

Beyond Rio+20

A 2012 Foreword to the “Beyond UNCED” report Greenpeace published at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992

June 2012

There is an upsetting sense of déjà-vu as we write this.

As we approach the Rio+20 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, it's plain for the world to see that the transformational change we need is not on the table. Rio+20 should be about zero deforestation, an energy revolution based on renewable energy and energy efficiency, about healthy oceans, liveable forests, and ecological food for all. Instead, it looks set to be about business as usual, and will see governments trying to pass off the most incremental of steps as delivering a “Future We Want”.

We are always happy to be surprised, but for now we are grimly certain that Greenpeace will have to condemn Rio+20 as a failure. We know the feeling: Back in 1992, we said that the Earth Summit had “sold out” the planet to vested interests. “Sustainable development” had been co-opted and mangled beyond recognition. Will we have any choice but to say the same thing about the “Green Economy” in two weeks time?

Anticipating this failure of the 1992 Rio Summit, Greenpeace released at Rio a report entitled *Beyond UNCED*, which we are republishing today. The aim of the report was to analyse some of the flaws of the UNCED results, and provide a first road map for moving forward after Rio. We challenged governments to address not just “environmental issues”, but the underlying root causes of the problems the world faced even then.

Greenpeace did not take this decision lightly. We had been an active supporter of the Earth Summit process; indeed we were one of the very few NGOs that followed the whole preparatory process through. Governments and conference organisers were quick to dismiss our criticism as inaccurate and mischievous. Officially, the outcomes were welcomed as representing major progress towards sustainable development.

Looking back, Rio 1992 did one good thing. It brought together the discourses of environment and development. We as Greenpeace honour this legacy today by focusing on the strong links between environmental protection, poverty eradication and social justice.

But in terms of actions for people and the planet, we were painfully right: Rio 1992 did not address the root causes of our crises. The last 20 years have therefore seen record greenhouse gas emissions and levels of inequality unheard of in 1992. Yet – while in real life people are already experiencing impacts of extreme weather events, dying ecosystems and depleting resources – in the official Rio+20 negotiations, governments seem to be playing a tape recorded in 1992 – with any passion and urgency deleted.

Governments both in 1992 and today are trying to pretend that there are no tough decisions to be made. For example, in 1992 governments argued that nuclear power and sustainable development were compatible, just as today some countries – such as the Republic of Korea – pretend that nuclear power is part of a Green Economy. But we need governments to make tough choices. It is easy and cheap to talk about promoting “sustainable development” or the “green economy”. But such words are meaningless unless governments act to urgently put an end to unsustainable practices. An economy based on nuclear energy, oil and coal, genetic engineering, toxic chemicals or the overexploitation of our forests and seas will never be sustainable or green.

There are still some steps forward that governments can make at Rio+20. As we enter the final negotiations, governments can choose to launch a High Seas Biodiversity Agreement to end the “Wild West” exploitation of the High Seas, or turn the UN Environment Programme into a fully-fledged Agency with adequate and reliable resources and the power to coordinate and implement global environmental policies. It's the least governments can do.

But even if these steps are taken, Rio+20 will have failed to advance the transformational changes we need in the face of 1 billion people without food, record greenhouse gas emissions, and deforestation rates rising in parts of the Amazon. For the “Future We Want” therefore, we must look Beyond Rio+20.

Beyond Rio+20

The good news is that today, unlike 20 years ago, more solutions are proven and exist at scale. The energy sector is already changing, for example. Twenty years ago, few would have honestly expected the renewables industry to be as strong as it is today. In Germany, 81% of all installed power capacity in the last decade was renewable. Last year, investments in renewable energies globally were higher than investments in old and dirty fossil fuel technologies. China has proven that renewable energy can be upscaled quickly and Brazil, too, has experienced an exciting boom in wind energy. Some governments are taking right steps, such as phasing out nuclear power (Germany), suspending the development of genetically engineered rice (China) or brinjal (India), or acting to collectively protect their tuna stocks (Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu). Some companies are also starting to lead, with Google investing heavily in renewable energy, Nike and H&M eliminating toxic chemicals from their supply chains, supermarket giant Sainsbury’s investing in the responsible sourcing of seafood around the world and backing Marine Reserves, or Indonesian Golden Agri Resources, the world’s second largest palm oil producer, committing to no more deforestation for oil palm expansion.

They do so because action for the environment is popular. That is why citizen power is achieving real change around the world. A referendum in Italy stopped nuclear power last year. Old coal-fired power stations in the US are being decommissioned and new ones stopped by an unprecedented alliance of grassroots groups, federal regulators and investors who no longer believe the lie that “coal is cheap”. In Brazil, President Dilma may have failed to protect the Amazon through a complete veto of the new Forest Code law, but Zero Deforestation can still be delivered by 2015. Over 300,000 Brazilians have already put their name to a Zero Deforestation law; once 1,4 million Brazilians demand a Zero Deforestation law, the Brazilian parliament is forced to vote on it.

As the warnings of 20 years ago are turning into reality and the Arctic is melting at a shocking speed, opposition is also building against oil companies drilling for oil where ice once made that impossible. As Greenpeace International Executive Director Kumi Naidoo observed as he was arrested on an Arctic oil rig: “A movement is building against this madness, one that will challenge the oil companies at every turn until they are locked out of the Arctic. These are critical years, ones in which the struggle to prevent the worst effects of climate change will be won or lost. The Arctic will be right at the heart of that struggle. The melting ice is a warning, and if we have the wisdom to heed it a bright future is still possible.”

Indeed, beyond Rio+20 lies a road worth taking: Through a groundswell of public mobilisation, social movement alliances, smart businesses investing in the future and enough governments daring to lead by regulating effectively and banning unsustainable practices, a liveable future for our children is still in our grasp.

To get to that future, we will need to learn the lessons of the past. It is in this spirit that we offer up our words from 1992 again today – as a warning, as a lesson and as inspiration.

www.greenpeace.org/earthsummit

GREENPEACE

The Lessons of History : Stalled on the Road from Rio to Johannesburg

A 2002 Foreword to 'Beyond UNCED',
originally published in 1992

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At the conclusion of the 1992 Rio de Janeiro UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Greenpeace condemned the outcome as a failure. Although nominally an 'Earth Summit', we said that the conference had "sold out" the planet to vested interests, agreeing only to measures that would do little or nothing to change 'business as usual'.

Greenpeace did not take this step lightly at the time. An active supporter of the 'Earth Summit' process and parallel efforts to negotiate effective international measures to reverse the alarming ecological trends that undermine our common future, Greenpeace had made a series of detailed and constructive proposals for action to every single 'Prepcom' leading to the 'Earth Summit'.

In turn, Greenpeace was condemned for 'raining on the parade'; for - - as some put it at the time -- "not giving the outcome a chance before the ink had even dried". Governments and conference organizers were quick to dismiss criticisms by Greenpeace, as inaccurate and mischievous. We had -they said - 'prejudged' the outcomes, which were officially welcomed as representing major progress towards sustainable development.

Anticipating the failure of the conference, Greenpeace prepared and released at Rio a report entitled "Beyond UNCED".

This was intended as a comprehensive analysis of the flaws of the UNCED results and a road map for how governments should move forward in the period after Rio. Sadly, the assessments made in 1992 remain as accurate in 2002 as they did a decade earlier. Against this background, Greenpeace has decided to re-publish "Beyond UNCED," attached, for two reasons.

Firstly, it is a cautionary reminder that governments have a history of making commitments that they don't implement. A decade after Rio, and thirty years after the first 'Earth Summit', the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, governments still allow levels of pollution and environmental destruction which are rapidly undermining the planet's ability to meet the needs of present and future generations. Key promises, and even treaty commitments and obligations, remain unfulfilled. Flagrantly unsustainable practices continue, unfair, unregulated and unpunished. (For details on status of ratification of UN multilateral environmental agreements, see for example <http://untreaty.un.org/English/treaty.asp>)

Second, it demonstrates that there are responsible answers to the problem of sustainability. Here, Greenpeace challenged governments to take the lead in the post-UNCED period by addressing not just environmental issues, but the underlying problems. In Greenpeace's view, UNCED failed not only because it didn't do enough to protect the environment, but because it failed to address the underlying causes in an integrated manner.

Many policy challenges – and solutions – were identified by Greenpeace in 1992 and are still relevant today. Up until now, however, governments have failed to rise to the challenge:

Finance: The need to mobilize greater finance for development was highlighted. This could be done through comprehensive debt relief, improved World Bank lending policies, and reforms to trade and market policies giving developing nations a greater voice in international affairs. As it was, UNCED failed to generate the necessary financial commitments to fund Agenda 21. By the end of the conference, minimal pledges were made against the US 125 billion per year which was needed¹. Even the modest goal of increasing Overseas Development Aid to .7% of GDP as agreed at UNCED has been met by only a handful of countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Luxembourg and The Netherlands. According to the Worldwatch Institute, “Foreign aid fell from \$69bn in 1992 to \$53bn in 2000, and the developing world's debt has risen by 34% since Rio” (State of the World 2002). As for trade and market policies and the need to give developing countries a greater voice, the controversies that have taken place within the framework of the WTO demonstrate that developing countries continue to be bullied like second class citizens, and the conflict between trade and environmental policies has undermined the Rio and other multilateral environmental agreements (See www.greenpeace.org/politics/wto).

Development: Current definitions promote ‘economic’ development, which usually undermines balanced human and natural development. Reforms should include adoption of development indicators and policies that better reflect human welfare and ecological sustainability. Unfortunately, governments have demonstrated as recently as the January Prepcom for the Financing for Development meeting that they are making conventional economic development a priority, with little or no regard for environmental sustainability (See www.un.org/esa/ffd/)

Trade: Trade policies and practices often encourage unsustainable practices. Reforms needed include making trade institutions more transparent and accountable; ensuring trade policies promote ecological sustainability; and preventing industrialized nations from exporting wastes. Volumes could be (and have been) written about the failure of the WTO in this regard. (See for example www.greenpeace.org/politics/wto/doha_report.pdf) Perhaps most telling is the fact that governments currently subsidise ‘conventional’ energy sources – mainly fossil fuels – on the order of USD 250-300 billion per year, while simultaneously arguing that renewables are not financially competitive. This severely undermines the credibility of the WTO, and puts in question the willingness of its member states to promote sustainable development.

Corporations: Multi-national companies have global impacts and global responsibilities. There is a need for policies and mechanisms that hold corporations accountable for environmental and social impacts of their activities and eliminate ‘double standards’ between plants in developed and developing countries. The fact that Bhopal – 17 years after one of the worst industrial accidents in history - is still not cleaned up and the local drinking water supply remains contaminated, underscores the continued need for corporate accountability. (See, for example www.greenpeace.org/~toxics/)

¹ The EU pledged 4 billion dollars, very little of which was new money. Canada agreed to wipe out 121 million of debt. Japan promised 7 billion dollars over 5 years, and the Netherlands promised to increase the percentage of its ODA.

Governance: There is a need to protect both what is of local value and what has global value. Sustainability can be achieved only through wider public participation. Decision-making processes must encourage greater public participation and problem solving. Here, greater transparency, public access to information and official accountability are fundamental. The fragmentation of institutional responsibility for environmental protection and sustainable development makes it virtually impossible to hold public officials accountable. There is a clear need to rationalise the system, and to give it the power and resources to achieve the goals of the international community. (See, for example www.worldwatch.org/pubs/sow/2002/#chap8)

Over the last decade, other voices have been raised which share Greenpeace's skepticism about the outcome of UNCED. Perhaps the most significant of these is that of Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of both the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment and the 1992 UNCED 'Earth Summit', and the "father" of UNEP.

In his recent autobiography 'Where on Earth Are We Going?,' Strong confesses to having agonized over whether to commend or condemn the outcome on the closing day of the 1992 UNCED conference.

Looking back, Strong assesses that in Rio de Janeiro "we had, it appeared, failed to effect the fundamental change in political motivation that I know is called for – that I know the planet most critically demands". To avoid "doomsday," he continues, "the basic principles of environmental protection and sustainability must be fully absorbed into the ethos of our industrial civilization and into every aspect of our economic life and behaviour."

Graciously, in the same book Maurice Strong acknowledges Greenpeace as "perhaps the most influential" environmental NGO and "the principal 'prosecutor' of the environmental movement," noting that in addition to its "dramatic confrontational tactics" it has done "constructive, though less-well known, work in developing credible, professional policy input into a number of international negotiations". "Greenpeace," he concludes, has played an invaluable role in publicizing issues and rallying political support".

Greenpeace is grateful for this public recognition, and we welcome Mr Strong's own proposals for "avoiding doomsday", which have many overlaps with the proposals made by Greenpeace in 1992. These include the greening of the market system, a shift in subsidies, full accounting for environmental costs and a rapid shift to renewable energy.

It is said that history has a way of repeating itself. In the case of the Johannesburg Earth Summit (WSSD), to be held in August – it must not. Governments, business and other stakeholders need to learn the lessons of history or we are bound to repeat them. If we let history repeat itself, our children will not forgive us.

***[Between now and Johannesburg, click:
www.greenpeace.org/politics/EarthSummit](http://www.greenpeace.org/politics/EarthSummit)***

BEYOND UNCED

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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED or the Earth Summit) takes place at a time when the living world has been stressed to breaking point. Since the first major environmental

conference in Stockholm two decades ago (The 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment), the world has failed to stem an environmental and social crisis that is deepening by the day.

We are today in the throes of the greatest political and economic transformation since World War II. The sudden halt of the Cold War has pushed a different global dynamic to the fore: increasing North-South polarization, global economic restructuring, and spiralling ecological decline. These factors combined offer both an unprecedented challenge and opportunity for change.

The challenge is nothing less than to rescue the planet and its capacity to support human life; to seize this moment to set in motion the economic, political and technological transformation that the world plainly requires. However, UNCED seems set to fail to meet this challenge or to seize this moment. In many areas the Earth Summit is clearly moving backwards from Stockholm, as is evident by a review of the official agreements produced thus far.

These include the Earth Charter, which is a statement of guiding principles, Agenda 21, which is billed as an 'action plan', and the Climate Convention, which will in its present form fail in its mandate to protect the planet's atmosphere. In general, the ideas and proposals in these documents are regressive, and devoid of the vision and direction contained in the 1972 Stockholm Declaration.

Furthermore, UNCED's treatment of such key issues as financial resources and technology threatens to exacerbate the economic and technological problems the conference was supposed to relieve. First, it is helping to strengthen the very institutions, such as the World Bank, that have contributed significantly to our present predicament. Second, it has been unable adequately to address such clear and urgent issues as global warming and the dumping of hazardous waste in Southern countries. And third, it has to date failed to advocate accountability for some of the key actors in global environmental destruction – transnational corporations and the world's militaries.

Given its failure to date to address the key issues, the Conference may well undermine the potential of the United Nations to catalyse forces for environmental security thus obstructing the power of communities and nations to defend their environments and populations from impending economic and environmental crises. Greenpeace believes that resolving the twin crises of environment and development requires an attack on the root causes, not just the symptoms, of these crises. Greenpeace therefore advocates following a route that will not deny the obstacles on the way towards achieving ecologically sound and socially equitable development. (See 'Defining Our Terms', page 4).

The crucial issues of environment and development cannot be solved overnight or with simplistic formulae or slogans. While Greenpeace does not claim to have definitive answers for the most complex and pressing economic, political and technological issues of this challenging time, we are convinced that our work to rescue the planet to save the oceans and the species that inhabit them, to protect the atmosphere, the forests and farmland, to rid the world of toxic and radioactive substances poisoning humans and other forms of life cannot proceed unless we tackle these fundamental issues.

In the following pages, we review some of the major economic, technological and political problems the planet will continue to face after UNCED, and we outline some of the options that could lead to an ecologically sound and socially equitable future. Some of these are formal policies that Greenpeace has fought for long and hard. Others are ideas that we think worthy of further discussion. We hope this paper will help to spur the debate and provoke the action that a strong and vital United Nations ought itself to catalyse.

THE NORTH: SAVIOUR OR DESTROYER?

Much of the discussion and debate in the Earth Summit has focused on what the North 'must' do to help the South achieve 'sustainable development'. By framing the argument in these terms, it becomes virtually impossible for the groups engaged in the UNCED process to insist that the North, no less than the South, must shift towards ecologically sound development. Without change in the North, humanity's environmental hopes, fears and dilemmas will remain unresolved.

At the heart of the global environmental crisis lie models and patterns of trade, investment, technological 'progress' and consumption, all created, advanced and politically dominated largely by governments, banks and corporations in the North working with their Southern counterparts. Ten industrialized countries of the North, with less than one-fifth of the world's population, discharge nearly three-quarters of the world's greenhouse gases and consume nearly two-thirds of the world's manufactured energy resources (see a Climate of Discontent, page 5). The North produces and uses around 85 per cent of the CFCs that are destroying the earth's ozone layer.

A few million people (mainly in the North) live in unprecedented affluence while nearly two billion people (mainly in the South) live in poverty, lacking clean water, opportunities for schooling or land to grow food. Five hundred years of extracting and exporting the natural wealth of Southern countries minerals, fuels, tropical crops, timber, dyestuffs, medicinal plants, meat and fish to enhance Northern economies have left their mark. The global distribution of economic resources remains hugely skewed, following patterns established during the colonial period, and the gulf between rich and poor countries continues to increase.

Capital resources now figure among the exports from South to North. From 1982 to 1990, the North received \$1340 billion in debt repayments from the South, while the South received some \$945 billion in total external investments, loans and grants from Northern sources. For this nine-year period, the net flow of capital from South to North was thus almost \$400 billion, or close to \$45 billion annually.

The environmental and economic conditions in the South are related to ineffective or counter-productive development "aid" and "technical cooperation". Multilateral Development Banks, UN bodies and bilateral aid agencies, some of which have worked purposefully to open new markets for transnational corporations, are major determinants of the South's development. Working closely with Southern governments, these institutions exercise power well beyond the size of their loans through the tough conditionality attached to their lending.

The economic prescriptions of these entities must be followed by national governments in order to be eligible to receive private loans or the investment guarantees which facilitate foreign investment. Therefore, even when the loans or aid represent but a small portion of the total investment capital, they disproportionately affect national decisions regarding government spending, regulations (or lack thereof) and priorities.

Part of the tragedy of the situation is that the same industrial and technological models that are being applied in the South have already led to massive environmental degradation in the North. Pesticide poisoning, soil erosion, deforestation, air pollution, acid rain, oil spills, toxic and radioactive waste dumping and other deadly ills blight the environment of the wealthier countries.

People in the North are increasingly forcing their governments to outlaw environmental abuse. One of the results is that corporations export hazardous products and locate problem industries wherever regulatory measures are lacking, where natural resources are cheap, and popular protest manageable. Meanwhile, the South sinks deeper into social and ecological decline - its forests and fisheries depleted, its agricultural land poisoned, overworked and eroded; and its people increasingly poor and hungry. The South, particularly where repressive elites hold political power, naturally shares blame for most of its problems. Needy and corrupt governments rarely resist the temptation to trade environmental security for cash.

Without fundamental economic and political changes in both North and South, bluntly put, the earth and its people cannot survive. Greenpeace is one part of the movement that has arisen throughout the world and which is taking up the challenge to promote change from the local to the international level.

Whether fighting a World Bank dam project, a transnational corporate polluter, the expropriation of farmland for an agricultural export project, the production and testing of nuclear weapons, the use of high seas driftnets or any one of a host of other activities, this movement deals with common problems. All face the same basic economic, technological and political opposition to change. All confront the overwhelmingly destructive logic of power and profits. All, in one way or another, base their

theory and the practical alternatives they propose on three principles that we consider essentially linked in the search for a sound approach to environment and development. These are ecological sustainability, social equity and popular participation.

Ecological sustainability is defined here as “the long-term viability of local, regional and global ecosystems and the maintenance of the biological and genetic integrity of those ecosystems”. We do not claim that protecting the environment alone can solve all the world's problems. Indeed, some steps taken to “protect the environment” lead us in the direction of political and social developments that would be neither just nor tolerable.

This is why the principle of social equity is another building block, achieved by raising living standards of the world's 'poor' majority and meeting the fundamental needs of all people. People have a right to satisfy basic human needs, to enjoy human rights, gender equality and cultural, ethnic and racial diversity. Without just and more equal access to resources, the problems associated with this unequal distribution, like poverty, will grow, and the resulting social, political and economic turmoil will prevent us from moving towards ecological sustainability.

Finally, the principle of popular participation at all levels is an essential vehicle for achieving ecological sustainability and social equity. Local, regional and international institutions charged with making environment and development choices must allow for meaningful popular participation if they are to meet the needs of present and future generations effectively.

DEFINING OUR TERMS

In a fast moving world, no choice of terms is without its pitfalls and contradictions. Here is what this document means by a few key concepts:

* NORTH/SOUTH: We use "North" and "South" here, well aware that aside from the purely geographical inconsistencies, there are elements of the (wealthy, industrialised) North in the (poor and increasingly marginalised) South and vice-versa.

'Developing' and 'developed' countries are less satisfactory terms, implying that the 'developed' have arrived at some pre-defined and necessarily desirable goal whereas the 'developing' are still striving to get there. Such terms discount the huge environmental and social problems of the rich countries and the fact that the levels of consumption of the latter, were they to be achieved by five billion people, would lead to ecological collapse.

The terms 'first', 'second' and 'third' worlds have been disqualified by the demise of the Eastern Bloc. The Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs) of Asia and the former Eastern Bloc also pose problems of vocabulary, but no one, we think, can deny that both their models of development have led to environmental damage on a large scale, likely to grow worse.

*ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY: is defined as “the long-term viability of local, regional and global ecosystems and the maintenance of the biological and genetic integrity of those ecosystems.”

*SOCIAL EQUITY: would be achieved by raising living standards of the world's 'poor' majority and meeting the fundamental needs of all people.

*POPULAR PARTICIPATION: we use the definition developed by the United Nations Research Institute on Social Development, which notes: “Popular participation is defined as the organised efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control.” (UNRISD/79/C.14, Geneva, May 1979.)

*DEVELOPMENT: it isn't easy to find adequate terms for the sort of 'development' we would like to see. 'Sustainable development' has already been co-opted and mangled beyond recognition by the World Bank, transnational corporations, and governments. For the purposes of this paper, we use the term: 'ecologically sound' (or 'ecologically sustainable') and 'socially equitable development'.

A CLIMATE OF DISCONTENT

"We note that... the rate of climate change predicted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change(IPCC) to occur over the next century is unprecedented...The potential impact ...could pose an

environmental threat of an up to now unknown magnitude threatening even survival in some small island States and low lying coastal, arid and semi-arid areas."

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION, SECOND WORLD CLIMATE CONFERENCE, 7 NOVEMBER, 1990.

*INDIGENOUS PEOPLE: We use the term as it is defined by the International Labour Organisation in its Convention 169, titled, "The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989", which defines indigenous peoples as follows: "People in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions".

The urgent need for a transformation in the role of the industrialised North, away from global environmental destruction, and toward ecologically sound and socially equitable development, is nowhere so clear as in the case of climate change.

After the most detailed official climate assessment in history, over 300 of the world's foremost climate scientists warned, in the 1990 report of the international Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change, that the 'greenhouse effect' was real. They also concluded that the predicted rate of temperature increase, unprecedented in thousands of years, could potentially affect entire ecosystems through impacts such as sea-level rise, changes in rainfall patterns and heat stress.

The IPCC further concluded that the warming of the atmosphere would be caused largely by the build-up of gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), three-quarters of which currently comes from the industrialised nations. Fossil fuel-based energy systems alone are responsible for up to half the additional predicted warming.

In light of these findings, it is clear that the preservation of the planet's life-sustaining climate is fundamental to all efforts to achieve ecologically sound and socially equitable development.

But the prospects for achieving an effective Framework Convention on Climate Change have faded. The United States, the single largest emitter of greenhouse gases, has steadfastly opposed binding commitments to reduce its emissions. Other governments continue to oppose many cost-effective and environmentally effective measures to reduce CO₂ emissions. Many Northern industrialised nations are refusing to provide adequate funding to assist Southern countries to obtain the necessary technology to control their own emissions in the longer term. Some nations even continue to cast doubts on climate science, in an attempt to 'protect' short-term national or corporate interests at the expense of global environmental security. A truly effective climate convention must provide for urgent cuts in carbon dioxide emissions by the North, support to the South, and a stimulus to develop and use renewable energy technologies.

PART ONE

ECONOMIC CHANGE

PROBLEM: THE DEBT CRISIS

The pressure to repay debts to Northern creditors contributes to the over-exploitation of natural resources in many Southern countries, and reduction of these debts becomes a necessary, although insufficient, condition to reducing resource exploitation. These debts, acquired over just a few decades, have been at the centre of much debate. Yet, the North's ecological, cultural and political indebtedness to the South - contracted over several centuries - is rarely mentioned. While we recognise that the effects of global economic recession are felt in both North and South, the following section focuses mainly on the ruinous ecological and social impact of debt on the South.

ECOLOGICAL DEBT

The now sovereign countries of the South were long victims of European adventures of exploration and conquest. Their peoples were subjugated and their natural wealth commandeered. This wealth was used to fuel the mercantile and industrial development in the North that, in turn, led to the economic inequalities which now stand in the way of a saner future for the planet.

If a monetary value could be assigned to the resources drained from the South in the past, we would perhaps begin to comprehend the ecological and human debt the North owes the South. How much is the Bolivian silver mountain of Potosi, intensively mined for the Spanish exchequer, worth? What would we pay today for the millions of square kilometres of tropical forests in the Caribbean, Central Africa, Brazil and Indonesia, destroyed to produce goods and crops, in large part for Northern consumers? What is the value of traditional technologies and indigenous knowledge lost in the process? What if we were to add liability compensation for the victims of nuclear testing in the South Pacific, of pesticide dumping in India, or for the Southern Chileans now living directly beneath the fast growing ozone hole? Such questions throw a different light on the financial debt the South owes the North.

FINANCIAL DEBT

The South's financial debt stemming in large part from the choice and imposition of inappropriate development models and technologies is widely recognized as a key obstacle to ecologically sound, socially equitable development. Excessive international development lending, low commodity prices, high interest rates and fluctuating exchange rates, as well as the greed and bad judgment of lenders and borrowers alike, have all contributed to ecological, economic and social crises in the South.

By focusing on the unsustainable pressures of debt repayment, Greenpeace does not mean to suggest that the impediments to ecologically sound and socially equitable development are all external. Governments acting with little or no accountability to their people have played an important role in generating and exacerbating the crisis. Many Southern governments pursued internal economic policies that steered economic resources toward large landowners, forest destroyers and other elites and away from support for small producers, housing, education, health, and other activities that would benefit the poorer majority. Further, many clearly fraudulent loans granted to dictatorial governments during the 1970s and early 1980s now seriously hinder their democratically elected successors' ability to free their countries from economic crisis.

Debt was often contracted to finance development projects - large dams, roads, mines and large scale monocultural agriculture projects - promoted by multilateral lending institutions, private banks and Southern elites, with devastating environmental and cultural effects. Arms purchases and expensive imported consumer goods - as well as more expensive oil after 1973 added further to the debt.

As these largely unproductive "investments" failed to generate projected earnings and debts came due in the 1980s, governments were forced to devote increasing percentages of their export earnings to meeting creditors' demands. In over 50 countries, the International Monetary Fund (IMF),

often working in tandem with the World Bank, has required Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) to allow debt repayment and to restore creditworthiness. SAP measures seek to boost export production and earnings and to cut domestic spending, particularly through deep cuts (and lay-offs) in public services, cancellation of subsidies, and sharp increases in the prices of utilities and previously price-controlled foodstuffs.

SAPs have led to the further erosion of already weak social programmes. Sharply restricted credit and intense competition for the few available jobs has meant plummeting real wages.

Increasing rural and urban poverty is accompanied by greater pressure on marginal lands and reduced health and educational standards. Needless to say, funds for environmental protection or rehabilitation are non-existent.

Debt servicing forces countries to seek foreign exchange at all costs, thus exacerbating an already existing tendency in which export production takes precedence over local needs. The international financial institutions' policies of "export-led growth" to relieve debt, will imply the on-going destruction of the most precious social and environmental assets debtor countries possess unless these governments undertake fundamental reforms to allow changes in how export goods are produced and who benefits. Today, the best lands are devoted to cash crops.

Domestic and foreign industries that promise quick returns and maximize the traditional advantages of poor countries - cheap labour, cheap raw materials and non-existent environmental regulation - are given preferred treatment. In the majority of cases the poor do not benefit from the policies put forward by the international financial institutions, even if they are involved in export sectors, since internal price distortions caused by local governments benefit other social classes and groups. Unless institutions like the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) begin to design programmes as part of long-term strategies for nation states, which include fundamental social and economic-based reforms, then these programmes will continue to lead to the excessive exploitation of natural resources with all of the accompanying harmful social impacts.

Although debt has been discussed during the UNCED preparatory process both by the Secretariat and by numerous governments, and has been recognised as a major obstacle to sustainable and equitable development, the Conference so far appears unlikely to provide any strong leadership on this crucial issue.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: RELIEVING DEBT

A just resolution of the debt crisis is a necessary, if partial, condition for saving the environment and ensuring genuine development. The struggle for more accountable governments in the South and North alike is a vital component, as well as the need for basic institutional reforms. These include land and tax reform, equitable income distribution, adequate producers' prices for agricultural products, satisfactory education, health and social services, and anti-inflation policies. Without such reforms, the following approaches and ideas will have limited positive impact:

- Minimal debt relief in exchange for Structural Adjustment programmes could be replaced by debt relief in exchange for serious efforts to institute policies which are not only economically viable in the longer term, but which are ecologically sound and socially equitable. The US, through the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, proposes only relief in exchange for structural adjustment. The sustainability and equitability of a given debtor government's policies could be judged by a body independent of debtor governments and of Northern public and private creditors.
- Mechanisms should be developed to encourage debtor governments to reduce debt service payments in exchange for freeing up financial resources for social and environmental priorities.
- By the early 1990s, problem Southern debt had been reduced to less than five per cent of commercial lenders' aggregate loan portfolios. Now that the banking industry as a whole is no longer vulnerable to Southern debt, one possibility could be to establish an international agency that would provide, in exchange for ecologically sound and socially equitable policies, funds enabling debtor countries to buy back their own debt at deep discounts.

- Official creditors now hold well over half of total debt as commercial banks have disengaged from the Southern hemisphere. Official bilateral and multilateral sources also hold approximately 85 per cent of Sub-Saharan African debt which, at \$165 billion dollars, is too small to be of major financial concern to anyone but Africans. In 1990, according to the OECD, Sub-Saharan Africa reimbursed its creditors at the rate of one billion dollars a month, at a human and environmental cost one can only imagine. Official lenders could instantly and immeasurably improve the situation of the debtor countries, particularly in Africa, if they applied much more generous terms than those provided currently.
- Many loans to the South were clearly fraudulent to begin with or disappeared into the private accounts of their elites. Many people have suggested that interest should not be paid by newly elected democratic governments on fraudulent loans (including for arms) taken by their dictatorial predecessors. More research on such loans could be carried out in the North and South (along the lines of work done by the Philippine Freedom from Debt Coalition, for example).
- Similarly, research should be undertaken to address the issue of ecological debt and the true costs of mal-development to date, as part of the justification for rapid and large-scale financial debt relief.

PROBLEM:

TRADITIONAL NOTIONS OF GROWTH: GDP

In current economic debates and echoed by UNCED, a standard but demonstrably false argument of many governments and corporations is the need for increased economic growth, as currently defined, in order to achieve 'sustainable development'.

If we ask 'What kind of growth?', 'Who achieves it and who benefits?', 'At what cost to the environment and society and at whose expense is growth delivered?', it becomes clear that economic growth as conventionally defined by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an important factor in environmental destruction and social inequity. The idea that more economic growth is necessary to pay for environmental and social measures to mitigate the effects of previous economic growth is unfounded and self-defeating. Unless growth is redirected and guided by the basic principles of ecological sustainability, social equity and popular participation, it is environmental degradation and poverty that will grow the most.

Increasing GDP, whether in the North or in the South, by no means heralds improved environmental or social conditions. Latin America, for example, achieved GDP growth rates close to 8 per cent a year between 1960 and 1980. But this growth was accompanied by intensified environmental decline, an increasing gap between rich and poor, and a growing proportion of the population living in poverty.

Economic growth has also fuelled industrial pollution, unsustainable exploitation of both renewable and non-renewable resources, energy-wasteful agribusiness and pesticide overkill - costs that have been borne by society at large. The benefits of growth, on the other hand, have largely accrued to elites and corporations of North and South.

Absurdly, GDP calculates as 'economic growth' the production of weapons of war for 'national security', pollution clean-up activities and health care for those made ill by toxic pollution or waste disposal. Meanwhile, jobs contributing to environmental security and measures to cut carbon dioxide emissions - even though they benefit everyone - are calculated as 'costs'.

The UNCED Secretariat has nonetheless stated that "it seems premature to expect radical changes in the systems of [GDP based] National Accounts", proposing instead a Satellite System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting as an adjunct to the prevailing environmentally counterproductive criterion of GDP. Although this system would have the advantage of at least attempting to measure the environmental costs of economic activity it would fail to incorporate important social indicators in its formulae.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: REDEFINING GROWTH

The drawbacks of using GDP as the primary indicator of economic health are clear. Innovative studies by independent statisticians show a wide range of quantifiable determinants other than GDP for measuring social and environmental well-being. It is urgent to explore and establish new benchmarks which reflect an economy's capacity to assure a healthy environment and to meet people's basic human needs. Some of these indicators might include: the physical and environmental quality of life, (for instance, soil fertility, air and water quality, employment levels, infant mortality rates) and socio-political indicators, (measuring, for example, the extent of popular participation and human rights). The UN Development Programme's Human Development Index constitutes a step in this direction. These new indicators should over time replace GDP as the main indicators in economic rankings.

PART TWO

REFORMING TRADE, AID AND COMMERCE

The professed goal of UNCED is to reorient global thinking, actions and institutions to the need for environmentally sustainable development. Such a reorientation requires that the nations of the world rethink how trade is carried out, how transnational corporations conduct business, and how development aid and finance for the environment can achieve ecological sustainability and social equity. These issues are fundamental to the problems of environment and development, as well as to their solution.

PROBLEM:

FREE TRADE V. ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The current restructuring of international trade centres on the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the proposed creation of a Multilateral Trade Organization (MTO). At the same time, regional agreements like the Single European Act, the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Enterprise for the Americas initiative are also gaining momentum. The three most powerful, and rival, participants in world trade continue to be the United States, Europe and Japan.

Proponents of free trade argue that unbridled free trade will increase economic growth and thus create financial resources for environmental protection and for development. However, many economists and historians argue the contrary, maintaining that deregulated trade leads to the over-exploitation of natural resources, the replacement of domestic food production by environmentally unsound export and transfer of obsolete and dirty industry to poorer countries, the destruction of native and local communities, and the increased impoverishment of the great majority of the world's people.

International trade can have both positive and negative effects. Greenpeace is not against trade per se, nor does it support traditional 'protectionist' arguments, as we are aware that trade policies have been used to put exports from the South at a relative disadvantage in the global marketplace. Our concern is that trade be conducted in such a way as to ensure the protection of the environment and health and to sustain the rights of nations to regulate within their borders. The current proposed free trade agreements do just the contrary, deregulating trade and investment in ways that can undermine environmental, health, safety, labour and other protections and standards.

The Uruguay round and the regional trade agreements expand the scope of commercial interests to include services, agriculture, and intellectual property. By defining environmental and other regulations as barriers to free trade that must be removed, they effectively aim to deregulate the international economy. Trade rules promoted in these agreements threaten to disable the efforts of affected communities and nations to control their own rates of resource extraction. By reducing national and community control over resource use and regulation these rules could result in unsustainable land and resource use practices. Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, have instituted log export bans. Under GATT rules, which prohibit or challenge export restrictions, they can be prevented from reducing log extraction or deforestation rates. The US-Canada Free Trade Agreement mandates Canada to export energy supplies even at times of domestic shortage.

Proposals before the GATT would harmonize national regulatory laws to conform to a single international standard. National restrictions to reduce potential agrichemical and food safety hazards would be particular targets. Countries with regulations more restrictive than international standards - which are currently set by a body controlled by agribusiness - would find these regulations open to challenge, and have to defend them using a single narrow set of cost-benefit criteria.

Trade rules and agreements tend to brand all environmental regulations as non-tariff protectionist barriers to be struck down. However, blanket rules against protectionism invite even greater evils. Under the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement, for example, government and industry have challenged requirements to reduce the emissions of polluting smelters and have opposed reforestation.

Some trade rules also conflict with multilateral environmental protection or conservation treaties, including the trade provisions of the Montreal Protocol on the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and of CITES, which restricts international traffic in endangered species. The processes of negotiation, setting of trade rules, and dispute-resolution, remain shielded from public scrutiny and are dominated by private interests.

UNCED does not promise to be a forum where the potentially damaging effects of unregulated free trade can be examined. Rather, there appear to be strong efforts to make any agreements emerging from UNCED 'GATT-consistent'. While conceptually 'free trade' in itself may be fine, it must be subjugated to restraints based on the values of society, rather than imposing the rules of unfettered free trade on societies.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: TRANSFORMING TRADE RELATIONS

Greenpeace addresses the trade issue in more detail elsewhere (see 'UNCED Undermined: Why Free Trade Won't Save the Planet', Greenpeace UNCED Reports, published by Greenpeace International, March 1992.) However, a few key principles follow:

- Trade institutions should be made publicly accountable, and trade itself subordinated to environmental soundness and to socially equitable development.
- Trade disputes raising environment and development issues should be decided openly in a transparent and publicly accountable forum, and trade policy should be subject to societal restraints based on internationally agreed standards of ecological sustainability and social equity.
- Communities and nations must be allowed to conserve their own resources through export restrictions, and protect their environment through import restrictions.
- Proposals to harmonise environmental legislation should be conceived as floors, not ceilings, and should thus permit national or local environmental legislation which is stricter than international standards. Trade agreements should be subject to prior environmental impact studies open to public input and assessment.
- In the case of disputes in which a party claims that an environmental regulation is a barrier to trade and thus illegitimate, the burden of proof should be on this party, not on the proponent or defender of the regulation.
- Trade measures incorporated into international agreements to protect the global environment should supersede any contrary trade provisions; national or local authorities should be authorised to restrict imports to protect the national or local environment or as a complement to domestic measures to protect the global commons. This holds particularly true for imports of wastes and other hazardous products, upon which bans should be allowed. Producing countries should be required to deal with their own wastes and hazardous products without counting on the poorer and weaker members of the international trading community to absorb them.
- Global terms of trade should be renegotiated to provide stable and fair prices reflecting the ecological and social costs of natural resource exploitation and commodity production. As trade barriers are removed, measures need to be taken to ensure that export crops are produced in ways that lead to sustainability and social equity. Under the aegis of the UN, resource exploitation and commodity production, export and use should be systematically re-examined.

PROBLEM:

WORLD BANK AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY

Every year the multilateral development banks (the World Bank, the Inter-American, Asian, African, and European Development Banks) lend upwards of \$30 billion in development finance to Southern (and now East European) countries. The extensive social and environmental costs of World Bank development projects have been amply documented by environment and development NGOs, policy analysts, journalists and academics. This section does not critique development policies in general. Rather, it focuses on an institution which is emerging as a major broker of environment and development policy for the future.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) has in recent months come under the near exclusive control of the World Bank and, left unchecked, will substantially expand the Bank's power over environment and development issues (See 'The World Bank's Greenwash: Touting Environmental-ism While Trashing the Planet', a Greenpeace UNCED Report published by Greenpeace International, April 1992.) If this happens, it could well mean that funds channelled through the GEF could become good money thrown after bad. In fact past and present World Bank policies and procedures should disqualify it from managing the GEF.

The GEF was established in 1990 as a three year pilot programme with pledges of \$1.3 billion for environmental projects. Today it is being touted as the permanent body to channel UNCED-generated funds to the South. Initially, it was to be jointly managed by the UN Environment Programme, the UN Development Programme, and the World Bank. However, the World Bank has established dominance over the GEF's management, and has maneuvered itself to receive future funds generated by UNCED, to the exclusion of the UN agencies.

The GEF's mandate is to fund projects in four areas: protection of biodiversity, global warming, pollution of international waters, and depletion of the ozone layer. In the future the GEF - that is to say, mostly the World Bank - may control upwards of \$30 to \$70 billion.

From the beginning, management of the GEF has been problematic. The first group of GEF projects was approved in May 1991 before guidelines or criteria for project selection had been established, before the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) was constituted, and without consulting any affected groups. Although the World Bank claims that these problems have been corrected with the STAP's recent approval of project criteria, these stop well short of covering the complex range of factors requiring consideration. In particular, they barely mention social factors, and have failed to establish a genuine participatory and accountable process for GEF operations. This will undoubtedly impede the potential positive impacts of new funding.

Perhaps the best example of why the GEF should not be administered by the World Bank lies in its energy lending. The Bank is the largest source of energy finance worldwide, loaning billions each year for projects that contribute to global warming. Despite this fact, the Bank has been entrusted to administer the GEF projects for carbon dioxide reduction. This allows the Bank to use token funds from one budget supposedly for climate protection while devoting vastly greater funds and technical efforts to climate destruction.

Agenda 21 has already endorsed the World Bank-dominated GEF as a 'special channel' for aid to the environment, despite opposition from Southern countries and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). UNCED thus ignores the World Bank's disastrous environmental record in the South and its continuing commitment to development models long proven counterproductive both to the environment and to development. The recent comments of World Bank Chief Economist Lawrence Summers, who believes that "the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable"; and that "under populated countries in Africa are vastly under polluted", undermine any confidence one might have had in the capacity of the Bank to manage such funds.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: TOWARDS ACCOUNTABILITY

A number of steps should be taken to ensure that financial resources generated to help solve environmental problems do not repeat the mistakes of the past, that ecological sustainability, social

equity, and popular participation become the guiding principles of multilateral bodies, and that they are administered under conditions of transparency and public accountability. Greenpeace's position can be summarised as follows:

The GEF should not be under the control of the World Bank, nor under the exclusive control of donor governments. Rather, new global environmental funding mechanisms must be directly responsive to the needs of people on the front line of environmental protection. Such mechanisms must be open to public scrutiny and respect locally determined priorities. Criteria need to be developed and refined to ensure that the administration of environment and development funds:

- is based on transparency and public access to information;
- allows for consultation and broad participation in decision-making by NGOs and communities affected by project development; in particular to ensure that technologies employed in project implementation are environmentally sound and promote appropriate development;
- provides the public in recipient and donor countries with access to complete documentation on all aspects of the projects;
- includes mechanisms to monitor funding activities and ensure full consultation with affected communities as projects are implemented;
- acknowledges the right of affected communities to participate fully in decisions to ensure that projects and technologies are chosen that are ecologic-ally sound and socially equitable; and to acknowledge their right to refuse projects and technologies in favour of environmentally and socially sound ones.

Finally, the governing body of such an institution should include a balanced representation of participating governments, including recipient governments, local and international NGOs and people's organizations.

PROBLEM: HOLDING TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS ACCOUNTABLE

The activities of transnational corporations (TNCs) "involve one quarter of the world's productive assets, 70 per cent of products in international trade, 80 per cent of cultivated land for export crops, the bulk of international financial transactions and the major share of the world's technological innovations". TNCs have, furthermore, been involved in some of the worst environmental catastrophes in history: Union Carbide at Bhopal, Sandoz in the Rhine River, Exxon in Alaska.

TNC operations are closely linked to those of other global institutions. The International Monetary Fund has fomented the restructuring of debtor economies to privatize national industries and further facilitate debt repayments, through accelerated export production; both effectively open the door to greater TNC investments. The Multilateral Development Banks loan money to countries for infrastructure (roads, energy, etc.) that facilitates TNC expansion, and the public pays the debt, not the companies.

While the TNCs are implicated in almost every global ecological problem, they have largely managed to avoid the consequences of their actions because their global scope places them virtually beyond the reach of national government control. They can play one community or sector against another to secure the lowest possible environmental standards. Because of their enormous size and resources, they can adapt to a broad range of conditions. For example, the UK chemical giant ICI produces HFCs which boost global warming, while simultaneously claiming the right to develop, release and control enhanced-yield, genetically engineered wheat to adapt to the higher temperatures.

TNCs control production of ozone-destroying CFCs; transnational auto companies generate a substantial proportion of the greenhouse gases emitted by industry. TNCs control some 50 percent of oil extraction and refining and play a major role in the extraction, refining and marketing of all other fossil fuels.

TNCs have played a major role in reorienting agricultural land once used for local food crops towards export production. These companies control most of the world's seed stocks. Just 20 transnationals controlled 94 per cent of 1990 world pesticide sales. Of all pesticides exported by OECD countries, about 30 percent are banned, unregistered, cancelled, or withdrawn in the country of manufacture.

CORPORATE ENVIRONMENTALISM?

Corporations have learned that they must deal with the critics of the environmental problems they cause. At first, they based their public relations strategies on a few stock responses:

- blanket denial of the problem. Producers of CFCs employed this tactic for years;
- evasion of legal responsibility. Union Carbide, for example, has fought continually to avoid paying the victims of Bhopal;
- lobbying against laws and regulations. TNCs fought hard against proposed legislation to bar exports of banned and unregistered pesticides from the US;
- job blackmail. Playing workers off against environmentalists or workers in one plant against workers in another;

Today, however, many TNCs want to appear 'environmentally sensitive' and are generating a much publicized wave of 'corporate environmentalism'. They are establishing new environmental departments, taking environmental initiatives, and, above all, issuing a series of non-binding corporate codes of conduct which are supposed to reassure the public.

Despite these facelifts and displays, little has changed. TNCs often continue to justify their output of environmentally hazardous products by claiming that they are merely responding to consumer demand. But consumers are only partially to blame. These companies obscure their blanket distribution, which created the demand in the first place, blaming the 'consumer' whose 'lifestyle' is held responsible for decisions taken in corporate board rooms.

UNCED's dead silence concerning the establishment or even recommendation of any mechanisms that might make TNCs accountable may be explained by the profound influence these entities have had on the entire UNCED process. The UNCED Secretariat has worked in close collaboration with the Business Council for Sustainable Development (BCSD), a corporate group established to assure a strong voice for business at UNCED and beyond. The BCSD, which advocates corporate self-regulation and open markets as the keys to sustainable development includes such well-known 'defenders' of the environment as DuPont de Nemours, Nissan Motors, Dow Chemical and Ciba Geigy, etc. More-over, the BCSD seems to have virtually replaced the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations, which was closed shortly before the final UNCED Preparatory Committee meeting.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY

Greenpeace has investigated corporate 'greenwashing' and made the case for developing mechanisms to ensure TNC accountability elsewhere. The findings will be published in a future report.

In summary:

- TNCs should be required in all countries to abide by the highest environmental standards in existence anywhere;
- TNCs should allow public access to information concerning production processes and environmental impact assessments relating to sitings, systems, and products;
- TNCs should be prohibited from exporting technologies or substances which are banned, unregistered, unauthorized, or highly restricted in their country of origin;
- A strict liability regime should be established for TNC activities, and victims should be entitled to legal recourse against TNCs in their countries of origin.

PART THREE

TRANSFORMATION OF TECHNOLOGY AND RESOURCE USE

Among the central challenges of the next decades are the transformation of technology and resource use to ensure ecologically sound and socially equitable development and the survival of the planet's rapidly disappearing cultural and ecological diversity. We look here at problems caused by unsustainable technology and resource use, and some possible solutions.

PROBLEM:

NORTHERN TECHNOLOGY

Technology can be defined most simply as the know-ledge and instruments used to transform resources and raw materials into products to match human needs. Yet identification of those needs is inextricable from economic, cultural, gender, and other societal factors. Technology choices are also choices about who produces what, where and for whom. These significantly inform the current global environmental crisis.

Since the Industrial Revolution, Northern technology has increasingly been implanted around the world, defining the terms of modernization, transforming natural resources and human activity at an ever-accelerating pace, with little attention to the global environmental and social consequences. The result has been environmental degradation on a massive scale. Northern efforts to prevent pollution, or to develop sustainable resource use and clean production methods, have had little significant impact on environmental quality overall. People's demands that industries clean up their technologies and production processes have often resulted in those industries moving their dirty business South. Yet in the environment and development debate, the North is viewed as the source of solutions to technology and production problems.

Ultimately, methods to prevent pollution, ensure clean production (defined overleaf), or to enable the sustainable harvesting of renewable resources are not always consonant with a profit motive that ignores environmental and social costs. Until the North corrects its own technological course - stopping, for example, the production of ozone-depleting substances, then the promotion and construction of large dams, the use and promotion of fossil fuels and nuclear technologies - no amount of 'advice' or 'aid' to poorer countries will be effective in reversing the mounting crisis.

PROBLEM:

NORTH-SOUTH TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

The North has long imposed its needs and priorities on weaker Southern economies, mainly by speeding the extraction of natural resources for Northern industry and commerce, and by creating Southern markets for the sale of the North's technologies and products. These then serve as a 'Trojan Horse', introducing Northern economic and social standards and values into the societies of the South, where they often trigger dynamics that undermine real development possibilities.

Since World War II, the multilateral development banks and transnational corporations have been primary promoters of technology 'transfer'. Never a gift, technology 'transfer' is either sold at a profit to lower income regions, or has expensive strings attached P sometimes locking a buyer into an entire system over which they have little control. Most lending countries require development loans to be linked to the purchase of 'their' technologies and/or products.

Such arrangements often cause unanticipated - albeit predictable - ecological and social problems. Forestry and agricultural technologies that have provoked serious environmental deterioration in the North, can have even more disastrous effects when applied in the very different ecosystems of the tropics or inserted into the South's diverse cultural realities. Even when transferred

West to East into similar ecological zones, imported technologies often prove inappropriate, or hard to adapt, to local social conditions.

Some products and technologies either outlawed or undergoing phase-outs in the North, such as lead additives, asbestos and DDT, now have firmly established roots in the South. DDT - invented in the US and banned there some decades ago - is now produced by Mexican and Malaysian firms. Ozone-destroying CFC production has also spread South. Many of the most polluted industrial centres of Latin America, the Newly Industrialized Countries, and former Eastern Bloc are operating with obsolete or faulty imitations of Western industrial technologies.

Ignoring fundamental questions about who produces what, where, and for whom, UNCED negotiators have failed to address the environmental and social damage caused by inappropriate technology and practices, broadcast worldwide by international and national development programmes. UNCED has focused on the 'transfer' of 'environmentally sound technology' from North to South P implicitly assuming Northern-style 'technological fixes' can save the earth. But UNCED defines environmentally sound technology as that which pollutes 'less'. This definition could easily be used to justify the export of dirty northern technologies as long as they are 'cleaner' than technologies already in place in the South. Such logic is antithetic to principles of ecological sustainability.

UNCED fails to address the 'technological transformation' that its original mandate calls for, and which must occur in the North if we are to save the earth from ecological decline. UNCED also does not seriously consider that there might be many aspects to 'development' that indigenous peoples and peasants might teach all of us, or that their knowledge and technologies developed over centuries under diverse conditions is valuable. The UNCED preparatory meeting discussions on forests and biological diversity have not acknowledged the link between biological and cultural diversity, nor the need to uphold the rights of cultures whose traditional, sustainable livelihoods are threatened by industrial development.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: TRANSFORMATION OF TECHNOLOGY

Technological transformation must entail a reorientation of technology to meet basic needs and raise the living standards of the poor majority while maintaining and restoring a healthy, biologically and culturally diverse planet. A rapid technological transformation in the North is essential to avoid global ecological collapse. Countries that are now locked in as recipients of hazardous technology transfer and investment from the North could begin to break out of the destructive development treadmill through the following: implementation of changes in the terms of international financial aid, trade and debt repayment; effective bans on the transfer of hazardous or obsolete technologies, products, and industries; and the open sharing of environmentally sound technologies (see below) and ideas.

However, these would be only some of the initial measures needed. In addition, countries and peoples of the South must have sufficient freedom to choose the diverse paths towards their own development. They must be able to build the critical capacity to create and apply technologies that allow them to meet human needs and maintain their cultural and the environment's ecological integrity.

TOWARDS DEFINING ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGY

There is no simple formula for creating environmentally sound technology and production processes. However, the following criteria should enter into any such equation:

- clean production
- sustainable resource use
- maintenance of cultural diversity (see Part Four, page 21), and
- popular participation in technology decisions (See Part Five, page 23).

CLEAN PRODUCTION

It is unacceptable to continue to blindly assume that the earth, a region, or a local ecosystem can assimilate the harm caused by toxic chemicals and toxic wastes. Systems to ensure 'clean production' of

commodities need to be developed, which are energy efficient in themselves and which also produce products that promote efficiency. The precautionary principle must be followed - the burden of proof that a certain technology will cause no harm should lie with that technology's advocate, not with the receiving community. Thus, before a technology can be developed, used or transferred, it must be demonstrated that it will not cause harm.

Specific criteria need to be developed for clean production, shifting production away from short-term profit, and toward supporting the long-term viability of affected ecosystems and the global environment. This requires new thinking by the corporate workforce and management about technology size and location; raw material selection, extraction and processing; capital versus labour-intensive processes; manufacture and assembly; cultivation; commodity and materials transport; packaging, distribution and marketing; commercial and household usage; and final disposal.

When measured against criteria developed along these lines, it will probably follow that many current technologies and production processes must either be phased out or fundamentally transformed. An international prohibition on the export of banned, severely restricted, cancelled or obsolete products and technologies would also be required. Mechanisms need to be developed to ensure compensation, retraining and new employment for workers in industries to be phased out. Detailed phase-out plans would have to be developed for these industries.

PROBLEM: UNSUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE

FORESTS: Recent international strategies for the management of tropical forests have promoted expansion and intensification of industrial forestry areas, managed for maximum national economic return through industrial wood production. Tropical timber operations, however, have been unable to maintain a sustained yield of tropical timber, let alone maintain biological diversity, and are responsible for the destruction of five million hectares of forest each year.

Government and development agency efforts to stem the loss of biological diversity in tropical forests have largely failed. Nature reserves set up as islands within seas of agricultural wasteland and degraded forest are not ecologically viable, even when they are respected, given threats by road building, mining, encroachment, poaching and tourist development.

Even in the less biologically diverse temperate regions, modern industrial forestry is leading to species extinctions, and is threatening traditional forest people. Indigenous groups in Finland, Siberia and across Canada are fighting to protect their forests, cultures and livelihoods in struggles as intense as those of the forest peoples in Malaysia, Indonesia and Brazil.

Agenda 21 promotes expansion of industrial forestry, ignoring the impacts of commercial logging and Northern consumer demand, and the rights of forest peoples. It also supports strengthening institutions that have helped accelerate deforestation in the tropics, such as the International Tropical Timber Organisation (ITTO).

AGRICULTURE: 'Green Revolution' technology was originally trumpeted as 'the' answer for world poverty and hunger. However these capital, chemical and energy-intensive technologies in fact fomented ecological, economic and social ills, eradicating small-scale agriculture (and some aquaculture) systems based on skilled husbandry and conservation of genetic diversity. Possibilities of food self-sufficiency are weaker than ever before, while the resource base has been robbed of genetic wealth which was developed over millennia to cope in particular environments.

UNCED has made some positive steps by attempting to develop a comprehensive approach to sustainable agriculture and rural development, and acknowledging farmers and local communities as stewards of the land. However, it has not gone far enough, as it overemphasises achieving food security through increased production instead of addressing post-harvest wastage and distribution; fails to adopt the precautionary principle in pesticide use; and does not focus on efforts to phase-out all chemical pesticides which are toxic, persistent and/or bio-accumulative.

In the field of biotechnology, UNCED also plays down the threats posed by the introduction of genetically modified species into agricultural ecosystems. The growing biotechnology industry has created new ways to replicate destructive and hazardous products and uses. It regards the world's biodiversity, two-thirds of which is located in the South, as a primary source of raw materials. These resources are extracted by predominantly Northern bio-engineering concerns and transformed into patented commodities. The technology is then sold back to markets worldwide.

Agenda 21 assumes that biotechnology is necessary for all aspects of environmentally sound and sustainable development, disregarding the serious likelihood that it could lead to a loss of biodiversity and the uncontrolled release of genetically altered organisms into the environment. Agenda 21 also ignores the environmental and economic dangers of biotechnology, promoting 'cooperation' with the industry instead of 'regulation'.

FISHERIES: Technological 'advances' in the fishing industry have led to a roughly five-fold increase in global fish catches over the past four decades. While this has been sometimes hailed as a way to combat world hunger, much of the increase has been diverted to produce animal feed, and to serve markets and consumer demand in the North. The use of big, highly mechanized fleets for these inflated harvests has caused widespread overfishing and the degradation of marine ecosystems, and has put thousands of traditional and indigenous fishing communities on coasts North and South out of work. The Exclusive Economic Zones of the South - created in the 1970s to stop runaway fishing by Northern fleets - are now being overfished to make ends meet and service debts.

UNCED fails to address the root causes of the depletion of the world's fisheries, and the degradation of marine ecosystems. Agenda 21 does recognize the importance of traditional knowledge, and the rights of indigenous and coastal peoples in the management of fisheries and the need to protect critical areas of marine habitat. But it fails to link the pressure of debt and trade in driving the unchecked expansion of large-scale industrialized and destructive fishing methods. While the high seas are recognized as a 'global commons', the high seas fishing nations, in particular the EC, have actively opposed any move in UNCED to control industrial fishing.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE

FORESTRY

- Activities such as road building, oil exploration, pumping, mining, and other developments that disrupt forest ecosystems should be halted, under a moratorium to be kept in place until alternative technologies that minimize commercial forestry's social and environmental impact can be applied.
- The use of the precautionary principle should be adopted in relation to all exploitation of forest ecosystems. In particular, logging operations should only be allowed when it can be proven by the proponent that the activity will not harm the forest, the forest ecosystem, or existing forest uses. In addition all logging concessions on the lands of indigenous forest peoples should be halted until the interests and prior rights of these groups are upheld.
- Preferential market access and trade advantages should be given for products extracted by ecologically sound and socially just methods. Such incentives should be guaranteed in international agreements.

AGRICULTURE: A precautionary approach should be adopted to the advancement of sustainable agricultural production. It would require the proponents of new agricultural production systems to prove them harmless to the environment before they are applied.

- All agricultural production systems should be designed with built-in pest management and soil fertility safeguards so that dependence on agrochemical inputs can be broken.
- Production, trade and use of all pesticides that are acutely toxic, persistent or bioaccumulative should be phased out by the year 2000. Direct and indirect subsidies and incentives that favour intensive use of chemicals, energy, and other hazardous inputs and processes, should cease.

FISHERIES AND MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

- An international set of environmental standards, agreed by all nations, should be negotiated to effectively govern the activities of fishing fleets both on the high seas and within areas of national jurisdiction.
- International efforts must be made to reduce waste in fisheries, through more selective fishing and harvesting techniques to better meet global food needs.
- More research on marine ecosystems can help measure the impact of fishing and other human activities. Fisheries management worldwide must shift from the maximum sustainable yield of single species towards an ecosystem-oriented approach, based on environmental impact and risk assessments, carrying capacity and the precautionary approach.

IMMEDIATE STEPS

It is clear at the outset that a number of current technologies and production processes fall short of the basic principles outlined in this section. These must either be phased out or radically transformed. They include large-scale industrial logging, production of ozone-depleting substances, large-scale drift netting, weapons production, large dams, fossil fuel dependent technologies and brown coal-powered or nuclear-powered electric generators. Technologies using chlorine, asbestos, leaded gasoline or mercury and the production of all toxic chemicals, should also be phased out immediately for the same reasons.

PART FOUR

THE PROTECTION OF CULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Today, the family of human cultures is suffering a rapid and alarming break-up. In the past 50 years, hundreds of indigenous and traditional cultures have disappeared entirely. This loss is occurring despite the active resistance of people and societies whose economic and cultural survival depends on intact ecosystems.

PROBLEM:

THE EXTINCTION OF CULTURES AND ECOSYSTEMS

The Brundtland Commission noted: "It is a terrible irony that as formal development reaches more deeply into rainforests, deserts, and other isolated environments, it tends to destroy the only cultures that have proved able to thrive in these environments." Without a profound shift in present development policies and strategies, many of the world's estimated 15,000 remaining cultures and 6,000 languages will be lost within the next few generations, leaving the world bereft of key reserves of human diversity and knowledge.

The fate of the planet's biological diversity is linked to the future of many of these peoples as well. Tropical forests house up to three-quarters of the Earth's biological diversity, and support over 50 per cent of human cultural diversity. Biologists estimate several hundred thousand species are becoming extinct each year and that 25 per cent of all life forms face extinction in the next few decades.

Among the central causes of both the increasing extinction of indigenous cultures and the ecosystems on which they depend are pressures caused by modern forestry and agricultural practices. A major force behind the expansion of these activities, which has caused the displacement of local cultures and their ecological wisdom, is the \$50 billion channelled each year through official development assistance programmes (including multilateral and bilateral loans and grants). Even conservation initiatives have exacerbated these problems when the rights of local communities are ignored, or the resource exploitation of surrounding areas is intensified.

Despite the pace of destruction, the remaining forests of the earth still support some 200 million traditional, mostly indigenous, forest dwellers. In the tropics, a further 200 million people live on the margins of forest areas, relying on these ecosystems for the majority of their daily needs. However, the lack of secure land tenure for these groups, and for the majority of rural poor, means vast areas of tropical forests are being degraded by people displaced from fertile lands taken over for industrial agriculture and forestry.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

PROTECTION OF CULTURES AND ECOSYSTEMS

The future of the earth's endangered peoples and ecosystems requires a series of urgent changes addressed throughout this paper, including the need for participatory control over technology, and the rapid establishment and enforcement of policies to ensure sustainable resource use. This section addresses specific measures that need to be taken to protect cultural and biological diversity.

- Rights of indigenous and tribal cultures should be recognised and supported by all states by ratifying ILO Convention 169 on Tribal and Indigenous Peoples.
- Land rights claims of indigenous and tribal peoples and peasant societies should be acknowledged in law and practice.
- The development of new technologies should reflect the knowledge systems and experience of the enormous range of cultures on this planet. Indigenous and traditional production practices

and systems are a rich source of sound technologies, the ecological dynamics and scientific basis of which need to be further explored and understood.

- The convention on biological diversity should recognize and uphold the rights of the traditional custodians of biodiversity, proscribing aspects of biotechnology and other industrial practices that jeopardize biological and cultural diversity.
- The climate convention must also respect the rights of indigenous communities to ancestral lands and forests, thus protecting them from the establishment against their will, of large-scale plantations established in the name of carbon sequestration.
- An international environmental court should be set up to hear cases from the public against bodies that threaten or destroy biological diversity.

Given the magnitude of the problems that have emerged in this realm in recent time, it is clear that far too little systematic attention has been given at international and national levels to ensure the rights and integrity of ethnic minorities throughout the world. A just hearing and mechanisms for the resolution of the diverse demands of these peoples would need to be part of any long-term solution to the problem of cultural survival.

PART FIVE

POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

Although the transformation of political culture and institutions at all levels - local, national and global - is central to achieving ecologically sound and socially just solutions to the world's crises of environment and development, the UNCED process has side stepped key issues such as popular participation, sovereignty and security.

Recognition of the importance of participation and informed decision making of affected peoples is made clear in 'Our Common Future' (the Brundtland Commission report), which noted:

"The pursuit of sustainable development requires a political system that secures effective participation in decision making ... This is best secured by decentralizing the management of resources upon which local communities depend, and giving these communities an effective say over the use of these resources. It will also require promoting popular initiatives, empowering people's organisations, and strengthening local democracy." (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987.)

This final section aims to deepen the discussion of these complex political and legal issues, to identify some of the problems and suggest some options that can help move us towards needed political and institutional changes.

PROBLEM:

INSUFFICIENT PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

In addition to the economic and technological dimensions analysed earlier, the basic issues of decision making, participation and power also lie at the heart of many environmental and development problems. Time after time, in place after place, key decisions affecting the biosphere and the lives of millions have been taken at totally inappropriate levels. Where local power is weak, global institutions may try to dictate programmes and rules for small affected communities. Where no effective international body exists, national governments may try to deal unilaterally with problems whose environmental implications reach far beyond their own countries' borders. Increasingly, market forces and private interests make rules over which no public authority - local, national or international - has much control. The central issue may not be new but its resolution is urgent: who has - or should have - the ultimate authority to make decisions about how we live, work and interact with the earth's ecosystems?

POPULAR PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNITY SOVEREIGNTY

Consistently the people who will be most affected by a development-related decision (for example, to clear cut a forest, dam a river, or site a petrochemical plant), have had little or no role in making the decision. Decision makers are commonly far away and use criteria unrelated to the well-being of the community and the integrity of ecosystems.

The results have been consistent. When development programmes do not allow for effective popular participation, they may produce short-term improvements in macroeconomic indicators, but they fail to improve the quality of life for the society as a whole. Worse still, they usually lead to a permanent loss of control by affected communities over their lands and livelihoods, and to the degradation of the ecosystems that sustain them, deepening poverty and contributing to environmental destruction.

A similar dynamic exists for environmental protection projects. Programmes that are imposed on a community or designed without their active participation tend to fail quickly. The most sustained environmental improvement occurs when the public is informed and has a full voice in decision making.

Since popular participation and community sovereignty have been impaired at the same time that the environment has suffered, new movements are growing around the world to defend basic environmental rights to clean air, clean water, and healthy land, and to insist on effective grass-roots participation in environment and development issues. The more successful these movements become in attracting public attention, the more they have had to confront strong political and economic forces. When their power is challenged, these forces may respond with 'greenwashing', but also with varying forms and degrees of repression. Thus, some environmental movements have been victims of clear human rights violations. In some cases, armed forces have physically prevented communities from defending their local environment.

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SOVEREIGNTY

In recent years, states have invoked the notion of national sovereignty to oppose global environmental proposals they claim could violate their authority to decide how to use the natural resources (including air and water) that lie within their territory. The underlying issues merit closer analysis.

Many states, in all parts of the world, have often represented and defended the interests of economic, bureaucratic or military elites. 'National' sovereignty has been exercised on their behalf, often to the detriment of most of the population, with devastating effects on ecosystems. In these cases, the possibilities for community participation or creating governments based on social consensus has been limited, thus firing the dynamic described above.

We should also look at sovereignty in a historical context and from a Southern perspective. Colonial expansion took a heavy toll on the peoples and ecosystems of conquered lands. Vital decisions about local social organization, economic structures and access to natural resources became the domain of foreign powers and compliant local elites. But the problem of colonialism is not only historical. Even in late 20th century life, colonialism's legacy is present in degraded ecosystems, technological dependence, impoverished populations, limited democratization and restricted sovereignty.

Additionally, in the realm of economics and development, many states are now ceding important areas of decision making to international institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank, which use their control of financial resources to shape the economic and trade policies, especially of Southern nations. For example, programmes such as 'structural adjustment' involve the dismantling of diverse state agencies, often limiting a country's potential to educate and care for its people or to regulate commercial activities to ensure environmental protection and human health and welfare.

Economic integration and regional free trade agreements are another area in which sovereignty is limited in significant ways. While agreements may be reached among 'sovereign nations', these same accords often mean that states are abdicating the decision making power entrusted to them by their people's to unaccountable international economic bodies. Thus, environmental legislation achieved by intense public pressure may be nullified as states cede their own and their people's sovereignty to international agreements that override national laws (see Part Two, page 10).

International, private-sector institutions such as transnational corporations also exert enormous influence on environment and development decisions, through their control of technological and financial resources. In doing so, they may also operate beyond national sovereignty. The extreme difficulty in establishing legal liability for environmental and human health damage caused by transnationals in Southern countries offers a clear example.

Existing international political institutions, such as the United Nations system or the World Court, have not been able to construct and defend a "global community" of interests on environment and development issues. At the same time, few international environmental agreements have workable enforcement mechanisms. Even when states have entered into the agreements in good faith, they have often found themselves unable, or have been unwilling, to ensure compliance.

As a result of these factors, the logic and institutions of "free markets" are breaking down national and regional sovereignty and creating the basis for a new de facto global sovereignty to be brokered by institutions with few or no mechanisms for popular accountability. In this new world order, the possibilities for broad public participation in key decisions and effective mechanisms to assure accountability are limited, as global trade and finance institutions and transnational corporations operate in a sphere quite insulated from public pressure.

Rather than challenging it, UNCED is part of this new world order. It is being made consistent with free trade rules as embodied by the GATT. Similar to GATT, it is promoting increased transnational corporate investment as the engine for economic growth, which it hails as the necessary impetus for "sustainable development." By helping legitimize the World Bank control of the Global Environment Facility, it is channelling the bulk of the funding it generates into the hands of one of the key institutions

promoting environmentally destructive "development" projects, and structural adjustment policies, which in turn contribute to opening markets for transnational investment.

Discussions at the Earth Summit regarding institutions must be understood in the context of these global dynamics. While the North has resisted the creation of "new" institutions, some global institutions are being strengthened, while others are being weakened in and around the UNCED process. As has been argued in the preceding pages, the guardians of the world financial system and the institutions of unfettered trade are the big winners so far. The UN System itself is one of the big losers. As a result of the recent "reorganization" of the UN, the

UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has been undermined, and is now in a weak position vis-vis the World Bank and other institutions in the competition for control over the environmental issue in the post-UNCED world. Today, in fact, the Bank's environment department is larger and more powerful than UNEP ever was.

Further, there is no longer an independent UN entity to monitor the environmental impacts of transnational corporate activity. The UN Centre on Transnational Corporations has been eliminated as an independent body, while at the same time considerably more weight has been given by UNCED to the private sector Business Council for Sustainable Development, which is advocating free markets for "technology transfer" and "sustainable development."

MILITARY SECURITY V. ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY

The world's military forces, generally charged with defending nations from strategic threats to national territory and stability, are also powerful institutional forces with enormous political clout whose activities have great impact on environment, development, and popular participation. In the 1990s the focus on military security that dominated during the Cold War is slowly giving way to other global concerns, such as the protection and access to vital resources, extreme poverty, and the rapid deterioration of ecosystems. Yet despite the urgent need to develop a new notion of security focused on resolving these problems, the world's military forces remain largely entrenched in their traditional roles. Military and military-related industries are some of the world's major producers of toxics and toxic wastes. The development, production and testing of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons have especially destructive effects on the environment. Yet military forces can be notoriously unresponsive to public demands for clean-ups or regulation of their activities. In addition, ecosystem destruction has always been part of the tactical arsenal of the military. Today, new technologies dramatically increase the destructive potential of war. The two clearest contemporary examples are the environmental damage provoked in Indochina by the US use of defoliants and saturation bombing, and the recent Gulf War. In general, military force maintenance, activities and research consume large quantities of natural, human and capital resources. This not only directly aggravates many environmental problems, but also prevents those resources from being directed toward development needs, environmental protection or social services. Furthermore, the strengthening of the armed forces has tended to erode the power of democratic institutions and civil society in many countries around the world.

The serious environmental impacts of the production, testing, use, transportation and storage of weapons of mass destruction, as well as conventional warfare are glaringly absent from the Earth Summit agenda. At all UNCED negotiations, the US and a number of other nations have opposed all proposals even to mention weapons of mass destruction, let alone ban them. UNCED has also failed to address the massive nuclear contamination caused by military activities around the world.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE: TOWARDS POPULAR PARTICIPATION, DEMILITARIZATION AND A REDEFINITION OF COMMUNITY, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL SOVEREIGNTY

A strengthened commitment to popular participation in decision making lies at the heart of the political transformations required to meet the challenges of global environment and development problems. This means creating or strengthening mechanisms for decision making, liability and enforcement that involve people in meaningful ways at the local, national and global levels. It requires moving from a military-

centred notion of security to a new focus on resolving the problems threatening the earth's major ecosystems and human health and welfare. It means challenging the global sovereignty based on market needs and building a new global sovereignty with institutions responsible for assuring environmentally sound and socially equitable development. This new sovereignty should be rooted in empowered communities; it should be manifested in national or regional governments with the power, accountability and legitimacy to govern responsibly and it should be expressed globally in international institutions with the strength and legitimacy to hold their members accountable.

Outlined below are some points that could provide the basis for the necessary political transformation required.

POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Among the elements that should be considered to strengthen popular participation and decision making at the local level are:

- * mechanisms to enable affected peoples (be they communities or nations) to evaluate, and decide in favour of the most environmentally and socially sound development options and technologies offered to them;
- * public access to information on the environmental, health and social impacts of these options;
- * public participation in investment and development decisions;
- * community rights to prevent, halt and replace environmentally destructive projects or technologies with more environmentally and socially sound ones;
- * strict civil liability for personal injury or damage to the environment both nationally and internationally.

DEMILITARIZATION

International political conditions in the 1990s make it possible to move rapidly towards global demilitarization and the redirection of defense spending to meet urgent environmental and social needs. Some steps that should be taken include:

- * an immediate moratorium on all nuclear weapons testing, resulting in a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, immediate major reductions in military spending;
- * a transfer of military resources to civilian controlled, renewable programmes to resolve basic environment and development problems;
- * public access to information currently reserved for military use in some countries, which is necessary for resolving environmental problems (especially information regarding oceans and climate);
- * ending the production and deployment of nuclear weapons, dismantling of existing nuclear warheads;

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND A NEW GLOBAL SOVEREIGNTY

Development of legitimate international institutions depends largely on greater popular participation and on the ability of nations to establish authority increasingly on the basis of consensual interests.

The following ideas relate to international political institutions in general. They may warrant elaboration as part of an initiative to reform the United Nations system and make it an effective expression of a new global sovereignty on behalf of environmentally sound and socially equitable development. Alternatively, they may provide some ideas for the creation of new institutions if the UN remains resistant to appropriate change.

Effective international political institutions should have authority in the following areas:

* Security: with a traditional mandate for peacekeeping, mediation of disputes, and the brokering of peace agreements; backed by an International Court of Justice with limited but clear responsibilities for settling political and economic disputes, with no 'opt out' clauses for any member nations;

* Environment: with the mandate to provide for ecological security by safeguarding the global resources upon which all nations depend, particularly the atmosphere, the high seas and migratory species; and by banning or regulating hazardous substances (including toxics and radioactive materials, and biological or chemical weapons agents);

* Development: with a mandate to ensure that the activities of international development institutions and TNCs are conducted in accordance with agreed criteria for environmentally sound and socially equitable development;

* Human rights: with a mandate for the protection of human rights, including environmental rights, within all states.

INTERNATIONAL ENFORCEMENT MECHANISMS

In addition, criteria and mechanisms should be developed to enforce international environmental agreements. This is a very broad area, but some specific steps could include:

* Effective environmental decision making and accountability; the adoption of the precautionary principle as the basis for accountability; development of effective liability and compensation regimes covering the activities of transnational corporations and multilateral economic institutions; and provision of authority to an appropriate body to set international environmental standards by majority vote decision making.

* The International Court of Justice could have its powers extended to rule against states that claim exemption from international jurisdiction. Legal task teams could be given authority to investigate potential or alleged violations of international law by sovereign states, TNCs, and national corporations.

* Environmental compliance panels made up of independent experts could be established to review implementation of international agreements and to draw attention to cases of non-compliance. International observers should be sanctioned to visit or inspect plants, facilities, and vessels unannounced, for verification purposes.

* All international institutions and their activities could be subject to independent environmental impact assessments to ensure that they adhere to environmentally sound practices. Governments that violate international accords should have sanctions imposed and their voting rights suspended for a significant period, or until corrective action is taken.

CONCLUSION

The questions UNCED has not bothered to ask, much less answer, are in the end quite simple ones. They are questions such as: Who is destroying the environment and why? and how can they be stopped? UNCED avoids these questions because these answers could endanger entrenched interests.

Greenpeace must ask why UNCED fails to mention the multilateral development banks' responsibility in the environmental crisis, particularly the World Bank, transnational corporations, and free trade agreements? Why are measures that could force real environmental accountability upon such institutions and reaffirm the accountability of sovereign governments, not even suggested? Why are the rights of the universal victims of environmental destruction, given such short shrift? Why are the people who do practice sound ecological husbandry so often faced with such insurmountable odds to continue their practices? Why has 'development' proven to be such a broadly acknowledged unmitigated disaster, while continuing unabated? Finally, why, 20 years after the leaders of the world acknowledged together the

fierce challenge that we face to save the planet and ourselves, are things still getting worse instead of better?

Answers to many of these questions are actually not so difficult to come by. But when the central question is answered: who is destroying the environment and why? Humanity is still a long way from answering the really difficult question: how can they be stopped?

The intention of this document is to help provoke the kind of debate and action that Greenpeace believes is required to develop a Linha Verde - a Green Road - out of our present ecological and social predicament. We offer these ideas as a small contribution toward helping to inform and strengthen the social forces that should be the major builders of that Road. It is this movement - fortified by dreams and vision, and directed by thoughtful and brave ideas and demands - that we hope and expect will catalyse the changes this planet and all of us so desperately need.

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