



WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

EIGHTH MEETING  
Tokyo, Japan  
February 23 - 27, 1987

WCED/87/30

TOKYO DECLARATION

ACTION REQUIRED: For discussion and decision  
February 26, 1987

## TOKYO DECLARATION

(Draft)

26 Feb. 1987

Kazu Kato

The World Commission on Environment and Development was constituted as an independent body by the United Nations General Assembly and set out to:

- a) re-examine the critical issues of environment and development, and formulate innovative, concrete, and realistic action proposals to deal with them;
- b) strengthen international cooperation on environment and development, and assess and propose new forms of cooperation that can break out of existing patterns and influence policies and events in the direction of needed change; and
- c) raise the level of understanding and commitment to action on the part of individuals, voluntary organisations, business, institutes and governments.

As we come in Tokyo to the end of our task, we remain convinced that it is possible to build a future that is prosperous, just and secure.

But realizing this possibility depends on all countries adopting the objective of sustainable

development as the overriding goal and test of national policy and international cooperation. Such development can be defined most simply as an approach to progress which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A successful transition to sustainable development through the year 2000 and beyond requires a massive shift in societal objectives. It also requires the concerted pursuit of a number of strategic imperatives.

The World Commission on Environment and Development now calls upon all the nations of the World, both jointly and individually, to integrate sustainable development into the goals of their institutions and to adopt the following strategic imperatives to guide their policy actions.

**The strategic imperatives:**

**1. Revive Economic Growth**

Poverty is a major source of environmental degradation which not only affects a large number of people in developing countries but also undermines the sustainable development of the entire community of nations - both developing and industrialized. Economic growth must be stimulated, particularly in developing countries, while enhancing the environmental resource base. The industrialized countries can and must contribute to reviving world economic growth. There must be immediate international action to resolve the debt crisis; a substantial increase in the flows of development finance; and stabilization of the foreign exchange earnings of low-income commodity exporters.

## 2. Change the Quality of Growth

Revived economic growth must be of a new kind in which sustainability, equity, social justice and security are firmly embedded as major social goals. Education, communication, and international cooperation can all help to achieve those goals. Development planners should take account in their reckoning of national wealth not only of standard economic indicators, but of the state of the stock of natural resources. Better income distribution, reduced vulnerability to natural disasters and technological risks, improved health, and preservation of cultural heritage – all contribute to raising the quality of that growth.

## 3. Conserve and Enhance the Resource Base

Sustainability requires the conservation of environmental resources such as clean air, water, forests and soils; maintaining genetic diversity; and using energy, water and raw materials efficiently. Improvements in the efficiency of production must be accelerated to reduce per capita consumption of natural resources and encourage a shift to non-polluting products and technologies. All countries need to prevent pollution by rigorously enforcing environmental regulations, promoting low-waste technologies, and anticipating the impact of new products, technologies and wastes.

4. Ensure a Sustainable Level of Population

Population policies should be formulated and integrated with other economic and social development programmes – female education, health care, and the expansion of the livelihood base of the poor. Direct measures to reduce fertility are also needed. Increased access to family planning services is itself a form of social development that allows couples, and women in particular, the right to self-determination.

5. Reorient Technology and Manage Risks

The capacity for technological innovation needs to be greatly enhanced in developing countries. The orientation of technology development in all countries must also be changed to pay greater regard to environmental factors. National and international institutional mechanisms are needed to assess potential impacts of new technologies before they are widely used. Similar arrangements are required for major interventions in natural systems, such as river diversion or forest clearance. Liability for damages from unintended consequences must be strengthened and enforced. Greater public participation and free access to relevant information should be promoted in decision-making processes touching on environment and development issues.

6. Integrate Environment and Economics in Decision-Making

Environmental and economic goals can and must be made mutually reinforcing. Sustainability requires the enforcement of wider responsibilities for the impacts of policy decisions. Those making such policy decisions must be responsible for the impact of those decisions upon the environmental resource capital of their nations. They must focus on the sources of environmental damage rather than the symptoms. The ability to anticipate and prevent environmental damage will require that the ecological dimensions of policy be considered at the same time as the economic, trade, energy, agricultural and other dimensions. They must be considered on the same agendas and in the same national and international institutions.

7. Reform International Economic Relations

Long term sustainable growth will require far-reaching changes to produce trade, capital, and technology flows that are more equitable and better synchronized to environmental imperatives. Fundamental improvements in market access, technology transfer, and international finance are necessary to help developing countries widen their opportunities by diversifying their economic and trade bases and building their self-reliance.

## 8. Strengthen International Cooperation

The introduction of an environmental dimension injects an additional element of urgency and mutual self-interest, since a failure to address the interaction between resource degradation and rising poverty will spill over and become a global ecological problem. Higher priorities must be assigned to environmental monitoring, assessment, research and development, and resource management in all fields of international development. This requires a high level of commitment by all countries to the satisfactory working of multilateral institutions; to the making and observance of international rules in fields such as trade and investment; and to constructive dialogue on the many issues where national interests do not immediately coincide but require negotiation to be reconciled. New dimensions of multilateralism are essential to sustainable human progress.