

Prime Minister
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**Opening Remarks - Symposium on Technology for Sustainable
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Developing countries, and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular, run the risk of lagging further behind unless they are given the opportunity to participate in the global economy. To this end, they must overcome the development gap and the technology gap. At present these gaps are widening.

In the 1990s, we will experience new technological progress in the industrialized countries. The EC Internal Market will take effect from 1 January 1993 and the EC countries are increasing their cooperation with regard to research and development. Competition between Europe, USA and Japan is likely to unleash human ingenuity of an unprecedented scale and scope.

There is now an increasing agreement that the 1980s was a lost decade for development in the Third World. Though some countries have done well, there has been a widespread economic retrogression. Living standards declined by one fifth since 1980 in Sub-Saharan Africa. The dialogue between developed and developing countries has been inadequate and unproductive. Very little has been done to prevent the gap between the rich and the poor from widening.

Unless we now adopt policies that will make modern technology more available where it is needed, the gaps between us will remain unbridged. Clearly, it is not in any country's interest that a continent of 400 million people risk becoming further detached from the world economy and global progress.

Africa's economy has since colonial times had a structure designed to facilitate extraction of African resources rather than to stimulate internal economic exchange.

As we all know, Africa must, over the next decade, create vast employment opportunities to support its rapidly growing populations. This can only be achieved by significantly increasing its industrial capacity, and including it in its development agenda. However, this activity must be both appropriate for Africa and must be sustainable.

Emerging technologies offer enormous opportunities for raising productivity and for improving health - all while conserving the resource base. This was pointed out by the World Commission on Environment and Development, to which Africans themselves contributed so significantly.

These new technologies include such areas of safe production as energy efficiency and the use of raw materials, as well as communications, information process control, and waste management. They also permit the establishment of small-scale, decentralized, widely dispersed industries which are appropriate for Africa; This, in turn, could provide non-farming jobs in the countryside, produce consumers goods that cater to the local markets, and help spread environmentally sound technologies.

But we should not expect that this process will be painless- It won't. However, by involving its citizens at all levels - institutional, political and social - African countries may be able to avoid wrenching consequences. Another prerequisite for creating an environment in which a process of dynamic industrialization can be successfully molded, is that the Africans themselves, through their own process of internal consultation, decide on which technologies are appropriate and sustainable.

This will require a strengthening of Africa's scientific self-reliance. Africa must build up its own basis for research and development. Solutions must be applicable at the local level. Only Africans themselves will be able to establish the diagnosis. Only Africans themselves will be able to implement the cure, working with grass-root movements and citizens groups. However, the international community must assist in the process, by making their knowledge more accessible and by helping to expand Africa's own scientific community. Nobody can speak with more authority about the needs of Africa's scientific community than Professor Odhiambo who will present his views later today.

Technology transfers has been discussed at the governmental level for decades. The results have so far been disappointing. There are a serious of reasons for this, including a long-lasting lack of political will on the part of many industrialized countries. Moreover, and this is important, the private sector, who often develop and own new technology has not taken actively part in these negotiations.

The WICEM II conference in Rotterdam gave evidence of a new commitment on the part of industry. Building on the Bergen conference of 1990, WICEM participants were increasingly interested in participating in technology partnership with the developing world. New ideas were presented, such as the application of the European EUREKA-model on North-South cooperation. This idea should be further explored.

Technology transfer, moreover, is one key element in the preparations for the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in 1992. Difficult negotiations are going on about whether or not such transfers should be "concessional", should they be "preferential" "favourable" or "non-commercial".

This exercise of high diplomacy reflect the economic interests involved. I believe that we must ask the fundamental questions about the role of intellectual property right and patents. What kind of protection is necessary for owners of new technology? How much technology protectionism is necessary to support new developments as well as the dissemination of such new technology to those countries who need it? How can we mobilize the necessary financial resources to accelerate the modernization of developing countries?

There is a growing recognition that it is in industrialized countries interests to facilitate transfer of technology needed for developing countries to be able to comply with international environmental agreements. This is the case with the Montreal protocol on ozone depleting substances, but we need to move beyond those areas which have been dealt with in international conventions and agreements. Our assistance must have a wider scope and a scale which is so far unseen.

The Symposium on Sustainable Industrial Development in Africa which was held in Nairobi in March this year, came up with concrete recommendations which will be presented later here today. One central element was to include the scientific and industrial community more strongly in the negotiations on transfer of technology.

I see the present symposium as an opportunity to effectively influence the new generation of discussion on transfer of technology. It demonstrates that industries are more ready to take on themselves clear commitments and come up with practical proposals and that there is a genuine will to remove obstacles to a real partnership between the North and the South.

The international political climate is more conducive than ever before to allow Africa to make a technological quantum leap forward. The needs are enormous, but so are the opportunities. Governments alone cannot do the whole job. We need more cooperation between professional bodies in developing and industrialized countries. Transfer of technology must be seen in a wide perspective where investments in capacity building and human resources are central elements.

It is my hope that today's symposium will make an important contribution towards more direct cooperation between the industrial and scientific communities of the North and the South. I commend the organizer for adding the global environment and development dimension to the yearly energy-conferences in Stavanger. The Rio Conference next year stand to benefit from your deliberations. The Rio Conference must become a breakthrough and a departure from the less productive discussions about technology transfer that we have seen in the past. This is all the more important since if we don't succeed we will not be able to reach our common goals.