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“GDP value must reflect eco-health, report says”

By ALANNA MITCHELL

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North Americans must radically alter the way they calculate gross domestic product to take into account the use of each country's environmental wealth, says a hard-hitting new report from the international environmental watchdog set up under NAFTA.

That's because North America's natural resources--from soil and forests to water and fish, and even clean air--are being consumed at a rate that cannot be sustained. The watchdog of the North American free-trade agreement is calling for a way to assess how long such use can continue before it's too late.

"The health of an environment that sustains 394 million people and an economy worth \$9-trillion [U.S.] is at risk," concludes the first state-of-the-nations report from the North American Commission for Environmental Co-operation, to be published Monday.

It adds: "North Americans are faced with the paradox that many activities on which the North American economy is based impoverish the environment on which our well-being ultimately depends."

As it stands, the internationally accepted system of national accounts fails to predict how long a country's environmental capital can be used, and at what rate, before parts of it collapse, the report says.

"Unlike human or fabricated capital such as buildings and machines, the depreciation of natural capital is not written off against the value of its production," the 100-page report says.

The planet's assets can be likened to a bank account, it says.

"By 'spending' natural capital without replenishing it, or by damaging processes and living systems that cannot be fixed by technology, we are living off our capital rather than the interest," the report says.

That this urging should come from an environmental group set up by the NAFTA partners, Canada, the United States and Mexico, is a measure of how seriously the new economic research on this topic is being taken.

"Because of the research, we are becoming more fluent and aware of the part that ecosystems play," said Janine Ferretti, the CEC's executive director. "They're the backbone of prosperity."

Mexico has done a pilot study on calculating an ecological GDP. It showed, for example, that Mexico's GDP calculated the regular way logged an average annual increase of 2.2 per cent from 1985 to 1992. The ecological GDP showed an average of 1.3 per cent because it took into account the depletion of natural assets.

Both Canada and the United States have examined integrating measures of economy and environment. The United States launched a study of the costs and savings of the Clean Air Act over 20 years, for example. Implementing the act cost \$524-billion (U.S.), but saved the economy more than \$6-trillion (U.S.).

The fate of the cod fishery on Canada's East Coast is a perfect example of what happens when natural capital is not taken into account. Past governments encouraged the use of large fleets to catch and process fish to build up Newfoundland's economy.

Because too many cod were fished out of the ocean, and too little was understood about how that system worked, the fishery collapsed.

In 1992, Canada banned cod fishing. Stocks have still not rebounded and many scientists say they never will. It's a similar story with haddock and pollock.

"Excessive fishing has destroyed a major piece of the environment," the report says. "In turn, that has destroyed part of the economy."

Not understanding how a natural system worked led to the loss of tens of thousands of jobs and a special unemployment program that cost the Canadian government \$1.9-billion in the first five years. It is expected to cost another \$760-million over the next three years.

The growing sense of urgency in understanding the continent's economy in this way is borne out by some of the report's other findings. While there is some good news, such as the increase in protected areas to about 15 percent of North America from about 5 per cent in 1970, there is also bad news.

Agricultural practices such as no-till planting are lessening the degree of soil erosion in parts of the agricultural belt, yet soil is still disappearing. Now it's because farmers rely heavily on chemical fertilizers that erode soil structure instead of the compost and manure that build it up, the report says.

As well, high use of fossil fuels is polluting the air and helping to damage the planet's climate. In the United States, the number of kilometres travelled by passengers on transit, rail and intercity bus has dropped by half since 1970 even as the appetite for bigger cars and longer trips increased.

Old-growth forests in North America continue to disappear, replaced in part by planted trees that are not as resistant to disease. Mexico, for example, has already lost 95 per cent of its tropical humid forests and is losing forests at the fifth-quickest rate of any country in the world.

Based in Montreal, the CEC was established in 1994 to help prevent conflicts over trade and environment, enforce environmental laws and examine environmental concerns of the member nations. Former U.S. president Bill Clinton insisted on its creation before he would agree to ratify NAFTA.

Environmental groups have often accused the three governments of creating the CEC only to ignore its recommendations.

January 11, 2002

Christian Science Monitor

“US industry can't ignore an energy-conscious world”

By Norbert Walter

FRANKFURT, GERMANY - It's no secret that the United States is the world's biggest consumer of energy. The US alone produces one-quarter of total global CO2 emissions. This is only slightly less than the combined total from Western Europe, Japan, Latin America, and Africa. The average Americans are responsible for creating more than twice as much CO2 as their West European counterparts. Internationally, the US is also a leader in per capita consumption of electricity and water.

One reason for America's high consumption of resources is its comparatively low energy prices. The price of gasoline in some West European countries (the United Kingdom, for instance) is more than three times as high as in the United States, because of taxes.

Another reason is that many American consumers still don't have an environmental mindset (partly, of course, because energy and resources are so cheap). Nonstop air conditioning and gigantic refrigerators are just two cases in point.

At heart, politics is primarily responsible for the US's pronounced appetite for energy. In the past, American politicians have provided few incentives to conserve energy or to use natural resources more efficiently. Cheap energy has traditionally been an objective of US policy, and the environment has taken a back seat. On the international stage, the US withdrawal from the Kyoto protocol demonstrates environmental policy's marginal role in America.

Nevertheless, Americans are likely to pay more attention to environmental issues in the medium term. The main reason is that US industry will be compelled sooner or later to use energy more efficiently in both production processes and products; this holds especially for sectors that produce internationally traded goods.

In the automobile industry, the need to rethink is increasingly apparent. In 2000, only 10 percent of US-produced vehicles were exported - with far more than half the exports going to Canada.

Other countries export much more. Japan exported nearly 45 percent of the cars it manufactured in 2000; the figure for Germany approaches 70 percent.

There are many reasons for this discrepancy, such as design and sales strategy. But it is surely impossible to ignore the fact that the gas-guzzling sport-utility vehicles and flashy cars produced by US makers are difficult to sell abroad because of their enormous fuel consumption and the much-higher prices at the pump outside the US. This becomes a particular problem for US carmakers when the domestic market declines, as it did in 2001, because it's not possible to offset weak domestic sales with higher exports.

Recently, though, it has become apparent in the US that fuel consumption matters to drivers as soon as the price of a fillup crosses a certain pain threshold. From roughly early 2000 until late summer 2001, the price of gasoline in the US was - by American standards - very high. And in both of those years, German and Asian automakers chalked up much better results in the US than did the domestic producers, even though the "Big Three" had launched sales drives with hefty financial incentives.

Disregarding other factors (such as exchange-rate effects and quality differences), the non-US producers' success is no doubt partly attributable to their lower average fuel consumption.

Sooner or later, the trend emerging in the auto industry is likely to become a reality in other sectors such as electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, and chemicals. The ability to save energy and manufacture energy-efficient, low-emission, low-noise, recyclable products is a growing factor in an international competition that America is far from winning.

Anyone who fails to change tack in the long run will face difficulties going head to head with foreign competitors. US manufacturers are becoming aware of this. They are (gradually) seeing that their products sell better abroad if they take into account the higher energy costs there, and that this also makes them more competitive in the home market.

US manufacturers realize that investments to reduce energy consumption pay off relatively quickly, especially since energy prices are scarcely likely to decline in the medium to long term. For that reason, some American companies are already much more farsighted on environmental protection and energy policy than are the politicians and some old-fashioned vested interests in industry.

So isn't it about time Washington also changed policies to encourage greater energy savings and took up the challenge to become an international leader on environmental issues?

Norbert Walter is chief economist of Deutsche Bank Group.

January 14, 2002

“Scientists begin comprehensive “check-up” of planet Earth”

Bangkok - Some 1,500 scientists and research institutions from around the world are set Tuesday to formally begin the most comprehensive study ever made of the ecological health of planet Earth.

The ambitious, four-year, 21-million-dollar Millennium Ecosystem Assessment will provide a "zero line" from which scientists in the future will be able to judge how much ecosystems have changed, said Klaus Topfer, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme.

"At the beginning of this millennium we want to know what's available, for my generation and the generations to come - a zero line," Topfer said Monday in an interview with Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.

The U.N.'s top environment official is scheduled to preside at the second meeting of the Board of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment on Tuesday in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, marking the completion of the design phase of the project and the formal beginning of its implementation.

The first Board meeting was held in Trondheim, Norway, in July, 2000.

The assessment is scheduled to be completed in early 2005, with progress reports released periodically. If the process proves successful, it will be repeated at five or ten year intervals.

The worldwide study will examine the condition of the world's grasslands, forests, rivers and lakes, farmlands, oceans and other ecosystems, providing governments and the private sector with authoritative scientific data on which to base their future policies.

"We want those policies to be based on scientific research, on reality," Topfer said. "We want to simplify, to start this process from a baseline for the future. It's a huge, huge challenge."

The study was designed by the U.N. Development Programme, the U.N. Environment Programme, the World Bank, the World Resources Institute and other partners, with major funding provided by the Global Environment Facility, the U.N. Foundation and the World Bank.

"The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is the first global check-up of the health of our planet, and the results will fill important gaps in the knowledge that we need to preserve it," Topfer said.

Scientists involved in the global check-up will use a variety of techniques to make their assessments, from field work to remote sensing from satellites.

For example, the size of glaciers and the polar ice caps will be measured to determine how much they change, and what effects those changes are likely to have on humans.

"From this point onwards, we can determine what has changed for the future," Topfer said. "We want to have it in a systematic way, linked to the past and a basis for the future."

Topfer acknowledged that the assessment, like previous international agreements related to global warming, has the potential to highlight the different perspectives of developed and developing nations.

“There is a lot of need to compromise,” he said. “Developing countries are the guardians of the world's biodiversity.”

To underline the urgency of the worldwide stock-taking, Topfer cited data indicating that the world's forests are disappearing at a rate of 14 million hectares each year.

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“Environmental protection insufficient, more ODA urged: U.N.”

NEW YORK, Jan. 12 (Kyodo) Ten years after the historic Earth Summit, the world has yet to sufficiently address and tackle crucial environmental issues, and there is a need for increased official development assistance (ODA) from Japan and other developed countries, according to a report recently released by U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan.

The draft report, published on the Internet, is a comprehensive assessment of global measures on environmental protection and development in the past decade and an important basic document for discussion leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in August.

"Progress towards the goals established at Rio has been slower than anticipated and in some respects conditions are worse than they were 10 years ago," according to the report issued by Annan, in reference to the Earth Summit which took place in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.

In light of this, the report urges developed countries including Japan to commit 0.7% of gross national product in ODA to developing countries. The report showed that ODA flows are on "an overall downward trend from \$58.3 billion in 1992 to \$53.1 billion in 2000."

The report expressed the U.N.'s hope participants at the Johannesburg Summit 2002 will draw up "concrete programmatic initiatives," based on a "strong political will, practical steps and strong partnerships."

The report's 10-point list of initiatives to strengthen implementation and global partnerships, particularly balancing fast-paced economic globalization -- cited as a factor affecting the developing countries' economies -- with sustainable development, and eradicating poverty, among other things.

It said that effecting "fundamental changes in the way industrial societies produce and consume" and providing "operational focus for the general concept of sustainable consumption and production" are needed to strengthen environmental protection.

The report for this year's summit pointed out how the countries' policies on sustainable development lack consistency, coherence and a long-term eco-friendly vision in the developed countries' investment.

According to the report, Japan, the United States and other developed nations are home to 15% of the world's population but consume 56% of the world's resources, as compared to consumption outlay in an average Africa household, which has decreased 20% from 25 years ago.

On natural resources, the report stated deforestation is estimated at 14.6 million hectares yearly, 800 types of plant and animal species have become extinct, and 11,000 animals are facing extinction.

Dependence on fossil fuels, among others, was still as high as ever, and carbon dioxide emissions are predicted to increase 75% by 2020 from 1997 levels, the report showed.

It also urged a "more favorable climate for technology transfer."

The U.N. report also said the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks served to underscore the reality that "we are living in one world, and that no part of that world can afford to ignore the problems of the rest.

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Washington Post
"Why We Must Feed the Hands That Could Bite Us"
By Jared Diamond

As the theme for the last volume of his history of World War II, Winston Churchill wrote: "How the great democracies triumphed, and so were able to resume the follies which had so nearly cost them their life."

A half century later, Churchill's words have regained uncanny relevance. While today's greatest democracy, the United States -- along with its loose coalition of allies -- routed the Taliban from Afghanistan extraordinarily quickly, we have not won the war on terrorism. Our focus now should be on what we can do to avoid lapsing into victors' follies. And that means combating the forces of poverty and hopelessness on which international terrorism feeds, in Afghanistan and elsewhere. I would single out three strategies -- providing basic health care, supporting family planning and addressing such widespread environmental problems as deforestation -- that, even in crude economic terms, would cost the United States far less than another Sept. 11.

I'm not suggesting that we can eliminate terrorism by alleviating such societal problems overseas. The planners and immediate agents of terror were fanatics who will continue to try to harm us as long as we are rich, powerful and supporters of Israel. But those few active terrorists depended on many more people, including desperate populations who have tolerated, harbored and even taken part in terrorist activities. When people can't solve their own problems, they strike out irrationally, seeking foreign scapegoats, or collapsing in civil war over limited resources. By bettering conditions overseas, we can reduce chronic future threats to ourselves.

There's a simple logic to this line of thinking, based on a sweeping change in the way the world has worked over the last half century. In the past, we have often portrayed foreign aid in the grand tradition of noblesse oblige -- as noble help to others. And while that's still true, foreign aid more than ever represents self-interested help. That's because the increasing efficiency of worldwide communications and transport (aka globalization) isn't just a matter of "us" being able to send "them" good things. It has also become easier for "them" to send "us" bad things.

If a dozen years ago you had asked an ecologist uninterested in politics to name the countries with the most fragile environments, the most urgent public health problems and the most severe overpopulation (measured against available resources), the answer would have included Afghanistan, Burundi, Haiti, Iraq, Nepal, Rwanda, Somalia, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe. The close match between that list and the list of the world's political hot spots today is no accident. In contrast, countries with well-maintained environments and modest populations, such as Belize, Bhutan and Norway, are no danger to us.

The first area in which a modest amount of American money can produce a big payoff is in public health. High infant mortality and short adult lifespans resulting from preventable diseases such as malaria, AIDS, cholera and parasitic infections are a major cause of poverty -- and paralyze whole economies in multiple ways. First, they sap the productivity of workers, who are often sick and die young; second, they stimulate high birth rates, because parents expect many of their children to die. The result is that much of the population is too young to work and women can't join the workforce because they are busy raising children. All those things make countries unattractive to investors. The biggest economic success stories of recent decades have been Hong Kong, Mauritius, Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan, all of which invested heavily in public health and saw their GNPs rocket as child mortality and family size plunged and as worker lifespans lengthened.

But many other countries with similar public health problems lack the money and scientific know-how to solve them. Compared with our own economic losses from Sept. 11 (about \$100 billion in domestic losses and a further \$1 billion per month to wage war in Afghanistan), it would be cheap for us to fund clean water supplies (decreasing the transmission of water-borne diseases); to provide medicines for treatable diseases; to fund more grants for U.S. biomedical research into vaccines for tropical diseases such as malaria and cholera; and to stimulate vaccine and drug development in pharmaceutical companies by guaranteeing to buy effective medicines. At present, companies lack incentives to invest in diseases whose victims live mostly in poor countries. Nor does our government invest adequately in research on malaria, the world's leading infectious disease (with 400 million new cases per year), because few of those stricken are Americans.

Our annual spending on malaria research is less than the cost of a few days of war in Afghanistan.

A second area of big payoff for small investment is in family planning. The world population explosion is paradoxically steepest in the poorest countries, which already have more people than the country's resources can support. This is a disaster in the short term, as noted above, because it removes mothers from the workforce and increases the ratio of non-working children to working adults. It also spells disaster in the long run, because more people competing for a fixed or shrinking resource pie is a recipe for civil war, as has already happened in Rwanda and Burundi, Africa's most densely populated nations.

Among the minority of Americans opposed to funding family planning overseas, there is a widespread misconception that people in overpopulated developing countries really want large families -- and that we have no right to tell them to have fewer children. In my experience of working in Third World nations, nothing could be further from the truth. Their citizens experience every day the disastrous consequences of large families. They are frustrated to know that the means to limit family size exist but are unavailable or unaffordable. In the most remote village that I visited in Indonesia, a government poster explained the various techniques existing for birth control, but none of them was available in the village. My best friend there -- a man of 22 -- explained to me his frustration: "I have eight children," he said, "and I'm already short of money to buy them clothes and schoolbooks." It would be simple and cheap for the U.S. government to subsidize family planning methods and education through local government agencies and non-governmental organizations.

The third area I would target for foreign aid involves worldwide environmental problems, including biodiversity losses, climate change, deforestation, depleted energy sources, over fishing, pollution, salinization, soil erosion and limited fresh water supplies. To take just one example, deforestation reduces soil fertility and water quality, causes erosion and deprives local people of free timber and other forest products. While these environmental issues are pressing even in the United States, their consequences are more immediately threatening in other countries with more fragile environments.

Here, too, Americans suffer from a widespread misconception -- that Third World landowners want to log their own forests, and that we have no right to stop them. Actually, local people, including many I've come to know, are well aware of the value of their forests and hate to lose them. They are forced, tricked or seduced by logging companies, their own national governments and their own desperate need for money into signing logging leases. But they see no alternative to selling their only marketable asset.

The long list of solutions that the United States could support includes: promoting conservation leases (payment for land that is left unlogged); refusing import licenses and domestic logging permits for timber that is harvested without replanting; restricting importation of products from deforested land, such as tropical palm oil; and pressuring the World Bank, for which the United States provides much of the funding, not to make loans for projects that involve extensive deforestation.

All three of these areas illustrate a general theme: the need for our government to pursue long-term crisis-prevention policies, instead of simply responding as crises arise. Unfortunately, such an approach is not considered urgent. Today, and every previous day for years, 100 more acres are being overgrazed in Afghanistan, 100 more acres are deforested in Nepal, and 100 more people are contracting AIDS or malaria in Zimbabwe. Yet these are the slow processes that eventually explode in to \$100 billion crises.

In our daily personal lives and business lives, we don't commit that folly of focusing only on crisis management. Of course we fixed the toilet that broke in our house this morning, but we also buy life insurance and draw up wills to solve problems that our children will face many decades from now. Our government needs more of that thinking. In public health as in the health of us as individuals, it is cheaper and more efficacious to practice a lifestyle that prevents disease than to wait to go to the emergency room when we finally get really sick. Unless we do so on a global level, we shall, like so many other victorious nations in the past, be doomed to repeat the victors' follies.

Jared Diamond, a professor of physiology and public health at UCLA, is the author of *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (Norton).

January 15, 2002

For information only Not an official record

“Largest Ever World Wide Project to Promote Biosafety Launched by UNEP”

Nairobi, 16 January 2002 - A multi-million dollar project to help developing countries assess the potential risks and rewards from genetically engineered crops will be at the centre of an African Regional Workshop on biosafety that opens today.

The project, financed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), will help up to 100 countries develop the scientific and legal skills for evaluating the health and environmental issues surrounding imports of so called Living Modified Organisms (LMOs).

The three year, \$38.4 million, scheme, is seen as a key initiative to help developing countries prepare for the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety which was adopted in January 2000.

Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) which is to carry out the project, said: "Industry is convinced that genetically engineered crops are the key to boosting yields in a more environmentally friendly way. But others are concerned that the new technology may actually pose environmental as well as health risks".

"The Cartagena Protocol is an attempt to reconcile these trade and environmental protection issues. It not only is the first legal, environmental treaty, to institutionalise the precautionary approach, but establishes the advanced informed agreement procedure. This requires those

nations exporting LMOs to inform countries who import them so that the receiving country can decide whether or not to accept the shipment, " he added.

"Crucial to the success of this is developing countries having the skills and systems in place for evaluating these imports and for safely handling them. This is why this multi-million dollar, capacity building, project is so important," said Mr Toepfer.

To date, 107 governments have signed the Protocol and 10 countries have ratified it. 50 ratifications are required for its entry into force.

Christopher Briggs, the project's manager, said: "It is a direct response to the need for building capacity for assessing and managing risks, establishing adequate information systems, and developing expert human resources in the field of biosafety. And the key to achieving this goal is pooling together the scarce institutional, financial, technical, and human resources within the region and sharing ideas and information amongst local and international experts. To this end more than 20 regional and sub-regional workshops will be convened in the near future."

Representatives from more than 46 countries are attending the three-day workshop, taking place at UNEP's headquarters in Nairobi, which runs to the 18 of January.

They will be discussing how to implement the new project through National Biosafety Frameworks as well as how to promote collaboration regionally, sub-regionally and between regions.

Mr Charles Gbedemah from Ghana, who is the project's task manager for the Africa region, added: "It is no coincidence that the first activity under this major biosafety, capacity building, initiative is taking place in Nairobi for the benefit of the African continent. Indeed Africa is one of the five priorities of UNEP's operations. Africa has played a leadership role during the negotiation of the Cartagena Protocol and we hope that the implementation of this project will assist the African countries in playing a similar role throughout the implementation phase of the Protocol".

Mr Ahmed Djoghlaif, the Chief of the GEF Coordination Division in UNEP stated: "This is a unique project in the history of the GEF and will benefit greatly from the experience gained by the implementation of a pilot biosafety capacity building project of \$2.5 million, involving 18 countries, which is also financed by the GEF and successfully implemented by UNEP. It will also build synergy with the implementation of eight on-going national biosafety demonstration projects, worth \$ 4.5 million, aimed at implementing already existing National Biosafety Frameworks".

Note to journalists:

The project is being implemented by UNEP as one of the three Implementing Agencies of the Global Environment Facility. The GEF was established in 1991 as a partnership between the

United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank Group. Under its GEF activities, UNEP is working in more than 144 countries.

The Biosafety Protocol seeks to ensure the safe transfer, handling and use of Living Modified Organisms that may have adverse effects on the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health. The United Nations Environment Programme is providing the secretariat of the Protocol as well as the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity located in Montreal, Canada.

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The UNEP/GEF Biosafety Project web site is at: www.unep.ch/biosafety

UNEP News Release 2002/02

UNEP INFORMATION NOTE

“Global Ecosystems Study Opens Secretariat in Malaysia”

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, 15 January 2002 -- Scientists overseeing the most extensive study of the world's ecosystems and their contributions to economic development today announced the opening of an office based at ICLARM-the World Fish Centre in Penang, Malaysia.

The study, called the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), is a four-year, \$21 million effort conducted around the world. The project's Executive Director, zoologist Dr. Walter V. Reid, will coordinate the work of at least 1,500 scientists and research institutions from Penang.

"We are pleased to host the directorate of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment", said Dr. Meryl J. Williams, Director-General of the World Fish Centre. "Assessing the health of the planet's intricately woven ecosystems requires unprecedented global cooperation and new partnerships between scientists, Governments and the private sector."

The study was designed by the UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the World Resources Institute (WRI) and other partners. Major funding is provided by the Global Environment Facility, the United Nations Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the World Bank.

"The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is the first global check-up of the health of our planet, and the results will fill important gaps in the knowledge that we need to preserve it", said Mr. Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director. "It involves the largest number of natural and social scientists ever assembled to look at the consequences of changes to the world's ecosystems."

The study was launched to provide decision-makers with authoritative scientific knowledge concerning the impact of changes to the world's ecosystems on human livelihoods and the environment. It will provide Governments, the private sector and local organizations with better information about steps that can be taken to restore the productivity of the world's ecosystems.

Prior to the MA's launch at UN Headquarters on World Environment Day on 5 June 2001, WRI and its partners undertook a study - the Pilot Analysis of Global Ecosystems (PAGE) - to demonstrate the feasibility of the MA. The results were published in a five-volume series last year (<http://www.wri.org/wri/wr2000/page.html>). That study indicated that in many regions of the world, the capacity of ecosystems to meet human needs for food and clean water is being diminished. Also, threats to biodiversity and human health are growing, and vulnerability to environmental disasters such as floods and landslides is increasing.

"We all depend on ecosystem services to sustain ourselves, but the fabric of our ecosystems is fraying and we need to repair it", said Prof. A.H. Zakri, Co-Chair of the MA Board. "Developing countries, in particular, rely heavily on healthy ecosystems to meet needs for food, water and employment and to provide a strong base for economic development", he said.

The MA will include global, sub-global and national assessments. Assessments have been approved or are being planned for Southern Africa, South-East Asia, Central America, Western China, Norway, India and Sweden. The current MA meeting in Kuala Lumpur will decide on additional assessments.

The MA has been recognized by Governments as a mechanism to meet part of the assessment needs of three international environmental treaties -- the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.

The MA's work is overseen by a 45-member Board, chaired by Dr. Robert Watson, chief scientist of the World Bank and Dr. A.H. Zakri, former Deputy Vice-Chancellor for academic affairs of the Universiti Kebangsaan in Malaysia and now Director of the United Nations University's Institute of Advanced Studies. The Assessment Panel, which will oversee the technical work of the MA, comprises 13 of the world's leading social and natural scientists. It is co-chaired by Angela Cropper of the Cropper Foundation, and Dr. Harold Mooney of Stanford University.

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For more information on the Millennium Ecosystems Assessment, visit the MA website at <http://www.millenniumassessment.org>

January 17, 2002

“Environmental, religious groups launch ads opposing ANWR drilling”

Maureen Lorenzetti
OGJ Online

WASHINGTON, DC, Jan. 16 -- A new coalition of environmental and religious groups Wednesday announced a media campaign designed to stiffen public opposition to drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) and US dependence on foreign oil.

The Sierra Club and the National Council of Churches are sponsoring two different television advertisements urging voters to tell their congressmen that conservation and technology should be emphasized to enhance national energy security, rather than relying on exploration of the environmentally sensitive ANWR coastal plain in northern Alaska.

"Washington has been dragging its feet on energy security," said John Podesta, former White House chief of staff in the Clinton administration and now a senior fellow at the Natural Resources Defense Council. "It's time for the president and Congress to reverse course, and tackle this national security priority."

Congress resumes work next week after a month-long recess. Leaders of the Democratic-controlled Senate have promised to consider an omnibus energy policy reform bill before spring. The Republican-led House passed a sweeping measure last August that calls for limited leasing of the ANWR coastal plain.

ANWR remains a controversial issue. The White House supports leasing a portion of the coastal plain but has not ruled out accepting legislation that does not include it.

"Evoking religious themes, the new ads say Americans ought not to ruin the land we've been entrusted to protect," the Sierra Club said. "Rather than destroying special landscapes for oil, we can find more energy through new technologies."

Proponents of drilling argue that conservation and new technologies will not be enough to satisfy America's large oil needs: the US consumes 25% of world oil supplies but only has 3% of known oil reserves.

Industry also argues that drilling in areas like ANWR better protect the environment because companies would have to meet tough US standards, the world's most stringent. Otherwise, companies would drill in countries with less strict regulations.

ANWR opponents argue that policymakers can take a number of actions that would lessen the US demand for oil.

"We don't need arctic oil and Americans don't want it," said Deb Callahan of the League of Conservation Voters.

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January 18, 2002

“UN Drylands Office for Nairobi”

Jan 18, 2002 (The Nation/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- A regional office to coordinate the global fight against desertification is to be established next month in Kenya.

Once in operation, the United Nations Development Programme Drylands Development Centre will concentrate its efforts in Africa - the continent most affected by desertification and drought.

Speaking during a courtesy call on Environment Minister Joseph Kamotho, UNDP's resident representative, Mr Paul Andre, said the organisation also planned to move all its programmes to Kenya this year.

"We are in the process of moving all our offices and major programmes to Africa and Nairobi in particular," Mr Andre said.

Mr Philip Dobie, the director of UNDP Drylands Development Centre, said the new organisation would be launched on February 11.

Mr Dobie said the UNDP had been spearheading issues on desertification long before the advent of the United Nations Convention to combat Desertification, enforced in 1996.

He said Nairobi was chosen because desertification affected 80 per cent of Kenya's land.

"The affected area supports a population of 10 million people who also suffer from widespread poverty and other adverse effects of drought," said Mr Dobie.

While welcoming the officials, Mr Kamotho said the government was looking for funds to embark on a large scale afforestation programme.

However, the minister refused to comment on the controversial excision of 67,000 hectares of forest land for human settlement.

Mr Kamotho said the new Environment Management and Coordination Act would help seal loopholes experienced in the past in conservation programmes.

He said desert encroachment in Kenya was on the increase due to poor land use, resulting in the reduction of Kenya's forest cover that currently stands at about 2 percent.

January 21, 2002

“ANALYSIS: Bush's mixed record on the environment”

By JOAN LOWY

Scripps Howard News Service

WASHINGTON (January 20, 2002 08:42 a.m. EST) - Few issues during President Bush's first year in office have drawn more fire to the White House than the environment.

Bush had hardly raised his hand to take the oath of office Jan. 20, 2001, before his subordinates began rolling back Clinton-era environmental initiatives, some of which had been approved in the waning hours of the previous administration.

Since then, hardly a week has gone by without wrangling between environmentalists and the administration over issues ranging from air pollution rules to wetlands to endangered species.

"I feel like we in the environmental community are in a huge battle to keep from moving backward at a time when it has never been more important to move forward," said Greg Wetstone of the Natural Resources Defense Council. "We see the president using the agencies of government charged with carrying out the environmental laws to undermine these statutes from the inside out."

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said the administration has not been given credit for trying "new approaches" that all parties can live with, including local communities and industry, rather than imposing costly regulations.

"It's a real results-oriented approach," McClellan said. "You have some who choose a divisive approach that slows progress. It's viewed as a zero sum game. That's an old way of thinking."

Among the environmental controversies of Bush's first year in office:

- The administration called for more oil drilling on public lands, including offshore drilling. So far, the federal government has opened a portion of a lease area in the Gulf of Mexico to drilling, despite protests that oil spills might harm Florida beaches, and intervened in court to try to undo a judge's decision that would have made it harder to drill new oil wells off California.
- The administration asked Congress to open the pristine Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska to oil drilling.
- The president abandoned the Kyoto Protocol - the climate-change accord reached in Japan in 1997 by the United States and more than 100 other nations - and questioned the evidence showing man-made activity as the major cause of global warming.
- Bush, breaking a campaign promise, said he won't seek legislation to reduce power-plant emissions of carbon dioxide. Many scientists believe that carbon dioxide is the principal "greenhouse" gas responsible for global warming.
- The Department of Energy weakened new energy efficiency standards for residential central air conditioners and heat pumps, which had been approved by the Clinton administration but were opposed by manufacturers. The New York, Connecticut and California attorneys general,

environmentalists and consumer groups sued the department in June last year in an effort to retain the tougher standard. They claim the standard would save consumers money in the long run and eliminate the need for some new power plants.

- Environmental Protection Agency head Christine Todd Whitman delayed a new standard set by the Clinton administration that would have lowered the amount of arsenic in drinking water from 50 parts per billion to 10 parts per billion, saying more scientific study was needed to justify the tougher standard. Later, the National Academy of Sciences reported that arsenic's health risks were even greater than previously assumed and the administration backtracked, accepting 10 parts per billion. The academy advises the federal government on scientific and technological matters.

Other controversies include new standards for mining on federal lands that ease environmental protections, opening roadless forests to logging and the scrapping of a program to reintroduce grizzly bears to remote areas of Montana and Idaho.

However, overshadowed by the arguing were some notable initiatives to protect the environment, including the creation in July of the largest U.S. marine reserve, the 150-square-nautical-mile Tortugas Ecological Reserve, 70 miles west of the Florida Keys.

The EPA also ruled that General Electric must clean up New York state's Hudson River, where it dumped toxic PCBs for 30 years - a project expected to exceed \$500 million. Likewise, Bush surprised environmentalists by signing the U.N. Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and backing Senate ratification of the treaty, which bans some of the world's most toxic chemicals.

Other issues are less clear. This month, for example, Bush signed an \$8 billion pact with Florida to rescue the Everglades. More than half the Everglades have been lost to development and the rest is drying up.

While the pact has generally been greeted with enthusiasm by environmentalists, some experts worry that an implementation plan released by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers doesn't ensure that water recaptured in the giant "re-plumbing" project will go to the fragile habitat instead of to development and sugar farming.

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January 24, 2002

“Faith groups gather in Assisi to seek peace”

By Jane Lampman

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

In a world shaken by terrorism and religious conflict, Pope John Paul II and leaders from all major faiths are uniting to show that faith can be a source of mutual respect and serve as an antidote to violence.

With the pope at the helm, the leaders will gather today at Assisi, Italy, for a day of prayer and peace. During a Jan. 1 speech, the Roman Catholic leader called on Christian, Islamic, and Jewish leaders to "take the lead in publicly condemning terrorism and denying terrorists any form of religious or moral legitimacy."

The indefatigable pontiff invited more than 100 religious representatives to join in a pilgrimage to the Italian town to share reflections, spend time in prayer, and issue a common commitment to pursue an "authentic peace."

"Sept. 11 has made everyone aware of the fact that not addressing the kinds of issues involved here, of tolerance and pluralism, can have catastrophic repercussions," says John Esposito, director of the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at Georgetown University in Washington.

It was with a 1986 meeting in Assisi that John Paul II began his effort to build an alliance with other world faiths, believing they should work together against the common enemy, materialism. The Vatican has since hosted several interfaith gatherings.

But the pope has also sought to build ongoing dialogues, reaching out to apologize for past wrongs of his church and showing respect for other faiths during visits abroad. His proclamation that anti-Semitism is a sin against God and his apology for the Crusades were crucial steps in establishing ongoing interactions with Jews and Muslims.

Today's gathering will also include presentations from leaders of Hinduism, Buddhism, and the traditional African religions, as well as Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant churches.

"Most of our traditions are beginning to come out of their childish, exclusive cocoons and to learn that we have to learn to work together for a better world," says David Rosen, international director for interreligious affairs of the American Jewish Committee, who is attending the Assisi meeting.

Convinced that the world is facing an emergency, the pope said he wished particularly to bring Christians and Muslims together to proclaim to the world that religion must never be a reason for hatred and violence.

The awareness of the need for dialogue has grown on both sides. Muslims, both internationally and in the United States, recognize that they must work to see that non-Muslims better understand mainstream Islam and how to distinguish it from the extremist fringe, Dr. Esposito says. This month, for example, his center is hosting a delegation of Muslims and Christians from Egypt to discuss pluralism, and he is helping convene a New York conference, with former President Clinton's involvement, on the global engagement between America and the Islamic world.

Sayyid Syeed, executive director of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA), finds hope in the global interfaith gatherings and US efforts at dialogue. A participant in a 1999 Rome meeting, Dr. Syeed says the Muslim world's "memories of the last millennium are so painful, so excruciating," that the pope's gestures have had tremendous impact. "We need to break from the past and create a new sense of direction for this millennium," he adds, "and we can prepare humanity for this by discussing issues and finding common ground."

In the US, Muslims and Catholics have engaged in active dialogue for several years. Syeed has co-chaired one of three regional groups now in dialogue, which meet annually.

The groups are producing papers on topics of shared interest - revelation, marriage and the family, and surrender and obedience to God, says John Borelli, interim director of interreligious affairs for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"We [Catholics] as a community have passed through many of the stages of acclimation to the American scene that they are going to pass through," he adds. "Also, we have our school systems ... and we are of a similar mind on certain public issues."

Syeed, whose group also meets with other denominations, says it is much easier to pursue such dialogue in America's free and pluralistic society, whereas other societies are still struggling with the tensions and power struggles flowing from colonialism.

Still, in recent months, major religious bodies in the Muslim world have held conferences on everything from Muslim-Christian relations to issues of terrorism, Esposito says.

And the Assisi meeting is of major symbolic importance, he adds. "It's sending a message internationally to the two communities - to the religious leaders and, if they are close-minded, directly to their followers."

January 26, 2002

“International Year Of Ecotourism 2002 Launch Ceremony”

Monday, 28 January 2002

Ecos Chamber At The United Nations Headquarters Visitors Entrance, 45th Street 10 A.M. - 1 P.M.

The Opening Ceremony will include welcoming remarks from Mrs. Simone De Comarmond, Minister of Tourism and Transport of Seychelles; a Keynote Address by Mrs. Louise Frechette, UN Deputy Secretary-General; and statements by Mr. Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and by Mr. Francesco Frangialli, Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization, the two organizations responsible for the International Year's observance.

This will be followed by a presentation by Mr. Richard Legendre, Minister for Youth, Tourism, Leisure and Sport of the Province of Quebec, Canada, on the World Ecotourism Summit, to be held in Quebec City, 19-22 May 2002,

After a short break, Mrs. Leticia Navarro, Minister of Tourism of Mexico, will moderate a roundtable discussion among practitioners and NGOs. It will include:

* Ms. Megan Epler Wood, President, International Ecotourism Society; * Mr. Bruce Poon Tip, CEO of GAP Adventures; * Mr. Peter Seligmann, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Conservation International; and * Mr. Adama Bah, of the Gambia Tourism Concern.

Mr. Jim Watson, President and CEO of the Canadian Tourism Commission, will make closing remarks.

A press conference is scheduled for 12:45 to 1:15 p.m. in the UN Press Briefing Room, S-226. It will involve Mr. Toepfer, Mr. Frangialli, Minister Legendre and Mr. Watson.

The observance will conclude with an informal reception in the UN Delegates Dining Room, hosted by the Quebec Government. All are invited.

Interested media must request U.N. access on official letterhead to U.N. Accreditation Office (fax: (212) 963-4642) call 963-5934 / 7164 to verify receipt of fax, once request is verified, pass must be obtained at 801 United Nations Plaza (45th & 1st), UNITAR building, Pass & Identification Unit (two forms of photo ID required).

UNEP NEWS RELEASE

“Pioneering Conservation and Tourism Project Wins Innovative Private Sector Backing”
New funding helps kick-start International Year of Ecotourism

PARIS, 24 January 2002 - The goal of developing sustainable tourism in some of the world's most beautiful, yet fragile natural environments received a major boost today with the announcement of \$1 million in support of a project linking conservation and tourism at six World Heritage sites.

Aveda, the global cosmetics company, has agreed to give \$500,000 to the project that is jointly managed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and RARE Center for Tropical Conservation. The new funds will be matched by an equal amount from the United Nations Foundation.

The World Heritage sites that will benefit from the new funding are the Sian Ka'an and El Vizcaino biosphere reserves in Mexico, Tikal national park in Guatemala, the Rio Platano

biosphere reserve in Honduras, and the Komodo and Ujung Kulon national parks in Indonesia. (See below for more information.)

It is hoped that the project, which uses tourism to help mitigate threats to biodiversity conservation, will become a blueprint for initiatives elsewhere where the demands of tourists can be balanced with the needs and cultural traditions of local people, the landscape and environment.

The news comes in advance of the official launch of the International Year of Ecotourism that will take place at UN Headquarters in New York on Monday, 28 January.

"Ecotourism has many definitions, but as a general goal it should provide an opportunity to develop tourism in ways that minimize the industry's negative impacts and a way to actively promote the conservation of Earth's unique biodiversity", said Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director. "Let's hope that this project will become a model for environmentally sound tourism around the world. A blueprint that shows how ecotourism, as a tool for sustainable tourism, can be a means of avoiding environmental degradation while sharing the economic benefits with local people", he said.

"Aveda's environmental sustainability efforts focus on the protection of biodiversity", says Dominique Conseil, President of Aveda. "As ecosystems around the world are threatened, so too are indigenous populations. The fight for the defense of biodiversity and the one anthropologists lead for the protection of 'ethno-biodiversity' are one and the same. They are about our own survival."

By working with managers, industry and local people, the World Heritage sites project will bring together conservation education, planning, business development, training and marketing techniques to create a model for using tourism to promote the protection of important habitats. A key part of the project is to involve tour operators in site-specific activities so as to create better tourism products and sustainable management systems.

"The global tourism industry is currently generating few tangible benefits for World Heritage sites in developing countries", states Dr. Natarajan Ishwaran, Chief of the Natural Heritage Section at the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. "In many cases, site personnel and local stakeholders lack the resources, experience and training necessary to use tourism as an effective tool for achieving long-term biodiversity conservation. This project will create a replicable strategy for addressing these challenges."

The loss of biodiversity and wildlife habitats, the production of waste and polluted effluent in areas that have little or no capacity to absorb them are just some of the environmental problems associated with tourism in sensitive, often remote and pristine locations. Ensuring that tourism is sustainable and does not negatively impact these important places is a key objective of the World Heritage sites project. But, there is also the overarching issue of why sites need to develop tourism in the first place - the need for income for parks and economic incentives for local communities.

Jacqueline Aloisi de Lardereel, UNEP Assistant Executive Director and Director of the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (DTIE), points out that "one of the project's strengths is that it rests on a partnership between protected areas, managers and the private sector to promote biodiversity conservation and economic development. These elements go hand in hand to guarantee long-term sustainable development, which will truly benefit local communities", she said.

Many local managers of World Heritage sites are looking to sustainable tourism as a means of balancing the need for economic development with conservation, by bringing income into cash-strapped park budgets and impoverished local communities.

"These are some of the most important places on earth - our world's natural heritage - but to survive, they must be conserved by local people", says Brett Jenks, President of the RARE Center for Tropical Conservation. "RARE is working with UNEP and UNESCO to unleash the potential of ecotourism to address the local political, economic and social challenges to biodiversity conservation."

"Linking Conservation of Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism at World Heritage Sites" is a four-year project with a budget of approximately \$3,500,000.

Note to journalists: The International Year of Ecotourism will be officially launched at UN Headquarters in New York on Monday morning, 28 January 2002. After the launch ceremony, Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director, and Francesco Frangialli, World Tourism Organisation Secretary-General, will hold a press conference at 12.45 p.m. in the UN Press Briefing Room, S-226.

For more information on the World Heritage project, please contact Robert Bisset, Press Officer, UNEP/DTIE, Paris, tel: +33-1-4437-7613, mobile: +33-6-2272-5842, e-mail: robert.bisset@unep.fr

For more information on the launch of the International Year of Ecotourism, please contact: Jim Sniffen, UNEP Information Officer, New York, tel: +1-212-963-8094, e-mail: sniffenj@un.org.

NOTE: Covering media must request U.N. access on official letterhead to U.N. Accreditation Office (fax: (212) 963-4642) call 963-5934 / 7164 to verify receipt of fax, once request is verified, pass must be obtained at 801 United Nations Plaza (45th & 1st), UNITAR building, Pass & Identification Unit (two forms of photo ID required).

For more information on the project's partnering organizations, please contact: Oliver Hillel, Tourism Programme Coordinator, UNEP-DTIE, Paris, tel: +33-1-4437-7621, fax: +33-1-4437-1474, e-mail: Oliver.Hillel@unep.fr; or Arthur Pedersen, Consultant in Tourism and Heritage, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Paris, tel: +33-1-4568-1620, fax: +33-1-4568-5570, e-mail: A.Pedersen@unesco.org; or Beth Trask, Director, Institutional Resources & Communications, RARE Center, Arlington, Virginia, tel: +1-703-522-5070, fax: +1-703-522-5027, e-mail: btrask@rarecenter.org

Note to Editors: In 1998, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism. UNEP and the World Tourism Organisation (WTO/OMT) are the lead agencies and have been mandated to coordinate and carry out international activities for and during the Year.

The Year is intended to offer an opportunity to review successful ecotourism experiences worldwide. It is a time to review ecotourism's effect on biodiversity, its potential contribution to sustainable development, its social, economic and environmental impacts, and the degree to which regulatory mechanisms and voluntary programmes are effective in monitoring and controlling those impacts.

The key global event for the Year will be the World Ecotourism Summit, to be held in Quebec City, Canada, from 19 to 22 May. This event is expected to be the largest ever gathering of the different stakeholders concerned with the issue, see <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/ecotourism/wes.htm>.

As one contribution to the Year, UNEP and the International Ecotourism Society have jointly prepared a new guide that should act as a basic resource and reference book for Governments and practitioners who want to develop environmentally and socially sound ecotourism practices. *Ecotourism: Principles, Practices & Policies for Sustainability* includes background data and reference sources as well as practical guidelines, see. <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/library/ecotourism.htm>

UNEP has also produced a special edition of its *Industry and Environment* magazine on the theme of Ecotourism and Sustainability (http://www.uneptie.org/media/review/ie_home.htm) as well as a Manual for the International Year. For information about this and other products go to the UNEP Tourism web site at <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/ecotourism/documents.htm>

World Heritage Project Sites

Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve (Mexico) Sian Ka'an, which means "Where the Sky is Born" in the Mayan language, lies on the Yucatán coast and houses lush tropical forests, mangroves, marshes, and the world's second largest coastal barrier reef. Sian Ka'an provides habitat for a wide variety of marine, terrestrial and plant life and a home to Mayan and Mestizo communities of farmers and fishermen. It is under increasing pressure from high-impact, poorly planned tourism development spreading down the coast from Cancun.

El Vizcaino Biosphere Reserve (Mexico) Centred in the Baja California peninsula, El Vizcaino is a site of stark contrasts. The coastal lagoons are vitally important reproduction and wintering refuges for the gray whale, harbor seal, California sea lion and northern elephant seal, and habitat for four species of endangered marine turtles. Inland, the arid mountains of the Sierra de San Francisco houses ancient cave paintings. Threats to the ecological health of the reserve include industrial development on its borders, as well as over-fishing and poaching of wildlife.

Tikal National Park (Guatemala) Sited within Central America's largest contiguous tropical rainforest, the Maya Biosphere Reserve, Tikal was a major site of Mayan civilization, inhabited from the 6th century BC to the 10th century AD. The centre of the site contains magnificent temples, palaces and public squares. Currently, poorly managed tourism is degrading Tikal's ecological integrity, while creating few benefits for the surrounding indigenous communities.

Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve (Honduras) This vast reserve preserves Central America's most important remaining stand of humid tropical forest. It is home to abundant plants and animals and over 2,000 indigenous people, whose traditional lifestyles are threatened by encroaching settlements and agricultural development.

Ujung Kulon National Park (Indonesia) Just three hours from Jakarta, this park protects natural beauty, unique geologic features and endangered species. It includes Krakatau, an island important for the study of volcanoes, and the largest remnant of lowland rainforest in the Java plain. Several species of endangered plants and animals occur in the park, including one of the world's two remaining populations of Javan rhinoceros, a species, which, at fewer than 50 individuals total, is on the brink of extinction.

Komodo National Park (Indonesia) Komodo's rugged hillsides of dry savannah contrast starkly with its brilliant white sand coasts and coral reefs. Its volcanic islands house the endangered Komodo dragon, numbered at less than 6,000 individuals. Found nowhere else, this lizard is of great interest to scientists studying evolutionary theory. Komodo is also an important marine reserve, with 1,000 species of tropical fish. A boom in local population (800% growth over the past 60 years) has intensified the environmental pressures on all of Komodo's ecosystems.

UNEP's Sustainable Tourism Programme: Focusing on policies, tools and best practices for environmentally-sound tourism -- website: <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/>

The Tour Operators Initiative: A joint initiative between UNEP, UNESCO, WTO/OMT and tour operators. The Initiative assists members in developing and implementing environmental management and practices that minimize negative environmental and social impacts while optimising benefits -- website: <http://www.toinitiative.org/>

UNESCO's World Heritage Programme: Works to protect natural and cultural properties of outstanding universal value against the threat of damage in a rapidly developing world - website: <http://www.unesco.org/whc/>

RARE Center for Tropical Conservation: A Virginia-based non-profit organization, RARE Center is active in 20 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and the Pacific. Through specialized training programs and technical assistance, RARE helps parks and communities in developing countries use ecotourism to meet both conservation and economic development needs. Founded in 1973, RARE Center's mission is to protect the wildlands of globally significant biodiversity by enabling local people to benefit from their preservation - website: <http://www.rarecenter.org>.

January 28, 2002

01/28/2002 11:26:14

NEWS FEATURE: "Tourism bonus seen at Earth Summit in South Africa"

By Benita van Eyssen, dpa

Johannesburg (dpa) - Stakeholders in South Africa's blossoming tourism industry should make the most of opportunities presented by the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), tourism authorities say.

Dates for the gathering have been brought forward by a week to between August 26 and September 4 in respect of the first anniversary of the terror attacks in the United States, tourism authorities confirmed on Monday.

The United Nations-backed follow-on to the Rio Earth Summit held in 1992 will be take place in the province of Gauteng at the heart of the country.

The WSSD and its related events have been billed as Africa's biggest ever international summit with over 100,000 participants expected from throughout the world.

The main summit will see the participation of some 65,000 people, while around 40,000 more are booked to attend a preceding non-governmental forum summit.

In all, it is expected to generate some 1.3 billion rand in revenue, create around 14,000 jobs and boost tax revenue by some 265 million rand. Tour industry stake holders have been urged to "come to the party".

Several of the key issues - development, poverty, the transfer of technology, energy, trade as it affects the environment and financing mechanisms – are particularly relevant to the continent.

The event, according to Gauteng Tourism Authority CEO Terry Tselane, will present the province - which includes the major cities of Johannesburg and Pretoria – and the country with its greatest ever opportunities in tourism.

"The tourism cake is big enough for all of us," he told representatives from travel and tour companies, hotels, airlines and affected municipalities at a half-day WSSD briefing in Houghton, Johannesburg on Monday.

But with less than seven months to go before the WSSD and its related events, preparations were as of Monday running behind schedule, according to Sabelo Mahlalela, the manager of tourism and business liaison for the Johannesburg World Summit Company (JOWSCO) said.

"The change of date has had an impact on the alignment of our task," he said.

Aside from several donations from European Union member nations, just two local corporate sponsors had by Monday pitched in with contributions towards the cost of hosting the summit.

But stakeholders in the tourism industry had to nevertheless gear themselves for opportunities that could signal major profits during the summit and spinoffs in the years to come, he said.

The Houghton briefing attracted more than one hundred eager registered private and public sector officials from many large and medium-sized concerns.

However, dozens of ambitious township cab drivers and several owners of makeshift guest houses in the vast Soweto township on the outskirts of the city were also in attendance.

“There is bound to be some kind of profit for just about anyone willing to offer their services it seems,” a regional travel agent specialising in tours for women, suggested.

Soweto homeowners meanwhile wanted to know what standards needed to be met to host summit guests, initiatives that could see much needed funds filter into the largely impoverished community.

South Africa has had to alter its school calendar to accommodate the summit. It anticipates high traffic volumes of up to 150,000 cars a day heading for Johannesburg by the start of proceedings despite the coach system that is to be implemented.

Some 43,000 hotel rooms throughout the province and beyond have been block booked ahead of the event while negotiations with local and international airlines are underway to ensure wide access to flights, according to JOWSCO officials.

The Sandton Convention Centre on the plush northern suburbs Sandton Square is the preferred main inter-governmental summit venue and has been earmarked for its proximity to hotels where heads of government are to be hosted during the final days of the gathering.

Summit organisers have a programme in place that will provide a “legacy” of the Johannesburg debate on the state of the earth that includes among its highlights environmental projects and significant archeological sites.

Tourism authorities in the province will drive a “get out of Johannesburg” campaign for locals wanting to avoid the increase in activity that the summit will cause in the already vibrant and at times chaotic city.

Authorities are looking at ways of making travelling and staying in other parts of the country cheaper for families from Gauteng while companies have been asked to adjust their holiday rosters to accommodate the summit.

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UNEP-WTO News Release

“International Year Of Ecotourism Launched In New York”

NEW YORK, 28 January 2002 -- The global importance of ecotourism, its benefits as well as its impacts, was recognized today with the launching here of the International Year of Ecotourism by United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette.

Hosted by the Year's two international coordinators -- the World Tourism Organisation (WTO/OMT) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) -- the UN Headquarters event involved the participation of several government ministers, heads of intergovernmental organizations, and representatives of leading industry associations and non-governmental groups.

In 1998, the UN General Assembly decided to observe 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism, offering an opportunity for interested local and national stakeholders to review the social and environmental benefits that the ecotourism industry can offer host countries when suitably developed. With a series of global and local events, publications and discussion platforms, beginning with today's launch, the Year will be a time to review the ecotourism industry's effect on biodiversity, its potential contribution to sustainable development, its social, economic and environmental impacts, and the degree to which regulatory mechanisms and voluntary programmes are effective in monitoring and controlling those impacts.

As ecotourism involves a broad range of interest groups -- from local communities and indigenous peoples to global corporations, national Governments and development agencies -- it has received mixed reviews on the effectiveness of its ambitious goals. However, in recognition of the importance placed on the issue, some 40 national and local multi-stakeholder committees have already been set up to organize activities related to the Year.

"The tripling of flows in the space of a generation, and the growing pressure to which the environment, tourism sites and host populations will inevitably be subject as a result, should encourage us, today as in the past, and despite the current crisis of the tourism industry, to think and act with a view to the sustainable development of this activity," said WTO Secretary-General Francesco Frangialli.

"Ecotourism, is far from being a fringe activity. It should not be regarded as a passing fad or a gimmick, or even as a secondary market niche, but rather as one of the trump cards of this industry of the future, i.e. tourism. And for a simple reason: it is crucial to the problem of developing a balanced, sustainable and responsible tourism sector", he said.

"Ecotourism has many definitions, but as a general goal it should provide an opportunity to develop tourism in ways that minimize the industry's negative impacts and a way to actively promote the conservation of Earth's unique biodiversity", said Klaus Toepfer, UNEP Executive Director. "If handled properly, ecotourism can be a valuable tool for financing the protection of ecologically sensitive areas and the socio-economic development of populations living in or close to them."

Other goals of the International Year of Ecotourism include:

- * Generate greater awareness among public authorities, the private sector, civil society and consumers regarding ecotourism's capacity to contribute to the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in natural and rural areas, and the improvement of standards of living in those areas;
- * Disseminate methods and techniques for the planning, management, regulation and monitoring of ecotourism to guarantee its long-term sustainability;
- * Promote exchanges of experiences and lessons learned in the field of ecotourism; and
- * Increase opportunities for the efficient marketing and promotion of ecotourism destinations and products on international markets.

The key global event for the Year will be the World Ecotourism Summit, hosted by Canada, in Quebec City, from 19 to 22 May, to which over 500 high-level delegates and experts from all regions are already pre-registered. Twenty international preparatory conferences, started last year, will feed directly into the Summit (see <http://www.ecotourism2002.org>).

"The World Ecotourism Summit is expected to be the largest ever gathering of the different stakeholders concerned with the issue", said Mr. Toepfer. "It will be the key global event for the International Year. To ensure that ecotourism follows a truly sustainable path will require increased cooperation -- and partnerships -- among the tourism industry, Governments, local people and the tourists themselves and the Summit offers that opportunity."

Note to the Editors Ecotourism has been defined as a form of nature-based tourism in the marketplace, but it has also been formulated and studied as a sustainable development tool by NGOs, development experts and academics since 1990. The term "ecotourism", therefore, refers, on one hand, to a concept under a set of principles, and, on the other hand, to a specific market segment.

According to a 2001 WTO/OMT study, ecotourism may represent between 2 and 4 per cent of global tourism. The global significance of ecotourism does not come from its revenue volume, but rather because it strives to:

- * Protect the rapidly disappearing ecosystems that house most of the remaining biodiversity on Earth, and it is one of the few feasible economic tools to finance conservation of sensitive ecosystems; and
- * Ensure that local communities have a voice in sustainable development, that they benefit positively from revenue flows, since ecotourism operations and infrastructure are generally small-size and are run directly by them, and that less impacting alternative livelihoods are available.

During 2002 the UN is observing both the International Year of Ecotourism and the International Year of Mountains. Links between these two issues will be explored, and UNEP is focusing on ecotourism alternatives in "Mountain Commons" as one of the key interfaces between economic sustainability and environmental stewardship.

For more information on UNEP's and WTO/OMT's activities devoted to the subject of ecotourism, see <http://www.unep.org/pc/tourism/ecotourism> and http://www.world-tourism.org/frameset/frame_sustainable.html

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UNEP and the International Year of Ecotourism

In July 1998 the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) proposed to members of the UN General Assembly (resolution 1998/40) to designate 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE). Recognizing the growing importance of ecotourism, the UN General Assembly in December 1998 accepted the proposal (resolution A/Res/53/200) and declared 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism. The members of ECOSOC consider the designation of the IYE as an encouragement for intensified cooperative efforts by Governments and international and regional organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations, to achieve the aims of Agenda 21 in promoting development and the protection of the environment.

The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and other venues were advised to implement the Year (decision 7/3-5i and WGP). Within the UN system, the CSD's Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) mandated the World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT) and UNEP to prepare and coordinate supportive activities for and during the year.

Among the many activities to be undertaken at the global, regional, national and local level on the occasion of the International Year, the World Ecotourism Summit will be the major landmark, thanks to the kind invitation of the Canadian government, and will be held in Quebec, Canada from 19-22 May 2002. The Summit is expected to be the largest ever worldwide gathering of all types of stakeholders involved in ecotourism.

What is Ecotourism?

Ecotourism has been defined as a form of nature-based tourism in the marketplace, but it has also been formulated and studied as a sustainable development tool by NGOs, development experts and academics since 1990. The term ecotourism, therefore, refers on one hand to a concept under a set of principles, and on the other hand to a specific market segment. The two most often used definitions are: "Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustains the well being of local people." (The International Ecotourism Society, 1991) "Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations." (IUCN, 1996)

UNEP's Interests in Ecotourism

According to a 2001 WTO study, ecotourism may represent between 2 - 4% of global tourism. The global significance of ecotourism does not come from its revenue volume, but rather because it strives to: * Protect the rapidly disappearing ecosystems that house most of the remaining biodiversity on Earth, and it is one of the few feasible economic tools to finance conservation of sensitive ecosystems * Ensure that local communities have a voice in sustainable development, that they benefit positively from revenue flow, and that less impacting alternative livelihoods are available

IYE Goals

UNEP's activities around the International Year of Ecotourism have the following goals: * Generate greater awareness among public authorities, the private sector, the civil society and consumers regarding ecotourism's capacity to contribute to the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in natural and rural areas, and the improvement of standards of living in those areas; * Disseminate methods and techniques for the planning, management, regulation and monitoring of ecotourism to guarantee its long-term sustainability; * Promote exchanges of successful experiences in the field of ecotourism; * Increase opportunities for the efficient marketing and promotion of ecotourism destinations and products on international markets.

UNEP Activities

Activities supporting the International Year of Ecotourism and the World Ecotourism Summit are being conducted as a part of UNEP's Tourism Programme mission to ensure that conservation (as in sustainable management and use) of the natural, cultural and man-made environment is an integral part of all tourism development. The 2002 events are being carried out through UNEP partnerships with the World Tourism Organization (WTO/OMT), The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), Ecological Tourism in Europe (ETE), and others. UNEP's activities include:

* Coordination of activities for the IYE within UNEP and among other inter-governmental organizations, linking the IYE with the International Year of the Mountain, the Carpathian Ecoregion Initiative, the Sport and Environment Initiative, the Great Apes Survival Project (GRASP), coral tourism related activities (UNEP-WCMC Global Atlas of Coral Reefs) the Regional Seas Programme and the Global Programme of Action.

* Organization of preparatory events to facilitate contributions to the Summit:

- Europe: St. Johann, Austria 12-15 September 2001 (with WTO/OMT)
- NGO and grassroots organizations: New Delhi, India, 24-26 September 2001 (with ETE)
- Central America: Belize City, Belize, 26-28 November 2001 (with TIES)
- Small Island Developing States and other small islands: Mahe, Seychelles, 8 -10 December 2001 (with WTO/OMT)
- South Asia: Gangtok, India, 17-25 January 2002 (with TIES)
- South America: Cuzco, Peru 5-7 February 2002 (with TIES)
- Southeast Asia: Chiang Mai, Thailand, 10-14 March 2002 (with TIES)
- East Africa: Nairobi, Kenya, 22-24 March 2002 (with TIES)
- Arctic Circle: Hemavan, Sweden, 25-28 April 2002 (with TIES)

* Publications:

- The UNEP Manual for the International Year of Ecotourism, containing orientation for interested parties to collaborate with the Year. The Manual has been posted on our website. Please visit: <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/ecotourism/documents.htm> - A double issue of the "Industry and Environment review" on Ecotourism, including articles presenting successful ecotourism experience from all parts of the world.
- A handbook: "Ecotourism: Principles, Practices and Policies for Sustainability", with basic background data and references for governments and practitioners, jointly produced with TIES.

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February 1, 2002

“2002 AND BEYOND: Reliance on Middle East poses problems: WORLD ENERGY”

By DAVID BUCHAN 02/01/2002

For the energy markets, the nightmare scenario after September 11 would have been a similar explosion at, say, Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura terminal – the biggest oil loading point in the world's biggest oil exporter.

In the event, the war in Afghanistan did not spread to the oilfields of the Middle East. Opec oil producers quickly calmed the energy markets by promising to make up any shortfall in supplies, and then - as demand for oil fell - found itself struggling by the end of the year to stabilise oil prices.

Eventually, it managed to persuade some non-Opec producers to join it in taking a further 2m barrels a day off an apparently glutted world market from this month. This left the cartel with its lowest quotas since just before one of its members (Iraq) invaded another (Kuwait) in 1990.

But, about every 10 years or so, events conspire to remind the oil-importing world of its dependence on Middle East oil, and of the problems that poses.

Many of the roots of the al-Qaeda movement lie in Saudi Arabia. In pondering whether to take its campaign against terrorism to, for instance, President Saddam Hussein, the Bush administration bumps up against the awkward fact that the US imports some 700,000 barrels a day from Iraq.

Even before September 11, major oil importing countries were becoming concerned about energy security. In late 2000 the European Commission issued a green paper, calling on the EU to constrain energy demand and diversify supplies to minimise the risk of import dependence. The Bush administration last year produced a national energy policy designed to squeeze more

oil and gas out of the US (especially Alaska) and to reduce fragmentation and inefficiencies in domestic energy networks.

In the UK, the government is on the verge of publishing a long-term review covering security of future oil and gas supplies as well as other aspects of energy policy.

While threats to energy supplies can be homegrown and real - such as the power cuts California suffered a year ago or the UK fuel tax protests of autumn 2000 - more risk is attached to the source and routes of supply.

This risk is growing, according to the Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA). In the past two years, half of the world's extra energy production came from the OECD countries of North America, western Europe and east Asia. Over the next 20 years, non-OECD countries will account for 95 per cent of new energy production; half of this extra energy will come from the Middle East, Russia and central Asia.

"This means a greater proportion of energy will be traded, that it will travel greater distances and that it will come from fewer places," according to Bill Ramsay, the IEA's deputy director.

This has implications for security of supply routes, as the trade in oil between major regions of the world is forecast to triple to more than 60m barrels a day by 2020, and for prices.

Opec's ability to keep the oil price artificially high has been undermined by the rise in non-Opec production in the North Sea, Alaska, the Gulf of Mexico, the Caspian and offshore west Africa and Brazil.

Much of this is due to new technology that accelerates rates of extraction, but also eventually of decline, in oilfields. The North Sea will peak soon. So will US production, even if the Bush administration succeeds in its controversial plan to open Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to exploration.

Output will increase in Canada, Latin America and Africa, and rise more substantially in the Caspian and Russia where, however, oil output is still below Soviet levels of a decade ago.

But the lion's share of world oil reserves still lies in Opec countries, and the IEA forecasts a swing back in the cartel's favour. The agency predicts Opec's share of the world market, now less than a third, will rise to 46 per cent in 2010 and to 54 per cent by 2020.

For the moment, Opec has had to accept the limits that current weak oil demand place on its ability to influence the oil price. At its Cairo meeting in December, Opec put aside its so-called "market mechanism", which had tried to keep the oil price within a Dollars 22 to Dollars 28 a barrel band. The oil price looks set to stay below Dollars 22 for at least the first half of this year.

In the long term, Opec will recover its ability to influence the oil price. The question is whether it also regains its confrontational mood of the 1970s. Much will depend on the delicate course of US-Saudi relations.

For now, Opec seems set more on co-operation with oil-consuming countries. Algeria, Venezuela, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iran are all in the process of re-opening, to varying degrees, their hydrocarbon sectors to western companies whose assets they once nationalised. Opec countries want the latest in western technology and know-how.

But they also want to sustain the appetite for their oil in industrialized countries which, with the exception of the US, are trying through the Kyoto Protocol on climate change to reduce the burning of carbon fuels.

Climate change considerations will support demand for relatively clean gas. This continues to be the fastest growing form of energy. But the advent of competition in some gas markets could discourage some of the big investments needed to transport gas, whether by pipeline or by ship in the form of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The EU's programme to liberalise its gas market has attracted complaints from outside suppliers, notably Russia, and some EU gas transporters such as Ruhrgas, that big gas infrastructure projects can only be financed on long-term exclusive supply contracts.

Arguments of secure supply, and of climate change, can be marshalled in favour of boosting renewable energy and reviving nuclear power. Wind and solar power may be intermittent energy sources, but for natural reasons rather than because of dependence on unreliable foreign suppliers.

Nuclear power poses many problems, but not of foreign availability of uranium fuel, which is plentiful, easy to stock and accounts for a small share of atomic reactors' operating costs. However, the levelling of New York's twin towers has raised doubts about reactors' ability to withstand terrorist attack.

September 11 should have reminded the world's major energy users that they need new policies for a new era. But it is still too early to tell whether it has.

FTviaNewsEDGE

February 4, 2002

“Headquarters Press Conference On Johannesburg Sustainable Development Conference”

What had emerged to date was a fairly clear and common view on the outcomes sought by all countries from the World Summit on Social Development scheduled, to be held from 26 August to 4 September in Johannesburg, South Africa, Crispian Olver, Director-General, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism of South Africa, told correspondents at Headquarters this morning.

Mr. Olver was briefing the press about his country's approach to the Summit and its state of readiness for the event. Also present at the briefing for South Africa were Onkgopotse J.J. Tabane, Head of the Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and Head of Communications, and Xolisa Mabhongo, a representative of South Africa's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, the international community adopted Agenda 21 -- a global plan of action for sustainable development. It also agreed on the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, a set of principles defining the rights and obligations of nations. Agenda 21 integrated environmental and socio-economic concerns into a single policy framework.

The proposals set out in 1992 have since been expanded and strengthened at several major United Nations conferences. The upcoming Johannesburg Conference presents an important opportunity for world leaders to adopt concrete steps and identify quantifiable targets for better implementation of Agenda 21.

Mr. Olver said that essentially there were three kinds of outcomes sought by the Summit. One would be renewed global political commitment at the highest level on the implementation of Agenda 21, as well as a listing of programmes and actions needed to put this planet on to a more sustainable growth path.

The second outcome sought was a concrete programme of action. The proposed programme would be organized around a number of key themes in the socio-economic and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Such a programme would include setting targets, although many had already been defined in the Millennium Declaration. Nevertheless there were certain targets, energy, for example, which needed to be discussed and which required clear coordination and implementation mechanisms.

The third outcome sought, often referred to as the Type II Partnership Outcomes, he described as a range of specific sectoral projects, programmes, commitments and partnerships that were not part of the formally negotiated United Nations text, but fell within the broader collection of the Summit's outcomes and outputs.

In terms of what should be in the programme of action, Mr. Olver said emphasis had been put on getting each of the three pillars of sustainable development in focus. There was, therefore, a clear set of economic programmes or commitments referred to as the economic platform for Johannesburg. "In pushing that platform, we are guided by what we see as the greatest obstacle to sustainable development in the world today ?- that is the problem of inequality and poverty", he said.

"We believe that we have to come up with an integrated set of measures that will attempt to address the negative consequences of globalization", Mr. Olver said. That package of measures had to include such things as market access and changes in the terms of trade, as well as a number of World Trade Organization (WTO) issues, such as intellectual property rights and the

phasing out of agricultural subsidies. The platform also had to look at questions relating to financial flows, capital markets, debt relief, technology transfer and capacity- building.

Mr. Olver said that there was also a need for a set of social programmes, again focused around poverty alleviation and inequality, but which also integrated environmental and economic aspects. "What we are seeing emerging are suggestions for programmes for energy and access to it, particularly for the 2 billion people in the world who at this moment do not have any such access."

According to Mr. Olver, there were also programmes on water, sanitation and access to water; food security and agricultural productivity; and health, including a global effort to eradicate HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases such as malaria. Regarding the latter, he said, "we believe we can eradicate it in the next decade if we put our minds to it". Other issues which needed to be addressed were education -- particularly for women -- and literacy.

On the environmental side, Mr. Olver said there were also a number of very important programmes, packages and initiatives under discussion. In Africa, the issue of desertification, for example, was extremely important. While there was already a convention on that issue, it was one without resources. In fact, there had been no flow of resources into really crucial areas, such as land degradation and desertification.

Mr. Olver went on to say that "we are pushing quite strongly for a focus on oceans and marine resources ?- one area that remains inadequately regulated". Access to the resources of the oceans, particularly fishing resources on the high seas, was extremely inequitable, he added. It was based on historical precedent, and developing countries really struggled to get any part of those catches.

Mr. Olver said that in Africa a new and very important process was emerging in parallel with the Summit ?- the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It was a new programme being pushed by African heads of State. His own President, Thabo Mbeki, had himself played an active role in championing the Partnership and getting it to the point it was at now. The NEPAD basically adhered to many of the themes that he had touched on today. It focused on the intellectual and technical expertise of Africa, was written by Africans, and sought to reposition the continent in terms of global economic relations.

"As far as we are concerned, NEPAD is the sustainable development programme for Africa and we will showcase it actively in Johannesburg", Mr. Olver said. "We are very pleased that, in the discussions here, there seems to be a very clear recognition that Africa should be given a special place at the Summit."

Turning to South Africa's state of readiness for the Summit, Mr. Olver said the substantive discussions were going well despite a slow start. "From where we are sitting now, things are moving forward very actively, and I have been very impressed by the levels of mobilization by different countries", he said. "I think we can clearly say now that there really is quite a high level of commitment to Johannesburg at all levels, which will give us a solid product at the end of the day."

On the logistical side, Mr. Olver said that all plans had been completed. "We have detailed plans for security, accommodation, zoning, and transport. We have also secured all the hotels in Johannesburg", he added. The Santon area, which was the core location of the United Nations event, and where there were 25 top-level hotels providing accommodations for heads of State, was being turned into a high-security zone along with a policed no-fly zone over Johannesburg. Eight thousand police officers would also be put on duty around the clock in the city.

Mr. Olver told correspondents that he would be presenting a detailed logistical plan on Wednesday morning in an open plenary session.

In terms of funding for the Summit, he said the budget had been finalized at 550 million rands (approximately \$46,250,000). The budget was for the total Summit package, which was a set of multiple side, parallel, and non-governmental organization events, various stakeholder initiatives, cultural experiences, opening and closing ceremonies and security. "This is also post-11 September, so we have to make sure that our security planning is absolutely watertight", he said.

Mr. Olver went on to say that so far 350 million rands of the budget had been raised, half of which was a contribution from the South African national treasury. "We have reasonably good prospects for raising the rest since a number of donors have made commitments", he said. "We have also embarked on a corporate fund-raising strategy and, while we think we will be on target, we are going to have to give it a bit of a push."

A correspondent noted that since Rio, Africa had become a continent in shambles. Five hundred and fifty million rands was going to be raised without a problem, yet although Africa as a whole had difficulties in raising that kind of money, conference after conference was taking place. The Africa Recovery Programme was going nowhere, and the last report on the continent indicated that the gross national product (GNP) was going down all over.

Mr. Olver said he would not agree that the Africa Recovery Programme was going nowhere. The NEPAD was still in the process of development and being rolled out. As he had emphasized earlier, the outcome of Johannesburg was viewed as being a set of concrete actions and resource commitments, which would roll out fairly substantive programmes. "This is not an empty negotiation over a text in Johannesburg. This is about real development issues and concrete implementation", he said. If Johannesburg were successful, it would have a profound and lasting impact not only on Africa, but the whole developing world.

Underscoring that the problem all along had been the resources to meet targets, a correspondent asked how far the preparatory committee had moved towards agreeing on resources to meet proposed targets.

Mr. Olver said, "we see Johannesburg as probably the most effective point in the international calendar over the next decade to try and mobilize further resources behind the sustainable development programmes negotiated at the Summit".

It was early to assess whether there would be success in mobilizing resources, even though the countries of the North and South were committed to a successful outcome. "I think everyone knows that a successful outcome has got to have those kinds of resources on the table", he said.

What had to be underscored, he said, was that government resources were only a small part of the overall resource package. "What we are talking about if we want to address real growth and job creation in the developing world is how we leverage private sector investments and funds into the Johannesburg programme of action." That was not something that could be closed in an international negotiation. It was also not a matter of a United Nations negotiated text. It was a far more complex and subtle package. The issue was more one of "how do we use the resources to give incentives to encourage private investments into the kind of sustainable development initiative that we want", he said.

February 27, 2002

February 27, 2002 edition—Christian Science Monitor

“Voodoo environmentalism”

By William G. Moseley

DEKALB, ILL. - When President Bush recently presented his new climate-change policy, he argued that economic growth is the key to environmental progress. Economic growth, he suggested, provides us the means to develop and invest in cleaner technologies. Mr. Bush's father once referred to Ronald Reagan's trickle-down economics as voodoo economics. I would assert that growth-induced conservation is a case of voodoo environmentalism.

The idea of wealth-induced environmental conservation is not a new one. In fact, this notion is consistent with conservative views of the sustainable development concept, an approach that came to prominence following the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. While the idea of growth-induced environmentalism holds a certain amount of intuitive appeal, it is questionable for a number of reasons.

First, economic growth tends to create as much environmental degradation as it potentially resolves, especially in the absence of regulation. The problem is that increased wealth tends to foster increased consumption and its attendant pollution. A more advanced economy may allow us to pay for pollution abatement, but this does not necessarily put us ahead of the game if our energy consumption levels are increasing at the same rate - or faster.

Second, while wealth may give consumers the means to purchase low-polluting technologies, such as hybrid cars, the demand for manufacturers to develop these advanced technologies simply doesn't exist to any wide extent in the United States. Just look at the trends. In the late 1990s, many Americans saw their incomes rise. Greater wealth, combined with low fuel prices, led to a boom in the sale of gas-guzzling SUVs and a rise in CO2 emissions.

Third, the growth-induced environmental conservation argument often is supported by cross-national studies suggesting a correlation between wealth (or GNP) and environmental standards. In most instances, these studies have focused on industrial emissions as a proxy for all environmental variables.

But the pollution generated by the production of goods for wealthy nations has not changed significantly (as the studies imply); it has just been shifted around the globe. The world's wealthiest economies have seen their dirtiest industries move to the developing world over the past 25 years. The migration of dirty industries and waste is not simply an international phenomenon - the same has happened between states and localities within our own borders. While dirty industries and toxic wastes tend to move from wealthier to poorer regions, environmental regulations and political empowerment often have as much or more to do with who gets stuck with what.

Finally, the flip side of the wealth-induced environmental conservation argument is that poverty is one of the major causes of environmental destruction. My own research with rural farmers in West Africa suggests that poor farmers tend to engage in more environmentally friendly practices than their wealthier counterparts. Contrary to conventional wisdom, wealthier farmers tend to contribute more to environmental degradation because they are more likely to grow cash crops, and invest more heavily in crop- production technologies that are harmful to the environment.

While I am not suggesting that environmentalists oppose economic growth, everyone must understand that wealth is not a substitute for political will and sound environmental policy. Better interpretations of the sustainable-development concept imply that the goal is not simply economic growth, but growth that respects the limits of the environment to provide goods and process waste.

The president's new climate-change policy proposes "greenhouse gas intensity" as a measure of progress. The problem is that the economy, or GDP, is expanding over time within the confines of an environment that has limits. While measuring emissions relative to the size of the economy tells us something about efficiency, such measures have no grounding in environmental reality.

William G. Moseley is an assistant professor of environmental geography at Northern Illinois University.

From February 27, 2002 edition of Christian Science Monitor

“Forces of faith enter fray over energy policy”

By Brad Knickerbocker | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

The biblical declaration about God's lifting of darkness as part of creation is not typically thought of as a political pronouncement.

But when a congressional staffer recently expressed surprise that the faith community had anything to say about federal energy policy, Paul Gorman, executive director of the National

Religious Partnership for the Environment in New York, replied straight from the Old Testament: "Genesis, first chapter, third verse - 'Let there be light.' "

As the Senate this week takes up major proposals on energy generation and conservation, the leaders of major religious groups around the country are looking over congressional shoulders, hoping to generate a little political heat while spreading some theological light.

Yesterday, in a letter to every member of the US Senate, more than 1,200 religious leaders reminded lawmakers of the "moral obligations" involved in deciding energy policy initiatives. Signers include high-ranking figures in Jewish, Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox denominations.

Not every denomination or member of the clergy agrees with this view. Presumably, some favor oil drilling and nuclear power plants. But the political weight of this week's message is clear.

Pulpit versus president

In general, the religious leaders take a line clearly at odds with the Bush administration: They favor more conservation and renewable energy sources, plus a "substantial" increase in vehicle fuel economy; they oppose more oil drilling, especially in wilderness areas. Referring to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, where President Bush wants to drill for oil, the religious leaders say, "Conservation is a morally superior alternative to drilling in such places."

When the administration was putting together its energy proposal last year, Vice President Dick Cheney seemed to dismiss energy conservation and renewables as scarcely more than "a sign of personal virtue," as he put it.

But such efforts, say the religious leaders, should be "the central strategies of our nation's energy policy."

There's an urgency to the religious message. Like Mr. Bush's own energy plan, it's tied to last September's terrorist attacks on the United States.

"We're telling the Congress that energy conservation is necessary for homeland security as well as environmental protection and justice," says the Rev. Dr. Robert Edgar, general secretary of the National Council of Churches. "Lives are at stake."

But this week's effort to influence the debate over national energy policy has some important context that predates Sept. 11.

Launched in 1993, the National Religious Partnership for the Environment now connects with 135,000 US congregations from Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox, and Evangelical faiths, providing everything from energy-saving tips for church sanctuaries to sermon ideas and Sunday School lessons. The organization also has arranged retreats for corporate executives and environmental group leaders.

While it didn't sign this week's letter, the generally conservative Southern Baptist Convention has cited scripture to advocate environmental protection.

Over the past two years, "interfaith climate and energy campaigns" have been launched in 21 states, involving training sessions, letter-writing campaigns, and meetings with lawmakers.

"I would say that this represents the increasing authenticity, motivation, and maturity of creation-care work at the most local level in the religious community," says Mr. Gorman.

A pastoral letter signed last June by all Roman Catholic bishops in the United States sought to raise the level of debate about global warming.

"At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures," the bishops wrote in their pastoral letter titled "Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good." "It is about our human stewardship of God's creation and our responsibility to those who come after us."

Image risks for both sides

It may be hard for the president - especially one who has declared such strong faith - to be seen bucking so many religious leaders urging him to "protect God's creation and God's children."

On Monday, Bush posed with experimental gas-electric hybrid cars in the White House driveway, to promote the tax credits his energy plan offers for Americans who buy the low-mileage vehicles.

The president may not be the only one with image problems here. As with other kinds of social and political activism, religious groups risk being seen as clearly partisan on energy and the environment - "the Green Party at prayer," as some have warned. Recently, the National Council of Churches joined with the Sierra Club in sponsoring a TV commercial on energy conservation.

"Many of us thought this was inappropriate," says Gorman of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment. "Our teachings are not those of secular environmentalism, and these can't be bridged in sound bites. Our call is to be distinctively ourselves, and for the long term."

Part of that distinctiveness comes in expressing a sense of environmental protection (including energy issues) that transcends the secular.

In this sense, it's part of such profound theological questions as the biblical meaning of "dominion ... over all the earth."

"More than ever our central message must be the need for religious, moral, and cultural transformation," says Gorman. "This is about the future of religious life itself, not just rapid partisan response to policy challenges."

UNEP INFORMATION NOTE

UNEP and the International Year of the Mountains

“From the Summits to the Seas - New UNEP exhibition opens in Brussels”

BRUSSELS, 27 February 2002 - "Mountains, the water towers of the world, are vital to all life on earth and to the well-being of people everywhere", said Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). "What happens on the highest mountain peak affects life in the lowlands, in freshwaters and even in the seas."

"Mountains serve as vast reserves of valuable resources, including water, energy and biological diversity, and as important centres for culture and recreation", Mr. Toepfer said. "Globalisation, urbanisation and mass tourism, however, threaten mountain communities and the resources that so many people depend on. Worldwide, mountain areas face increasing marginalisation, economic decline and environmental degradation."

Mr. Toepfer was speaking here today at the opening of "From the Summits to the Seas," a new photo exhibition at the European Parliament that highlights UNEP's input to the 2002 International Year of Mountains.

At the event in Brussels, held with the support of MEP Richard Howitt and MEP Luciano Caveri of the Parliament's "Friends of the Mountains, Mr. Toepfer said "the Year should mark the beginning of a new era, one that recognizes the true value of mountains".

Highlighting how countries in Europe have been tackling the challenge of balancing interests in their mountains for many years, he said the Alps, in particular, have given rise to much discussion, especially with regard to transport, land use planning, protection of nature and landscape and tourism.

More recently, the threats from global warming have been brought into sharp focus as a result of studies by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). These studies have highlighted how, as a result of rising temperatures linked with the build up of greenhouse gases, the snow and ice environments of mountain ranges like the Alps are set to radically change with impacts on winter tourism, water supplies, soil stability, vegetation and wildlife.

Mr. Toepfer said: "The IPCC has concluded that a warming of one to 3.5 degrees Centigrade over the next 100 years would shift the current climate zones vertically by between 150 and 550 metres, forcing cold loving species of plants and animals further up the slopes. Species that cannot adapt quickly enough may become extinct -- an irreversible loss."

The impact of the anticipated climate change on glaciers, vital sources of water for the rivers and lakes downstream, is underlined in a study by the Berne-based ProClim, the Swiss Forum for Climate Change, which is linked to the Swiss Academy of Sciences. Their study is based on IPCC forecasts.

"These experts estimate that by 2015, with a temperature rise of 0.07 degrees C, 19 per cent of the Swiss Alpine glaciers will have melted. By 2080, even more dramatic losses are foreseen unless urgent action is taken by the world to dramatically reduce emissions of greenhouse gases", said Mr. Toepfer. (See notes to journalists below.)

He said the Alpine Convention, agreed in 1991, needed to take the impacts of climate change into account and could act as a blueprint for other mountain ranges around the world.

"The 1991 Alpine Convention gave Europe a comprehensive policy on the protection and sustainable development of the Alps, one of the largest European ecosystems. It recognized that the Alps must be protected, and that the economic and social needs of the native population have to be taken into account", said Mr. Toepfer. "Other regions of the world can perhaps learn from these experiences", he said.

Note to journalists: For information about UNEP's Mountain Programme, contact Andrei Iatsenia, Coordinator, in Geneva on tel: +41-22-917-8273, fax: +41-22-917-8036, e-mail: iatsenia@unep.ch

UNEP Activities for International Year of the Mountains

The UN General Assembly declared the year 2002 as the International Year of the Mountains (IYM) in order to increase international awareness of the global importance of mountain ecosystems. Throughout the year, people all over the world will participate in events to celebrate mountains and discuss ways to promote their conservation and sustainable development.

In response to many requests for assistance, UNEP has set-up a Mountain Programme coordinated by UNEP's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC).

UNEP Mountain Programme in Europe and Central Asia: In response to requests from Governments in Europe and Central Asia, UNEP has launched the European Mountain Initiative. The Initiative, which builds on the experience of the Alpine Convention, covers the Carpathians and the Caucasus mountain ranges as well as mountains in Central Asia.

UNEP is helping Ukraine, as it leads efforts to establish greater cooperation between Carpathian countries. The project (with WWF International) aims to create a network of protected areas, like those in the Alps, and to promote conservation and sustainable development. Other activities include supporting the work of Governments of Caucasian countries to develop a legal instrument for the protection of their mountains. UNEP is also supporting a "best practices" conference, to be held in Berchtesgaden, in June 2002.

In 1989 the first meeting at the National Park of Berchtesgaden in Germany started the process that led to the Alpine Convention. This year UNEP, jointly with the German Government, the Alpine Convention and CIPRA International, will organize a meeting on the "Alpine Experience: An Approach for Other Mountains?" (27 - 29 June 2002). The meeting will identify lessons learned from the Alpine process that might be useful for application in other mountain ranges.

In Central Asia the draft text of a Charter for Sustainable Mountain Development has already been discussed and comments provided by several countries. During the Berchtesgaden meeting, officials from Central Asia will come together, supported by an experienced legal consultant from UNEP, to fine-tune the Charter that is to be formally signed during the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit.

Bishkek Global Mountain Summit: In celebration of the IYM 2002, the Government of Kyrgyzstan will host the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit from 29 October to 1 November 2002. The Summit, the main global concluding event of IYM, will draw together the ideas and recommendations generated from all levels and sectors of society at previous events and agree concrete actions for the sustainable development and management of mountain areas in the 21st century. The UNEP Mountain Programme is facilitating the preparation and implementation of the Summit meeting. See <http://www.globalmountainsummit.org>

Global Programme of Action for Mountains: Activities in the mountains have an important impact of the quality and quantity of water flowing into rivers and streams, the coastal environment and eventually the marine environment. The UNEP Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities is implementing innovative approaches to promote sustainable development.

UNEP, in partnership with the UN Focus Group on Mountains, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and others, is now exploring the possibility of setting up an International Partnership or a Global Programme of Action for Sustainable Mountain Development. One of the important initiatives leading to such partnership is the Mountain Commons Partnership, developed jointly with the Government of Germany.

Mountain Commons Partnerships: "Mountain Commons" are one of the key interfaces between economic sustainability and environmental stewardship. Economic development and sustainability depend in many respects on appropriate resource management "at the source" in mountainous areas.

Mountains provide environmental and economic benefits particularly through the supply and regulation of freshwater. An estimated two thirds of the world's renewable freshwater comes from mountain watersheds. Improvements in watershed management and other aspects of environmental stewardship in mountain areas will require long-term local and regional cooperative programs between communities, upstream and downstream private and public stakeholder associations, policy makers and development financiers. In February 2002, UNEP and the World Economic Forum held the first round table on Mountain Commons Stewardship at UN Headquarters in New York.

Mountain Watch / Mountain Atlas / UNEP.Net Mountain Portal: The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre is working with partners to provide the best possible information on mountain ecosystems. The Centre has produced a World Map of Mountains and their Forests, which will provide basic materials for a proposed World Atlas of Mountains. It is now working to develop Mountain Watch, a map-based global overview of mountain

biodiversity and the priorities for management. All materials arising from the Mountain Watch and Mountain Atlas processes will be integrated into a Mountain Portal on the UNEP.Net Internet site.

High Summit Videoconference: The High Summit, to be held 6-10 May 2002, will consist of a simultaneous videoconference broadcast with continuous live Internet feeds from North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Africa. Experts, policy makers, researchers and scholars from mountain areas will discuss five main themes: Water, Culture, Economy, Risk, Policy: The Way Forward. The objective of the High Summit is to create policy-oriented documents (one per continent) with supporting scientific guidelines on the future development of mountain areas. The High Summit will provide one of the scientific inputs into the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit. UNEP has taken responsibility for the African hub of the videoconference, which will take place in Nairobi. Further information is available at www.highsummit.org.

Building Capacity for Monitoring and Assessment: The largest protected area in Nepal, the Annapurna Conservation Area, will be the pilot site for development of tools and training for assessment of ecological and cultural values of mountain commons, and monitoring of impacts on mountain ecosystems. UNEP-WCMC will work alongside the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation in an area that has pioneered the involvement of local communities in protected area management. It is hoped that lessons learned from the project will be transferable to other mountain parks.

Mountains and Sustainable Livelihoods: Mountain ecosystems are fundamental to the livelihoods of many people worldwide. They provide fuel, food and water to communities in both highlands and lowlands and are the basis for many activities that provide income. These include marketing of non-timber forest products and tourism. Ensuring the sustainability of these activities is crucial to the continued survival of both people and ecosystems.

UNEP, through its Division for Technology, Industry and Economics, UNEP-WCMC and other partners, is developing methods to quantify the impacts, or "footprint", of tourism activities. These include environmental impacts and socio-economic impacts on local livelihoods. UNEP is also a lead agency for the 2002 International Year of Ecotourism. For more information see <http://www.uneptie.org/pc/tourism/ecotourism/home.htm>

The UNEP Mountain Programme is being supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the Aga Khan Development Network, FAO, the UN University, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the Mountain Forum and the Governments of Kyrgyzstan, Italy and Germany.

UNEP Information Note: 2002/03

February 28, 2002

Globe And Mail

“Why Kyoto is such a hot potato”

By Edward Greenspon

Thursday, February 28, 2002 ? Print Edition, Page A19

Poor David Anderson. Such grand hopes. Such pedestrian problems. In the world of a committed environment minister, the gulf between good intentions and real world pressures can swallow you up -- as Mr. Anderson understood long before his latest trials and tribulations over the Kyoto Protocol on climate change.

Consider the case of the Toyota Prius. When Prime Minister Jean Chrétien shuffled his cabinet in January, Mr. Anderson, a happy survivor, felt plucky enough to dash off a letter to each of the new ministers. "Dear colleague," it began, and went on to ask them to trim their vehicular ambitions and choose as their ministerial cars the hybrid gasoline/electric Prius, or perhaps a Crown Victoria converted to natural gas.

Mr. Anderson, who is ferried around town in a Toyota Prius, invoked the name of Mr. Chrétien in pressing his case. "He is very enthusiastic for us to illustrate our dedication . . . and determination in meeting Canada's Kyoto Protocol commitments, while inspiring all Canadians to embrace new technologies that can reduce greenhouse-gas emissions."

You can picture the minister waiting for the return mail that never came. The number of ministers willing to make the sacrifice of a few inches of leg room for the global good: zero. And these are the colleagues Mr. Anderson counts on for support in ratifying Kyoto. No wonder he's in trouble. He's up against "not in my back seat" syndrome.

As everyone knows by now, Mr. Anderson has hit a wall on ratification of Kyoto. Not an insurmountable wall, but a substantial one nonetheless.

A few weeks ago, he deluded himself into believing that headway was being made in positioning the government "on the right side of history," as his department likes to say. He went so far as to pronounce on behalf of both himself and his prime minister that Canada hoped to ratify Kyoto in time for the Group of Eight summit in Kananaskis, Alta., in June. Supporters of Mr. Anderson borrowed the language of free trade in suggesting the country take a leap of faith. Who knows? We could have an environmental technology-led boom.

By last week, the minister had slammed his Prius into reverse. "We have no deadline, we have no deadline at all," he said.

What happened?

To begin with, Mr. Chrétien has not lost his interest in climate change. His relationship with the Kyoto agreement has been unusually amorous. At several junctures, the Prime Minister has come out of nowhere to push his bureaucracy and ministers to get with the program.

But Mr. Chrétien, who would have liked to display a ratification trophy for his fellow G8 leaders, is a practical man. In recent weeks, it has become obvious to him that the issue is far

more complicated than merely persuading Ralph Klein to give up breathing, in addition to alcohol.

It is truly mind-boggling how little preparatory work -- both politically and economically -- has gone into an issue that has been around for so long. But the fact of the matter is that the government has figured out neither the real costs of compliance nor the means of distributing the pain in an acceptable manner among provinces and industrial sectors. (The decision by the Americans to remain on the sidelines adds a further competitiveness dimension to an already difficult situation.)

Mr. Chrétien, naturally, is looking to meet our Kyoto targets as painlessly as possible. At last year's G8 summit, he pushed for recognition of Canada's clean energy exports. In other words, he wants credit for natural gas and electricity sales that displace dirtier energy. Such credits could conceivably fill half of Canada's remaining Kyoto gap. But, so far, the rest of the world has delivered only a process for further discussion, not a formula. Expect Mr. Chrétien to raise the matter in a loud voice at Kananaskis.

Canadians are all squishy for Kyoto, but they are only beginning to hear of costs. Will they, unlike Mr. Anderson's colleagues, be willing to sacrifice some leg room? It appears from the polling data they are prepared to pay a price for doing the right thing by the climate. But exactly how high a price is difficult to discern. How can you even ask them when the government itself hasn't a clue?

Mr. Chrétien isn't a leap-of-faith kind of guy. Some say he might sign and let his successor worry about the gap between environmental good intentions and the deep blue sea. But not if the provinces and business community are up in arms. Not if investment bypasses Kyoto Canada. Not if the public is in for unpleasant surprises.

Mr. Chrétien needs to satisfy important constituencies that he has a workable plan. For that, he actually needs a workable plan. Won't happen by June. egreenspon@globeandmail.ca

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"A Babel of Voices for World Summit"

Mar 01, 2002 (Mail & Guardian/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Delegates will bring many conflicting agendas to the World Summit

"The trouble with the World Summit on Sustainable Development is that sustainable development means whatever you want it to mean," comments a South African-based diplomat.

With the summit six months away, and a ministerial "prepcom" (preparatory committee) meeting due to refine the agenda in Jakarta in June, its concrete business and possible fruits remain vague.

But key participants are already seeing the 10-day gathering, starting in Johannesburg on August 26, in different ways. No one predicts the sort of conflict that almost sabotaged last year's conference on racism in Durban, and most are hopeful of a positive outcome.

But all foresee "difficulties". South Africa's Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Ronnie Kasrils, said in Parliament recently that every effort was being made to prevent a Durban-style bunfight.

Everyone agrees - or at least pays lip-service to the idea - that the summit must redress the widening gulf between rich and poor nations. There is a sense that while the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro critically reshaped the world environmental regime, through such instruments as the Kyoto protocol on climate change, its call to arms on poverty and under-development had little effect.

Views on what should be done are heavily coloured by the interests and ideological culture of nations and groups of nations, however. The principal fissure is between the rich north and the poor south - but these blocs are far from monolithic.

The South Africans are adamant that the summit must focus on development, not the environment, and this is the message the host country is sending out to environmental NGOs.

Kasrils complained that the local media tended to assign environmental journalists to the August 26 gathering, and the Cabinet is apparently irked that its inter-state contacts on the summit are mainly with environment ministers. The relevant Cabinet subcommittee embraces virtually every portfolio.

Details are sparse, but the South Africans are pressing for heads of state to seal a global economic deal between north and south, embodied in a "Johannesburg programme of action". They are said to be determined that the summit should not be an empty vessel, like the racism conference.

The blueprint is the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad), which emphasises the mobilisation of private capital for development and envisages a trade-off involving increased "northern" development assistance and improved trade access in exchange for "southern" government reform.

Minister of Finance Trevor Manuel is expected to advance this position in a conference on development financing in Monterrey, Mexico, in March, which is seen as a crucial element in the build-up to August 26.

South Africa has a foot in both northern and southern camps. But many members of the "G77" developing nation lobby appear to have a cruder view, seeing the summit as a means of

extracting more aid - the magic figure is 0,7% of Gross National Product - and more, and less onerous, assistance from multilateral agencies such as the World Bank.

There is little sympathy among certain developed states - and particularly a United States under Republican rule - for what they brand the "diplomacy of the begging bowl".

The US is to press for improved governance in key poverty-relieving areas such as energy, water, fisheries and forests. It has little interest in the "artificial" 0,7% figure, arguing that if the poor are the target there is no sense in lining the pockets of self-serving elites.

In general, the US favours private sector-driven development and is allergic to regulatory regimes that hobble private business. It is this that underlies its refusal to endorse Kyoto, and preference for private sector self-regulation through "emissions trading" between companies.

Coupled with the aid issue is another potential summit flashpoint - globalisation, construed in some circles as a force for under-development.

The South is by no means unanimous on this. President Thabo Mbeki has pledged an open economy, and many Far Eastern states have benefited handsomely from increased trade and capital flows.

Whatever else happens, the South Africans clearly intend using the summit as a launching pad for Nepad, an initiative which enjoys strong support from European countries with a post-colonial conscience. But the Third World is not unanimously behind them.

Latin America is concerned that Nepad may divert aid flows to Africa. Another potentially competing interest is that of small island economies, whose cause is championed by Australia and the US.

The general perception is that environmental issues are highest on the agenda of Europe, with its environmentally conscious citizens and tough regulatory regimes. The Europeans are expected to push hard on matters such as renewable energy and marine conservation.

But there is a suspicion that this is partly a veil for restricting trade access and, in particular, shielding Europe's farmers, subsidised to the tune of \$1-billion a day. The fear - which cuts across the north-south divide - is that the European Union may use the summit to counter-balance its pledge at the recent World Trade Organisation pow-wow in Doha to dismantle non-tariff barriers to trade.

"The Europeans may try to extend the Rio Declaration's support for 'the precautionary approach' - restricting environmentally risky imports without hard scientific evidence - to issues of human health," said one diplomatic source.

One target could be genetically modified agricultural imports, on which Europe is deeply cautious. The bulk of US grain exports are genetically modified, and both the US and South Africa see genetic engineering as a potential motor of development.

The Europeans would prefer multilateral environmental accords like Kyoto to take precedence over the World Trade Organisation, which insists on scientific proof of harm to the environment or health as a condition for trade blackouts.

Veiled protectionism may influence the view of certain European summit delegates on G77 demands for more official aid, say observers. Remarks one: "There is talk that cheque books will be waved around at the summit, to soften demands for access to European markets."

For environmentalists, the biggest worry is that the accent on August 26 will be on economic development to the detriment of sustainability - two ideas that do not necessarily complement each other.

It is said that 500 years ago, a squirrel could cross Britain without touching the ground. The nemesis of indigenous woodlands was the ship-building trade, the root of British mercantile power.

Likewise, the destruction of rain forests may serve the immediate development needs of Brazil, Malaysia and, perhaps down the road, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Arguing that Europe's present affluence was built on massive environmental damage, rapidly industrialising countries such as China and India ask why they should limit "greenhouse" and other harmful emissions.

The Johannesburg summit will have to transcend the narrow economic interests of national governments whose first obligation is to their own citizens.

But delegates - and particularly the South Africans - will also have to accept that environmental protection is not the faddish concern of a well-heeled minority. The immediate material interests of the world's poor will have to be squared with the interests of generations to come.

But delegates - and particularly the South Africans - will also have to accept that environmental protection is not the faddish concern of a well-heeled minority. The immediate material interests of the world's poor will have to be squared with the interests of generations to come.

by Drew Forrest and Fiona Macleod

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March 1, 2002

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"BC-Climate-Summit-(News-Focus) 3-1 0663 FOCUS: World doing too little, too slowly on environment"

Global efforts to conserve the environment and eradicate poverty in the 1990s were too small and too slow, according to the U.S. think tank Worldwatch Institute.

"Steps in the 1990s toward a more just and ecologically resilient world were too small, too slow, or too poorly rooted," Gary Gardner, director of research at the think tank, states in its published report on the "State of the World 2002."

Ten years after the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit), where participants adopted Agenda 21, an international action program to realize sustainable development, the world is only responding "tentatively and unevenly," he states.

Efforts have also been made to create conventions, including the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change and the biodiversity treaty, but Gardner notes, "Global environmental problems, from climate change to species extinctions, deforestation, and water scarcity, have generally worsened."

"Social trends have shown some improvement, yet gaping global disparities in wealth remain: one-fifth of the world's people live on a dollar or less each day, even as the world's wealthy suffer from symptoms of excess, such as obesity," he reports.

World leaders are expected to express new resolve on sustainable development at this year's summit in Johannesburg from Aug. 26 to Sept. 4, by pointing to past problems and outlining the numerous challenges that lie ahead.

Among these are the issues of fresh water resources, deforestation, and measures to prevent HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases.

According to a survey by Save the Children, a U.S. citizens' group, 4 million children in developing countries die every year before their first birthday.

The number of children who die before their first birthday in Japan and other developed countries stands at 2-4 in 1,000, but this compares with 68 for Liberia, while the figure exceeds 40 for most other African countries.

Average life expectancy is over 80 years in Japan, the oldest in the world, but the comparable figure in Sierra Leone is less than 35.

On deforestation, the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) says that large areas of forest are still being destroyed in developing countries despite a slight decline in pace since the 1980s.

Even in a developed country like Japan, 12.3 million hectares -- nearly a third of Japan's forests -- were destroyed between 1990 and 2000, the FAO says.

Another challenge for world leaders is how to reduce the inequalities brought about by rapid globalization and developments in Information Technology (IT), especially with regard to people in Africa -- an issue that was not even thought about 10 years ago.

Emil Salim, chairman of the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development, told a preparatory session for the summit at the United Nations headquarters in February that serious poverty invites environmental destruction and that environmental destruction aggravates poverty.

Salim said the largest challenge for participants in the Johannesburg summit will be poverty eradication.

Preparations for the summit have gradually started moving forward. At the preparatory session in New York from late January to early February, a draft document for a new action plan was compiled.

In Japan, the government set up a summit preparatory committee on Monday with members from the Cabinet Office and nine ministries. The government is soliciting public opinion on the document, while nongovernmental organizations are also preparing for the event.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has yet to officially announce his participation or whether Japan will be making any specific proposals at the summit.

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March 5, 2002

WASHINGTON POST 4-3-02

“Europe, U.S. Diverging on Key Policy Approaches”
By Keith B. Richburg

PARIS -- The Sept. 11 attacks initially brought Europe and the United States closer together, with spontaneous outpourings of sympathy on the streets of Europe and pledges of solidarity from the corridors of power. But nearly six months on, the transatlantic allies are at odds over how to deal with key international issues highlighted by the attacks on New York and the Pentagon.

While Americans are still coming to grips with their newfound vulnerability, many Europeans -- long accustomed to terrorism at home -- believe it is time to move on. While the Bush administration has made the war on terrorism the central focus of its foreign policy, Europeans are pursuing a more broadly focused policy that looks at what they see as the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, disease and environmental degradation.

Europeans are continuing overtures to North Korea and reformist groups in Iran, rejecting President Bush's view that those countries and Iraq form an "axis of evil."

On the Middle East, the Bush administration has largely followed the lead of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, isolating Yasser Arafat and blaming the Palestinian leader for not clamping down harder on Palestinian "terrorism." But the Europeans see a Middle East

settlement as crucial to solving the global terror problem, and say the way to get one is to be far more critical of Israeli incursions into Palestinian areas and to insist that Arafat remains the legitimate voice of the Palestinians.

Above all, the Europeans believe the threats exposed by Sept. 11 require more than ever a multilateral approach, and that the United States is trying to go it alone.

"You can't deal with the dark side of globalization -- the terrorism, the financing of terrorism, the crime, the drugs, the trafficking of human beings, the relationship between environmental degradation and poverty and security . . . unless you deal with them as a result of multilateral engagement," said Chris Patten, the European Union's external affairs commissioner.

"There is a real European perplexity in the face of an American administration that, in a little more than a year, has opposed the Kyoto protocol [on global warming] . . . several disarmament accords, and took advantage of its Security Council veto on the question of the Middle East," French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said in an interview in Friday's Liberation newspaper. In December, the United States cast the lone veto of a Security Council resolution calling for Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian-controlled territory.

"Perhaps there had been a certain underestimate in Europe of the dreadful shock that was the discovery by the Americans of vulnerability," Vedrine said. "But this doesn't explain this growing unilateral temptation. . . . The fight against terrorism cannot take the place of a policy for all the problems in the world."

A certain amount of discord has been a constant feature between the United States and its European allies, the more so in recent years as Europe has moved tentatively closer to a common voice on foreign and security concerns.

But many Europeans are surprised by the intensity of the current debate and the depth of criticism coming even from self-professed "Americaphiles" such as Patten. In the 1990s, as the last British governor of Hong Kong, he was a favorite of U.S. conservatives for his tough stance against China.

No one indicates the current debate will lead to any kind of permanent rift. Diplomats, politicians and analysts note that the United States and Europe still share common values, interests and liberal democratic systems.

But there is also broad agreement that the Sept. 11 attacks and their aftermath have opened a fundamental divide between the United States and its European allies, and the debate is likely to intensify as the Bush administration decides, for example, whether to begin military operations to dislodge Iraq's Saddam Hussein from power.

"There's just a really different view of what the problem is and how to deal with it," said Philip H. Gordon, a senior fellow in foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

"Americans see the Europeans as wanting to put their heads in the sand," he said. "We see this as a long-term struggle."

Almost six months after the World Trade Center and Pentagon were hit, "Europeans want to put the whole thing in parenthesis," said Francois Heisbourg, a French defense analyst. "That is indeed terrible. I consider the Europeans on this one are totally wrong."

Much of the difference is rooted in different experiences with terrorism. For Europeans, terrorism has long been considered an unfortunate fact of life. France has endured bombings linked to Algerian militants, while Italy suffered under the Red Brigades. Germany experienced a wave of terrorism from the Baader-Meinhof gang in the 1970s, and Greece is still home to the small but deadly November 17 group.

"Europeans have always felt vulnerable," said Daniel Keohane, research fellow at the Center for European Reform in London. "But what they don't understand is that for Americans, this is a new development."

For Europeans, the lessons of terrorism are that it must be fought, but that the root causes must also be addressed. "One can walk and chew gum at the same time," Heisbourg said.

Patten cites "linkages" among social, economic, political and security issues. "Am I so naive as to think if you drop 20 million European aid packages on Sudan or Somalia or Afghanistan that terrorism is going to disappear tomorrow?" he asked rhetorically. "No. But do I think there is a relationship between global inequity and state breakdown and violence and instability and terrorism? Yes."

The European Union spends about \$30 billion a year on development assistance, nearly three times the U.S. figure.

Shortly after Sept. 11, Gordon Brown, the British finance minister, recommended that the developed world double its level of assistance, to \$100 billion a year. But the idea was shot down by Treasury Secretary Paul H. O'Neill, who said as recently as last month he believes "there is precious little to show" for past U.S. aid programs.

Europeans were stunned that Bush, in his January State of the Union address, talked at length about the "axis of evil" and terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction, but did not mention Third World poverty.

On Iran, Europeans said they would continue their policy of engagement, including trade and building ties with reformers and the middle class.

On North Korea, Europe has relaxed textile trade controls to try to stimulate economic activity, and is moving ahead with a plan to bring North Korean managers to Europe for training and firsthand experience with market economies.

Concerning Iraq, most European leaders see Hussein as a threat. But the Europeans would like to push more aggressively to force him to accept U.N. weapons inspectors. As for a possible military campaign to oust him, one European diplomat said, "Show us the plan first."

“Non-Traditional Security In Asia: Governance, Globalization, And Environment' To Be Addressed At Headquarters Seminar, 15 March”

The United Nations University will host a seminar sponsored by the Ford Foundation on "Thinking Outside the Security Box -- Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Governance, Globalization, and the Environment". The meeting is scheduled to take place from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday, 15 March 2002, in Conference Room 6, at United Nations Headquarters.

The seminar will focus in particular on understanding non-military and non-State centric security challenges. The panel will examine the broadening concept of security, which addresses threats to individual security from disease, hunger, unsafe water, environmental contamination, crime and even terrorism. The workshop will be divided into three sections: the environment and security; globalization and socio-economic challenges to security; and the role of governance.

Speakers will include the coordinators of the project, Ramesh Thakur, Vice Rector of the United Nations University, and Bradford Smith, Vice President, Peace and Social Justice Program, the Ford Foundation; Dipankar Banerjee, Executive Director, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies; Barry Desker, Director, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies; Amitav Acharya, Deputy Director, Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies; Adil Najam, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, Boston University; Evelyn Goh, Assistant Professor, Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies; Guen Lee, Assistant Professor, School of International and Area Studies, Seoul University; Shaun Narine, Izaak Walton Killam Postdoctoral Fellow, Liu Centre for the Study of Global Issues, University of British Columbia; Shao Zhiqin, Senior Fellow, Shandong Academy of Social Sciences; Santishree Pandit, Director, International Centre, University of Pune, India; Tsuneo Akaha, Director, Center for East Asian Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies, California; P. Saravanamuttu, Director, Center for Policy Initiatives, Colombo, Sri Lanka; and Rizal Sukma, Director of Studies, Center for Strategic and International Relations, Jakarta.

For further information, please contact Ramon Ray at the United Nations University Office in New York, tel: 212-963-6387, fax: 212-371-9454, Web site: www.unu.edu/ona.

Interested delegations, Secretariat staff, non-governmental organizations, and representatives from the media are invited to attend. As seating is limited, kindly register at <http://www.unu.edu/ona/unuseminarregistration.htm>.

“Activists Cheer Kyoto Ratification”

By Greta Hopkins

BRUSSELS, March 4 (IPS) - Environmentalists have greeted the European Union's decision to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on climate change with relief and applause.

The Kyoto Protocol - adopted at the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Kyoto, Japan, on December 11, 1997 - commits the 15 EU nations to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to 8 percent over the period 2008-2012 compared to 1990 levels.

Carbon Dioxide, emitted by motor vehicles and industries that burn fossil fuels, is blamed for climate change and global warming.

"The EU decision to ratify the Kyoto Protocol is an historic benchmark towards its entry into force by the time of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg," said Michel Raquet, Greenpeace climate advisor after the ratification on Monday.

"The whole Kyoto protocol was at stake today. This act sends a clear and definitive signal to all countries around the world that the EU is serious about Kyoto."

Matthias Duwe, Climate Policy Researcher at Climate Network Europe, said: "It sends a strong political signal to the rest of the world, particularly to Moscow and Tokyo. It shows that the 15 EU member states want to fulfil their commitment together and act as one voice."

According to environmental NGOs, Japan and Russia have been waiting for the EU to make the first move before they go ahead and ratify.

Two conditions are needed for the Kyoto Protocol to come into force: it must be ratified by 55 countries, and ratifying parties together must represent at least 55 percent of world emissions.

So far 47 countries had ratified, but of these only two are industrialised - Romania and Mexico.

Once the Protocol has been signed by countries making up at least 55 per cent of world emissions it will take at least 90 days for the Protocol to enter into force. If the EU is to live up to its commitment to ratify before the Johannesburg summit (August 26 - September 4), all the 15 member states must send their ratification letters to the United Nations by the first week of June. Now that the EU has ratified the text as a body, there is a real possibility that the EU can live up to its self-imposed deadline.

A common document endorsed by EU Environment Ministers on Monday says that the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol will preserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment, protect human health, contribute to the prudent and rational use of natural resources and promote measures at the international level to deal with regional or world-wide environmental problems.

The current president in the EU's six-month rotating presidency, Jaume Matas Palou said: "Climate change is the most serious environmental problem faced by the EU. Ratification by the EU is an important achievement that will save the Kyoto Protocol."

But EU commitment is not enough on its own, he said. "The EU will keep open negotiations with other countries to encourage them to ratify," he said.

"This is a great day for climate and a great day for sustainable development," said the EU's Environment Commissioner Margot Wallström.

"It allows us to maintain our credibility and keep taking the lead in climate change policy. Of course all countries have to act, but we in the EU have a certain responsibility and have to take the lead on this."

Wallström admitted that there is a certain cost to implementing Kyoto. " We estimate that Kyoto will only cost 0.06 per cent of GDP if efficient means such as emissions trading are used. If less efficient means are used it could cost 0.3 per cent. But climate change also costs."

Wallström announced that she will immediately write to the governments of Russia, Japan and Australia, urging them to speed up the ratification process.

Activists say that the EU's commitment to Kyoto can no longer be questioned, and it is just a matter of time before the rules come into force.

All the EU member states have to ratify Kyoto separately, and also as a whole. "It's a done deal. We know all the conditions and all the details. We now just have to get the processes through national parliaments," said Duwe.

NGOs are most concerned about Italy and Greece, the two countries that are most behind in their internal procedures. "The finalisation of national procedures must not thwart the overall EU commitment," said Duwe.

The European Union also declared itself opposed to the Bush climate plan, saying that Kyoto is the only credible international instrument to tackle climate change. Wallström said: "We have calculated that the Bush plan will even allow the U.S. to increase its emissions by up to 33 per cent."

The Bush plan, much of which must be approved by Congress before it can be implemented, proposes a 'cap and trade' system that would set limits for emissions of three major air pollutants -- but not carbon dioxide.

Under this plan, permits would be assigned for each ton of pollution. By cutting emissions, firms would save up these permits for use at a later date or to trade with other businesses. By contrast, the international community's Kyoto Protocol insists on mandatory reductions.

Also in preparation for the Johannesburg World Summit, EU Ministers adopted a set of conclusions on the EU's sustainable development strategy (SDS). Environment ministers declared that the EU's SDS concentrates too much on economic and social issues, and overlooks the importance of the environment.

The European Parliament had also demanded that the environment be placed on an equal footing with economic and social policy in a resolution adopted on February 28. Members of the European Parliament are asking for specific targets to measure the reversal of unsustainable trends. (END)

March 25, 2002

For information only. Not an official record

“Saving the ozone layer: UNEP responds to evolving needs of developing countries in implementing the Montreal Protocol; New Compliance Assistance Programme launched”

PARIS/NAIROBI, 25 March 2002 - The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has changed the way it does business in order to help developing countries meet their targets to phase-out use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone depleting substances.

Last week in Montreal, the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol endorsed the 2002 Business Plan of UNEP which includes the Compliance Assistance Programme (CAP). The new Programme, approved by the Executive Committee and designed to speed up project implementation by DTIE and the quality of services provided to developing countries to support compliance with the Montreal Protocol, is the new core of the UNEP DTIE OzonAction Programme.

"Completing the CFC phase-out schedule for developing countries is of particular importance for the recovery of the Earth's stratospheric ozone layer," says Jacqueline Aloisi de Larderel, Assistant Executive Director of UNEP and Director of the Division of Technology Industry and Economics (DTIE). "The Montreal Protocol is succeeding but the job is not yet over. Ensuring that developing countries fulfil their compliance is essential for the success of the treaty and ultimately the recovery of the ozone layer, and we believe UNEP's new approach under the CAP will assist in realizing this objective," she said.

The ozone layer shields planet Earth from the harmful ultraviolet-B radiation of the sun. It also completely screens out lethal UV-C radiation. The ozone shield is thus essential to life as we know it. Depleting the ozone layer allows more UV-B to reach the earth. More UV-B means more melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers, more eye cataracts, weakened immune systems, reduced plant yields, damage to ocean eco-systems and reduced fishing yields, adverse effects on animals, and more damage to plastics.

Under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and its Amendments developing countries that are Party to the Protocol (Article 5 countries) must reduce and then

phase-out both the production and consumption of ozone depleting substances according to a specific timetable.

These countries have committed to a 1999 freeze in their production and consumption of CFCs, to be followed by a 50% reduction by 2005, an 85% cut by 2007, and a complete phase out by 2010; they will also be required to freeze halons and methyl bromide in 2002. Developed countries almost completely phased out CFCs in 1996, except for a small number of essential uses.

The new Compliance Assistance Programme will move UNEP away from its previous project management approach. In the future, a team of UNEP staff located in UNEP's regional offices and DTIE Paris will deliver compliance assistance directly to countries on the ground. Strengthening the regional offices in this way will help deliver more projects and services to developing countries.

"The majority of the UNEP CAP team will be based in our Regional Offices where they can work more closely with countries on an ongoing basis," says Mrs. de Larderel. "Through the more direct delivery of services that is envisioned, CAP will enable UNEP to be more responsive to the needs of Article 5 countries. This innovative regional delivery approach may set a trend in supporting compliance with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements," she said.

The 36th Meeting of the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol took place from 20-22 March in Montreal, Canada.

Note to Editors: The Multilateral Fund was established by a decision of the Second Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol (London, June 1990) and began its operation in 1991. The main objective of the Multilateral Fund is to assist developing country parties to the Montreal Protocol whose annual per capita consumption and production of ozone depleting substances is less than 0.3 kg to comply with the control measures of the Protocol. These countries are referred to as Article 5 countries.

The Fund is managed by an Executive Committee and assisted by the Fund Secretariat. It is implemented by four international Implementing Agencies (UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, World Bank) and a number of bilateral agencies. Responsibility for overseeing the operation of the Fund rests with an Executive Committee comprising seven members each from Article 5 and non-Article 5 countries. Contributions to the Multilateral Fund from the industrialised countries, or non-Article 5 countries, are assessed according to the United Nations scale of assessment.

Since 1991, the Multilateral Fund has approved investment and non-investment projects worth over US\$ 1.3 billion that will result in the phase out of over 141,000 ODP tonnes in developing countries. (ODP, Ozone Depletion Potential, is a relative index indicating the extent to which a chemical product may cause ozone depletion)

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UNEP Information Note 2002/8

OXFORD ANALYTICA

“INTERNATIONAL: Market principles endorsed at Monterrey”

25 March 2002

EVENT: A week-long conference on development aid concluded on March 22.

SIGNIFICANCE: More than 50 heads of state adopted the so-called Monterrey Consensus at the conclusion of the UN-convened International Conference on Financing for Development. The consensus could represent a turning point in the concept of development finance.

ANALYSIS: By adopting the Monterrey Consensus -- the core document of the week-long global development assistance conference -- industrialised countries, emerging economies and underdeveloped countries, along with international financial institutions, agreed that development aid represents one, and not the most important, of the avenues to obtain resources to drive economic development. The conference also pressured the world's two largest economic regions -- the United States and the EU -- to pledge more money for development assistance (see OADB, March 19, 2002, II).

The consensus represents the widespread acceptance of certain standards on development finance. It contains many of the guiding principles attributed to the so-called Washington Consensus of the early 1990s, yet enjoys the imprimatur of industrialised, emerging and least developed countries alike. Although vague in many of its statements, between the lines the Monterrey Consensus clearly promotes laissez-faire principles -- though with greater recognition of political and economic constraints -- and articulates the limitations of initiatives such as debt cancellation, while hinting at radical changes for the IMF.

Economic policy. While stating that each country has primary responsibility for its economic and social development, and that the appropriate role of government in market-oriented economies will vary from country to country, the consensus unambiguously prioritises:

- avoidance of inflationary distortions and abrupt economic fluctuations;
- prudence in fiscal and monetary policies; and
- coherence of such policies with the exchange-rate regime.

The document comments on a number of specific areas relevant to development finance:

1. Trade. The consensus notes international trade's role in providing external finance, and argues for facilitating the accession of all countries that apply for membership in the WTO. Notably, it promotes not only multilateral liberalisation (encouraging the WTO to implement the agreements reached in the Doha ministerial conference), but also regional and subregional agreements -- even urging international financial institutions to continue supporting projects that promote regional integration (see OADB, March 21, 2002, IV).

While the consensus does not mention industrialised countries' own protectionist digressions (see OADB, March 8, 2002, I), World Bank President James Wolfensohn showed no such restraint, urging rich countries to tear down trade barriers and reminding political leaders of their responsibility to face down the powerful lobbies ranged against liberalisation. Wolfensohn also urged rich nations to reduce agricultural subsidies, which by some estimates are six times as large as industrialized nations' foreign aid (see OADB, March 19, 2001, III).

2. FDI. Sound macro policies are emphasised for growth reasons as well as for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), which is unequivocally advocated to secure long-term growth, transfer knowledge and technology, create jobs, boost productivity, and ultimately eradicate poverty through economic development. The consensus stresses creation of domestic and international conditions to facilitate FDI flows, mainly in terms of a government role for creating a transparent and predictable investment climate with contract enforcement and respect for property rights (see OADB, October 5, 2001, III).

The document is more cautious on portfolio investment flows. It states that mitigation of the impact of excessive volatility of short-term capital flows is important, and that the liberalisation of capital accounts should proceed according to local conditions and development objectives. It avoids mention of specific measures, including the so-called Tobin tax (see OADB, January 31, 2002, I).

3. Conditionality. Arguably one of the most ground-breaking aspects of the consensus is its de-facto acceptance of conditionality for official development assistance (ODA). It stresses that ODA has only a complementary role to other sources of finance -- mainly that it can be critical for improving the environment for private-sector activity. ODA should only be channelled under 'partnerships' among donors and recipients, always recognising that sound economic policies and good governance at all levels are necessary to ensure effectiveness.

Unexpected results. While disappointing some of its most fervent organizers (see OADB, February 8, 2002, II) the conference produced a number of somewhat unanticipated developments:

1. Aid commitments. The most fruitful short-term result was the unofficial bidding contest between the United States and the EU publicly to increase their ODA commitments. Before Monterrey, during a meeting in Barcelona, the EU countries committed themselves to reach an average ODA equivalent to 0.39% of national output by 2006, with individual countries reaching at least 0.33% -- a commitment representing at least an extra \$7 billion by 2006 and some \$20 billion during 2000-06 (total EU ODA was 25.4 billion dollars during 2000). In what was considered an abrupt change in policy, US President George Bush pledged to increase ODA by

50%, also by 2006, to 15 billion dollars per year, with some of the extra funding becoming available within the next year.

2. Limits to debt relief. While stating that debt relief should be pursued vigorously and expeditiously, the consensus clearly rejected a blanket debt cancellation or a generalised solution for heavily indebted poor countries, stressing that the countries have to undertake policy measures to become eligible for debt reduction to a sustainable level.

3. Potential IMF changes. Albeit with few specifics, the consensus proposes what would be important changes to the workings of the IMF:

It recommends studying the allocation of funds for development purposes (the World Bank's purview), while respecting the IMF's Articles of Agreement, which requires taking into account the need for liquidity at the international level. It is unclear how these objectives would be reconciled.

It argues for strengthened Fund surveillance of all economies, and of short-term capital flows and their impact.

It welcomes the consideration of an international debt workout mechanism between sovereign debtors and creditors to restructure unsustainable debts less chaotically, a proposal which has been taken up by the Fund in recent months (see OADB, January 23, 2002, I).

CONCLUSION: The Monterrey Consensus' realistic promotion of free-market principles could represent a turning point in development assistance thinking. While the document lacks specifics, it succeeded in reinvigorating the important dialogue on financing development in the world's poorest countries.

April 17, 2002

Unep Convention On Biological Diversity
NEWS RELEASE

“Governments to advance work on Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety”

The Hague, 17 April 2002 - With the legally-binding Protocol on Biosafety gaining momentum towards its entry into force, delegates from over 160 governments as well as non-governmental, inter-governmental and indigenous and private sector organizations will meet here for continuing discussions from 22-26 April.

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity aims to ensure the safe transfer, handling and use of living modified organisms that result from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biological diversity, taking also into account risks to human health.

"The Cartagena Protocol recognizes that biotechnology has an immense potential for improving human welfare but that it could also pose risks to biodiversity and human health," said Klaus

Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. "The Proposal promises to minimize these risks by establishing an effective system for managing the transboundary movement of living modified organisms."

"As of 28 February 2002, the Protocol had a total of 13 ratifications and accessions and 103 signatures. It will enter into force on the ninetieth day after the fiftieth instrument of ratification, accession, approval or acceptance, has been deposited with the Secretary General of the United Nations", said Mr. Hamdallah Zedan, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

"This third meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee on the Cartagena Protocol needs to make significant progress in order to ensure a smooth entry into force for the Protocol when the day arrives," he added.

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (ICCP) was established by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to prepare for the first Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (COP-MOP 1). The Committee first met from 11-15 December 2000 in Montpellier, France and then again from 1-5 October 2001 in Nairobi, Kenya. The current meeting is being held back-to-back with the sixth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention.

In The Hague, the ICCP will address the following issues: decision making; information sharing; capacity building; compliance; handling, transport, packaging and identification; liability and redress, monitoring and reporting, the Secretariat, guidance to the financial mechanism, and rules of procedure for the meeting of the Parties; and consideration of other issues necessary for effective implementation of the Protocol.

Ambassador Philemon Yang of Cameroon, Chairman of the ICCP, noted that some progress was made during the first two meetings on a number of issues. Concrete outputs so far have included: the development and implementation of the pilot phase of the Biosafety Clearing-House (a mechanism for international exchange of biosafety-related information), adoption of an Action Plan for Building Capacities for the Effective Implementation of the Protocol, and establishment of a roster of over 400 experts who provide advice and other support to developing country Parties on risk assessment.

"Information sharing and capacity building, especially for developing countries, are some of the critical priority requirements for the successful implementation of the Protocol," said Ambassador Yang. "We need to empower countries to make informed decisions."

The first and the second meetings of the ICCP also prepared a number of recommendations, which will be considered by the COP-MOP.

This third meeting will also consider the report of the CBD Executive Secretary on the status of the Protocol, including the designation of National Competent Authorities and National Focal Points for the Protocol and for the Biosafety Clearing-House, as well as progress in implementing the recommendations made by ICCP 2. Reports of inter-sessional meetings

convened pursuant to the previous ICCP recommendations will be discussed, namely: the regional meetings on the Biosafety Clearing-House and the Technical Experts Meetings on Handling, Transport Packaging and Identification for paragraph 2(b) and 2(c) of Article 18) and for paragraph 2(a) of Article 18.

It is expected that the meeting will prepare further recommendations that will advance preparations for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol.

Additional information

1. The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was adopted on 29 January 2000 in Montreal, Canada, after more than three and a half years of negotiation. It will enter into force on the ninetieth day after the date of deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, accession, approval or acceptance with the Secretary General of the United Nations.
2. The Intergovernmental Committee for the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will cease to exist when the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Protocol is held, i.e. after the Protocol has entered into force.
3. The roster of experts was established to provide advice and other support to developing country Parties to conduct risk assessment, make informed decisions, develop national human resources and promote institutional strengthening, associated with the transboundary movements of living modified organisms.
4. Additional information about the Protocol is available at : www.biodiv.org/biosafety/

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PRESS BACKGROUNDER

Biotechnology and the Biosafety Protocol

What is biotechnology? For millennia, humans have artificially altered the genetic makeup of plants and animals through breeding selection and cross-fertilization. Since the early 1970s, however, modern biotechnology has enabled scientists to transfer genetic material (DNA - the biochemical instructions governing the development of cells and organisms) through biochemical means and to radically alter the intricate genetic structure of individual living cells. They can now introduce a great diversity of genes into plants, animals, and micro-organisms almost instantly. For the first time, humanity has the power to transfer genes from one type of organism to another - for example, to insert genes from a bacterium into a tomato to create a transgenic plant. Modern biotechnology means the application of:

- a. In vitro nucleic acid techniques, including recombinant deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and direct injection of nucleic acid into cells or organelles, or
- b. Fusion of cells beyond the taxonomic family, that overcome natural physiological reproductive or recombination barriers and that are not techniques used in traditional breeding and selection.

What are Living Modified Organisms (LMOs)?

LMOs are any living organism that possesses a novel combination of genetic material obtained through the use of modern biotechnology; they include a variety of food crops that have been genetically modified for greater productivity or for resistance to pests or diseases. Common examples include tomatoes, grains, cassava (a starchy root grown in Sub-Saharan Africa and other tropical areas), corn, and soybeans. Seeds for growing new crops are particularly important because they are used intentionally to propagate LMOs. Living organism means any biological entity capable of transferring or replicating genetic material, including sterile organisms, viruses and viroids.

What are LMO products?

LMOs form the basis of a range of products and agricultural commodities. Citing the precautionary principle, some experts cite the risk that pieces of DNA remaining in these non-living products could possibly replicate under certain conditions; others consider this to be extremely unlikely. Processed products containing dead modified organisms or non-living LMO components include certain vaccines; drugs; food additives; and many processed, canned, and preserved foods. Depending on the precise definition, they can also include corn and soybean derivatives used in many foods and nonfoods, cornstarch used for cardboard and adhesives, fuel ethanol for gasoline, vitamins, vaccines and pharmaceuticals, and yeast-based foods such as beer and bread.

What are the potential benefits of biotechnology?

Genetic engineering promises remarkable advances in medicine, agriculture, and other fields. It can alter the growth characteristics of micro-organisms, insects, fish, and animals or make them produce new substances. It can improve the resistance of plants to pests and environmental pressures and increase their commercial value. It can create food crops with increased yields, raising the protein generated from limited land and resources. It can also make plants more resistant to disease and insects. Other benefits include new medical treatments and vaccines, new industrial products, and improved fibres and fuels.

What are the potential risks?

Biotechnology is a very new field, and much about the interaction of LMOs with various ecosystems is not yet known. The introduction of genetically modified organisms should not proceed faster than advances in scientific understanding. Some of the concerns about the new technologies include unintended changes in the competitiveness, virulence, or other characteristics of the target species; the possibility of adverse impacts on non-target species (such as beneficial insects) and ecosystems; the potential for weediness in genetically modified crops (a plant becomes too resistant and invasive, perhaps by transferring its genes to wild relatives); and the stability of inserted genes (the possibilities that a gene will lose its effectiveness or will be re-transferred to another host). A specific example that has recently been cited involves the insertion of protease inhibitor genes (PIs) into plants; these small proteins interfere with enzymes in the intestinal tracts of insects and can disrupt development and destroy larvae in both pests and beneficial insects. Similarly, Bt-toxins engineered into a wide range of transgenic plants may build up in the soil and harm pollinators and other beneficial insects.

What is biosafety?

Biosafety is a new term used to describe efforts to reduce and eliminate the potential risks resulting from biotechnology and its products. It is based on the precautionary principle, which states that the lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as an excuse to postpone action when there is a threat of serious or irreversible damage. While developed countries that are at the center of the global biotechnology industry have established domestic biosafety regimes, many developing countries are only now starting to establish their own national systems.

Why is biotechnology also a trade issue?

The commercialization of biotechnology has spawned multi-billion-dollar industries for foodstuffs and pharmaceuticals that continue to grow at a dramatic pace. Under World Trade Organization (WTO) regulations, the regulation of trade must be based on "sound scientific knowledge". Under environmental regimes, the agreed standard of proof is the precautionary principle. The WTO also does not accept socio-economic concerns, such as the risk that exports of genetically engineered crops may replace traditional ones and undermine local cultures and traditions in importing countries. The subsidiary agreements of the WTO, including the Sanitary and Phytosanitary Agreement (SPS), Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement (TBT), and the Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property (TRIPs), also contain specific provisions that apply to the biosafety issue.

Why is an international Biosafety agreement needed?

The objectives of the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity are "the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources." There is growing public concern about the potential risks posed by living modified organisms. A particular concern is that many developing countries lack the technical, financial, and institutional means to address biosafety. They need greater capacity for assessing and managing risks, establishing adequate information systems, and developing expert human resources in biotechnology. While many countries with modern biotechnology industries do have domestic legislation, there are no binding international agreements covering LMOs that cross national borders because of trade or accidental releases. An international regime is needed now while the biotechnology industry is still young and major errors have not yet been committed.

GLOBE AND MAIL

"U.S. religious groups take on Manitoba Hydro"

By KRISTA FOSS

Wednesday, April 17, 2002 ? Print Edition, Page A10

WINNIPEG -- Manitoba Hydro has become the target of U.S. religious groups over a proposed hydroelectric expansion in Cree territory that would allow it to deliver \$1-billion (U.S.) more in electricity to a Minnesota energy company.

Yesterday, a full-page ad in The New York Times read: "Investing in Manitoba Hydro's Environmental Destruction And Human Rights Abuses Is Just Bad Business." It was placed by San Francisco-based social justice organization As You Sow and paid for anonymously.

As You Sow is part of a coalition of 300 religious and social justice groups that wants Minneapolis-based Xcel Energy to stop contracting with Manitoba Hydro for any future additional supplies of "non-renewable" electricity.

A resolution to that effect will be put forward by members of the coalition who own shares in Xcel Energy at the company's annual shareholder meeting in Denver, tomorrow.

"The shareholders are concerned. The issue is building momentum. It is going to come back every year . . . all we want is clean energy," As You Sow's associate director, Michael Passoff, said.

Manitoba Hydro currently sells 30 per cent of its total electricity output to Xcel, and is negotiating to sell an additional 500 megawatts to the energy company by 2005 in a deal worth more than \$1-billion (U.S.).

The public utility has been dogged by a 30-year-old legacy from the days when it diverted the Churchill River for hydroelectric development and caused massive floods and environmental destruction on the lands of the northern Cree.

Members of the Pimicikamak Cree Nation at Cross Lake, Man., say Manitoba Hydro never made proper reparations to them for the devastation of the early 1970s and they have taken their story of land erosion, destroyed fish stocks, poor drinking water and social problems to U.S. environmental and religious groups. Chief John Muswaggon will speak at Xcel Energy's shareholder meeting in Denver.

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April 19, 2002

“Climate scientist ousted”

Sceptics claimed the IPCC had become too political. One of the most outspoken scientists on the issue of global warming has been ousted from his job.

Dr Robert Watson was voted out of the chair of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on Friday and will be replaced by one of the current vice-chairs, Dr Rajendra Pachauri.

Dr Watson's removal will spark a huge political row - environmentalists accuse the US Government of orchestrating a campaign to have the scientist sidelined.

They say Washington disliked Dr Watson's willingness to tell governments what he believes to be the unvarnished truth – that human activities are now contributing dangerously to climate change.

Government representatives attending an IPCC meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, voted 76 to 49 for the engineer and economist Dr Rajendra Pachauri to take the chair.

Dr Pachauri, the director of the Tata Energy Research Institute in New Delhi, was the US administration's favoured candidate.

Climate facts

President Bush repudiated the international climate agreement, the Kyoto Protocol, which is the only political instrument so far to result from the IPCC's work.

The president took the view that the protocol would do enormous damage to the US economy.

Green groups believe Mr Bush is unduly influenced by the energy lobby in America, and point to a memo forwarded to the White House by ExxonMobil last year.

The document raised the question of whether Dr Watson could be replaced as the US representative on the IPCC. Environmentalists claimed the outcome of Friday's vote was proof of ExxonMobil's power behind the scenes in Washington.

"It's just extraordinary that Exxon can tell the US what to do and then they go and do it," said Cindy Baxter of the StopEsso campaign. She claimed the company did not like the science coming out of the IPCC, "so they changed the scientist".

"Luckily, the science of the IPCC is very strong," she added. "No matter what Exxon and the US tries to do - they cannot change that."

Natural factors

What the environmentalists do fear, however, is that documents produced for politicians may now be less forceful in their presentation - they are not convinced that Dr Rajendra Pachauri will be so strong an advocate for change in global energy policies as Dr Watson.

Many critics of the IPCC believe this should not be a role the panel assumes anyway. They think it should stick simply to assessing the facts of climate science.

Many sceptics were deeply critical at what they saw as the politicisation of the UN group under the chairmanship of Dr Watson.

They claim humanity's influence on the climate has been overstated - that the changes we see around us today are the products of natural variability.

ExxonMobil has told BBC News Online that the White House memo was not written by one of its employees and that it merely passed the document on. The company said it had no official position on the post of IPCC chair.

04/19/2002 12:50:33

“UN conference backs indigenous peoples drug payout”

By Otti Thomas

THE HAGUE, April 19 (Reuters) - A global environmental conference on Friday hammered out guidelines to encourage big business to pay indigenous communities for the right to use native plants to make commercial drugs and cosmetics.

Delegates from 166 countries adopted global guidelines at the end of a two-week U.N. sponsored conference designed to encourage leading pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies to strike deals with countries where they use genetic resources.

“The guidelines on genetic resources promise to improve the way foreign companies... and other users gain access to valuable genetic resources in return for sharing the benefits with the countries of origin and with local indigenous communities,” the Convention on Biological Diversity said.

According to the World Health Organisation there are some 250,000 medicinal plant species in the world, extracts from which are used to produce more than 85 percent of the medicines used by more than 80 percent of the developed world.

Developing countries, whose jungles and wetlands might harbour as yet unknown cures for cancer or AIDS, have long complained they receive little benefit from pharmaceutical firms, which are keen to protect the intellectual property rights to drugs.

The Convention on Biological Diversity guidelines are designed to help governments secure a share of profits and royalties from companies gathering material in their country to use in products or research.

BIOPIRACY

Environmental group Greenpeace was less than happy with the outcome of the conference, which was attended by environment ministers from dozens of countries.

“The ministers... discussed proposals to stop and prevent biopiracy, the theft of genetic resources from developing countries by... pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. (Greenpeace believes that any agreement to stop biopiracy will be insufficient if the resources to be shared are disappearing,” it said.

A spokesman for the United Nations Environment Programme said that agreement on the guidelines was an important step forward.

“We all play our roles. Greenpeace's role is to push governments in a direction to do even better. Things should be better and actually need to be better, but we were not there to plant trees. We were actually talking,” its spokesman Michael Williams said.

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May 6, 2002

ANN-ARBOR NEWS (Michigan)

“Religion a force in local environmentalism: Area congregations called to activism as a moral obligation”

Sunday, May 5, 2002

BY TRACY DAVIS

For Lee Moore, getting a master's degree in an environmental subject was a divine inspiration.

She's now writing her thesis on using religious teachings to affect sustainable land-use planning.

"The thing that's so interesting to me is the Bible ... if you actually take a look at what it says, there's a lot of stuff in there about how to live in harmony with the environment," said Moore, 29, a graduate student in the University of Michigan's School of Natural Resources and the Environment.

Moore, co-chairwoman of Michigan Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, is part of a growing group of people boosting environmental awareness through an unlikely venue - religious teachings.

In temples and mosques, in churches and sanctuaries, area congregants and their leaders have been citing religious texts as they connect to the environmental movement.

In the Ann Arbor area, that movement has included Quakers, Unitarians, Lutherans, Catholics, Muslims and Jews.

The message extends beyond preaching from the pulpit. Congregations have created committees and held education days. They organize letter-writing campaigns to put political pressure on lawmakers on such issues as fuel standards, greenhouse gases and endangered species.

Temple Beth Emeth's Social Action Committee has been focusing on the environment for a year, said former chairwoman Leonore Gerstein. The group created space for environmental education information in the temple's newsletter. They had a day of speakers that included local environmentalists and ecologists. Members of the congregation participated in the annual Huron River cleanup day.

The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Ann Arbor had a two-week-long celebration of Earth Day last month that ended with a Sunday sermon from senior Pastor Kenneth W. Phifer on respecting the "interdependent web of all of existence."

The momentum may be coming partly from an increased sense of urgency about environmental issues such as energy policy, and it may partly come from a sense of responsibility, local activists say.

"It may be a realization that some of the theology has contributed to sense that human beings have domination over the earth," said Claire Tinkerhess, clerk of the Ann Arbor Friends Meeting. "And a realization we have to learn to live as a part of the natural state, and our future depends on it really."

A group of local residents recently formed the Washtenaw County Interfaith Environmental Network. Episcopalians, Quakers, Jews, Unitarians and others met twice in April to discuss issues such as water protection, global warming and sprawl, said organizer and Friends member Alan Conner. They've set up an e-mail list for ideas and activities.

Political leaders have paid attention. In the mid-1990s, a push in Congress to gut the Endangered Species Act sparked a public outcry, including from some conservative Christians.

More recently, faith-based environmental groups such as the Michigan Interfaith Coalition for Creation have been writing letters of support for the Kyoto Agreement and other initiatives to reduce global warming.

"Churches approached it from two ways," said Kim Winchell, state director of the Michigan Interfaith Coalition for Creation. "One, the potential profound impact (of neglecting the environment) to all of creation, and two, the justice impact. Who would suffer first and the most? By and large it's the most vulnerable people. So there's a moral obligation of those who are most able to do something about it to do so."

In March, more than 1,200 religious leaders nationwide, including 62 from Michigan and several from the Ann Arbor area, sent a letter to every U.S. senator calling for "energy conservation, fuel efficiency and alternate energy development to protect God's creation and God's children."

Congregants are making their houses of worship greener with renewable energy and cleanup projects or recycling bins. The Michigan Interfaith Coalition for Creation offers an energy audit so congregations can learn how to cut usage and costs.

"It's not enough to say to policy-makers, 'Make the right policies,'" said Winchell. "We need to be aware of our own actions."

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May 4, 2002 8:16pm

“Islamic principles guide preservation of the environment on island shaped like a prayer mat”

By GEORGE MWANGI

Associated Press Writer

MISALI ISLAND, Zanzibar (AP) _ Fishermen carefully unload their precious catch on the white sand beach of Misali, an uninhabited island off mainland Africa where they are involved in a conservation project based on Islamic principles.

"There are verses in the Quran that teach us why we should not destroy the environment," Ali Mohammed Haji said as he lifted slippery octopuses from his small sailboat, or jahazi. "To conserve is investment. There are a lot of benefits ... what we conserve will be used by generations to come."

And for generations, fishermen from villages on nearby Pemba island in the Zanzibar archipelago have been using Misali as a fishing camp and a site for spiritual activities.

In order to keep out developers who wanted to turn the 90-hectare (222-acre) Indian Ocean island into a resort, in 1998 the semi-autonomous government of Zanzibar, which is part of Tanzania, declared the island of tropical trees and volcanic rock a protected conservation area.

A magnificent coral reef surrounds the island 18 kilometers (11 miles) west of Pemba's capital, Chake-Chake, making the area attractive to divers. The island also hosts green and hawksbill turtles that build their nests in the white sand.

The Zanzibari government, CARE International, the Austrian government, the European Union, African Wildlife Foundation, Irish Aid and the local community have established the Misali Island Conservation Association.

It will eventually become the manager of the Jozani-Chwaka Bay conservation project under which some 1,500 fishermen have agreed not to fish along Misali's coral reef and in other breeding areas and not to fish with dynamite, poison or nets that are tightly woven.

In exchange, the fishermen will get a portion of the revenues from tourism by divers or other conservation-conscious visitors who may be drawn by the untouched beauty of Misali. "Nrganizers say the project depends on the Islamic concept of balance in nature and also appeals to pre-Islamic beliefs that the island's coral caves were inhabited by spirits who would ensure good health and large catches if left offerings.

Legend has it that Misali got its name after the prophet Muhammad appeared and asked for a prayer mat _ or "msala" in the Kiswahili language of Africa's eastern coast. When none was available, he is said to have declared that the teardrop-shaped island that points northeast towards Mecca would be his mat.

Ali Thani, who coordinates the Muslim ethics portion of the project, said his office provides local religious leaders and schools with posters and pamphlets that offer guidance on how to make the teachings of the Quran relevant to fishermen and the conservation of their environment.

If the Islamic-based conservation education works on the island over a two-year period, Thani said, the concept will be tried on other parts of Africa's Indian Ocean coast whose inhabitants are primarily Muslim.

"The project is innovative as far as conservation is concerned," said James Hutchins, an American researcher. "It is not demanding a lot from the resource users (fishermen).

But he said the project is also challenging because it involves working with fishermen who remain in the conservation area as compared to other approaches where local communities are removed from the area to be conserved. Of course, not everyone is happy with the project.

"We don't know why they are conserving Misali; now we cannot fish where there are fish," said Mkumbwa Said Ali, a 33-year-old who has been fishing for a living since he was 10. "We are suffering ... they should go and conserve somewhere else. The project is benefiting people at the top, but we poor people are not benefiting because we totally depend on fishing."

Hutchins said such complaints are valid because it will take time before the fishermen begin to benefit from the project, which is also introducing a savings and credit plan.

Project executive director Ali Abdalla said 40 percent of revenue raised from tourism on the island will go to the local community and 60 percent toward conservation management.

Project manager Amour Bakari denied claims that the project was fostering Islamic fundamentalism.

"We are not supporting Islam as a religion. We are supporting culture," Bakari said. "We want to enable people to use principles taught in the Quran for conservation."

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May 9, 2002

Joint UNEP-UNICEF-WHO News Release

“Pollution-Related Diseases Kill Millions of Children a Year: Alarming Numbers Part of New UN Report Released for Child Conference”

NEW YORK, NAIROBI, GENEVA, 9 May 2002 -- Every day 5,500 children die from diseases caused by consuming water and food polluted with bacteria, according to a new study released by three United Nations agencies.

This alarming figure, from *Children in the New Millennium: Environmental Impact on Health*, shows that children the world over are the greatest victims of environmental degradation, despite the great strides made over the past ten years in improving both children's well-being and the environment. The diseases largely influenced by this degradation, most notably diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections, are two of the leading causes of child mortality.

"We have made great strides over the last decade. Children are healthier today. There is more access to clean water. But these disturbing figures show we have barely started to address some of the main problems," said Carol Bellamy, the Executive Director of UNICEF. "Far too many children are dying from diseases that can be prevented through access to clean water and sanitation."

The 140 page report, jointly produced by UNICEF, the UN Environment Programme and the World Health Organization (WHO), is being released as part of the May 8-10 UN General Assembly Special Session on Children. This landmark conference, attended by more than 60 heads of state or government and 170 national delegations, aims to place children back at the top of the world's agenda and foster more investment in essential social services for them. One of its main goals is to increase household access to hygienic sanitation facilities and affordable and safe drinking water.

40 Per cent of Environmentally-Related Disease Burden in Children Under 5

According to WHO, almost one-third of the global disease burden can be attributed to environmental risk factors. Over 40 per cent of this burden falls on children under five years of age, who account for only 10 per cent of the world's population. A major contributing factor to these diseases is malnutrition, which affects around 150 million and undermines their immune systems. Malnutrition and diarrhoea form a vicious cycle. The organisms that cause diarrhoea harm the walls of children's guts, which prevents them digesting and absorbing their food adequately, causing even greater malnutrition -- and vulnerability to disease.

"People are most vulnerable in their youngest years. This means that children must be at the centre of our response to unhealthy environments," said WHO Director-General Dr. Gro Harlem Brundtland.

The report also identifies other major environmental problems directly affecting children, such as high levels of toxic chemicals and the degradation and depletion of natural resources. Lead in the environment -- much of it from leaded gasoline -- causes permanent neurological and developmental disorders in children. Millions of children work in agriculture, putting them at high risk of pesticide poisoning. Children are also disproportionately vulnerable to global environmental problems, such as the impact of climate change, the depletion of the ozone layer and the loss of the planet's biological diversity.

"I am convinced that we need to elevate children's environmental health issues on the international agenda, both through the General Assembly's Special Session on Children and then the World Summit on Sustainable Development," said Mr Klaus Töpfer, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme. "We should recognize that realising children's rights and managing environmental challenges are mutually reinforcing goals. We hope that the publication

will inspire everyone who cares about children to take decisive action that will improve both their health and the environment."

Immediate Action Needed Across the Board

The report warns of low public awareness on children's special vulnerability to environmental health risks. Among the recommended actions, the report calls for increased national investment in early child care, including focusing on the immediate environments of children, like homes, schools, and communities. One notable success in many countries is the transition to unleaded fuel, which helps eliminate lead from the environment.

Through the report, the three UN agencies hope to raise the awareness of governments and non-government organizations on these problems during the UN Special Session itself, and at August's World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

* * *

Note to broadcasters: An 8 minute video news release with 22 minute b-roll is available including interviews with the three UN agency heads. Please contact: Jenny Richard, Television Trust for the Environment, (44 20) 7586 5526, jenny.richards@tve.org.uk

For more information, please contact: Jim Sniffen, UNEP New York, (212)963-8094, sniffenj@un.org, Karuna Nundy, UNICEF New York, (212)303-7941, knundy@unicef.org Gregory Hartl, WHO Geneva, (41 22) 791 4458, hartlg@who.int

Copies of the book can be ordered from the UNEP Publications website – see www.earthprint.com

May 10, 2002

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

“Teachings of Islam enlisted to aid island; Conservation plan relies on doctrine”

By George Mwangi
Associated Press

MISALI ISLAND, Zanzibar -- A conservation project based on Islamic principles is aiming to preserve the beauty of Misali Island, an uninhabited spot off mainland Africa surrounded by a magnificent coral reef.

"There are verses in the Koran that teach us why we should not destroy the environment," said Ali Mohammed Haji, a local fisherman. "To conserve is investment. There are a lot of benefits... What we conserve will be used by generations to come."

The coral reef around Misali makes the area attractive to divers, and the island itself is home to green and hawksbill turtles that build their nests in its white sand.

In order to keep out developers who wanted to turn the 222-acre island into an Indian Ocean resort, the semiautonomous government of Zanzibar--which is part of Tanzania--declared the island of tropical trees and volcanic rock a protected conservation area in 1998.

The Zanzibari government, CARE International, Austrian government, European Union, African Wildlife Foundation, Irish Aid and local community have since established the Misali Island Conservation Association.

The group will eventually become the manager of the Jozani-Chwaka Bay conservation project, under which some 1,500 fishermen have agreed not to fish along Misali's coral reef and in other breeding areas and not to fish with dynamite, poison or tightly woven nets.

In exchange, the fishermen will get a portion of the revenues from tourism by divers and other conservation-conscious visitors who may be drawn by the untouched beauty of Misali.

Organizers say the project depends on the Islamic concept of balance in nature, and it also appeals to pre-Islamic beliefs that the island's coral caves were inhabited by spirits who would ensure good health and large catches if left offerings.

Ali Thani, who coordinates the Muslim ethics portion of the project, said his office provides local religious leaders and schools with posters and pamphlets that offer guidance on how to make the teachings of the Koran relevant to fishermen and the conservation of their environment.

If the Islamic-based conservation education works on the island over two years, Thani said, the concept will be tried on other parts of Africa's Indian Ocean coast whose inhabitants are primarily Muslim.

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June 26, 2002

“Orthodox Christian urges religions to save planet”

By Alister Doyle, Reuters

OSLO, Norway -- The spiritual head of the world's Orthodox Christians urged religious leaders on Wednesday to do more to protect the environment, saying time was running short to save what they view as God's creation. "We are losing time, and the longer we wait the more difficult and irreparable the damage," Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew told a news conference in Oslo, where he received a \$100,000 environment prize. Often known as the "Green Patriarch," Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide, said that religious leaders should urge people to respect rather than plunder the planet's resources. "Religious leaders can play an important role for the environment. (They) can influence their followers -- Christians, Jews, or Muslims -- inspiring and guiding their faithful towards ecological awareness," he said. He did not say which nations he believed were the worst environmental offenders. The United Nations will stage a summit in Johannesburg in August on ways to curb poverty while protecting the environment. Some religious believers, especially in

rich nations, justify their high use of fossil fuels as an exploitation of resources given by God to help humankind. Bartholomew urged a longer-term view. "We have to protect the environment and think of coming generations.... of the continuation of the presence of human beings as the true kings of creation on the planet," he said. BYZANTINE EMPIRE Bartholomew's patriarchate is based in the Turkish city of Istanbul, a throwback to when the city, formerly Constantinople, was capital of the medieval Byzantine Empire. He is spiritual leader of 14 autonomous Orthodox churches. He has arranged international environmental conferences highlighting pollution in the Aegean Sea, the Black Sea, the Danube River, and the Adriatic Sea. The Baltic Sea will come under the spotlight next year. On Monday he signed a joint declaration with Pope John Paul, leader of the Roman Catholic Church, that included a call for more ecological awareness. On Wednesday in Oslo, Bartholomew collected the so-called Sophie Prize. The prize was set up by Norwegian author Jostein Gaarder who wrote the 1990s runaway bestseller *Sophie's World*, a novel and teenagers' guide to philosophy. Bartholomew said he would split the prize money between U.N. programs for poor children in Africa and a conference about the state of the Baltic Sea.

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July 11, 2002

Gulf News

Environment given a new perspective

<http://archive.gulfnews.com/articles/02/07/11/57251.html>

By Eman Al Baik

The need to keep the environment clean from the religious perspective was introduced to women in a lecture organised by the Sharjah Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Department at Al Hamriya Women's Club yesterday.

The lecture was organised as part of the Sharjah Municipality's clean-up campaign being organised at Al Hamriya beach which will conclude tomorrow.

Ibrahim Al Hosni, a scholar, called on mothers to urge their children to keep the environment clean as laid down by Islam.

He called on women not to harm any of God's creatures. Al Hosni illustrated his call citing verses from the Holy Quran and the sayings of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

Al Hosni said: "Islam calls for the protection of nature – plants and trees must not be cut. Islam also calls on people to plant trees even if they do not bear fruit. This will help in creating a balance in nature and prevent pollution."

He reminded mothers about the Almighty's punishment and the Holy Quran's strictures in case they or their children do not abide by them.

Mothers must instill in their children correct practices as based on Islamic principles.

"Mothers, in particular, are more close to their children than fathers," he pointed out. "They should observe their children's practices whether at the house, at the beach or on the street.

"Protecting the environment is a religious duty," the scholar emphasised.

Rational consumption of environment resources is a way of worship and thankfulness to God for giving man plenty, he noted.

"Whatever in nature is God's gift and grace to mankind," he said. "We should be rational in consuming as we should allow others to share use those graces."

He explained this can be achieved only if everyone protects and maintains the environment and its resources for the coming generations.

"Only then will our consumption will be a kind of worship," he added.

July 16, 2002

07/15/2002 11:38:29

"S.Africa minister vows Earth Summit to go ahead"

By Nicholas Kotch

JOHANNESBURG, July 15 (Reuters) - South Africa said on Monday that the Earth Summit it is due to host next month will certainly go ahead despite the absence of agreement so far on key goals for the global environment.

Environment Minister Valli Moosa snuffed out suggestions that the gargantuan gathering might be cancelled.

"That is not at all possible," he told Reuters.

"What I can say with certainty is that everyone wants this summit to succeed," Moosa said before flying to New York for 25-nation talks at the United Nations aimed at finding an 11th hour accord.

Many environmental activists say there is no chance of meaningful progress at Johannesburg's August 26-September 4 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

Rather than hollow promises which will not meet the core goal of alleviating world poverty while protecting the environment, such critics say it would be preferable to call off the summit.

"At some point when things are not really moving, it's better to have a failure than a foul compromise," Gerd Leipold, executive director of the Greenpeace group, told Reuters in Amsterdam last week. But Moosa disagreed and predicted positive movement at Wednesday's one-day "Friends of the Chair" session at the U.N.

“The only possibility is that there will be progress on Wednesday. The question is how much progress,” he said in a telephone interview.

CHIRAC, BLAIR PLEDGE ATTENDANCE

South Africa says it expects more than 100 world leaders and around 60,000 participants at the WSSD and parallel gatherings of non-governmental organizations and business.

Among Western leaders French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister Tony Blair have both pledged to attend.

But there is no expectation that U.S. President George W. Bush will come to Johannesburg. One senior South African official told Reuters last week that Secretary of State Colin Powell was likely to head the U.S. delegation.

“If the U.S. representation went lower than (Powell), we would have a problem with that,” the official, who declined to be quoted by name, said.

The summit is seen as a follow-up, 10 years on, to the first great environment meeting held in Rio de Janeiro.

South African organisers and activists want the WSSD to end with concrete and achievable goals on a raft of issues which might allow a ballooning global population to be fed, sheltered, educated and employed without wrecking the planet's shrinking resources.

The final round of pre-summit talks between governments, to agree a text built on such principles, was held in Bali, Indonesia in June but ended unsuccessfully.

“In terms of U.N. procedure no other (preparatory) meeting is planned before the summit starts,” Moosa said.

“So it was felt better to do some ground work in New York in order to facilitate an agreement here in Johannesburg.”

Key issues that remain outstanding include the thorny one of agricultural subsidies in rich nations, which the developing world claims prevents its farmers from selling their goods to affluent and mature markets.

Reut11:38 07-15-02

July 17, 2002

UNEP NEWS RELEASE

“UNEP to Study Environment of Palestinian Territories”

JERUSALEM/NAIROBI, 17 July 2002 -- Mr. Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Under-Secretary General of the UN, visited Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories from 13 to 16 July in preparation for an environmental desk study of the Palestinian territories.

Mr. Toepfer was invited to the region by the Israeli Environment Minister Tzachi Hanegbi and by Minister Yousef Abu Safieh of the Palestinian Higher Agency for the Environment.

During his visit to the region Mr. Toepfer also met with Prime Minister Sharon and with Chairman Arafat. Furthermore, he held talks about the framework of the desk study with the environmental authorities in Israel on 14 July and with the environmental authorities in the occupied Palestinian territories on 15 July. In addition, site visits relevant to the desk study were organized by both hosts.

"My visit to the region will start the desk study on the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian territories as decided by the Governing Council of UNEP in February 2002", Mr. Toepfer stated. "This will be an objective process, in close cooperation with both parties concerned, and with the clear aim of listing priorities and proposing recommendations to solve environmental problems."

The desk study team will be chaired by Mr. Pekka Haavisto, former Finnish Minister of Environment and Development Cooperation, and managed by a UNEP staff member acting as Project Coordinator. In addition, the desk study team will include the necessary number of experts to address environmental issues such as water, waste management, soil protection, and environmental administration.

The desk study will outline the state of the environment and identify major areas of environmental damage requiring urgent attention. It will be based on review of available, relevant studies and interviews with officials and experts.

"The common understanding is clearly that urgent attention and action is needed to address environmental needs in the region", said Mr. Toepfer.

The desk study will be finalized in November 2002 and presented to the Governing Council of UNEP in February 2003.

The decision to assess the environmental situation in the Palestinian territories was taken unanimously by the UNEP Governing Council in February 2002 at its Seventh Special Session.

Note to journalists: The February 2002 UNEP Governing Council decision is attached below.

For more information, please contact UNEP Information Officers Nick Nuttall or Robert Bisset in Nairobi at +254-2-623084, or robert.bisset@unep.org or Michael Williams in Geneva at +41-22-917-8242/8196/8244 or michael.williams@unep.ch

DECISION SS.VII/7 OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL AT ITS SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION/GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM (15 February 2002)

“Environmental Situation in the Occupied Territories”

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decisions 20/2 and 21/16 on the environmental situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,

Taking note of the report presented by the Executive Director (UNEP/GCSS.VII/4/Add.3),

Conscious of the need to respond to the Decisions of the Governing Council comprehensively,

Gravely concerned over the continuing deterioration and destruction of the environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,

Encouraged by the recent invitation extended to the Executive Director by the two concerned parties to visit the region,

1. Requests the Executive Director to visit the area as soon as possible with a view to establish a framework and modalities of the study requested by the Governing Council in decisions 20/2 and 21/16;
2. Requests the Executive Director to designate a team of UNEP experts to prepare a desk study outlining the state of the environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and to identify major areas of environmental damage requiring urgent attention;
3. Also requests the Executive Director to undertake field studies, as deemed necessary, with the objective of proposing remedial measures to improve the environmental situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and by implementing existing agreements for improving the environment in the area;
4. Urges the Executive Director to take all necessary steps, on an urgent basis, to:
 - a) Coordinate the activities of UNEP in the area, including the implementation of this decision;
 - b) Follow up the findings and recommendations of the UNEP study and assist the Palestinian Ministry of Environmental Affairs in its efforts to address the urgent environmental needs in the Occupied Palestinian Territories;
5. Invites all the parties concerned to cooperate with the Executive Director in the implementation of this decision;

6. Requests the Executive Director to report on the implementation of this decision to the Governing Council at its 22nd regular session.

UNEP News Release 2002/51

LOS ANGELES TIMES

“A Power Struggle: Electric vs. Spiritual”

Electricity: Indian tribes hope to block construction of a geothermal plant they fear will drain healing force of Medicine Lake.

By ERIC BAILEY

TIMES STAFF WRITER

July 17 2002

MEDICINE LAKE, Calif. -- Under a sky as wide as the world, Willard Rhoades comes to the lake to heal himself.

He wades into turquoise waters frigid with snowmelt, like countless Native American ancestors before him. Tribal lore has it that the Creator bathed in Medicine Lake, and it remains a place of raw spiritual power to elders such as Rhoades, 83. A dunking, he believes, washes away sickness of body and soul.

Now a big energy company has come to tap a different kind of power at Medicine Lake. Tempted by the geothermal energy that lurks beneath the volcanic wild lands of California's far north, Calpine Corp. hopes to harvest megawatts from generating plants only a few miles from the sacred lake. Exploratory drilling is to begin this week.

Tribal elders question whether the relatively meager energy to be drawn from the Earth justifies wounding a ruggedly beautiful landscape, a place of deep spiritual value to its first inhabitants: the Pit River, Modoc, Shasta, Karuk and Wintun tribes.

Last month, Calpine was sued by a coalition of tribes and environmental groups. They rue the possibility of power lines and exposed pipes snaking into the forest like the arms of an octopus. They worry about tainted steam fouling unsullied air, the groan of industry spoiling the quiet, electrical light pollution blemishing night skies.

Calpine officials say such concerns are unfounded. The \$120-million power plant will be clean and quiet, they insist, hidden in the woods and free of but the barest traces of toxic emissions. They will also bring a new generation of jobs to a land of double-digit unemployment.

Still, the company can't mitigate the dismay of Rhoades and other Native Americans. For many, this corporate quest for geothermal power is a 21st century echo of historic persecution by the white man.

"It's the same thing," said Rhoades. "This is a place of healing and meditation, but instead there would be noise and pollution."

The battle is playing out at a precarious time in the energy business, amid ballooning cynicism over the authenticity of last year's California crisis. But for San Jose-based Calpine, the prospects for Medicine Lake are too tantalizing to scrap.

Calpine's armada of new plants fired by natural gas remain susceptible to the price swings of a fickle market for fossil fuels. In contrast, power from a geothermal plant comes with no cost for fuel--and produces 26 times less greenhouse gas. Mother Earth does all the work: Deep pockets of subterranean water are superheated by magma, producing steam to turn turbines.

John Miller, Calpine's program manager, acknowledged that Native Americans have had a long and important affiliation with Medicine Lake. "We're very respectful of that," Miller said. But he said all the land under lease is in national forests, not a tribal reservation. The company's first venture--a 49-megawatt plant--is set for a spot known as Fourmile Hill. Several more geothermal plants could follow. The company recently won a legal battle forcing federal officials to reconsider rejection two years ago of a second plant even closer to the lake. In all, Calpine holds geothermal leases on 66 square miles of Medicine Lake Highlands.

This is a land of geological mystique. The lake is in a six-mile-long crater, the caldera of North America's broadest volcano. Upon that flat backside, the Earth has belched mountains of glistening obsidian and fields of chalky pumice. Lava caves and cinder cones dot the terrain. Native Americans of the area say they have used Medicine Lake as a sanctuary since the Creator descended from nearby Mt. Shasta. It was a place for coming-of-age ceremonies and vision quests. Tribes from all over came to gather obsidian, chipping the shiny black stone into razor-sharp hatchets and spears.

In the 1850s, Gold Rush settlers overran these ancestral lands. History tells of a lopsided fight.

Famine and disease spread. State legislators authorized \$1.5 million to suppress the natives, giving rise to bounty hunters. Many Indians were killed or enslaved. California historian Hubert Howe Bancroft called it "one of the last human hunts of civilization, and the basest and most brutal of them all."

The most notorious standoff came in 1872, when a Modoc leader named Intpuash--dubbed Captain Jack by tongue-tied settlers--holed up with more than 50 warriors in caverns north of Medicine Lake. Badly outnumbered, they held off the cavalry for a year before Captain Jack was captured and hanged.

During the century that followed, the region's tribes demonstrated a consistent devotion to their ancestral lands. In the turbulent early 1970s, scores of Pit River tribal members were arrested trying to claim land held by Pacific Gas & Electric and the U.S. Forest Service.

That effort failed, but today the Pit River--with more than 2,000 members--remain a tribe unafraid to take on powerful forces. Out of their base in the mountain town of Burney, they have led the fight over Medicine Lake.

"It's a very sacred place," said Vern Johnson, a Pit River member and executive director of the California Council of Tribal Governments. "Young people have threatened to lay down in front of the heavy equipment if it comes to that."

A power plant at Medicine Lake would be as inappropriate as a McDonald's, said John Mike, 43, another Pit. "It would probably take the spirit out of that place."

Regulators don't necessarily disagree.

An environmental report concludes that the plant's effects on air, water and wildlife are negligible, but it says Native American values could be undermined. And there's no way to fix it. Plumes of steam and noise could interrupt vision quests, the report says, and the siphoning of geothermal waters "may adversely affect the spiritual qualities of Medicine Lake."

"It would be like a Catholic going to confession and someone opening the door," said Jerald Jackson, a Modoc elder.

Jackson says he needs the lake now more than ever. For the past year, cancer has been eating away his bone marrow. He's receiving medical treatment near his home in Klamath Falls, Ore., but believes Medicine Lake has "kept me alive so far."

But a few Native Americans of the north state find it hard not to doubt.

"That healing power and all that is baloney; that went out in the 1900s," said Erin Forrest, longtime leader of the Hewitt band, one of 11 branches that make up the Pit River Tribe.

Forrest, who supports Calpine, contends the Pit River hierarchy is holding out for big royalty money from the energy firm. Pit River elders discount such claims as sour grapes from a loser in tribal political wars.

An even nastier rift has erupted within the Shasta Nation. The tribe has split in two, with one band backing Calpine, the other opposed.

To entice support, Calpine has dangled the prospect of college scholarships and jobs if the project comes online. It has already provided legal services and an ethnographer, Shasta leaders say, to help with the tribe's slogging 20-year effort to gain federal recognition.

Offering help to a local community is standard practice to spur support for a large industrial project, said Joe Ronan, Calpine's government and regulatory chief. "It's just," he said, "how this stuff works."

What won over Betty Hall, a Shasta elder who supports Calpine, was coming to terms with 21st century reality. Today, the shores of Medicine Lake are scattered with dozens of cabins and three campgrounds. On summer afternoons, it roars with power boats and personal watercraft. "The truth is," Hall said, "the damage is already done."

Rob and Janie Painter, who own a vacation cabin on the lake, don't dispute that recreational users leave footprints, but they say it doesn't compare to a power plant's stomp on the landscape. "It's being pushed down a lot of people's throats," Janie Painter said.

Bush administration officials aren't about to step in the way. The only hope of stopping the Fourmile Hill project is in the courts, opponents say.

Meanwhile, a second geothermal plant, which was rejected by federal officials in 2000, is suddenly back on the table. Under an agreement to settle a legal case brought by Calpine, Washington must by November reconsider allowing a facility at Telephone Flat, about a mile from the lake.

If it isn't approved, Calpine can take the dispute back to court to seek the \$100 million in damages it has claimed.

Such threats have federal officials feeling boxed in. Sean Hagerty, a Bureau of Land Management geothermal expert, said the Bush administration "doesn't want to pay a company to not produce power in a state that needs power."

Calpine has already sealed a deal with the Bonneville Power Administration in Portland, Ore., to buy geothermal energy from Medicine Lake, and it has won approval for \$49 million in state subsidies to be slowly meted out once the plants begin generating electricity. The state is providing an additional \$1 million for exploratory drilling.

Opponents cast this arrangement as a bitter irony: power subsidized by California taxpayers being exported out of state. Calpine's Miller countered that Bonneville sells energy to California utilities all the time. As for the prospect of state subsidies, he said it has helped keep the company on course as costs jumped with legal and regulatory delays.

In time, Miller added, all concerned will "learn to live with what we're bringing to the area."

Such talk rankles the Modoc tribe's Jackson, a quiet man of peaceful intent.

This month, he will be back up to the highlands for a ceremony at the stronghold of Captain Jack. Drums will play atop the lava beds. Political talk, normally avoided at such events, may be unavoidable.

Just a few miles up the rise, Calpine will be boring into Mother Earth, trying to tap her essence.

"It brings back old anger from what happened years ago," Jackson said. "Resentment and anger. We try to tell our young people, don't feel that way. It ain't going to help. But now we can't help but feel that way too."

August 8, 2002

UNEP NEWS RELEASE

“New Pledges for Multibillion-Dollar Environment Fund a Boost For World Summit on Sustainable Development”

30 Years UNEP: Environment for Development: People, Planet, Prosperity

PARIS, 8 August 2002 - The agreement by donor countries in Washington, D.C. yesterday to increase their support to a multibillion-dollar environment fund, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), is an important boost for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the head of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) said today.

Speaking to journalists in Paris, Klaus Toepfer, UNEP's Executive Director, welcomed the news that 32 Governments have agreed on a \$2.92 billion replenishment of the GEF to fund its operations over the next four years, 2002-2006. He congratulated Mohammed T. El-Ashry, Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the GEF, and all the negotiators involved.

Mr. Toepfer said the agreement, the highest replenishment ever for the GEF (which has proved itself an invaluable weapon in the fight against poverty and environmental degradation), was a positive signal for success at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg later this month.

"The World Summit on Sustainable Development will be a crucial test of the world's ability and its enthusiasm for tackling the very pressing problems facing people and the planet today", Mr. Toepfer said. "The pledges for the GEF replenishment show that in one critical area we are starting to move from words to implementation."

"Richer nations, meeting in Monterrey, Mexico, earlier this year, committed themselves to a significant increase in aid to poorer ones. This marks a reversal of years of decline in official overseas development aid that had fallen to 0.22 per cent of rich countries' national wealth", Mr. Toepfer continued. "The Monterrey pledges, combined with yesterday's pledges in Washington, are a real turnaround, and a good start. Now, these pledges need to be turned into concrete actions at Johannesburg in areas such as water, energy and biodiversity", he said.

The GEF has, over the past 10 years, committed more than \$4 billion and mobilized some \$11 billion for more than 1,000 projects in 160 countries.

Successes include helping developing countries to cope with the impacts of global warming to ones that are assisting poorer nations to conserve wildlife, monitor and improve the health of international waters and overcome land degradation.

The GEF was officially established in October 1991, for a three-year pilot phase. Core contributions to the Trust Fund for the pilot phase amounted to \$841.64 million. Additional contributions to the GEF Pilot Phase, provided under co-financing arrangements, amounted to \$223.79 million.

In 1994, in the first replenishment of the restructured GEF, 34 nations pledged \$2.023 billion. In 1998, 36 donors agreed to a second replenishment of the GEF to the amount of \$2.75 billion, involving new pledges of a further \$1.991 billion. On 7 August 2002, agreement was reached among 32 donor nations on the third replenishment of the GEF to the amount of \$2.92 billion, including \$2.2 billion in new funding.

Currently, UNEP runs a portfolio of GEF projects and other activities valued at approximately \$0.5 billion (see below for more details).

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Note to Editors: The Global Environment Facility was established for a pilot-phase in 1991 in the run up to the Rio Earth Summit of 1992. It has three implementing agencies. These are UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.

UNEP in GEF

As of 1st March 2002 the UNEP portfolio of GEF activities is valued at \$511 million. This includes ongoing activities valued at \$375 million comprising 21 full scale projects, 33 medium sized projects, 154 enabling activities and 34 projects in "PDF phase". In addition, UNEP is co-implementing with partner agencies 12 full-size projects and 4 medium-sized projects. This portfolio involves the participation of some 144 countries worldwide.

The UNEP portfolio of projects in GEF is based on the five main pillars of UNEP intervention that were established during GEF Phases I and II:

- * Enabling activities;
- * Environmental assessment, analysis and research;
- * Development and demonstration of tools and methodologies for improving environmental management; Strengthening the enabling environment so that countries can more effectively implement commitments made as Parties to various environmental conventions (including assistance under the GEF Capacity Development Initiative); and
- * Management of transboundary ecosystems (shared water bodies, terrestrial ecosystems, etc).

Highlights of UNEP intervention in GEF

POPs: UNEP is actively assisting more than 30 countries prepare national implementation plans for Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) through GEF enabling activities. UNEP has consolidated a portfolio of activities relating to persistent toxic substances ranging from strategic activities such as the assessment of national management needs, to more focused activities dealing with DDT phase out and reduction of pesticide use in intensive agriculture.

BIOSAFETY: UNEP succeeded in ensuring the early start of the operations of its GEF project on the development of National Biosafety Frameworks aimed at assisting 100 countries to prepare for the entry into force of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. Eight countries have begun implementing these frameworks.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION: UNEP, the Global Change System for Analysis Research and Training (START), the Third World Academy of Sciences and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have embarked on a project targeted towards developing capacity for assessing the impacts of climate change. Financing from the GEF has been directed towards developing science capacity and assessment techniques and information targeted at the most vulnerable regions and sectors where the capacity is needed. UNEP is now working to assist Least Developed Countries (LDCs) prepare their national plans for adaptation to climate change.

SUPPORT TO AFRICA: Being the only GEF partner located in Africa, UNEP was instrumental in preparing, a couple of days after the OAU Summit of Lusaka, a GEF operation aimed at assisting African countries to implement the environment component of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) adopted by African Heads of State. This unique GEF activity may assist in the design of a programmatic approach for addressing global environmental challenges facing the African continent.

LAND DEGRADATION: Being one of the major environmental threats facing the world community and, in particular, Africa, UNEP has assisted countries with the assistance of GEF financing to address land degradation in the context of integrated land and water management.

ASSESSMENTS AND ANALYSIS: The Global International Waters Assessment (GIWA) is well under way, identifying the possible target areas and activities needed to protect transboundary water systems and the water supplies. With a consolidated portfolio of strategic assessments in the other GEF focal areas, namely:

- * the regionally based assessment of persistent toxic substances;
- * the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment;
- * a facility for developing solar and wind resource assessments in pilot sites across the world;
- and
- * a preparatory phase for a global drylands land degradation assessment UNEP will be able to assist countries in identifying those environmental issues that require priority interventions.

CIVIL SOCIETY INVOLVEMENT: UNEP has utilized the avenue of medium-sized projects to provide GEF funding for projects led or partnered by NGOs, community-based organizations

and scientific organizations. To date, some 42 medium-sized projects have been approved through UNEP with GEF financing.

UNEP News Release 2002/56

UNEP NEWS RELEASE

'Sustainable Development Security Imperative', Says Top US Government Official
30 Years UNEP: Environment for Development: People-Planet-Prosperity

NAIROBI, 5 August 2002 - Delivering environmentally friendly development is vital for delivering a more stable world, a key member of the United States Administration argues in the upcoming edition of the United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Our Planet magazine.

Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State, claims that "sustainable development" is a "compelling moral and humanitarian issue".

And adds: "But sustainable development is also a security imperative. Poverty, environmental degradation and despair are destroyers of people, of societies, of nations. This unholy trinity can destabilize countries, even entire regions."

Secretary Powell, writing in a special edition of the magazine that will be handed to world leaders attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg (26 August - 4 September), argues there is real cause for optimism.

"Despite the stories and images of trouble we read in the our newspapers and view on our television screens, this is a time of great opportunities to expand peace, prosperity and freedom. The spread of democracy and market economies, combined with breakthroughs in technology, permits us to dream of a day when, for the first time in history, most of humanity will be free of the ravages of tyranny and poverty", he says.

Secretary Powell's essay is among a formidable line up of writers contributing to the special WSSD edition.

Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director of UNEP, argues that failure in Johannesburg cannot be contemplated as the risks are too great: "Unless a new course is chartered for planet Earth we risk a new 'Iron Curtain', dividing not East and West, but the haves and the have-nots -- with all the ramifications of increased tensions, jealousies and hatreds between and within countries."

He looks to the new world trade talks, in which environment is now playing a part; the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the recent agreement in Mexico where nation's agreed to reverse the decline in official overseas development aid, as real glimmers of hope.

Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, flags up the need to address the world's existing patterns of production and consumption.

"If the Chinese citizen is to consume the same quantity of crude oil as his or her United States counterpart, China would need over 80 million barrels of oil a day -- slightly more than the 74 million barrels a day the world now produces", says the Summit's host.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the President of Brazil, says that hosting the Earth Summit of 1992 has helped his country towards the path of sustainable development. He is convinced that such development is key to a healthy and wealthy society.

"It was gratifying to see the Kyoto Protocol recently receiving the approval of our National Congress in response to strong public demand. Brazil has made an enormous effort in combating poverty. It is already reflected in changes in such social indicators as infant mortality and schooling and, before long, it will be reflected in economic indicators as well", says President Cardoso.

Margaret Beckett, the United Kingdom's Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, writes that a global response is needed to fight a variety of ills: "In a globalized world no one nation can solve what are collective problems. Poverty, terrorism, disease, climate change, migration, drug abuse -- these are new challenges to the international community."

And Goran Persson, the Prime Minister of Sweden, echoes these sentiments by affirming that Governments need the support of all sectors of society including the private sector and civil society.

Notes to Editors- Our Planet magazine is expected to be published on 12 August. In addition to the contributors mentioned above there are also articles from Mohammed Valli Moosa, Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism of South Africa, on the African Renaissance; David Anderson, Minister of the Environment for Canada and President of UNEP's Governing Council; Peter Wong of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Hong Kong, on corporations and sustainable development; Martin Khor, Director of the Third World Network on the role of corporations; Sir Partha Dasgupta, the Frank Ramsey Professor of Economics at the University of Cambridge, on measuring sustainability; Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, Co-chair of the G8 Renewable Energy Task Force, on delivering green and clean energy; and Richard Wiewiorka and Roy Herberger on a new strategy for sustainable business.

These full articles are available from UNEP's Division of Communications and Public Information by e-mail or fax.

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August 12, 2002

The Wall Street Journal

“Furry Math? Market Fails To Capture Nature's Value”

What am I bid for these swamps?

If you belong to the new discipline of ecological economics, to determine the worth of a wetland you might calculate what it would cost to construct levees and other structures to provide the flood control and storm protection that natural wetlands do. From that, you'd extrapolate that the world's wetlands are valued at \$4.9 trillion -- the cost of replacing "nature's service" with technology.

That's one way scholars led by Robert Costanza of the Institute for Ecological Economics guesstimated nature's worth in 1997. They also calculated that coastal estuaries recycle nutrients (grabbing nitrogen out of the air and converting it into fertilizer, for instance) and perform other services to the tune of \$4.1 trillion a year. Forests provide services such as regulating climate and recycling nutrients worth \$4.7 trillion a year.

All told, they valued nature's services at about \$33 trillion a year. Some traditional economists responded -- in one of the few retorts suitable for a family paper -- "ludicrous." As Paul Portney, president of the Washington, D.C., think tank Resources for the Future, told me, "Equating nature with its replacement value is seductive, but from an economist's perspective, a non sequitur. Something's economic benefit is determined by how much people are willing to pay for it."

The nature's services study was nevertheless a hit, judging by the 375-and-counting papers that cite it (compared with fewer than two cites for the average science paper), and by the books and journals it inspired.

Now, in advance of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg this month (10 years after the first Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro), a team of 19 researchers from Britain and the U.S. is weighing in on an equally controversial question: the relative values of developed and undeveloped land.

Their conclusion, in Friday's issue of the journal *Science*: An intact ecosystem is worth 82% more, on average, than the same parcel clear-cut, drained, paved or otherwise developed in a nonsustainable way.

Some examples. A mangrove swamp in Thailand was worth 72% more when left intact to provide timber, charcoal, fish and storm protection than after being converted to a shrimp farm. A freshwater marsh in Canada was worth 58% more intact (thanks to hunting, angling and

trapping) than farmed. A Philippine reef was worth 73% more when fished sustainably and providing coastal protection than when blast-fished.

"In every case we looked at," conservation biologist Andrew Balmford of the University of Cambridge, England, said, "the loss of nature's services outweighed the benefits of development, often by a large amount."

Which raises two obvious questions. If ecosystems are worth more intact, why the heck are they being razed and paved? And surely it can't be true that leaving America the way the Europeans found it would make it worth more today than with its highways, railroads, factories and cities?

Dr. Costanza, who with his Institute moves to the University of Vermont next month, readily acknowledges that past conversions -- turning Nebraska into grain central and Silicon Valley into tech heaven -- "benefited society as a whole." What's different now is that we're running out of nature. What's left has a higher marginal value. Which market mechanisms fail to capture. No one collects money from those who benefit from the flood control a wetland provides, or the nutrient recycling a forest does. Such nonmarketed externalities accrue to society but have no tollbooth attached.

"Every textbook says that the market is the most efficient way to allocate resources," says Dr. Portney. "But the market also fails, especially when it comes to public goods. If you could charge people for using nature, you might show that it's more valuable to preserve it than to convert it, but for now there's no way to capture those values."

In contrast, owners reap the value of development, collecting real money.

In a nutshell, market failures help drive habitat loss. Although the benefits of conversion are often private, society bears the losses. "We've already done the profitable conversions," argues Dr. Balmford. "Developing what's left makes less sense, and the benefits of keeping ecosystems intact are much higher."

Since the 1992 Rio summit, Earth has lost an astonishing 11.4% (by area) of its natural places -- this in a decade when the nations of the world supposedly cared. Efforts to save habitats to preserve species or mitigate climate change haven't been raging successes. Maybe denominating nature in cold hard cash will work better.

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Summer of Peace Culminates With "Peace Within: A Day of Remembrance";
Event to be held at Center for Spiritual Living on 9/11

SEATTLE, Aug 8, 2002 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Center for Spiritual Living (CSL) today announced Peace Within: A Day of Remembrance, a peace event that will take place Wednesday, September 11.

In support of the United Nations international commitment for peace – it designated 2001-2010 as the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World" -- CSL's senior minister, Reverend Doctor Kathianne Lewis, proclaimed Summer 2002 as a "Summer of Peace." Throughout the summer, CSL taught a message of tolerance, coexistence, and living together in community in their youth church curriculum. Peace Within: A Day of Remembrance is the concluding celebration to the multi-faceted program.

"This summer we've focused on teaching our youth, as well as adult members of our church, how to create a peaceful community by paying close attention to how we interact with ourselves, our families, our neighbors and co-workers, how we take care of the environment, and how we respond to those who seem different than ourselves," said Lewis.

As part of CSL's Youth Church curriculum, children enjoyed guest speakers who shared experiences about living in Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Israel, and Palestine. They also learned about conflict resolution and participated in an international writing contest sponsored by the Goi Peace Foundation on the topic of harmony.

"The Peace Within event is really a celebration of all we've learned, a chance to personally commit ourselves to peace, and an excellent opportunity for individuals and families to come together as a community and pay tribute to those lost in the September 11th tragedy last year," Lewis added.

The all day event will take place in the Sanctuary at Center for Spiritual Living (5801 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle), and will be held Wednesday, September 11 from 6:00am until 8:00pm with special times devoted to meditation, chants and a service facilitated by senior minister Kathianne Lewis as noted in the following schedule:

6am-6pm: Remembrance and World Peace Meditation 4pm-6pm: Children's Peace Fair with crafts and display of peace projects
 6pm-7pm: Peace Chants
 7pm-8pm: Commitment to World Peace Service

Everyone is welcome to join in for times of silence, communal and individual prayers for peace and world blessing, chanting, and an opportunity to make a personal commitment to Peace on Earth.

About Center for Spiritual Living

Center for Spiritual Living is a Religious Science Church in Seattle, Washington. Their mission is to build a spiritual community that supports people in enhancing their relationship with Spirit, and experiencing greater good in their lives. They embrace people of all religious faiths and cultural backgrounds, a wide range of ages, and diverse lifestyle preferences. For more information, visit www.spirituallyliving.org, email info@spirituallyliving.org or call 206/527-8801.

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August 14, 2002

“In a world of plenty, how do we fight hunger?”

By Sharman Esarey

LONDON, Aug 14 (Reuters) - As world leaders gather this month to grapple with the goal of halving world hunger by 2015 the spectre of famine is again stalking sub Saharan Africa.

At least 13 million people in southern Africa risk starvation, with millions more hungry in Afghanistan, North Korea, the West Bank and Gaza Strip even as subsidised farmers in the northern hemisphere produce mountains of surplus food.

The United Nations wants to cut the number of the chronically under-nourished earning less than \$1 a day to some 400 million from 815 million, but it is falling behind, with declines of just six million a year and not the 22 million needed.

Complicating the huge task for the world leaders at the U.N.'s Johannesburg “Earth Summit” is a bitter first-world debate on genetically modified (GM) crops which some say are a solution to world hunger, some regard as a threat, and others see as a distraction.

Genetically modified crops are spliced with genes from other animals or plants to make them more resistant to drought, pests or salinity -- scourges that can ruin crops and livelihoods.

Some argue that genetically modified foods could help pick up the battle against hunger as the productivity gains from years of the green revolution tail off.

“It will not solve world poverty, but if it solves five percent of world poverty that will still be a wonderful thing and if it isn't allowed to do anything then it will be a sad thing,” said Dr Johnjoe McFadden, professor of molecular genetics at the University of Surrey in southern England.

But sceptics say corporate biotechnology's vows that it could feed the world were both overblown and misplaced.

First, products for the developing world do not yet exist. Nor is the sheer amount of food an issue -- we still live in a world of plenty.

“It's (GM) not a central issue in the debate...It doesn't seem to offer much to the one billion hungry people,” said Dr Margaret Mellon, director of the food and environment programme at the non-profit environmental group Union of Concerned Scientists.

So far, there are just two main products -- both designed to cut costs for first-world farmers.

“Framing hunger as primarily a technology problem invites technological solutions. That doesn't move the ball very far when dealing with a social and economic and political problem – and one of enormous complexity,” Mellon said.

STARVATION IN A WORLD OF PLENTY

For some, more food, GM or otherwise, is not the answer -- we have starvation amid abundance.

Jacques Diouf, the chief of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), has said that existing know-how, excluding gene technology, was sufficient to generate enough food to meet the needs of developing countries today.

“It does not mean it will be enough in the future... with the growth of the world population, we'll be moving from the present six billion and we're expected to reach eight billion by 2020. Hence the need to look at better crop varieties,” he said.

According to the United Nation's World Food Programme southern Africa needs a minimum of 1.2 million tonnes of emergency food aid and an extra 2.8 million tonnes of commercial supplies over the next year.

The European Union alone has some five million tonnes of subsidised grains in its warehouses and is so desperate to get rid of its rye that it is considering burning it as fuel.

The subsidies which much of the developed world pays its farmers help build the unwanted food stockpiles, while tariffs bar entry to what otherwise would be lucrative developing world exports.

“(Developing world agriculture) could use all the things that European agriculture has -- agricultural extension agents, agricultural universities, new roads to get from the farm to the market, new storage technologies, new markets, new uses for the products they grow, access to our markets and fair prices,” said Mellon.

“None of that has the miraculous easy ring of just introducing a new crop.”

The EU spends half its 95 billion euro (dollar) budget on agriculture, subsidising more than a third of farmers' incomes. Japan and Switzerland have far higher levels of support.

The United States subsidises more than one-fifth of its farmers and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development said this year's new U.S. farm bill would increase domestic subsidies and depress world market prices.

Globally, the subsidies and tariffs also negate the one clear trade advantage the developing world would have in fair markets -- cheap, abundant agricultural labour.

Nor does one need travel to Brussels's warehouses for excess grain. The charity Oxfam International says at least some of the needed aid could be sourced locally, underpinning local markets and providing the food residents are used to eating.

“South Africa has about 855,000 tonnes of maize for export, according to the South Africa Grain Producers Association. Other countries, such as Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda have exportable surpluses, perhaps as much as 220,000 tonnes in total,” says Oxfam's briefing paper on southern Africa.

DEVELOPING NATIONS SEIZE THE INITIATIVE

The GM divide exists in the developing world as well. Some countries have banned the products while others, such as China, India and Kenya, are forging ahead with their own research.

Romanon Kiome, director of the state-run Kenya Agriculture Research Institute, says GM might improve food security. Researchers are experimenting with modified potatoes and maize.

“I am not trying to say that biotechnology is the silver bullet to resolve our food problems but it has brought good opportunity. It has very high potential of resolving some of the problems we have been unable to resolve with conventional science,” Kiome said.

China, eager to achieve food security, is the second largest developer of biotechnology after the United States and is researching GM crops such as corn, rice and cotton. In India, there are hopes for crops such as potatoes, tomatoes and mustard.

China planted some 1.5 million hectares (3.7 million acres) of GM cotton in 2001, or 30 percent of the total crop, while India will harvest its first modified crop, cotton, this year.

The once bold promises of the biotechnology industry appear to be yielding to these targeted, smaller-scale efforts.

“I wish the biotech industry would start scaling back its rhetoric and promises,” said Mellon. “If it would see itself as an adjunct to other steps -- it might have a better chance to make a difference.”

(Additional reporting by David Mageria in Nairobi, Lee Chyen yee in Shanghai, Atul Prakash in Bombay, David Brough in Rome)

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 “Peace and Sustainable Development Will Rise or Fall Together”
 by David Krieger

It is not likely that peace can be maintained in the longer term without sustainable development. Similarly, it is unlikely that sustainable development can take place in a climate dominated by war and the preparations for war.

In order to assess the prospects for both peace and sustainable development, we must take into account the broad global trends of our time: political, economic, military and cultural. I will attempt to provide some perspective on these trends.

Political

In the aftermath of the Cold War, there was a breakdown of the post World War II bipolar balance of power. The United States emerged as the dominant global power, while the Russians have struggled to maintain their economy and their influence. Instead of extending a gracious hand of support to the Russians, as the United States did for Western Europe, including the vanquished nations, and Japan after WWII, the US has sought to extend its global reach and, in general, forced the Russians to accept compromising positions, such as the expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe.

At the same time, the United States has generally opposed the expansion of international law, including human rights law, and has withdrawn its support from many key treaty commitments, including the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto Accords on Climate Change, and the Protocol to verify the Biological Weapons Convention. Almost daily there are reports of new US assaults on international law.

As the United States has sought to extend its power unilaterally, it has undermined the international political process established after World War II that operates through the United Nations. The US has withheld economic support from the United Nations and only sought to use it when the US perceived that its own interests could be directly advanced, as in the cases of the Persian Gulf War and the more recent US-led war on terrorism.

In the past, new coalitions have formed to provide a check on one country asserting global dominance. It is perhaps too early to see clearly the shape of a new coalition that might arise in response to US dominance, but if history is a guide there will be one. Even without any major coalition of forces arising, however, the US will remain challenged by terrorists seeking to avenge themselves against the US for policies that have adversely affected their lives, cultures and countries.

Economic

The US has promoted the forces of globalization that have opened the doors for capital to move freely to countries where the costs of labor are cheapest and the environmental regulations are most lax. Despite claims by Western leaders that benefits would accrue to the neediest, this “globalization from above” has continued to shift economic benefit from the poor to the wealthy, and has not provided substantial increased benefit to the poor of the world. Nearly half the world’s population continues to live in conditions of poverty, characterized by inadequate food,

water, shelter and health care. These conditions create a fertile breeding ground for terrorists committed to the destruction of US dominance and its imperial outreach.

Further, global military expenditures are approximately \$800 billion per year. These funds are largely used to repress and control the poor, when in actuality, for a small fraction of these global expenditures, the conditions of poverty could be largely eliminated. Of the \$800 billion spent worldwide on military forces, the US spends approximately one-half of the total. This trend has been on a steady rise since the Bush administration came into power.

The rich countries of the world have done little to alleviate the crushing burdens of poverty or to aid in redressing the indignities and inequities still existing after long periods of colonial rule. There is much cause for unease throughout the developing world, which is giving rise to continued low intensity warfare as exemplified by the Palestinian struggle against the Israelis and events such as the September 11th attacks against the United States.

Military

In the post-Cold War period, the US has pulled far ahead of the other nations of the world in terms of military dominance. The US is able to control NATO policy and has used NATO as a vehicle for its pursuit of military domination. In addition to dramatically increasing its military budget in recent years, the US has announced plans for high-tech developments that include missile defense systems, more usable nuclear weapons and the weaponization of space.

Despite its push for global military dominance, however, the nature of today's weapons limit the possibility of any country having unilateral dominance. Nuclear weapons, for example, are capable of destroying cities, and there is an increased likelihood in the aftermath of the Cold War that these weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists capable of attacking largely, if not completely, with impunity. Thus, the most powerful weapons that have been created have greater utility for the weak (if they can get their hands on them) than they do for the strong (who may be reluctant to exercise such power and also unable to if they cannot identify and locate the source of the attack).

Cultural

The world is definitely experiencing a clash of cultures, but not along the fault lines of civilizations as Samuel Huntington has suggested. The opposing cultural trends that are most dominant are between those who define the world in terms of the value of massive accumulation and immediate use of resources (powerful individuals, corporations and the national governments that provide a haven for them) and those who define the world in terms of shared rights and responsibilities for life and future generations (most of the world's people). The former values, reflected predominantly by the economic elites in the United States and many other countries and constantly on display through various forms of media, do not promote sustainable development, wreak havoc on the poor of the world and invite retaliation. The latter values are reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the growing body of international human rights law that has developed since World War II.

Dominant Trends

The dominant world trends today are:

unilateralism by the United States and a downplaying of collective political responsibility; growing and increasingly desperate economic disparity between the world's rich and poor; a push for military dominance by the United States in particular and the Western states through NATO more generally, offset by the flexibility of terrorists who may obtain nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction; and the cultural dominance of greed and selfishness portrayed by global media on a broad screen for all, including the poor, to see from throughout the world. These trends are destabilizing and unsustainable. They can change by democratic means from within democratic states or they can continue until the world is embroiled in conflagration. That is a choice that is available to us for a relatively short period of time as the trends are already quite advanced. The changes needed are:

a shift to multilateralism, involving all states, through a reformed and strengthened United Nations; implementation of a plan to alleviate poverty and economic injustice throughout the world; a shift from US and NATO military dominance to the implementation of the post World War II vision of collective security; and a shift toward implementation of international law in which all states and their leaders are held to high standards of protecting human rights and the dignity of the individual. The United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development, set to take place in Johannesburg, South Africa in August 2002, will fail dramatically unless it takes into account these dominant trends and the need to shift them in more sustainable and peaceful directions.

--David Krieger is president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (www.wagingpeace.org) and the Deputy Chair of the International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility. He can be contacted at dkrieger@napf.org.

“Environmental summit may contribute to global warming, U.N. says”

New York (dpa) - Carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles bringing thousands of people to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa should be offset to protect the global environment, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said Thursday.

UNDP proposed that attendees to the summit, to be held from August 26 to September 4 in Johannesburg, pay 10 dollars per person while participating businesses should pay between 1,000 dollars and 100,000 dollars to the newly formed “Johannesburg Climate Legacy”.

The Climate Legacy said that it expects the travels and the conference itself will generate 289,619 tons of carbon dioxide, and is seeking to raise 5 million dollars ``to mitigate the effects of the carbon emissions of the summit" in South Africa.

UNDP said that money collected from participants will be channelled to a trust fund of the Development Bank of South Africa and used for ``long-term carbon-reducing renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in schools, hospitals and communities".

``They are setting an example for the rest of the world by putting money where their mouths are," said Saliem Fakir, who heads the Climate Legacy that is seeking to raise awareness on the issue of climate change in South Africa.

The World Summit, a follow-up to the 1992 Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit, will review progress made reversing in protecting the earth's environment and seek money to new implement programmes.

But the prospect that several thousand government delegates and non-governmental organizations converging on Johannesburg may generate harmful carbon dioxide, which is one of topics of discussion at the World Summit, has convinced organizers to set an example by urging attendees to pay for the emissions they create.

``The Johannesburg Climate Legacy provides an excellent opportunity for UNDP to set an example in taking practical steps towards addressing climate change issues while providing tangible benefits to local communities," said UNDP administrator Mark Malloch Brown.

Emissions of carbon dioxide - the result of burning fossil fuels such as gasoline - and other gases are trapped in the atmosphere, contributing to the phenomenon of global warming and climate change.

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