



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/44/659
19 October 1989

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-fourth session
Agenda item 82 (f)

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION: ENVIRONMENT

Letter dated 18 October 1989 from the Permanent Representative of
Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to attach hereto the text of the Chairman's summary of the Conference on the Global Environment and Human Response toward Sustainable Development, held in Tokyo from 11 to 13 September 1989, under the auspices of the Government of Japan in co-operation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

As His Excellency Mr. Taro Nakayama, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, mentioned in his address before the General Assembly on 26 September 1989, this document contains many valuable recommendations on such key environmental issues as global warming, deforestation of tropical forests, and the relationship between the environment and development.

I would be grateful if, in the light of its value to us as we address the issue of the global environment, the text of this document were circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 82 (f).

(Signed) Hideo KAGAMI
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Plenipotentiary
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Tokyo Conference on the Global Environment
and Human Response
Toward Sustainable Development

Chairman's Summary

The Tokyo Conference held on 11th through 13th September 1989 addressed two major areas of global concern: "Changing Atmosphere" and "Development and the Environment in Developing Countries" so as to seek pragmatic responses of the world to help realize the concept of "environmentally sound and sustainable development" as advocated by the UNEP Governing Council and the World Commission on Environment and Development. The Conference was held at the height of growing world-wide attention to global environmental issues. Such growing attention has been indeed clearly demonstrated in recent international meetings such as the Arch Summit, and thus the Conference paid due consideration to the results of those meetings.

(1) Rapid and unfettered economic growth fueled by vast quantities of fossil fuel in the developed countries, and widespread environmental damage stimulated by abject poverty and high population growth in many developing countries have caused worrisome increases in atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. As a consequence, Planet Earth confronts the prospect of significant warming and shifts in precipitation patterns. During the coming decades, everyone, everywhere, will begin to experience the effects of these major historical shifts in climate -- effects that will be manifest in agricultural production, sea levels, human health and quality of life, generally.

The threat of global climate change with its accompanying biological, economic and social disruptions will make the goal of sustainable development even more difficult and elusive for nations across the globe. During the decades to come, virtually every aspect of human life will change perceptibly -- how we grow our food, even what food we grow, the nature of our fuel, the supply of water for irrigation and human consumption, the pattern of daily life. Of all the environmental challenges mankind has confronted in the course of history, none has been as world-wide as the challenge of greenhouse warming. No one nation can, alone, mitigate the extent or consequences. It is a truly global problem; it will require a truly global solution.

(2) The forests of the tropical countries of the world are a vital resource. They provide a wealth of goods and services. They yield timber, fuelwood and many other

economic forest products; they maintain the stability and fertility of the soil; and they regulate water supplies and moderate climate. They also contain a substantial bank of stored carbon and are a highly important reservoir of biological diversity.

Natural forests within the tropics are being destroyed and seriously degraded every year at an unprecedented rate, the principal causes being pressure of population, economic imperatives and land hunger. Only a small proportion of this forest is removed for well planned and executed developments but the majority is the victim of unwise conversion to agriculture, excessive shifting cultivation, badly executed timber exploitation, over-grazing and over-collection of fuelwood, many of these factors being closely linked to each other. In general the real goods and services which could be provided by the forests are undervalued and the benefits of conversion to other uses are overestimated.

There is a reciprocal relation between deforestation and global warming. On the one hand, deforestation contributes to the build-up of CO₂ in the atmosphere; on the other hand, global warming will have an effect on forest productivity, the choice of species for afforestation, the choice and management of biological reserves and many other features.

(3) In developing countries the problem of mass poverty is the critical issue to be addressed in their quest for sustainable development. In the course of rapid industrialization and urbanization, many developing countries are faced with environmental pollution problems, but it is difficult for them to implement necessary pollution control measures due to institutional deficiencies and to lack of human, financial and technological resources.

The Tokyo Conference grappled with the challenges through the course of intensive, constructive discussions, with a firm conviction that such challenges should and could be overcome by keeping the present momentum coupled with appropriate actions to be taken, domestic or international, which led to the following recommendations. They should be incorporated in international efforts toward the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development.

I. Overall Findings

Since there are many kinds of uncertainties surrounding global environmental problems, internationally

coordinated efforts should be expanded in continuous global monitoring of the earth's environment, in review and assessment of the data acquired, and in interdisciplinary scientific research and studies.

Greater efforts should be made to foster better linkage between science and policy so that policies will be based on solid scientific grounds. In this respect, the essential advisory role of scientists in the decision-making process should be recognized.

In parallel with gathering scientific knowledge on global environmental problems to reduce uncertainties, necessary and appropriate steps should be immediately taken to avert the risks for present and future generations.

Designing for a sustainable future beyond the 20th century will require a new commitment to the Environmental Ethics by all nations, upon which actions can be taken by integrating a variety of socio-economic policies, enabling people in developing countries to meet their basic needs, and modifying socio-economic activities including the life-style in developed countries. Broad-based participation and contribution of concerned groups and the public are needed and intensive public information and awareness activities should be fostered.

Over-population and poverty pose great threats to environment, and as such these problems demand urgent attention for their solution for making sustainable development achievable.

Further international cooperation between and among groups of nations is of vital importance in global environmental management.

II. Intersectoral Recommendations

A. Reducing Uncertainties

All countries should take strong initiatives to increase scientific knowledge about global environmental issues. It is essential that uncertainties regarding climate change, ozone layer depletion and other environmental problems be reduced.

Special efforts are required to provide the developing countries with assistance to ensure their participation in, and their access to, the results of those initiatives:

(a) All countries should actively maintain and, where necessary, augment global monitoring networks using ground and ocean stations, ocean-going ships, airplanes or satellites. Satellite observation programmes should be coordinated among countries so as to make systematic observations.

The data acquired by global monitoring should be accumulated, in an appropriate way, in data centers in several countries or international organizations. The data should be exchanged among those centers and made freely accessible to all researchers concerned.

(b) Scientific research on the global environment should be supported in all countries. International coordination of research programmes, aimed at a long-term global perspective, will aid in maximizing the efficiency of such research including the various disciplines of social science. In this connection, existing international research programmes such as the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP), the World Climate Programme (WCP) and the International Human Dimensions of Global Change Programme (IHDC) should be effectively promoted.

To encourage these research programmes, global environmental research centers in developed countries, equipped with advanced research facilities, should promote international exchanges of researchers and research results.

(c) Training of specialists, in particular in developing countries, and general environmental education should be given high priority.

(d) To review and promote scientific progress, international meetings of leading scientists from various disciplines should be encouraged.

B. Technology

The challenge of achieving sustainable development in the face of global concerns such as greenhouse warming poses the need for unprecedented technological advances in a wide array of fields including energy, bio-technology and agriculture. But technological approaches to the climate change issue should also recognize the complex nature of global environmental issues and should be sensitive to the danger that a "technological fix" for one problem may magnify the difficulties associated with others.

In this respect, any technological breakthrough should fuse and harmonize the expansion of human activities with the grand cycles of nature, aiming at removal and re-utilization of environmentally burdensome substances, and the creation of environmentally benign materials and production processes. At the same time, increased utilization of existing and, where relevant, indigenous technologies should be promoted.

Institutional arrangements should be urgently initiated with a view to exploring international policy orientations for research and development. International cooperation in the field of technology, including technology transfer to developing countries, is also important.

C. Financial Arrangements

The Conference noted with concern the fact that, in the face of growing threats to the earth's environment, the past decade has seen a decline in the overall financial flow to developing countries, and a rise in their debt burden.

The imperatives of sustainable development require nothing less than a critical review of internal economic, fiscal and financial policies of each individual country as well as the existing structure of international economy such as trade, direct investment, international financing and official development assistance.

A dramatic addition and innovative new approaches to international funding will be required to achieve environmentally sound and sustainable development. In this regard, the Tokyo Conference appreciated the initiatives taken in various international fora such as the Working Group of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Ministerial Conference in the Netherlands to be held in November, 1989, and the International Conservation Financing Project commissioned by the UNDP.

One such innovative approach would be the transformation of debt obligations to support environmental programmes, through mechanisms similar to "debt-for-nature swaps."

The Conference valued the role which has been played by the World Bank and other multi-lateral development banks in their efforts to eliminate the vicious circle of poverty and environmental degradation.

The announcement by the Government of Japan to provide 300 billion yen (about \$2.25 billion) of official development assistance for environmental purposes in the next three years was highly commended.

D. Institutional Responses

International cooperation as recommended here requires strengthened implementation mechanisms to facilitate and coordinate various measures to be carried out by national, regional and international organizations. UNEP, WMO and other international bodies should be further strengthened so as to expand their financial and institutional capacity in order to serve this purpose.

III. Changing Atmosphere

The emission of radiatively and chemically active gases from industrial sources and from current land use practices is a major cause of concern. The accumulation of those gases in the atmosphere is depleting the ozone layer and may be altering the global climate, with possible consequential risks to people and the environment including health risks from increased ultraviolet radiation; heat stress from rising temperatures; damage to plants, animals and ecosystems; loss of land and settlements to rising seas; flood or drought risk from changing precipitation patterns and other major disruptions of the social and economic well-being of many of the earth's inhabitants.

In view of the above,

(a) As many countries as possible should be encouraged to participate in the activities of the IPCC. All countries are urged to support research, monitoring, assessment and impact study programmes, and to engage in the identification of national response options and roles in global response to limit or delay climate change and adapt to unavoidable impacts of climate change.

The IPCC should be encouraged to investigate the feasibility of low-emission scenarios which sustain the prospects for economic growth but limit global warming to less than the "doubled CO₂-equivalent" effect,

(b) There is still considerable uncertainty on the magnitude, timing and regional variations of climate change and their impacts on the hydrological cycle and the level of the sea. The role of clouds and oceans are particularly central. In view of the increase in greenhouse gases and the temperature rise that has taken place and is further expected, it is important to conduct anticipatory research to enable society to deal with consequences such as rise in sea levels and changes in agricultural productivity, particularly since many food crops would have greatly reduced yields with increase of temperature. In order to reduce the uncertainty, all countries are urged to support and participate in research studies coordinated by the IGBP, WCP, and UNESCO's programmes in ecology, hydrology and oceanography. It should also be emphasized that fully-integrated climate system models are essential and provide an effective method to predict the future evolution of climate,

(c) Intensified efforts should be made for increased use of existing technologies and for achievement of technological breakthroughs in such areas as the prevention and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, including energy saving, new and renewable energy, and removal and re-utilization of CO₂, and adaptation to climate change,

(d) Consideration of technical and legal aspects of a framework convention on climatic change should be urgently initiated so as to realize the earliest adoption of the convention and, when scientific evidence requires and permits, the conclusion of its relevant protocols,

(e) Countries should urgently accede to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, if they have not yet done so. They should also participate in the consideration of amendments to the Protocol to phase out, by the year 2000 or as soon as possible thereafter, the production and consumption of substances already controlled by the Protocol, and control or reduce, as much as possible, other ozone depleting substances. Towards this assistance, where needed, would have to be provided to obtain at low cost the technology for CFC substitutes and for restructuring of industries based on the use of CFCs wherever they exist.

(f) Countries should also take a combination of urgent steps to address the greenhouse problem such as increasing energy efficiency and use of non-fossil energy. This includes renewable energy and, where national decisions so contemplate, nuclear power with maintained and improved safety in construction, operation and waste disposal,

(g) International cooperation should be enhanced to help developing countries institute national policies for adapting to the changing atmosphere and for limiting or reducing the emission of substances contributing to acid precipitation, the greenhouse effect or to the depletion of the ozone layer, and

(h) Increased assistance to developing countries should be provided so as to ensure;

- (i) their participation in the IPCC and its working groups, and other international fora on the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol,
- (ii) adequate training of scientists and administrators,
- (iii) mounting public education and awareness programmes,
- (iv) the swift transfer of technologies and information so as to control pollution sources without detriment to developmental requirements,
- (v) the implementation of measures to mitigate global warming such as afforestation,
- (vi) effective analysis of regional impacts of atmospheric changes and the preparation of national and regional responses, and
- (vii) observation of their own climatic and environmental factors which will contribute both to national policies and to global assessments.

IV. Tropical Forests and Their Future

A. Action by Developing Countries

Forest resources can only be developed wisely within the framework of national and international policies that recognize and profit from the full value of these goods and services.

The following actions are recommended to the attention of national Governments:

(a) A long-term strategy for the conservation and utilization of tropical forests should be fully integrated into the overall development plan of each country, taking account of the renewability of forests, and conservation of ecosystems and biological diversity. Governments should establish units for policy analysis.

(b) Requirements of local communities should be the first charge on the forest, and the participation of local populations in forestry development should be promoted, based upon both timber and non-timber products. Policies should be encouraged for productive multi-purpose forests in the custody of communities of forest dwellers.

(c) Alternatives to excessive shifting cultivation should be found which create employment and income, such as wider and more diversified use of agroforestry systems and practices.

(d) A network of carefully chosen national parks, sanctuaries and biosphere reserves for the conservation of biological diversity should be established. These should be of sufficient size and internal variability to ensure the survival of large animals and to be buffered against climatic change.

(e) Successful demonstration programmes in biological conservation and sustainable development should be identified and every effort should be made to provide practical examples of the income that can be derived from natural forests, for example as a base for specialist tourism.

(f) Effective priority should be given to large-scale sustainable management of natural forests for timber production according to scientific management plans with logging under adequate control.

(g) The stumpage value of commercial timber species should be increased, and the financial and fiscal environment should be modified to provide suitable conditions for sustainable forest management.

(h) A massive programme of reforestation is required concentrating on lands which have been deforested or degraded, and, at least in the humid tropics, based less than at present on mono-specific plantations.

(i) Professional education, training and research in forestry and land-use should be broadened and strengthened, and great emphasis should be placed on the development of human resources.

(j) Special attention needs to be paid to the problems of conservation and sustainable utilization of mangrove areas for multiple uses and to the research needed as a sound basis for their management. All bodies concerned with the management of coastal resources should be involved. The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) is urged to expand its activities to embrace mangroves.

B. Action by Developed Countries

(a) Financial measures and investment: The financial burden on developing countries is a powerful incentive to mine their forests. Resources should be directed toward relieving this burden by encouraging profitable enterprises which are consistent with the sustainable utilization and conservation of tropical forests.

(b) Trade policies: Developed countries should favor policies which stabilize the markets for cash crops which replace tropical forest (eg rubber, oil palm, sugar) and should discourage import duties that hinder the benefits of adding value to timber products from sustainably managed forests. Measures should be encouraged to reduce agricultural subsidies which militate against production in tropical countries and consideration should be given to planting trees on surplus farm land as a contribution to reducing atmospheric CO₂.

(c) Aid: Aid should be directed to strengthening self-reliance and to measures which favor good land allocation and the sustainable use of forest lands. Substantially increased financial support should be provided by the whole donor community, particularly for the ITTO, the Tropical Forest Action Plan (TFAP) and the new forestry initiative within the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

C. International Action

There are already many international programmes in relation to tropical forestry. These should be strengthened and, in each of them, closer ties should be developed between forestry and other aspects of government policies which affect the land.

- (a) The work undertaken through the TFAP should be strongly supported. The TFAP should pay particular attention to the following: dialogue at policy and planning level; intersectoral linkages; involving NGOs, local communities and their representative organizations, as well as the private sector; the balance between investment and technical assistance; ensuring sustained support and follow-up locally and by the international community; regional and subregional action; the mobilization of manpower and financial resources by national governments. International resources should supplement and complement national efforts.
- (b) The ITTO should be given greater political and financial support to attain its objective of the sustainable development of tropical forests with emphasis on trade, ecological balance and conservation.
- (c) Accurate information on the exact condition of the tropical forest is essential to ensure its future. The work of UNEP, the FAO assessment for the year 1990 and the work of the Conservation Monitoring Center of IUCN are vital elements. Support should be given to develop and strengthen the various research programmes and institutes involved: the IGBP, the forestry related activities of CGIAR and the relevant programmes of ICSU and the International Union of Forestry Researchers' Organizations (IUFRO).
- (d) As fixing carbon in wood or humus is the only known practicable way of removing large quantities of CO₂ from atmospheric circulation, it is recommended that the international community should explicitly aim to increase the area under forest world-wide.
- (e) Existing centers of excellence (herbaria, natural history collections, etc.) urgently need increased funds to provide the basis upon which all forest work relies. The training of ecologists and taxonomists from tropical countries is an urgent need.
- (f) An international data base on tropical forests and forestry should be established.

V. Development and Environmental Pollution in Developing Countries

A. Developing Countries' Environmental Protection Measures

Developing countries should be encouraged to take measures as promptly as possible including;

- (a) integrating environmental considerations in development policies and establishing and enforcing environmental regulations,
- (b) promoting integrated use of various policy tools, such as fiscal policy, industrial siting and land use planning for environmental management,
- (c) implementing monitoring and assessment of environmental quality, and periodic reporting of the results, and strengthening capabilities for environmental appraisal and monitoring of development programmes and projects,
- (d) improving institutional arrangements in governmental administration to promote integrated policies for sustainable development,
- (e) strengthening institutional capabilities for research and development for environmental management in industry and agriculture, with reference to local conditions and resource endowment, and strengthening training programmes of personnel for environmental management,
- (f) encouraging public participation in, and support of, environmental management activities through the provision of environmental data and information and through promoting public awareness programmes, and
- (g) promoting regional cooperative programmes for environmental management among countries which share similar geographical or socio-economic backgrounds.

B. Response by Developed Countries

Developed countries should take steps;

- (a) to promote development assistance in an appropriate manner,
 - (i) for social infrastructure which can efficiently utilize available local resources,

- (ii) for environmental monitoring system and information processing,
- (iii) for expanding institutional and manpower potential in developing countries, for example, by assisting the establishment of environmental research and training institutions which increase the capability of environmental monitoring, research and training in developing countries, or by dispatching environmental experts,
- (iv) for introduction and research and development of appropriate technology,
- (v) for supporting the formulation of environmental projects based on the needs of the developing countries concerned through policy dialogues between donor and recipient countries, and
- (vi) for promoting environmental cooperative activities at the regional level.

(b) to initiate consideration of institutional frameworks for increased transfer of technology for environmental pollution control,

(c) to assist developing countries to ensure integration of environmental considerations into development aid projects and their implementation,

(d) to allocate greater resources to projects in harmony with the local economy and contributing to environmental conservation,

(e) to strengthen the Committee of International Development Institutions on the Environment (CIDIE), and to help it ensure cooperation with and among bilateral aid agencies, and

(f) to ensure adequate environmental consideration in industrial and commercial undertakings, in both private and public sectors.

C. Industry/Business and Environmental Conservation

(a) Industries should be guided in their trade and investment practices;

- (i) to take account of environmental effects of their activities,

- (ii) to ensure timely provision of proper risk information to trading partners for their informed decision-making,
 - (iii) to assist trading partners in establishing and building up capacities for risk management for imported goods,
 - (iv) to pay due attention to environmentally harmful export practices.
- (b) Private industries should be encouraged through economic and other incentives;
- (i) to make investment by the private sector in environmental improvement, such as the improvement of energy efficiency and pollution control equipment and the introduction of non-fossil energy,
 - (ii) to engage in research and development-for environmentally sound and sustainable development, and
 - (iii) to develop funding mechanism for converting commercial bank loans into sustainable development activities.
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