovative, concrete and realistic plans to make sure that such a tragedy never happens again. And then we must all, Africans and other citizens of our common planet, make sure those plans are carried out.

I said earlier that the Commission had not yet reached any firm conclusions. But we have mapped in some detail the issues we shall be addressing, and you will find our agenda clearly set out in our mandate document. In a short introduction to this Seminar I cannot touch on them all. Four of them are on your programme today.

Instead, I will mention one of the key themes that will run through all our work: environment and security.

We need to widen our definition of national security, far beyond the narrow confines of military security, to embrace economic and ecological interdependence, and global environmental hazards. I want to touch on four issues that illustrate how outdated a narrow military concept of national security now is: nuclear winter, acid rain, environmental wars and environmental refugees, and development assistance.

First, nuclear winter. We Europeans have known for many years that a nuclear war would devastate our continent. It is now clear that the consequence would be even worse than that. The raging atomic firestorms that a nuclear war would unleash could inject enough dust and smoke into the atmosphere to cut off much of the sun's light and heat, bringing to the Northern hemisphere at least, and probably to the whole world, months of freezing cold and darkness.

Biologists have predicted that such a nuclear winter would be followed by a silent spring, a spring more silent than Rachel Carson ever imagined. An international group of 40 distinguished biologists sounded that serious alarm in 1983.

There can be no greater environmental threat than making our planet totally unfit for man. Nuclear winter has illustrated to us all, East and West, North and South, our common peril.

The second point I want to make about environment and security relates to acid rain, a subject specifically on the Commission's agenda next week. Evidence recently submitted to us suggests that the damage from acid pollution, which was first noticed here in Norway and in Sweden, may be far greater than we have yet realised.

We already know that forests in many parts of Europe are dying from the direct effects of acid pollution on their leaves or needles. Now there is disturbing new evidence that prolonged acid pollution acidifies the soil itself, releasing previously insoluble aluminium in a form that is highly toxic to plants.

Scientific warnings submitted to us in the last few weeks talk of irreversible acidification whose remedial costs are beyond economic reach, of damage that stretches beyond dead forests and fishless lakes on a regional scale. We are talking of widespread deforestation leading to massive soil erosion, siltation of rivers, flooding of farmland and towns.

In 1983, the Federal Republic of Germany reported visible damage to 34 percent of its trees. In 1984, the figure was 50 percent. We do not know what the figure will be this year, or next year. Have Europe's soils now absorbed so much acid that they have reached a tripover point? We may soon find out.

We shall be hearing more of this at the public hearings tomorrow and Tuesday. I want now simply to underline the close connection between acid pollution and national security. At least 63 percent; and maybe as much as 92 percent, of the sulphur emissions which are acidifying our forests and lakes and soils here in Norway

do not originate within our own borders. They come from Britain, Germany, Poland and other countries, from both Eastern and Western Europe.

Other nations could quote similar statistics. At least half of Canada's sulphur deposition comes from outside its borders, 56 percent of Czechoslovakia's, 58 percent of Sweden's, 12 percent even of the United Kingdom's, a country which is so far resisting common action towards reducing emissions.

Here in Europe the latest evidence suggests the damage is rapidly becoming worse. Norway's economic security, and that of other downwind states, is threatened by activities in other countries over which we have no control.

We need a new concept of national security. This will require new restrictions, in the common interest of all, over national sovereignty. No nation should be free to pollute the common environment and inflict severe ecological and economic damage on other states.

Thirdly as Johan Jørgen Holst will be discussing in more detail later today, there are the new phenomena of environmental refugees and environmental violence.

In far too many parts of the Third World, economic and political circumstances force the poor, and especially, the rural poor, to damage and destroy the soils, forests, rivers and coastal waters upon which they ultimately depend for food, fuel and shelter.

As the land can sustain less people, desperate and hungry families search for a way out. Some move to the cities, where they play a part in food riots and revolutions. Others remain in the countryside, where they may become involved in sporadic violence between nomads and settled farmers, or in the organised violence of guerilla movements. Others flee into neighbouring countries, environmental refugees placing intolerable burdens on their host nations, which - as in the case of the Sudan at present - maybe little more able to feed them than the damaged environment they have escaped.

Earthscan's briefing document "Environment and Conflict" suggests there is reason to suppose that environmental degradation, and the rural unrest it can cause, may have played a part in revolutions such as those in Ethiopia, Iran and in Afghanistan.

In many of the areas of the world which are now cockpits of superpower rivalry and confrontation - Central America, the Horn of Africa, the Middle East - environmental degradation clearly plays a role, although we do not yet know how large a role.

If we are to avoid war, we must tackle its causes. With environmental degradation deepening in many parts of the world, it is likely to become an even more serious hazard to peace, with military means being used or threatened to tackle what are non-military threats.

Unless we tackle it far more seriously than at present, these threats will become reality, with environmental bankruptcy adding new and unpredictable twists to global and national insecurity.

Again, as with nuclear winter and acid rain, environmental concerns show we must revise our concepts of national sovereignty and national security. Armaments cannot remove these threats to peace. Sustainable development and wise environmental management can. We hope to focus constructively on these issues in our report.

The final point I wish to make concerns development assistance. Here in Norway we spend at least 1 percent of our GNP on assistance to the Third World: the highest percentage of any country. We hope we can increase it further in the future, and we expect that other industrialised countries will soon raise their figures up to a higher level.

But even more important than levels of development assistance is the type of development assistance. Far too much development aid has been designed to benefit the donor more than the recipient. Tens of millions of Africans are hungry, many of them are starving, because of the failure of donor agencies as well as of African governments to invest in agricultural projects that are both economically and environmentally sustainable. Instead we have poured far too much aid into prestige projects that the World Bank

has called Africa's white elephants, and former Commissioner Edgard Pisani of the European community called "cathedrals in the desert".

After the last drought and famine in the Sahel, in 1968-73, the Club du Sahel in OECD, which groups together the main bilateral donors to that region, determined that the overwhelming development objective must be food self-sufficiency, and that the main way of achieving this must be the support of rainfed grain production. Yet the OECD's own analysis shows that since then only 4 percent of foreign aid has gone to rainfed food cropping. The results of that failure are shown in the even worse famines that Sahelians are suffering today, ten years on.

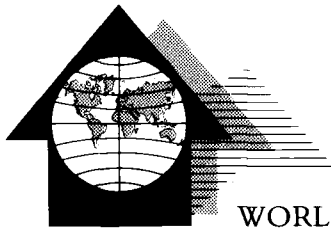
We have to ask ourselves, and this is one of the key questions on the World Commission's agenda, whether development assistance is really structured to assist. We have to ask if tying a large proportion of aid to the purchase of donor nation goods and services is one of the reasons why Africa has not been getting the help it needs. We have to ask whether the structure of international trade and finance is either equitable or effective, when it leads to a net annual export of capital from Africa, as is the situation at present. In these circumstances, who is really aiding whom?

Who is development assistance designed to benefit? The donors or the recipients? According to figures in

Earthscan's new book "Africa in Crisis", Sub-Saharan Africa has at least 80,000 expatriates working under official aid programme, at a cost of about 4 billion dollars a year. And in 25 years of independence, Africa has plunged from food self-sufficiency to widespread hunger and famine. Are our experts giving the right advice to the right people? It seems not.

Let me end by returning to the theme of national security. The World Commission will be looking closely, in the months ahead, at the pattern and experience of development assistance, and we hope to propose some practical and realistic measures for improvement. We must be sure that aid is helping development that is environmentally sound and sustainable. To that extent, development assistance is of benefit to the recipients, and we must make sure that it is not structured to inhibit this.

In the long run, and perhaps in the short run too, environmentally sound development benefits us in the donor countries too. Environmental degradation is making the world a rapidly less stable place, politically, economically and militarily. We can have no true security, here in Oslo, or in Washington or Paris or Warsaw or Moscow, until we direct far more of our efforts into ecological stability. We may get more national security by investing in tree planting or soil terracing in the Third World than by spending money in military hardware.



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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Address by
Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland
Chairman
at the Opening Session of the
Third Meeting of the Commission
Oslo, Norway
June 24-29, 1985

Mr Prime Minister, Madame Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends from far and near.

I am speaking today in my homeland, yet I represent an international group of citizens, a World Commission whose aim is the care and future improvement of the planet which we all share. I want to welcome them as colleagues to my country, which generally speaking, is a rather cool place, but you have come here when the sun is not only warm – it never disappears.

And I want to thank the Norwegian Government for the warmth of its welcome and its hospitality to the Commission. We are glad and honoured that my political colleague, Kaare Willoch, Norway's Prime Minister, would open our meeting and set us about our work with such encouragement, together with our Minister of Environment, Rakel Surlien.

One of the earliest decisions that my colleagues and I made, at our first meeting in October 1984, was that we should be as open as possible. We do not intend just to meet behind closed doors between now and early 1987, and then present a report. On the contrary, we are determined to involve as many people and organisations as possible in our thinking. We need to develop our ideas within a broad community, in both developing and developed countries, so that our final report will reflect the views of concerned people everywhere.

As an expression of our commitment to dialogue, we are holding two days of Public Hearings, today and tomorrow, inviting the views and perspectives of governments, international agencies, research institutions and – above all – of non-governmental organisations, NGO's. I believe we are the first world commission to take this approach, which we pioneered at our second meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, in March this year. A wide spectrum of vigorous environmental NGO community there. This experience strongly confirmed our belief in actively inviting participation.

Norway has had a long experience of many of the formative processes that have changed and moulded the character of nations. And we must admit that my country has left its mark on others. Norwegian Vikings ravaged England, Scotland, Ireland, settled Iceland, found North America, even carried our culture to the mouths of the Volga and the Seine. In retrospect, it appears like the excesses of adolescence. We had our struggle of national unification earlier than many countries – about 800 years ago. We spent a lot of time fighting our neighbours, but the available technology was less lethal and our wars consequently less apocalyptic than those of today. Erik Blodoks – Erik of the blood-stained axe – was a leader of those times. Then we lived through a long period of relative eclipse by our Danish and Swedish brothers, and our King even pawned our old possessions – the Orkneys and the Shetlands – to the King of Scotland, to address an international debt problem – we never got them back!

Not only the Vikings, but our more remote forebears – the ancient Chinese, the Persians, Greeks and Romans, for two or three millennia – knew about and shared in the problems of imperialism, colonisations, wars of national liberation, debt, the prosperity that comes with trade, the rise and decline of emperors, dictators and parliaments.

Today, Norway is a rich and prosperous country. Just two generations ago, it was among the poorest countries in Europe – as a share of the total population, Norway saw more emigrants leave for North America than any other country but Ireland. Our history over the last hundred years – even before oil was found – is a tangible proof that development is possible.

Norway's present policy is one of positive engagement in the economic and social development of the Third World. We devote at least one percent of our gross national product to this end. I am pleased to say that it is a policy shared by all political parties, and I am sure that it will remain one of the clear expressions of Norwegian commitment to global development. We must, however, find other means to express this commitment, and we must, in co-operation with recipient countries, take steps to ensure that it contributes only to development that is sustainable – economically and environmentally sustainable.

We have entered an era of global community and global concern. We must respond to the challenges we confront with a global agenda for change. That is what this Commission is all about, an agenda for change, leading to practical proposals for dealing with the essential goals of environment and development. These are not contradictory objectives; they can be made compatible. When they are, they become mutually re-inforcing. When they are not, they become mutually destructive. This is confirmed constantly as we examine the critical environment and development issues likely to dominate the world scene into the next century.

People ask today what happened to the spirit of Stockholm. In 1972, the belief in international co-operation of many issues was strong and there was a shared conviction that it could only grow stronger, especially in the field of environment.

There is now a feeling, not so much that the management of our small planet is proving unexpectedly difficult; but that there is some deeper malaise; that the machinery we created is not working; that perhaps it cannot work; that we need to re-think the issues from new perspectives.

It was this feeling on the part of a growing number of governments over the past years that led directly to the establishment of the Commission. By the end of 1983, when the General Assembly adopted its resolution calling for a special commission, governments had agreed that it should take a fresh, hard look at the critical issues of environment and development and from a perspective that offered promise of some innovative but practical proposals for action, including new forms of international co-operation. This new, hard look, it was felt, had to be undertaken outside the system rather than within it, but with clear links to the system. Hence, while the Commission is independent, the General Assembly has undertaken to receive and debate its report and recommendations in the fall of 1987.

It is important to ask ourselves what has gone wrong. It is also important to bear in mind that some parts of the world have registered successes in improving environmental quality over the past 15 years. All of us here who can remember the environmental destruction that accompanied the rapid growth of the 1950's and 1960's can confirm that. Public opinion demanded action against pollution and governments responded with new legislation, institutions, policies and programmes. Many lessons can be drawn.

One is that after-the-fact clean-up is possible; that few things are irreversible. Canada and the US signed the Great Lakes Treaty in 1971 and today, billions of dollars later, the fishermen of Lake Erie are back in business with larger catches than ever before. Some years ago, the Thames produced the most famous salmon in history. The Japanese can see Mount Fuji again. In Los Angeles, they can see each other again – on most days. But we also learned that this type of after-the-fact clean-up can be very expensive.

Another lesson is that some of the measures taken have probably made things worse at least on a regional basis. High chimneys spread emissions over a wider area, while reducing political support for truly effective control measures near the source. And, of course, many problems, like the pollution of ground water resources and loss of cropland to erosion, still go on unabated or even accelerate.

As for developing countries, they have quite simply not been able to afford the costs of the react-and-retrofit approaches that have dominated the environmental policies of the industrialised nations. Most have seen a massive deterioration of their environment. In many countries, the natural resource basis for future development is deteriorating rapidly and, in some cases, as in Africa, large regions are in jeopardy.

We have learned that some of the most threatening environment and development problems today are caused to a considerable extent by the widespread poverty and the inequitable distribution of resources within individual nations and among nations and regions. Many of the most serious effects in the Third World are rooted in economic and social injustice and in a worsening imbalance in the relationship between man and his capacity to manage nature.

We are beginning to learn that there are better ways to manage our small planet than to react and cure: we must anticipate and prevent. This may sound simple and obvious. But it requires that we recognize environment and development as essential and mutually re-inforcing goals. It requires that environmental considerations be built into development at the earliest possible stage. Otherwise it will not be economically sustainable. The World – and especially the Third World – North Africa, for example – is littered with cases of “development-without-environment”, often aid-supported, that literally consumed their own bases – in soil, in water and other resources – and thus ended up reducing rather than increasing the future economic potential of their countries.

Finally, it requires that we begin to take a much broader view of environmental policy, seeing it not just as air, water, waste and noise policy, but also, and more importantly, as resource, energy, agricultural and transportation policy, and development assistance, trade and economic policy. And, of course, vice-versa.

These views are gaining ground, but we have to admit that they run counter to the political and institutional realities in almost all governments and large industries where, whatever the rhetoric, environmental policy is treated in fact as a limited policy field, essentially an add-on to other policy fields, whose mission is to react to damage done and cure it after the fact. We must change those realities, not only in industry and national governments, but also in international organisations.

The Commission's agenda aims at nothing less. It shifts the focus from the effects of environment and development problems to their root causes in policy. The agenda we will be discussing here in Oslo goes to the roots of several issues: population; science and technology; international economic relations, including trade, multinational investment and development assistance; energy policy as manifest in acid rain; industry policy as manifest in hazardous wastes; and the African crisis which embraces them all.

During the five short months that separated the first meeting of the Commission in Geneva from its second in Jakarta in March, the world witnessed several cases of environment and development failure. They were classical cases stemming not so much from a failure to anticipate as from an incapacity – a political and a management incapacity – to act on the basis of anticipation.

The first was Africa where since last September the whole world has been watching men, women and children die on television in close-ups of misery and despair.

The terrible famines in Africa are the worst disasters since the Second World War. Hundreds of thousands, a figure that could reach millions, are paying with their lives, after weeks and months of starvation and agony, for failures in development and in environment. Nothing could illustrate more starkly the need for our Commission, and the urgency of taking a new, independent look at these crucial global issues.

The famines in Africa are too often presented as the result of drought. But lack of rain has only been the trigger. The causes of the famine stretch back over the decades, in patterns of misdevelopment – over-cultivation, over-grazing, soil erosion, deforestation, poor agricultural policies – which have severely damaged the African environment and reduced its capacity to grow food. The misery of millions of the African poor has through television and the press reached every home in the rich countries, and the public has responded with tremendous generosity.

But we owe Africa more than generosity. We must ruthlessly analyse what has gone wrong, and formulate innovative, concrete and realistic plans to make sure that such a tragedy never happens again. And then we must all, Africans and other citizens of our common planet, make sure those plans are carried out.

Another major case of development failure was Bhopal, an industrial disaster which provoked the greatest human suffering of any industrial tragedy to date – with nearly 2,000 dead and tens of thousands injured.

And there will be more such accidents. Tomorrow's Bhopals are engraved in yesterday's development decisions. In fact, within two months of the Bhopal disaster, two serious pollution accidents occurred in the chemical industry in OECD countries – Little Rock, Arkansas, in the United States, where 2,500 people were evacuated; Karlskoga, Sweden, where 20 people were affected and 300 evacuated – and five in the developing countries – Peru, Mexico and Brazil – where thousands of people were evacuated and hundreds affected and treated in hospital.

In the time required to give this speech, about three or four shipments of hazardous wastes will have crossed an international boundary on the way to some disposition. On average, a shipment of these waste crosses a frontier more than once every five minutes, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

We must come to grips with the problem of increasing volumes of industrial waste, and the Commission will begin its consideration of this in Oslo. We had a preview in the future of the ways in society must deal with this problem in the future on our visit to Fiskaa Verk in Kristiansand on Friday. Tomorrow's answer cannot be to bury it, or even to burn it, it must be to transform waste into useful resources.

In the meantime, however, there is no doubt that, given future disasters already in the pipeline of mal-development, the overall situation is going to get worse before it gets even worse.

If this is true, the world is going to need to develop an increasing capacity for crisis response. There are lot of questions to be asked about the ways in which the world community now forecasts situations in which a crisis response will be needed, the ways in which it generates the political capacity to respond and the effectiveness of the response undertaken. In Africa today, our present institutions fail on all counts: forecasting, generating political will and effectiveness.

There are even more questions to be asked about the capacity of our present institutions to act in anticipation of a specific crisis and to prevent it.

The lessons of the past suggest one condition for effective environmental action. That is the establishment of a close relationship between the power to act on the one hand and the geographical area of the problem on the other, bringing together those responsible for the sources of the problem and those who bear the damage costs of its effects, in some kind of agreement, convention or going authority.

In the cases of many success stories, Tokyo air pollution, for example, or the London smog, these relationships – given the political structure and the perceptions of the day – were largely built-in. In the case of the Great Lakes, shared by Canada and the US, negotiations were driven by an aroused public demanding action on both sides of the border.

In the past, we have dealt with the need to marry area and power largely in terms of the transfer of physical pollutants from one jurisdiction to another. In the future, we must also include chemicals, products and even technologies, and we must be much more sophisticated than we have been in dealing with the economic, trade and political dimensions of the problems. After all, from an economic point of view, what is transboundary air pollution – acid rain – if not the transfer of production costs from one country to another where it shows up as damage costs to soils, forests and water systems?

Our shrinking world must view with great suspicion any economic, energy or trade policy which displaces the area affected by an environment and development problem away from those responsible for creating it.

In the future, we must extend this same principle to time as well as space. For example, when a nuclear or chemical company undertakes development which may cause major clean-up problems fifty years later, the timing of the effect is displaced from the timing of the production, and costs are transferred to the next generation with no corresponding benefit. This is the International Year of Youth, and I commend this thought to the various organisers of that activity. If we have to have a slogan for youth, let us try “Don’t let grandfather get away with it!”

As we in Scandinavia are only too well aware, acid rain is one case where we have not yet succeeded in bringing about a fully effective relationship of power within the region affected by the problem – not in Europe and not in North America. There has been a long courtship, with Scandinavia and Canada, in the role of wooer and, until recently, the rest in the role of the wooed. It has produced a convention, the so-called 30 Percent Club with an open membership, but so far there has been no agreement for collective action. Hopefully, the Helsinki meeting next week will move things in that direction.

But it is coming awfully late. Evidence recently submitted to us suggests that the damage from acid pollution, which was first noticed here in Norway and in Sweden, may be far greater than we have yet realized.

We already knew that forests in many parts of Europe were dying from the direct effects of acid pollution on their leaves or needles. Now there is disturbing new evidence that prolonged acid pollution acidifies the soil itself, releasing previously insoluble aluminium in a form that is highly toxic to plants.

Scientific warnings submitted to us in the last few weeks talk of irreversible acidification whose remedial costs are beyond economic reach, of damage that stretches beyond dead forests and fishless lakes on a regional scale. We are talking of widespread deforestation leading to massive soil erosion, siltation of rivers, flooding of farmland and towns.

In 1983, the Federal Republic of Germany reported visible damage to 34 percent of its trees. In 1985, the figure was 50 percent. We do not know what the figure will be next year. Have Europe’s soils now absorbed so much acid that they have reached a trip-over point? We may soon find out.

We shall be hearing more of this at the Public Hearings today and tomorrow.

One thing is clear: in the future no nation should be free to pollute the common environment and inflict severe ecological and economic damage on other states. In fact, we need a new concept of national security that goes beyond the narrow confines of military security, to embrace economic and ecological inter-dependence and global environmental hazards. We face a crisis of internationalism. In the field of environment and development there is no such thing as benign neglect. We can no longer live with the pursuit of unilateral advantage at the expense of our common future.

The post-war international economic system has collapsed. Our most urgent task is to persuade nations of the need to return to multilateralism. The task of reconstruction after the Second World War was the real motivating power behind the establishment of the post-war international economic system. The challenge of environment and development ought to provide the impetus – indeed the imperative – behind a renewed search for multilateral solutions and a reconstructed international economic system of co-operation.

We are striving to promote a change of mind set, but new attitudes do not come from the top down. They evolve deep in the hearts of people responding to the elemental vision of life as they see it. And change may be on the way. One researcher, Lester Milbrath, declares that we are at a “fork in the road”. He discerns that society’s dominant belief structure is ready to shift. The old dominant paradigm characteristic of the industrialised west is the pursuit of “progress” founded on four dominant beliefs. That people dominate the earth, that they are masters of their destiny, that the world is vast and unlimited, and that history is one of progress with every problem solvable.

A new environment and development paradigm is actively coalescing however, and defining itself. It calls into question those four basic dominant beliefs and emphasises instead concern for the world’s environment as the essential basis for sustainable development. It sees citizen participation at all levels in the care of the planet and, based on this deeper and wider perception of the basis of life and human activity, it presages profound changes in economic and social attitudes. The Commission is itself a symptom of the process and will itself do all it can to help that process along to make a better world for us all.

Opening Address
by Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland
Chairman
at the Second Meeting
of the World Commission on Environment
and Development
Jakarta, Indonesia
March 27-29, 1985

President Suharto, Your excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to express my great pleasure at being here and to transmit the expression of that same pleasure on behalf of the Commissioners of the World Commission on Environment and Development and secretariat members. We have all been looking forward to spending the last week in March here in Indonesia.

We have already had most stimulating contributions at the Public Hearing yesterday from your very active non-governmental organizations, from your distinguished scholars and from the heads of your foremost scientific and technical institutes. Mr. Salim arranged to show the Commission in a concerted, well-organized style the scope and depth of environmental concern in Indonesia. We are very grateful.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen

When I was a student I read a lengthy and classic book which said among other things that ... "Taking it as a whole, and surveying it from every point of view, Java is probably the very finest and most interesting tropical island in the world."

That was some time ago. I did not envisage that some day I would find myself in the capital, speaking before the government and distinguished citizens, and thanking the President of Indonesia for his kind invitation. Nor could I imagine that my responsibility, when here, would be a reflection of some of the perspectives contained in that book.

You, the Indonesians, acknowledge the need to take full command of your inheritance. Like so many newly industrializing countries you are grappling with the problems of development against the backdrop of rising population, rural poverty, and recent world economic difficulties.

You, with your neighbour Malaysia, were badly affected as oil exporters by the fall in prices of your oil exports after 1981. The adjustment to the slower growth in world trade has been painful - but at least by cautious financial management you spared yourselves heavy indebtedness. You can look forward to continuing economic growth if all goes well.

Where, in the midst of such short term economic struggles, does environment come?

My first major political responsibility was to be environment minister. It was my task for five years in a country much smaller than this, and much colder! As Norway has a rapidly expanding oil economy our cabinet meetings were also often dominated by crises in the balance of payments, fluctuations in the currency because of what happened to oil prices in Rotterdam, the corrosive effects of inflation. In our interdependent world I am certain that government ministers would not find themselves lost in other countries cabinet and council meetings. In Norway it was our own citizens who helped to keep the mind of the government on the environment. The long term damage to our national environment and the need to fashion changes in our industrial practices were there for everyone to see who cared to open their eyes. We were reminded of the need for international cooperation by the continuing showers of acid rain sent to us by our upwind industrial neighbors.

It is characteristic of environment and development problems that they look as if they can wait until something more urgent is dealt with. Until, that is, a situation has become a crisis or clearly catastrophic. Then there is a scramble to find the cheapest solution and get into immediate action. Nobody then likes to admit that the cheapest solution was to heed the warnings 10 or 15 years before and prevent the situation.

It reminds me of a story often told about Winston Churchill in World War II. On one of his travels he was offered a small specimen of a rare, slow growing tree to plant in his garden back home in Britain. He asked when he could collect the tree and his host said "why not some time later this week, after all it takes a hundred years to grow." "That is why I must take it today," said Churchill, "if it takes so long, we must begin immediately."

That is what we might say of the environment and sustainable development "we must begin immediately."

But did we not begin in 1972 with the United Nations Environment Conference in Stockholm and the creation of UNEP? Do we not have machinery in most governments already functioning? Do we not have various multilateral organizations grappling with trans boundary air pollution, freshwater and marine pollution, potentially toxic chemicals, ozone, carbon dioxide, deforestation and a host of other matters? The answer is yes, of course, we do.

But is it all working? The answer is no, it is not.

Only in minor parts of the rich industrialized world has the quality of the environment improved over the last 15 years. There have been new legislation, policies and institutions but they have largely addressed the massive backlog of degradation and pollution that came from rapid economic growth in the fifties and sixties. Even so the battle against classic pollution is far from won; some of the measures like dispersing power station emissions with high chimneys have probably made things worse on a global basis because they have spread the emissions over a wider area, while reducing political support for truly effective control measures near the source. Many of the other problems like the pollution of ground water resources and loss of cropland to urban sprawl go on unabated or even accelerate.

On top of these continuing, one might almost say, traditional problems, new ones are looming out of the mists ahead of us. Some of them are at least easy to describe - the threat of climatic change arising from burning fossil fuel and the consequent rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide is a case in point.

If this phenomenon unfolds, as many scientists have predicted, the impact will be substantial. However, we already know some of the measures we can take to reduce it. We can accept the risk that the polar ice might start to melt with a resulting rise in sea level, and find ways of building dykes around our sea level cities like Bangkok, London, Jakarta, New York, Calcutta, Tokyo. The Dutch may have to raise their existing dykes by 10 metres at least. Alternatively we can try to find new sources of energy and stop burning oil and coal. Nuclear power, solar power, ocean thermal power and others are feasible but might well demand more capital than could ever be made available. Another choice, again prohibitively expensive and impracticable would be to scrub with sea water the carbon dioxide from fossil fuel exhaust emissions all over the world. Lastly, it might be possible to embody the carbon dioxide in the biomass of specially grown trees but these would have to cover 10 percent of the land area of the planet to be effective. Here then are some ways - although not very comforting ways - of addressing problems we can grasp.

But other types of problem are hardly described and classified yet. The interdependence of the modern world means that even apparently remote events can have an impact on the environment. Take an example from the sector of tariff and trade negotiations.

A decision in GATT to restrict the market for goods where developing countries have an advantage like cheap labour can cripple those countries' development and blight their foreign currency reserves. Following the chain of cause and effect we can see first a devaluation and then the local price of kerosene for the poor go up. Next the pressures on fuel wood resources increase and then, soil erosion increases and the base for sustainable development shrinks again. But do the negotiators in GATT struggling with many pressures, ever have time to give a thought to remote environmental consequences? Many of them may have no grasp whatever of the cluster of problems enmeshed in the two simple words environment and development.

We have examples of a deep malaise in our machinery for dealing with environmental problems even when we do anticipate them. Take desertification. The advance southwards of the Sahara has been logged by the scientific community for over twenty years. Warnings have gone to governments and institutions at the international level regularly and the great drought of the early seventies dramatized the human dimensions of the problems. In 1977 we had an international conference on desertification. A programme of action, or what we could rather call reaction, was designed and approved by governments.

But the response of the world community was so slight that the whole episode, to the despair of the UN Environment Programme, has become a case study in lack of political will.

And then the inevitable happened in the Sahel. The drought struck again. The non governmental aid groups in the field, UNICEF field workers, World Food Programme and FAO field workers all told their superiors and governments. But very little happened until television crews took home their harrowing film and, through the agency of public interest broadcasting, ignited popular indignation all over the world. Only then did the world community react. The reaction is too late for many thousands of children, mothers and old people.

The cost of combatting the present famine is not yet clear but the current emergency in Ethiopia alone will be not much less than \$400 million for the period from last autumn to the next rains. The value of the food accounts for \$208 million and the air forces of several great powers are deployed in the field making parachute drops of bulk food and subsequent local distribution by helicopter. You can imagine the true cost of such military operations with airborne maintenance teams, communications equipment and forward refuelling. And this is happening in areas so poor that a year ago it was almost impossible to get enough petrol to fill the tank of a passing Land Rover. And at the end of the day nothing in the way of combating desertification will have been achieved.

Suppose that donor governments had supported their own plans at the UN Conference on Desertification. What are the sums that the Plan of Action to control Desertification would have spent in Ethiopia? The UN Environment Programme has produced a figure - \$50 million.

Spending that money over the last 5 years would not necessarily have meant that there would have been *no* famine at all. Nothing is so simple. But it does tell us something - it does suggest that prevention is cheaper than cure. And in Ethiopia that \$400 million already spent this year is not a cure anyway! It is just a means to buy time, to survive and to postpone a very evil day.

For the eight countries of the Sahel not including Sudan and Ethiopia a four-year plan of desertification control has been proposed. It would combat soil erosion, stabilize sand dunes and reafforest to provide fuel wood. The cost would be \$108 million for four years - \$108 million in pursuit of sustainable development. Contrast that with the estimated food needs for the inhabitants for the same period which, unless starvation is permitted, will be \$1,390 million. And we know that the world community will not permit starvation when it is galvanized into action - or, more appropriately, reaction.

The absurdity of our behaviour as a world community is obvious. Lack of support for preventative measures results in almost as much money or more being spent to redress the human misery in an atmosphere of crisis and emotion.

Meanwhile the root causes remain. The land remains under stress from human activity. The stabilizing elements in an ecosystem - perennial vegetation, a stable water table, adequate stream flow and a fertile soil are under great pressure. When drought strikes the ecosystem gives way. It may even be that natural dry spells are intensified and prolonged by farming practices and the pattern of human activity. Desertification proceeds at exactly the same rate as it did in 1977 when the UN Conference on Desertification was held. It now threatens 35 per cent of the planet's land surface and 850 million poor people. We know the tragedy of Ethiopia will be repeated in other African countries and in other parts of the world.

Must we replay the same scenario for every environmental disaster? Must we wait until floods, droughts, and landslips break the hearts of poor people? Must we wait until we have accidents like Bhopal before we devise ways of anticipating and preventing environmental problems? Must we wait for the misery and death that the collapse of the environmental basis for civilized life inevitably brings?

In the world of aviation it is ironic that technical progress often comes from accidents and disasters. It is seldom admitted, but after many disasters it turns out that there were warning signs that, through indolence, incompetence, greed, hubris and arrogance, went unheeded, or they were lost in the noise from day to day operations. It sometimes seems that things which were known to be wrong are not fixed until deaths and lawsuits and recriminations explode in the face of society's institutions.

Are we going to fly spaceship earth like that? Because we, you and I, know lots of things are wrong and we do nothing about them?

And remember, in aviation after a crash they may say - "back to the drawing board". They can and do learn from mistakes. But we have only got one earth. We cannot go back to the drawing board and redesign it. We have to manage this single small planet for the benefit of us all. And we are not doing very well at the moment.

We must develop a new approach and pursue a novel perspective. We are convinced that we are not doomed to fly space-ship earth into disaster and oblivion. It is possible to harness science and technology in ways which are favourable to the environment. It is within our power and competence to increase food production enormously and to do it in ways which not only sustain but also expand the ecological basis for agriculture. Similarly, it is within our grasp to develop energy, industrial processes, transportation and human settlements which are consistent with sound environmental considerations. Fundamentally, we know that it is possible to build environmental considerations into development as a forethought rather than, as now, as an afterthought.

But other types of problem are hardly described and classified yet. The interdependence of the modern world means that even apparently remote events can have an impact on the environment. Take an example from the sector of tariff and trade negotiations.

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In the world of aviation it is ironic that technical progress often comes from accidents and disasters. It is seldom admitted, but after many disasters it turns out that there were warning signs that, through indolence, incompetence, greed, hubris and arrogance, went unheeded, or they were lost in the noise from day to day operations. It sometimes seems that things which were known to be wrong are not fixed until deaths and lawsuits and recriminations explode in the face of society's institutions.

Are we going to fly spaceship earth like that? Because we, you and I, know lots of things are wrong and we do nothing about them?

And remember, in aviation after a crash they may say - "back to the drawing board". They can and do learn from mistakes. But we have only got one earth. We cannot go back to the drawing board and redesign it. We have to manage this single small planet for the benefit of us all. And we are not doing very well at the moment.

We must develop a new approach and pursue a novel perspective. We are convinced that we are not doomed to fly space-ship earth into disaster and oblivion. It is possible to harness science and technology in ways which are favourable to the environment. It is within our power and competence to increase food production enormously and to do it in ways which not only sustain but also expand the ecological basis for agriculture. Similarly, it is within our grasp to develop energy, industrial processes, transportation and human settlements which are consistent with sound environmental considerations. Fundamentally, we know that it is possible to build environmental considerations into development as a forethought rather than, as now, as an afterthought.

The limitations are not defined by the physical universe or our lack of understanding of what need to be done. They are determined rather by our inability to draw political conclusions, to make that possible which we know to be necessary. Vested interests, established jurisdictions, bureaucratic inertia and plain lack of vision and imagination are powerful obstacles and brakes. It is our task to remove them. But we cannot do it alone. We need support, and we need it now.

It is our task to re-examine the relationship between environment and development, to challenge the conventional wisdom and demonstrate the urgency of the issues and how the two are inextricably intertwined. Environmental consideration is not a luxury concern of those nations which have passed the take-off stage on the road to development. It is a necessary condition for sustainable development to become an attainable goal for any nation, rich and poor, northern or southern, eastern or western. Indeed some of the most dire threats against environment and development today are caused by widespread poverty and the inequitable distribution of resources and means within individual nations and among nations and regions on spaceship earth.

Our world is an interdependent world, but we know that it contains enormous inequities. Such inequities must be ameliorated if human beings everywhere are to be given the opportunity to enjoy their inalienable rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" to quote from the American Declaration of Independence. We need a global declaration of independence which can liberate human beings everywhere. Such liberation requires solidarity and commitment on behalf of rich and poor alike, it requires a new international economic order which equitably serves the interests of all people.

The threat of war and destruction hangs over our planet like a dark cloud, affecting the lives and expectations of people everywhere. The prospect of nuclear destruction is the ultimate reminder of our need to work together to ensure a common future. The levels of armaments have reached obscene levels and the upward spirals point towards ever greater misallocations and dangers. The arms race must be stopped and reversed. A promising new beginning was made in Geneva earlier this month. Deep cuts in the arsenals of offensive weapons are necessary and possible to achieve without endangering anyone's security. Furthermore, care must be taken to protect the global commons; Antarctica, the deep seabed and outer space from being enveloped by the arms race. Hence, the nuclear weapon states must agree to prohibit the emplacement of weapons in space or to deploy weapons on the earth which threaten objects in space.

Warfare is the ultimate threat to our environment and joint survival. Hence there is a strong link between the work of the World Commission on Environment and Development and that of the Brandt Commission on development issues and the Palme Commission on international security issues.

The World Commission will assess and propose new forms of international cooperation which break out of existing patterns and promote the changes which are needed. Whilst doing this we shall attempt to raise the level of understanding and commitment everywhere. We must create the conditions for mobilizing political will to deal with the issues in an enlightened manner.

The members of the World Commission number 22 of whom 14 are from developing countries. They have been chosen for their eminence in environment, political and development affairs and although several are Ministers in office they serve in their personal capacity.

When we first met we asked ourselves whether we were likely to make substantial progress if we followed the conventional agenda.

What do we mean by the conventional agenda? Take some of the familiar issues like soil erosion, desertification, loss of cropland and wildlife habitat. They have all received attention as separate issues and have been studied at international, regional and national levels. They are all areas where, despite the expenditure of considerable effort, the situation is getting worse, not better.

We asked ourselves whether we were likely to make significant progress further along such well worn paths. Was there a new approach? Evidently all those environment problems have common sources in agriculture, land and settlement policies. Would it not be more useful to look at the root policies which lead to the intractable issues with which we have become so familiar?

Take other conventional agenda items: carbon dioxide and climate; air pollution; acid rain. They too are usually treated in isolation but they have their deeper roots in a common area, namely the energy policy nations have chosen. We saw that there was alternative, probably more fruitful way of looking at issues of environmental concern.

That is why we decided to adopt an "alternative agenda". We think that to focus attention on the common sources of environmental problems and on the related trade and economic policies is the only viable approach. Environmental concerns cannot be viewed as an add-on to other policies, but rather an integral element of all policies effecting the development of our societies. Such an approach will also enable the Commission to address a critically important audience - those key individuals and agencies which influence the primary economic and social policies and which thus in turn influence development, nationally and internationally.

We are striving to promote a change of mind set. We want to induce a move away from regarding environment as a political afterthought - something that the "productive" or big spending departments of government like agriculture, industry, energy, defence, the finance ministry itself, think about - if they think about it at all - after formulating key policies that not only exclude environmental considerations but often induce practices that destroy the environmental resource basis of the development being sought.

Using this alternative agenda the Commission will be in a much better position to command the attention of the key central and sectoral agencies in government. It can show that environment and development is the responsibility of bodies ranging from the central economic and financial institutions of government to their agriculture, energy, industry, trade, transport and other agencies whose policies and patterns of investment have a significant impact on the environment. Often those policies and investments are the cause of the critical problems.

Thus we shall show that anticipate-and-prevent strategies are the only realistic way of ensuring that the environmental dimension finds its true place at the centre of policy making.

All too often the environment minister finds himself called in to clean up problems created by his colleagues' own decisions earlier in the cycle of development. His is the melancholy duty of reacting after the event and fighting for money from a position of weakness, where the environmental afterthought is regarded, resentfully, as an extra un-anticipated cost.

The scenario, repeated all over the world in governments, rich and poor, has to be stopped. It can no longer be afforded. Third World governments in particular must respond to the lessons of recent history.

Third World countries are now industrializing, and building many of the highly polluting industries that brought prosperity to the North in the 1950s and 1960s. Many of the environment problems of the North are therefore now showing themselves in the Third World. London may still hold the record for the world's worst killer smog, a distinction achieved in 1952, but many cities in the Third World from Ankara to Mexico City regularly run it close. But you do not have to recapitulate those mistakes.

In the North industrial development, which was so careless of the environment, has imposed three separate charges on the people and the economy. The first comes from direct damage to the environment - with ruined rivers, poisonous waste dumps, destroyed landscape - and damage to the health of the population and the work force.

The next charge comes from the direct costs of curing all this, rehabilitating landscape, treating ground and river water, restoring habitat, meeting high medical costs. And many countries are now having a third set of charges - compensation for lives that have been blighted and property that has been damaged by pollution.

Unfortunately, several industrializing countries of the Third World are already well along the same road, building up the same problems. Acid rain, regarded as a scourge of Europe and North America, is already eating into the fabric of the Taj Mahal. That is the first cost, the next will be incurred. The only question is when.

In the future all of us, and especially you in the Third World, must grasp the lesson of recent history that the costs of protecting our resources and environment - which are the essential basis for future economic development - these costs must be paid, they must be taken out of production, but they need be paid only once. One charge, that of anticipating and preventing, is what you need to impose on your own industrialists and on those who have come from other countries to build their factories on your land. And when we do it that way, not only do we ensure that the basis for future growth is sustained and even expanded but also we find that the ultimate burden on our economy is much less.

The problem with prevention is that the costs come at the beginning. They are up-front and there are many insidious pressures on the governments to allow industry to avoid these costs and to lower, or fail to enforce, environmental standards. These pressures arise from the pursuit of things we all want - jobs and faster economic growth today, even at the expense of more sustained growth tomorrow. The pressures are particularly evident in primary industries such as minerals mining, forestry and the energy industries. We are all tempted in the short term to mortgage the environment. In developing countries the temptation is especially difficult to resist when international debt repayments are pressing and foreign exchange is lacking so that spare parts cannot be obtained.

But these pressures on our environment today are as nothing compared to what they will be by the year 2000 when a whole extra world of people and their demands will be imposed on the present one. When the world has 10 billion people what will be the pressures on the soil, water, energy sources, the genetic resources, the absorptive capacity of the environment, the atmosphere itself?

If you cannot defend a heritage like your tropical forests now what hope will you have of coping with the much greater pressure in 30 years time?

Your tropical forests are not only one of the wonders of the world studied by scientists but also are a national, indeed a world, resource beyond price. The industrial and business community has only recently begun to understand the meaning of genetic diversity as we move into new industries like biotechnology. The tropical forest is more than a place for getting timber from. It is a store, a reserve of great value for the new dawning industries of the next industrial revolution. What you have in Indonesia is a genetic Fort Knox, and you should guard it and maintain it accordingly.

You have tried hard to ensure that timber companies adjust their practices to leave species that will regenerate the forest after logging. I hope you are succeeding but there are few encouraging precedents either from the tropics or from temperate forests. Sadly, it often seems that making a living is for here and now but the environment and sustained development, they are always put off until tomorrow.

Your government, like so many others, lacks the means to enforce the measures needed to make development sustainable. Still, there is nothing unusual about governments finding it hard to have their way against pressures. Strong forces seek to change the minds of governments in the North as well. Witness the strong fight made by the North American and European automobile industry against emissions standards.

In the end governments have to turn for support to the people. Eventually, it has to be the people as a whole who create a climate in which a unique resource is cherished and exploited on a sustainable basis. The action of citizens themselves is the best defence of the environment. Such action comes from education and inspiration not just at the national but at the local level too. In this area the so-called non-governmental organizations have a crucial job to do.

One of the exciting things about the South East Asia is the growth of citizen action groups and organizations concerned with both environment and development. They are engaged in the defence of the environment when they feel it to be under attack. They are actively improving the environment in other areas. They are engaged in campaigning and educating the public and promoting environmental education among the young.

Mr President, I would add a personal observation. Yesterday I arrived in time to join the public hearings with many representatives of local, regional and national non-governmental organizations from throughout Indonesia. I was deeply impressed by their knowledge, their dedication, their achievements and their vitality. It is clear from that meeting that you have an even greater source of energy than oil, and that is the tremendous energy of the Indonesian people themselves. I and my colleagues on the Commission benefited a great deal from those public hearings yesterday with your experts from within and outside the government, and we want to express our special thanks and gratitude to you for providing us with that opportunity.

The Commission will be considering measures to improve the capacity of NGOs to exert their influence. We see often, for example, that when an NGO decides to fight to defend some part of the environment it comes up against a much stronger opponent. In appealing to public opinion through the media the NGO can find its way blocked by the big company that threatens to withdraw newspaper advertising if an editor favours the environmental cause. In the courts or at a public enquiry, the situation may be even worse. The rich company or the well connected parastatal organization can call on the best legal advice, and deploy research effort at will. But the NGO has to rely on voluntary effort and bake-sales to raise the money to fight.

Governments can change that if they want to. Enquiry procedures can be made more fair by the judiciary too. We are seeking advice on this and on other questions, for example, the practice of some governments to match dollar for dollar the funds raised by NGOs for development and environmental purposes. Is it a good thing? Should the practice be extended and consolidated among all governments, rich and poor?

There is much to be explored in the way of helping NGOs to pursue their objectives at various levels and in the various social and political contexts in which they work.

The Commission recognizes that the environment will be sustained only by the active involvement of all the people and there are many ways of encouraging this. But we need your help in our work.

I hope that the Commission's work will result in a strengthening of the capacity of people to take care of their own environment or where necessary improve it and rescue it from degradation. An essential element is that we learn to appreciate the inheritance of life on earth. Our communicators and educators must make one of their prime objectives the stimulation of this appreciation.

The particular natural inheritance which Indonesia enjoys is in fact very special. It was, as many of you will know, the contemplation of your fauna and flora that led to one of the greatest of human insights namely the theory of evolution. It was at Ternate in the Moluccas that the naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace over one hundred and twenty years ago seized the idea of the survival of the fittest. He had not only been collecting and studying your inheritance of living things, he had been reflecting on something else equally thought provoking in our own time, namely Malthus's "Essay on Population." Alfred Russel Wallace wrote to his friend Charles Darwin and their joint paper launched the theory of evolution.

Wallace left you a line on your maps that bears his name. It marks, between Bali and Lombok, the division between the Indian and Australian fauna and flora. It was he who wrote the lines about Java which I quoted as I began my speech.

I hope the Commission's work will lead to an increased cooperative effort by all of us on this earth in the care and maintenance of the biological basis for our own lives.



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

INTER-GOVERNMENTAL INTERSESSIONAL PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

Nairobi, 26 November 1984

STATEMENT BY

MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, CHAIRMAN,

WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Rana, Mr. Tolba, Your Excellencies,

It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity of meeting with you and exchange views. Earlier today I addressed my colleagues in the Inter-Parliamentary Union and I was most impressed and encouraged by their interest and, I might say, their dedicated concern about environment and development issues. They will be able to do much to widen the understanding within governments and you in the Inter-governmental Inter-sessional Preparatory Committee, will, I am sure, also see them as allies in the struggle that confronts us all.

I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Rana, on your election as Acting Chairman of the IIPC.

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The Commission and the IIPC are complementary bodies devoted to the same ideals and objectives. It is very important for our two bodies to develop and maintain the closest co-operation. I know that I speak on behalf of the Vice-Chairman of our Commission, Mr. Mansour Khalid, and the other Commissioners in expressing the hope that we shall manage to work together in a constructive and co-operative manner.

The World Commission on Environment and Development held its Inaugural Meeting in Geneva in October. During that meeting we approved the mandate for our work and made an initial determination of the key issues that we should address during the course of our work. These papers have been made available to you and I am looking forward to your comments on them. While I regret that the Commission did not have the benefit of the views of the IIPC prior to its first meeting, I did receive them

shortly after. We are bringing your advice to the attention of Commissioners and it will be considered by the Commission at its next meeting. It is my impression, however, that the key issues and workplan encompasses all the issues which you indicate you would like the Commission to cover in its deliberations and that we share a basic approach to the issues and a common view of what is urgent.

I wish to stress that the Commission is taking a flexible position on its plan of work. We will be reviewing it from time to time in the light of future advice - such as the advice we have now received from you - and in the light of our own experience.

As we see it, the objectives of the Commission are threefold: First, to re-examine the critical issues of environment and development and to formulate innovative, concrete and realistic proposals to deal with them;

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Second, to strengthen international co-operation on environment and development and to assess and prepare new forms of international co-operation which can break out of existing patterns and influence policies and events in the direction of needed changes; and

Third, to raise the level of understanding and commitment to action on the part of individuals, voluntary organizations, businesses, institutes and governments.

The Commission is convinced that we need a new integrated and source-oriented approach to environmental and development problems. Current approaches are manifestly not working. We have reached the point when we can no longer continue to undertake development without regard to

the environmental consequences of that development in the expectation that when we are better off we can react and retrofit, i.e. take a mortgage on the future, against environmental assets, in order to enjoy some short-term benefits. When we do that we often discover that the benefits are indeed short-term and that the cost in terms of environmental deterioration can be enormous both financially and in economic terms. In some cases it can destroy irretrievably the fundamental ecological basis of future development.

A small scale example, but so often repeated that it has become a very large problem, is the environmentally careless disposal of hazardous waste. Clean up is often possible but is always expensive. Ground water pollution is another example. It is becoming much more extensive and there are no easy ways of cleaning up after it. On a larger geographical scale we see the short term benefits of felling and selling the forests are

soon followed by the long term costs of erosion of soil, flooding in the plains and desertification.

Some of the most threatening problems are caused not by misconceived and badly executed development, but by under-development, by widespread poverty and by the inequitable distribution of resources within individual countries and among nations and regions. In fact, for the great majority of mankind it is the very fact of under-development that leads to the degradation of their environment. Poverty is a major source of pollution. It must be conquered for us to succeed in building good societies on planet Earth.

The Commission recognizes that the developing countries face enormous difficulties in mobilizing resources for development. Poverty and the

immediate demands of survival often compel many developing countries to embark upon environmentally unsound paths. Their plight is such that they are often forced to give priority to short term effects. Ways must be found to assist the developing countries so that they can choose to invest in the future. Developed countries act irresponsibly by adopting short term perspectives; yet in many areas they are embarked on development paths that are unsustainable.

Environmentally sound development is not a concern which is or can be confined to the few rich countries of this world which can "afford" to pay attention. No country can in a true sense afford to neglect it. The penalty of neglect is to undermine the very growth we seek to accomplish. Growth which does not include environmental considerations is like a house which is built on sand. It cannot be sustained.

Mankind is threatened not only by the consequences of poverty. The threat of war has become even more pervasive and cataclysmic. The capacity for destruction greatly exceeds the capacity for wise counsel and rational decision-making. Our concepts and visions are lagging dangerously behind our capacity to harness physical processes for destructive purposes. It is infinitely easier to build a nuclear bomb than to draw appropriate political and moral conclusions from the existence of the bomb. We are wandering in the dark blinded by the flash of Promethean force. We shall have no Common Future unless we manage to give substance to the concept of Common Security.

In the most direct and simple way armaments are draining the capacity of nations to invest in sustainable development. World wide military expenditures are estimated to reach an annual level of one trillion dollars in 1985, and they continue to grow at an annual average rate of 3-4 per cent in real terms. The industrialized countries account for 77 per cent of the total global expenditures on arms, but arms expenditures in developing countries are growing in real and proportional terms. This constitutes a gross misallocation of resources and a foreclosure of opportunities for improvements in the human condition which the Commission wants to consider from its particular perspective of concern.

You will understand from these remarks that the Commission is particularly concerned about the linkage between environment and development. The foundations must be laid for sustainable growth.

The consequences of national decisions in fields like economic and trade policy, food and agriculture, energy and forestry are not confined to the goals of the institutions that make them. Clearly, they impact on development. But more than that, they impact on the fundamental ecological basis for future development - and often negatively. They do so not only within nations but also in larger regions and, in many instances, globally.

Environmentally sound development requires stronger and more effective international co-operation. The 1970's however, witnessed a marked turning away from international co-operation. Nations appeared to be turning inward, concentrating on the short term issues of national competitive advantage rather than on the longer term issues of their common future. The trend away from international co-operation and commitments

must be reversed in order to provide new momentum to the process of development, and to harmonize human development with protection of the environment.

The Commission has decided that during its mandate it will explore means to strengthen international co-operation on environment and development. In considering ways to achieve more effective international co-operation, the Commission intends to pay particular attention to the need to manage the global commons in a manner which combines equity in the distribution of benefits with enlightenment about the state of the environment. As human activity increases in the ecologically fragile polar areas the need for international co-operation will grow correspondingly.

Similarly, the rapid expansion of human activity in outer space will raise novel issues of environmental impact and challenges to inter-

national co-operation. The Commission also wants to consider appropriate legal mechanisms and procedures for the settlement of disputes and enforcement of international agreements.

The Commission is convinced that it is possible to change course, that states can be brought around to pursue common interests in ensuring a common future; that it is possible to harness science and technology to serve development strategies which are favourable to the environment; that it is possible to expand food production enormously and in ways which are not only sustainable but which even expand the ecological basis of agriculture; that it is possible to develop energy policies, industrial processes, systems of transportation and patterns of human settlements which are environmentally sound; that it is indeed possible to build environmental considerations into the strategies for development.

But new approaches are needed. The standard approach has tended to focus action on the effects of environmental problems rather than on their sources. The react-and-cure approach has led to some significant achievements, but it is fundamentally flawed. Given future trends, it has to be supplemented and reinforced, indeed, increasingly supplanted, by anticipate-and-prevent measures. Environmental policy should not be a political afterthought but rather the essence of political forethought. It should not remain a late stage add-on to our conduct of affairs. Its mission is to anticipate damage and reduce the negative external effects of human activity and, at best, to advance and promote economic and social policies which expand the basis for sustainable development.

Many of the approaches to environmental issues that have emerged over the past 15 years have tended to examine the issues as environment or resource conservation issues rather than as development issues or as

joint development and environment issues.

The depletion of genetic resources, for instance, is proceeding at a pace without precedent in human history. The most serious cause is the destruction of their habitats such as wetlands or, particularly, tropical forests. Such forests are contracting rapidly as a result of expanding and shifting agriculture, spontaneous settlement, planned colonization, clearance for plantations and ranching, cutting for fuel and timber. Action to put tropical forests on a sustainable path of development will be difficult and costly, but in the end far less costly than the consequences of failing to do so. Genetic diversity is, as you know, a key-stone of global economic development, food security and the supply of fibres and certain drugs.

Another difficulty we confront is that most of the work to date has tended to examine each of the critical issues in isolation. Hence, we have had reports dealing with acid rain while others deal with climatic change induced by higher levels of CO₂, still others with air pollutants, or with lead in petrol. However, it has become clear that these problems are all highly linked to one or a few common causes such as energy policies which favour fossil fuel combustion; or transportation, tax and trade policies which favour large fuel-inefficient vehicles. Therefore, the Commission has decided to examine the problems from the perspective of their principal sources in certain common policies. Environmental policy will be viewed as a comprehensive, horizontal policy field, an integral component of economic and social policy.

Mr. Chairman, I have attempted to share with you the perspectives which caused the Commission to adopt an alternative formulation of the key issues to the standard one with which you are all more familiar. Hence, I believe that the Commission will deal with the issues that you have set out in IIPC 1/3 but it will try to do so from a more integrated perspective than has traditionally been applied, focusing on root causes.

Let me illustrate more concretely what we propose to do: In considering the design of energy policies the Commission will deal simultaneously with several key issues such as Carbon Dioxide and Climatic Change, Air Pollution and Acid Rain, in terms of their common source in energy policy. There is no known means of preventing the build-up of atmospheric CO₂ with its attendant climatic effects if the use of

fossil fuels increases. CO₂ strategies, in common with air pollution and acid rain strategies, must therefore embrace improved energy efficiency. In any event, this is usually the most economic and environmentally benign source of energy.

Similarly, the Commission will approach the key issues of Soil Erosion, Desertification, Loss of Cropland and Wildlife Habitats from the perspective of their common sources in agriculture, land and food policies. Within the same context, the Commission will address the efficient use in agriculture of surface water resources and the depletion and degradation of ground resources.

Furthermore, and similarly, the interrelated issues of tropical forests and biological diversity will be approached from their common sources in agricultural, forestry, trade and aid policies. Although the

forestry situation in the developed world appears relatively stable there are exceptions as the present situation in the Federal Republic of Germany illustrates so vividly - forests in developing countries have declined by one half during this century, and are shrinking at an increasing rate, largely because of expanding agricultural pressures.

While the implications of national environmental measures on trade, on investment and its location and on international economic relations generally, was an early concern and has long been examined, the converse has been almost completely neglected. Yet it is becoming evident that certain policies and practices governing investment, trade and aid can have serious detrimental effects on environmental conditions and on the potential of certain countries for sustainable development.

Initially, at least, the working agenda of the Commission will be structured by the following clusters of issues:

1. Perspectives on Population and Economic Developments, Technology and Environment
2. Energy: Environment and Development
3. Industry: Environment and Development
4. Agriculture: Environment and Food Security
5. Forestry, Agriculture and Environment
6. Human Settlements: Environment and Development
7. International Economic Relations and Environment
8. Global Environmental Monitoring and Reporting
9. International Co-operation

This agenda will permit the Commission to focus on those development goals and sectors that are of primary concern to people and governments, for instance, food and agriculture, housing and services, energy, industry, etc. It will enable the Commission to address a new and critically important audience; namely, those key individuals and agencies which have a major influence on economic and social policies, and on development, in government and industry, nationally and internationally. It will enable the Commission to consider and propose strategies that are mainly anticipatory and preventive in character, rather than reactive and curative. And, most significantly perhaps, it provides the Commission with a different and more effective basis for examining existing and new forms of international co-operation.

In its approach to the task ahead the Commission will start with assembling state-of-the-art assessment reports on as many of the key issues as possible as defined in the standard agenda. This kind of inventory is necessary in order to create an appropriate data base. The Secretariat will extract from the reports assembled the essence of the analysis and synthesis and the major policy relevant conclusions and recommendations and present them in separate reports to the Commission.

In the second stage the Commission will move into its own agenda and attempt the challenging and complicated task of viewing environmental issues from the perspective I have discussed. This will not be easy and a major task for the Secretariat will be that of establishing efficient and authoritative mechanisms to generate the required analysis, synthesis, conclusions and recommendations and have them presented to the Commission in an appropriate form.

In the course of the work the Commission intends to develop and maintain the closest co-operation with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, such as UNEP and most especially its Inter-governmental Inter-sessional Preparatory Committee. Heads of some major international organizations presented the views and perspectives of those organizations during the Inaugural Meeting of the Commission. Future meetings of the Commission will include discussions with the heads of other such bodies.

The Commission will hold future sessions in several capitals throughout the world. It is our ambition to meet in all of the continents represented on the Commission. Such meetings provide opportunities to meet with interested individuals, organizations and institutions in the region in question.

The Commission will encourage the development of national and regional activities in association with its work, such as regional seminars and expert groups. We are looking towards an open process with multiplier effects throughout the international community.

In view of the difficult strategy which the Commission has decided to adopt the workplan envisages a total of eight full Commission meetings.

Mr. Chairman, the World Commission on Environment and Development looks forward to continuous, close and fruitful dialogue and co-operation with the IIPC in this most important endeavour on which we have now embarked.'



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT

Nairobi, 26 November-1 December 1984

STATEMENT BY

**MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, CHAIRMAN,
WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen and Fellow Parliamentarians,

It is an honour indeed to be invited to address you, fellow parliamentarians, here in this beautiful city of Nairobi. And I am glad to see so many Kenyan parliamentarians present among us - likewise devoted to the open public debate of courses of action and to that interplay with constituents which is the mark of the parliamentary style.

This is not the first time that parliamentarians have discussed the environment and it will certainly not be the last. It is appropriate that we should meet in Nairobi and we thank UNEP who have so kindly offered us the hospitality of their new headquarters. Indeed we find ourselves at a pole of activity in environmental affairs surrounded by

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much positive evidence that mankind can address his problems. We have the chance to meet the staff of UNEP on their home ground and their colleagues in Habitat. We have the chance to meet the representatives of the non-governmental organizations active in environmental affairs. The permanent representatives of governments to UNEP are equally a vital part of the World community in Nairobi concerned with environment.

Beyond Nairobi, in the countries to the North, we have different evidence for the importance of environment in the lives of people. We have evidence of the implacability of environmental constraints in the shape of a drama of human desperation in the Sahel. The desertification that is driving millions from their homes is only partly the drought - it is a product of us - of our own policies in agriculture, land tenure,

settlement and population to name only some of the man made influences on the environment.

As the pressures for action increase some have wondered whether the slow processes of parliamentary discussion are not irrelevant. Certainly when disaster strikes as in Ethiopia and along the southern margins of the Sahara people's lives are saved by swift resolute action which often has to come from the mobilization of capabilities that only the military may have at hand. Indeed, today we must call upon all countries to render swift and effective assistance in order to prevent the catastrophe which is casting its ugly shadows before it in the Sahel. But in the last analysis the environment is the responsibility of all the people and action depends on shared understanding and the effective co-operation of everyone in our societies. It is there that parliamentary discussion becomes more, not less relevant.

I think all of us sense that we have less margin and room for error as time goes by. We have the feeling that things happen more quickly than they used to. Sometimes the chain of cause and effect goes so quickly that we talk of shock. Thus quite remote connections show up quickly today although twenty years ago the same chain of cause and effect could only have been detected by academic analysis. Thus we sense that today mistakes are more costly and more difficult to reverse than they were when our global village lived further from the edge of its limits. Our village is expanding rapidly - too rapidly - and today at several points such as the Sahel - it has gone through those limits.

We need, in fact, more time for reflection and discussion on the fundamental basis for our future development - the environment. It is a somewhat different issue from many others that parliamentarians discuss. It is something much more protean, something that appears in every sector, sometimes suddenly and dramatically. We can, of course, discuss the effects of environmental mistakes and labouriously set them to rights if we are lucky enough to find appropriate curative measures, and if we are lucky enough to be able to afford to apply them. That is what environment ministers in industrialized countries are doing in respect of acid rain. The damage costs of acid rain to our forests, lakes and property are becoming recognized as a massive and unsupportable burden on our economies. But the origins of this environmental disaster are to be found in national energy policies and the decisions taken many years ago to transfer local air pollution far and wide rather than to remove it at the source.

In Africa today desertification is coming to be seen not as a problem for a small and harassed environment ministry, last in a long line of departments fighting for a share of the budget, but as something that is a consequence of the way a country goes about feeding itself, fueling itself, and the way the country runs its settlement policy - and, frankly, its overall development policy. The right time for a discussion of the environmental consequences of development is as early as possible. The right place is in the central councils of government. Environment, usually a political afterthought, must become the essence of political forethought.

We must recognize that in the next few decades population growth will mean that another world will have to be built on top of the one that now exists. How can a healthy environment be created to provide for their basic needs? How can we satisfy their rights to a livable life? Equity demands

that we improve the access to, and the distribution of resources, especially those for human needs.

When we parliamentarians discuss these issues we see that a narrow perception of environmental policy as a set of add-on measures is no longer possible. But looking back, we can now see that much of the machinery of government invented at around the time of the Stockholm Conference in 1972 embodies this basic idea that environmental policy is largely a question of reacting after the fact, to the undesirable consequences of economic, trade and other policies and to the undesirable side effects of practices that seek cheap energy, cheap food, and speedy returns on capital investment. A broader vision of environmental policy, a vision that requires that it becomes an integral part of development, has great ramifications for the existing structures of government and for the mechanisms of international co-operation.

Can we change the standing of environment in our approach to economic and social affairs?

It is this question that lies behind the establishment of the World Commission on Environment and Development.

Ladies and Gentlement, let me turn more specifically to the World Commission on Environment and Development and the approach we have chosen.

You know the background already. You know that many current approaches to environment and development are not working. You know that many of today's economic, monetary, trade, agriculture and energy policies induce and reinforce non-sustainable patterns and practices of development.

Forestry and settlements policies often squander our biological resource base. You know that widespread poverty on the one hand, and concentrated affluence on the other, are bringing more and more pressure on the environment and increasing the inequities which lead to global instability and political tensions.

You know too that a new generation of environment and development problems has crystallized and that the new problems are increasingly complex. Take one example: rising levels of carbon dioxide are an almost inevitable consequence of burning fossil fuel for power and fuel wood for cooking. We now look with disquiet at the effect of carbon dioxide on climate. And then we find with surprise that some strong defenders of the environment are constrained to say that nuclear power may even be a relatively desirable alternative source of energy. The logic may lead to a surprising conclusion but logic it is.

Take another example. The damming of rivers to provide hydropower and a supply of irrigation water marked the first steps in development for many newly independent nations. Ten or fifteen years into the lives of some of these expensive projects the environmental effects are becoming more evident. Soil salinization and the spread of water borne diseases are all too common after effects. But new ones are coming to the fore - When the dam floods the valley floor and gentler slopes the displaced farmers must move to steeper slopes and establish themselves and their families quickly. Forest clearance for agriculture proceeds apace. When the rain falls on the bare catchment area the silt begins to flow and the dam begins to fill - being transformed now from the eternally renewable resource envisaged in the plan to a once-for-all mistake. The last bitter question that, in some cases, may remain to be answered is whether the dam will outlast the final repayment to the bank.

At Stockholm, in 1972, we first heard the phrase that has become ever more pertinent. The greatest pollution, it was said, was the pollution of poverty.

The phrase was Mrs. Gandhi's and she used it with skill to remind us down the years that development is indissolubly linked to environment and that rich and poor have both special problems, and common problems. I pay a heartfelt tribute to her memory as a very great pioneer in environment and a very great leader of nations.

When she coined that phrase, at the beginning of the UN's Second Development Decade, we were perhaps overly optimistic that we knew how to tackle poverty. We now know that we can tackle poverty in the old way by exploiting natural resources for as long as they last - forest exploitation is a good example - but we see that we are only putting off an

evil day. Indeed, the exposure of watersheds to erosion by removing tree cover may actually advance the evil day.

But in each individual area better strategies are known for achieving developmental success. They may be more expensive in the short run though cheaper in the long run. They may require profound changes of attitude, changes of institutions, all sorts of needed changes but we know that the ingenuity of mankind can do what is necessary.

Nevertheless we must recognize that the developing countries face enormous difficulties in mobilizing resources for development. Their plight is often such that they are forced to give priority to short term gains. Choosing environmentally sound paths to development would be better economy

in the medium and long term. Ways must be found to assist the developing countries so that they can choose to invest in the future. Sound environmental policies are also an international responsibility.

Mankind is threatened not only by the scourge of poverty. The threat of war has become even more pervasive and cataclysmic. The capacity for destruction greatly exceeds the capacity for wise counsel and rational decision-making. Our concepts and visions are lagging dangerously behind our capacity to harness physical processes for destructive purposes. It is infinitely easier to build a nuclear bomb than to draw appropriate political and moral conclusions from the existence of the bomb. We are wandering in the dark blinded by the flash of Promethean force. We shall have no Common Future unless we manage to give substance to the concept of Common Security.

In the most direct and simple way armaments are draining the capacity of nations to invest in sustainable development. World wide military expenditures are estimated to reach an annual level of one trillion dollars in 1985, and they continue to grow at an annual average rate of 3-4 per cent in real terms. The industrialized countries account for 77 per cent of the total global expenditures on arms, but arms expenditures in developing countries are growing in real and proportional terms. This constitutes a gross misallocation of resources and a foreclosure of opportunities for improvements in the human condition which the Commission wants to consider from its particular perspective of concern.

Where does the Commission come into this complex picture?

The members of the Commission have been chosen as eminent leaders in the political life of their countries, in science and industry and in environment and development. They come from all corners of the globe and they serve in a personal capacity. But they are confident that it is possible to build a future that is more prosperous, more just, and more secure because it rests on policies and practices that serve both to sustain and to expand the ecological basis of development.

The Commission believes that it is possible to build environmental consideration into development. When this is well done we can see the result is not only more socially effective but more resource efficient and much more economic.

The Commission believes that it is possible to develop energy, industrial processes, transportations and settlements in ways which are environmentally sound.

The Commission believes that it is possible to expand food production in ways which are sustainable, and that the ecological basis for the production of renewable resources is itself expandable. Science and technology, we believe, can be harnessed to development in ways which are environmentally favourable.

The Commission will call on the world's best brains to help it chart a way ahead and come up with concrete action proposals. During the past months I have experienced widespread interest and support for the Commission. This is a positive sign that many of the existing forces for reform will be able to focus their visions of a more coherent future through the work of the Commission.

What then, in short order, are the objectives of the Commission?

Its prime objectives are, first, to re-examine the critical issues of environment and development and formulate realistic action proposals to deal with them. Next to strengthen international co-operation on environment and development, and to assess and propose new forms of co-operation which can break out of existing patterns and influence policies in the direction of needed changes. Lastly it will, during the execution

of this work, raise the level of understanding and commitment on the part of individuals, voluntary organizations, business, institutes and governments.

The Commission has chosen an alternative approach to the traditional way of handling the issues of environment and development. Our focus is shifted away from the effects of environmental problems to their source in macro-economic, trade and sectoral policies. Environmental policy will be seen as a horizontal policy field, an integral component of economic, social, and development policy. Its mission is to anticipate damage and reduce the negative external effects of human activity. We want to promote economic and social policies which expand the basis for sustainable development.

Many of the problems we have faced in the past stem from the fact that while industry and the sectoral agencies of government are sometimes seen as "targets" by environmental agencies, they are seldom seen as "participants" in the development of environmental policies. "Environmental" policy is seen as something separate and distinct related to the protection or conservation of water, land, and species; perhaps as an "add-on" to economic and sectoral policy, but seldom as economic and sectoral policy itself. As a result, few environmental agencies have developed the institutional capacity needed to undertake the analysis required to attract seriously the attention of these agencies; nor have they acquired the professional resources and expertise needed to argue their case effectively in the interagency committees where advice on macro-economic, trade, agriculture and energy policy is formulated; and in the corridors where decisions are effectively taken. The Commission, therefore, has adopted an integrated, systemic approach.

One last question is the relationship of the Commission to the world community. As many of you know the early discussions which laid the foundation of the idea of an independent commission took place in this city - in the Governing Council of UNEP. In due course these ideas were crystallized in resolution 161 of last year's General Assembly of the United Nations. The Secretary General of the UN chose myself as Chairman and Mr. Mansour Khalid as Vice-Chairman and we in turn chose the Commissioners. Organizationally the Commission is independent and free to consider all aspects of the environment and development problematique presented to it by anyone, in any way, and from anywhere in the world. It will nevertheless pay special attention to the suggestions made in the UN resolution of 1983. Its final recommendations will be presented to the General Assembly of 1987, an act which will conclude the Commission's work.

The Commission's work is not just to present a final persuasive report. It is to engage the world's best minds in the work of reappraisal and rethink. Parliamentarians are in a unique position to contribute their own ideas which reflect their situation close to government and close to constituents. Just as important is the contribution they can make to raising the receptivity of governments by virtue of their own interest and enthusiasm. Governments are, we know, beset by short term problems and your help in reminding them of the longer term factors in the conduct of our affairs will be invaluable.

Thus, with the help of all those who care to contribute I hope we shall bring about a change in attitudes to the environment as the basis of all development. I hope that environment will cease to be a political afterthought, and will become the essence of political forethought.

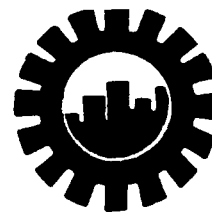
Only when mankind's first thoughts, rather than his afterthoughts, are of the care and maintenance of this priceless planetary heritage, only then can we talk of being really civilized.



UNEP

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WORLD INDUSTRY CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Versailles, 14 - 16 November 1984

Statement by

Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Chairman,

World Commission on Environment and Development

"Towards a Common Future"

Mr. Chairman, Prime Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure indeed to be given this opportunity to address the World Industry Conference on Environmental Management on behalf of the World Commission on Environment and Development.

The theme of your Conference is both timely and urgent. We need to fashion relevant, effective and credible policies to further the twin objectives of environmental protection and sustainable development. Too often these two objectives have been presented as antithetical. But the dichotomy is a false one. Indeed we must realize their close inter-relationship. There is no choice of either - or, we can only achieve sustainable growth if we manage to protect the environment and we shall only succeed in protecting the environment if we can accomplish sustainable growth. For such an integrated perspective to take hold and inspire the policies and trade-offs made at the various levels of decision-making we need to develop close co-operation among industry, governments and organizations. Therefore, this Conference is indeed both important and promising.

You as industrialists, are often regarded as the prime source of environmental problems, especially pollution. However, you are also the source of comforts, convenient machines, clothes, cars and several basic elements of a good life. You are also the source of jobs and by that, of development. You are thus both reviled and appreciated, very often by the same people, although at different times.

In the documents to this Conference you state that : We need to foresee change, not react to it. Yes, and may I add as a medical doctor with a public health background : prevention is better than cure.

When the environment movement began to gather momentum 10 to 15 years ago, the image of the typical industrialist was of someone seeking profits and determined to keep costs down. It was supposed that you,

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the industrialist, regarded pollution control as simply another cost - another impediment to your activities and one to be avoided by any convenient means. You might also have felt, as many politicians did - wrongly - that environment was a new public fashion and would, after a while, fade away, and disappear.

We all know today that environment is not a passing fashion but something that is moving to occupy a central place in world policies. Environment is much more than a simple and inconvenient cost. Over the years industrialists have participated more directly in the environment debate. Perceptions have broadened and deepened. Your image in the eyes of even the most dedicated environmentalists has changed as the industrial community has responded to growing environmental awareness. You have yourselves invented and implemented solutions at all phases of the industrial cycle - new products and new processes that conserve resources and recycle what was formerly waste and effluent. You have begun to build environment into development. But more has to come!

Our present knowledge about population, resources, environment and development issues demonstrates that globally, over the next two or three decades, the human environment will deteriorate in largely predictable ways. The critical question is what actions need to be taken in the near future to ensure that development in medium and long term will be on both an expansive and more sustainable path, one that promises to restore and gradually improve the human condition.

The answer depends less on nature than on nations, and on their capacity for co-operation. The problematique is above all a puzzle in international co-operation, a puzzle in which some missing pieces will hopefully be filled in, also by the will and imagination created through this meeting.

In an era when we have witnessed a certain turning away from international co-operation, and seen nations concentrating on short term issues, commitments must be reversed in order to give renewed momentum. The World Commission will wish to examine new forms of co-operation that can

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break out of existing patterns and influence policies in the direction of needed change.

Some of the problems we confront reflect the incidental effects of certain economic, trade, agricultural, forestry, energy and other policies as applied at both the national and international level. Climatic change, soil erosion and desertification, surface and ground water pollution, deforestation and the loss of genetic resources, are all examples of how man is eroding the very basis of his own survival.

The Commission has three main objectives :

First, we are going to reexamine the critical issues of environment and development and try to formulate innovative, concrete and realistic action proposals to deal with them ;

Second, we will assess and propose new forms of international cooperation on environment and development - forms that can break out of existing patterns and influence policies and events in the direction of needed changes, and

Third, we will endeavour to raise the level of understanding and commitment to action on the part of individuals, voluntary organizations, businesses, institutes and governments.

To meet these objectives, we will need the ideas and support of all concerned groups and individuals, but in particular those of industry.

Many current approaches to environment and development are not working. They are clearly not sustainable as we move into the next century, building another world on top of the one we have, and doubling, at least, our demands on the planet's ecosystems. In the crudest sense they are not even affordable. If we continue to undertake development without regard to the environmental consequences of that development

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in the expectation that later - "when we are richer" - we can "react and retrofit", it is doubtful that even the rich countries will be able to afford to keep up, let alone catch up. It is certain that the developing countries will not.

Yes, the industrial community knows perhaps better than anyone that :

It is possible to harness science and technology to development in ways which are environmentally sound. You have done it.

It is possible to expand food production enormously and in ways which are not only sustainable but which even expand the ecological basis for agriculture ; and we must do it if the good earth is to feed all of our children's children. You have done it.

It is similarly possible to develop energy, industrial processes, transportation and human settlements in ways which are environmentally sound. Again you have done it.

In short, it is possible to build environmental considerations into development. When this is done well the result is not only socially more effective but also more resource efficient, and indeed more economic.

Change is needed in some of the critical policies of governments and the ways in which they are formulated and applied ; in the nature of co-operation between government, business, labour, science and youth in the forms of international co-operation which have proved incapable of tackling many environment and development issues and, above all, change is needed in the level of understanding and commitment by people themselves, by organizations and governments.

The World Commission will attempt to chart a new course. We need your views and your active support and co-operation if spaceship earth is to provide a basis for good lives and good societies for all human beings. The Commissioners come from all corners of the globe and they

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are all eminent leaders in different walks of public and private life. They are united in the view - a view I know is shared by this Conference - that it is possible to build a future which is more prosperous, more just, and more secure because it rests on policies and practices which serve both to sustain and to expand the ecological basis of development.

The Commission will take a broad view and design policy proposals which make industry and the sectoral agencies of government active participants in the development of environmental policies, not the targets of such policies.

In this regard, Mr. Chairman, the Commission wishes to involve leaders from industry directly in our work, as we will certainly draw upon the results of this Conference. Its recommendations will be presented to the Commission at its next meeting. They will be extremely valuable if they respond directly to the four questions put so clearly by Mr. Roderick earlier this morning.

Mr. Chairman, we can no longer treat environmental concern as an add-on or an afterthought to industrial policies, energy policies, agricultural policies, etc. It must become the essence of political forethought and an integral element of public policy in all our countries. Our approach must be preventive and anticipatory rather than reactive and curative. We must recognize that environmental protection cannot be predicated upon poverty. For the great majority of mankind it is the very fact of underdevelopment which degrades their environment. Poverty is the major source of pollution. It must be conquered for us to succeed in building good societies anywhere.

Our world is an independent world. Decisions made by the authorities in one society will affect conditions of life in other societies which have no access to the process of decisions. While

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the benefits of a free flow of goods, services, people and ideas will undoubtedly contribute to human welfare, the free flow of pollution and waste have exactly the opposite effect. We need international co-operation and regulation to promote social and economic growth and to preserve equity. We have to learn to think and act as citizens of one world. We have one common future.

Subject to alterations

16TH SESSION OF THE IUCN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Madrid, 5 - 14 November 1984

STATEMENT BY

MRS. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, CHAIRMAN,
WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highness, Ministers, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is an honour indeed to be able to bring greetings and best wishes from one of the youngest global institutions in the field of conservation and development - The World Commission on Environment and Development - to one of the oldest - The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.

You have long been a symbol of what we all see as indispensable in the way mankind addresses the natural environment - a union of active and inspired people from East and West, North and South. But you also unite governments and non-governmental organizations, scientists, politicians, teachers and citizens. And if there is one thing we do know about changing our world, it is that it takes a united effort. It takes the mobilization of all resources.

I want to take this opportunity of giving you a picture of the World Commission and its perspectives - to set your minds to thinking about our objectives and how you might help us to achieve them.

How best to mobilize enthusiasm, knowledge and political will has been very much on my mind as the World Commission now gears up for its work. We see clearly that we shall not be able to accomplish our task without drawing on the world's intellectual resources in the widest sense. We shall be looking to IUCN and to its members for an important contribution and active support. And we are convinced that joint endeavours will result in an improved framework, and in better support, for all those working for progress in the field of environment and sustainable development.

The Commission has been established at a time of unprecedented pressures on the global environment and a growing recognition that much of today's development is not sustainable. Rather it is based upon a squandering of our "biological" capital: our soils, forests, animal and plant species, even our water and air.

But this Commission believes that rather than spend our biological capital we can expand it. We can improve the quality of our environment while at the same time enhancing economic growth and development. In fact, the Commission sees no limits to growth provided that growth is a reflection of sustainable development. We are convinced that it is possible to build a future which is more secure, just, and prosperous and we believe that such a future for the world's people must, and indeed, will rest on policies and practices that are sustainable and expand our natural capital.

What are our objectives?

The first is to look again at the critical issues of environment and development and to recommend new, realistic and concrete proposals for gaining new ground - action proposals that will take us beyond the achievements of Stockholm over a decade ago.

The second is to assess and propose new forms of international cooperation on environment and development which can break out of existing patterns - patterns that have almost become conditioned reflexes. We must steer policies in the direction of needed change.

And the third objective is to raise the level of understanding and commitment to action on the part of individuals, voluntary organizations, businesses, institutes and governments. For this we

shall need Partnership in Conservation, Partnership in Development, and Partnership for a Common Future.

The Vice-Chairman of the Commission, Mr. Mansour Khalid, and I were chosen by the Secretary General of the United Nations. Together we in turn have appointed the Commissioners. All of them have been chosen for their political eminence and leadership experience in science, industry, environment and development affairs. When complete the Commission will number 22, with 5 from Asia, 5 from Africa, 4 from Latin America, 2 from North America, 3 from Western Europe, 2 from Eastern Europe and one from Yugoslavia.

The World Commission on Environment and Development is an independent body of people. Its perspective is a global perspective and it is an integrated perspective which cuts across the traditional sectors of public policy.

Much of the evolution of the idea of the Commission took place in the United Nations and in the Governing Council of UNEP. It was a resolution of the 1983 General Assembly - No. 161 - which effectively led to the establishment of the Commission - and it is to the General Assembly of 1987 that we shall submit our recommendations for action. The Commission stands free as an independent body and is able to address any issues, to formulate and present any views and recommendations and to present any proposals it considers relevant and pertinent.

It is quite clear now that many of the current approaches to environment and development are not working. During the last decade and a half of growing environmental awareness, most developing countries have seen a steady and, in some cases, rapid increase in environmental degradation. The trends are alarming and they have added to historic pressures on resources, and to those associated with underdevelopment and poverty.

It is true that many advanced industrial countries have enjoyed some significant advances in environmental quality over the past decade and a half, but even in these countries the battle against conventional pollution is far from won. Resource deterioration accelerates and the economic and social costs of the "react and retrofit" approach to development continue to grow.

At the same time , a new generation of increasingly complex environment and development issues has emerged, of concern to developed and developing countries alike. Some of these, although global or regional in nature, are largely a consequence of the production patterns of the heavily industrialized parts of the world. Climatic changes induced by rising levels of carbon dioxide is one example which could have massive economic and social consequences.

Some problems reflect the incidental effects of certain economic, trade, agricultural, forestry, energy and other policies as applied at both the national and international level. Soil erosion and desertification, surface and ground water pollution, deforestation (especially of tropical forests) and the loss of genetic resources, are all examples - examples of how man is eroding the very basis for his own survival.

Some of the most threatening environment and development problems today are caused to a considerable extent by the widespread poverty and the inequitable distribution of resources within individual nations and among nations and regions. Many of the most serious effects in the Third World are rooted in economic and social injustice and in a worsening imbalance in the relationship between man and his capacity to manage nature.

At Stockholm, 12 years ago, a phrase was used that has become even more pertinent today. The greatest pollution, it was said, is the pollution of poverty.

It is one thing to diagnose the ill, and declare that existing machinery is of no avail. Bringing about radical change is the real test.

You in IUCN have already started on a new road forward. Your "World Conservation Strategy" has blazed a trail that others should follow. You put sustainable development through the conservation of living resources at the head of your agenda. The question is now - how can we get others to do likewise - governments, institutions, development agencies, businesses and banks, and all the other actors who contribute to the running of the world economy?

The changes needed are radical. There must be changes in certain critical policies and the ways in which they are formulated and applied; changes in the nature of cooperation between government, business, science and people; changes in certain forms of international cooperation which have proved incapable of tackling many environment and development issues; changes, above all, in the level of understanding and commitment by people themselves.

But what changes? And how?

This is where we most need your support and assistance. The Commission intends to develop strategies that will enable it to tap the vast intellectual and political resources of the communities concerned with environment and development issues. Many of them are your members

and associates and we look forward to close contact on substantive matters in the coming months. We were greatly encouraged by the concrete and thoughtful suggestions made by your Director General at our Inaugural Meeting in October.

They will help us in our priority task to shift the focus from the effects of environmental problems and the emerging palliatives we deploy, to the sources of environmental problems in macro-economic, trade and sectoral policies. Environmental policy needs to become an integral component of economic, social and development policy. Its mission is to anticipate damage and reduce the negative external effects of human activity. Its mission is also actively to promote economic and social policies that expand the basis for sustainable development.

We must therefore increasingly question whether our consideration of environment as a sort of late stage add-on to our conduct of affairs, as a kind of political afterthought, is sufficient. I personally suspect that, on the contrary, our consideration of environment will have to become the essence of political forethought. We must come to see that many of our current approaches add up to a sort of piracy against our children that a truly civilized world can no longer tolerate or afford.

I am sure it will not be easy to reorientate our approach to ensuring food, shelter, security and peaceful enjoyment of life for all the world's people - and for their descendants. But if we do not find the way to a policy for common survival and common security then our future will be torment and disaster.

Friends, we shall overcome the challenges, but in order to do so we need people of goodwill, dedication and insight to come over and join our campaign for a better world. By working together we can and must achieve our goal of a common future.

Statement of Mrs Brundtland
at the Opening Session of the Inaugural Meeting
of the World Commission on Environment
and Development, Geneva.
1-3 October 1984

M. Ministre, Messieurs les Conseillers d'Etat.
Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am very encouraged to see so many of you here to attend the launch of our enterprise and I hope, in the next few minutes, to convey something of the spirit of the World Commission on Environment and Development to you - so that you have a better idea of what kind of ship you have seen take to the water.

As in launching real, rather than metaphorical ships, some words of thanks to the constructors and creators are essential.

Let me first thank Switzerland our host country for providing us with a place to be, entirely appropriate to our objectives. Switzerland has long played a unique role in helping the world community negotiate and settle its differences in peace. As a neutral calm and orderly country which never had colonies, Switzerland has been a living demonstration that it is possible for peoples of different languages and religions to work and live in peaceful co-operation. Switzerland is a co-sponsor of the Commission and has already given us much encouragement. It is said that in Switzerland today the most vital issue is in fact the environment, so we shall be pleased to have a receptive local audience for our work.

Geneva has been host to people with ideas for the creation of a better world for at least 120 years when the International Committee of the Red Cross was founded here by Henri Dunant. In fact there was an initiative 30 years before that called The League of Peace. So international co-operation has, by now, entered the very stonework of the city. Our small Secretariat will soon move into the Palais Wilson where the League of Nations began. May I convey to you, M. Segonde, our warm appreciation of the welcome that Geneva has given us.

I must thank too the representative of the United Nations for relaying the kind words of the Secretary General. The World Commission was formally created by Resolution 161 of the last session of the General Assembly and it is to the General Assembly that we shall deliver our final recommendations. Nevertheless, our Commission is organizationally independent of the UN system with each Commissioner serving in an individual capacity. It will be able to address any issues, to formulate and present any views and recommendations, and to present any proposals it considers relevant and pertinent.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to UNEP in whose Governing Council the groundwork for Resolution 161 was prepared and I extend a special welcome to Dr Tolba, Executive Director of UNEP who was able to be present today.

With most diplomatic initiatives, it falls to one country to play a strong leading role. In our case, we owe special appreciation to Japan for taking and sustaining the initiative that gave substance to the widespread desire for the development of a new approach to environment and development. It is most appropriate that Mr Hara who worked so hard at the early meetings in Nairobi in UNEP's Governing Council should be here today for this Inaugural Session.

Japan's generosity will also take the Commissioners to a meeting in Tokyo in 1986 at a time when final shape will be given to our recommendations.

The Vice-Chairman of the Commission, Mr Mansour Khalid, and I were chosen by the Secretary General of the United Nations. Together, we, in turn, have appointed the Commissioners seated behind me.

You will, I know, recognize many of them. You will find their names and their biographies in the literature available to you. They have been chosen for their political eminence and leadership experience in science, industry, environment and development affairs. You will also find quotations and excerpts from some of the things they have said or written. I hope this documentation will help you to form a deeper impression of the Commissioners than can be transmitted by my brief introductory remarks. I should add that we have followed other international precedents in seeking an acceptable geographical balance for the Commission - when complete it will number 22, with 5 from Asia, 5 from Africa, 4 from Latin America, 2 from North America and 3 from Western Europe, and 3 from Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia.

I would also like to say how pleased we are to have been able to persuade Mr Jim MacNeill to become the Secretary General of the Commission. His experience and competence will be of great importance to our work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be able to introduce the World Commission on Environment and Development to you and to tell you what we have achieved so far, what our plans are for the near future and the crucial role that your governments, your agencies, institutions and non-governmental organizations have to play in these plans. Indeed, one of the many things I believe that distinguishes this Commission is its need for your active support, and our determination to facilitate your participation.

As I have already mentioned, the Commission was established as a result of a resolution adopted by the General Assembly in December of last year. It was formally established at a meeting in Geneva last May. Today, with the appointment of the Commissioners almost completed, with a small Secretariat being put in place under the Secretary General, we are about to start our first regular session. It will be a crucial one. The Commission will be determining many of the key issues that it should address and the perspectives from which it should address them. We will consider the strategy that we should employ to marshal the information that we will need. We will ascertain the intellectual, political and organizational resources that need to be tapped, in order to achieve our objectives. And we will endeavour to translate the answers to these questions into a practical workplan and timetable that will enable the Commission to achieve its objectives within a relatively short period of time.

Commission's Objectives

What are those objectives?

If I were to put them into three short points I would say they were:

First, to re-examine the critical issues of environment and development and to formulate innovative, concrete and realistic action-proposals to deal with them;

Second, to assess and propose new forms of international co-operation on environment and development that can break out of existing patterns and influence policies and events in the direction of needed changes; and

Third, to raise the level of understanding and commitment to action on the part of individuals, voluntary organizations, businesses, institutes and governments.

Pressures on Environment and Development Unprecedented

The Commission has been established at a time of unprecedented pressures on the global environment and a growing recognition that much of today's development is not sustainable. Rather it is based upon a squandering of our "biological" capital: our soils, forests, animal and plant species, even our water and air. It consumes its own ecological foundations.

Many of today's economic, monetary and trade policies and policies in sectors such as energy, agriculture, forestry and human settlements, induce and reinforce non-sustainable development patterns and practices. Many current approaches to environment and development are not working. Widespread poverty and concentrated affluence conspire to increase environmental degradation, to increase pressures on resources and to increase inequities that lead to global instability and political tension.

During the last decade and a half of growing environmental awareness, most developing countries have seen a steady and, in some cases, rapid increase in environmental degradation added to historic pressure on resources. Many newly industrializing countries have experienced a massive deterioration of their environment, with environmental problems associated with sudden industrialization and explosive urbanization being added to those associated with underdevelopment and poverty.

It is true that many advanced industrial countries have seen significant improvements in environmental quality over the past decade and a half. This has stemmed from new institutions, legislation, policies and programmes designed largely to clean up the massive backlog of environmental degradation from the rapid growth of the fifties and sixties, and to react to and cure new situations as they arise. It must be added, however, that in these countries the battle against conventional pollution is far from won. Resource deterioration accelerates and the economic and social costs of the "react and retrofit" approach to development continue to grow.

At the same time, a new generation of increasingly complex environment and development issues has emerged, of concern to developed and developing countries alike. Some of these, although global or regional in nature, are largely a consequence of the production patterns of the heavily industrialized parts of the world. Climatic changes induced by rising levels of carbon dioxide, for example, which could have massive economic and social consequences. Transboundary air pollution in the form of acid rain now probably affects all continents, as do the use and misuse of chemicals and the unwise management of hazardous wastes.

Some problems reflect the incidental effects of certain economic, trade, agricultural, forestry, energy and other policies as applied at both the national and international level. Soil erosion and desertification, surface and ground water pollution, deforestation (especially of tropical forests) and the loss of genetic resources, are all examples - examples of how man is eroding the very basis for his own survival. Some of these problems, of course, are reinforced by the voracious material demands of the industrial societies.

Some of the most threatening environment and development problems today are caused to a considerable extent by the widespread poverty and the inequitable distribution of resources within individual nations and among nations and regions. Many of the most serious effects in the Third World are rooted in economic and social injustice and in a worsening imbalance in the relationship between man and his capacity to manage nature.

Current Approaches Not Working

Hindsight demonstrates clearly that many current approaches to environment and development are not working. They are clearly not sustainable as we move into the next century, building another world on top of the one we have, and doubling, at least, our demands on the planet's ecosystems. In the crudest sense, they are not even affordable. If we continue to undertake development without regard to the environmental consequences of that development in the expectation that later - "when we are richer" - we can "react and retrofit", it is doubtful that even the rich countries will be able to afford to keep up, let alone catch up. It is certain that the developing countries will not.

New Approaches to Development Are Possible

Hindsight also demonstrates forcibly that different approaches are possible.

It is possible to harness science and technology to development in ways that are environmentally favourable.

It is possible to expand food production enormously and in ways that are not only sustainable but which even expand the ecological basis for agriculture: and we must do it if the good earth is to feed all of our children's children.

It is similarly possible to develop energy, industrial processes, transportation and human settlements in ways that are environmentally sound.

It is possible, generally, to build environmental considerations into development. Our experience to date demonstrates that when this is done well, the result is not only more socially effective but also more resource efficient, and indeed, much more economic.

Changes Are Needed

We must recognize that the developing countries face enormous difficulties in mobilizing resources for development. Their plight is often such that they are forced to give priority to short term effects. Choosing environmentally sound paths to development would be better economy in the medium and long term. Ways must be found to assist the developing countries so that they can choose to invest in the future. Sound environmental policies are also an international responsibility. The members of the Commission have been chosen as eminent leaders in the political life of their countries, in science and industry and in environment and development. They come from all corners of the globe and they serve in a personal capacity. But they have one thing in common. They are confident that it is possible to build a future that is more prosperous, more just, and more secure because it rests on policies and practices that serve both and to sustain and to expand the ecological basis of development.

The Commission however, is equally convinced that this will not happen without significant changes in current approaches: changes in certain critical policies and the ways in which they are formulated and applied; changes in the nature of co-operation between government, business, science and people; changes in certain forms of international co-operation which have proved incapable of tackling many environment and development issues; changes, above all, in the level of understanding and commitment by people themselves, by organizations and by governments.

But what changes? And how?

Frankly, here is where we most need your support and assistance. To answer that question, the Commission intends to develop strategies that will enable it to tap the vast intellectual and political resources of the communities concerned with environment and development issues: scientific institutes and non-governmental organizations, as well as governmental and intergovernmental bodies. During the past months I have experienced widespread interest and support for the Commission, even before we had been established. This bodes well for the future of our work. The Commission will take steps to facilitate the fullest possible participation.

The Commission discussed these questions briefly at its Organizational Session in May and will be returning to them this week. But it is clear now that as the Commission conducts its enquiries and sifts the evidence on what changes are needed, it will be guided by certain perspectives.

Sustainability

I have already mentioned sustainability. Policy paths to sustainable development are a central concern that will preoccupy the Commission as it addresses the critical issues. This will compel examination of a range of policies in many directly relevant sectors such as agriculture, energy, forestry, industry, investment, trade and development assistance. In any such examination a major purpose will be to identify those policies that can serve to promote development that is sustainable not only in the short-term but also in the medium and long term.

Security And Environmental Risks

Security and the need to widen the definition of national security beyond military security to embrace economic and ecological interdependence and global environmental risks is a further concern that the Commission will need to consider in assessing the key issues.

In various parts of the world ecological degradation and environmental risks are becoming a significant causal factor in economic, social and political unrest. They are manifest in the growing migrations of "ecological refugees", the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters and the social collapse of exploding settlements. While these threats are fundamentally non-military, continued failure to address them adequately could lead to crisis situations in which military force is seen as a way out, at least in the short term. With environmental crises deepening in many parts of the world, environmental degradation could become a serious threat to peace in the future with military means employed to deal with non-military challenges to security.

Warfare, of course, constitutes an ever present threat to the environment. Historically, the scale and intensity of the threat has been increased considerably by technological developments. In 1977 a convention was signed outlawing military or any other hostile use of environmental modification techniques having "widespread, long-lasting or severe effects as the means of destruction, damage or injury to any other state party". The first review conference of the parties to the convention took place in this city just the week before last. Unfortunately, at present only 43 states are parties to the convention.

The ultimate threat is nuclear war and recently deep concern has been raised over the short and long term consequences of the dust, smoke, radioactivity, and toxic vapour which would result from a nuclear war. The possible creation of a "Nuclear Winter" as a result of multiple nuclear explosions would be a clear violation of the convention outlawing military environmental modification techniques. The "Nuclear Winter" has added an environmental imperative to the prevention of nuclear war. The existence of large stockpiles of nuclear weapons cannot serve any rational purpose but their own negation. A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. We must find a way to build down the arsenals rather than succumb to the pressures to expand them. Warfare presents a clear and present danger to the very survival of man.

World military expenditures have now reached unprecedented levels, and are estimated to exceed one trillion dollars next year. They continue to grow at an annual rate of 3-4 percent in real terms. This constitutes a gross misallocation of resources and it forecloses opportunities to improve the human condition, including the environment on which we all remain ultimately dependent.

Interdependence

The growing interdependence of the international economic and political system is another central concern for the Commission. It has become a dominant characteristic of many issues involving the environment and the ecological basis of development: embracing demography, migration, agriculture, communications, energy, industry, minerals, technology and financial transfers.

Interdependence is maybe not an inspiring word as such. It is not a strong old word like axe, wind, fire, wood, river, sky, - in most languages, as in English, it has the air of a constructed intellectual word, coined to describe something newly perceived. What we have newly perceived in fact, is the complexity of the linkages and feedbacks. We now know that the most important feature of interdependence is not its isolated components, be they separate issues or separate nations, or regions or polarities like North-South. The important thing about interdependence is the connections between and among the components. The limiting factor in working out policies that will permit us to live and develop in a sustainable way is not the capacity to analyse the elements of our interdependence with each other and with nature. The limiting factor is our incapacity to put it all together as a guide to future action.

The inter-related issues of tropical forests and biological diversity illustrate our apparent incapacity to put it all together. Although the forestry situation in the developed world appears relatively stable, forests in developing countries have declined by one half during this century, and are shrinking at an increasing rate, largely because of expanding agricultural pressures. The actual and potential socio-economic consequences of this are serious, primarily for the countries concerned, involving increased flooding, sedimentation of reservoirs, disruption of irrigation systems and losses of land and food production and ultimately touching on their trade and their overall capacity to develop.

Overcutting and inadequate investment in forest management and new plantations have seen 23 developing countries change from net exporters to net importers of forest products in recent years, putting additional pressure on their balance of payments. An additional 14 countries are similarly threatened.

Action to deal with the problem can be provoked by an analysis of certain trends. But such action (e.g. plant more trees faster) may not be too meaningful in terms of problem interdependence or of promoting sustainable development if it serves only to ameliorate certain effects in the short run. In order to be meaningful it would need to deal with the other sources of the interlocking syndromes of poverty-driven settlement, and policies favouring destructive colonization, agricultural harvesting practices, not to mention problem interdependence with genetic resources and watershed management.

Soil erosion and desertification is another classic example of an issue recognized and discussed at the international level. A conference was held, a programme of action, or rather reaction, was defined - and - so slight was the response of the international community that the Executive Director of UNEP publicly threw up his hands in despair.

And yet the world community did the accepted thing - recognized an environmental disaster and reacted after the event.

Why were the measures unsuccessful? Could it be that governments instinctively sense that the "react and retrofit" approach is flawed? Do they feel that in reality desertification is connected to, or rather interdependent with, policies in other fields, such as agriculture and settlement?

The web of interdependence stretches across the most apparently remote of our economic and social activities. The activities of the IMF as it lays down its conditions for a new line of credit can lead to environmentally destructive practices. A decision taken at GATT restricting the market for goods in which developing countries have an advantage can slow down their development generally, thus extending poverty induced pressures on the environment and leading to something as apparently remote as, say, increased fuel wood cutting as kerosene imports are restricted. Even more remote, but still connected by that chain of interdependence, is a decision in GATT that might lead to the production of alternative goods involving non-sustainable uses of land or other resources.

We must therefore increasingly question whether our consideration of environment as a sort of late stage add-on to our conduct of affairs, as a kind of political afterthought, is sufficient. I personally suspect that, on the contrary, our consideration of environment will have to become the essence of political forethought.

A Broader View

From these remarks, you will understand that the Commission is going to take a very broad view of environmental policy, linking it clearly to economic and social development. This is essential - and it is overdue. Whatever the intentions of a decade ago, it is unfortunately true that, with few exceptions, environmental policy has to date been treated as a limited policy field, essentially an "add-on" to other policy fields, whose mission is to react to damage done and to cure it after the fact. Its focus has been largely on the environmental effects of development, on ways and means to ameliorate those effects and on the costs and benefits of doing so.

There is clearly a need now to shift the focus from the effects of environmental problems to their sources in macro-economic, trade and sectoral policies. Environmental policy needs to become in fact a horizontal policy field, an integral component of economic, social and development policy. Its mission needs to be seen as at least that of anticipating damage and reducing the negative external effects of human activity. At best, its mission needs to include the active promotion of economic and social policies that expand the basis for sustainable development.

This will not be easy. I know. I have worked on it sitting in the chair of an Environment Minister and of a Prime Minister.

In my view, a part of the problem stems from the fact that while industry and the sectoral agencies of government are sometimes seen as "targets" by environmental agencies, they are seldom seen as "participants" in the development of environmental policies. "Environmental" policy is seen as something separate and distinct related to the protection or conservation of water, land, and species; perhaps as an "add-on" to economic and sectoral policy, but seldom as economic and sectoral policy itself. As a result, few environmental agencies have developed the institutional capacity needed to undertake the analysis required to attract seriously the attention of these agencies; nor have they acquired the professional resources and expertise needed to argue their case effectively in the interagency committees where advice on macro-economic, trade, agriculture and energy policy is formulated; and in the corridors where decisions are effectively taken.

Sadly, the same is true of most NGO's. They usually see their audience as the environment agency or the development assistance agency with whom they share common goals and can seek mutual support. They seldom see their audience as the central and sectoral agencies whose policies and decisions have such a critical impact on the environmental bases of sustainable development.

International Co-operation

However we do it, we must seek more effective ways to reach the key individuals in those agencies that have a significant impact on environment and development. This includes a whole range of agencies in government and industry, from the central economic and financial institutions, to those engaged in agriculture, energy, transport, trade and other activities. These are the agencies whose policies and investments have a significant impact on the environment. They, and the policies they pursue, are indeed the source of many of the critical problems.

We must also find ways to involve these agencies more effectively in international co-operation on these issues. When the critical environment and development issues are considered against a background dominated by themes of sustainability, equity, security and interdependence, they emerge subtly changed. They appear as complex geo-political syndromes that challenge existing forms of international discussion and co-operation. Part of the challenge that they present stems from the way in which environment issues have been defined - conventionally defined - that is, as purely environment issues, without full consideration of the development imperatives and economic and sectoral policies underlying them. Another part of the challenge stems from the consequent fact that many of the key actors are missing from the discussions. While respecting the complex realities of international co-operation, the Commission will wish to look at possible new forms of international co-operation, forms that can break out of existing patterns and influence policies and events in the direction of needed change.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT, Mrs. GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, AT THE FIRST
MEETING OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL, INTERSESSIONAL, PREPARATORY
COMMITTEE, NAIROBI, 28th MAY 1984

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Committee!

It is a great pleasure to address you here today. The Intergovernmental Intersessional Preparatory Committee as well as the World Commission on Environment and Development have been charged with a very important task and indeed a heavy responsibility. It is my hope that we can conduct an important and stimulating dialogue over the next two years. It is my hope and expectation that the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development will constitute the type of substantive contribution which has been envisaged in your work in elaborating the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond. Similarly, I am confident that the work of the Commission will benefit from the cooperation with the Intergovernmental Intersessional Preparatory Committee.

As you are well aware, the origin of the two bodies is found in Resolution 38/161 of the General Assembly of the United Nations. That resolution clearly states that at an early stage in the Commission's work the Committee should articulate 'the Governing Council's expectations regarding the matters which it hopes will, inter alia, receive consideration by the Commission'. It is stated, furthermore, that the Commission, in fulfilling its terms of reference, should 'receive the views of Governments, principally through the Governing Council and its Intergovernmental Intersessional Preparatory Committee'. The Commission is indeed looking forward to this interchange. We believe it important to develop and maintain the closest cooperation with the Committee as well as with the Specialized Agencies of the

UN system and with the United Nations Environment Programme and, of course, the Administrative Committee on Coordination. We are at all times eager and ready to listen to the views of these bodies and to draw upon the intellectual and political resources of the UN bodies concerned with environmental and development issues, particularly in this Committee.

It is a great pleasure for me indeed to be able to inform you about the World Commission on Environment and Development - what we have achieved so far and what our plans are for the near future. The Commission was formally established in Geneva on May 15th of this year. The Commission has unanimously adopted its Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations and Staff Rules and it has had a first discussion of its Terms of Reference, Workplan, Timetable and Budget Estimates. We have also had a first discussion on the Key Issues which will be addressed by the Commission.

The Commission will number 22 members, 5 from Asia and the Pacific, 5 from Africa, 4 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 3 from Eastern Europe and 5 from Western Europe and other groups including North America. Hence it will include 14 members from developing countries and 8 from developed countries. All but 7 members have been selected already and I hope that the whole Commission will attend the First Regular Session in the beginning of October. During the Organizational Session of the Commission, 15-16 May, 12 members were present, 8 of them representing developing countries.

I take pleasure in informing you that I have recently signed a contract with Mr. Jim MacNeill who will be the Secretary General of the Commission.

The next practical step will be the formation of the permanent Secretariat, which will be located in Geneva. We hope to accomplish that in the course of the summer and early autumn. The members of the Secretariat will be chosen according to need and merit, and with due regard to the need for a broad geographical representation.

At its First Regular Session in October the Commission will finalize its terms of reference and continue its discussion of the key issues to be addressed.

There is an urgent need to fashion a long-term, integrated, global strategy for survival on this planet. We face enormous problems and threats to our common future. Widespread poverty and concentrated affluence result in increased depletion of resources and environmental degradation that add to political tensions and increased global instabilities. In the age of nuclear weapons we all live in the shadows of unprecedented destruction. We need a policy for common survival and common security, a strategy for a common future.

The environmental problems are well-known to all of us; deforestation (especially of tropical forests), desertification, soil erosion, water pollution, air pollution, loss of invaluable genetic resources, are all examples of how man is eroding the very basis for his own survival. The trends are highly disturbing as more and more people are seriously affected and the ecosystems are suffering serious damage. We need to face the fact that the gravest and most threatening environmental problems today are caused to a considerable extent by the widespread poverty and inequitable distribution of resources within individual nations and among nations and regions.

Our economies, environment and development are linked into an increasingly interconnected system. Many of the serious environmental problems of the Third World are rooted in economic and social injustice and in an imbalance in the relationship between man and nature.

The environmental problems of the poor affect the rich as well; if we fail to manage interdependence they may be transmitted through political instability and turmoil. In addition there are other environmental problems which will encompass the globe if we do not manage to act decisively: climatic changes induced by rising levels of carbon dioxide could have massive economic and social consequences; transboundary air pollution in the form of acid deposition now probably affects all continents; as does the use and misuse of chemicals, the mismanagement of hazardous wastes and so on.

The world is shrinking rapidly. We share a world economy; a world environment which is the basis for the present and future world economy; and a stake in world development and a decent and dignified human condition of life. We must learn to think globally and in a long-term perspective. No single region or nation can isolate itself from the rest of the world. Each shares the responsibility for our common future.

The World Commission on Environment and Development is predicated on the notion that we need to develop a long-term global framework and strategy recognizing the inter-dependent nature of human activity and endeavor on spaceship Earth. One of our important tasks is to raise the level of commitment by Governments for effective international cooperation. This understanding is based on the view that efforts by Governments so far, nationally as well as through the existing forms of international cooperation,

while not without positive results, have proved insufficient and too often misguided in terms of their impact on the environmental and ecological basis for economic development. Decisions have been based largely on traditional, short-term perspectives and planning has, for the most part, proceeded on the basis of national scales. We are all to blame for the negative results, and we must all prepare ourselves for a new, global thinking.

As I mentioned earlier, the Commission has had only a first discussion on its terms of reference and the key issues which it will address. The Commissioners fully agreed on the need for the Commission to adopt an open process of work so as to be able to incorporate different ideas and experiences. The Commission must be able to tap the resources of a multiplicity of institutions and individuals - scientific institutes, governmental and intergovernmental bodies, non-governmental organisations, groups and individuals. The Commission will seek to stimulate public awareness and debate on the key issues. Public awareness and concern about the crucial issues we confront are necessary if we are to be able to mobilize support and momentum behind the changes which are needed. It is indeed our task to help make possible that which is necessary. Several Commissioners have emphasized that the general public, and the younger generation in particular, need to raise their environmental outlook and consciousness in order to be prepared to meet the environmental challenges of the year 2000 and beyond. Education and a free flow of information constitute important elements of such a process.

The Commissioners agree that a new, long-term course of action, including environment and development strategies for the world community, must build on agreed principles for managing the global commons and agreed methods for making global environmental impact analysis. Indeed we have to push against the limits of the system of nation states. The management of key resources fall within the competence of individual nations, but the consequences of their management decisions affect broader regions and sometimes the whole globe.

States must be able to establish standards of management which reflect global responsibilities. There is a close link between environment and development. The present plight of the developing countries, particularly the debt crisis, threaten to deny them the means by which they can implement long-term environmental policies. Indeed long-term environmental policy depends on the ability of the international community to establish and implement policies for sustainable development.

Although the World Commission on Environment and Development will formulate and adopt its terms of reference and agree upon the key issues to be addressed, we shall certainly pay close and careful attention to the mandate given by General Assenbly in that connection. The General Assembly resolution provides an excellent point of departure for our further discussion about objectives and the means to achieve them.

The Commission has been established in accordance with a resolution by the General Assembly of the United Nations. But it is not in itself a UN body, and each Commissioner serves independently in a personal capacity.

The Commission will be able to address any issues, to formulate and present any views and recommendations, and to present any proposals it considers relevant and pertinent. It is my intention that the proposals should be concrete, realistic, well-founded and action-oriented.

We have decided to name the Commission the World Commission on Environment and Development in order to convey our commitment to the global perspective and the intention to focus particular attention on the links between environment and development, as stated in the resolution. The choice of name does not, of course, in any way alter or modify the aims and purposes of the Commission.

The report of the Commission will be an important link into the process of this Committee and the Governing Council in presenting its recommendations to the General Assembly.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, let me once more assure the Committee of the willingness and indeed eagerness of the Commission to cooperate in our common and important work, to create a long-term strategy for the future of the world community, to elaborate the Environment Perspective to the Year 2000 and beyond.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Invitation To Participate

Many organizations and institutions have been re-examining the framework for environment and development and I know that many of you have given a lot of thought to these questions. During the next three days, the Commission will be working out practical ways of tapping the world's best minds wherever they are - in governments, in the UN system, in the scientific community, in the development banks and institutions, in industry, in the non-governmental organizations or other walks of life. Whenever practical, we shall seek to involve the media in provoking and gathering new ideas and in sounding out public opinion.

And we must open our doors wider still. We want to hear, for example, from people who were still at school in 1972 at the time of the Stockholm Conference. Young people not only have a special contribution to make with their natural zest and fresh enthusiasm, but they are also vividly aware that they will inherit and will have to repair the mistakes and omissions of the older generation in the stewardship of our planet.

The Commission will endeavour to gather its basic material from all over the world. Our first regular session is here in Geneva, and we have seized this opportunity to open a dialogue with heads of certain UN Specialized Agencies and others. Future meetings will be held in other parts of the world, at the invitation of other co-sponsor countries. I hope we visit each continent and that such meetings provide other opportunities for dialogue.

The Commission will be considering many other more direct means to obtain the participation of scientific institutes, NGO's and others, and I would hope to be able to tell you more about that and the issues that we will be addressing at our Press Conference on Wednesday.

Conclusion

Earlier on, I suggested the title of our final report which will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration in the fall of 1987, "Common Future". That is really what we have to consider. We share a world economy; a world environment, which is the basis for the present and future world economy; and a stake in world development and a decent and dignified human condition of life. We must learn to think globally and in a long-term perspective. The world is shrinking rapidly. No single region or nation can isolate itself from the rest of the world. They share the responsibility for a common future.

We need to dig deep into our political consciousness and make environment and sustainable development a prefit not a retro-fit. We must change our perceptions so that sustainable development and the conservation of our planetary heritage come to the forefront. We must come to see that many of our current approaches add up to a sort of piracy against our children that a truly civilized world can no longer afford or tolerate.

Environment is not a concern which is confined to the rich countries, those who can "afford" to pay attention. We cannot afford for anyone to neglect it. The penalty of neglect is to undermine the very growth we strive to accomplish. Growth which does not include environmental considerations is like a house which is built on sand. It cannot be sustained.

Our world is an interdependent world. Decisions made by the authorities in one society will affect conditions of life in other societies which have no access to the process of decisions. While the benefits of a free flow of goods, services, people and ideas will contribute to human welfare, the free flow of and waste have exactly the opposite effect. We need international co-operation and regulation to promote and preserve equity. We can only create a common future if we can cope with the common crisis which the Brandt Commission addressed and build peace on the basis of the concept of common security as the Palme Commission pointed out.

We have to learn to think and act as citizens of one world. We have one common future. That, ladies and gentlemen, must be the perspective which inspires and gives direction to our work. Humility, dedication, competence and hard work are needed for us to succeed. We are eager to start.