

Consumers International, Friends of the Earth International, Greenpeace International, Woods Hole Research Center, Worldwatch Institute, World Conservation Union (IUCN), World Resources Institute, World Wide Fund for Nature International, Brazilian NGOs and Social Movements Forum for Environment and Development, Faor-Forum da Amazonia Oriental, Rede Cerrada/CERRADO NGOs Network, SEAN-Secretaria de Entidades Ambientistas do Nordeste, Rede de ONGs da Mata Atlantica, Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens, Uniao de Entidades Ambientistas do Parana, APEDEMA-Assembleia de Entidades Ambientatlistas, APEDEMA-Rio Grande do Sul, Mato Grosso Forum for Environment and Development

24 June 2002

H.E. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of Brazil
H.E. Thabo Mbeki, President of South Africa
H.E. Goran Persson, Prime Minister of Sweden

Rt.Hon. John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister of UK
H.R.H. Princess Basma Bint Talal of Jordan

Your Excellencies,

We write to ask for your leadership as the best hope for a positive outcome at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, now only sixty days away. We thank President Cardoso for convening this meeting, and each of you for your willingness to come to participate in an urgent dialogue with leaders of civil society. Specifically, we urge you to campaign for an agenda based on five key elements outlined below, and to proceed on that agenda even on the basis of broad but incomplete consensus.

The Rio Summit in 1992 articulated a global commitment to the idea of sustainable development broadly, and to specific measures to turn that idea into action. The genius of the consensus at Rio was that it provided for environmental protection and economic development, while at the same time incorporating the principles of equity among people, between countries and between generations. While there are examples of progress at the national level in several countries, through local Agenda 21s and through the efforts of civil society, the promise of Rio has not been kept. Climate change, the loss of species and the degradation of ecosystems are accelerating.

Humanity's demands for food, fuel, fibre, water, and minerals have simply exceeded the Earth's capacity to provide them sustainably and that has profound implications for human well being. Half of all jobs worldwide depend on fisheries, forests, and agriculture. A billion people depend for food on wild caught fish, but two-thirds of the world's fisheries are being harvested beyond sustainability, and three-fourths of the world's agricultural lands are degraded. Yet in many regions of the world, people remain voiceless in environmental decisions. Dependent directly on natural resources, they have no say in how those resources are used.

One-third of the world's people face water scarcity, and water use is rising twice as fast as population. Three great rivers, the Amu Darya, the Colorado, and the Yellow no longer reach the sea in dry seasons. The number facing scarcity is likely to double in the next several decades, creating a band of scarcity around the middle of the globe. 70% of the water people use is for agriculture, and it is used to produce half the world's food.

Global warming is underway, and will cause not just hotter weather, but more severe storms and droughts that will intensify the agony of dry regions, worsen the misery of the poor, and drive

still more refugees from the land. Rising sea levels and worsening storms may soon create a human catastrophe of destruction, and displacement affecting millions of the world's poorest people. Meanwhile, two billion people still have no access to basic energy services.

Maintenance of international peace and security depend on our success in addressing these fundamental issues of sustainability.

We are deeply concerned with the proposal suggested by some governments that "type 2" agreements, voluntary public/private partnerships, serve as an alternative to inter-governmental agreements, known in the WSSD process as "type 1" agreements. Coalitions by civil society, the private sector and governments, however broad, cannot substitute for official action. We believe that such coalitions can only be effective if linked with specific multi-lateral commitments made by governments.

The outcome of the last preparatory meeting at Bali does not reassure us that there will be agreement on a Plan of Action for Johannesburg that helps to reverse these trends. But we are convinced that there is a broad, even if not complete, consensus around a set of measures which would make a significant difference. The leadership that we ask of you is to articulate and support this consensus, and seek broader agreement to address three key challenges:

- **Achieving poverty eradication, particularly in developing countries and countries in transition;**
- **Achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns worldwide;**
- **Maintaining and restoring the integrity of ecosystems worldwide.**

The world could make significant progress toward those goals by agreeing to the following actions in Johannesburg:

1) Energy:

- to launch an action programme to enable access to clean, affordable and reliable energy services to the two billion without basic energy services to facilitate achieving the Millennium Development goals on poverty alleviation;
- to establish a global target of 10% of primary energy supply from new renewable sources by 2010.

Taken together, and if properly supported with appropriate policies and measures, these two actions could achieve much in the pursuit of the goals of poverty alleviation and combating climate change.

2) Water:

Achieve by 2015, the Millennium Development Goals of halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation by conserving the source of water and facilitating its equitable and efficient use:

- Establish river basin management authorities and implement integrated river basin management for 80% of the world's rivers and lakes. This should be undertaken with public participation and address key causes of deteriorating environmental health, such as water timing, quality and biodiversity;
- Reduce by a third the volume of water required to produce a unit of each of the world's major irrigated crops;

- Reduce by 80% the volume of water lost to leakage in urban water supplies;
- Establish multilateral river basin management authorities for more than 50% of the world's 261 transboundary rivers by 2007.

3) Biodiversity:

Achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at global, regional and national levels as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth.

- Ensure equitable and fair access and sharing of benefits from use of genetic resources by developing appropriate legal and policy measures by 2004 to implement the CBD Bonn Guidelines on Access and Benefit Sharing;
- Ensure significant actions to restore threatened ecosystems.

4) Trade:

As we saw in Bali, the failure to chart a course for change in the rules and practices of international trade and finance will leave intact a system that is fundamentally failing the world's poor and undermining natural resource conservation. Developed countries should:

- End agricultural dumping and agree to a timetable to phase out agricultural export subsidies; agree to radical reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to achieve social and environmental objectives, rather than increased output;
- Phase out environmentally and socially harmful subsidies, including those on fisheries, and the energy, forestry and agriculture sectors;
- Support the right of developing countries to protect and promote their domestic agricultural sectors in the interests of food security and rural development;
- Propose that the Johannesburg Political Declaration recognizes that environmental rules should not be subordinate to trade rules.

5) Corporate Accountability, Participation and Openness:

One of the agreements in 1992 with the greatest potential to strengthen sustainability is embodied in Rio Principle 10 which would guarantee the right of citizens to information about and a voice in environmental and natural resource decisions that affect them. In the era of corporate driven globalisation, governments must ensure rights and protections for citizens and communities, and hold trans-national corporations to the highest standards. Governments should ensure the rights of citizens and communities to obtain information, participate in governmental decisions, and hold trans-national corporations accountable to the highest standards. Progress on Principle 10 requires:

- A commitment to implementation of national systems of participation consistent with Principle 10;
- Creation of programs to build the capacity of governments to implement their commitments to Principle 10, and the capacity of civil society groups to track the progress of implementation;
- A commitment to a process to create a framework for corporate accountability and liability;
- A commitment to report on progress on the accountability and liability regime by 2005;
- A commitment to secure the participation of affected civil society in the decision making processes of multilateral financial institutions which affect natural resources, either temporarily or permanently.

The Summit must also produce significant progress on the “means of implementation” for the Plan of Action. Key elements of the means of implementation should include progress towards the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade, as well as increased market access through the phasing out of harmful environmental subsidies in agriculture, energy, fisheries and forests. In addition, developed countries must commit to building upon Monterrey as a floor to financial commitments. Accelerating the timetable and level of commitments for reaching the 0.7% ODA target, as well as full GEF replenishment are core elements of this agenda.

We are convinced that if you would issue a call to agreement around these actions that much of the world would endorse them. We urge you to create a process led by South Africa to finalize an agreement around these action programmes and a post-Johannesburg process; and we pledge our support to the implementation of such a process. Failure is not an option.

Sincerely,

Stefan Larenas, CONSUMERS INTERNATIONAL
Charles Secrett, FRIENDS OF THE EARTH INTERNATIONAL
Steve Sawyer, GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL
Kilaparti Ramakrishna, The WOODS HOLE RESEARCH CENTER
Jonathan Lash, WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE
Christopher Flavin, WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE
Achim Steiner, WORLD CONSERVATION UNION
Claude Martin, WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE INTERNATIONAL
Brazilian NGOs and Social Movements Forum for Environment and Development,
Faor-Forum da Amazonia Oriental,
Rede Cerrada/CERRADO NGOs Network,
SEAN-Secretaria de Entidades Ambientistas do Nordeste,
Rede de ONGs da Mata Atlantica,
Movimento dos Atingidos por Barragens,
Uniao de Entidades Ambientistas do Parana,
APEDEMA-Assembleia de Entidades Ambientatlistas,
APEDEMA-Rio Grande do Sul, Mato Grosso Forum for Environment and Development

Argonautas, Fundacao Pro-Cerradao, ASPOAN-Associacao Potiguar Amigos da Natureza, GAIA, Germen, Os Verdes, ASPAN-Associacao Pernambulana de Defesa da Natureza, APAN-Associacao Paraibana de Defesa da Natureza, CEDEA, GAMBIA, CEA, ECOA-Ecologia Eacao, Instituto Centro Vida, NUCAV, Terra Viva-Centre de Desenvolvimento Agroecologico do Sul da Bahia, WWF Brasil, AGAPAN-Associacao Gaucha de Protecao do Ambiente Natural, IBRACE-Instituto Brasileiro do Cerrado, Vita Civilis Instituto, SINPAF, Instituto Ambiental Vida'Agua, Fundacao Sos Mata Atlantica, TERRÆ

cc:

John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister UK
Maurice Strong, Secretary General, Rio Summit
Emil Salim, Chairman Prepcomm WSSD
Jan Pronk, Special Envoy of UN Secretary General
Nitin Desai, Secretary General of WSSD