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CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 5 MAY 1994

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Barbados Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford opened the High-Level Segment and said that after discussing and sharing their experiences, States must forge a new partnership for sustainable development based on collaboration, cooperation, and companionship. He called for an end to the old concept of foreign aid, which should be replaced with equity and mutual respect and common, but differentiated, responsibilities. Rafeuddin Ahmed then delivered a message on behalf of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in which he highlighted the importance of the Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration. He said that as much determination should be given to the implementation as was given to drafting.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: Prime Minister Dr. Patrick Manning said that international cooperation may be increased through transfer of technology, easing of the debt burden and trade liberalization. He called for rapid implementation of the relevant conventions that can further the sustainable development of SIDS.

CHINA: Liu Chengguo, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, said that no country alone can achieve prosperity, and the new partnership should be based on mutual respect and equality so that SIDS can further improve their capacity to protect their own environments.

UNITED STATES: Under Secretary of State Timothy Wirth said that even if carbon dioxide emissions are reduced their concentration will continue to rise and therefore discussion should focus on the alleviation of the effects of sea-level rise. He highlighted marine pollution and asked that all concerned participate in a coral reef initiative.

ICELAND: Dr. Ossur Skarphedinsson, Minister for the Environment, on behalf of the Nordic Countries, said that 80% of marine pollution comes from land based sources and he urged the delegates to act. He also stressed the importance of the ban on transportation of toxic and hazardous wastes from OECD to non-OECD countries.

BAHAMAS: Prime Minister Hubert A. Ingraham said that rich nations must assist SIDS with funding and implementation of Agenda 21 and the new Programme of Action. He expressed hope that the international community will take decisive steps to support the Haitian people.

AUSTRALIA: Gordon Niel Bilney, Minister for Pacific Islands and Development Cooperation, lamented the exploitation of the natural and mineral resources of many Pacific islands by unscrupulous foreign companies. He noted that improvement in the status of women is essential for population policies to be effective in SIDS.

MARSHALL ISLANDS: The representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs asked how his country could maintain a strong voice at the UN if it disappeared due to sea level rise. He urged industrialized countries to strengthen the Climate Change Convention.

NAURU: President Bernard Dowiyogo said that sustainable development is a concept that islanders have always understood. He called for the elimination of poverty as a prerequisite for sustainable development, the improvement of the quality of family planning services, and the effective implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

CYPRUS: Alecos Michaelides, Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that sustainable development can only be achieved within the context of a secure environment, free of territorial claims, foreign aggression and the accompanying economic and environmental destruction.

VANUATU: Prime Minister Maxime Carlot Korman said that development can only be truly sustainable if all the recipients have been involved in all stages of the process. Then answers will be brought to the problems of today without compromising the conditions of future generations.

CUBA: President Fidel Castro Ruz spoke of the havoc wreaked on the developing world by consumer societies of the North, which depend on growth, fueled by the natural wealth of the South, for survival. Sustainable development is impossible without redistribution of wealth within and between countries. If the peoples of the South have to die then so be it, but they will die fighting, not as slaves, fighting for truth and for the right of their children to live.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Governor General Sir Wiwa Korowi said that no island can achieve sustainable development alone. Without access to necessary resources and technology, SIDS will not be able to fulfill their part of the commitments made in Rio. He also stressed the need for the South Pacific to be given a place on the GEF board.

VENEZUELA: Dr. Miguel Angel Burelli, Minister of Foreign Affairs, said that the international social justice that emerged in Rio acknowledged shared but differentiated responsibilities between developed countries and SIDS.

JAMAICA: Easton Douglas, Minister of the Public Service and Environment, said that the issue of sustainable development is of global magnitude going beyond beaches and coral reefs, since what is at stake is the survival of a large part of the family of humankind.

MAURITIUS: Bashir Khodabux, Minister of Environment and Quality of Life, spoke of the essential role women play in sustainable development. He stressed the need for partnership within and among regions and appealed to UNEP to link with the Indian Ocean Commission to implement regional seas programmes and other initiatives.

KIRIBATI: President Teatao Teannaki stressed the difficulties in communicating between islands within Kiribati

Earth Negotiations Bulletin (enb@igc.apc.org) is written and edited by Pamela Chasek (pchasek@igc.apc.org), Charlotte de Fontaubert (61155@chopin.udel.edu), Langston James Goree VI "Kimo" (kimo@pipeline.com) and Rachel Kyte (rkyte@igc.apc.org), with funding from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (iisd@web.apc.org). Additional funding for this volume of the *Bulletin* has been provided by: the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Caribbean Community (Caricom), the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC) and the Environment and Natural Resources Group (ENR) through the United Nations Development Programme; the British Development Division in the Caribbean; the Government of Iceland; the World Bank; the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; and the UNICEF Division of Public Affairs. The authors can be contacted at their electronic mail addresses. IISD can be contacted by phone at +1-204-958-7700 and by fax at +1-204-958-7710. The opinions expressed in *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in other publications with appropriate citation. This volume of *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* is uploaded into the APC computer conference <env.islands> and can be accessed on the Internet through the gopher at <igc.apc.org>.

and with the rest of the world. He noted that many consultants have said that there is no economic future for SIDS, but the people have no option but to go forward.

UNITED KINGDOM: The Earl of Arran, Department of the Environment, noted the significant bilateral and multilateral assistance provided by the UK to SIDS. He said that a new fund for SIDS would only be of use if there was new money. Instead, SIDS should get a larger share of existing aid money.

BRAZIL: Henrique Brandao Cavalcanti, Minister for the Environment and the Amazon, spoke of the relationships understood in Rio between development, environment and human well-being. Since then, Brazil has worked hard to ensure the institutional follow-up of UNCED.

MALDIVES: Ismail Shafeeu, Minister of Planning, Human Resources and Environment, said that the Maldives faced all the constraints outlined by this Conference and welcomed the attention it brings to the plight of SIDS. He called for a global monitoring network to allow SIDS to better understand the effects of climate change.

MICRONESIA: President Bailey Olter said that today's theme is partnership -- not the traditional donor-recipient relationship -- but people working together in a common enterprise to implement the Rio agreements.

TONGA: Prime Minister Baron Vaea said that we have become wiser and, therefore, accept that development is not concerned only with rapid economic growth, but also with using environmental resources in a more frugal manner.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS: Prime Minister Dr. Kennedy A. Simmonds said that we have been wasting time talking about sustainable development if the developed countries do not come up with new and additional financial resources.

FIJI: Lt. Col. Jonetani Kaukimoce, Minister for Housing, Urban Development and Environment, said that while UNCED urged global and regional cooperation, momentum is being lost as States compete for funding. He stressed the importance of protecting the rights of indigenous people.

MALAYSIA: Datuk Law Hieng Ding, Minister of Science, Technology and Environment, highlighted the ecological disasters faced by SIDS from climate change and sea level rise. He called for partnership on the basis of common, but differentiated, responsibilities and mentioned that Malaysia is providing training for SIDS.

GERMANY: Professor Dr. Klaus Töpfer, Federal Minister for the Environment, spoke first on behalf of the European Union. He pointed out that in 1991 the EU provided US\$1.03 billion in multilateral and bilateral assistance to SIDS (30% of total assistance from all donors). Secondly, on behalf of Germany, he said that his candidacy for the Chair of the CSD indicates how seriously Germany takes this process. He stressed the Climate Change Convention; the fight against the illegal hazardous wastes mafia; and the need to change production and consumption patterns.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: Ezekiel Alebua, Minister of Forests, Environment and Conservation, said that his country has produced a national environmental management strategy. He mentioned human beings at the center of sustainable development, gender equity and the role of women.

INDONESIA: Sarwono Kusumaatmadja, Minister for Environment, said that at Rio overconsumption and poverty were seen as pushing the world to the brink of disaster. International cooperation is needed for the implementation of Agenda 21.

SEYCHELLES: Danielle de St. Jorre, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Planning and Environment, the only woman speaker, highlighted issues of critical importance, including tourism, transportation, trade and human resources development.

SAMOA: Faasootauloa Pati, Minister for Lands, Surveys and Environment, said sustainable development involves NGOs, local communities, women and youth. SIDS are innocent victims of climate change and should have increased access to resources and technology.

CANADA: Clifford Lincoln, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for the Environment, raised the issues of the right

to determine family size, changing patterns of production and consumption, biodiversity, climate change, forestry, straddling and highly migratory fish stocks, and the involvement of indigenous people.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA: Song Young Shik, Special Envoy of the President, noted that the objectives of development are full employment, equitable social progress, natural resource management and environmental protection. To achieve this for SIDS the world needs a guiding vision, a programme and mechanisms attuned to their needs.

SAINT LUCIA: Prime Minister John Compton said that this Conference provides the basis for North-South and South-South cooperation. Economic activities require the intense use of land resources and, at times, one must be a magician on a small island to meet competing needs.

BARBADOS DECLARATION

At 11:30 Wednesday night, delegates reached agreement on the draft Barbados Declaration in an informal session of the Plenary. The draft Declaration, which is expected to be adopted by the Conference on Friday, contains a preamble that reaffirms the principles and commitments to sustainable development embodied in the Rio agreements and recognizes that this Conference translates Agenda 21 into specific policies, actions and measures to be taken at the national, regional and international levels. In Part One, the Declaration affirms the importance of: human resources and cultural heritage; gender equity; the role of women and other major groups, including children, youth and indigenous people; the sovereign right of SIDS over their own natural resources; vulnerability to natural and environmental disasters; climate change and sea level rise; limited freshwater resources; special situation and needs of the least developed SIDS; economic vulnerability; capacity building; constraints to sustainable development; and partnership between Governments, IGOs, NGOs and other major groups in implementing Agenda 21 and this Programme of Action. In Part Two, the Declaration declares the importance of national, regional and international implementation, including the reduction and elimination of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, and the provision of effective means for the implementation of the Programme of Action, including adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The warmth of the welcome for Fidel Castro was met with a cold blast from the security guards on the balcony -- dragging one participant out, and injuring her in the process, on suspicion of holding a placard that said "¡Viva Cuba!" A full apology was offered later by UN Security, and accepted by the NGOs. One NGO had his pass rescinded, but Security has failed to identify the other offending placard holders. One can only imagine what the reaction would have been to a protest!

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT: The High-Level Segment will resume at 9:30 am. The remaining speakers are Japan, New Zealand, Colombia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Cook Islands, Guyana, Niue, Pakistan, India, Belize and Haiti. It is hoped that the High-Level Segment will end between 11:00 and 11:30 when the Round Table will begin. The Round Table meeting of Heads of State and Government and Ministerial participants will continue until 1:00 pm.

PLENARY: At 4:00 pm the final meeting of the Plenary will take place. The Inter-American Development Bank will conclude the general debate. The President of the Conference will report on the results of the Round Table. The Plenary will then move to adopt the Barbados Declaration, the Programme of Action and the Conference Report. With an expected round of thanks and praise, the Conference will come to a close.