Check against delivery.

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It has been an honour to be invited to address you here today, and in particular the young students and graduates of Harvard in whom so much hope for the future is reposed.

In the course of the less than 400 weeks left of the twentieth century you will enter professional life with promising chances of influencing the future course of this country, a future which is of so decisive importance to the whole world.

In the final decade of the second millennium, 2500 years since the birth of democracy in ancient Greece, humanity - and nature of which depends, finds itself at a cross-roads.

Technological and scientific advances have created a world economy of staggering dimensions, but it has left more than half of the world's people in poverty. Through overexploitation of our natural resources, we have brought life on earth even closer to the brink of disaster.

The predicament is new to present generations, the first ones to face the formidable moral challenge: Not only one of responsibility to the needs and rights of others, but of those not yet born - and of the future life of nature itself.

At this point in our evolution, we can not hope that the environmental and development crisis will go away as a passing fad. Technological trends, patterns of production and consumption - and pure human numbers - call for radical changes in order to reconcile human activities with the laws of nature.

The 1990s will be a decade of destiny, in which we must summon our human resources, our knowledge, and our moral conviction to seriously face the real challenge of the future.

53 years of life experience and 18 years of political work in Government and the parliament of my country has brought me to

the following view of the most fundamental challenge of our time:

The forces of technology, of finance and of electronic communication have increasingly taken over the powers which were vested in democracy to shape our future.

What should be our global village is threatening to turn into a global jungle. We need to replace international anarchy by international governance.

The challenge of the 1990s is to deepen and widen the forces of democracy and to lift democratic decision-making also to the international level.

We are brought up being taught that democracy allows us to govern on behalf of the people, and that people, through their participation in democratic processes in each country, can make decisions and choices about their own future

We elect our leaders on their programs. Our elected representatives, in turn, pursue the objectives of society by means of legislation, rules, and taxation.

The idea of democracy - 2500 years old - has a stronghold here near Boston. All of you, and those who are fortunate to get higher education, are familiar with the account of the Tea Party.

Today, the ideas summed up in Gettysburg: "government of the people by the people for the people", while formally in good order, are, when applied at the level of the nation state not alone able to lead us to a future which is more safe, more just and more secure.

The nation state, even the most powerful, is too small a scene for addressing regional and global challenges. It will become increasingly contradictory to promise remedy through national measures alone to challenges which are of an international nature and origin.

I can give you an example from my own country. People expect that the government sees to it that the general interest rate is such that they can repay the mortgages without too much hardship, - reasonable interest rates are good for investments and for jobs. The last time the Federal Bank of Germany raised the prime lending rate, however, it took 17 seconds until the Norwegian National Bank had to raise it's interest rate.

Another example: In Norway, we have cut our sulphur emission by more than 50 per cent since the seventies. Still rain as sour as vinegar keeps falling down destroying our lakes and soil, and 90 per cent of this acid rain originates in other countries.

If we maintain the illusion that nations can act in isolation we not only risk postponing critical decisions which can only be made effective when states act in cooperation: We risk an increase in the growing scepticism and lack of respect for democracy, politics and politicians because they seemingly can't do what is in reality beyond the reach of their present powers.

We are used to holding politicians accountable and to measure their results and how they are able to improve our lives. If their results do not meet our expectations, we are quick both to turn against them and against the political system.

If this alienation towards political life is allowed to continue, we risk a gradual disintegration also of traditional political institutions. The new and dangerous anti-democratic trends in some countries and calls for the strong man are dangerous symptoms which we must take seriously.

We must not forget that it is we ourselves, not somebody else, who are responsible for how our democracies work. We cannot wait for someone else to do the job or put all our faith in an illusion of omnipotence at the top political level. All segments of our societies must become more deeply involved in the real issues of our time.

Democracy cannot be achieved by top-down processes. It must have its base in our communities, in the minds and priorities of the individual citizen and voter, in political parties and in the network of interest groups and non-governmental organizations which are an essential part of our pluralistic societies.

I have come here directly from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro which opened yesterday. That conference is about survival of the human race and about its reconciliation with the biosphere.

Cynics are often quick to dismiss international conferences as futile, costly, and substantively contrary to what they see as national privileges and vested interests. Such attitudes are dangerous. "Cynics know the price of anything and the value of nothing", said Oscar Wilde.

Presently, the vast majority who are poor make only a minimal claim to our natural resources, while the more voracious North is consuming in a few decades what is has taken the planet billions of year to accumulate.

This growing difference between the fortunate few and the powerless impoverished majority is a destabilizing trend. It is dangerous as well as morally unacceptable.

Achieving or approaching sustainability demands a profound understanding of a series of the challenges facing societies between now and the year 2050. Can a doubled world population

be adequately fed in an environmentally sustainable way? How can they be educated and become our partners when today only 8 percent, in some very poor countries only 2 per cent have access to higher education?
How can we find the energy needed to fuel a world economy perhaps five times larger than today's without spoiling the environment and significantly disrupt climate?

Unless we assist developing countries in by-passing the most polluting stages of development and in developing the potential of their people, we ourselves may be the victims. We can not say to the developing world: "Sorry, we have filled the wastebasket, there is no room left for you."

Developing countries require environmental space for their development. For them, the future is essentially about development and justice. For them, the environment is vital, as it is for us. But they will not accept the unequal burden that seems to be asked of them, - to be the caretakers of our common responsibilities for future generations, while we who have been destroying nature and raised our standard of living, through unsustainable patterns of growth are not ready to take our share - the bill of repair.

I have been stunned to see how the Rio Conference seems to fail to make workable decisions on how to curb population growth. States which do not have a population problem, - in one particular case even no births at all, - are doing their utmost to prevent the world from making sensible decisions regarding family planning.

Family planning services must be made universally available. The status of women must be raised, and they must receive better education. Women have been patronized long enough.

We are faced with a watered down climate convention. It fails to set firm targets. It fails to recognise that the longer we wait the greater the bill.

Many countries have already made deep cuts in their emissions, and pledged further reductions. And still, their economies are among the primary forces on the global scale. Germany is a case in point. The energy-efficiency of Japan is well known. We can not be surprised when these countries increase their edge in the future because they forced their industry to become more effective.

Carbon taxes have been introduced in some countries including my own. They may not be popular but they are accepted as necessary. But all such measures in small and medium sized countries will not make a decisive difference unless they are matched by similar strong measures in major countries.

Faced with these challenges and ever dwindling natural resources, I see the Rio Earth Summit as steps in the staircase leading to what will have to come: A better

organized world community where we pool resources as well as formal sovereignty in order to obtain more real sovereignty and choices for the future, not foreclosing the choices of future generations.

We need to use the gifts of the world's crust more thoughtfully and efficiently. We should treasure them more, price them properly and keep more of them available for future generations.

Time itself is a scarce resource as the Club of Rome's report "Limits to growth" illustrates by a French children's riddle:

You own a pond with a water lily. The lily plant doubles in size each day. If the plant was allowed to grow unchecked, it would completely cover the pond in 30 days, ruining all other forms of life in the pond completely. Imagine that you decide not to worry until the water lily covers half the pond. On which day will that be? Only one day to go!

It shows how little time we have and why derisory attitudes will be self-destructive.

If we signal that the task is almost hopeless, we will foster environmental nihilism, rather that stimulate a new global ethic. The World Commission on Environment and Development, which I had the honour to chair, concluded that the situation is far from hopeless. Instead, the Commission expressed the hope and the firm belief that humankind has the capacity to change the dangerous course we have been travelling.

We need new policies at local, national and international levels based on sustainable patterns of development.

We do not have global institutions strong enough to determine new directions or to implement effective global policies. We must develop an international public sector based on the United Nations and existing institutions.

Countries have sovereignty over their national resources, but decisions leading to sustainable development will be illusionary if we can only move forwards at snails pace decided by the most reluctant movers.

It is difficult to see how decision-making in international institutions can become effective unless we introduce new elements of supranational rule. We need elements of global governance that can serve our real interests, across national barriers.

We have come to a watershed in human history. Political leaders will have to lead into unchartered land, where familiar concepts of purpose and interests fail to match reality. But democratically elected leaders cannot do the job alone. They need to be supported by increasing millions of responsible citizens, in particular when the necessary

measures seem costly in a short-term perspective.

Trillions of dollars have been spent on arms in the past, now comparable gigantic efforts are needed in a new and common struggle.

Thanks to US leadership and the United Nations, we said effectively no to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. In a similar manner we must say effectively no and deploy the resources needed to repel the much more serious threat of global environmental and social collapse. Leadership will have to come from the North. We must set our own house in order, and assist both the developing countries and the former communist countries. The West has won the Cold War. Now the West must again resume real leadership.

In my view there are compelling political reasons for ensuring that Europe and the US will be walking together breaking new ground.Political innovation must come from those countries which derive their values and form of government from the same sources of free, democratic thinking. We must use our cultural, political and humanitarian capital to undertake an even greater responsibility for those who are less fortunate than we are

Then we can hope to build the truly global democracy which will comprise also those parts of the world where today the seeds of our values are growing on the thinnest soil.

We need a collective engagement which goes beyond building a new East-West relationship. We need a new era of internationalism where peace, environment and development are linked, and placed in the epicenter of national and international affairs.

You stand here today - as I once did - as a highly privileged group. You have been gifted with talent, opportunity, knowledge and access to the best education the world has to offer. You have hopes and may also have doubts about the future. But most of all each of you has a great opportunity to make a difference and to play a role in the establishment of the primacy of global democracy.

As generations before you have experienced, the world - and life itself has changed during the couple of decades of your childhood and youth. That pace of change is likely to increase.

When I myself left Harvard, in 1965, before most of you where born, there was a war in Viet Nam. A reformist wave was under way. President Johnson was announcing the Great Society, Rachel Carson gave us her warning, in "Silent Spring" - and gradually the world was preparing for the first UN conference on the Environment.

Your two decades from 1972 to 1992 have seen the new radical

right movement evolving. But let us remember: however good the markets are at allocating resources efficiently and effectively, they cannot build community purpose or instill social responsibility, or assert the larger vision only people can have of a just and sustainable future.

The truth is that in order to make far reaching decisions governments depend upon a population that will support even the most difficult decisions. Only then can truly effective change come about.

Through satellites and cables we receive fragmented images from all over the world, 24 hours a day. Complexity is reduced to disconnected simplicity. One day of multi-media information comes close to what Umberto Eco calls a journey in hyper-reality.

We must not be blinded by the immediate. We must all take a longer term view. We need to expand and share knowledge and we must get much more people engaged in the overriding issues of our time.

Luckily, at the beginning of the 1990s, democracy is gaining ground world wide, now that we need it so urgently. These changes could have been slower had it not been for the information revolution and the global media. We will have to rely on the gift of information technology for spreading knowledge and for developing those common perspectives and those common attitudes which our human predicament now require.

We are compelled to manage the most important global transition since the agricultural and industrial revolutions - the transition to sustainable development - how to reconcile human activities and human numbers with the long-term carrying capacity of this finite earth.

If we succeed as we must we may with greater confidence teach generations yet unborn the Gettysburg ideals and how they where made to work at a time when people and countries realized that they had to move towards more mature stages of civilization.

My own faith is in the youth of the world, - custodians of the present and trustees of the future. We - and you should see to it that the day will come when people look back on your generation and say: Faced with the challenge they managed to upgrade human civilization.