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GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS
ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS TENTH SPECIAL SESSION

DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION

EXTERNAL DEBT CRISIS AND DEVELOPMENT

PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE
GENERATIONS OF MANKIND

Letter dated 25 October 1989 from the Permanent Representative of
Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the "Declaration of Brasilia", issued by the Ministers of State in charge of environmental management and the representatives of the countries participating in the Sixth Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Brasilia on 30 and 31 March 1989. Upon instructions from my Government, I request that the Declaration be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 63, 66, 82, 84 and 85.

(Signed) Paulo NOGUEIRA-BATISTA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Brazil
to the United Nations

ANNEX

The Ministers of State in charge of environmental management and the representatives of the countries participating in the Sixth Ministerial Meeting on the Environment in Latin America and the Caribbean, held at Brasilia, on 30 and 31 March 1989, decided to conclude their deliberations with the following:

Declaration of Brasilia

1. The Latin American and Caribbean countries recognize that the urgent need to find a balance between socio-economic development and environmental protection and conservation through sound management of natural resources and control of environmental impacts is a common concern of the highest priority to the countries of the region. This recognition expresses the inextricable relationship between environmental concerns and socio-economic development, as well as the obligation to ensure the rational use of resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

2. The Ministers reaffirmed the principle that each State has the sovereign right to freely manage its natural resources. This principle does not exclude, but rather underlines the need for international co-operation at the regional, subregional and global levels. The Ministers also emphasized that the solution to the external debt problem and the establishment of a just and equitable new international economic order are imperative conditions to strengthen democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to promote security and peace in the region, as well as sustainable economic and social development, which is the only possible alternative for the rational utilization of our natural resources to satisfy the needs of our peoples.

3. The improvement of social and economic conditions is the essential factor in preventing environmental degradation in our countries. In Latin America and the Caribbean, as in the rest of the third world, underdevelopment and environmental degradation are elements within a vicious circle that condemns millions of people to a quality of life below levels of human dignity.

4. The Ministers therefore resolve to intensify efforts to foster greater understanding in their respective countries of the proper relationship between economic development planning and environmental problems and concerns, and to consolidate and improve their countries' capacities for effective environmental planning and management. However, the Ministers are of the view that present levels of economic development and rates of growth severely limit the possibility of readily achieving the objectives of sound environmental management and conservation.

5. Moreover, this situation has been exacerbated by the present heavy indebtedness of Latin America and the Caribbean to the financial community of the industrialized countries. The debt crisis and the adjustment policies derived from it have impaired conditions for economic, social and environmental development. The debt cannot be paid under present conditions not even by increasing the hunger and poverty of our peoples, nor by creating more underdevelopment and the ensuing degradation of our environment. It is obvious that present conditions for managing the external debt must be changed and that the current negative transfer of resources, which has transformed developing countries into capital exporters to the industrialized world, must be immediately reversed.

6. The measures adopted by the countries in the region are important, but still insufficient to achieve a just, stable and lasting solution to the debt problem. Such a solution will only be possible through a change in terms and modalities in dealing with the external debt and through "co-responsibility", which creditors will have to assume so as to solve the problems of indebtedness and its consequences on a joint basis.

7. International financing agencies should, through specific institutional facilities, ensure availability of sufficient additional resources, on concessional terms, to fund environmental protection projects in developing countries. In the allocation of resources for that purpose, no conditions should be imposed that would, in effect, result in a reduction of resources available for environmental protection.

8. In the light of the foregoing considerations, the Ministers call upon the industrialized nations, and particularly those that share our concern for effective environmental management, to increase substantially the level of their financial and technical contributions to developing countries and their effective support to the United Nations Environment Programme.

9. In this regard, it is of paramount importance that the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean be assisted, if they so request, in the establishment of essential capability to conduct scientific research, to efficiently manage their natural systems, and to strengthen national processes for environmentally sound decision-making.

10. Furthermore, international co-operation for environmental protection should include free access to scientific information and the transfer - at cost - to developing countries of non-polluting technologies and of those intended for environmental conservation. Access to new environmental technologies cannot be subject to purely commercial interests. Likewise, international organizations should aid the countries in the region to improve their monitoring systems and enhance their capability to enforce the international standards for environmental protection to which these countries have subscribed.

11. In this respect, greater efforts must be made to increase the systems of protected natural areas in the region and to cease practices that are highly deleterious to the environment, such as the indiscriminate and/or illegal transport and disposal of hazardous and toxic wastes and materials, and dumping in the ocean of such wastes, which places coastal areas in the whole region, and especially the island States of the Caribbean, in jeopardy.

12. The serious environmental problems the world is facing today derive mainly from industrialization models and patterns of consumption and waste adopted in the industrialized countries, which gave rise to the accelerated deterioration of the planet's natural resources and the ever-increasing introduction of pollutants into the biosphere. The Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean are committed to a course of action capable of avoiding the recurrence in our countries of the errors of that pattern of development and its consequences, and urge industrialized countries to assume their full responsibility commensurate with their financial and technical resources for reversing the environmental degradation process.

13. The countries that have nuclear weapons and other weapons for mass destruction should immediately cease all tests and experiments with these weapons and actively promote their elimination. Only in this manner will it be possible to guarantee protection of the environment against the risk of contamination and ecological destruction. Resources made available therefrom should be channelled into promoting economic and social development, following the dispositions emanating from the different forums of the United Nations system.

14. Therefore, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, in addition to their internal efforts to design and implement national plans for the protection and conservation of the environment, are committed to strengthening their co-operation in this area and to requesting technical and financial co-operation from extra-regional countries and international organizations. The Ministers of the Latin American and the Caribbean countries are convinced that the global solution for our endangered Earth entails an unprecedented level of co-operation between industrial and developing countries for the benefit of future generations.
