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Med forbehold om endringer

SPERRET til

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## Socialist International Congress

The present Congress is taking place at a time when we experience serious changes in the relationship between man and nature. We have seen great changes in the course of the last two generations, economically, technically and socially. The world's population has increased at rates hitherto unknown, and the economic growth has been strong. But the development has been evolving as if there did not exist any relationship between our economic growth and our environment.

We stand now at a point in time when the arms race is continuing at unprecedented pace, the gap between the industrialized countries and the developing countries is increasing every day, and economic structures are threatening our very basis for life.

The contrasts between the immense challenges before us and the limited possibilities for real solutions in the short run, may entail the danger of leading to inactivity. But the problems we face must not be allowed to overwhelm us. The tragic nuclear disaster that hit a neighbouring country of my own, and which inflicted severe damage on a number of other countries, must now contribute to opening of our eyes and induce us to make every effort to improve the established patterns of international cooperation.

On this background I welcome this opportunity to offer my views on the Draft Action Programme which the Socialist International Committee on Economic Policy has prepared for us, under the outstanding chairmanship of my good friend Michael Manley. I warmly welcome this action programme as a significant

contribution to overcoming the current stalemate of the international economy where the debt crisis of the Third World and the rising unemployment in the industrialized countries both are symptoms of the same disease.

My main concern here today is to say a word of caution. We need a large scale recovery, but does the Global Challenge really approach the whole of the problem? What we need is a sustained growth, one which also will secure a common future for mankind.

How, then, is the reality that we face? - The devastating famines in Africa represent the worst disasters since the Second World War, the result of decades of mismanagement - in the shadow of colonization - over-cultivation, soil erosion and deforestation.

The famines of Africa are too often presented as a result of drought. But the lack of rain has only been the trigger, while the real causes has been poor agricultural policies - which have severely damaged the African environment and reduced its capacity to grow food.

- The tragedy of Bhopal is the industrial disaster that provoked more human suffering than any other industrial tragedy to date.

That was not just any accident. It raised the question of whether industry, the great multies, are not exploiting the environment of developing countries hunting for competitive advantages.

- While I address the Congress of the SI, three of four shipments of hazardous wastes will have crossed an international boundary. We may ask ourselves whether the trade in waste is not growing at a more rapid rate than the trade in goods.

In my country, Norway, people still remember the time when there was still an abundance of fish in the lakes. But the fish have had to yield - overpowered by mismanagement and the acid rain that comes in its wake. After all, from an economic point

of view, what is transboundary air pollution - acid rain - if not the transfer of production costs from one country to another where it shows up as damage costs to soils, forests and water systems? The forests of Europe are dying from the direct effects of acid pollution on their leaves and needles. Now there is disturbing new evidence that prolonged acid pollution acidifies the soil itself, releasing previously insoluble aluminium in a form that is highly toxic to plants. The the Federal Republic of Germany there were reports of visible damage to 34% of its trees. In 1985 the figure was 50%. It is hardly likely to warm the hearts of my friends Willy Brandt or Johannes Rau, that "Waldsterben" - the german words for the dying of the woods - is entering the international vocabulary.

Policies of today, in the fields of economy, monetary systems and trade, and policies in sectors such as energy, agriculture, forestry, and human settlement, induce and reinforce non-sustainable development patterns and practices. We see that many of the current approaches to environment and development do not work.

Widespread poverty and concentrated affluence conspire to increase the pressure on resources and to increase inequities, leading to global instability and political tension.

During the pase decade and a half of growing environmental awareness, most developing countries have seen a steady and, in some cases, rapid increase in environmental degradation added to the historic pressure on their resources. Many newly industrialized countries hav experienced a massive deterioration of their environment, and the environmental problems associated with sudden industrialization and explosive urbanixation have been added to those associated with underdevelopment and poverty.

Some ot these problems are largely a consequence of the production patterns of the heavily industrialized parts of the world. They are made even grater by the voracious demands for materials made by the industrial societies.

Many of the most threatening environment and development problems today are caused, to a considerable extent, by inequitable distribution of resources within individual nations and among nations and regions. Many of the most serious problems that plague the Third World are rooted in economic and social injustice and in the ever-increasing imbalance in the relationship between man and his capacity to manage nature.

This Congress is concerned with the paramount question of how we can overcome the contractive powers at work in the world economy. Our discussion has taken as one point of departure the "Global Challenge".

As I indicated at the outset, "Global Challenge" describes a frank and courageous venture. We need a recovery in global spending of the magnitude suggested by "Global Challenge". We need to come to grips with debt and trade problems. The Baker plan is not enough. The net spending of the Baker plan will amount to some percent of the total debt of developing countries.

But "Global Challenge" alone will not solve the problems of the future either. On the contrary, in reality, it could possibly increase strain on the environment, and our management would amount to blatant mismanagement unless the relations between the environment and development, and the environment and economy are integrated into such action programmes. We all remember the environmental destruction that accompanied the rapid growth of the 1950s and the 1960s. Should new largescale growth be brought about, then we must take care. We must anticipate and prevent, rather than react and cure.

Let us not make the developing countries go through the same immensely costly transitional stages that have been the aftermath of rapid industrial and agricultural growth in the Old World.

Developing countries must not be forced to use the

environment as a competitive factor. They will not be able to afford the costs of the reaction and retrofit approaches that have dominated the environmental policies of the industrialized nations. Short-term profits should not be allowed to prevent sound and sustainable development.

In the fall of 1983, the United Nations formed the World Commission on Environment and Development. I had the privilege and honour to be chosen Chairman of the Commission by the Secretary General. Together with Vice-chairman Mansour Kahlid, I have appointed a Commission of eminent and experienced people from different walks of life, representing all parts of the globe.

The Commission has been established at a time when there is unprecedented pressure on the global environment and a growing recognition that much of today's development is not sustainable.

We had arrived at a point in time when there was every reason to question whether our national and international political institutions were designed to enable us to handle the crucially important questions which face mankind.

The world economic crises and the lack of progress in the north-south dialogue led to the establishment of the Brandt Commission, and to the increased work on the world economy that is also focus of our deliberations here in Lima. Acute awareness of the shortcomings in the field of security and disarmament led to the establishment of the Palme Commission. The two Commissions have stressed the interdependency between economic recovery and security. The World Commission now faces still another task, which is closely connected to the work of the two other commissions. What, then are the objectives of this World Commission? What do we hope to achieve?

Our objectives are as follows:

First: To re-examine the critical environmental and developmental issues and to formulate concrete and realistic

proposals for action. We must deal with the issues head-on.

Second: To assess and propose new forms of international co-operation in the fields of environment and development. We need innovation in order for break out of existing patterns and influence policies and events in the direction of needed changes. and

Third: to raise the level of understanding and commitment to action on the part of governments, individuals, businesses, institutes, and voluntary organizations.

The commission is marked by optimism but it has not forgotten realism, based on the remarkable achievements of the past few decades, based on the capacity of science and technology, based on the growing awareness of the mutual inter-dependence of the environment and the economy, and based on the proven capacity of man to adapt and adjust to changing circumstances.

The task is not an easy one, but then again, if it were wasy, there would hardly be any reason to have a World Commission to deal with it.

The new issues are more difficult to deal with than were those of earlier generations. The issues are no longer local, but international in character. Recent events also raise fundamental questions about the limits of sovereignty. Does one nation have the right to expose its neighbours to the risk of severe accidents or to the long-term negative impacts of practices detrimental to environment?

In our work in the commission, it has become very clear that one important line of work to support necessary change, lies in the field of law, nationally and internationally. New concepts and new institutions will require new frontiers of imagination and determination in this very area.

At the Commissions fifth meeting, which took place in Canada last month, we achieved the next step in the drawing up of

our final report, when we dealt with the reports of three advisory panels.

One panel reported on "Industry and Sustainable Development". The report points out that the prospects of sustainable forms of industrial development have now improved greatly. The new generations of technologies offer enormous opportunities. Another plus factor is the steadily growing public awareness that development should enhance rather than undermine its own resource base on environmental support systems. The overriding objective of future industrial decision-making will be to integrate resource and environmental considerations into the decision-making processes of both governments and industries at all levels.

By way of conclusion the Panel maintains that an inbalanced interpretation of the "environment versus industrialization" debate can only hinder development prospects. - Neither must be allowed to override the other. If environment aspects are accorded unreasonably high priority, industry will almost inevitably be penalized even at an early stage of economic growth. If the attainment of short-term industrial goals - regardless of environmental impact - is made paramount, then not only will the quality of life be undermined but the possibility of maximizing the benefits of the industrialization process will be jeopardized. In order to make the industry's contribution to development effective, attention must be devoted to environmental issues from the very start, acknowledging the overwhelming importance these issues have for mankind and his habitat.

The central question today is not whether to choose between development and environment, It is rather to select patterns of development that not only minimize adverse effects, but are actually designed to stabilize and improve environmental, and hence economic conditions.

An advisory panel on energy and sustainable development also presented its report in Canada.

If we could use less fuel while at the same time retaining the same level of economic activity, we would have achieved something significant. And there is good news on this front. During the past decade, one unit of growth in the gross national product has begun to require less than a unit of growth in energy consumption. Economic growth no longer implies a parallel growth in smoke stacks. In fact, the energy content of growth declined, in some countries from 1,2 to 0,5 units. The result is a substantial gain in overall economic efficiency and competitiveness, and considerable reductions in environmental damage.

But the momentum that produced the energy efficiency gains up to 2 per cent per year of, late is now threatened by the third oil shock. With the price of oil falling, past gains could be lost quickly.

Experience has demonstrated the past decade that the most effective measure to prevent future damage is to establish energy prices that are high enough to encourage both a steady increase in energy productivity and a shift away from fossil fuels. If the low present low price of oil lasts for too long, we could rapidly lose the gains that we have made in these areas over the past decade. Worse still, planning for the future on the basis of cheap energy will be detrimental both development and the environment when prices rise, as they will.

On the other hand, high energy prices have over a number of years been straining the current accounts of the oil-importing developing countries to a serious extent bringing many of them close to what is termed bankruptcy in private economies. What we need is reasonable and stable energy prices at a level which will promote the objectives I just mentioned and take fully account of the interests of oil-importing and oil-exporting countries alike.

If we could sustain increases in energy productivity over the next 50 year or so, and there is good evidence that we may be able to do this without any reduction in the tempo of growth,



we could cut half the output of carbon dioxide globally. This would buy the time so desperately needed to remove some of the real uncertainties concerning what is perhaps the greatest potential threat to the global environment - climatic change from rising levels of "green house" gases.

Many governments, many people see nuclear energy as one answer to reducing the environmental costs that arise from fossil fuel consumption. These same nations, however, have found it difficult to come to grips with many of the issues raised by nuclear energy; issues of risk and safety, the technology and siting of facilities for the permanent disposal of long-lived, high level nuclear wastes; the separation of peaceful and military uses of the nuclear plants.

The tragedy of Chernobyl ensures that debate on these issues will continue all over the world.

The third Advisory Panel delivered its report on a plan of action for sustainable food security.

Its principal feature was a Seven Point Action Plan which placed emphasis on the concept of sustainable livelihood. Just producing more food was not enough. The essential was for people to have the wherewithall to make a living so that they could have access to food on a sustainable basis. Access to the right technology was another need and the Panel proposed national and international "Rural Resource Corps of Professionals" for sharing with rural populations new skills and techniques, and for collaborating with them in developing location-specific technologies. Other points included a call for the mass media to promote technical literacy, a "new orientation to international action and assistance", and the establishment of an autonomous, non-political, non-commercial organization with high professional credibility and integrity for monitoring and publicising, widely, violations of natural heritage for personal profit by political and commercial interests.

The Panel paid close attention to agricultural over-production driven by heavy subsidies in Western industrialized countries, and cited it as one cause of ecologically unsound practices. It deplored the marginalization of the majority of small formers in the Third World and saw there too, a factor contributing to the erosion of the resource base for agriculture. It was optimistic that, since the world has abundant food reserves and the technical resources for making hunger a problem of the past, the challenge of world food security can be met.

I have given an outline of the tasks presently facing the World Commission. I have pointed out the relationship between the World Commission, the Brandt Commission and the Palme Commission.

Throughout the history of man, great political changes have emanated from thoughts and ideas which have proven to be irreversible. If I may refer to the last 100 years as our recent past, the evolution of universal suffrage, large scale decolonization and the establishment of a set of universally recognized and protected human rights stand out as examples of such great political changes.

Our member parties around the world have always taken the lead in the development of such rights and liberties for individuals and nations. We have recognized the needs, and we have had the courage to draw up radical prescriptions.

It is my firm belief that mankind now once again faces the need to show courage, taking radical action and making changes. We are experiencing an evolution in many ways equal to the historical transitions I just mentioned. I doubt it if there has ever been a time when the world has had greater need of leadership on the interrelated issues of environment and development.

Arnold Toynbee once said:

"The human race's prospects of survival were considerably better when we were defenceless against tigers than we are today when we have become defenceless against ourselves".

It seems to me that we are defenceless unless we stand ready take a giant leap forward by recognizing that sustainable development can be combined with sound economic practices. I invite you all to share my optimism that such a sustained development is possible. I invite you, when we eventually adopt an Action Programme, that due reference be made to the work of the World Commission on Environment and Development and that its recommendations should be taken fully into account at all stages in the development process. It should be made clear that the concern for the environment merits a lot more than the mentioning of it twice in the draft action programme.

When Neil Armstrong set his foot on the moon, he called it a small step for man and a giant leap for mankind. What the World Commission is aiming at is that all the small steps of man shall amount to one giant leap forwards for mankind. I thank you for your attention.