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Abstract

The deterioration of the environment in the Americas exacts urgent and decisive actions aimed at its preservation, renovation, and sustainable development. This diagnosis is shared by all 34 member countries that constitute the Organization of American States. Although environmental protection is a global task, it also demands actions at the regional level. Consequently, in early 1990 the OAS began a process of diplomatic debates--based on a long technical experience in natural resource conservation--oriented towards creating an Inter-American System of Nature Conservation. This effort culminated in June 1991 at the General Assembly held in Santiago de Chile, where an Interamerican Program of Action for Environmental Protection was approved and a Permanent Committee on the Environment was created at the OAS to ensure the implementation and supervision of that program, as well as to design the overall policy of the hemispheric organization with regard to environmental affairs.

This book includes articles that derived from those discussions, along with other important essays and, most importantly, the complete Interamerican Program of Action and a unique selection of documents on environmental issues produced in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as globally within the sphere of the United Nations.

The works appearing in this book are particularly interesting because they represent--reflecting the actual

composition of the OAS--the views of developed countries, like the United States and Canada, together with developing countries like those of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The pages of this book present many of the critical themes involved in diplomatic negotiations on the environment, ranging from criticisms of traditional development models, the demand by developing countries for gaining access under favorable terms to clean technologies and new and additional financing for sustainable development, the unavoidable need for all to cooperate across borders, though establishing levels of responsibility in determining contributions to environmental conservation and recuperation, to the convenience of preventing the legitimate application of environmental policies from becoming "third generation" non-tariff barriers to trade.

In reading this book, it will become clear that the Americas and the world are confronting an urgent task that requires compromise and solidarity, on whose success the well-being of present and future generations depends.

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— 8/

EMBAJADOR

DELEGACION DE CHILE
ANTE LA ORGANIZACION
DE LOS ESTADOS
AMERICANOS

Washington, D.C.,
February 18, 1992

The Honorable
Senator Albert Gore
393 Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

We were sorry that you were unable to accept the invitation I extended to you in my capacity of President of the Committee on the Environment of the Organization of American States to participate in a high-level conference on "Trade and the Environment" to be held in Chile, April 20-21. Next time perhaps.

I call your attention on this occasion to see if you could give us a brief comment, so that we could extract some "quotable lines", on a book entitled Environment and Diplomacy in the Americas that our Committee is about to publish. I have seen your own book and the idea is to have on the back cover comments hopefully like those provided to you by Bill Moyers and others. I only enclose the first 50 pages of the manuscript since the rest are key documents in an appendix.

Thanking you in advance for your kind attention, I remain,

Cordially yours,


Heraldo Muñoz
Ambassador

cc: Susana Valdes ✓
Assistant to Sen. Gore

ENVIRONMENT

AND

DIPLOMACY

IN THE

AMERICAS

EDITED BY
HERALDO MUÑOZ

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The Environment in Inter-American Relations: an Introduction
Heraldo Muñoz

For a long time the subject of the environment was absent from the foreign policy priorities of the countries of the hemisphere, and therefore from the agenda of the inter-American system as well, except for isolated instances such as the 1940 Western Hemisphere Convention for the Protection of Nature and Conservation of Flora, Fauna, and Natural Beauties of the Countries of American. However, this lack of interest, which was not only regional but worldwide, began to change in the early 1940s as the result of debate that culminated in the United Nations conference on the human environment held in Stockholm in 1972.

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Notable change has occurred since then. The subject of the environment is now a political priority in the foreign policies of most countries. The Paris meeting of the Group of Seven highly developed countries (G7) in 1989 was dubbed the "green summit" precisely because of the importance it afforded discussions of world environmental problems. This concern was also evident at the Houston G7 meeting in mid-July 1990, when the final communiqué cited as one of its most important responsibilities "providing future generations with an environment the health, beauty and economic potential of which were not threatened."¹

This change in attitude is in part attributable to nongovernmental ecology organizations and the Green Parties of the United States and Western Europe. Their activism contributed to elevating the importance of environmental issues in the foreign policy agenda of those countries. One result has been the growing significance of environmental matters in Washington's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean as the 1990s begin.

As in the rest of the world, concern for the environment has rapidly been acquiring greater importance in Latin America and the Caribbean. In contrast with a few years ago, today there are many nongovernmental groups dedicated to the study and promotion of environmental conservation. And public opinion polls demonstrate that Latin Americans assign great importance to the control of environmental pollution in their large cities, to the

contamination of coastal areas, and, in general, to the deterioration of ecosystems. At the government level, too, increasing urgency is being given to environmental problems. In fact, such countries as Colombia, Venezuela, Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador, Bolivia, Costa Rica, and Chile, among others, have recently approved environmental protection codes or created national commissions or ministries of the environment to formulate and apply environmental protection policies.

The different mechanisms of consultation and cooperation in Latin American and the Caribbean have also served to stimulate advances in the discussion of the region's environmental protection policies and to limit, neutralize, or reverse processes that degrade local, regional, or world ecological balances. The environment has become a permanent agenda item for the Rio Group during its meetings. In the final communiqué of the meeting held by the Rio Group in Caracas, October 1990, the presidents of the Rio Group countries committed themselves to "maintain constant coordination in multi-lateral fora on the environment in order to harmonize our positions and assure them more efficiency."² Similar concern is shown by the countries grouped into the Amazon Pact, CARICOM, and the recently created Central American Commission on the Environment and Development.

At the regional level, significant progress has occurred in the preparation of diagnosis and action program proposals to confront the hemisphere's environmental problems. Outstanding environmental policy efforts have been carried out in Latin America and the Caribbean by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), which agreed to a "call to action" at its Seventh Ministerial-Level Regional Meeting in Trinidad-Tobago in October 1990; by the Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Development and the Environment, established in 1989 with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), which produced the report known as *Our Own Agenda*; by ECLAC, which organized a meeting that led to the adoption of the Tlatelolco Platform on the Environment and Development; and, at the hemispheric level, by the Working Group on Environmental Protection of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States (OAS), which produced the Inter-American Program of Action on the Environment. All these efforts to a greater or lesser extent constitute preparatory steps for the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

It is clear that as we begin the 1990s the deterioration of the environment is a problem of the highest political urgency, and tied to the systematic development of the Americas. Protection of the environment has been transformed into a development priority for hemisphere countries, and into a matter that also concerns their security.

THE ENVIRONMENT AND SECURITY

In its broadest sense, the concept of "security" refers to the situation in which a person, institution, or country is free from any danger, damage, or threat. Traditionally, Latin American and Caribbean countries defined their security in terms of the classical nations of national sovereignty and military defense of territorial integrity. From this conventional perspective, security ultimately depends on the arms and adequately trained personnel available to meet foreign and domestic threats.

NOTIONS

However, this way of conceiving security appears to be insufficient for responding to a series of risks and threats of a nonmilitary nature that Latin American and Caribbean nations face. A reformulation debate has given rise to new approaches to the concept of security: Since the end of the 1970s "collective economic security" has been on the regional agenda. This revised notion of security includes those conditions that increase or diminish the capacity of individual countries to resolve critical social and economic problems and to achieve a more equitable and democratic internal order. The relationship of these conditions to the security of each individual country is evident. The accumulation of tensions and unsatisfied demands, and foreign restraints that obstruct, impede, or block internal development all represent situations at least as dangerous as military threats.

The security of a country cannot be dependent solely upon tanks and bombers. A nation's security also depends on its climate, the quality and availability of land for cultivation, its water and marine resources, the normal functioning of its water basins, its genetic resources, and the diversity of its wildlife. And so, the incorporation of environmental issues into security approaches in the region has become necessary.³ If a nation is denied the environmental factors it needs for normal development there is no doubt that its economy, at the very least, will be affected. Taking the situation to the extreme, the social and political structure of that nation may be seriously damaged, possibly to the point of provoking its disintegration.⁴

The international dimension of the environmental problem and its impact on security results from the fact that much of the aggression the environment now suffers has effects that go beyond the borders of the country where the abuse occurs. The attempts by some developed countries to export toxic and radioactive waste to countries in Latin America, and, in general, the interest in relocating in the South some industrial plants that produce environmental impacts unacceptable to the developed countries are examples of the nonmilitary aggression to which the regional environment is being exposed.

Some environmental aggression is clearly worldwide. That is the case, for example, with global warming (the greenhouse effect), the destruction of

the ozone layer, the loss of biodiversity (accelerated destruction of species), and the contamination of oceans. Other environmental problems are more regional in their scope, such as the deterioration of the water basins and ecosystems shared by various countries in Central and South America. For example, deforestation and misuse of the land in the higher elevations of the basins fill the rivers with large quantities of sediment downstream that may eventually be deposited in and obstruct navigational channels in other countries.

Since the seriousness of the damage caused to nature puts world security and the future of humanity at risk, the logical way to confront the situation is cooperatively to search for collective solutions and to support national efforts. As the Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Development and the environment states in the document, *Our Own Agenda*, "There is no room for doubt that the most sensible course is to build the foundation of a pact for survival. That foundation will be solid to the extent that we can work together. Let us take a step forward together and let us call on those to negotiate who have the will to act generously, vision and a sense of solidarity with the future of human civilization."⁵

ENVIRONMENT

THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN INTER-AMERICAN RELATIONS

With the end of the Cold War and the changes that have taken place in the former Socialist world, the organizing principle of US post-war foreign policy—the containment of the Soviet Union and of Communism—has, in practical terms, ceased to exist. The principal threat to the United States has disappeared, and along with it the perspectives through which Washington viewed the world and built alliances and regional understandings of both diplomatic and military nature. And of course changes in hemispheric relations have unfolded as of the moment in which one of the principal factors which provoked the decline of the inter-American system ceased to exist: that is, the perception that the inter-American system was merely an instrument in the context of the East-West confrontation.

In the United States, while most leaders agree that the Cold War has ended, there is as yet no consensus around any new national thesis. That means there is a conceptual vacuum in foreign policy, although a relative decline is perceived in military concerns in favor of economic matters. Many issues have emerged to compete for the designation of new national security priority. According to Theodore Sorensen, the temptation is to include each leader's favorite topic as the basis for a new US security paradigm.⁶ As a matter of fact, the deterioration of the environment, along with other themes such as drug-trafficking, illegal migration, economic competition, and the

promotion of democracy, is one of the themes being emphasized among the new security priorities in the post-Cold War era.

However, if the ecological question is unilaterally defined as a matter vital to the United States' national security and to relations between Washington and Latin America, there exists the danger of transferring the traditional tensions and distrust of inter-American relations to the subject of the environment (as has already partly occurred in the case of drug-trafficking). Disagreements and fears could become even stronger considering the fact that in the emerging new world context, without the ideological underpinnings of the Cold War, the logic of power politics would take on greater vigor, accentuating the asymmetries in the treatment of hemispheric affairs.

The challenge before the Latin American and Caribbean countries is to see to it that environmental issues in inter-American relations are approached from a new perspective. Emphasis must be placed on the practical necessity of defining and treating environmental issues in light of common security, which requires the perspective of international cooperation and coordinated actions among all the countries of the hemisphere, excluding unilateral actions, and in accordance with a general criterion of solidarity.

ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION VS. NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

One principal difficulty in discussing the environment within the hemisphere has been how to confront such problems as contamination and environmental deterioration, which have neither national nor ideological boundaries, while at the same time preserving national sovereignty and the basic principles of inter-American law, including the principle of nonintervention.

We must accept the premise that, while all countries contaminate, it is possible to distinguish degrees of responsibility that each State has for degradation of the planet. Advances in this direction, however, have been problematic. It sometimes seems to developed countries that the developing countries are most responsible for damage to the environment—one example is the public concern often voiced in the developed nations for the deforestation of the Amazon basin.

However, if we consider two areas that excite more attention from the international community—the destruction of the ozone layer and the greenhouse effect—scientific research shows a different panorama. In the first case, the contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean to the production and utilization of gases that degrade stratospheric ozone (principally

chloroflourocarbons and halogens) is infinitesimal. The study, *Chile: Strategy on Ozone Layer Protection* estimates that all of Latin American and the Caribbean represent only 3 percent of world usage of chloroflourocarbons; North American alone consumes 35 percent; and the United States, the former Soviet Union, and the rest of the industrialized countries, including Eastern Europe, produce 95 percent of those gases.⁷ Something similar occurs in the case of global warming. It is calculated that carbonic anhydride generated in industrial processes, the burning of fossil fuels, and deforestation represent 50 percent of all the greenhouse effect gases emitted into the atmosphere. Some estimates put the share of Latin America and the Caribbean between 12.9 percent and 14.4 percent of total world emissions of carbonic anhydride.⁸

North America

From the Latin American perspective, attention must be paid to the environmental damage caused by overconsumption in rich countries. This thesis is supported by studies that demonstrate that such phenomena as global warming are due more to the excessive use of hydrocarbons in industrialized countries than to the destruction of rain forests in the Amazon. There are also examples of how certain consumption habits in developed nations generate demand for products that result in environmental damage or the depletion of natural resources in Latin America and the Caribbean.⁹ These perspectives have in the past led some political sectors in the less-developed countries to take some extreme positions—for example, that environmental concerns in industrialized countries were in fact a hypocritical attempt to deny economic growth to poor countries, in order to conserve their natural beauties for the sake of developed countries ecotourism.

Fortunately, the most acute stage of the controversy between international action on the environment and national sovereignty has now passed. Although the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have not accepted a concept of limited sovereignty, they have expressed that sovereignty must not constitute an obstacle to the negotiation of just and balanced agreements, in which the duties and the rights of the parties are clearly defined. The Declaration of Brasilia, signed by the states of Latin America and the Caribbean, reaffirms that "each State has the sovereign right to freely administer its natural resources," but immediately adds that such right does "not exclude, but on the contrary, reinforces, the necessity of international cooperation."¹⁰

In summary, the Latin American and Caribbean countries have accepted that States have the sovereign right to exploit their resources in accordance with their own environmental policies and development strategies, but, by the same token, accepting the necessity to cooperate, they have the duty to prevent, reduce, or avoid all adverse effects or prejudices to the environment under their control as well as to that of other States or zones outside their national jurisdiction.

DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Another complicating factor of the debate on international aspects of the environment that inevitably affects hemisphere relations is the link between environmental protection and socioeconomic development.

Although they recognize the link between environmental matters and development, the United States and other developed countries often tend to associate the deterioration of ecosystems with pressures derived from high demographic growth. According to this thesis, population growth in developing countries exceeds the overload capacity of the ecosystems, thus contributing to the deterioration of the environment.

Clearly there is a relationship between population density and environmental quality, but that relationship is strongly mediated by the model or style of development. If that model generates impoverishment, heavy migration from rural areas to urban centers, pressures on land use that result in its underutilization, and the extractive exploitation of natural resources, it eventually provokes, as we see in Latin America and the Caribbean, extreme deterioration of the environment. Still, from the perspective of developing countries, the pressure exerted on the environment by the inhabitants of an industrialized, high-consumption country is notably more harmful than that exerted by the inhabitants of a poor country. However, there now seems to be a growing consensus that environmental decay is linked to both the excesses of prosperity and the conditions of poverty, and that both conditions have in common a style of development that assumes natural capital is infinite.¹¹

From the Latin American viewpoint, it is also difficult to advance toward the creation of conditions for effective environmental protection and conservation so long as there is the heavy burden of servicing foreign debt, the fluctuations of world trade, and the internal economic adjustment processes which are being carried out.¹² The governments of the region have repeatedly argued that one key element in any approach to conserve hemisphere ecosystems is to address the conditions of underdevelopment and poverty, alleviate the weight of external debt, and favor the achievement of more equitable international economic conditions.

There is a growing commitment in Latin America and the Caribbean to a development model based on the rational utilization of natural resources and on the necessity for adopting measures designed to limit or reverse processes that degrade local, regional, or world ecological balance. But it is considered, difficult to produce substantive progress without greater international cooperation. As the Rio Group said at the Caracas meeting in October 1990, "The possibility for our countries to assume concrete commitments and participate effectively in international instruments, programs and projects in the field of environmental protection depends, to a large extent, on our

Latin America

having adequate technology on accessible terms and additional financial resources."¹³ Cooperation for environmental conservation must also include the promotion of pure and applied scientific research, including access to scientific information; and the transfer to developing countries, under favorable conditions, of technologies that are clean and designed for environmental conservation and for the enhancement of national decisionmaking processes related to environmental matters.

Addressing the issue of technology transfer in the agenda of inter-American relations is a challenge for the countries of the region. Differences on the subject are well-known. In fact, recent years have witnessed tension and disagreement between the White House and several Latin American governments attributable to the importance with which the United States imbues the protection of intellectual property. The pressures exerted on Latin American countries to change their respective legislations to protect pharmaceutical patents is one case in point. It is highly likely that this area of conflict will broaden now that, in the (ear) of biotechnology and microelectronics, the protection of intellectual property represents much more significant benefits for the private sector than those earned through the technological innovation that ushered in the famous "green revolution" of the (1970).

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Furthermore, it could be argued that Latin American countries suffer a double-deterioration paradox. In the first place, they are the victims of major environmental problems, such as global warming and the deterioration of the ozone layer, which are mainly caused by the developed countries; and, second, in order to contribute to solving those environmental problems originating principally in the developed world, they must borrow scarce financial resources or purchase high-priced technologies, consequently adding damaging to their national budgets and development strategies.

The high cost of technology protected by intellectual property rights does not adequately reflect the contribution of the biodiversity found principally in the less-developed countries. As one source reminds us, "half of all prescriptions dispensed in the world have their origins in wild organisms. In the United States, the value of these medicines and drugs amounts to some US\$14 billion a year . . . [but] the wild genetic material is found mostly in the tropical South."¹⁴ Similarly, there are more species of birds in the Sangay National park in Ecuador than in all of North America, while the Choco region in Colombia has potentially more plant species than all of those that have been conserved in the history of the United States.¹⁵

Latin American countries are also concerned with what they perceive as a growing tendency in Washington to use environmental protection to impose nontariff barriers on exports from developing countries, with resulting distortions of international trade and the provisions of GATT Article 20. Latin American countries question this kind of attitude particularly when it

comes from sectors that did not show much environmental consciousness in the past, and because it disregards the progress made by producers, particularly in the private sector, in environmental protection. The Latin American productive sectors have come to understand the necessity of incorporating environmental parameters in their costs of production so as to remain competitive in the export market since, according to one source, "very soon the international market will simply not accept products that are not environmentally safe."¹⁶

ROUTES TO THE FUTURE

There is the risk that the subject of the environment will be transformed into another point of misunderstanding between the United States and Latin America. Inter-American conflict over this matter will tend to increase to the extent that the United States (or any other country) unilaterally defines environmental protection as a problem exclusively of its external security, thus dismissing real dialogue, cooperative efforts, and solidarity on the regional and world level. Without concrete expressions of cooperation, confrontation will be unavoidable.

But there are various areas of inter-American affairs where cooperation is possible. Such areas ~~are~~ include

1. implementing programs to promote environmental consciousness as an omnipresent dimension of education;
2. promoting the transfer of clean technologies and those that favor protection and conservation;
3. developing uniform terminology and common criteria for the protection of natural resources and biodiversity;
4. harmonizing environmental legislation among the States of the hemisphere;
5. promoting studies to review national accounts to incorporate the impact of natural resource use;
6. developing regional policies on prevention of environmental accidents and the elimination of radioactive, toxic, and dangerous wastes in accordance with pertinent international juridical instruments; and
7. promoting and supporting the training of human resources in environmental matters.

One interesting, although modest, step in hemisphere environmental cooperation is the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative announced by President Bush in June 1990. It provides for the exchange of foreign debt for

environmental protection projects. Although Washington never explicitly recognized a linkage between foreign debt and conservation of the environment, it has done so indirectly by introducing the "swap" mechanisms as part of the initiative.

mechanism

Part of the legislation related to the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative has already been approved under the Agriculture Law of 1990. The law provides for the reduction of concessional agriculture debt, allowing interest on such credits to be paid in local currency, and designating that money to a fund for environmental protection. The law also authorizes the president of the United States to sign bilateral agreements with beneficiary countries that want to make use of that facility. Each country will have to establish an Enterprise for the Americas Initiative Environmental Protection Fund to be administered by a committee made up of:

1. one or more representatives named by the president of the United States,
2. one or more representative designated by the beneficiary country, and
3. representative of local nongovernmental organizations dedicated to environmental issues.

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The types of projects to be financed fall into nine categories, from the restoration, protection, or sustainable use of the oceans and the atmosphere, to the promotion of regenerative methodologies in agriculture, fishing, use of waters, and forestry. Finally, the same legislation creates, in the United States, an "Environment for the Americas Board" to advise the president on the subject and supervise the activities of the national committees.

Perhaps one of the most important efforts being undertaken to promote inter-American cooperation for environmental conservation is the Inter-American Action Program for Environmental Protection approved by the General Assembly of the OAS in Santiago, Chile, in June 1991. The program contains two chapters that enumerate action measures to be implemented by individual member States and action measures to be promoted through a regional cooperative effort. In addition, the program provides for the adoption of institutional mechanisms to coordinate and evaluate the action measures, and creates a permanent commission on the environment.

Obviously, technical cooperation plus the relevant aspects of the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative are not by themselves sufficient to meet the problem of environmental deterioration. It would be an error to think of "depoliticizing" the subject and to adopt a merely technical approach. The central thrust of the inter-American perspective must be political and, in the ultimate analysis, must lead to the promotion of a hemispheric debate, without recriminations, oriented to the formulation of a just, common,

specifically hemispheric-focused design to contribute to the worldwide task of environmental protection.

NOTES

I am grateful for the support provided by Daniel Asenjo in the research of this paper. This article reflects only the views of the author and not necessarily those of the Committee on the Environment of the OAS, which he presides, or those of the Government of Chile.

1. "Reunión Cumbre declara máxima prioridad de conversaciones sobre Medio Ambiente." *Official Text*, Information Service (Embassy of the United States: Chile, 13 July 1990), 14.

2. Grupo de Río, "Declaración de Caracas," 12 October 1990.

3. On the evolution of this new approach to security in Latin America and in particular the incorporation of the ecology dimension therein, see the publications of the South American Peace Commission. Specifically, South American Peace Commission, *Principios de la Seguridad Democrática Regional*, ILET, July 1988; Manuel Baquedano, *La Seguridad Ecológica en América del Sur*, Study Document Series, No. 3, South American Peace Commission; Raul Brañes, *Seguridad Ambiental en América del Sur: Los principales problemas y los nuevos desafíos de la soberanía*, Working Document Series, No. 5 South American Peace Commission; and Juan Somavía and José Miguel Insulza (eds.), *Seguridad Democrática Regional, Una Concepción Alternativa* (Caracas: Editorial Nueva Sociedad, 1990).

4. Vicente Sánchez, "Modalidades de desarrollo, relaciones internacionales y políticas ambientales" paper presented to the Primer Seminario Latinoamericano de Sistemas Ambientales para la Planificación (UNAM: Mexico City, 2-5 December 1985).

5. Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Development and the Environment, *Our Own Agenda* (IDB-PNUD, 1990), 41.

6. Theodore Sorensen, *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1990), 3.

7. Ozone Team (Manger, Chile: *Strategy on Ozone Layer Protection* (Santiago: Nielol, 1991), 14.

8. *Our Own Agenda*, op. cit., 41 et seq.

9. Vicente Sánchez, op. cit.

10. "Declaración de Brasilia", VI Reunión Ministerial sobre el Medio Ambiente en América Latina y el Caribe, 30-31 March 1989.

11. See CEPAL, *El Desarrollo Sustentable: Transformación Productiva, Equidad y Medio Ambiente* (United Nations, January 1991), p. 9.

12. The argument has been advanced that service of their foreign debt has forced debtor countries to overexploit their natural resources for export with consequent damage to the environment. However, that argument has been questioned by Steven Sanderson, who has shown that for Latin America's a whole, agricultural, forestry, and fishing exports have exceeded the levels before the debt crisis on only one occasion between 1980 and 1990 and that, additionally, the last two decades witnessed a decline in the importance of the raw materials producer and exporter sectors, even during the debt crisis period of the 1980s. See Steven Sanderson, *Politics Without Politics: Environmental Affairs in OECD*

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Latin American Relations in the 1990's," mimeo, (University of Florida, April 1990).

13. Declaración de Caracas, op. cit.

14. *Our Common Future: The World Commission on Environment and Development* (Washington, D.C.: Earthcan Books, 1987), 155-156.

15. Roberto Buimaraes, "La Ecopolítica del Desarrollo Sustentable" in Roberto Russell (ed.) *La Agenda Internacional en los Años 90* (Buenos Aires: GEL-RIAL, 1990), 75.

G. Buimaraes

16. Eberhard Meller, Environmental Policy Director of the Federation of German Industries, *El Diario* (Santiago 14 March 1991), 24.

At a dinner given by President Collor of Brazil to honor Rodrigo Borja Cevallos, president of Ecuador, both the host and President Borja made statements that struck me as exceedingly important. The two presidents agreed that what we need in Latin America today is development—heightened development—to resolve our problems of social injustice and inequity, but that we must redefine what we understand as progress or development. Because if development means extending to the entire planet the things we seek today—e.g., the quality of life in this country, and in countries such as Germany, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands—that is just plain suicide. It has no future; it just cannot be.

Our planet cannot support a consumer society with the excessive use of commodities to which we are accustomed in the United States. It would be impossible to extend them to the entire planet. Suffice it to consider a very simple extrapolation: in the United States we have one automobile for every 1.7 inhabitants. The planet already has 500 million cars for a population of 5.4 billion. If we were to extend this type of development to the entire planet, we would end up with some 3 billion automobiles. That is out of the question; the atmosphere cannot stand it.

So we must rethink our goals. And the first ones that must redesign their economic model are the countries of the First World. All of us must do some rethinking—but they even more than we, because they are the ones responsible for the major environmental problems, such as the deteriorating atmosphere and world climate.

The concern that is troubling even the United Nations today—the “greenhouse effect”—is only one of the areas in which the aggression and interference with natural processes, perpetrated by modern industrial society, have reached global levels.

The situation is in fact much more serious than we think. Everyone should be now be familiar with the discussion of the “greenhouse effect.” Its most salient feature is a concern with linear extrapolation over the next 50 or 100 years. We are told that as carbon dioxide (along with other gases, such as methane and other contributors to the greenhouse effect) is released into the

atmosphere, there will be a slow but progressive rise in the temperature of the planet, which—perhaps by the year 2050 or 2080—will result in serious climatic upsets. Europe's temperate climate will become subtropical. The polar caps may melt. Sea levels will rise four meters.

These dangers thus loom forty, fifty, or one hundred years down the road. Obviously most politicians (as well as technocrats) operate in a limited time frame, generally bounded by the date of the next election. By the time they have amassed a certain amount of power, they have also reached a certain age with an implicit short-term outlook; this is an accepted fact that does not bother many people.

But anyone who is familiar with vital processes and has a holistic or ecological view of nature realizes that when we have to cope with such complex systems as human life or the planet's climate system, there is no way of drawing open-ended linear extrapolations.

A human being can take a lot of abuse, withstanding violent aggression up to a certain point and then collapsing. Consider the following hypothesis: let us assume that I am a little dwarf who is forever pushing against an object. I keep pushing, time after time, and nothing happens. Past experience tells me that I can continue to push indefinitely to no avail. There is a point where knowledge provides no further assistance.

Vital processes are like that: they will take a lot of punishment up to a certain point, after which there is a quick reversal. By that time, it is too late to be sorry; and no additional information will help.

A dangerous attitude prevails today. A case in point is the White House conference on climate held early in 1990, at which the US government insisted upon more information and more research. That is a dangerous attitude. By now we have a hundred times the information necessary to spark a change in our position. If we are not making changes, it is because we do not want to.

Of course more research is needed. Research is good; it is important. But the knowledge we now possess suffices to tell us that modern industrial society is on a suicide course. Either we use the knowledge we already have to make the necessary decisions that, over time, will produce the necessary changes to ward off the disasters that are imminent, or our children will assuredly and in the near future have reason to curse us.

In my opinion, we should be guided by the basic precepts of wisdom. That is not happening. If I am performing an experiment, knowing that a possible failure will have unacceptable and irreversible results, I have no right to perform that experiment. That, however, is the type of experiment mankind is engaged in today. We are releasing into the atmosphere ever greater amounts of substances that will very soon trigger dramatic changes. And anyone observing events today can see that draconian changes in our ~~lane~~ ^{are} already taking place. Before we reach the point of no return, there is an

interval where things hang in the balance long enough to give us a chance to pull back.

Over the past ten years, the entire planet has witnessed increasingly severe climatic changes. Recently I visited Rio Grande do Sul, the place where I was born, in southern Brazil. The past ten years have seen a series of floods and droughts in Rio Grande do Sul. It once had a subtropical, rainy, and very stable climate. Now its climate gets worse with each passing year. During my visit, there was a downpour, the likes of which I had never seen before: 15 centimeters—not millimeters!—in less than an hour. A week later there was another storm with 20 centimeters of rainfall in less than an hour. Such things had never happened in the past.

There is no point in confining our thinking to long-term extrapolations of developments that may inconvenience our great-great-grandchildren. The road from here to there may well prove intolerable. If the erratic climate we have already witnessed ^{in Brazil} and here in North America, in 1988, I saw the wheat fields in Manitoba where mounds of dust were swirling through the farms continues to worsen, we will soon no longer be able to count on crop yields. Today 5.3 to 5.4 billion people are living on this planet, and we have fewer than 100 days of reserves. If severe climatic changes continue, in North America, those reserve stocks will quickly be depleted.

What good is clement weather or a nice day for the beach in Scotland going to do us if there is nothing left to eat? Tens of millions of the world's population are now dying every year from malnutrition and starvation. Tomorrow the mortality rate may be hundreds of millions. They certainly will not go without a fuss. There will be a big uproar. And in today's world where violent dictators are trying to produce atom bombs and lethal chemicals for biological warfare, there is no telling what will happen.

So we must act. This will require a whole new view of the cosmos. Today we, the modern world society, divide the world into two groups: the developed and the underdeveloped (we do not use that word, because it would be insulting; so we call them the "developing countries"). Our belief is that the whole world should reach the status of the United States. Germany and others have done so. As we have seen, however, that is impossible. We are going to have to revise our thinking, because that type of progress has no future. It even uses as a yardstick of progress such things as the gross national product, which simply tots up the volume of goods billed without considering the real cash impact of that cash flow; does it bring greater happiness for a larger number of people or not? When we demolish whole mountains in Brazil to export iron ore and aluminum at dirt-cheap prices, the only thing our gross national product has to show for it is the foreign exchange income from the sale of those commodities; nothing in our balance sheet offsets the loss of the ore extracted from the mountain. We are poorer now than we were before. No one is keeping books of that account. Any

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industrialist or businessman who adopted the type of bookkeeping used by governments today would be bankrupt before he realized it. So we really have to review the basic precepts of our entire economic thinking. Today we say that we are producing oil, but since when have we produced oil? We are extracting oil, and we thin we are getting rich in the process. Am I richer when I withdraw money from my account at the bank and spend it? Am I making money? Of course not! Yes, we are going to have to take a closer look at a lot of things.

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In Latin America—where, despite everything, we still possess vast lands and enormous resources—it is time to think again and avoid the mistakes that have been and continue to be committed in the regions that are said to be developed but which, from many standpoints, I would consider to be poorly developed.

There is no future in a situation such as the one existing in the Netherlands. The entire planet cannot possibly attain their quality of life—the level of development and the squandered resources that are feasible only because they are working with *our* resources, the ones we sell them at rock-bottom prices.

We have a new government in Brazil today, a government whose philosophy is unlike that of its predecessor and various previous administrations. While we once viewed a vast wet tropical forest such as the Amazon region as merely a resource to be consumed, today we take a different view. Yes, we want development, but it must be defined in sharply different terms: development not confined to cash flows and the sale of materials, but a process calling for greater social justice, enhancing the well-being of a greater number of people, and producing a situation which is truly sustainable—one which can be maintained indefinitely and improves the commonwealth instead of consuming the environment. Unfortunately, almost all of the technologies we apply today entail degradation and depletion of natural resources.

More than 15 years ago (I was an environmentalist at the time), we were fighting a large-scale lake desalinization project at Laguna, in the State of Santa Catarina. Its plan was to close off the lakes to prevent the inflow of salt water, because fresh water was needed at the time for a steel plant. But more than 10,000 local shrimp fishermen complained that their means of existence would be destroyed. At that point one of the technocrats argued in the State Parliament: "But we have to consume nature in order to make money." (In Portuguese, the words even rhyme.) He went on to ask: "What is it that you people want? We are going to make money that anyone who wants shrimp can afford to buy it."

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If that represents our attitude, not a stone will be left standing. And when the last shrimp is gone, there will not be enough money to buy more; you may have all the money you want, but there will be no shrimp to sell.

We must reassess our attitudes. The present government of Brazil, for example, has completely changed its philosophy about the Amazon region. Today we want to preserve that area: it is important not only to us but, like all ecosystems, to the planet as well.

Present-day industrial society has an absurd view of things. It looks at the planet and all it sees is a storehouse of resources—raw material that is there to be used by our generation as quickly and efficiently as possible. We think that any of our shims entitles us to demolish mountains, forgetting that planet earth is a living system. Today we have a new concept of modern ecology, one based on hard and disciplined science: the Gaia concept, which views earth as a living being. In a living being or organism, the different organs cannot fight each other—they can only complement each other. My heart can only function within my body. If I cut it out, it becomes simply a piece of flesh that will rot, and the rest of my body will rot as well. Only when it is beating inside me does it have a reason for existing. We have to learn to view the planet earth once again as did the peoples that, in our arrogance based on ignorance, we termed primitive.

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The Indians, the Buddhists, and the black tribes of Africa had that global, holistic, unitary view of earth and believed they were part of a larger organism. We today—that is, the modern industrialized society of which we are (or want to be) a part—see nothing but resources. At worst, we see a sort of spaceship with ourselves as passengers, able to consume all that fills the chests and cupboards. But the world is a living organism that does not carry passengers. My heart is not my passenger—it is an integral part of my being, and I am an integral part of it. The plant outside, which produces the oxygen I consume, is an external organ of mine and just as important to me as my internal organs. And I am just as important to that plant as it is to me, because I produce the carbon dioxide it needs to survive.

So the industrialized society of today's world must set its sights on a new concept, a holistic view of social justice and sustainability of our achievements. Here in the Americas, both North and South, with our vast stretches of land and—despite all the damage we have wrought—with our wealth of resources, I believe that we can take a different stand, avoid the mistakes made by the so-called First World, and embark on a quest for sustainability.

People who know nothing about ecology tend to think that ecologists espouse absolute noninterference. We must not touch forests, we cannot cut down trees, and we should not meddle with anything. That is not the case. What ecology teaches us is that we should use nature the way human beings have always used it—in a sustainable fashion and by living on the interest accrued on our capital, not consuming the principal.

Until recently in Rio Grande do Sul, we had two different ways of utilizing nature: one was sustainable, the other was not. I use the past tense

advisedly, for the second method no longer exists. The sustainable way of utilizing our land was farming. The farmer lived on the proceeds of his stockraising. If he had a thousand head of cattle, he knew that he could not call more than 100 to 150 every year. He lived on the interest from his capital, which is why farmers have continued to farm for almost 300 years and will be able to do so indefinitely if they like.

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In Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Paraná, we had one of the planet's most fantastic woodlands, filled with araucaria evergreens. When I was a lad of 18, the forests were virtually untouched. Then the lumberjacks went into the woods—which they had not made and to whose existence they had contributed nothing—and demolished as much as they could. They sold the result at the lowest possible price, and that was the end of the forest. If the lumberjacks had treated the forest the way the farmers deal with their livestock, the result would have been very different. They would have realized that if the aim is to preserve that 200- or 500-year-old stand of pines, they could feel one out of every 500 trees a year and the forest would not be depleted—like some carefully managed forests in Finland and Germany that continue to flourish.

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But we have used the forest with a prospector's mentality. The prospector enters a world that does not belong to him, takes what he can, tramples and ravages everything, and then goes off to seek another world.

Unfortunately, our modern industrialized society by and large uses the same approach, consuming everything we can as quickly as possible. There is no future in that. So I call on those of us in the Organization of American States to rethink what we consider to be development and progress.

If progress and development are understood as nothing but an increase in the gross national product, expressed in terms of cash flow alone, it simply means demolishing more mountains, building more dams, moving every greater quantities of materials, and continuing our destruction of the bases of human life. That is not progress. Progress should mean heightened social justice, enhanced well-being for a larger number of individuals, increased sustainability, and greater integration of civilization with the majestic process of creation.

Note: This chapter was delivered in a slightly different form as an address by José Lutzemberger, Brazil's minister of the environment, to the special working group on environmental protection of the OAS at its November 15, 1990, meeting.

This is an important opportunity to inform the OAS about the environmental policy we are designing in Chile. One of my government's aims in that policy is to seek agreement and consensus. I believe that the OAS today has the ability and potential to serve as a common forum for achieving certain agreements and consensus, which are necessary as much in this field of the environment as in others in the international sphere.

There are three basic tasks that Chile is addressing. These have been entrusted by President Aylwin to the national Environmental Commission, which I chair as minister of national assets.

The first task is to design an environmental policy; the second is to draft an environmental code; and the third is to put forward an institutional proposal that will make our policy efficient and our environmental law effective.

Until now, Chile has had no environmental policy or code. Instead, we have a number of legal provisions scattered among the various parts of our legal system. Nor are there institutions that deal directly with the environment issue—so the overall picture is rather depressing and complicated, but it is also a challenge we are prepared to tackle.

The positive perspective shows us that starting from zero is perhaps an advantage: it enables us to develop an overall conception from the outset instead of struggling with an accumulation of disconnected and disorganized parts.

The purpose of my presentation is to explain what we are doing to design our national environmental policy.

We first agreed that our environmental policy must be based on clear principles. An environmental policy must have principles that delineate the framework of the policy. I will mention only some of the principles that seem to me to be the most important.

The first principle on which our environmental policy is based is very general and quasi philosophical, but it is enormously significant for the subsequent prospects of that policy, namely respect for nature. We are immersed in a civilization where nature has been subordinated by man, where

the relationship of man to nature, or, if you will, the relationship of society to land, is one of subordination. Nature is dominated; land is subordinated.

The relevant question here is whether it is possible to change or try to change that relationship. I realize, of course, that environmental policy in a country such as Chile cannot be scaled so pretentiously as to endeavor to make a real change in civilization. It is true that changing the relationship of man to nature and the relationship of society to land involves a change in civilization. However, on the eve of the twenty-first century, we must view this issue from that perspective and accept the challenge that humanity faces today to try to make that kind of change.

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For Chile, this is especially important. Chile is undergoing profound democratic reconstruction. I believe it is possible to consider today whether a democratic relationship can also be established between man and nature. This involves an outlook of solidarity by our generation toward future generations. We cannot exhaust available natural resources for our own development and leave without any support base those who will have the task of going forward after us.

A second guiding principle of our environmental policy is environmental conservation. here the challenge must be met by science and technology. Unlike the previous principle having to do with the ethics of cultural patterns, the principle of conservation is a challenge for scientific and technical development that we must place in the service of conservation. I am using conservation in the generally accepted sense of a rational equation between using and protecting resources.

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In Chile, we are betting, in the design of our environmental policy, that it is possible to find a scientific-technical equation that will harmonize utilization and protection of resources. Based on this principle, we have designed the Chilean government's position on resources treatment and use and on environmental protection in the Antarctic continent.

It is true that if one adopts the minerals exploitation systems used in the other continents, catastrophic effects may well occur in Antarctica. But we are absolutely convinced, assuming there is scientific and technological progress, that it will be possible in the next 40 to 50 years for humanity to design productive structures, forms, and systems that will properly protect the environment. It is not necessarily true that there is only one way to produce or only one direction to go in establishing the conditions for exploiting resources. We believe rather that it is possible, using scientific and technological development, to design different ways to exploit our resources. This is a progressive vision of humanity.

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Accordingly, I am especially interested in the proposal being studied by this commission to establish a center that will be able to collect information on everything being done in the scientific and technological fields in the Americas to achieve the conservation equation we require. There is a body of

knowledge that must be arranged and coordinated, and I believe that at this point, because of the challenges we face in protecting the environment, concentrating all of our scientific and technological knowledge for environmental protection in an inter-American center is very important.

A third principle that we are considering in our environmental policy is energy conservation.

We start from the assumption that it is impossible for the developing world to achieve the present per capita energy consumption of the developed world. We would have to exhaust all of the planet's energy reserves if we tried to provide our people in a few years with the level of energy consumption that the developed countries have today.

Accordingly, the obvious conclusion is that we must rationalize the use of our energy sources, introduce ways to save energy, and finally seek alternate energy sources. It is also necessary to consider something that is inherent in this principle. What is involved in the final analysis when we consider energy savings is that we must begin to keep our development accounts from the perspective of other dimensions. Our national accounts are able to determine how much it costs to produce, or what the actual yields are in using various resources to arrive at an end product. However, we do not yet know the cost of destroying what must be used as an input for production, nor do we know how much it costs today to recover exhausted ecosystems or the ecosystems at high risk. And the only way to find out the cost is by keeping an energy balance sheet.

The issue is quite controversial, and obviously must be discussed, but it would appear that today we can operate all of our productive machinery while using 40 percent less energy than is now consumed.

Everything that points toward energy savings is not merely a matter of conserving energy but of reducing production costs and the pressure on the renewable or nonrenewable natural resources that provide the energy we use today.

This principle points not only to the entire production apparatus, but also to very different environments that are extremely complex.

If we want to save energy we must adopt a wide range of initiatives, from changing our domestic habits individually and collectively to introducing systematic and widespread recycling in the productive processes in many industrial subsectors.

The principle of energy conservation therefore has extremely diverse ramifications, which in due course must also be managed institutionally and also legally.

A fourth principle underlying our environmental policy is the promotion of all activities involving improvement in the quality of life. I will not dwell on a subject that today is taken for granted by all our governments: the close relationship between poverty and environmental degradation. Unless we solve

the problems of large pockets of poverty, we will not be able to overcome the environmental problems that are increasing because of them.

We know perfectly well that poverty places pressure on the indiscriminate and irrational use of resources, and that there is no other alternative for the poor but to use resources in that way. They have no other way to survive, and it is impossible today even to consider other ways. However, if we are aware of the close relationship between poverty and environmental degradation, our environmental policy must encourage all efforts and programs to combat poverty.

Finally, another principle is that it is our responsibility to contribute as a country to overcoming worldwide environmental problems.

There is no need to look for the guilty ones. Looking for the guilty and pointing to the dimensions of their guilt is not what should guide our conduct. We should instead be able to establish a system of responsibilities where, in one way or another, contributions are rationally shared.

The only limit on the dimension of our responsibility is recognition by the industrialized countries of the North of their own responsibility in this area. If we adopt that perspective, the burdens can be shared responsibly by both. It is true that the contributions cannot be equal. But it is also true that the responsibilities are shared. And if we do not take that approach, I believe we are not going to be able to resolve the worldwide problems that objectively end up affecting all of us, even those who believe that the guilty must be sought out.

From that perspective, therefore, we are concerned that on the eve of the World conference on the Environment and Development to be held in Brazil, there is an atmosphere of tension and growing conflicts of interests between the countries of the North and the South. If we do not make an effort to overcome that tension, we will divide ourselves into the guilty and the victims and gain nothing, because we are all going to be affected equally by these problems.

Having discussed some of the principles of our environmental policy, I would like to mention a group of minimum instruments required to implement that policy.

The first instrument we need is an environmental authority; that is, there is a need to decide where the state apparatus should be located and what kind of attributes it should have. There is controversy about this in Chile, and I know that is true in other countries of the Americas also. One side says that, in view of the conceptual and theoretical nature of environmental problems—their presence everywhere and their extraordinary extension—only mechanisms for intersectoral or interinstitutional coordination can be considered.

If we compare this assertion with the need to give environmental officials executive power, we find that it contradicts the principle of

intersectoral coordination. There are no coordinating apparatuses that are actually capable of exercising authority. Their limit is precisely their definition. They are coordinating and not decisionmaking apparatuses. So in this dilemma, faced with the urgency and seriousness of environmental problems, it is better to give priority to having an authority with executive power, and, essentially, that means having ministries; the ministries are where the highest executive powers lie. I believe that if we require an instrument with authority, that instrument must be a ministry.

The second instrument our countries must have is environmental monitoring and information systems. There is no way to carry out effective environmental activities if they are not based on precise diagnoses. And to make those diagnoses, we must have environmental monitoring and information systems, which we do not have today. We must make specific efforts to gather data, which, in our countries, are scattered in statistical institutes, natural resource centers, or ministries. But the conceptual design of information suitable for environmental decisionmaking is different. It is a special design, using known technology, so we do not have to look very far to find it. Monitoring and information systems should ideally be shared among all countries. Information anarchy among the various countries could make any hemisphere-wide action program ineffective.

Accordingly, this instrument of environmental monitoring and information systems based on a common conceptual design becomes an elementary requirement at this time. A specific program aimed at the convergence of our information systems is needed. I believe we are in a position to standardize and unify our information systems to make effective hemisphere-wide policies.

The last instrument is extremely important. It involves measurement of the adverse effects all activities have on the environment. We lack environmental quality standards differentiated for the various subsectors of productive activities—standards that must be compatible with the development level of the productive and technological forces of our countries.

We have to make an especially great effort in Chile to design these standards conceptually and to create practical apparatuses capable of taking measures in each of the productive activities to see whether we are meeting those standards. Usually, we import conceptual designs or standards designed conceptually in other countries. Chile has been using the Environmental Protection Agency standards, and if they were to be applied rigorously, 70 to 80 percent of productive activities in Chile would have to be shut down.

Therefore, we need to establish standards appropriate to the development level of the productive and technological forces of our countries. But we also need an agreed-upon system of regulations that prevents unfair competition by price reductions or standards increases among the countries.

Today our countries are competing in international markets by selling

primary products requiring compliance with certain environmental quality standards, both in their productive systems and in the end product. We therefore need a system of conventions that do not take advantage of any gap there may be in environmental quality standards between countries. It is also worthwhile to make a collective effort through some of the specific programs that can be given impetus by the Organization of American States, because this is not primarily a technical problem; it is actually a political problem.

We have adopted in Chile the working method of seeking agreements and consensus among the various sectors. What we are doing today is coordinating the interests of private and public enterprises, government agencies, scientific societies, academies concerned with the environment, and, most importantly, citizens' organizations concerned with environmental issues. We are constantly seeking agreement and consensus among these four types of institutions: businesses, government, scientific and academic institutions, and citizen and social organizations.

The method is slow and gradual, but it produces an enormous yield, for all decisions are made with a maximum of legitimacy. Ensuring legitimacy for environmental problems requires that government decisions not be conceived exclusively by the executive branch or the authorities, but that they emerge from a national consensus.

Chile is a country that has experienced strong economic growth in recent years. However, from the perspective I must have as a minister dealing with environmental issues, I believe that growth must be achieved with proper protection and management of our natural resources. The only guarantee of future sustainable development is to make growth, social justice, and environmental protection compatible with one another. The democratic government of Chile is aiming in that direction, and I hope we will be successful.

Note: This chapter was delivered in a slightly different form as an address by Luis Alvarado, Chilean minister of national assets, to the special working group on the environment of the OAS at its meeting of November 26, 1990.

Colombian-born author Gabriel García Márquez, in describing the spreading wastelands of deforestation, wrote of how "fifty years of uncontrolled deforestation had destroyed [the Great Magdalena River Valley]: the boilers of the riverboats had consumed the thick forest; . . . the hunters of skins had exterminated the alligators; the parrots and monkeys had died out as the foliage was destroyed."

There can be no doubt our life-supporting biosphere will not withstand another fifty years—or even much less—of ecological devastation. Time is running out. In response, people and governments everywhere—and this region is certainly no exception—are calling for action to build environmentally sound and sustainable development.

As the recent IADP/UNDP report, *Our Own Agenda*, clearly argues, "On Earth, there can be no Third World." We share one single planet. Our planetary survival demands that governments pull together to confront not merely the symptoms of ecological destruction—from the threat of climate change and the proliferation of hazardous wastes to the destruction of tropical and temperate forests—but more importantly, their underlying economic and societal *causes*.

Indeed, the Brasilia Declaration cogently highlights the inseparable link between this region's economic and development crisis and its grave environmental problems. Poverty, unfair international economic conditions, and crippling debt are structural problems creating and strengthening the stranglehold of natural resource destruction and growing pollution.

Determination to forge collective solutions to shared economic and environmental problems has moved closer to reality; progress in crafting an effective, concrete regional action plan has been remarkable. Governments and multilateral and regional organizations—together with the core working group of ECLAC, Inter-American Development Bank, UNEP, and UNDP—have engaged in intensive consultations. We all have been united in our determination to ensure it is a plan developed by Latin American and Caribbean governments for the benefit of Latin American and Caribbean

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people, ^{the} action plan is based on the premise of international cooperation and a concrete commitment to global partnership. It endeavors to strike a balance between collective strategies and the sovereign right of each nation to freely manage its natural resources.

Such a plan is born of necessity. It is born of the urgent need to tackle escalating ecological problems—themselves born of unprecedented regional changes in agriculture, industry, transportation, energy consumption, and urbanization—all in a very short time. Many changes have ^{been} welcome. Impressive gains have been made in public health, education, and life expectancy, to name just a few. Too often, however, flawed development patterns have only deepened the development and environmental crisis. For example, an estimated 163 million people currently live in poverty in the region, of which 61 million are sentenced to extreme poverty. Real per capita Gross Domestic Product in many countries has fallen during what has been called the “lost decade” of development. Today, the problems of uneven economic distribution, hyper-inflation, lawlessness, swelling shantytowns, and tragic armies of homeless infants are just some of the prices of past mistakes.

Only recently have we clearly understood that flawed development is often the cause, not the cure, of resource mismanagement and ecological destruction. There is no need for a full rehearsal of all the environmental problems facing this region. You know them much better than I do. But you may agree ecological problems are overshadowed by deforestation and the ensuing loss of biological patrimony; the impact of environmental deterioration on human settlements; inappropriate land use; and the over-exploitation and pollution of marine resources.

I will first focus on tropical deforestation. *The Brazilian Secretariat of Science and Technology* estimates that from 1976 to 1989, the average rate of deforestation in the Amazonian region was 21,800 square kilometers per year. In 1989, the total deforested area was 394,000 square kilometers, and 93,000 of those were deforested before 1974.

Recent reports suggest global tropical deforestation may be twice as bad as previously estimated. Estimates indicate that as much as 1.5 acres of tropical forests are lost each second around the world. In this region, some estimates indicate that an area larger than Mexico has disappeared through burning and clearing in the last three decades. Estimates, however, vary widely. Thus a first priority action in this area is to intensify scientific monitoring and assessment of deforestation rates.

Resource destruction has—as you are fully aware—profound repercussions on future regional economic growth. One such repercussion is the accelerating extinction of the region’s biodiversity. Untapped, undiscovered plant and animal resources face extinction. The industrialized world will have to come back to this and other tropical regions of the world

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for plant breeding, new medicines, and the inevitable boom in biotechnology. Efforts must be redoubled to conserve these precious resources.

Effort is likewise needed to address the rapid rise in urbanization. Three of four people in the region currently live in urban areas. As always, it is the poor and the underprivileged who suffer most. Living in overcrowded shantytowns and slums, they suffer from unsanitary home and working conditions. They lack clean water and sewer systems. Hundreds of thousands of urban immigrants are drawn each year to overcrowded cities, unable to cope with spiralling hazardous wastes, acid rain, and airborne pollution. In Mexico City, deaths attributed to cancer, influenza, and pneumonia have risen six-fold since 1956. On a regional basis, an estimated 81 million people face serious urban air pollution, leading to 2.3 million cases of chronic respiratory illness among children and over 100,000 cases of chronic bronchitis among the elderly. Yet no statistic can convey the despair and suffering of people living in slums.

Such problems will only increase as "mega cities" of 30 million people or more spring up throughout the region in the next century. Political will is needed to create frameworks for sound urban planning and to improve the provision of land to the poor by, for example, granting security of tenure on illegally settled plots or providing cheap loans and serviced housing plots.

Another priority area concerns the use of land resources to enlarge agricultural frontiers. Modest gains in agricultural productivity over the recent years were largely fueled through excessive use of fertilizers and pesticides. The once exponential rise in crop yields is approaching a plateau because of limits of the "Green Revolution" and excessive use of agrochemicals that are prompting soil pollution and exhaustion. Experience shows that by reforming land practices, involving rural communities, and advancing agroforestry, mixed and traditional cropping, integrated pest management, and other approaches, agricultural yields can increase in a sustainable way.

Brazil's President Fernando Collor de Mello recently summed up this region's determination to environmental protection, by stating "On questions of ecology, we have made a fundamental commitment to life. We have nothing to hide and nothing to explain" (*Time*, July 1990).

This is the sort of commitment that leads us all into bringing forward meaningful, lasting solutions. And to do that we must address the economic and social forces creating environmental destruction and thereby jeopardizing the prospects of development and economic growth. I have already mentioned poverty, unfair international economic relations, and debt. There are other forces: uneven population growth, unsound agricultural practices, unplanned expansion of agricultural frontiers, the insatiable international demand for limited and precious natural resources such as high-grade tropical timbers, and inappropriate land tenure policies.

I am aware plans have been in place at the national and regional levels to combat deforestation and put the development of tropical forests on solid, sustainable grounds. More countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region have national forestry action plans than any other region of the world.

To address the socio-economic forces, progress is needed in economic reforms on at least two fronts:

The *first* front is on a national level. Despite serious efforts by national environmental departments, current fiscal and monetary policies—ranging from incentives to tax shelters—continue to encourage cattle ranchers, small-scale farmers, settlers, city developers, industrialists, and energy authorities to expand commercial operations at the expense of the environment and the national resource base.

Such economic policies are certainly not the monopoly of this region. Virtually all countries need to align fiscal, transportation, energy, trade, development, and other policies with environmental goals. Success probably depends on articulating environmental arguments to economic decisionmakers in their own language. This is an area where ECLAC, in cooperation with UNEP, has been pursuing a series of detailed studies, the results of which I hope will fully be used during the implementation of the agreed-upon regional action plan.

An extremely important factor in this economic equation is finding a realistic symmetry between the prices of goods and services and their real ecological and social costs. To date, governments do not provide industry and people with incentives *not* to destroy the environment, largely because conservation is still not viewed as a legitimate form of economic development. Immediate benefits are gained from turning jungles into pasture or razing a mangrove swamp for building materials. The full social and economic costs of such actions are transferred to society as a whole, concealed in national accounts and passed on to the next generation.

We have to expose the full social and ecological costs of destruction. Market forces simply have not provided sufficient incentives to promote environmental protection. Assessments of national wealth accommodate trees when they are cut, harvests when gathered, and fish when sold. But they cannot assess the value of intact forests, the soils on which crops are grown, and the mangroves, coral reefs, and other marine ecosystems that support marine life.

In short, most market economies perpetuate a system of *perverse* incentives, with scarce means to measure the direct value of healthy ecosystems, and even less to assess the indirect value of ecosystem functions such as watershed protection, photosynthesis, climate regulation, and soil fertility, and with even lesser means to assess the value of these natural resources to future generations.

That must change. To do so, some cherished ideas about the marketplace

must go by the board. Government intervention is required in order to provide economic incentives—equitably applied—to halt the over-exploitation of precious renewable natural resources.

Governments should reassess budget priorities to ensure that subsidies, infrastructure projects, energy pricing policies, and fiscal and trade policies actively promote environmental protection. And innovative revenue-generating mechanisms including green taxes, charges on so-called “free” natural resources like clean air and water, user fees, pricing adjustments, concessionary loans, and rebates need to be introduced. Such tools, while generating new public funds for environmental protection, also encourage behavioral changes by rewarding action toward environmental protection and by penalizing polluting enterprises.

The *second* economic front is on an international level. Of all economic problems facing the region, none is more ominous than the debt crisis. It continues to drain national treasuries, consume foreign exchange export earnings, and dash individual hopes for future growth and a better life. Interest payments of \$200 billion between 1982 and 1989 were too often financed by rapid exploitation of natural resources to meet crushing debt-servicing obligations. Even with such over-exploitation, scarce little remains to meet the growing costs of proper resource management and sustainable development.

This can neither be maintained nor continued. The case must be made for substantially increased debt write-off. There is nothing new in this; it has been a goal for some time.

We also need to build the case—as the Brasilia Declaration suggests—for concrete, objective, and automatic financial commitments, and for the provision of *new and additional* financial and other resources to promote environmental protection. This region has the political commitment, public support, skills, and traditions to save its environment. Additional financial resources and the transfer of proper technology is needed to be able to carry the task at hand.

Despite enormous obstacles, progress toward global partnership is being made. At UNEP's 1990 special session of the governing council, at the preparatory committee meeting for the UN conference on environment and development, and at numerous conferences and international meetings, the world community has voiced strong support for cooperative action. Too many economic roadblocks already exist without the environmental agenda becoming another.

There is evidence that governments will back up words with deeds. Four months ago in London, nearly 100 countries from north, south, east, and west created a Multilateral Ozone Fund of \$160 million over three years—to grow to \$240 million when other developing countries become parties to the Montreal Protocol. This fund—the first ever created to address a specific

global environmental problem—will assist developing countries in becoming full partners in protecting the ozone layer by acquiring CFC substitute chemicals and technologies without confronting more economic roadblocks.

Another step toward action is the World Bank's work with UNDP and UNEP to shape the modalities for a global environmental facility which would provide \$1 billion in special drawing rights for a three-year period to finance developing countries environmental efforts to save the ozone layer, address climate change, improve water development, and protect biodiversity.

Cooperation in the environmental field is not novel to this region. In fact, this is the first region to have organized—in the developing world—regional ministerial conferences to agree upon common actions to deal with common problems.

The Convention and Action Plan for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region is a pioneer among the regional seas activities in the world. That plan, and the Plan of Action for the South-East Pacific, have been highly successful regional strategies to address shared environmental problems. Both have worked to find the balance between urgently needed economic development and the protection and preservation of the marine environment.

And as *Our Own Agenda* argues, the Latin American and Caribbean region is contributing to the global debate on sustainable development. Solutions geared to the region are being forged—solutions that develop both environmental and economic resources and enshrine the principle of equitable growth.

Determination to define a course of development-sustainability that meets the needs and taps the wisdom of this region likewise underlines the approach which helped shape the proposed regional action plan. It is designed to integrate environmental considerations at the outset of development activities, whereby planners and economic policymakers regard ecological protection as an indispensable component of economic, social, and cultural development.

At the national level, the plan is geared to reinforce environmental administrations and institutions, including the development of environmental legislation and the broad-based participation of community groups, the private sector, and individuals.

At the regional level, the plan seeks cooperation in responding to regional and subregional problems of common concern by way of coordinating and enhancing regional scientific research, monitoring and assessment capabilities, and the exchange of data on natural resource endowment and management strategies, in order to avoid overlaps and unnecessary duplication of efforts.

The proposed plan is intended to complement—not replace—ongoing regional efforts. It is to strengthen such critical regional programs as

development and environmental planning; environmental legislation and institutional frameworks; environmental education; the protection and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage and of protected areas ;the environmental training network; and the action plan for the south-east Pacific and the Wider Caribbean Environment Program.

The plan also calls for new initiatives, including the creation and coordination of a regional environmental information service and specific means to promote technology transfer.

Sustainable fresh water management should also be a key goal of the action plan. This region is the largest repository of fresh water in the developing world, and the largest repository of international fresh water resources anywhere in the world. I proposed to the preparatory committee of UNCED at its Nairobi meeting that governments should consider supporting the design and implementation of a pilot project for the cooperative management of an international water course in Latin America. I suggest that this, together with other specific pilot projects for other regions of the world, be presented to UNCED, each identifying specific targets over specific periods of time, costing the required activities, and indicating from where the financial resources could come.

That proposal could be taken up within the action plan, together with regional strategies, to address global environmental problems of climate change, ozone layer depletion, conservation of biodiversity, and minimization of hazardous wastes. The problems of climate change and biodiversity are soon to be addressed in global treaties being drafted. Both will have important implications for this region. Popular views on them are of great importance in charting the path toward achieving meaningful treaties. The target date is Rio de Janeiro in 1992. But certainly that target should not be met at the expense of the substance and clear definition of the responsibilities of individual countries and groups of countries to global action.

To ensure the regional plan moves from ideas to results, experts have elaborated clear decisionmaking and administrative mechanisms, beginning with the regional ministerial meetings, to the regional intergovernmental committee, and five support and advisory committees—each with clearly delineated duties. To coordinate the implementation of the action plan, UNEP's regional office for Latin America and the Caribbean—if called upon—can act as the secretariat for that purpose. UNEP's support of the implementation of the action plan could be reflected in the 1992–1993 proposed program budget for consideration by the governing council in 1991. And if called upon to do so, UNEP can ensure that all UNEP-supported projects for the Latin American and Caribbean region will be required in the future to fall under the auspices of the action plan and according to the priorities set for its implementation.

This region is blessed beyond imagination with remarkable secrets of the

natural order. It is our moral and ethical duty to protect God's creation, to ensure we leave to our children a nourishing planet earth. That is the commitment to life and ecological protection I know we all share.

Note: This chapter was delivered in a slightly different form as an address by Mostafa K. Tolba, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, to the seventh ministerial meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean region, Port of Spain, October 22, 1990.

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Inter-American Program of Action for Environmental Protection

AG/RES. 1114 (XXI-0/91. Resolution adopted at the eleventh plenary session, held on June 8, 1991.)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

HAVING SEEN the report of the Permanent Council on the establishment of an inter-American system for nature conservation (AG/doc.2718/91);

CONSIDERING that the diverse dimensions of the ecological crisis call for renewed and more effective solidarity between the states at the subregional, regional, and world levels;

RECALLING:

That the Charter of the Organization of American States establishes in its preamble that the "historic mission of America is to offer to man a land of liberty and a favorable environment for the development of his personality and the realization of his just aspirations";

That, in Article 30, it provides that "inter-American cooperation for integral development is the common and joint responsibility of the Member States . . .";

That, in Article 29, it establishes that "the Member States, inspired by the principles of inter-American solidarity and cooperation, pledge themselves to a united effort to ensure international social justice in their relations and integral development for their peoples . . ."; and

That, in Article 37, it provides that "the Member States shall extend among themselves the benefits of science and technology . . ."; and

BEARING IN MIND the views expressed in the Declaration of Brazilia (Sixth Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1989); the Amazon Declaration (First Meeting of the Presidents of the Countries of the Amazon Region, 1989); the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito (Third Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the States Parties to the Treaty for Amazonian Cooperation, 1989); the Call to Action (Seventh Meeting of Ministers on the Environment for Latin America and the Caribbean, Trinidad and Tobago, 1990); the

Declaration of Puntarenas (Meeting of the Central American Presidents in Puntarenas, Costa Rica, 1991); the Tlatelolco Platform on Environment and Development (Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, Preparatory to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development—UNCED—Mexico, 1991); and other instruments signed by the OAS member states with international organizations outside the region on environmental matters,

RESOLVES:

1. To note with satisfaction the report presented by the Permanent Council on the establishment of an inter-American system for environmental protection.
2. To adopt the following Program of Action:

**INTER-AMERICAN PROGRAM OF ACTION
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

The member states of the Organization of American States, with a view to protecting and improving the environment, resolve to adopt as guidelines for pursuing the objectives of this Program of Action the principles of Article 3 of the Charter of the Organization of American States, those enshrined in the Declaration issued at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972), and those adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in preparation for the Conference on Environment and Development (Rio de Janeiro, 1992).

In accordance with those principles, the following objectives are adopted for the Inter-American Program of Action for Environmental Protection:

I. OBJECTIVES

- a. To use the OAS as a forum for a rational, constructive hemisphere-wide debate, free of recrimination, aimed at developing a specific regional approach in order to contribute to implementation of the proposals of global scope that environmental protection requires.
- b. To help derive maximum advantage from international sectoral efforts by identifying and addressing individually or collectively, as appropriate, the problems of conservation and protection of the environment in the Americas, for purposes that include dealing with abject poverty and its connection with environmental degradation.
- c. To promote OAS participation in agreeing upon a regional position

on other meetings and initiatives, whether regional or worldwide, on environmental protection.

d. To support the framing of ecologically balanced and culturally viable environmental policies that reconcile development, conservation, and the rational, sustained use of the environment and natural resources, including a policy on the transfer of nonpolluting technologies.

e. To promote cooperation among the member states for the provision of mutual technical and institutional assistance in the framing of policies, planning, implementing activities, surveillance, and exchanges of information, in order to maintain, restore, and improve the quality of the environment.

f. To promote cooperation and communication among the OAS member states on environmental problems, including technology transfer, the development of standardized terminology, the establishment of common criteria, and the implementation of joint projects for the defense of protected areas and for resource management and control.

g. To sponsor and support projects for the design and use of technologies that further environmental protection.

h. To promote the development and progressive codification of environmental law and to seek, insofar as possible, to harmonize such legislation among the countries of the hemisphere, to bring about sustainable development, bearing in mind the specific needs and characteristics of each country.

i. To promote cooperation among the member states to develop further the body of international law regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage caused by activities within the jurisdiction or control of such states to areas beyond their jurisdictions.

j. To cooperate in the study and identification of the possible effects on the environment of the illicit use and production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and traffic therein.

k. To promote in the inter-American sphere better knowledge and understanding of the region's environmental problems and of the advantages of an integrated conservation strategy.

l. To encourage the media to support regional and national efforts to create environmental awareness and better educate and inform people on the need to protect the environment in order to allow the full development of present and future generations in the Americas.

m. To promote the coordinated participation of nongovernmental organizations and those from other sectors of society in designing and implementing measures to protect and improve the environment and bring about sustainable development.

II. MEASURES DIRECTED AT THE MEMBER STATES

It is recommended that the member states adopted the following measures in order to achieve the objectives of this Program:

adopt

a. The adaptation, in exercise of the sovereignty of the states over its natural resources, of government institutions to enable them to coordinate, unify, and strengthen environmental management; in particular, consideration of the possibility of creating environmental ministries, agencies, or high-level national mechanisms on the environment to exercise general coordination, oversight, control, and monitoring of efforts to preserve and use in a sustainable way its environmental heritage.

b. Promotion of the responsible use of natural resources in the development of production activities that favor economic growth. In particular, promotion of efficient energy use and the use of renewable energy sources.

productive

c. Study of the possibility of revising national accounts in light of the experience of countries that keep national environmental accounts, so as to incorporate into them the impact produced by natural resource use.

d. In adopting standards on the environment and the preservation of ecosystems, avoidance, in accordance with the provisions of the GATT, of the imposition of nontariff barriers that could distort trade; also, measures to ensure that the addition of environmental standards and strategies in national planning does not place new types of conditions on development assistance or financing.

~~addition~~

e. In accordance with applicable law, requiring environmental impact studies in the planning of investment projects by private or public enterprises, whether domestic or foreign, to be completed before they materialize, so as to determine any significant adverse effect on the environment, on the health and welfare of the population, or on the national wealth of the country in question.

f. The study and preparation of integrated programs for the preservation and management of biodiversity, without prejudice to the sovereignty of states over their natural resources, the exploration of new mechanisms, such as monetary contributions from enterprises toward the conservation of the species which they use and which, until now, have been evaluated in a conventional way that disregards their value as an asset of the country that possesses that resource.

g. Promotion of policies that include, among other aspects, economic incentives for environmental protection.

h. Promotion of measures aimed at avoiding transborder pollution and at restricting and controlling the transboundary carriage of hazardous wastes and impeding their illegal transport.

i. Prevention of the indiscriminate discharge of toxic and hazardous

wastes into lakes, rivers, coastal waters, and oceans with the ensuing hazards to those areas, and increased efforts to check the phenomenon of acid rain.

j. Adoption, revision, or consolidation of national environmental laws, so that conservation and sustainable development are complementary, and the establishment of national mechanisms for prevention and for monitoring compliance with environmental laws.

k. The adoption of bilateral or multilateral agreements, as appropriate, for cross-border cooperation in environmental matters.

l. Encouragement of international cooperation and concerted action toward developing joint biotechnology programs that will contribute to preserving biological diversity and to generating high-value-added projects.

m. Recognition that it is their shared responsibility to protect the environment, and that the developed countries should support, in addition to existing programs, increased flows of capital and of nonpolluting technologies to the developing countries through international cooperation, in order to ensure their full participation in the international efforts to protect the environment and promote sustainable development.

III. MEASURES FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION

In order to assist the member states in regional cooperation to implement actions and adopt measures for the protection and improvement of the environment, it is recommended that the Permanent Council establish a Standing Committee through which the OAS might serve as an effective forum for proposing the Organization's environmental policy, and develop, coordinate, evaluate, and monitor the following measures, among others:

a. Compilation of indexes of information available on the natural resource base of the Americas, as well as of economic and physical indicators of the state of the environment.

b. Promotion of increased cooperation between the developed and developing countries of the hemisphere, and especially, the transfer to the latter of modern, environmentally sound technologies on terms that foster their wide dissemination without constituting an excessive economic burden on the developing countries; of particular importance are technologies that facilitate energy savings, especially in the transportation sector, as well as financing for those purposes, in order to replace technologies whose environmental consequences are more costly than their replacement.

c. Promotion of cooperation by the countries of the hemisphere in global efforts to deal with the effects of climatic changes and, under the Montreal Protocol, to reduce substances that deplete the ozone layer, and, in particular, the examination of possible joint hemispheric action to broaden

and strengthen that cooperation, with particular regard to the situation of the developing countries most severely affected by the depletion of the ozone layer.

d. Promotion of intergovernmental cooperation to support the sustainable management of the forestry ecosystems, including appropriate financial assistance and the transfer of technologies, as well as the formulation of integrated programs for the protection, rational use, and restoration of those ecosystems.

e. Encouragement for the design of regional policies on accident prevention and on the carriage and disposal of radioactive, toxic, and hazardous wastes or materials, in accordance with the applicable international legal instruments.

f. Collaboration with requesting member states in the development of their scientific research capabilities, preferably *in situ*, to enable them to manage their ecosystems more efficiently and strengthen processes for arriving at environmentally sound decisions.

g. Promotion of a greater environmental awareness as a dimension and omnipresent function of education, from an interdisciplinary standpoint, in the member states of the inter-American system.

h. Promotion of and support for manpower training in order to develop professional and technical personnel in scientific, technical, legal, administrative, economic, and educational aspects of conservation in the hemisphere.

i. Support for and promotion of the inclusion of environmental considerations in development planning and in the formulation of investment projects.

j. Provision of technical support and advisory services to requesting member states to assist in the conclusion of agreements and projects for environmental protection and improvement, drawing on funds that may become available from likely reductions of the external debt, for example, those envisaged in the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative.

k. Promotion of cooperation among member states in the management and use of natural resources in shared ecosystems, and the provision, at the request of interested member states, of advisory services and technical support for these purposes.

l. The provision of advisory services and technical support to requesting member states in the prevention, reduction, or avoidance of adverse effects from transboundary pollution, including the transboundary movement or discharge of hazardous wastes.

m. Promotion of the coordination of policies for the conservation of fishery resources in order to protect, in particular, ecosystems that are fragile and vulnerable.

n. Study of the economic consequences of the degradation of coastal

environments and the formulation of hemispheric cooperation strategies for the protection and restoration of marine, insular, and coastal ecosystems.

o. Collaboration with global, regional, and subregional efforts and programs concerning the seas, to conserve marine resources and protect the marine environment, including efforts and programs aimed at avoiding environmental pollution and the effects caused by hazardous and toxic wastes and radioactive substances coming from all sources, including those of nuclear origin.

p. Promotion of new hemisphere-wide projects for the creation and management of parks and reserves for the preservation of ecosystems, habitats, and natural monuments; consideration of new methods for evaluating the cultural, social and economic benefits of those areas with a view to making them more self-supporting.

q. Support for requesting member states in the formulation of projects to improve energy efficiency and the use of alternative energy resources, especially those that use renewable resources, and encouragement for international financial institutions to allocate more resources and establish special facilities for the expansion of investments for those purposes.

r. Request that the Inter-American Juridical Committee prepare reference indexes on the environmental legislation of the various countries, with the cooperation of the General Secretariat.

s. Promotion of the adoption within the region of agreements, conventions, and treaties for the conservation of ecosystems.

t. Promotion of the revision, in cooperation with the Inter-American Juridical Committee and the General Secretariat, of the 1940 Convention on Nature Protection and Wildlife Preservation in the Western Hemisphere by the introduction of new topics, such as the preservation of biodiversity; and study of the possibility of preparing an inter-American agreement for environmental conservation.

u. Promotion of the coordinated participation of nongovernmental organizations and other sectors of society in the regional effort to improve the environment and the quality of life in the region.

v. To promote, in coordination with CICAD, regional cooperation among the states in putting a stop to the possible adverse effects on the environment caused by the illicit use and production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and traffic therein, by means of procedures such as illegal-crop substitution, that are not harmful to humans or the environment and would permit the rehabilitation of affected areas and the ecologically sustainable socioeconomic development of the region.

w. Performance, in coordination with CICAD, IICA, PAHO, and the IDB, of a study of the effects that the illicit use and production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and traffic therein have on the

environment, and study and recommendation of ecologically safe methods for the storage and destruction of the chemical substances ^{used} in their manufacture and for the replacement and eventual eradication of illegal crops, with a view to the rehabilitation and development of the local communities and affected ecosystems in the regions.

x. Maintenance of ongoing coordination with the relevant United Nations agencies and global, regional, and subregional efforts aimed at environmental conservation. Especially, cooperation in the preparatory work of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992 and adaptation of the work of the Committee to any prospective results of that Conference; also, preparation, in coordination with the Executive Secretaries of CIECC and CIES, of an analytical document on the status of the environment in the Americas, for presentation to that United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development.

y. Performance of a study with a view to establishing an inter-American center for environmental studies to collaborate in academic research and hemispheric thinking on conservation of the environment, and presentation of that study to the Permanent Council for consideration at the twenty-second regular session of the General Assembly. This Center would engage in the following activities:

i. The conduct of seminars, encounters, and studies for the presentation and exchange of experiences in connection with studies and strategies for the treatment of conservation as a vehicle for integrated development in the hemisphere.

ii. The regular dissemination of salient developments in problems of conservation in the Americas, and in projects and measures newly adopted by the states for protection of the environment.

iii. Establishment of an academic periodical for the publication of articles, developments in research, and discussions that illustrate the salient proposals and currents of thought in the field of ecosystem conservation.

iv. The conduct of research on environmental problems with an inter-American dimension.

v. The promotion in particular of interdisciplinary studies on, among other subjects, models for development, economics and environment, technology transfers, and environmental conservation, and on the legal, ethical, and social implications of conservation of the environment and biodiversity in the hemisphere.

vi. Assistance in generating and the study of environmental statistics on the countries of the hemisphere, taking account of the work done by other institutions on the subject, for the ultimate purpose of harmonizing them and thereby strengthening national and international policies on ecosystem conservation; collaboration in the performance of

studies to facilitate the adoption of national environmental accounts in the countries of the region.

3. To establish an Inter-American Environment Day as part of a possible hemisphere-wide publicity campaign to foster environmental awareness, which would be entrusted to the Standing Committee of the Permanent Council and the General Secretariat, working in collaboration with the member states.

4. To allocate in the Organization's program-budget for the biennium 1992-1993, sufficient initial resources for the advancement of the Inter-American Program of Action for Environmental Protection.

5. To recommend to the Permanent Council that, in coordination with the General Secretariat, it seek financing from external sources for implementation of this program of action and, ~~to that end~~, ^{that} explore the possibility of creating an inter-American environmental fund or other alternative means of financing for environmental conservation and research in and the transfer of nonpolluting technologies, to be constituted with special contributions from the member states, the observer countries, other international agencies, and private sources.

6. To request that the bodies of the OAS, the Inter-American specialized organizations and the departments of the General Secretariat cooperate in the execution of this Program of Action.

7. To request that the Permanent Council, in collaboration with the General Secretariat, intensify cooperation and coordination between the operations of the Organization of American States in the area of environmental conservation and the initiatives of the appropriate United Nations agencies and subregional efforts for similar purposes, especially in relation to the plan of environmental action for Latin America and the Caribbean promoted by UNEP, the programs of the Permanent Committee of the South Pacific, and the preparatory work for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.

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APPENDIX 1: Selected Documents

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DECLARATION OF BRASILIA

The Ministers of State in charge of environmental management and the Representatives of the countries participating in the Sixth Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Brasilia from March 30 through 31, 1989, have decided to conclude their deliberations with the following

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DECLARATION OF BRASILIA

1. The countries of Latin America and the Caribbean recognize the imperative need to strike a balance between socioeconomic development and environmental protection and conservation through the proper management of natural resources and control of environmental impacts as a source of common concern to the countries of the region having the utmost priority. Such a recognition is a statement about the indissoluble relationship that exists between environmental affairs and socioeconomic development and about the obligation to ensure the rational exploitation of resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

2. The Ministers endorse the principle that each State has the sovereign right to administer freely its natural resources. This does not, however, exclude the need for international cooperation at the subregional, regional and world levels; rather, it reinforces it. The Ministers further emphasize that solving the external debt problem and establishing a new fair and equitable International Economic Order are essential conditions for securing democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean, promoting regional peace and security as well as sustained economic and social development, the only possible alternative for the rational use of our natural resources and meeting the needs of our peoples.

3. Improving economic and social conditions is the key to preventing the defacement of the environment in our countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean, as in other parts of the Third World, underdevelopment and the deterioration of the environment are factors in a vicious circle that condemns millions of people to a quality of life beneath the norms of human dignity.

4. The Ministers therefore resolve to step up efforts to further in their respective countries a greater understanding of the rightful relationships between economic development planning and environmental problems and concerns, and to consolidate and improve the effective national environmental management and planning capacity. However, the Ministers are of the opinion that current levels of economic development and growth rates severely curtail the likelihood of the proper environmental management and conservation objectives being met.

5. Further, this situation has been exacerbated by the severe

indebtedness of Latin America and the Caribbean vis-à-vis the financial community of the industrialized countries. The indebtedness crisis and the adjustment policies stemming from that crisis have eroded conditions for economic, social and environmental development. The debt cannot be paid under current conditions, not by increasing hunger and poverty among our peoples, not with further underdevelopment and the consequent defacement of our environment. Clearly, there must be a change in the current approach to the external debt and an immediate reversal brought about in the current process of the negative transfer of resources whereby the developing countries have become net exporters of capital to the developed countries.

6. The measures adopted by the countries of the region are important, but they are not enough to provide a fair, stable and lasting solution to the debt problem. Such a solution will only be possible if changes are made in the terms and conditions applying to treatment of the debt and if the creditors assume their share of the responsibility to solve together the problem of indebtedness and its consequences.

7. The international financial organizations must ensure, by means of specific financial facilities, that sufficient additional resources are made available, on concessionary terms, for the execution of environmental protection projects in the developing countries. In allocating resources for this purpose, conditions that will entail, in practice, a cut in available resources for environmental protection should not be imposed.

8. In light of the foregoing considerations, the Ministers are appealing to the industrialized countries, and particularly to those that share our concern about the effective management of the environment, to augment substantially the level of their technical and financial contributions to the developing countries and their effective support to the United Nations Environmental Program.

9. In this regard, it is imperative that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean enlist assistance, if and when they so request, in developing their scientific research capacity so that they may effectively manage their natural systems and strengthen national processes for making appropriate environmental decisions.

10. Furthermore, international cooperation for environmental protection should include free access to scientific information and to the nonprofit transfer of nonpollutant and environmental conservation technologies to the developing countries. Access to new environmental technologies cannot be subjugated to purely commercial interests. Besides, the international organizations should help the countries of the region to improve their monitoring systems and strengthen their capacity to meet international environmental protection standards they have adopted.

11. In this regard, an all-out effort must be made to increase natural area systems that are protected in the region, and to cease practices that are

highly inimical to the environment as, for example, transportation and the indiscriminate and illegal disposal of toxic substances and materials and the dumping of such substances in the oceans, which entail a risk to coastal areas, particularly those of the Caribbean islands.

5 12. The seriousness of the environmental problems facing the world today stem mainly from industrialization, consumer and disposal patterns in the developed countries, which are at the root of the rapid wear and tear on natural resources on the planet and the ever-increasing introduction of pollutants in the biosphere. The Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean are committed to a course of action that will be able to prevent a repetition of the mistakes of those development patterns and of their consequences in our countries, and we urge the industrialized countries to assume full responsibility commensurate with their financial and technological resources to reverse the process of defacement of the environment.

13. Countries that have nuclear and other types of arms for massive destruction must cease immediately all tests and experiments with such arms and actively promote their elimination. Only thus will it be possible to safeguard the environment and protect it from the risk of ecological pollution and destruction. The resources that are economized thereby should be funnelled to promote social and economic development, according to the provisions emanating from the meetings of the United Nations System.

14. Therefore, in addition to mobilizing domestic efforts to map out and implement national environmental protection and conservation plans, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are bent upon strengthening cooperation in this area and requesting technical and financial cooperation from countries in other regions and the international organizations. The Ministers of the Latin American and Caribbean countries are convinced that a global solution to our threatened planet is to be found in a level of cooperation, hitherto unprecedented, between the industrialized and the developing countries in aid of coming generations.

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THE AMAZON DECLARATION

The Presidents of the Member Countries of the Amazonian Co-operation Treaty, meeting in Manaus on May 6, 1989, for the purpose of undertaking a joint reflection on their common interests in the Amazon region and, in particular, on the future of co-operation for the development and protection of the rich heritage of their respective Amazon territories, adopted the following

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AMAZON DECLARATION

1. In the spirit of friendship and understanding that inspires our fraternal dialogue, we affirm our willingness to give full political impetus to the concerted efforts being undertaken by our Governments within the framework of the Amazonian Co-operation Treaty, signed on July 3, 1978; and also within the framework of their bi-lateral relations, with a view to promoting co-operation between our countries in all areas of common interest for the sustainable development of the Amazon region. Therefore, we commit ourselves to give the necessary impetus to the decisions contained in the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito, adopted by our Ministers of External Relations on March 7, 1989.

2. Conscious of the importance of protecting the cultural, economic and ecological heritage of our Amazon regions and of the necessity of using this potential to promote the economic and social development of our peoples, we reiterate that our Amazon heritage must be preserved through the rational use of the resources of the region, so that present and future generations may benefit from this legacy of nature.

3. We express our support for the recently-created Special Commissions for the Environment and Indigenous Affairs, aimed at fostering development, conserving the natural resources, the environment and the respective Amazonian populations, and we reiterate our full respect for the right of indigenous populations of the Amazonian region to have adopted all measures aimed at maintaining and preserving the integrity of these human groups, their cultures and their ecological habitats, subject to the exercise of the right which is inherent in the sovereignty of each State. Furthermore, we reiterate our support for actions aimed at strengthening the institutional structure of the Amazonian Co-operation Treaty, in accordance with the Declaration of San Francisco de Quito.

4. We reaffirm the sovereign right of each country to freely manage its natural resources, bearing in mind the need for promoting the economic and social development of its people and the adequate conservation of the environment. In the exercise of our sovereign responsibility to define the best ways of using and conserving this wealth and in addition to our national efforts and to the co-operation among our countries, we express our

willingness to accept co-operation from countries in other regions of the world, as well as from international organizations which might contribute to the implementation of national and regional projects and programmes which we decide to freely adopt without external impositions, in accordance with the priorities of our Governments.

5. We recognize that the defense of our environment requires the study of measures, both bi-lateral and regional, to prevent contamination-causing accidents and deal with their consequences once they have occurred.

6. We stress that the protection and conservation of the environment in the Region, one of the essential objectives of the Amazonian Co-operation Treaty to which each of our nations is firmly committed, cannot be achieved without improvement of the distressing social and economic conditions that oppress our peoples and that are aggravated by an increasingly adverse international context.

7. We denounce the grave conditions of the foreign debt and of its service which transform us into net exporters of capital to the creditor countries, at the cost of intolerable sacrifices for our peoples. We reiterate that the debt cannot be paid on the present conditions and in the present circumstances and that the problem of debt should be dealt with on the principle of co-responsibility, in terms that permit the reactivation of the process of economic growth and development in each of our countries, an essential condition for the protection, conservation, exploitation and rational utilization of our natural heritage.

8. We emphasize the need that the concerns expressed in the highly-developed countries in relation to the conservation of the Amazon environment be translated into measures of co-operation in the financial and technological fields. We call for the establishment of new resource flows in additional and concessional terms to projects oriented to environmental protection in our countries, including pure and applied scientific research, and object to attempts to impose conditionalities in the allocation of international resources for development. We expect the establishment of conditions to allow free access to scientific knowledge, clean technologies and technologies to be used in environmental protection and reject any attempts made to use legitimate ecological concerns to realize commercial profits. This approach is based above all on the fact that the principal causes for the deterioration of the environment on a world-wide scale are the patterns of industrialization and consumption as well as waste in the developed countries.

9. Conscious of the global risks for human life and environmental quality represented by the existence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and concerned with preserving our region from these dangers, we reaffirm the commitments our countries have made to use nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes and we urge the countries that

possess nuclear weapons to immediately cease the testing of such weapons and to promote the progressive elimination of their arsenals. Likewise, we repudiate the deposit of radioactive and other toxic wastes which may harm the ecosystems in the Amazonian region. We stress the need for appropriate measures to be taken to reduce the risks of environmental contamination in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Furthermore, we express our support for the aims and objectives of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America.

10. Convinced of the need to intensify the process of consultation and dialogue among our countries on all issues regarding the development of the Region, including those set forth in the Amazonian Co-operation Treaty, and certain that our co-operation strengthens integration and solidarity in Latin America, we affirm our decision to unite efforts in a vigorous and pioneering joint action, aimed at ensuring a future of peace, co-operation and prosperity for the nations of the Amazon region. Therefore, we are deciding to meet yearly.

José Sarney
for the Government of Brazil

Virgilio Barco
for the Government of Colombia

Rodrigo Borja
for the Government of Ecuador

Hugh Desmond Hoyte
for the Government of Guyana

G *Alan García Pérez*
for the Government of Peru

Ramsewak Shankar
for the Government of Suriname

Carlos Andrés Pérez
for the Government of Venezuela

Valentin Abecia Baldivieso
for the Government of Bolivia

(Government, then
name)

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