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EARTH SUMMIT BRIEFING BOOK

JANUARY 1992

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The Earth Summit must establish a whole new basis for relations between rich and poor, North and South, including a concerted attack on poverty as a central priority for the 21st Century. This is now as imperative in terms of our environmental security as it is on moral and humanitarian grounds. We owe at least this much to future generations, from whom we have borrowed a fragile planet called Earth.

Maurice F. Strong
Secretary-General
UNCED

EARTH SUMMIT '92

The environment and development conference [Earth Summit]...certainly could be one of the most significant international meetings of recent times. But it could just as easily be a diplomatic fiasco of historic dimensions.

Philip Shabecoff

Executive Publisher, GREENWIRE

As I look at UNCED...I see many positive things occurring. The right issues are being raised, the UNCED Secretariat is framing exciting proposals for addressing these issues, and a new generation of government officials is having to grapple with all this...The biggest problems remain with U.S. government policy on climate change, on new financial resources, and on measurable targets and timetables for national performance. For myself, I haven't given up. There's still time for a new U.S. attitude, an attitude more like the one the United States brought to Stockholm in 1972.

James Gustave Speth

President, World Resources Institute

The industrial nations are the principal cause of most environmental problems today, producing 75 percent of the carbon dioxide that is causing the greenhouse effect. But they have not shown themselves able to come forward and admit it's their problem...It has been painful to attend, as I have, numerous meetings where the rich countries think this is a Third World problem. It isn't. It's primarily a First World problem...Everyone is a bit discouraged by UNCED so far. It is attracting an enormous amount of cant. The biggest single problem today is the attitude of the United States...[Developing nations] see the summit as a chance to screw more money out of the developed nations. It is very dangerous. The aid simply is not going to happen.

Sir Crispin Tickell

Former British ambassador to the U.N.
Architect of Earth Summit

...A SAMPLING OF VIEWS

The United States has approached UNCED and the climate convention in a defensive crouch. The negotiations are viewed as a job of damage limitation, not as a potential contribution to international security and economic growth...But so far the Bush administration has shown no signs of recognizing that protection of the planet is among the essential tasks of a new world order.

Jessica Mathews

Vice President, World Resources Institute

Organizers hope Earth Summit will go down in history as an environmental Bretton Woods...But many nations have not yet indicated willingness to move beyond Earth Charter rhetoric to hard commitments that will change patterns of consumption and development.

Bruce Babbitt

President, League of Conservation Voters

Over three hundred nongovernmental organizations have already been accredited to participate in Earth Summit and many more are expected to seek admission before Rio...The United Nations and delegates to UNCED are learning what it is like to deliberate with an unprecedented number of citizens watching.

Fran Spivy-Weber

Chair, U.S. Citizen's Network on UNCED

We clearly recognize that U.S. leadership will be an essential ingredient in the kind of UNCED results the world deserves and expects. Our strong record in managing our own environmental problems provides an excellent base for initiatives to promote sustainable development internationally. In the same way that constructive U.S. leadership gave impetus to the highly successful Montreal Protocol Process to combat ozone depletion, we seek to catalyze a dynamic approach to Agenda 21.

We will table concrete proposals on a wide variety of issues and hope that other governments do the same.

U.S. Delegation to UNCED

The U.S. Approach to Agenda 21

Introduction to Earth Summit

Excerpts from *In Our Hands: Earth Summit '92*
Prepared by the UNCED Secretariat

No individual or country can remain immune to the environmental consequences of economic development or the human consequences of lack of development. That is why the integration of economic development and environmental protection demands continuing attention and action on parts of the world community.

Much of the deterioration in the global environment is caused by patterns of production and consumption, especially in the industrialized countries. In many developing nations—which altogether contain almost 80 percent of the global population of 5.4 billion—poverty, population growth, and environmental damage are closely related. Protection for the local as well as global environment must be integral to the development process everywhere in an increasingly interdependent world.

To this end, the United Nations will host a Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, on the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which was held in Stockholm in June 1972. The Rio Conference—widely known as the Earth Summit—will be the first global gathering of heads-of-state-and-government on the environment and development. It will also be the largest meeting of

world leaders, non-governmental organizations, business executives, educators, students, and grassroots workers.

UNCED is a unique attempt on the part of nations to find a common basis for action to secure for all its inhabitants a more secure, sustainable and equitable future and to protect the future of Planet Earth. The Earth Summit of 1992 will aim to put environment at the center of economic decision-making in government, industry, and the home.

The General Assembly made it clear that the linkages between development and environment must be tackled through a fresh international consensus on global issues—and in particular the revitalization of development in developing countries on an environmentally sound and sustainable basis. The specific issues to be addressed include protection of the atmosphere; protection and management of land resources; conservation of biological diversity; promotion of environmentally-sound use of bio-technology; protection of the oceans, seas and coastal areas, and of the quality and supply of freshwater resources; and environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals.

Of particular importance will be agreement on the means of ensuring that developing

countries will have access to the new and additional financial resources and technologies that they will require to integrate environment into their development, and to participate fully in international environment cooperation.

In establishing UNCED, the United Nations has also underscored a number of other critical issues that the world community needs to address more fully: the importance of access to, and transfer of, environmentally sound technology for developing countries; a concerted attack on poverty; economic instruments and institutional arrangements; and development patterns particularly in energy, agriculture, forestry and manufacturing. The elimination of wasteful consumption practices and inefficiencies in energy usage could do much to preserve natural and financial resources that could be released for more rapid development.

Most of the financial needs of the developing countries will be met by them through re-deployment and more effective use of their own resources. But they will also need to have access to substantially increased external resources over time through increased private investment, improved terms of trade, and debt relief—as well as concessional assistance. The current net outflow of resources from the poor to the rich nations must be reversed, and new and additional financial support provided to revitalize developing country economies on an environmentally-sustainable basis. The

industrialized countries must be the main source of these resources. Meeting these needs will also present economic opportunities for the industrial nations. Some of the most essential and most cost-effective investments in environmental protection and sustainable development will be in developing countries. Addressing the total environmental and development needs of the most impoverished countries will involve huge sums. But the costs of ignoring the deterioration of finite natural resources and the environment would be even higher.

Who will attend the Earth Summit?

All member-states of the United Nations will be invited to the Rio Conference, represented—it is expected—by their heads-of-state-or-government. In addition, a large media corps, thousands of representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other groups from the independent sectors are expected to be present in Rio de Janeiro during the Earth Summit.

What, specifically, will the Rio Conference do?

Based on recommendations of its Preparatory Committee, the Earth Summit is expected to act on the following principal matters:

An Earth Charter or Declaration of Basic Principles for the conduct of nations and peoples in respect of environment and

Introduction

development to ensure future viability and integrity of the Earth as a hospitable home for human and other forms of life;

An agenda for action, called **Agenda 21**, establishing the agreed work program of the international community for the period beyond 1992 and into the 21st century in respect of the issues to be addressed by the Conference with priorities, targets, cost estimates, modalities and assignment of responsibilities.

Participants at the 1992 Rio Conference are expected to deal with the means to implement this agenda through:

- New and additional financial resources;
- Transfer of technology;
- Strengthening of institutional capacities and processes.

In addition, there is expectation that the Rio Conference will produce agreements on specific legal measures, such as conventions for the protection of the atmosphere, biological diversity and possibly forests. These are to be negotiated prior to the Conference and signed at the **Earth Summit**.

Within this agenda, governments will be called to act upon a series of concrete measures which would literally change the basis of our economic life, our relations with each other and our prospects for the future. These will provide the basis for a new set of priorities for the world community, including:

→ Revitalization of the economies of the developing countries;

→ Reversing the outflow of resources from developing countries and ensuring their access to the new and additional resources and technologies they will require to incorporate the environmental dimension into their own development and participate fully in international environmental cooperation;

→ Eradication of poverty, the principal source of the environmental problems of developing countries and a major threat to the achievement of global environmental security;

→ Reversal of the destruction of renewable resources, soil, forests, biological and genetic resources;

→ Ensuring availability of energy supplies, particularly to developing countries under conditions that will safe-guard the environment and contain risks of climate change;

→ Ensuring availability and protection of water supplies;

→ Ensuring food security;

→ Ensuring equitable access to and use of the global commons by all nations under conditions that will provide for their protection;

→ Changing the system of incentives and

penalties which motivate economic behavior to ensure that they provide strong incentives to sustainability and changes in national accounts to reflect real values of the environment and resources;

→ Transition to patterns of production and consumption in the industrialized countries which will drastically reduce their disproportionate contribution to deterioration of the earth's environment and related global environmental risks.

What is the Preparatory Committee?

The United Nations General Assembly decided to establish a Preparatory Committee to oversee efforts for the Rio Conference. It consists of representatives of all United Nations member states. The Committee has become widely known as the PrepCom. The goals of UNCED have been articulated in General Assembly Resolution 44/228, and the task before the Preparatory Committee is to recommend the programs and the actions required to reach these goals.

The Preparatory Committee scheduled four formal substantive sessions in Nairobi (Kenya), in August 1990; Geneva, in March-April 1991; Geneva, in August - September 1991; and finally in New York, in March-April 1992.

How are individual countries contributing to UNCED preparations?

These contributions are made through their participation in the Preparatory Committee and its Working Groups. In addition, countries are able to participate in regional meetings which provide a perspective on the issues to be addressed at Rio. Each country has also been asked to submit a national report documenting its experiences, insights and concerns with respect to environment and development.

Is UNCED focusing far too much on "environment" at the expense of "development"?

The 1992 Earth Summit is a conference on both environment and development. Indeed, its primary emphasis is on development and economic change, as it is only through changes in economic behavior and a transition to sustainable development that environmental as well as economic security can be attained.

At its very first session in 1990, the Preparatory Committee stressed the need to ensure that in all areas of work the developmental dimension is taken fully into account. Each Working Group has been asked especially to do this, to pay particular attention to the linkages with developmental issues and problems and to identify the need for financial support, technology transfer and institutional development. □



Climate Agreement Enters Final Negotiations

*In First Major Test of Earth Summitry
U.S. Stance is Pivotal*

In mid-February, diplomats from more than 100 nations will gather in New York City for a decisive round of negotiations on an international treaty to limit the threat of global warming. Their instruction from the U.N. General Assembly is to have an "effective" climate change convention ready for heads of state to sign five months from now at the Earth Summit in Rio.

Culminating years of intensive international scientific research, policy analysis, and diplomatic controversy, this fifth session of the U.N.-sponsored Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) is widely seen as a litmus test for the Bush administration, not only on the problem of climate change, but on global environment and development issues generally. By extension, the outcome of the INC in New York may well be the best early indicator of the Earth Summit's overall diplomatic prospects.

To many observers, the New York session of the INC will be a success only if it produces an agreement that includes specific targets and timetables for industrialized countries to significantly limit emissions of greenhouse gases, in particular carbon dioxide, the primary cause of global warming. Industrialized countries must also provide additional financial aid and other forms of assistance so that developing countries will be able to afford "clean" technologies to control greenhouse gases without impeding economic development. And environmentalists, alarmed by a recent U.N. sponsored study that found ozone depletion is worsening, want Rio delegates to agree to an accelerated phaseout of ozone-depleting compounds.

The United States is increasingly isolated in its opposition to carbon dioxide caps and new funding. As a result, critics say, U.N. plans to sign a climate change treaty in Rio are in jeopardy.

Climate Agreement Negotiations

Background

A broad consensus currently exists within the international scientific community that global warming is one of the most serious environmental threats facing the planet. Human activities—principally the burning of coal, oil, and gas and emissions of methane and chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs)—are altering the earth's atmosphere in a manner that could cause an abnormally rapid global temperature increase of as much as 8 degrees Fahrenheit over the next 100 years. With the temperature increase will come sea level rise and coastal flooding, changes in precipitation patterns that may result in mid-continental droughts, and potentially severe consequences for individual species and entire ecosystems. As *Science* magazine stated in August, 1990, "there's virtual unanimity...among greenhouse experts that a warming is on the way and that the consequences will be serious." The National Academy of Sciences echoed that warning in April, 1991: "Even given the considerable uncertainties in our knowledge of the relevant phenomena, greenhouse warming poses a potential threat sufficient to merit prompt responses...Investment in mitigation measures acts as insurance protection against the great uncertainties and the possibility of dramatic surprises."

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from energy production and use, deforestation, and other activities account for about half of manmade greenhouse gas emissions. Emissions of

CFCs and related compounds, which may account for as much as another quarter of human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, are already partly addressed in international law through the historic 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. Parties to the Protocol amended it in 1990 to accelerate phaseout of CFCs and related compounds. A study released by the United Nations Environment Programme last October, however, found that ozone depletion is occurring at twice the rate observed previously.

Control of CO₂ emissions is nevertheless the key outstanding challenge facing negotiators at the February INC session in New York. Left unchecked, global CO₂ emissions will nearly double by 2025, according to scenarios prepared by the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). With aggressive control policies, the IPCC projects that a modest increase or an actual decrease in CO₂ emissions is attainable over the same period.¹

Like many international environmental problems, responsibility for global warming falls heavily on the industrialized nations of the world. For example, with just 25 percent of the world's population, industrialized nations account for three quarters of global CO₂ emissions associated with energy production and use. In per capita terms, carbon emissions from energy use in industrialized nations are nearly ten times greater than in the developing world.² If develop-

ing countries follow the development patterns of the industrialized world, their emissions of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases will grow sharply. If per capita emissions in China and India were to rise to the current world average, global greenhouse gas emissions would increase by 28 percent. If they raised emissions to the level of France, greenhouse gas emissions worldwide would increase by 68 percent.³

Diplomatic Developments & Status

The threat of global climate change was among the problems discussed twenty years ago at the Stockholm Conference. Within the U.N. context, the scientific and diplomatic groundwork for a climate treaty was initiated in 1988 with the establishment of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC was instructed to assess information on the process of climate change and its impacts, and to formulate realistic "response strategies." Findings and reports of the IPCC, issued in 1990 and 1991, provided a scientific foundation and diplomatic impetus for a climate change treaty.

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) session slated for New York in February has its origin in the U.N. General Assembly in 1989, when a consensus resolution was adopted urging "governments, non-governmental organizations, and scientific institutions to collaborate in efforts to prepare as a matter of urgency a framework convention on climate." The INC itself was

established by another consensus resolution of the General Assembly in the fall of 1990. The INC was instructed to negotiate an "effective" treaty on climate change containing "appropriate commitments" and related legal instruments "as might be agreed upon" in time to be signed at UNCED in June, 1992.

Negotiations began in earnest at the INC's third round in Nairobi, Kenya in September, 1991. At the most recent negotiating session in Geneva in December, an integrated text of an agreement was produced, but little progress was made in bridging the wide divergence of country positions on industrial country emissions limits, or on financial and technological assistance to developing countries. Delegates and non-governmental observers agree that these issues must be dealt with productively at the February session in New York if an "effective" convention is to be ready for signing at Rio.

Key Controversies & The U.S. Position

Developing countries insist that before they commit to measures to curb greenhouse gas emissions, industrialized countries must accept binding limits on their own, far greater emissions. Coming into the New York round of the INC, the United States stands alone among industrial nations in making no commitment to reduce or at least stabilize CO₂ emissions. The United States was further isolated in December, when the European Community agreed to consider

implementing a tax to reduce carbon emissions and energy use as part of its strategy to combat global warming. Experts say this move is especially significant because both energy use and carbon emissions in the Community are already lower in absolute and per capita terms than in the United States.

Developing countries further insist that the agreement include a separate and independent mechanism to fund their adoption of low-emission technologies. The United States and most other industrial nations have resisted calls for new financial mechanisms in the convention itself, and favor utilizing the Global Environmental Facility (administered by the World Bank with UNEP and the United Nations Development Programme) to deal with the financial assistance implications of a global climate treaty. The European Community has agreed that "new and additional" funds are needed for this purpose. The United States insists that existing development assistance be redirected to address climate change.

Environmentalists argue that the Bush administration's refusal to consider firm limits on CO₂ emissions is jeopardizing the entire INC process, a view many European diplomats share. But the Administration argues that it has demonstrated leadership on the climate change issue. "The climate change debate is not about research versus action, for we have never considered research a substitute for action," President Bush told a White House conference in April, 1990. Citing the Clean Air Act, the EPA phaseout of CFCs, and other initiatives, the president predicted that U.S. actions "will produce reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that will reach 15 percent in ten years—and considerably more later on."⁴ The United States opposes specific targets and timetables for stabilizing carbon dioxide emissions on the grounds that such measures would harm the U.S. economy. U.S. officials cite a 1990 Department of Energy (DOE) study which concluded that significant cuts in CO₂ emissions would lower the gross national product by 1 percent or more.

Citing numerous studies, environmentalists argue that the United States can reduce greenhouse emissions in a manner that will actually benefit the economy. "Between 1973 and 1986," according to a recent study by

four U.S. environmental groups, "total U.S. energy consumption remained level—and CO₂ emissions actually dropped—while our economy expanded by almost 40 percent."⁵ By 2030, according to the study, policies to encourage energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources could cut the nation's energy requirements by half, petroleum by two-thirds, and carbon dioxide emissions by 70 percent, with net savings to U.S. energy consumers of \$2.3 trillion.

The Climate Action Network, an international coalition of nongovernmental environment and development organizations, and the U.S. Citizens Network for UNCED have called upon industrialized nations to reduce energy-related CO₂ emissions by at least 20 percent below 1988 levels by the year 2000. Environmentalists also want the Earth Summit to produce a commitment by governments of the world to strengthen the Montreal Protocol when the parties to the agreement meet next November in Copenhagen. □

Endnotes

¹ *Climate Change: The IPCC Response Strategies*. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 1991. Island Press (Washington, D.C.). Table 2.8 p. 26-29.

² *The IPCC Response Strategies*. Table 2, p. xoodiii.

³ *World Resources 1990-91*. World Resources Institute. 1990. (Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford), p. 17.

⁴ "Selections from the President's Conference Remarks." In *Global Stewardship: A Review of the Context and Challenges Facing Science and Economics Research Related to Global Change*. The White House. Washington, D.C. Undated.

⁵ *America's Energy Choices: Investing in a strong economy and a clean environment*. Alliance to Save Energy, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, Natural Resources Defense Council, Union of Concerned Scientists. 1991. (Union of Concerned Scientists, Cambridge, MA) p. 3.



Biodiversity Agreement Seen Likely At Rio

*After Earth Summit, Nations Would Own
Genetic Resources Within Their Borders*

After years of negotiation, experts are optimistic that an international agreement to conserve and manage the planet's imperiled species, genetic resources, and ecosystems will be ready in time for signing by heads of state at the Earth Summit this June.

The prospect of a Rio signing improved only recently when negotiators in a U.N.-sponsored intergovernmental committee broke a deadlock over the key issue of ownership and control of genetic materials. Historically, genetic materials—seeds, germplasm, or specimens of individual species—have been a collective good within the world community. Anyone who found and derived benefits from plants or animals or the genes they contained was under no obligation to compensate the country of origin. But within the past year, a consensus has emerged among negotiators that genetic materials of all kinds should become the sovereign resource of the individual nations in which the materials occur. In the form of a legally binding treaty provision, the concept would afford species-rich nations, many of which are in the developing world, a greater measure of control over access to genetic resources. It would also enable them to share in the economic benefits of conservation and management of species and ecosystems.

Important issues remain to be resolved, however, before a convention can be tabled for consideration at the Earth Summit. Once again, the question of funding looms large. The United States and the other G-7 nations continue to insist that the World Bank's pilot Global Environmental Facility (GEF), or other funding mechanism, be used to pay for the conservation provisions of a biodiversity convention. Many developing countries want a funding mechanism whose control they share, and new and additional funds for biodiversity conservation.

Biodiversity Agreement Seen Likely

Background

The conservation of biological diversity embraces protection of species, ecosystems, and the gene pools within species. Motivations for protecting "biodiversity" range from aesthetics to hard-nosed pragmatism. Modern agriculture and medicine have benefitted profoundly from the identification and use of genetic material or chemical compounds found in wild species, tropical species in particular. Entire ecosystems provide valuable "services" such as the recycling of nutrients, purification of water, and fixation of carbon dioxide.

Though they have described approximately 1.4 million species of plants and animals, scientists remain uncertain—within an order of magnitude—about how many species exist. But this diversity is being reduced rapidly by human activity.

Modern extinction rates, it has been estimated, are about 400 times greater than the normal "background" rate over evolutionary time. The causes of accelerated extinctions include pollution, over-exploitation through hunting and other means, and the introduction of alien species. Probably the most important problem is habitat destruction. Climate change will also imperil species and ecosystems.

Extinction rates in terrestrial ecosystems have reached crisis levels. Tropical forests, home to half of all species, are already half

gone, and are disappearing at a rate of at least 20 million hectares per year. In the marine environment, over-harvesting of particular species of marine mammals and some fish, and pollution, account for most of the known endangerment.

Diplomatic Status, Controversies & The U.S. Position

Like the climate change convention, the biological diversity convention is being developed in a negotiating process that is parallel to UNCED but separate from it. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for Biodiversity had its origins in 1980, when the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), World Wildlife Fund, and UNEP collaborated on a World Conservation Strategy that had as one of three priorities the conservation of biological diversity. Forty countries have since developed national strategies to identify and conserve biological resources, from species to ecosystems, but many of the countries that are richest in species have taken no action. Moreover, a very large proportion of the planet's biological resources—species and ecosystems—remain unprotected by the existing patchwork of international laws and conventions.

In 1988, an ad hoc group of experts recommended to UNEP that a global convention on biological diversity be negotiated to deal with the numerous gaps in international law. By 1989, U.N.-sponsored intergovernmental

negotiations were underway.

While important details remain in dispute, negotiators generally agree that ownership and control of genetic resources be conferred to nations of origin. This agreement may provide a basis for resolving interrelated controversies over intellectual property rights, patent protection, and conservation funding. In principle, for example, indigenous peoples could be compensated for their knowledge of medicinal and other uses of native plants and animals just as nations would be compensated for the use of genetic resources.

Observers note a distinct philosophical schism within biologically wealthy nations of the South. Some countries consider the conservation of biological diversity a cost in virtually every instance, and insist that industrialized nations provide compensation for the protection of species and ecosystems. Other developing nations believe that biodiversity, inventoried and properly managed, is a resource that can have income-generating potential. This latter group is receptive to a broader range of biodiversity funding and assistance schemes. The pilot GEF mechanism makes funds available for biodiversity actions that are not expected to compensate local costs, and therefore need international support. Other means are still needed to support investments in biodiversity that will lead to economic returns through new products and employment.

The interrelated issue of biotechnology is another matter of contention in intergovernmental negotiations. A number of developing countries want a convention to provide for enforceable screening and control mechanisms for genetically modified organisms by the governments of exporting nations. The United States, in particular, objects to this idea, preferring that such screening be left to bilateral arrangements between governments or within the private sector. □

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Institutional Reform

Funding, Powers of United Nations Are Central Issues At Earth Summit

If the Earth Summit witnesses the signing of significant new international agreements on biological diversity and climate change, an ambitious plan of action for environment and sustainable development in the form of Agenda 21, and other measures, what international institutions will be needed to administer those initiatives?

From the outset, this question has arisen in discussions of virtually every issue addressed by UNCED. Existing international laws and programs relating to environmental protection and development, limited though they are in number and scope, already exceed the clout and resources of the international institutions given the job of implementing them. Some experts see UNCED as the first diplomatic foray into a broader debate on how the entire United Nations system should be overhauled to reflect the new exigencies of international relations in the post-cold war period.

At this stage, however, it seems unlikely that UNCED will create any major new institutions for environment and sustainable development. Instead, delegates will opt to strengthen existing institutions and coordination among U.N. agencies. Once again, the question of who will pay for an expanded U.N. presence, and how, remains a stumbling block. Among industrialized nations, the United States stands foremost in opposing either new institutions or new funds.

UNCED diplomats will also be called upon to ensure that such major international institutions as the World Bank, and national governments, respect fundamental human and environmental rights, through provisions in the Earth Charter, Agenda 21, and virtually every other measure to be agreed upon in Rio.

Institutional Reforms are Central

Background

The most significant outcome of the landmark Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 was the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Established to catalyze action on the ambitious environment and development agenda set forth in the Stockholm Declaration, UNEP was to serve as the "environmental conscience" of the U.N. system. In its brief existence, UNEP is credited with many noteworthy achievements such as facilitating the landmark Montreal Protocol to protect the ozone layer. Still, UNEP has remained a small program with limited funding and staff. It has neither power nor influence over U.N. institutions that have major impacts on the environment and development patterns.

The World Bank is a salient example. Although efforts to "green" the Bank have met with considerable success over the last decade, the people whose environment and well-being are most directly affected by Bank-financed development projects usually have little or no voice in project negotiations between Bank staff and recipient governments. Thus conceived, Bank projects have too often meant resource destruction, and displacement and destitution for indigenous peoples.

Problems of access and input are not limited to the World Bank or other international organizations. Many national governments

actively suppress environmental debate and persecute environmental advocates. In virtually all societies, both environmental risk and government suppression tend to most severely affect the less powerful and the poor, especially women and children.

Diplomatic Status, Controversies & The U.S. Position

Prospects for the creation of a major new international institution as a result of the Earth Summit faded quickly in the UNCED process. An overwhelming majority of delegations expressed clear opposition to a proliferation of international institutions, preferring to reform existing entities, most notably UNEP. At the Geneva Prepcom last August, sharp philosophical disagreements emerged over the degree to which the international legal system should be strengthened through UNCED. Delegates also disagreed on the Earth Charter, some favoring a brief, nonbinding, inspirational declaration, others a longer, possibly binding document setting forth principles to guide sustainable development.

Many countries of the south fear that a strengthened international environmental regime will give industrial countries even greater power over the resources of the developing world. For example, Malaysia has led the affiliation of developing countries known as the Group of 77 in opposing a forest convention. They fear that it will be used to halt forest development so that the

forests will remain intact to absorb the vast carbon dioxide emissions of the industrialized world. Developing countries likewise oppose environmental and other requirements ("conditionality") on World Bank loans and other forms of assistance.

The United States also has resisted significant new powers for the United Nations, putting forward instead cautious proposals that would merely enhance coordination among organizations and streamline U.N. programs. The United States opposes centralization of compliance and dispute resolution functions of international environmental agreements, preferring that such mechanisms be adopted on a case-by-case basis in international agreements.

The United States has taken the lead in promoting the rights of individuals and nongovernmental organizations in U.N. decision-making, and has proposed inclusion of those rights in the Earth Charter. By contrast, most governments have made vague statements supporting "public participation" in decision-making. What rights might be recognized and integrated into the Earth Charter and Agenda 21 thus remain unclear.

U.S. opposition has effectively blocked proposals for new and additional financial resources to help developing countries comply with the climate change convention and other new international laws. U.S. officials argue, however, that their European counterparts are also reluctant to provide

meaningful new financial assistance in UNCED because of the pressing assistance demands in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Last December in Paris, however, mainly because of opposition from the United States, OECD countries failed to agree on additional financial aid to developing countries for action on climate change and other global environmental concerns. It appears that most OECD countries individually will provide some new resources. Among industrialized nations, Japan is alone in considering the provision of major new aid as part of UNCED.

Many U.S. nongovernmental organizations support new and additional funds to implement a wide range of Earth Summit initiatives. The Consortium for Action to Protect the Earth '92, comprised of six major U.S. environmental groups, wants global institutional reforms to include strong procedural safeguards, such as citizen lawsuits to enable individuals to protect themselves and their environment, and full public participation in U.N. activities. Whether a new or existing institution is utilized, environmentalists also want a high-level U.N. authority to set international standards, identify global trends, and serve as an international "Green Cross." They also seek an "environmental compliance council" to monitor and assist nations' compliance with international environmental agreements, and mandatory environmental assessment requirements for all U.N. institutions. □

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Earth Summit
E W S

Population Hotly Debated At Earth Summit

*Overconsumption By North Is The Problem
Not Population Growth, Southern Countries Say*

Few issues have generated as much controversy during Earth Summit preparations as the question of how—or whether—human population should be addressed within UNCED.

At the crux of the debate is a view held strongly among many developing countries that excessive per capita use—and waste—of energy and other resources in the industrialized world is the dominant and fundamental environmental problem facing the planet. In early deliberations setting the UNCED agenda, delegates from southern nations sought to prevent formal consideration of population during the Earth Summit. They felt that northern countries would use the issue of population levels and growth rates in the South to wring political concessions from them on climate change, forests, poverty and other issues. Many developing countries also felt that consideration of population would divert attention from the inequitable and “unsustainable” development patterns of industrialized countries.

In a compromise struck at the Geneva meeting of the summit’s preparatory committee last summer, delegates agreed that progress on environment and development requires action on *both* over-consumption of resources and rapid population growth. As a result, it is expected that population will be treated as a distinct item in Agenda 21, the work plan to be adopted at UNCED for international action following the Rio convention. Nongovernmental groups nevertheless worry that an attempt will be made to dilute references to population during the New York PrepCom in March.

The United States has generally supported consideration of population issues in UNCED deliberations. But the Bush administration continues to draw strong criticism from nongovernmental groups for not fully addressing population as an environmental issue, instead considering population to be a “neutral phenomenon.”

Population Debate at Earth Summit

Background

The Earth's human population, currently at 5.4 billion, is expected to grow by 95 to 100 million people every year over the next decade. At projected rates of growth, world population will reach 10 billion by the year 2025. Generally speaking, industrialized country populations are growing slowly compared to many developing countries. In 1987, about 76 percent of the world's population lived in developing countries; by 2025, 84 percent will live there. However, with all population increase comes heavier demands on resources and social services, and more pollution.¹

A majority of developing country governments have population policies and family planning programs. They recognize the adverse impact of rapid population growth on their own development and use of natural resources.

Within UNCED, however, developing countries have succeeded as never before in characterizing per capita consumption in the industrialized north as a greater *global* threat to environment and development than rapid population growth. For example, in 1987 the average American consumed 280 gigajoules of energy, more than ten times the amount consumed per capita in Asia (21 gigajoules) or Brazil (22 gigajoules), and more than 35 times the amount consumed by the average Indian. High per capita energy consumption translates into high per capita pollution generation. For example, on

average an American emits about 5 metric tons of carbon dioxide (expressed as elemental carbon) into the atmosphere annually, more than the average Chinese contributes to the atmosphere in eight years.² North-South inequities of comparable magnitude characterize the use of many resources.

Diplomatic Status, Controversies & The U.S. Position

As with many other so-called "cross-cutting issues," no major diplomatic agreements specific to population will be agreed to in Rio. Barring major shifts among delegates in the New York round of negotiations, Agenda 21 will incorporate references to population concerns throughout, and specific recommendations will be made for national governments and international agencies to recognize and act upon linkages between population and poverty, health, and the environment.

Certainly, the negotiating process has confronted northern governments and environmentalists with the need to embrace a more balanced view of population in relation to environmental degradation. Consideration of population within the UNCED process has also helped underscore the acute underrepresentation of women not only in population policymaking, but in environmental and development policy debates generally. Advocates for women's reproductive rights have effectively articulated the complexity of population and environment

interactions. They have also utilized UNCED to expand the focus of population policy discussions beyond matters of birth control strategy and technology, to include the status of women's health care, education, and economic opportunities.

Within the decidedly narrow diplomatic confines of UNCED, the United States has generally played a supportive role, agreeing, for example, to inclusion of population proposals in the Earth Charter and Agenda 21. In the broader realm of population policy generally, however, experts say the more telling indicator of the U.S. position is its refusal to fund the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, as well as its continuation of the so-called "Mexico City" policy of the Reagan administration, under which the United States refuses to provide financial support for the International Planned Parenthood Federation and other international family planning efforts that provide information or referral services for abortion.

Nongovernmental groups propose, among other ideas, that the United States adopt the Amsterdam Declaration recommendations to increase spending on population programs. Specifically, nongovernmental groups are recommending that 4 percent of annual development assistance be devoted to international population aid. Many U.S. environmental groups and other nongovernmental organizations also want the United States to reverse its "Mexico City" policy. □

Endnotes

¹ *World Resources 1990-91*. World Resources Institute. (Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York). p. 253.

² *World Resources 1990-91*. pp. 346-347.



Major Forests Agreement Ruled Out For Rio

North-South Disputes Stall Earth Summit Talks

Images of charred, denuded landscapes where tropical forests once grew have come to symbolize destruction of the global environment in recent years. But it now seems almost certain that diplomats will not have a global convention on forests in hand, as had been hoped, when they leave the Rio Earth Summit next June.

The UNCED debate on forests has become a stand-off between developing countries, where about 60 percent of the world's remaining forests are found, and industrialized countries that seek curbs on deforestation. Some developing countries adamantly oppose restrictions on their forestry practices unless they are compensated for their stewardship of forest resources with new and additional funds. They also insist that industrialized countries recognize and correct their own destructive forestry practices, and curb CO₂ emissions as a *quid pro quo* for any preservation of forest "carbon sinks" in the tropics. Industrial nations, in particular the United States, have rejected these proposals.

In Geneva last year, UNCED delegates generally agreed that a forest convention could not be formulated in time for the Rio conference. It remains to be seen if they can agree on a meaningful set of forest principles, the basis for a future convention, when they reconvene for the final Earth Summit PrepCom in New York this March.

Background

In the late 1980s, studies by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations indicated that tropical deforestation was occurring at a rate of 20.4 million hectares per year, an area about the size of Minnesota, and a rate 79 percent greater than the previous FAO estimate, made in 1980.¹ While much of the primary forests in the industrial world, particularly Europe, were cleared long ago, a significant amount remains, notably in the vast sweep of boreal forest across Canada and Russia. The U.S. government also controls millions of acres of ancient forest within its National forest system, and over one hundred million acres of rapidly recovering secondary forests.

Evidence of a pronounced increase in tropical forest loss has intensified international concern about deforestation's consequences. Loss of species is a major threat, since over 90 percent of the world's land-dwelling plants and animals inhabit forest systems. Tropical rainforests, which comprise only 6 percent of the Earth's surface, contain half of the world's known species.² Forests also play a vital role in the stabilization of the world's climate. Forests absorb vast quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it as woody growth. Deforestation through clearing or burning releases large quantities of greenhouse gases (mainly CO₂). The IPCC estimates that deforestation accounts for about 18 percent of human-induced emissions of greenhouse gases.³

Forests also serve other ecological functions, such as reducing soil erosion, protecting watersheds and coastal systems, and supporting a range of economic and recreational resources. Finally, forests are central to the social, economic and cultural survival of millions of indigenous peoples worldwide.

At the present time only a fraction of the world's remaining forests have protected status under a piecemeal system of local, regional, and global legal instruments.

Diplomatic Status, Controversies & The U.S. Position

At the 1990 Houston Economic Summit, the United States led the G-7 nations in calling for negotiations on a global convention to curb deforestation, conserve biological diversity, and otherwise improve forest stewardship. Environmentalists credit the U.S. role in initiating the debate. But in this policy arena, as in others, the United States is criticized for its rejection of developing country demands for additional funds. The United States has also been unwilling to accept specific UNCED provisions to protect primary forests worldwide—forests that have experienced minimal human disturbance. Such provisions would enhance protection of old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest. Nongovernmental groups also argue that the U.S. position should more strongly support protection of forest biodiversity and indigenous peoples.

Given the importance of forests to the global climate and biological diversity, forest issues have been debated intensively in the parallel INC and biodiversity treaty negotiations.

But at this stage, success on the forest issues at UNCED will at best mean agreement on a broad set of principles for sustainable use of forests and forest preservation. Ideally, participants will commit to continue work following Rio, until a binding international forest convention is negotiated and existing agreements that affect forests are brought into compliance with the Earth Summit's principles. But nongovernmental groups worry that weak existing drafts of the principles, if adopted in Rio, might actually undermine more progressive policies now in process, such as the recent policy position of the World Bank.

At the final preparatory meeting in New York in March, American nongovernmental groups will press for strong principles to curb deforestation, protect substantial areas of native, mature forests, legalize forest homelands for indigenous peoples, and extend the worldwide area of forest cover.□

Endnotes

¹ *World Resources: 1990-91*. World Resources Institute. 1990. (Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, Oxford), pp. 101-102..

² *1992 Information Please Environmental Almanac*. World Resources Institute. 1992. (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston). p. 279.

² *Climate Change: The IPCC Response Strategies*. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. 1991. Island Press (Washington, D.C.). p. xxix.



Land-Based Pollution Called Greatest Threat To Oceans

But Few Nations Will Commit To A Global Treaty At Rio

Pollution issuing from land-based sources is now recognized as the single greatest threat to the world's oceans. But oceans advocates now believe that the Earth Summit in Rio will produce very little international progress in dealing with the problem.

The U.S. delegation is generally credited with playing an effective and constructive role on oceans during UNCED deliberations. In particular, the United States has supported regional efforts to deal with land-based sources of ocean pollution. But environmentalists say draft provisions for regional action fall short of what many countries already are doing to cope with land-based sources of ocean contamination. Draft provisions dealing with industrial pollution control are especially weak, they say.

Oceans advocates contend that the Rio conference should produce an international commitment to post-summit negotiations on a legally binding global treaty for land-based pollution. By opposing such a proposal, environmentalists say, the United States is failing to exercise badly needed leadership on oceans issues.

Background

The oceans cover 70 percent of the Earth's surface and harbor a diversity of life as varied and valuable as that on land. And like terrestrial ecosystems, the oceans are threatened by myriad human activities, including overfishing and hunting, coastal development, mining and drilling, and wastes discharged from ocean-going vessels. But the most serious threat is the discharge of pollutants into the oceans from land-based sources—sediment, toxic chemicals, and other materials. Scientists estimate that between 70 percent and 80 percent of all ocean pollution can be traced to land-based sources.

The symptoms of degradation in marine ecosystems are numerous. Experts have documented increased incidences of toxic algal blooms, oxygen depletion that kills fish and other lifeforms in coastal waters, more frequent epidemics among marine mammals, increases in fish diseases, and elevated concentrations of contaminants among commercial fish species. Even the "deep ocean" is no longer immune. Scientists are detecting signs of significant toxic pollution in surface waters of the open ocean.

Oceans advocates want the full range of problems to be addressed in Rio: pollution, fishing regulation and technology, protected areas, coastal development, and marine mammal protection, to mention a few. Of all the ocean protection challenges facing Earth

Summit delegates, however, the most important is the effective control of land-based sources of pollution.

Diplomatic Status, Controversies & The U.S. Position

Ocean pollution is not a new issue on the international diplomatic scene. The Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 expressed concern over the growing degradation of the marine environment. Stockholm put into motion an international policy that resulted in negotiation of a global treaty on the dumping of wastes and other materials at sea. But because these sources account for no more than 20 percent of ocean pollution, the intervening 20 years have witnessed increased deterioration of the ocean environment.

Past efforts to craft broad global treaties on oceans have frustrated oceans advocates. After more than a decade of U.N.-sponsored negotiation, the Law of the Sea (LOS) Convention was completed in 1982. While the LOS achieved consensus on a number of fishing, navigation, and pollution issues, dispute over seabed mining rights and ownership has stalled progress. Only 45 nations have ratified the treaty, 15 short—including the United States—of the ~~number~~ needed to put it into force. Environmental groups hope the Rio conference will produce commitments from more governments to ratify the LOS treaty.

The United Nations has convened two special intergovernmental meetings of experts to grapple with the crucial question of how land-based sources of ocean pollution should be handled internationally. Many experts, including environmental groups, believe that the Earth Summit should produce a recommendation for an international strategy that features strong national regulations and regional agreements centered around discrete seas or segments of coastal ocean. Environmentalists support strong and effective national action and regional agreements. The crucial additional element needed is a new, legally binding global treaty to coordinate regional agreements and provide a mechanism for technology transfer and funding. A global treaty, environmentalists argue, could make the difference between a patchwork of regional agreements of unequal effectiveness and a coordinated effort to significantly reduce land-based sources of pollution.

Going into the 1992 Rio conference, however, only a handful of countries supports such a treaty. Developed countries in general, and the United States in particular, remain reluctant to enter new, broad environmental treaties. Developing countries fear that a global treaty would obligate them to meet pollution control standards without provision for the technical or financial assistance they will need to comply.

The United States is generally credited with supporting UNCED provisions for effective

national and regional provisions for reduction of land-based pollutants. Environmentalists are withholding judgment on the U.S. commitment, however, until they see how land-based sources are treated in a forthcoming Caribbean regional agreement. And oceans advocates criticize the United States for not supporting the concept of a global treaty to deal with the problem. Without U.S. leadership, including commitments of funding and technology transfer, such a treaty is unlikely to come about. □

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THE U.S. APPROACH TO "AGENDA 21"

AT UNCED PREPCOM 3, GENEVA, AUGUST 12 - SEPTEMBER 4, 1991

UNCED offers an excellent opportunity to shape a new, practical and comprehensive approach to international environmental cooperation as we enter the 21st century. The principal U.S. goal for UNCED is to facilitate international cooperation in programs which build on the concept of sustainable development and that fully integrate environment and development strategies.

We clearly recognize that U.S. leadership will be an essential ingredient in the kind of UNCED results the world deserves and expects. Our strong record in managing our own environmental problems provides an excellent base for initiatives to promote sustainable development internationally. In the same way that constructive U.S. leadership gave impetus to the highly successful Montreal Protocol Process to combat ozone depletion, we seek to catalyze a dynamic approach to Agenda 21.

The first two Preparatory Committee meetings set out an agenda, resolved procedural points, and discussed the substance of most issues before UNCED. It is critical to the success of UNCED that PrepCom 3 negotiations begin, in the words of Chairman Tommy Koh, "to make action-oriented recommendations on all issues."

The U.S. is prepared to make such recommendations. We will table concrete proposals on a wide variety of issues and hope that other governments do the same. We are pleased to see that the UNCED Secretariat has produced or will produce 49 reports for consideration at PrepCom 3. By and large, these are thoughtful responses to the requests of PrepComs 1 and 2, produced under tight deadlines. We appreciate that.

Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of UNCED, proposes that a major outcome of the Conference should be an action program entitled "Agenda 21." This framework for the full range of UNCED decisions stresses the integrated relationships of environment and development issues. The starting point for Agenda 21 is the broad UNCED mandate set out in UN General Assembly Resolution 44/228 and subsequent decisions of the Preparatory Committee. The UNCED Secretariat has circulated an analysis of each issue as the basis for the action proposals presented as "Options for Agenda 21."

The U.S. supports the concept of an Agenda 21; we believe that further work will be required regarding form and substance. The following sections address the "program areas" listed by the Secretariat, which are the building blocks of Agenda 21, and briefly describe the U.S. approach to Agenda 21 for the ten environmental issues to be addressed by Working Groups 1 and 2, and the four cross-sectoral issues to be addressed by the Plenary. (In a number of areas, for example financial resources, Agenda 21 proposals will

not be considered until the fourth PrepCom next year.) The overall U.S. approach to all Agenda 21 program areas must be seen, of course, in relation to our positions on financial and other cross-cutting issues.

LAND RESOURCES

Proposed Program Areas: (A) protection and management of fragile ecosystems; (B) an integrated approach to land resource planning and management; and (C) sustainable agriculture and rural development; the latter includes: sector policy review, planning and programming; grassroots participation and development of human resources; integrated production system management; diversification of rural incomes; land resources conservation and management; water resources for agriculture; conservation and utilization of genetic resources; integrated pest management; sustainable plant nutrition; rural energy.

U.S. Approach

In the U.S. view, the proposed options represent a comprehensive program leading toward sustainable agriculture and improved land resource management. We would particularly emphasize: (A) human resource development, (B) pilot projects to test prescriptions, (C) multiple use as the key to successful land management, (D) the combination of research and best known management practices, (E) significant participation in the land resource management process by affected citizens, and (F) decentralized decision-making. We particularly emphasize that approaches to these concerns must be consistent with GATT principles and efforts to reform agricultural trade arrangements. The program outlined is ambitious and costly. Achieving it by the year 2000 as targeted is clearly unrealistic. Given the importance of the subject to poor countries, particularly in Africa, we look forward to seeing the Agenda 21 options for desertification, which the UNCED Secretariat has not yet presented.

FORESTS

Proposed Program Areas: (A) forest inventories and land availability assessment for afforestation; (B) mechanisms for global/regional/national afforestation and reforestation; (C) assessment of potential forest impacts on climate change; (D) protection of selected forest ecosystems; (E) large scale planting programs; (F) regional/national rehabilitation of degraded lands; (G) expansion of community and social forestry in developing countries; (H) industry and trade in forest products; (I) training, research and research dissemination; and (J) forest accounting and mechanisms for assessing the economic value of forests.

U.S. Approach

UNCED PrepCom 3 will consider "Guiding Principles for a Consensus on Forests." At the London Economic Summit, the G-7 countries undertook to achieve, by the time of UNCED, "agreement on principles

for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest, leading to a framework convention. This should be in a form both acceptable to the developing countries where tropical forests grow and consistent with the objective of a global forest convention or agreement" set at the Houston Economic Summit. The U.S. has distributed a proposal for forest principles. The U.S. will seek an approach to Agenda 21 that is not inconsistent with the U.S. proposal.

BIODIVERSITY

Proposed Program Areas: (A) information on biodiversity; (B) maximization and spread of the benefits of biodiversity; (C) improved conservation of biological resources; and (D) enhanced capacity to manage biodiversity.

U.S. Approach

The U.S. is participating in the negotiations for a global framework biological diversity convention being conducted under the auspices of UNEP. U.S. objectives for this convention include the furtherance of the conservation of biological diversity -- primarily in situ, but also ex situ -- within and beyond national jurisdiction; to expand cooperation in acquiring base-line data, monitoring, and other research on species and habitat; and to ensure access to biological resources on a non-discriminatory basis. Options selected for Agenda 21 should be those which support these objectives. However, care must be taken that Agenda 21 not attempt to duplicate or anticipate the convention, which the U.S. and most other member states of UNEP look upon as the primary vehicle for global cooperation. It would be useful for PrepCom 3 to begin to prioritize the most urgent tasks listed in the ambitious options paper which do not come under the immediate purview of the convention.

BIOTECHNOLOGY

Proposed Program Areas: (A) advanced biotechnology applications in sustainable agriculture; (B) improved human health through biotechnology; (C) prevention of environmental degradation through the judicious application of biotechnology; and (D) effective safety procedures.

U.S. Approach

The United States, fully recognizing the potential benefits and risks of biotechnologies, supports the stated UNCED objective of facilitating the sound development and application of biotechnology. The United States also maintains that the regulation of industry and its products should be dealt with on the national level by individual countries and their governments. Such regulation typically has been based upon risk assessment as defined for particular environment and cultures. Therefore, the United

States believes that it is desirable for the nations of the world to harmonize sound scientific practices and economic principles in developing and commercializing products of biotechnology. Efforts to this end currently are underway within a variety of international organizations participated in, and supported by, the U.S. However, the U.S. opposes onerous and inflexible international regulations and guidelines on research and development. Further, we would not want to create unrealistic expectations as to the potential of the newer biotechnologies for vastly improving living conditions, especially in the near term. We therefore plan to take exception to certain themes in the UNCED Secretariat background paper and, in parallel, to propose modifications to a number of the options for Agenda 21.

ATMOSPHERE

Proposed Program Areas: (A) the energy transition; (B) energy efficiency; (C) environmentally sound energy systems; (D) sustainable energy consumption patterns and life styles; and (E) research on the atmosphere.

U.S. Approach

The U.S. strongly supports: (A) the integrity of the independent negotiating process on climate change under the International Negotiating Committee (INC), (B) effective implementation of the Montreal Protocol regime to combat ozone depletion and (C) international cooperation to improve ambient air quality and address problems of transboundary air pollution. We believe Agenda 21 options on the atmosphere should concentrate on interconnections between climate change and other sustainable development issues and on efforts to help developing countries deal with increasingly serious air pollution problems. Instead, the options presented focus exclusively on recommendations to address one environmental issue, climate change, through one sector, energy. Irrespective of any potential merit in the options outlined, these options not only unnecessarily interfere with the work of the INC but fail to consider all sources and sinks of greenhouse gases. The U.S. will argue for a complete restructuring of this section of Agenda 21.

OCEANS

Proposed Program Areas: (A) integrated management of coastal areas and exclusive economic ones; (B) management of living marine resources on the high seas; (C) sustainable use of living marine resources under national jurisdiction; (D) maintenance of ecosystems and biodiversity; (E) prevention and control of land based marine pollution; (F) prevention and control of sea-based marine pollution; (G) international and regional cooperation; (H) capacity building; and (I) addressing critical uncertainties for ocean management and climate change.

U.S. Approach

The U.S. sees a need to restructure the proposed Agenda 21 oceans options in order to establish a clear set of objectives and to reflect more adequately the work contained in the Secretariat background paper. At present, they are internally inconsistent, over-sectoralized and confusing. Moreover, they intermingle ecological concepts with juridical concepts involving settled areas of customary international law as reflected in the 1982 UN Law of the Sea Convention. As indicated in our detailed submission to PrepCom 2 (A/Conf. 151/PC/WG.II/CRP.7), the U.S. looks to UNCED for substantive progress in promoting: (A) the elaboration of principles on land-based sources of marine pollution emphasizing pollution prevention, the application of economically efficient clean technologies and the use of appropriate economic incentives, (B) cooperation in coastal zone management techniques, including through international organizations, with emphasis on capacity building and regional interaction, (C) conservation of marine living resources through the application of ecosystem, multi-species management, (D) cooperation through relevant international organizations in integrated monitoring of the marine environment and (E) improved coordination of regional and international coastal and marine programs.

FRESHWATER

Proposed Program Areas: (A) water resource assessment; (B) protection of water quality; (C) drinking water supply and sanitation; (D) water and sustainable urban development; and (E) water for sustainable agricultural development.

U.S. Approach

The U.S. is committed to the establishment of a pollution prevention principle for water quality, including the application of recycling and other low pollution production technologies. We will also stress the need for all countries to work together toward a pollution prevention system which steers away from traditional end-of-the-pipe treatment that fails to minimize or limit the source of contaminants. We look forward to participating in the Dublin Conference in January 1992, which will formulate precise options for the fresh water section of Agenda 21.

TOXIC CHEMICALS

Proposed Program Areas: (A) an expanded and accelerated international assessment of chemical risks; (B) harmonized classification and labeling of chemicals; (C) information exchange on toxic chemicals; (D) establishment of risk reduction programs; and (E) a strengthening of national capabilities and capacities for management of chemicals.

U.S. Approach

The United States made comprehensive proposals in this area at PrepCom 2. The U.S. supports increased international cooperation to enable countries to implement economically efficient programs for managing and reducing risks associated with the manufacture, trade, use and disposal of toxic substances. Regarding trade, the U.S. favors full implementation of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure, but not a legally binding instrument or general provisions that would restrict trade in domestically prohibited products. The harmonization of classification and labeling standards involves a number of entities, which should not be duplicating effort; important work is being done, in particular, in the OECD Chemicals Program and, within the U.N. system, the International Program on Chemical Safety (IPCS). The U.S. strongly favors a broad-based approach for reducing chemicals risk which could involve both regulatory and non-regulatory measures. These should include a code of conduct on industrial chemicals paralleling the FAO Pesticides Code; national toxic release inventories; adoption by UNCED of guiding principles for accurately communicating risk to the public; and establishment of national risk communication programs by member states. Industry initiatives can serve as an important complement to government regulatory programs.

WASTES

Proposed Program Areas: (A) promotion of waste prevention and minimization through "cleaner production" methods, resource recovery, recycling, reclamation, direct re-use or alternative uses of wastes; (B) enhancement of knowledge and information on economics of hazardous waste management; (C) increased knowledge about environmental and health impacts of hazardous wastes; (D) promotion of institutional capacities in hazardous waste management; and (E) strengthened international co-operation in monitoring transboundary movements of hazardous waste, in particular the prevention of illegal traffic, and assessing environmental and health impacts of those movements.

U.S. Approach

The U.S. places great importance on sound waste management practices and policies and supports international cooperation on waste management issues to promote this end. The U.S. would particularly emphasize: (A) full implementation of the Basel Convention; (B) harmonization of policies, strategies and measures for reducing risks to human health and the environment from hazardous and other wastes in an economically efficient manner; (C) information exchange on clean technologies to reduce waste generation; (D) information exchange to promote use of new methods for resource recovery.

POVERTY

Proposed Program Areas: (A) promotion of sustainable livelihoods; (B) reduction of demographic pressures; (C) human development; and (D) the living conditions of the poor.

U.S. Approach

The U.S. recognizes that environmental degradation and poverty are interlinked and often result from similar causes; thus, that policies should be integrated for improving living standards for the poor and for protecting the environment. Neither problem can be addressed effectively through large unspecified resource transfers. The bulk of U.S. efforts to help end poverty aim at eventual self-reliance. To achieve environmental goals, assistance should take the form of specific programs for action in land, freshwater, forests, and oceans. The U.S. will oppose specific and unrealistic deadlines for the elimination of poverty. The U.S. endorses the objective of expanded population programs and will suggest additional measures.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Proposed Program Areas: (A) basic health needs related to the environment; (B) control of communicable diseases; (C) meeting the urban health challenge; and (D) reduction of health risks from environmental pollution and hazards.

U.S. Approach

The U.S. emphasizes that human health concerns are highly relevant to this conference on environment and development and that the sectoral interests of health, environment and development must be considered in each case. Basic human needs for clean air, pure water, safe food, and sanitation should be met by measures to prevent problems rather than relying on the more difficult remediation procedures. Communicable diseases should be prevented wherever possible through sound principles of hygiene and vaccination. Particular emphasis should be directed towards diseases with major environmental interfaces such as malaria, cholera, tuberculosis and polio. Measures to reduce environmental toxic compounds and injuries in the work place should be strongly supported. Particular emphasis should be directed towards the reduction of heavy metals such as lead and mercury, as they rank as being the most significant world-wide preventive measures.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Proposed Program Areas: (A) a strengthened role of education in society in its widest sense for achieving sustainable development; (B) reorientation of formal education towards environment and development; (C) improved education and training within development programs; (D) facilitation of access to information and improved

communication; (E) strengthened community participation and partnership; and (F) improvement in the supportive role of the international system.

U.S. Approach

The U.S. generally supports the objectives of the new initiatives outlined in the Secretariat paper on environmental and developmental education. In our view, more attention needs to be given to including both environmental and developmental aspects. We particularly support the need for more cooperation using existing international mechanisms to enhance the wide availability of information relevant to environmental and developmental education. As the document states, "environmental education needs to be recognized by all as an essential part of basic learning." Many of the initiatives called for in the document have already begun in the U.S. or are being developed in response to the requirements of the National Environmental Education Act of 1990.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

Proposed Program Areas: (A) adequate shelter for all; (B) human settlements management; (C) land resource management; (D) environmental infrastructure: water, sanitation, drainage, and solid waste management; (E) energy and transport; (F) construction; and (G) human resource development and capacity building for human settlement development.

U.S. Approach

The UNCED Secretariat draft Agenda 21 basically views cities and rural settlements as providing an opportunity for more efficient use of resources, simultaneously promoting development and reducing stress on the environment. The U.S. supports and will seek to emphasize measures that serve to improve public and private sector management capabilities and collaboration and to promote better resource use, services, and waste disposal.



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Environmental And Citizens Groups

CAPE '92

In preparation for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Environmental Defense Fund, Friends of the Earth, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council and Sierra Club are pooling their expertise and efforts to work toward productive actions from the Conference.

The U.S. Citizens Network on UNCED

Established in October of 1990 by 160 organizations, the Network was created to facilitate the efforts of U.S.-based organizations hoping to affect the Earth Summit process, and to influence U.S. and UN policies being developed for it. Using the Network as a hub for information and logistical support, organizations and individuals can organize activities which can positively influence the Earth Summit's outcome. The Executive Director is Catherine Porter: 300 Broadway, Suite 39, San Francisco, California 94133, Tel. (415) 956-6162, Fax: (415) 956-0241.

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