

*Environmental Challenges of the 1990s*  
*Our Responsibility*  
*Toward Future Generations*

*GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND*

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GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND, Prime Minister of Norway in 1981 and again from 1986 to 1991, holds both an M.D. and an M.P.H. degree. Her long record of involvement in politics has included several ministerial positions and an established leadership in the Labour party in Norway. She is well known for her work on environmental issues, for which she earned a seat on the UN World Committee on Environment and Development, and received the Third World Prize for Work on Environmental Issues in 1989. Her publications include articles on preventive medicine, school health, and growth studies.

Throughout human history, a sense of responsibility for the future of our own children and grandchildren has always been an inherent part of human nature. The next generation has represented hope, continuity, and progress. Each generation has taken pride in leaving a heritage which the next could use to advance society.

This was possible for many in earlier generations. The future appeared stable and predictable. At the beginning of this century, human numbers were too small and human technology not powerful enough to alter planetary systems radically. It was not until we gained access to vast energy resources that we acquired the power to destroy the biosphere.

As this century draws to a close, a greatly increased human population and its activities have that power, and the results are showing. People have altered the earth, and the altered earth has changed people's lives to an unprecedented degree.

The future no longer appears either stable or predictable. We do not know what life will be like for the next generations.

We all recognize the signs of the global crisis now approaching. Global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, continued population growth, massive loss of species and biological diversity, acceleration of deforestation and desertification — these are all threats which will soon lead to breakdowns in vital support systems for life on earth.

These trends must be reversed. No more scientific evidence is needed to reach that conclusion. Our foremost responsibility toward future generations is to ensure that there will be a future world worth living in. The future generations are knocking at our door today. The living conditions of our children and grandchildren will be determined now. Since they cannot take care of their own destiny, we must do so on their behalf.

We have but a very short time to design and implement the necessary changes in our attitudes, behavior, and policies. The changes we make—or fail to make—will have a decisive influence on the survival of life on earth.

Taking command of our common future will be a formidable task. The challenges caused by the increasing interlinkages between issues and by global interdependence are becoming such that we no more can deal with the issues one by one, as has been our traditional habit.

At present world attention is focused on the crisis in the Persian/Arabian Gulf. Leaders all over the world are preoccupied with the war. People are uncertain and afraid. At the same time twenty million people are facing starvation in Africa. These are different crises requiring different remedies, but they both touch upon our responsibility for future generations. Giving priority to one immediate challenge must not lead us to neglect the others. Long-term problems are also urgent.

When we entered the 1990s we did so against a background of positive, radical changes as former adversaries moved away from confrontation toward cooperation. Democracy was gaining ground not only in Europe but also in other parts of the world. There was a new belief in our ability to cooperate on common goals and aspirations, a new belief in respect for human rights and international law.

Iraq's brutal invasion of Kuwait last August and its persistent refusal to abide by the decisions of the United Nations Security Council to withdraw immediately and unconditionally from that country were serious setbacks. It is a tragedy, and a cause for serious concern, that it has been necessary to use force, as authorized by the United Nations, to expel Iraq from Kuwait. All countries are under an obligation to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council. Those countries which are not themselves directly involved in the conflict, such as my own, must render appropriate support.

In Norway, we are doing so in fields where we have expertise and tradition. Our efforts are aimed at minimizing human suffering and protecting the environment. We have responded positively to a wide range of needs, including a British request to send a mobile hospital to Saudi Arabia, and we will provide transport for wounded personnel from the area to Europe. Let me express the sincere hope that those sons and daughters of British families who are now in the Gulf will return safely, and that they will do so soon.

The objective of the present conflict is to restore the independence of Kuwait. This is not a war against the Iraqi people or against the territorial integrity of Iraq. The objective must be accomplished with a minimum of loss and human suffering.

The Middle East will need a period of healing and a new basis for future cooperation, based on the three priority issues I proposed to the United Nations in 1987 as chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development: peace, environment, and development. Stability in the Middle East must be based on a system which takes all legitimate interests into account. Our European experience demonstrates that economic integration and interdependence is the best insurance policy against renewed confrontation.

I want to make one particular point about the war in the Gulf before returning to the challenges of peace. How could we in the industrialized countries, we who are so determined to reduce offensive capabilities in Europe, allow the enormous build-up of Iraqi power? Governments and the private sector alike are responsible. Governments have failed to establish the necessary national and international rules, control, and surveillance, and the private sector has exploited this vacuum in pursuit of profit,

We must never again allow such dictators to arm for war. We need new treaty obligations which can control and verify trade in arms. The Security Council and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) countries have a particular responsibility to give this issue top priority. The enormous destructive

power of modern weapons also makes it vitally necessary to strengthen our methods of conflict management and crisis control, short of the use of force.

In Iraq we have to deal with a leader whose ruthlessness knows no bounds and who has subjected far more than just his own population to tremendous sacrifice. His treatment of prisoners of war challenges the fundamental humanitarian provisions set out in the Geneva Conventions. The environment itself has become a victim. Vast, deliberate oil spills have led to an ecological catastrophe in the waters and on the shores of the Gulf. Fires from burning oil wells add to the accumulation of soot and climate gases in the world's atmosphere. The president of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), my friend and fellow World Commissioner Sir Shridath Ramphal of Guyana has expressed his fear that nature is being made a major hapless victim of war.

When the discussions on postwar arrangements in the Gulf area begin, the question of an environmental strategy to redress ecological damage caused by the war should also be high on the agenda. We must do our utmost to ensure that the world community emerges from this conflict with a deepened commitment to the rule of law in all aspects of international relations. We must ensure that the principles of international law which have justified the current operation are systematically applied in the future.

In the Third World there is now growing anxiety that the Gulf war will also have a dangerous impact on development, and that the costs of the operation and the ensuing disruption in the world economy will make it even harder to find the additional resources needed to put sustainable development on its own feet in the South. In Africa the specter of famine is again appearing in several countries while the eyes of the world are turned elsewhere.

Through satellites and cables we receive fragmented images from all over the world, twenty-four hours a day. Complexity is reduced to disconnected simplicity. One day of multimedia information comes close to what Umberto Eco calls a journey in hyper-

reality. But decision makers must not be blinded by the immediate. We must adopt a longer-term view and never forget what it takes to promote change: in-depth knowledge, a firm commitment, and a clear vision of where we are headed.

Does the fact that leaders all over the world are preoccupied with a war mean that we have to change the agenda for the 1990s? Should we postpone dealing with all those other vital issues which will determine the future of humankind far into the next century?

No. Far from it. The hostilities in the Gulf will come to an end. It is essential that we do not lose sight of the objective of long-term management, even in times of crisis. We must reverse the dangerous trends which threaten the human environment. We must use resources without overusing them. And we must ensure that our children and grandchildren can realize their aspirations and ambitions.

In the course of the 1980s sustainable development became firmly anchored on the international agenda. We now know that ecology and economy are inextricably linked, and that environmental degradation can be reversed only by restructuring the economic system which has led us into the present crisis.

To reverse the current decline, we must integrate environmental concerns into all levels of economic planning, performance, and accounting. A truly effective strategy for change must be based on a cradle-to-grave approach, from scientific exploration and technological innovation, through the cycles of production and consumption, to emissions control and waste disposal.

Most important of all, a strategy for global change must deal squarely with the issue of world poverty, which is both a cause and an effect of global ecological decline. There is no way that we can win the battle to save our global environment unless we mount a full-scale, committed offensive against poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World.

Better and more sustainable management of global change remains a prime political task for the 1990s. It will require leader-

ship and long-term perspectives in political decision making. The task cannot be achieved by top-down processes alone. It must have its basis in the grass roots of our communities, in the minds and priorities of the individual citizen and voter, and in the network of interest groups and nongovernmental organizations which are an essential part of our pluralistic societies.

The reversal of the current dangerous trends is an ethical challenge of new dimensions. The transition to sustainable development touches on core issues of our societies. It concerns basic values and moral codes for human behavior, attitudes, and concern for our fellow human beings, for nature itself, and for future generations.

In situations where survival is at stake, there will be overwhelming pressure to satisfy the immediate needs of the present. The World Commission's definition of sustainable development — our prescription for global change — is based on that reality. We view sustainable development as a process of change which can satisfy the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet and to satisfy their needs.

To engage all humankind in the efforts to save our global environment — and nothing less will do — we must also ensure that all peoples have an opportunity to satisfy basic needs without inflicting further damage on their own environment. This is clearly possible in today's world, but it requires broad political action for sustainable progress and human survival. We must begin now to ensure better management of natural and human resources.

Today, we see many encouraging signs that these concerns for the environment are being reintegrated in our value systems. A potentially powerful coalition is developing, encompassing a wide variety of ideological and intellectual approaches. As modern research increases our understanding of the effects of man's relationship with nature, more and more individuals reach the conclusion that academic interest alone is no longer enough, that the findings require action, and that our only chance for survival is to change our current behavior before it is too late.



An obvious approach is based on human solidarity. The sense of social responsibility for the poor and underprivileged has always been a strong element in the political debate. Many now realize that poverty is a threat to the rights of the child, to equality of women's rights, and to the vitality of nations and the social order. Today, there is increased awareness that this sense of responsibility must be extended to cover the interests of future generations.

We have also seen the growth of religious or spiritual approaches to global environment issues. In Christian thinking, we see a new focus on the need to protect the work of creation. We see ecumenical initiatives to bring representatives of all the major faiths in the world together to work out a shared global vision and to bring together political and spiritual leaders to formulate it.

Many different voices are taking part, but not all of them are singing in harmony. The value systems underpinning this new environmental concern are as varied as the fragmented reality that constitutes the world society of today. Through this diversity of voices, I believe an important message is emerging. The fact is that our planet is in danger; we have to act now to save it, and we can only succeed if we act together. In many indigenous cultures, the need to protect the earth is still a basic element of their faith.

From these many roots, from the cultures of science, faith, and ideologies, a new global environment ethic may be in the process of being born. There has been an amazing change in public awareness and in the political attention given to environmental problems in the four years since the World Commission on Environment and Development issued its report.

More and more groups and individuals now accept the need for a new code of behavior defining basic principles for humankind's relationship to nature and the environment. A growing number of professional groups are revising their ethical norms to include principles reflecting environmental concerns. Scientists

have become more aware of the social and environmental responsibilities which follow from their work and are discussing a new scientific ethic.

In industry, major ecological accidents such as the grounding of the *Exxon Valdez* have led to the elaboration of a new set of principles for corporate behavior toward the environment. This is now being expanded on a more global scale in the efforts by the International Chamber of Commerce to draw up a Business Charter for Sustainable Development, which will incorporate principles of environmental management for industry and business.

We need to convey determination and belief that individual and collective efforts really matter, that we can succeed in reversing even deep-rooted negative trends if we put our hearts and minds to it. If we prophesy only doom, people will have no incentive to change. If we signal that the task is almost hopeless, we will foster environmental nihilism, rather than stimulate a new global ethic. Still, there is a reason to express deep concern on one important account. *The development dimension* tends to be neglected or given insufficient attention in most discussions on environmental ethics.

A comprehensive environmental ethic cannot only include principles addressed to humankind's relationship to nature in our own half of the world, principles which can be afforded or implemented only by countries or groups in the industrialized world. A truly global ethic must give prime consideration to the need to achieve sustainable development in the South, where the vast majority of the members of future generations will be born. The achievement of a livable global environment depends on the sustainable development of the entire human family.

To eradicate world poverty is in itself one of our most important ethical goals, but it is also an essential ingredient in the establishment of a new global ethic to save our common future. On this crucial issue, there has been very little progress during the last few years. A large number of the least-developed countries

are still experiencing negative per capita growth. Their struggle to ensure even the most basic of human needs for their citizens is becoming more difficult with each passing year.

The development of a global economy, which has brought wealth and affluence to the industrialized countries, has left large parts of the Third World behind. The total number of people living in absolute poverty, most of them in the South, is increasing every day. We all know the results: rapid urbanization, high population growth, and increasing pressure on the earth's finite resources.

Many of our most pressing environmental problems, including resource depletion and finance burden sharing, concern the question of how to apportion natural resources on our planet, both within and among generations. Again, it is not enough to agree on how we should behave as individuals or groups on environmental issues. We must move beyond that.

The next logical step in our efforts to establish a global environmental ethic is to address how we should *distribute* environmental quality, how we should split the benefits of natural resources, and how we should share the burdens of reversing past mistakes, among nations and individuals. This is a question of justice, equity, and equal opportunity.

Today, the countries of the South clearly recognize the environmental hazards inherent in current development patterns. They have repeatedly stated their willingness to contribute their share to the global efforts now needed. I was very encouraged to read the report of the South Commission, which stressed the importance of self-reliance and of the mobilization of indigenous systems of agriculture and industry.

We have now begun the hard task of integrating the principles of sustainability into the way we run our societies — from the level of the individual to the level of international decision making. Statements from all over the world are clear as regards the willingness to act, but there is considerable confusion about what to do, who should do it, and when. We face considerable dif-

difficulties when we try to translate words into decisions and action.

We need solutions that will work. We need political leadership and we need public support. Change depends on whether or not our democracies are able to produce forward-looking decisions. The truth is that in order to make decisions which will improve the environment, governments depend upon an environmental movement in the population that is strong enough to support even the most difficult decisions. Extreme solutions will not do. Draconian measures will not be easily accepted by our peoples. All political decisions must, in fact, be supported by, or have the potential support of, the majority of the people. Only then can truly effective change come about.

We are prepared to express our firm support for a global climate convention. Most people will support this. But are we as individuals willing to reduce our use of private cars? We are prepared to support giant clean-up operations in the North Sea, but are we prepared to change to different detergents? We are prepared to call for increased efforts to counter acidification, but are we prepared to accept that our local, technologically outdated factories must be closed down?

Democracy is essential, and it is a precondition for environmental change. In the end, we must all recognize that the basic values of our societies are the very foundation for political action. Past experience demonstrates how difficult it is to implement political decisions which have a long-term perspective. Democratically elected governments tend to have an urge to remain in power, even after the next election.

When I was Minister of the Environment in Norway in the 1970s, I was deeply engaged in an issue which involved the governments of Norway, the United Kingdom, and other countries: the problem of acidification. Scientists in Norway had come to the conclusion that acidification of Norwegian soil and waters was due to sulfur emissions outside Norway, including those originating in the United Kingdom. Only through close cooperation between

scientists and governments were we finally able to convince European governments of the root of the problem. This eventually led to European agreements on transboundary air pollution. Still, the road to the implementation of that goal was and is paved with obstacles from science, governments, and people with an interest in maintaining existing patterns. Clearly, the necessary decisions were difficult in those countries where most of the pollution originated.

Such difficulty is often true of change. The World Commission believed that change was not only necessary but also possible. Its report was therefore not a prophecy of doom but indeed a positive vision for the future.

Never before have our knowledge and capacity to address vital challenges been greater. Science thus holds the key to change if it can put its knowledge and research to use for environmental protection. As I am speaking to representatives of that segment of the population which are keepers, explorers, and developers of this human knowledge, my appeal to you is to engage in democratic decision making.

Science, like art, is a listening post at the outer edges of human perception. But science cannot work in isolation. For science to make a maximum impact on the societies of tomorrow it must interact with politics and democratic debate, and it must be geared toward defined needs.

Isaac Newton, whose name is forever linked with the University of Cambridge, said that he felt like a little boy looking for pebbles and shells in the sand while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before him. We have taken to sea on that great ocean, but we shall not drift at random. Democratically elected politicians must have a clear vision of where to go and a firm grip on the rudder. Science must deliver navigational information and the crew must be convinced that their contribution and support are essential if the voyage is to be successful.

Thus it is the responsibility of the men and women of science to take an active part in shaping and directing our common future.

To make full use of human knowledge, we need a better interplay among science, politics, and public opinion. Science cannot confine itself to games in an ivory tower. Scientists must sit down with the politicians. The doors of laboratories and studies must be opened up for a real, in-depth dialogue between science and politics. Scientists and politicians must convey what is possible and point out how we can chart the unknown.

The dispersal of information is in fact a fundamental aspect of democracy. Democracy is not confined to participation in decision making. Democracy is also about the right to know, to be informed, and to be able to make informed choices based on the best available facts and assessments.

If we succeed in forging this alliance between science and politics, we can make the necessary changes and offer concrete solutions. Let me address some of the policy issues that will be central on our agenda in the 1990s.

*First, awareness raising and public participation are vital for change.* We need a strong public opinion to keep democratic pressure on political decision making alive. We need a knowledgeable, impatient, and action-oriented coalition for our common future to keep alive the call that we have to act, and act more urgently, to meet the current crisis. We cannot allow public interest in environmental issues to be a passing fad, to let it slip away from our political agenda in the same way as it did for many years after the 1972 United Nations Conference on Environment in Stockholm.

As a follow-up to recommendations of the Bergen Conference on Action for a Common Future held in May 1990, Norway and the Netherlands have taken the initiative to convene a group of experts to discuss the elaboration of a Charter on Environmental Rights and Obligations. A first draft adopted in Oslo in late October contains fundamental principles both concerning the individual's *rights* to an environment adequate for his general health and well-being, and concerning the individual's *responsibility* to protect and conserve the environment for the benefit of present and

future generations. The intention is for such a charter to be adopted by the countries in the ECE region during 1992. Such a charter could also be envisaged at the global level within the United Nations.

*Second, irreversible, global and transgenerational issues must be given top priority.* During the preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil, the world community will negotiate new legal instruments and measures to stop the loss of biological diversity and to halt the pace of climate change. These are among the most urgent and pressing environmental and developmental problems facing us. Because of the severe impact they may have on living conditions for generations to come, they also have profound ethical implications.

In our time, plant and animal species have become extinct at a rate never before witnessed in human history. From 5 to 15 percent of the world species could disappear in the next thirty years, primarily in the tropics. This is an irreversible loss of global resources. It means that generations coming after us will have much less variety and variability in life forms on earth.

Climate change is probably the most difficult issue we have ever faced. It is not merely a pollution problem. It is part of the very essence of life-style and consumption patterns on a global scale. The problem goes to the core of the North-South gap. It is a fundamental part of the economic life and industrial level of states. The greenhouse effect is real. We cannot deal with it without addressing the problem of carbon dioxide (CO) emissions. In Norway we are committed to our national reduction targets. Those who are now trying to avoid the issues must rethink their policy.

*Third, cost-effective measures must be the core of a new generation of environmental agreements.* The World Commission pointed to the sharp contrast between the integrated, interdependent nature of the new challenges facing us and the nature of the institutions we have set up to deal with them. Our responses have

tended to be fragmented and limited to narrow mandates with closed decision-making processes.

The preparation for the Brazil Conference is therefore a demanding task. We must deal not only with specific problem areas in order to come up with concrete solutions but also with links between the global problems. We must deal with the sources of emissions in the same context as we deal with the capacity of nature to absorb them. This approach would allow us to reach agreements based on a more equitable sharing of burdens. A comprehensive approach would also permit us to be more cost-effective in our choice of responses.

Optimal results cannot be achieved with today's environmental agreements. The marginal costs of reducing emissions vary greatly from country to country, yet we have continued to adopt agreements based on the simple notion of equal percentage reductions, regardless of how this affects total costs or — even more important — overall results. Through such approaches, we have in fact encouraged smaller reductions than would have been possible if we had based our agreements on the principle of cost efficiency. Percentage reductions have provided a license to pollute *up to* a certain level for many countries which could and should have performed much better.

In *a new generation of environmental agreements*, we must seek maximum environmental benefit at minimum cost. In Europe, we now have a unique opportunity to improve results through a regional approach. We could drastically reduce the export of long-range pollutants by environmental investments in Eastern Europe, where the marginal costs of reductions are quite low, improving both our national and European environments much more than if we scattered our investments in countries with low pollution and higher marginal costs. We will all benefit if we start our reductions where they cost least.

At the global level, some indication of the difference in costs can be seen by comparing emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> per unit produced.



Japan is responsible for 14 percent of the world's gross national product but only for 5 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. China is responsible for only 2 percent of the world's national product but for as much as 9 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

All countries must commit themselves to appropriate efforts to combat global warming. Equity and efficiency must be combined in order to achieve optimal results which are acceptable to all parties concerned.

Among the greenhouse gases, CO<sub>2</sub> is the most important and the most difficult to deal with, but deal with it we must. I believe we should develop agreements on the use of both international CO<sub>2</sub> charges and tradable CO<sub>2</sub> quotas.

We can establish a global ceiling for emissions. Each country or region may then reduce emissions according to an emission quota within this global ceiling, which could subsequently be lowered.

Countries or regions could then choose to use their quotas, or to trade them. Countries where the costs of reducing emissions are high could buy quotas from countries where such costs are low. Economists suggest — and I believe they are right — that both the country which receives and the country which sells emission rights will gain by such agreements.

*Fourth, international cooperation to harmonize the use of economic instruments should be intensified.*

We must make better use of the market to give us a cleaner environment, more quickly and at less cost. I am convinced that much can be done by combining the effects of standards, emissions limits, and new economic instruments.

Left to itself, the market is a very inadequate instrument for environmental management. In our present economic system, market prices do not reflect the true environmental costs of exploitation, production, consumption, and waste management.

We need to internalize environmental costs in all aspects of economic management. We have made limited progress in this

field in dealing with the problems of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and hazardous wastes. We need to do much more, especially in the fields of energy and energy conservation.

More active use of economic instruments to benefit the environment will require an international harmonization of rules and regulations to avoid distortions of international trade relationships. This will be particularly important when we start discussions on greater use of environmental taxes to reduce energy-related emissions, for example of CO<sub>2</sub>. When we move further in this direction we will learn that real change in economics and politics is what counts. Economic incentives may prove just as controversial as regulations precisely because they are aimed at changing the patterns of production and consumption. If a politician in one country is to succeed in promoting such changes, we need politicians in other countries working for the same goal.

*Fifth, additional resources to developing countries will continue to be a precondition for progress.*

In our efforts to save the global environment, a special responsibility lies with the industrialized countries. The wealth accumulated in the industrialized countries is based on a long process of growth during which environmental concerns were given little or no attention. Our economies have been built on cheap and abundant fuel, and we have been using it as if there were no tomorrow. We have drawn upon the natural capital left to us by our forefathers, we have paid little or none of the true environmental costs of our growth, and we have passed most of the bill on to the generations coming after us.

Seventy percent of all emissions of greenhouse gases which accelerate global warming come from the countries of the North. We have used the world's atmosphere, oceans, and soil as a free wastebasket for much too long. This wastebasket is now almost full, and we have no chance, indeed, no moral right, to tell the developing world that it must stop using that basket because we have already filled it. The industrialized countries must therefore

assume the main burden of reducing the global level of emissions. This means that we must increase our technological and financial assistance to Third World countries to enable them to take part in the global effort. True additionality is necessary. If this is rejected, the whole global consensus will be at stake.

As a contribution to the global effort now needed, my government has established a separate climate fund of NOK 75 million for 1991, to be used for international measures which can assist developing countries in adopting measures which would halt climate change. These funds are separate from and come in addition to our ordinary budget for development cooperation, which is already the highest among the countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), amounting to more than 1 percent of our gross domestic product per year.

For a number of years, Norway has made a considerable effort to target its aid to the poorest parts of the population in many countries. In recent years, we have tried to strengthen the environmental dimension of our aid programs even more. I am pleased, therefore, that this year's State of the World report from the Worldwatch Institute depicts Norway as the world leader in development assistance and points to us as a model. "If the world as a whole had the priorities reflected in Norway's aid budget," says Worldwatch, "Third World environmental reforms would be much further along." I want to make this policy far better known, because it will make a real difference only when larger and more influential countries are also ready to act in accordance with internationally agreed policies and targets for development.

*Sixth, we must strengthen our international institutions to make them more effective in finding solutions to environmental problems.*

We need stronger international authority to make decisions which are binding for member states, even in cases where not all nations agree. This means that nation-states must increasingly be willing to transfer formal decision making to international au-

thority in order to regain political control over processes already outside the control of the individual state. It serves little purpose to talk about sovereignty when effective sovereignty was in reality lost a long time ago.

The concept of the nation-state, which has been the building block in our system of international organization during this century, is very much a part of the process of global change today. In an age of rapidly growing global interdependence, the traditional nation-state is increasingly unable to tackle the challenges of modern civilization alone. Unprecedented, profound, and continual technological change has created new and as yet unresolved problems of governance, both nationally and internationally.

The political leaders of our time have their political base in the nation-states. They are dependent on the attitudes and perspectives which can be shared in a democratic sense with their own nation. Although these perspectives will have to cross national barriers, they are still dependent on a basis in national policy. This is a great dilemma which we must help each other to solve.

It has been said that we are the first generation which really has the ability to change the course of world development, and that we may be the last to have the possibility of doing so. That is why our generation has a unique responsibility and opportunity to manage global change, and to do so in time. With the increasing pace of development and technological change, we see a growing gap between our perceived needs of the present and the real needs of the future. How can we best help democracy today to take account of the interests of tomorrow? How can we best help democracy to see the future? And let me repeat — we have no alternative to democracy.

How can we chart a new course on behalf of our children, and do so in time? To build bridges from the generally perceived reality of today to the future, we must all assume the challenge of creating sustainable development patterns, based on knowledge, foresight, and shared responsibility.

Democracy is also the only acceptable principle and practice for international decision making. In an interdependent world we have to raise democracy to the international level. As Sonny Ramphal has said, "Those who are for democracy locally and nationally must also be its champions internationally, for its values and principles are indivisible."