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Item 83 of the preliminary list\*

### UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Letter dated 1 June 1990 from the Permanent Representative  
of Ecuador to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the Government of Ecuador has declared the 1990s the "Decade of Ecodevelopment", and has issued an appeal to the Ecuadorian people to contribute to the rational and balanced management of natural resources, in keeping with their legitimate aspirations for development, with particular emphasis on research, environmental education and relevant legislation.

The Declaration on the Decade of Ecodevelopment is contained in Presidential Resolution No. 04 of 22 April 1990 (see annex).

As the Presidential Decree is closely related to item 83 of the preliminary list for the General Assembly, I should be grateful if you would arrange to have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) José AYALA LASSO  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

\* A/45/50.

ANNEX

RESOLUTION NO. 04

RODRIGO BORJA,  
President of the Republic

Whereas:

The country must take measures urgently for the management of its natural resources and environment, as economic and social development cannot be in conflict with the conservation of these resources,

The consequences of deterioration of natural resources and the environment affect the nation's present and future, and that hence solving the problem is the responsibility of society at large,

The development process must aim not only at increasing material wealth but also at improving the quality of life of Ecuadorians,

Resolves that:

- (1) The 1990s shall be declared the Decade of Ecodevelopment;
- (2) The nation's economic and social development shall be planned, implemented and evaluated in accordance with environmental criteria, so that it will be sustainable and not destructive of the environment and natural resources;
- (3) All development projects shall pay special attention to their potential environmental impact.

Done at the National Palace in Quito on 22 April 1990

Rodrigo Borja  
President of the Republic

Mar o Jalil Rodríguez  
Minister of Agriculture and  
Cattle-raising

Plutarco Naranjo Vargas  
Minister of Health

Diego Tamariz Serrano,  
Minister of Energy and Mining

## THE DECADE OF ECODEVELOPMENT

### Declaration by the President of the Republic, Dr. Rodrigo Borja, on proclaiming the 1990s the Decade of Ecodevelopment

My fellow Ecuadorians:

The challenges of the future increasingly demand that the Governments and citizens of the world combine economic development with the preservation of environmental conditions that will guarantee the well-being of present and future generations.

It is becoming increasingly clear that development in and of itself is not a desirable goal if it does not ensure the sustained and rational use of natural resources, for well-being cannot be defined merely as the accumulation of material wealth but must also represent an improvement in the quality of life of the people. This includes the right to a healthy life, clean air, uncontaminated food, and decent, proper environmental conditions at home and at work.

In essence, development implies a necessary and feasible harmony between man and nature, but this has not always been the case. Too often, science and technology have been used irresponsibly in exploiting non-renewable resources. This has contributed to a growing deterioration of environmental conditions - through improper use of the soil, the employment of polluting technologies to grow crops, the extraction of resources more rapidly than they can be renewed and the growing accumulation of non-degradable wastes.

Consequently, it is a matter of the utmost urgency for the nation must take decisions and measures for the management of its natural resources and environment. It is becoming essential to strike the proper balance between the needs of a population which is undergoing explosive growth and the utilization of the always limited resources nature has bestowed on us.

I have therefore decided to give special attention to this problem. My administration has taken important steps, such as the establishment of the Department of Afforestation and Natural Resources within the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, the Department of Environment within the Ministry of Energy and Mines, and the Environmental Unit within Petroecuador, whose environmental management role has been supported and will be expanded. The last two entities have developed and issued to the oil companies, for the first time in Ecuadorian history, the technical standards with which they will have to comply during all phases of oil production in order to protect the environment.

Likewise, during my first days in office, I appointed an Indigenous Affairs Commission within the Office of the President, whose primary efforts have been focused on seeking solutions to the problems of Ecuador's indigenous ethnic groups; in that context, the Commission has also concentrated on ensuring that ecological requirements are taken into account in all Government policies.

During the first 19 months of my administration, the ownership of 1,400,000 hectares of land was transferred to indigenous communities, most of it as community property, thus ensuring both the survival of these groups and their culture and the preservation of the environment.

In a different sphere, by Executive Decree No. 375 of 19 January 1989 I established the new Coastal Resources Management Programme for the preservation and development of the coastal resources of the provinces of Esmeraldas, Manabi, Guayas, El Oro and Galápagos. I have also supported the operations of the respective national commission and its technical office, and the establishment of special management areas, in whose administration the respective communities are involved.

My Government has taken many other actions in the ecological sphere, and by so doing has merited international support. However, we can and should do more. Accordingly, I have decided, by means of Executive Resolution No. 04 of today's date, to designate the 1990s as the Decade of Ecodevelopment, in other words, the decade in which Ecuador's economic and social development will be planned, implemented and evaluated in accordance with environmental criteria, so that it will be sustainable and not destructive of the environment and natural resources, and that at the same time it aims not only at increasing material wealth, but also at improving the living standards of our people.

To this end, I have given instructions that environmental criteria must be the common denominator of all development projects, and I call upon the patriotism of Ecuadorians in order to make the conservation of nature an essential part of all activities carried out by the Ecuadorian community.

As a result of the proclamation of the Decade of Ecodevelopment, Ecuador will have to place special emphasis on the relevant research, environmental education and legislation.

My responsibility as a public official requires me to tell the truth: Ecuador will not give up the exploration and exploitation of its natural resources, since the building of the basic infrastructure which we need is largely dependent upon them. At the same time, however, I am committed to ensuring that such exploitation takes place increasingly in a manner which is scientifically compatible with the protection of the fragile ecosystem in which those resources are found. We will be increasingly strict with ourselves and with those who share the risks of petroleum investment. We will continue progressively to implement the internationally recognized standards which ensure efficient exploitation and minimize the risks of pollution.

In accordance with the National Economic and Social Development Plan for 1988-1992, we will promote public participation in the formulation and implementation of policies for the rational management of natural resources, through education, training, research and the choice of appropriate technologies, and through specific consultation mechanisms with regard to major decisions.

We are now formulating, and we intend to implement, new strategies for dealing with urban environmental problems, and we will work out specific programmes for the restoration of ecosystems damaged by excessive human pressure.

The tasks of this Decade do not fall solely on the Government. Precisely because of the vast biological richness of Ecuador's natural resources, the world has an obligation to help in protecting them. Therefore, we will seek increased technical co-operation and international funding for environmental issues.

However, the Decade of Ecodevelopment is also a task for the entire community, with each sector contributing its appropriate share. Accordingly, it is Ecuador as a whole which accepts this commitment to guide society towards a new pattern of harmonious development, in which the processes leading to regeneration of natural resources and the environment are respected. I invite everyone to take part in this task, because today conservation and development mean peace.

Quito, 22 April 1990

Earth Day

Rodrigo BORJA,  
President of the Republic

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