

STATSMINISTER
GRO HARLEM BRUNDTLAND

1

THE INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS' FEDERATION

Oslo, 4 - 5 June 1987

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome the Central Committee of the International Metalworkers' Federation to Norway. I have been looking forward to this opportunity to meet prominent representatives of metalworkers' unions in 70 countries, from both industrial and developing countries, and to presenting the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development.

The IMF includes the largest and most powerful trade unions in the world. The movement has long traditions in managing important interests and contributing substantially to the development of our society. The World Commission's report, which I present here today, involves the essence of several major challenges which will be facing the unions in the future, ranging from the health and standard of living of the individual member to the broad global issues that will be crucial to all of us, to "Our Common Future".

International economic development has gone through a period of severe recession, particularly for the developing countries. The greatest challenge facing us is to revitalize sustainable growth in both industrial and developing countries. The considerable imbalances in the global economy include oppressive burdens of debt in many countries, now too in a growing number of large industrial countries, reductions in flow of development aid, trade policy clashes, substantial falls in commodity prices, diminishing export revenues and volatile foreign exchange rates. In spite of growth in the OECD countries, unemployment remains at a level so high that it can not continue without leading to considerable political and economic damage and the inexcusable abuse of human resources.

The real fundamental problems that threaten our prospects for the future are, however, far more advanced than the traditional

macroeconomic figures for imbalance and stagnation are able to express. It is the environment, our original capital, the very source of all life, and thus the source of our development, which is in danger.

Next to the efforts for peace and disarmament, work on problems related to environment and development now represent the greatest challenge to humankind as we move towards the end of this millennium. This could not have been foreseen even a few decades ago; The 1960s brought us rapid economic growth. We were optimists, apparently with good reason. Unemployment was low, prosperity was growing, and the health situation was improving all over the globe. New nations appeared, in the hope of a free and better future. General progress was substantial in all countries. Environmental protection was then called nature conservation, but concern about the environment was a newcomer on the international agenda and it was given low priority.

Towards the end of the 1960s, the bill for such expansive economic growth arrived. Serious pollution problems struck industrial countries. The improvement in material standards was accompanied by demands for a better quality of life, cleaner air and water, a more healthy working environment and better health measures.

In the 1970s a question was posed as to whether consideration of the environment meant that there were absolute limits to how much growth the world could tolerate. Global environmental reports focused on the possibility that the world's resources, particularly the minerals, could be depleted. Growth and environmental consideration appeared to be diametrically opposed to one another.

A number of international conferences under the auspices of the UN expressed our general frustration over our inability to resolve the more far-reaching problems. We had the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment and other large-scale conferences on the rights of people to adequate food, on safe housing and settlement, on safe water supplies, on the status of

women and on population trends. All these conferences addressed pressing global problems and generated new hopes for a better future. Nonetheless, it is clear that the problems have continued growing and that there has been little reason for optimism.

The 1980s began with stagnation in international cooperation, acceleration in the arms race and dwindling confidence in the organizations established since the Second World War. Poverty in the world has increased. The gap between the rich countries and the poor countries has widened. Threats to the global environment have increased, but our abilities to resolve the problems seem to remain very small.

Recognition of the fact that development, environmental protection, population questions and issues of peace and security can not be viewed independently of one another was the background for the establishment of the World Commission for Environment and Development in 1983 - a Commission that was to cut across traditional political dividing lines - North/South, East/West; to cut across the separated disciplines and organizations and to work outside the heavy bureaucratic and formal channels of the UN system and the world community. The need for an independent commission was felt strongly because there existed no institutions or authorities at either the national or international level with a mandate that corresponded to the dimensions of the problems.

What the UN actually asked the Commission to do was to deal with the entire international political agenda, viewing all the problems together. We were asked to prepare realistic recommendations about how the world community can meet the steadily growing threats against our environment as a whole and against our economic and social development.

For three years people from 21 nations worked on the report now being presented. Through open dialogue with people in all corners of the world, we managed to arrive at common realizations and common analyses. The report also contains questions that

were dealt with by the Brandt Commission and the Palme Commission. In the world of today it is not possible to deal with questions relating to the environment, to development and to peace and security separately from one another. These problems are closely linked, and they must be dealt with as a whole.

The Commission found that there are today environmental factors which threaten to radically alter life on Earth. The Commission's diagnosis is hard, but the possibilities we see for resolving the problems are substantial.

What are, then, the greatest threats to life on Earth? We are approaching critical thresholds that we cannot transgress without putting our entire future at risk.

The atmosphere is not infinite. We have scientific proof that we are in the process of overburdening the thin layer of atmosphere around the Earth. This is due to the rapid pace of consumption of non-renewable resources. The emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and industrial gases into the atmosphere is creating a "greenhouse effect" which threatens to warm up the entire globe. The concentration of CO₂ traps the heat from the sun near the surface of the Earth and raises the temperatures. This may lead to the melting of ice, which would raise sea levels and cause extensive areas to be flooded over the next 50 years. Agricultural production which is dependent on certain climatic conditions would have to be shifted. The effects on settlement and production would be catastrophic.

That industrial gases threaten the Earth's protective ozone layer is a relatively new discovery. Waste gas from foam production, refrigerants and aerosols have accelerated the pace of this serious threat. Science knows of no means by which it would be possible to repair the damage to the ozone layer. The consequences may include a rise in the incidence of cancer and a threat to the very food chain of the oceans.

It is a well known fact that air pollution, long-distance transport of acid precipitation, and other substances have killed

fish in large parts of Scandinavia. In the Federal Republic of Germany forest death is a phenomenon that is far too familiar, threatening not only the entire forestry industry, but also the recreational opportunities of millions of people. This problem has been most pronounced in North America and Europe, but it is now spreading to the developing countries, particularly those of Asia and Latin America.

Desertification and deforestation continue at a frightening pace. Every twelfth week a forest the size of Denmark is lost, and every nine months an area the size of Switzerland is converted to desert. Soil erosion is considered by the World Food Organization to be the most serious problem of our time.

The industrial production of toxic substances and the treatment of hazardous waste entail a risk which affects many people. For densely populated Europe, the accident in the Sandoz plant in Basel was an eye-opener. The drinking water in neighbouring countries was immediately endangered and it will take years before the fish stocks in the Rhine regain their pre-accident levels. Industrial production involving considerable risk factors is increasingly being established in developing countries. The Bhopal catastrophe in India put us face-to-face with the dangers of chemical production. The consequences of the Chernobyl accident show how meaningless national boundaries are when an accident first happens.

In the developing countries, poverty is a one of the main reasons for environmental damage such as soil erosion, desertification and deforestation. Today more than 700 million people live below the so-called poverty line and the number of poor people in the world is on the rise. Far too many of them are forced to overtax and thereby undermine their own environment, not through ignorance, but because they have no choice whatsoever if they are to survive. Poverty forces them to work the soil too hard, to cut down forests for fuel and to make new farmland, and to let their livestock overgraze barren pastures.

Viewed as a whole, this is an expression of deep social injustice

on a global scale, but also within the individual countries. And this injustice bears within it the seed of conflicts over scarce natural resources and social struggle for a better life. At the same time this reminds us of how pointless it is to use violence and war to resolve conflicts and of the tragedy of today's arms race. Nearly \$ 1,000 billion are used every year on weapons and military expenditure around the world. These resources could have been used to solve a number of the environmental and developmental problems facing us. This expenditure amounts to just as much as the total gross national products of China, India, and all the nations of sub-Saharan Africa - of 2 billion people. Today half of the world's research and development funds are used to develop weapons. But security can not be ensured by military means alone.

Environmental problems are already the cause of social unrest across national boundaries. We have got the expression "environmental refugees" - meaning people who are forced to move due to draught and desertification. Thus, environmental protection has also become a question of security for individuals and for nations.

In many places population growth increases the imbalance between human needs and nature's carrying capacity. In places where the population growth exceeds 3% per year, there is little hope that poverty can be overcome in the short term. But poor people will not be motivated to have fewer children until they become convinced that this will increase their chances of living a better life. There is no alternative to a far-sighted population policy which also encompasses a decent standard of living, health and education and an improvement in the status of women in society.

Against this dismal background, how can our report, "Our Common Future", conclude that man's possibilities are greater than ever before? How can we seriously claim that we can reverse development? How can we claim, as we do, that it is possible to mobilize all of our resources and possibilities and that the chances of humankind have never been greater than they are now?

We must not forget - even in the light of these depressing facts - how far we have come in so many areas. Average life expectancy has increased in large parts of the world. More and more people are receiving better and better schooling. The work to counteract the first generation of environmental stress has progressed well in many countries. We have greater possibilities, technical and economic, than ever before. These are the resources which must be employed wisely. And this task is formidable.

This report is a political document. It concerns the interrelatedness of the problems and the need for comprehensive solutions; the need for more international cooperation. Mistrust and narrow national interests must yield to new realizations, new behavioural norms, and new forms of cooperation.

The report has been given the name "Our Common Future". It is a warning that development cannot continue as it has thus far. At the same time it is a clear recognition of the fact that it is possible to safeguard both the environment and development.

We can and must change the pattern of development we have had in recent decades. We must make the transition to sustainable development. This entails a development based on satisfying the current needs of everyone without destroying the chances for future generations to cover their needs.

The concept of sustainable development is central in the report of the Commission. It does not mean zero growth. Quite on the contrary. Nor is it a unilateral goal of environmental protection. Sustainable development is not possible without a new era of economic growth.

Without economic growth the poor people of the world will have no prospects of a better future. Growth must be considerable in order to ensure the livelihood base for a steadily growing world population. The growth will also give us the capacity, technical and economic, required in order to solve the problems. This

calls for new impetus in the world economy. Such sustainable development must strengthen rather than destroy the resource base upon which it rests. The environment can work with us in our efforts towards sustainable development. We cannot let it fall victim to unsuccessful development.

Sustainable economic growth will require a restructuring of both national and international policies. It will require that we institute a more equitable policy of distribution, both between countries and within the individual countries. Today the developing countries must often ruthlessly exploit their environment in order to produce raw materials and agricultural products for export. Growing burdens of debt and falling commodity prices mean that these countries have to push even harder - harder than the environment can tolerate - to pay debts and interest to creditors in the industrial countries and to earn the same as before to pay for sorely needed imports.

The international economic situation forces countries to exploit their natural resources, and the result is "income". The biggest loser is the environment which often can not be regenerated.

In the industrial countries, we must assume our share of the responsibility for ensuring the developing countries' opportunities for warrantable and necessary economic growth. This must be a definite commitment. And such a commitment is in our own interest as well.

We must ensure the developing countries stable and reasonable prices for their exports. It is a fact that commodity prices have not been as low as they are today since the 1930s. We must work to relieve the burdens of debt. Amounts being paid today on loans and debt servicing to countries in the North surpass the total of the funds that flow South. We must stimulate transfers to the developing countries through reasonably priced loans from the public development banks and private banks. Development aid must be increased, and it must take more account of the effects it has on the environment of the recipient countries. We must ensure that the developing countries have access to our markets.

Protectionist tendencies must be countered. Only freer world trade will promote growth and development for everyone.

Trade in agricultural products plays a decisive role for the environment, both in the developing and in the industrialized countries. Large-scale, expensive subsidies have led to overproduction in many countries of the North. The schemes have led to increasing use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers and to cultivation methods that overtax the soil and entail considerable pollution danger from agriculture and the farm industry. And what happens to the production that we cannot manage to use up all by ourselves? It is dumped on the world market in such a way as to hold prices down. This in turn hits the countries that do not have comparable resources to call upon and which have no other choice but to produce more in return for even lower prices. The biggest loser in this game is the small farmer in a developing country who, in order to survive at all, is forced to coax a little bit more out of his small plot of land, or to cultivate land ill-suited for farming.

For the countries that lose the most, rapid industrialization is a short-term and often dangerous remedy from an environmental point of view.

The situation today is that a number of countries use the environment as their stakes to achieve a short-term competitive edge. Industrial production in the developing countries is frequently not subject to the strict environmental standards and requirements practised in the industrial countries. Thus in reality many of today's production patterns entail that the developing countries are importing environmental costs from the North. They are in actually subsidizing our own environment.

If US environmental requirements were to be applied to the industrial production of the developing countries, it would have cost them \$14 billion in 1980 alone. In comparison, total world development aid amounts to about \$ 35 billion yearly. The consequences of the methods of production which cause environmental stress must often be borne by those who do not

themselves benefit in any way from the production. These tendencies, with the environment at stake, can not be allowed to continue.

We can not continue to apply such different standards to industrial and developing countries. But we can clearly see what a dilemma this presents for the developing countries involved. They must themselves take the responsibility for managing development, but they often lack the resources needed. This both places responsibility on and opens up possibilities for transnational companies. The same applies to the UN's work with guidelines for transnational companies and the international organizations that can assist the countries of the South in building up modern environmental protection administrations and drawing up up-to-date regulations.

Sadly, international cooperation on the treatment of toxic chemical substances has not progressed very far. Nearly 70,000 chemicals are now in use, but toxicity and risk assessments have only been made for a small minority of them. As more and more toxic substances are being banned in industrial countries, we see that many of these substances end up in developing countries, which are often not advised of the dangers or about the ban or the regulations in the country of origin or the exporting country. The Commission appeals to the exporters in particular when it recommends that all new substances on the international market be thoroughly tested. Advance information must be given to the recipient countries concerning all possible dangers, and help must be given to local control agencies. The producers must bear the responsibility for damages that can be traced back to them and see to it that sufficient information is provided to all involved parties, including to those who do not benefit from the goods, but who are particularly vulnerable to the dangers they entail.

For anyone who has been injured by a chemical substance, it does not make much difference whether the substance is on its way in or out of the production process. Hazardous waste is in the process of becoming a trade commodity which crosses national

boundaries on its way to dumping or incineration. There are very few regulations, if indeed any at all, as to how this waste should be treated. The Commission is of the opinion that the same requirements must be applied to waste as to chemicals. We all share the risk, but we do not usually share the profits. During the past decade we have witnessed a number of accidents that could have been prevented. Now we must develop modern, satisfactory regulations for the control of the international transport and storage of such waste.

Manufacturing forms a large part of the basis for our growth and development. Today the world produces 7 times as many goods as in 1950. Production must be increased between 5-fold and 10-fold in order to raise the developing countries' consumption of finished products to the present-day level of the industrialized countries before the population growth levels out sometime in the next century.

This seems to entail that the need for raw materials will be tremendous, perhaps almost impossible to meet. How can the Earth bear the burden of such industrial production when today's pattern can not even continue without threatening life on Earth? Experience in recent years has also given us reason to believe that sustainable industrial development is possible, but that it can not occur with today's technology.

Parallel to economic growth, we see that the consumption of raw materials has stabilized in many countries. There is even a decline in the consumption of some commodities. Resource-efficient and low pollution production has proven not only possible, but even quite profitable. We have seen in the OECD countries that the stricter environmental requirements for manufacturing have not had a negative influence on the employment situation. New technology gives us hope that we may be able to develop new methods of production that require less resources.

The energy supply is a central element of all economic activity. At the same time energy consumption is the cause of the most serious environmental problems. Access to reliable and

environment-friendly energy is necessary to ensure sustainable development. The differences in energy consumption in the North and the South clearly illustrate the tasks facing us on a broad scale. On the average a person in the North uses about 80 times as much energy as a person in sub-Saharan Africa. Firewood is the only significant source of energy for a billion people.

Dependable, environmentally acceptable sources of energy must be developed. We believe this is possible, but it will require major efforts. The developing countries will have to be assured access to considerably more energy if they are to lift themselves out of poverty and lay the foundation for economic growth. But where will this energy come from?

We in the industrialized countries have come far - much further than we believed possible just a short time ago - in making our energy consumption more efficient. The oil price shocks of the 1970s forced us to make progress. The environment and the scarcity of reserves - of oil in particular - will force us on. We must work unceasingly to stabilize our energy consumption. There is no alternative to a policy of low consumption. But low consumption can also ensure the economic growth on which we depend. The Commission is of the opinion that the goods and services for which we presently require a great deal of energy can be maintained on half the present amount of energy consumption. This presupposes a large-scale investment in energy conservation and in energy efficiency measures. We urge countries to make energy efficiency the spearhead of their energy policies.

One prerequisite for achieving this is that we remain open as regards the impact of prices on research and efficiency measures. The price of energy must to a greater extent reflect the burdens that consumption places on health and the environment, on buildings and natural resources. Oil prices are central in this context. The Commission is of the opinion that the price of oil must be stabilized at a reasonable level in order to ensure the investments which will be absolutely necessary. We recommend therefore that the countries seek new forms of cooperation which

could promote a dialogue between oil-producing and oil-importing countries.

But energy conservation alone is not enough. The need for energy will grow on a global basis. Today there is no mix of energy sources at hand that is safe enough, abundant enough or environmentally acceptable enough to cover the needs of the future. We must develop new sources.

This can only be accomplished through the large-scale, goal-oriented development of renewable resources. Today investments in this field are far from sufficient. If we are to ensure the energy required by a world population twice the size of the present one, nations will have to join together sometime during the next century in broad, binding cooperation which also ensures the particular needs of the developing countries.

In many countries nuclear power plays an important part in today's energy picture. The role of nuclear power in the future was also the subject of complicated discussions in the Commission. With great interest and pleasure, I can confirm that the draft of the statement on nuclear energy submitted at this meeting presents an analysis which largely coincides with that of the Commission.

The discussion in the Commission reflected that the members came from countries with widely varying experiences of and attitudes towards the role of nuclear energy. This is also true of the delegates at this meeting. For quite some time we did not believe that it was possible to reach a common position. But this should not be surprising considering the composition of the Commission. However, the members from the USA, the Soviet Union, China, Columbia and Indonesia, to mention a few, did reach agreement.

The Commission recommends that there be international cooperation on the economic, social, technical and political implications of nuclear power. The international agreements on early notification and assistance, which were developed last year by

the International Atomic Energy Agency - IAEA - must be ratified. There is a need for international regulations and guidelines on emergency response training and emergency measures, on the transport of nuclear material and waste, on international compensation liability and on standards for training and operation routines. There are as yet no internationally agreed limits regarding acceptable amounts of radiation, and we must also continue the work on rules for consultations regarding the siting of nuclear power plants, the disposal of waste and the phasing out of older facilities.

Norway was among the countries affected by the Chernobyl accident a little more than a year ago. The consequences for farming and reindeer herding in particular were considerable. Since that time, Norway has signed the agreements mentioned relating to notification and assistance. Moreover, we are negotiating bilateral agreements with a number of countries inter alia to ensure that we receive information concerning safety measures at nuclear power plants. Such agreements have already been signed with Sweden and Finland. We also attach great emphasis to the efforts of the IAEA to develop better, binding regulations regarding the safety of nuclear power plants.

The borderline between civilian and military deployment of nuclear material has constantly been a source of concern. Unfortunately, the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons has not proved to be a sufficient instrument to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We therefore recommend in the strongest terms that a viable regime be constructed which could function more effectively and ensure that the states subject themselves to IAEA control.

The Commission has considered the various interests which must be looked after simultaneously by one and the same international organization. We believe that it would be expedient and inspire confidence if the IAEA were divided into several mutually independent units: A system for verifying that regulations and guidelines are followed on the one hand, and units intended to promote the use of nuclear energy on the other. This would

create a clear set of conditions and we believe that it would further strengthen the IAEA, which would be in our common interest.

In its total evaluation of the future of nuclear power, the Commission arrived at the opinion that the development of nuclear power could only be justified if convincing solutions could be found to the thus far unresolved problems linked to nuclear power. The highest priority must be accorded to research and development on environmentally sound alternatives, as well as to means of increasing the safety of nuclear energy. This requires a strong warning.

Future development will require great efforts on the part of all. The trade unions movement will have to occupy a key position. Its international traditions and its ideology based on solidarity can and must be a driving force. The trade unions movement has been at the forefront of work for reforms, for the protection of health and a justifiable use of resources. It has placed demands on the working environment, and rightly so, concerning safety at the workplace. Now once more it can be a source of ideas and innovation.

We know that we must reduce the consumption of resources in the production of goods and services. We know that we must make more efficient use of energy in manufacturing processes. We also know that we must limit waste, for waste represents resources that we have not used. We believe that the work to achieve sustainable development can generate new growth. New techniques can be developed at the workplaces in cooperation with research communities. We can not envisage any sustainable development without the trade unions movement playing a crucial role.

In the future this work will encompass the practical development of central ideas in the history of the trade unions movement, based on an equitable distribution of benefits. Greater justice, equality, and the development of human values presuppose that we, together, take care of the environment, protect it and ensure economic growth with a content that aims at covering humankind's

needs while at the same time keeping the possibilities open for future generations. This is a shared basic value upon which both the trade unions movement and social democracy are based. It is a continuation of the work for social and national liberation, for professional and political rights which has been central to our international political commitment through a hundred years.

Here in Norway we are proud to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Labour Party this year. The party is a strong and far-sighted centenarian that is now focusing on the next generation of substantial, important tasks, fighting the oppression and exploitation of weak groups, ensuring a better and safer environment, and promoting wise management of the Earth's resources. We will embark on these tasks in close cooperation with the trade unions movement. Together we possess generations of experience and insight.

Through its international commitments, the trade unions movement can demand that the most modern techniques and processes be used in all countries. My meetings with the international trade unions movement in Brussels last month confirmed that it is willing and capable of playing precisely the role that these problems require. The international trade unions movement participates actively in several international organizations such as the International Labour Organization, the World Food Organization, and the UN's economic and social councils. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the European Trade Unions Confederation shared the Commission's views on a number of important points. This applied to central questions such as the need for a new era of economic growth and global environmental standards which would mean so much to both the environment and the working environment in a vast number of countries.

In the important years in front of us, we have no time to lose. We must agree on common tasks, political and professional. The tasks represent a common future - Our common future.

But societies are organized as if there were no inter-

relationships in the world. We think and act to a great extent on the basis of our short-term interests, and we find it easy to overlook how politics and actions in one area influence other areas. During the past fifteen years environmental considerations have become recognized as a sector on a par with other sectors. But the environment is not a separate sector in economic life.

The report of the Commission is unambiguous in its analysis of where ecological considerations belong. They must become a part of decision-making processes at all levels, both in the public and the private sector.

This is because the environment is not a subject separate from socioeconomics, agricultural policy and techniques, energy, industry or other large and important areas. We must continue to strengthen our monitoring systems in the governments, at the regional level and in companies, large and small. For far too long we have focused largely on after-the-fact repair of damage that has already been done to the environment.

We must get to the bottom of the problems. We ourselves must assume responsibility for the environmental effects of our actions. Genuine results will be achieved when environmental consideration becomes a major requirement for all activity. Our common future will be completely dependent on our ability to view the overall picture and to realize that ecology is also good economy because they are actually the same thing.

So we may ask, all this is well and good, but how can we put it into practice? What can Norway do? What can any country accomplish on its own? Separately it appears that our opportunities are limited, for example Norway is the source of 0.3% of the emissions which threaten the Earth's ozone layer.

The answer is that we have possibilities both separately and together. National measures must run parallel to stronger and more binding international cooperation.

The coming decade will be decisive. For the first time ever, man has the ability to destroy the livelihood base of the present and coming generations, but also for the first time we possess the ability to take the decisions that can ensure our livelihood base.

This requires the mobilization of a broad international public opinion. It requires reorientation of attitudes at all levels. There is a need to give new substance to education and close dialogue between the trade unions movement, business and industry, research communities, cultural life, etc. There is a need for a broad-based follow-up of the report from the World Commission for Environment and Development.

The Norwegian Government has taken the initiative for such a broad follow-up in Norway and for developing a foreign policy which includes considerations of environment and development.

Nationally, the Government has asked all ministries to assess Norwegian policies in the light of the recommendations contained in the report and to evaluate which measures lend themselves to implementation in Norway. A special state secretaries' committee for environment and development has been established to assist the Government. A comprehensive information campaign has been launched in cooperation with organizations and regional authorities.

Internationally, Norway will work to introduce "sustainable development" as a guideline for all international organizations.

The Commission hopes and believes that "Our Common Future" can form the basis for a new impetus in international cooperation. The UN and the Secretary-General himself must take the lead in this process that will be required. We invite the General Assembly to translate the report into a UN programme for "sustainable development". International financial institutions will play a very decisive role. The World Bank itself has already begun to restructure its policies.

My recent talks with the president of the World Bank confirmed

the bank's commitment. The bank's policy can serve as a model for other institutions such as the individual countries' development banks and the private banks.

Norway will also attach emphasis to international follow up at the regional level. The Government is prepared to host a regional conference in 1990 for the countries that are members of the UN's Economic Commission for Europe. We hope that similar conferences will take place in other parts of the world.

We have only one Earth. Viewed from outer space, political boundaries are meaningless. We see clouds and oceans, greenery and mountain chains. We see the sea which we must manage in our common interest. We see that we belong together and that we must act as good neighbours.

The time is ripe for action - for committing the world community to a future that is safer and more secure and where there are better opportunities for everyone. Efforts for environment and development can become a common platform for all countries. This can create the basis for renewed confidence between East and West and between North and South.

The challenges demand that isolationism yield to international solidarity. They demand that we build on values that have always been fundamental to the international trade unions movement. The trade unions movement's contribution to the coming process will be decisive on many levels, political, technical and in the efforts to influence attitudes. The trade unions movement can accept responsibility, as it has so many times before. It is only together with the international trade unions movement that we have a hope of realizing the perspectives outlined in "Our Common Future".