

WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

FOURTH MEETING

WCED/85/CRD 4

Sao Paulo - Brazil

25 October - 4 November 1985

TIMING OF PUBLICATION OF FINAL REPORT (OFFICIAL)

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This note is to invite discussion by Commissioners and is very preliminary. it will set out a series of options with the associated merits and objections.

1. Release at the end of the final writing meeting - large press conference with all Commissioners present.

Merits - The event would be real - like the verdict at a trial. This would raise press interest .

Objections - Distribution of properly printed Final Report with embargo prior to publication not possible. Risk of diffuse response since commentary in press would be in response to summaries only and delayed. Risk that something else of local high news priority happen on same day - too many eggs in one basket.

2. Six - ten weeks after final writing, simultaneous launch in the national capital of each Commissioner with presentation to Head of State and national Press Conferences.

Merits - This would permit the printing and prior distribution of Final Report under embargo. Therefore more profound, because pre-prepared commentary in the media would be possible. Overall worldwide impact would be

substantial. Eggs would not be in one basket but many, therefore risk of swamping by higher priority news items would be less.. Global profile for a global report – good preparation of satellite discussion 7 to 10 days later.

Objections – Organizational work load and cost exceeds resources available to Secretariat by more than one order of magnitude. When World Conservation Energy launched in this way 30 to 40 man months was used at international headquarters, with National WWF organizations helping at local level.

3. Launch at a special event 6-10 weeks later than final writing meeting.

Merits – Gives times for printing and distribution under embargo of Final Report. Facilitates exploitation of special features of recommendations. Enables FR(P) (if approved) to follow closer on launch of FR(O) and thus permit cross publicity.

Objections – Difficult to get all Commissioners to a non-substantive event. Loss of PR value of presentations to Heads of State or other appropriate Dignitaries. Risk that event will be seen a junket with adverse publicity if report not felt to be unusually controversial.

4. Variant of No. 2. By simultaneous regional launches with appropriate gathering of Commissioners in e.g. Santiago, Bangkok, New York, Geneva, Addis Ababa.

Merits - More global spread, just about handlable by Secretariat. Opportunities to invite Ministers etc on regional basis. Highlight regional aspects of global prescriptions.

Objections - Problems of choosing locale. Suggestions above are HQs of UN Regional Commissions but other criteria might suggest Tokyo, Nairobi, Delhi, Washington, Mexico City, Cairo, Beijing, Moscow, Oslo. Alternatively, a focus on media interest might indicate London, Hong Kong, New York, Paris, Brussels, Tokyo, Frankfurt, Vienna. Again there are the problems of getting high level participants to a non-substantive event unless the launches be run back to back with the first advocacy meetings. But ideally, advocacy phase should only begin after a digestion phase of at least four weeks after launch to permit reflection.