

STRATEGY
(WCED/84/10-2)

INAUGURAL MEETING

WCED/84/10-2

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ITEM 5.2 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

FUTURE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

PART TWO

STRATEGY

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What Strategy should the Commission employ to marshal the information that it will need, and the intellectual, political and organizational resources that it will need to tap, in order to achieve its objectives?.

1. At its Organizational Session, the Chairman summarized the Commission's primary tasks in three short points :

"First, to start a new long-term course for action, including environment and development strategies for the world community, and realistic, well-founded, action-oriented proposals and recommendations on how to deal with the problems;

Second, to raise the level of commitment by governments for effective international co-operation; and

Third, to stimulate public awareness and debate on the key issues."

2. This paper is designed to act as a point of departure for the Commission's discussion on the strategy for its work. It sets out elements of a draft strategy in several parts which, taken together, should serve to achieve its objectives.

- I. STATE-OF-THE-ART ASSESSMENT REPORTS ON THE KEY ISSUES (CONVENTIONALLY DEFINED).

3. The Commission needs to have early access to up-to-date and authoritative assessments of the key environment issues as an essential basis for its work and deliberations.

4. Fortunately, a great deal of work has been done and a large amount of information and data exists in the form of reports on most issues, albeit defined in conventional terms (i.e. specific environmental pollution issues, natural resource issues, and human settlements issues). The process of obtaining this information and reviewing it need not, and should not, consume a great deal of time and resources of the Commission.
5. In the process of reviewing this material, the Secretariat will also identify and contact other sources of relevant information and advice (scientific institutions, non-governmental organizations, academics, consultants, industry, etc.). This will no doubt lead to the Commission receiving additional information and advice on the key issues, but again much of this will be in the conventional terms in which they have emerged and been defined over the past decade and a half.
6. In reviewing this body of information, the Secretariat should identify those reports which are authoritative, up-to-date and reflect a reasonable consensus of a representative cross-section of the international scientific community. Employing expert assistance as necessary, the Secretariat should endeavour to extract from these reports the essence of the analysis and synthesis and the major policy-relevant conclusions and recommendations and present them in separate reports to the Commission.
7. In respect of a few of the issues, however, the Secretariat will find that limited work has been done, or that the available reports are out-of-date, incomplete

or do not represent the views of a sufficiently representative cross-section of the scientific community. In these cases, the Secretariat could invite a recognized scientific institution to take the lead in selecting an internationally representative panel of scientists to prepare a state-of-the-art assessment report for submission to the Commission.

8. In the case of some issues on which there is little up-to-date information and no obvious institution to take the lead, other means may have to be employed (e.g. a representative panel of scientists, expert groups, etc.).
9. Proceeding in this way, the Commission would use its good offices to assemble state-of-the-art assessment reports on as many as possible of the major key issues, conventionally defined. These reports would provide a common information base and reference point not only for the future work and deliberations of the Commission but also for governments, the general public and other institutions and organizations which may subsequently be invited or may volunteer to submit reports to the Commission. Consequently, where reports have been prepared specially for the Commission, it could be a useful service to release the reports publicly as soon as possible after they are received, and preferably during the Commission session to which they are submitted. The reports would be released with the agreement and under the name of the institution or group responsible for preparing them.
10. A serious effort would be made to assemble these reports and have them submitted to the Commission by mid-1985. Although they would provide an essential basis for the further work and deliberations of the Commission and

others, they could be expected to do little more than up-date and authoritatively confirm or slightly modify what is already known, especially by those working in the environmental community. They may therefore yield only limited new information and have limited impact.

II. POLICY REPORTS ON KEY ISSUES (NEW FORMULATION)

11. For the many reasons cited earlier, the Commission will need to consider how best to move beyond the conventional perceptions and formulations of the key issues to an approach which deals with these issues in more operational and policy terms. A more policy oriented approach is particularly needed if the Commission is to reach beyond the traditional and committed environment community to those in governments and industry who are in a position to influence and make policy in key areas of development and environment.
12. This will not be easy. Few institutions have established the broadly based capacity needed to examine the critical environment and development issues from this perspective, and comparatively little work is available.
13. The Commission will therefore need to consider the most effective way of proceeding within the limited time and resources available. It would need to ensure that not only have the issues been properly structured and competently analyzed, but also that the major and relevant political, economic, strategic and other factors have been considered and reflected in advice to the Commission. To this end, it would need to establish, or encourage the establishment of, efficient and authoritative mechanisms to generate the required analysis, synthesis, conclusions and recommendations and have them presented to the Commission in an appropriate form.

III. CO-OPERATING INSTITUTIONS

14. In the case of certain key issues and policy areas, the Commission may be able to enter into a co-operative arrangement with an existing institution under which it would undertake the work, and present the results in the form of a report to the Commission.

IV. ADVISORY PANELS

15. In the case of other key issues and policy areas, the Commission may wish to establish small, and carefully selected Advisory Panels. This would provide an opportunity to involve a broader cross-section of senior, world-scale experts and figures, including those with positions of responsibility in the sectors concerned (i.e. energy, agriculture, finance, etc.). To be manageable, however, the number of such Advisory Panels would have to be severely limited.
16. Such Advisory Panels would be responsible for preparing a detailed analysis of the issues and policy areas concerned and developing conclusions and recommendations for consideration by the Commission. In doing so they may also review and assess the policy implications of the relevant state-of-the-art assessment reports mentioned above; and receive and review other relevant information received by the Commission from various organizations, groups and experts. At least some Advisory Panels will likely need to be assisted by a recognized consultant or, possibly, even by a small team of experts. The financial implications of this would, of course, have to be carefully considered, as would the ways and the means.

17. Most and preferably all such reports, including those prepared under Advisory Panels, should be submitted to the Commission by March 1986, and preferably earlier, in order that the Commission may take them fully into account in the preparation of an initial draft of its final report. As with the state-of-the-art assessment reports mentioned earlier, these reports would be submitted under the responsibility of the co-operating institution, or Advisory Panel which prepared them, and might also be released publicly during the Commission session to which they are submitted.
18. The two streams of the strategy discussed above will help to serve all three objectives cited by the Chairman, although especially the first objective. They are not, however, sufficient and certain additional streams of activity and action should be contemplated.

V. CO-OPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

19. It is important that the Commission develop and maintain the closest co-operation with United Nations bodies and Specialized Agencies (FAO, UNEP and the IIPC, UNESCO, WHO, WMO, etc.) and with other relevant inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations. The Inaugural Meeting will provide the first opportunity for direct discussions with the Heads of some major international organizations. Future meetings of the Commission would include discussions with the Heads of other such bodies.

VI. MEETING IN NATIONAL CAPITALS

20. As agreed at its Organizational Session, the Commission will hold its sessions not only at its Geneva headquarters

but also in several capitals throughout the world. This will open many opportunities to obtain new information and insights on the key issues being considered by the Commission. In this regard it should be noted that :

- Several governments have already invited the Commission to be their guests.
- Certain governments are considering steps to ensure that their national scientific institutes, non-governmental and private sector organizations and eminent persons will be ready to present their views to, and to engage in a dialogue with, the Commission when it meets in their countries.
- Where appropriate and desired, arrangements could be made for the Commission to meet with heads of government and ministers, and with relevant parliamentary and legislative committees.

VII. VISITS TO OTHER GOVERNMENTS

21. In travelling to and from these meetings arrangements could be made for Commission members to visit members of other governments and to make field trips relevant to the key issues being considered by the Commission.

VIII. REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

22. It would be useful for the Commission to encourage and stimulate the development of national and regional activities associated with its work. Regional seminars and expert groups could certainly make useful contributions relating to specific regional problems, to different

points of view and to possible solutions. At a later stage in the work these regional activities could provide useful feedback on reports released earlier by the Commission.

23. Meetings of the Commission in any of the regions concerned might be used as an occasion to receive the results of such activities and if possible visit specific problem areas in the region.

IX. ATTENDANCE AT MAJOR EVENTS

24. A number of major events are scheduled over the next two years which are directly relevant to the objectives and work of the Commission. These involve special international conferences and meetings as well as regular meetings of relevant inter-governmental bodies. Since some of these involve the Commission's "target groups", it may be useful for the Commission, later in its work, to secure their ear.

X. OPEN PROCESSES

25. It seems clear that the Commission's processes should be as open as possible for as long as possible, as was stressed at the Organizational Session. They should be open in terms of sources of information and advice, with effective mechanisms (e.g. scientific institutes, expert groups, task forces, advisory panels) in place for receiving and assessing commissioned reports, and with opportunities for others to submit volunteered reports (e.g. governments, international agencies, institutes, non-governmental organizations, private sector

organizations, unions, etc.)). They should also be open as regards the provision of information, and the release of reports provided to the Commission.

XI. RESOURCES, WORKPLAN AND TIMETABLE

26. To facilitate discussion, the principal elements of the proposed strategy are summarized in the following chart.
27. In considering this, a primary consideration must be how to make the most effective and strategic use of the limited time, staff and resources directly available to the Commission. Implied in this is a judgement on how much and what kind of resources the Commission can reasonably expect to have at its disposal. That judgement will be called under a later item of the agenda.
28. Following discussion by the Commission, this draft strategy would be revised and reflected further in the draft Workplan and Timetable, set out in Part 3.

XI. PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF WCED STRATEGY

