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Plenary a.m.

Address by
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Development
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to the
First Conference of the Parties to the
Framework Convention on Climate Change

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[Madame Chairperson, Ministers, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,]

It is my privilege and honour to address this outstanding and important conference as chairman of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

I.

It is the Commission's mandate to lead governments and international organizations on the road to global, regional and local sustainable development. Sustainable development is, in just few words, the essence of the global strategy endorsed by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development 1992 in Rio de Janeiro and agreed by the participating governments in "Agenda 21", the Rio declaration, the Rio principles, the non legally binding principles on forest and, last but not least, the two conventions on climate change and on biodiversity.

One could just as well say: Sustainability is development, since the world, especially the poor half of the world, needs development; this is the clear message and results of the Social Summit in Copenhagen and the Population Conference in Cairo. But development in the future can no longer be that of the past. Otherwise we destroy our common future on this

wonderful blue planet earth. Economic growth - no matter how much we need it - can no longer be stimulated at the expense of the environment, it cannot be ecologically subsidized. It can no longer be tolerated that, in times of economic crisis, governments extend or even increase to environmentally damaging subsidies which, in the end, deplete the nations' wealth and the development potential of their neighbours more than they add to it. No beggar my neighbour policy by transboundary immissions on air, water, hazardous waste or toxic substances can be accepted. This is not only unethical with a view to future generations; it is also poor economics. Governments should be encouraged to "green accounting" just as much as private enterprises are to learn in detail the indirect, externalized costs of economic growth. The development of indicators for sustainable development is therefore one of the most important tasks of CSD.

We are one world - not subdivided in a first, second and third world. But we must be aware of what we decided in Rio.

I quote: "The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command." In my view, this does not mean merely reducing consumption as such since this could harm worldwide demand and thus impair trading opportunities for developing countries. Even today, the South is disadvantaged by the regionalisation of the benefits and globalisation of the detriments of developed countries

consumption and production patterns. Emissions of carbon dioxide are threatening the global climate and thus especially the survival of many small island states in the wake of rising sea levels, but also the increase of deserts, the decrease of fertile land - we all will be losers, there are no winners. The countries of the North bear a special responsibility for damages, to the global environment. Therefore I appreciate the draft of a CO2-Protocoll presented by the AOSIS countries. It is a clear signal, an outcry. There is no time for resignation or reluctance, but it is high time for common action and creative ideas, additional research for deepening our understanding of the interrelations between greenhouse gas, emission and climate change cannot be misused as an alibi for common action now.

Development for all countries, poor and prosperous, must be turned into sustainable development:

- Sustainability is needed for the environment otherwise we are subsidizing our standard of life by externalising costs of production and consumption to the future, to nature, to other parts of the world.
- Sustainability is needed for social development because without social equity, unrest, conflict and violence would make our communities uninhabitable places to live.
- Sustainability is needed for economic development because a throw-away - society is not stimulating the products and production technologies urgently needed for the global markets of the future:

energy and resources efficient, recyclable, for multiple use, repairable. The full life cycle approach is absolutely necessary, integrating economic instruments, but also legislative decisions and social instruments.

Twenty years ago, we discussed the limits of growth; today, we need the growth of the limits - to find ways to ensure economic development without strain for natural resources and eco-systems and the social stability of our societies.

II.

World stability and freedom today is threatened not only by military wars, but more and more by the silent war which mankind is fighting against the very foundations of our physical life. The world must come to recognize that the crisis of our eco-systems is threatening peace just as much as political or military conflicts do.

As we gather here today, battles are being fought over water rights; families and clans clash over burning material and food; urban poor struggle for a place to live and to rear their children; millions are on the move because of drought and desertification, while even more millions seek refuge from raging storms and destructive floods. Even the insurance companies are suffering from climate changes, from floods and drought - they are witnessing the enormous economic disadvantages combined with climate changes, with ecological instability.

The world is unstable because the world's development has been unsustainable. Global security is threatened by environmental and social instability. This is why we have to stimulate the Commission on Sustainable Development towards the Security Council for global sustainable development.

If there must be a peace dividend from the end of global military confrontation in the former bipolaric world, there is just as much a security dividend from ending the war between mankind and nature. I expect the Rio process to become just as crucial for global peace, as the Helsinki process was for European and global security in the 70s and 80s.

A great challenge is the growth of urban settlements all over the world, particularly in the South. As UN statistics tell us, the world will see 100 mega-cities of 5 million and more inhabitants by the year 2025. The future of mankind will be in a global network of cities, not in the global village. Without proper spatial planning, without efficient environmental infrastructure, without neighbourhoods which are "home" instead of places to drive through, cities will not be sustainable. We need the spartial integregation, not the segregation of functions, we need the dezentralisation in the urban agglomeration - to decrease traffic necessities. They will be breeding grounds for crime, violence, drugs and radicalism. The challenge is to find better spatial, political and administrative structures for large agglomerations, to find a sustainable pattern for urban growth.

The upcoming United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, HABITAT II, will hopefully bring tangible progress.

III.

What is the significance of the Rio process and its monitoring institution, the CSD for this conference?

The global climate is threatened by many different causes on the face of this earth. Industrial activities, air and ground traffic, unsustainable agriculture, energy consumption of households and buildings, the increasing volume of waste, shrinking forests in all parts of the world - all this contributes to the real danger of global warming.

Agenda 21 is the first global effort to stimulate and to integrate programmes and activities world-wide: national and international programmes, sectoral and cross-sectoral activities, activities by governments, other public institutions and major groups.

The Commission on Sustainable Development is utilizing this integrative approach in its work programme to implement Agenda 21.

In this years' session, the 3. session, beginning April 11th, the Commission will review all Agenda 21 programme areas

related to land use. These are contained in chapters 10 to 15 of Agenda 21:

- Planning and management of land resources,
- Combating deforestation,
- Combating desertification and drought,
- Sustainable mountain development,
- Sustainable agriculture and rural development,
- Conservation of biological diversity.

Steps forward towards cooperation on all kinds of forests could be negotiated in the intersessional period of the year 1994/95. There will be an International Panel on forests, guided by the CSD and directly linked with FAO. Sustainable agriculture is under consideration mainly by FAO, the relevant task manager in the UN system. We treated important steps forward:

- * the convention to combat desertification has been brought to successful conclusion
A "prompt start" has been initiated
- * The Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted an Action Programme of sustainable development
- * National agendas 21 with integrated reporting systems, with action programs to reduce environmental harmful activities are developed,
- * local agendas 21, especially developed with ICLEI, prove the responsibility of the local authorities.

All these sectoral issues have, in one way or another, a direct bearing on emissions or retainment of "greenhouse gases", most obviously for forests which absorb much of the carbon-dioxide (CO₂) discharged into the atmosphere. Forest are also of immeasurable value for bio-diversity, but also for food and fodder, as home for indigeneous people.

The Commission will also review progress on cross-sectoral issues, with financial issues, technology transfer, and sustainable production and consumption patterns, but also the important interrelations between trade and environment are high on the agenda. Hopefully, its decisions will contribute to the further development of new instruments for financing actions, such as the "joint implementation mechanism", the build and operate-transfer (BOT). If the potential of innovative financial instruments is fully utilized, we can go a long way towards meeting the financial requirements of Agenda 21. CO₂-Energy taxation is urgently needed. The industrialized countries have to take the lead, increasing energy efficiency, energy saving, technology progress in new energy sources, solar energy must be stimulated. Such a combined strategy is not against the interests of oil production and use, but stabilising the long term development of this industry.

Agenda 21 has provided the vision for a powerful movement involving governments, international and UN bodies, regional and local authorities, as well as non-governmental organizations and major groups. Two years from now, in 1997, a special UN General Assembly will review the progress

achieved since Rio. The Commission will then present its assessment, and hopefully it will be able to include this conference in a "success story" of the Rio process.

IV.

What are the next steps?

- First: The UN should develop a set of measures and tools for ensuring that appropriate collective action can be taken when it is considered necessary. Studies, reports and resolutions are necessary, but not enough. The international community must be enabled to move forward when global environmental risks are evident and require action.
- Second: More dialogue should be encouraged between those responsible for environmental policies and the individuals and institutions responsible for economic, trade, fiscal policies and economic cooperation. The interrelations and closer cooperation, between the UN-System and the Bretton Wood system is indispensable. Sustainable development, by its very nature, requires adjustments in economic structures as well as public and private spending. International trade relation must be changed and developed. Economic instruments should make use of the market mechanism, wherever possible.
- Third: On all levels - global, regional and local - more attention must be paid to capacity building and enablement.

Too many investments are made without proper professional judgement, trained management and democratic participation. There is no contradiction between democracy and sustainable development - in the contrary: democracy is a necessary condition for sustainable development. Directly linked with capacity building is the access to and dissemination of reliable information on environmentally sound technologies.

- Fourth: A global system for monitoring and assessing progress towards sustainable development should be developed and put into operation. The Commission's work programme on sustainability indicators is intended to provide the blue-print and the nuts and bolts for such a system. The debate on "sustainable forestry" is clearly demonstrating the benefits of such indicators.
- Fifth: Common action and cooperation. Additional efforts are required to bring ODA Level in line with the 0,7 % target, as reaffirmed in Ageda 21, as soon as possible, combined with debt reduction operations. In this context: highest with the economies in transition must be concentrated to the cooperation.

Legally binding obligations to stabilise the greenhouse gas emission, expecially CO₂, on the basis of 1990 until 2000 and a decrease of those emmissions after 2000 must be finalised in a protocol, combined with concrete measures - the concrete mandate for these negotiations must be

decided in this Berlin Conference. Beyond the national obligation to stabilize and reduce greenhouse gas emissions pilot projects for joint implementations are needed.

Men and women all over this world look at this conference and further on to the Commission on Sustainable Development wondering whether governments will be courageous and far-sighted enough to agree on steps to reduce global risks. Are we going to live up to our responsibility towards our children and grand-children, towards all future generations? Should it be true, what a respected author recently said: that "environmentalists are on the right side of history, but on the wrong side of the present"?

The tremendous interest in the decisions of this conference testifies to the high level of expectations for progress toward sustainable development. I share with you the hope and the confidence that our efforts will match the task ahead.