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COMISIÓN SOBRE EL DESARROLLO SOSTENIBLE  
Quinto período de sesiones  
7 a 25 de abril de 1997  
Tema 4 del programa provisional\*

PREPARATIVOS PARA EL PERÍODO EXTRAORDINARIO DE SESIONES  
PARA REALIZAR UN EXAMEN Y UNA EVALUACIÓN GENERALES DE  
LA EJECUCIÓN DEL PROGRAMA 21

Carta de fecha 18 de febrero de 1997 dirigida al Secretario  
General por los Representantes Permanentes del Brasil y  
Noruega ante las Naciones Unidas

Tenemos el honor de presentar una carta del Sr. Gustavo Krause Gonçalves Sobrinho, Ministro de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Hídricos y la Amazonia del Brasil, y el Sr. Thorbjørn Berntsen, Ministro de Medio de Ambiente de Noruega, relativa a un simposio sobre producción sostenible y modalidades de consumo celebrado en Brasilia del 25 al 28 de noviembre de 1996 (véase el anexo).

En la carta, ambos ministros solicitan que el documento\*\* adjunto se distribuya en el próximo período de sesiones del Grupo de Trabajo especial entre períodos de sesiones de la Comisión sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible y en el quinto período de sesiones de la Comisión.

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\* Se publicara como documento E/CN.17/1997/1.

\*\* Las conclusiones de la Presidenta del Simposio (véase el apéndice) sólo se distribuyen en el idioma en que fue presentado.



ANEXO

Carta de fecha 20 de diciembre de 1996 dirigida al Secretario General por el Ministro de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Hídricos y la Amazonia del Brasil, y el Ministro de Medio Ambiente de Noruega

Mientras el mundo se prepara para la celebración del próximo período de sesiones de la Comisión sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible y el período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General, los Gobiernos del Brasil y Noruega tomaron la iniciativa de patrocinar y organizar un diálogo que tuviera por objeto determinar cuáles son los elementos más importantes para elaborar un proyecto común Norte-Sur sobre la cuestión de la evolución de las modalidades de consumo y producción. El seminario se celebró en Brasilia del 25 al 28 de noviembre de 1996. Participaron, entre otros, representantes de varios países de América Latina, Europa y América del Norte en representación de los gobiernos, las organizaciones internacionales, las organizaciones no gubernamentales, el comercio y la industria, la comunidad académica y las autoridades locales.

Mediante la presente carta nos complace presentarle los resultados de esa reunión como contribución al debate internacional sobre esta cuestión.

Entre las conclusiones de la reunión, cabe mencionar las siguientes:

Queda claro que las cuestiones que se examinan en el capítulo 4 del Programa 21, Evolución de las modalidades de consumo, interesan por igual a los países industrializados y a los países en desarrollo y requieren reforzar la cooperación internacional entre ambos grupos de países.

El intercambio de experiencias en materia de desarrollo de políticas nacionales y su ejecución constituye un factor fundamental para lograr que las modalidades de consumo y de producción sean más sostenibles. La cooperación bilateral entre países como Noruega y el Brasil ha demostrado ser útil para avanzar un paso más en el debate de la cuestión. También se reconoció y reafirmó que corresponde fundamentalmente a los países industrializados tomar la iniciativa en esta materia. No obstante, tanto los países en desarrollo como los industrializados pueden aprovechar sus respectivas experiencias siempre y cuando lo hagan en un marco de respeto mutuo de su diversidad cultural.

Imbuídas de la voluntad de lograr el desarrollo sostenible, las conversaciones de Brasilia demuestran que el debate actual debería tener un enfoque más amplio que trascienda las cuestiones vinculadas con la evolución tecnológica y política e incorpore la dimensión humana procurando una mejor comprensión de las necesidades y los valores que están implícitos en los modos de subsistencia sostenibles.

Además, está más claro que nunca que, en vista de las necesidades de los países en desarrollo, y de que la degradación del medio ambiente a nivel mundial es cada vez mayor, es preciso reforzar el sistema de las Naciones Unidas, en especial los órganos que se ocupan del desarrollo sostenible.

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Le podemos asegurar que los Gobiernos de Noruega y el Brasil seguirán apoyando la labor de las Naciones Unidas en esta materia y contribuyendo con ella.

En algunas de las conclusiones de la reunión se sugieren alternativas para el proceso y temas para la labor futura y para el debate del período extraordinario de sesiones de la Asamblea General. En consecuencia, quisiéramos pedirle que haga distribuir el documento adjunto a los participantes de las sesiones del Grupo de Trabajo especial entre períodos de sesiones y del quinto período de sesiones de la Comisión sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible.

Mientras tanto, esperamos con interés las próximas deliberaciones de la Comisión sobre el Desarrollo Sostenible y del período extraordinario de sesiones que se celebrará en junio de 1997, y confiamos en que los resultados de la reunión de Brasilia constituyan un aporte útil a ese proceso.

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APPENDIX

A shared vision - conclusions from the Chairperson of  
the Brasilia Workshop on Sustainable Production and  
Consumption Patterns and Policies, held from 25 to  
28 November 1996

1. The Brasilia Workshop was organized by the Ministry of Environment, Water Resources and the Amazon-Brazil in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment-Norway. It was chaired by Ms. Aspasia Camargo, Deputy Minister at the Brazilian Environment Ministry, and co-chaired by Mr. Oddmund Graham, Ambassador for the Environment at the Norwegian Environment Ministry. As well as participants from Brazil and Norway, the meeting brought together representatives of Governments from other Latin American countries, including Chile, Cuba, and Paraguay, as well as international institutions such as the Commission on Sustainable Development and the OECD, and representatives of major groups, including the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Earth Council. The Brasilia Workshop built on the Agenda 21, chapter 4 - Changing Consumption and Production Patterns and a series of meetings since UNCED. We reached a number of conclusions which could provide input for the review of Agenda 21 in 1997.
2. For the last two centuries, we have been living with the trinity of liberty, equality and fraternity. As we move into the twenty-first century, we need to take as our inspiration the four values of liberty, equality, fraternity and sustainability.
3. We recognize that current production and consumption patterns are causing serious environmental degradation and social marginalization. Most of the world's people are unable to meet their needs and improve their quality of life. If we integrate them into the market economy only using existing mechanisms then we would suffer unbearable environmental stress. Providing the goods and services required to reduce poverty will require lifestyle change among the affluent in North and South.
4. We found that there is a universal interest in a common agenda among all countries to pursue sustainability. The industrialized countries have a special responsibility and are embarking on change and this can have an important demonstration effect for the developing world. But new ways of meeting needs while respecting nature have a special place in developing countries where the urgency to increase consumption is greatest. Action for sustainable production and consumption is not a one-way street, and both North and South can learn from each other.
5. The deep-seated nature of many of the issues requires new forms of international cooperation between Governments and other stakeholders on questions of resource pricing, technology, trade, environmental regulation and management systems. We must make sure that the drive for environmental sustainability does not become an instrument of increasing North-South inequalities. Protectionist measures should not be used in the name of the environment. Rather attention should be focused on opening up opportunities for

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developing countries. Furthermore, policies and regulations to change consumption in the industrialized world should be accompanied by dialogue with developing countries and support to ease the transition process.

6. Globalization needs to be underpinned by an ethic of sustainability, based on human rights and the values of freedom, democracy and social equity. It is impossible and makes no sense to change consumption patterns simply through technological change or policy plans. New cultural reference points for success are needed to replace the notion that increasing material consumption equates with progress. Concern for future generations needs to be incorporated into today's decisions.

7. The role of advertising and the media is critical here, and the international community should apply the resources of the media to induce behaviour changes to avoid waste, inefficient resource use and conspicuous consumption. Positive messages of how individuals can live in a sustainable manner are required in place of advertising encouraging ever-rising consumption or stories of environmental disasters. Development models based on overly individual and material consumption should give way to a market economy encouraging lifestyles where spiritual, cultural and community aspirations have a greater role.

8. The Brasilia Workshop focused on the key resources for consumption related to basic human needs, and the main resources for production and the economy in general, namely energy, forests, land and water. At all levels, action to achieve sustainable management of natural resources, and thereby sustainable production and consumption, is needed. We need to respect environmental and resource limits and recognize that fair use of resources will increase human well-being and reduce social conflicts. To achieve this, participation and democratic accountability is crucial.

9. The Workshop discussed a range of positive examples and ideas of success. A broader strategy is now needed for Governments, business and civil society, so that they can carry out their critical tasks and build new partnerships based on trust.

For Governments, the challenge is to change the rules of the game to stimulate social and technological innovation.

- The greening of Government means integrating sustainable development into the heart of government decision-making. It is particularly important to ensure that macroeconomic policies for liberalization and deregulation promote environmental improvement.
- Environmental tax reform can remove distorted prices, stimulate development, encourage employment and reduce pollution and resource use. Environmentally damaging subsidies should be removed in a socially responsible way. Questions of international competition mean that more should be done to coordinate efforts to internalize environmental costs into market prices.

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- Governments are also major consumers and can help shape markets through better understanding of their use of goods and services and incorporating environmental criteria into procurement policies.

For business, the goal is to find new ways of satisfying customer requirements with the lowest resource use and environmental costs, and thereby guarantee competitive advantage which will increase as market conditions change to better reflect environmental costs.

- Cleaner production and eco-efficiency offer promising strategies for continued economic development at reduced environmental costs. But eco-efficiency needs to be accompanied by targets and cannot be an alternative to reforming unsustainable lifestyles.

For NGOs, the focus is to:

- develop and present documentation based on the solidarity values found among NGOs worldwide.
- suggest political action at all levels.
- campaign to raise awareness on sustainable "consumer values" and provide tools for changing lifestyles.
- educate citizens in their rights to participation in decision-making on sustainable production and consumption issues.

Finally, citizens need to exercise their consumer rights and responsibilities.

10. Finance, technology and information are powerful levers for achieving change.

- Time is running out for industrialized countries to meet the commitments made at Rio to increase development assistance. But even if these commitments were achieved, additional action would be required to reorient policy frameworks and financial markets to drive sustainable production and consumption. The imagination and skills of the financial sectors need to be mobilized in the cause of sustainable development.
- Banking, insurance and other financial institutions have an essential role in promoting sustainable development since they influence the entire framework in which investment and business activity take place.
- Innovative financial mechanisms should also be explored, such as charges on fuel for international air transport and charges on speculation in international financial flows, to reinforce global funds.
- The organizational dimension is critical to the successful spread of cleaner technologies: "software" is at least as important as

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"hardware". Investment should be focused on building the human skills and knowledge which will provide the basis for the generation and adaptation of technology.

- Innovation is important to stimulate more sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources, but needs to be balanced with measures to overcome the tendency towards obsolescence in both products and production technology, which has especially high costs for developing countries. Policy and research efforts should focus on improving product durability and the ability to upgrade technologies.
- Information strategies should focus on raising general "environmental literacy" in government, business and the public at large, and then targeting information at the point of decision.

11. In conclusion, the Brasilia Workshop found that:

- there is a commonality of interests between North and South for achieving sustainable development. Sustainability has humanity at its centre, respecting the world's cultural diversity.
- the scale of the challenge means that institutional reforms are required at the United Nations to strengthen the work on sustainable development and to build UNEP into a robust and effective global environmental organization.
- bilateral initiatives for sustainable development, such as the Brasilia Workshop, offer practical ways of bridging different perspectives of North and South.

12. Political emphasis should be given to this shared vision for sustainable production and consumption in national Government, in regional forums and at international meetings such as Rio plus 5, the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the special session of the General Assembly.

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