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"Environment, Security and Development"

I would like to begin by thanking the board of SIPRI for inviting me to hold the sixth Olof Palme Memorial Lecture here today. It is a great honour for me to address this distinguished audience on a topic of such importance.

It is a special honour to participate in the commemoration of Olof Palme, swede, social democrat and statesman of world stature. Like many of you here today I had the great privilege of working closely with him and enjoying his personal friendship. We all remember him as a unique person possessing many fine qualities. I would like to begin this lecture by focussing on just two of them.

Firstly, Olof was never indifferent. If he saw injustice, he spoke up against it. If he saw a problem, he took action. He was an idealist in the best sense of the word.

Secondly, he was open and non-exclusive, both towards people, and towards the world as a whole. Conflicts in other parts of the world were important to Olof because he believed that every nation had an equal right to self-determination and security. North-South relations were important to him, because he believed that every individual had the right to equal opportunities, the right to participate in shaping the future and the right to enjoy a just share of the benefits of economic and social progress.

I believe all of us must share this attitude in order to meet the challenges of our time.

When the Palme Commission was launched in 1980, there was very little discussion about the prospects of ending the arms race, let alone achieving real disarmament. While we worked on the Commission, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union deteriorated sharply. Conflicts in Afghanistan and Poland, between Iran and Iraq and elsewhere in the Third World contributed to the escalating arms race. The policies of the major powers offered few alternatives.

However, at this low ebb in international cooperation, many of us were convinced that policies would have to change, that we would have to forge a new concept of security rather than continue the competition for military supremacy and the development of ever more effective means of destruction.

The report of the Palme Commission was unique because it was the first political document in which representatives from NATO, Warsaw Pact and neutral countries alike were able to agree on a common analysis of the dangers to peace and security and on a broad programme of action to break out of the apparent deadlock in world affairs. We agreed that a nuclear war could never be won and must never be fought. We offered an alternative concept to mutual deterrence, that of common security.

The essence of this concept is that countries can never achieve security against their adversaries. Common security can only be achieved if countries work together, defining their common interests in arms reductions and recognizing that cooperation would have to replace confrontation as the basis for a programme for joint survival.

Although the report of the Commission was controversial for many years, important parts of its analysis and conclusions are, in fact, widely accepted and valued today.

Since the end of World War II the world has spent about 20 trillion dollars for military purposes. Industrialized countries doubled their defence spending since 1960 and developing countries increased their expenditures more than six-fold.

Nevertheless, we are living in a period of genuine disarmament. SIPRI figures show that in 1990, world military expenditure declined by an estimated 6 per cent to about 935 billion dollars as compared with the all-time high of more than one trillion dollars in 1987.

Many of the specific recommendations of the Commission are now being implemented. The demise of totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe and the progress made by the ideas of self-determination, democracy, the rule of law and freedom of expression have profoundly changed the outlook for peace and cooperation.

These trends are global and not confined to the European continent. In a security policy context, Europe has been extremely successful in dealing with the revolutionary changes we have witnessed. The Soviet leadership, breaking with earlier practice, respected the right of self-determination throughout Eastern Europe, and supported the process of peaceful change.

NATO's response to the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the fundamental changes in Moscow has been to adopt a cooperative

approach to security. NATO was able to redefine its concept of security. This would not have been possible without the Alliance's open and non-exclusive approach.

The arms control process has produced an impressive set of agreements which not only prescribe reduction in armaments, but also stipulate cooperative ways of following them up.

The most recent agreements between the United States and Russia in the field of nuclear disarmament represent a quantitative breakthrough. For certain categories of weapons, there will be reductions of up to 80 per cent compared with the early 1980s, and implementation is well under way. The agreements will require very close cooperation of a qualitatively new kind, involving everything from verification and control to destruction technologies and financing.

The issue of a global, verifiable test ban, as advocated by the Palme Commission, has been on the international agenda for a long time. Today, a window of opportunity has opened. Now that nuclear weapons are being destroyed on a large scale, it can no longer be argued that nuclear tests are necessary for security. They were part of the old, competitive and confrontational order. Several nuclear powers have already announced short-term unilateral moratoria. A lasting moratorium must be global. The opportunity should now be seized to agree on a lasting, global nuclear test ban as a matter of first priority.

Another area of priority today must be to counter the threat of a spread of nuclear technology. To achieve this, we must be prepared to assist, both practically and financially by cooperating to detect clandestine nuclear activities and to find alternative uses for the huge nuclear establishments. The initiative to establish international research centres in Moscow and Kiev is a commendable contribution.

Considerable progress has been made with respect to conventional arms reductions. Under the CFE agreement, meticulously elaborated procedures for the exchange of information and verification are being implemented. A network of military contacts and confidence-building channels is thus being established throughout the European continent. The provisions of the treaty are practical in nature and may even seem prosaic. Nevertheless, this qualitatively new way of building security may well prove to be one of the most outstanding achievements of diplomacy in our time. The CFE agreement has aptly been described as the first solid cornerstone of the new European security architecture. In my view, its soundness lies in the integration of the intentions of the treaty with the practical steps that must be taken to ensure their realization at a national or local level.

At the global level, all states are rallying behind the United Nation in its role as our common global peace organization. Never has the UN been involved in so many peace-keeping

operations. The Secretary-General's Agenda for peace is widely recognized as a starting point for a serious discussion on how to revitalize the collective security system envisaged in the UN Charter.

Still more time will be needed to establish lasting new patterns of global stability. Our challenge is to move on from the Cold War era, through policies of common security among states towards a wider comprehensive security concept which must include social, economic and environmental progress. Our new comprehensive security concept must fully include the anticipation and prevention of the underlying political, social and environmental causes of tension, preventing war by building and managing peace.

When I was called upon in 1983 to establish and chair an independent commission it was clear that the international community was unable to deal effectively with the vital issues confronting us. Throughout the 1970s, the United Nations had dealt with important areas such as population, housing, safe water, and new and renewable energy sources by holding major conferences. This offered hope, but all in all the United Nations system was on the whole too weak and fragmented to deal with human needs in an integrated way.

The World Commission on Environment and Development was fortunate to be able to build on the reports of the Brandt Commission and the Palme Commission. It was clear to me that after Brandt's Common Crisis and Palme's Common Security, Our Common Future would have to be the next step in a major effort to persuade countries to return to multilateralism in an integrated effort to address peace, environment and development.

In the early 1970s, the Club of Rome had presented for the first time how limited resources could set limits to growth. The ecological movement and many scientists had since the late sixties become increasingly aware of how we were approaching limits to the burdens that we could load upon Nature's capacity to absorb the effects of human activities. The Stockholm Conference in 1972 was the first major international effort to address these new threats.

The increasing knowledge which we acquired throughout the 1970s was new to our generation. Never before in human history had we had the capacity to destroy the environment and to reduce the options of future generation. Our generation was the first which had to be cognizant of its responsibility for the environment also on behalf of generations yet unborn.

The South was sceptical of the new environmental awareness of the North, seeing it as a threat to their development ambitions. The North had been developing for decades without showing much concern for environmental degradation and destruction. The developing countries were facing completely different challenges. They were caught in a downward spiral of

increasing poverty, crushing debt burdens, deteriorating terms of trade and inadequate access to world markets. They felt unable to afford the apparent luxury of protecting their own resource base.

Our report, "Our Common Future", played its may be most important role in establishing the link between environment and development. These were formerly viewed as separate issues and were dealt with by different institutions internationally and different ministries at the national level.

The World Commission managed to forge the basis for a global consensus because we made it explicit that it was only by solving social and economic problems that we could have hope of solving the threats to the environment. We firmly believed that we could not protect the global environment without establishing a more just international economic order, nor provide the basis for a more just and equitable future for all if global trends that threaten the resource base were allowed to continue.

We developed the concept of sustainable development which means that we must meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainable development is a political concept for human social, economic and environmental progress. It would require a new era of international cooperation and greater participation by people themselves. They must become more actively involved in political life so that they can have a say in decisions of importance to their own lives and futures. Thus, democracy, human rights as well as practical solidarity had to become the basis of all effective policies for environment and development.

Like the earlier commissions, our analysis led to the call for a strengthening of international cooperation. Only by working together, not against each other, can we have a vision of a better managed world, better governance, and global adherence to the fundamental principles of democracy, and to the principle that economic and social development must be sustainable. Peace, democracy, environment and development. These would have to be the core issues of our common agenda for the 21st century.

We must recognize how interdependent we all have become. World population trends indicate a doubling or trebling of our numbers some time in the next century. 90 per cent of the increase will take place in developing countries, and unless corrective action is taken this will aggravate the vicious circle of poverty and environmental degradation in which they already are caught. Combined with unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, especially in the North, these trends will place intolerable strains on finite natural resources.

We in the North must also recognize that nobody, not even the richest of us, can hide from these global trends. There will be no sanctuaries where some people can escape the harsh realities. We will all suffer from the radiation if the ozone layer is further damaged. Climate change can cause drought, floods, and disruption of agricultural patterns both in the North and in the South.

Hundreds of millions of people are living in areas that will be affected by a rise in sea level. Toxic substances are travelling with winds and currents, and everybody has to breathe. Pollutants originating in the temperate zone are already to be found in the food chain in the Arctic. Clearly we need fundamental changes in the way we use the Earth's crust and in the way we distribute the benefits of economic growth.

Our security depends at least as much on economic well-being, social justice and ecological stability as it does on military threats. Throughout human history, struggles over access to and control over natural resources have been one of the root causes of tension and armed conflict. We risk a proliferation of such disputes if the rapid deterioration of environmental quality is allowed to continue.

Our Common Future depends on our collective ability to change. We must address issues of peace in a precautionary, integrated manner, and we must deal decisively with all the underlying causes of human conflict and distress.

Above all we must be uncompromising in our determination to alleviate poverty. Poverty is a major cause of environmental degradation in the Third World. Poor people will concentrate on their daily survival. They will be forced to cut down trees, overgraze pastures and overuse farmland in order to stay alive. Poor countries, too, will have to overexploit their natural resources in order to produce the export goods needed to pay for necessary imports. When prices go down, they will have to produce more and more basic commodities and extract more and more of their natural resources to pay for goods that they do not produce themselves.

Poverty is also in itself intolerable and cannot be reconciled with human dignity. We must adamantly oppose any tendency to ignore the fundamental challenges of the continuing North-South divide. Otherwise the very future of our planet is in danger.

In spite of remarkable economic and social progress in many developing countries, the inequalities persist. According to the UNDP's latest Human Development Report, the richest 20 per cent of the world's population receive 83 per cent of total world income, whereas the poorest 20 per cent have 1.4 per cent.

We cannot allow this to continue. The African continent has

been particularly hard hit by economic decline, and a concerted international effort must be mounted to reverse this unfortunate situation. Look at Sub-Saharan Africa where the vast majority of the population is being robbed of any hope of a decent future. Just look at the appalling gaps between the opulent wealthy and the most miserable poor. It is appalling that hundred of millions of people are forced to live on less than a dollar a day. How can we live with a situation were 40 000 children die each day of malnutrition and disease?

To break out of the present situation of uneven, unsustainable development, we will have to improve both the way the world economy can generate more benefits and the way we distribute the benefits of growth within and among countries. A broad set of coordinated measures will have to be applied.

Debt relief is necessary. How can developing countries make the investments needed to provide health, education and basic amenities for such growing populations when today they are suffocating under crushing burdens of debt and when financial flows are going from poor countries to the rich?

We must create economic growth in developing countries. This is essential and the concept of growth must be adjusted to the real requirements of sustainable development.

However, the slow rate of economic growth and high level of unemployment in most OECD countries, including this one and my own, limit demands for products from developing countries. The current financial and monetary instability poses great risks to countries and individuals. We need to improve stability and prevent speculation from throwing national economies into peril. There is no alternative to effective coordination of financial and monetary policies. But it can only succeed when coupled with social purpose, a fair distribution and public efforts to create employment.

In fact most economic problems that we are faced with are linked to lack of coordination, to rivalry, and to laissez-faire attitudes among industrialized countries.

And while economic policies are important, all evidence supports the assertion that social development depends on democracy and pluralism. Even the best economic policies alone will not suffice unless the human potential of a healthy and educated population can be unleashed and unless people can participate in political life without fear.

To get out of the crisis we also need to improve developing countries' access to world markets. The Uruguay Round is vital and must be successfully concluded. World trade must be governed by common rules. GATT must be the stronghold of trade discipline. Enforcing mechanisms are important particularly for weaker parties.

A striking illustration offered has been given by the World

bank: Developing countries would benefit by some 55 billion US dollars if they were granted unrestricted access to the markets of industrialized countries. This sum is equivalent to what they now, in sum, receive in aid.

Aid will remain important, in particular for Africa. Many donor countries can increase the quantity of their aid and improve its quality. I feel I can point to this since Norway maintains its development assistance in excess of 1 per cent of GDP, the highest in the world. Yet, aid alone can never solve the poverty problem. Aid must be designed to help in building sound national economies and in implementing policies of social reform.

If we should fail, our predicament can be variously described. Steady deterioration of the quality of life, traumatic for the rich, catastrophic for the poor, is perhaps the least dramatic way of describing humanity's future. Still, there are signs that international cooperation is experiencing a period of maturing.

The new spirit of regional cooperation bodes well as a means of overcoming the impediments to economic growth and social progress. Groups of states are in fact pooling their efforts and building down barriers between them to ensure the free flow of people, ideas, capital investment and goods, and also including sustainable development as an overriding objective.

The Nordic countries are strengthening their longstanding cooperation in facing and adjusting to the profound changes taking place in Europe. We are able to deal with foreign and security policy issues in a new way. We are actively facing prospects of European cooperation, strengthening our ties to the EC and EFTA countries through the EEA-agreement and through applications for membership of the Communities. Our cooperation also includes the environmental aspects of our security in Northern Europe by assisting Russia in dealing with nuclear and other environmental dangers which concern all of our people.

The European Community is inspiring action also on other continents. But only the community has so far been able to adopt the necessary institutional means that are available only when countries decide to exercise some of their sovereignty jointly.

The Coal and Steel Community established an international Authority in charge of the resources and industrial equipment necessary for waging war in Western Europe. Today, the Communities' potential as a peace organization is clearer than ever, given its success in binding the European powers closer together and its prospects as an engine of renewal on a pan-European basis.

The extension of Community responsibility to the spheres of foreign policy, environmental cooperation and monetary

stability is taking place at a time of great opportunity. In Russia, a new way of thinking and a new approach to the world are dominant. Soon, a new generation will be at the helm in the United States. All in all, I take an optimistic perspective, not withstanding the problems which are evident in the world today in many spheres.

Already the Palme Commission proposed a strengthening of regional cooperation and to establish the links to the United Nations. It is not a question choosing either regional or global cooperation, although some political parties in my country seem to think so. Regional and global organizations must be mutually reinforcing, each organization doing what they can do best. Our goal must be to forge an appropriate division of responsibility between regional organizations and the United Nations system. In other parts of the world, regional organizations such as the OAS and the OAU and others could define and sustain their contributions to regional peace, stability and integration. The UNs regional commissions should also play an increasing role in this respect.

The way the UN, the CSCE, the NATO countries, the Council of Europe and the EC are cooperating in addressing the difficult situation in former Yugoslavia shows how we can reap the benefits of each organization's specialties. The people behind the "ethnic cleansing" and the war for territorial gains in the former Yugoslavia represent the negation of everything that has been achieved in this century. Their ill-conceived policy and cowardly, savage attacks on innocent people are at the same time a brutal onslaught on the very foundations for any functioning international order.

It must be made clear that basic international standards as they have evolved during this century apply indiscriminately. It is particularly important to demonstrate this here in Europe. Norway has proposed that an international tribunal should be set up to punish all those responsible for the war crimes that are now being committed, and the Nordic countries have supported that proposal. Steps to explore our judicial possibilities are taken also by the CSCE and the Council of Europe. Thus, the inviolability of human rights must permeate and guide all our efforts in a world community based on the rule of law.

Our efforts regionally and globally, to deal with concrete environmental problems have so far had uneven success. Despite the progress in some environmental fields such as ozone depletion, the international community is still in critical lack of adequate means of arriving at effective decisions. While on the national level the whole range of regulatory and economic measures are available to us, we lack corresponding measures of governance on a global basis.

Most of the critical decisions that shape the world today are still taken within the confines of national politics. This will have to change. Decisions intended to shape the world of

tomorrow must be taken at the level where the problems occur. Just as we are used to applying the necessary political measures to deal with domestic problems, we will have to develop the necessary international measures to deal with international problems.

This is the essence of what we must deal with as we open a new chapter in the development of democracy itself: We must not only spread the benefits of democracy to all corners of the globe, but also ensure that political decision-making can be made to work at the same level as other phenomena that influence our daily lives.

At the United Nations Conference in Rio this summer it was made clear that we are heading towards a crisis of uncontrollable dimensions unless we change course. Assessments of the Conference have varied widely. I believe the most important outcome was the recognition of the shared but differentiated responsibility of countries. What this means is that the industrialized countries, which are still the major polluters, will have to shoulder the greatest commitments to reducing the strain they are placing on the global environment.

They must allow the South sufficient environmental space for their development. They cannot say to developing countries "Sorry, we have filled the wastebasket, there is no room left for you."

We also agreed in principle that the North must provide new and additional resources to be transferred to the South to enable them to fulfil their obligations. The South is facing enormous problems of environment and development which are mostly of a regional or national nature. In order to allow these countries to take part in efforts to counter the truly global environmental threats, such as climate change and loss of biodiversity, they need assistance to be able to cover the additional costs of undertaking implementing measures.

Implementing what is called Agenda 21, the action programme adopted by the Conference, will require an extremely high level of activity. It has been estimated that the cost of implementation to developing countries alone would amount to 600 billion dollars a year between now and the year 2000. Four-fifths of this would have to be covered by developing countries themselves. The remaining 125 billion dollars a year would have to come as financial transfers from the industrialized countries. While this may appear to be a large sum, it is in fact equivalent to the funds that would be available if all OECD countries raised their level of development assistance to that of Norway and the Netherlands and designed that aid to support sustainable development

The Nordic countries were forthcoming towards the demands of the South at the conference by making concrete proposals regarding the financial issues. For us it was hard to accept

that even reaching the old target of 0.7 per cent of GDP as development assistance by the year 2000 should be denounced as unrealistic by other industrialized countries.

There are many reasons why we must delay making our final judgment on the overall success of the Rio Conference. Although progress was made in some fields, many of the conclusions of the Conference were inadequate and much will depend on the road from Rio. Many of the decisions which could not be taken in Rio will remain with us in urgent need of attention. However, I believe that one fundamental conclusion can be drawn:

Traditional international conferences run by consensus can only advance at the pace of the most reluctant mover in each field. The future requires stronger decision-making procedures. The suspicion that some countries are jockeying for advantage at the expense of others is a crucial problem. It threatens to blur the recognition of mutual dependence. Everyone seems to be waiting for someone else to make a move.

Faced with these challenges and ever dwindling natural resources, I see the Rio Earth Summit as steps in the staircase leading to what will inevitably have to come: A better organized world community in which we pool resources as well as formal sovereignty in order to obtain more real sovereignty and wider choices for the future, without depriving future generations of their freedom of choice.

However, at present we do not have global institutions that are strong enough to determine new directions or implement effective global policies. It is difficult to see how decision-making in international institutions can be made effective unless we introduce new elements of supranationality or make more frequent use of majority vote. This must be the next chapter in developing a system of global governance that can serve our real interests, across national barriers and across generations.

If international cooperation is to become more effective, countries must coordinate their representation in different international organizations much more closely. We cannot move forward if a representative of the ministry of agriculture pursues one policy in FAO while the Foreign Office's representative says something quite different in the General Assembly.

Furthermore, it is essential that the various organs of the United Nations system improve the coordination of their policies and activities. We need a more unified approach and stronger direction within the UN system. Over the years the number of agencies, programmes and councils has mushroomed, with too little inter-agency coordination. This cannot continue. We must streamline our organization to avoid duplication and improve effectiveness. The Secretary-General himself must be supported by all countries to enable him to

perform his coordinating role.

One of the most important prerequisites for change, which is obviously needed, will be how we build on the public commitment generated during the years of preparation for the Rio Conference, how we manage to harness the broad-based dialogue among concerned people and how we develop shared perspectives and experiences.

Such support and commitment are critical if we shall be able to take far-reaching decisions, particularly when the necessary measures seem costly in a short-term perspective.

The industrialized democracies will again have to take the lead. We must constantly improve the way our own democracies work and prevent at all cost ignorance and apathy from being allowed to gain a foothold among the millions who, for instance, now have fallen victim to unemployment also in the industrialized world. Our challenge is to help them retain their faith in the future of democracy even in a period when their own most fundamental needs are being inadequately met.

The political system in our countries is often judged in terms of its ability to produce results that are in reality beyond its power. This can lead to a feeling of alienation from the political system. To overcome this danger, of which we see daily examples, politicians must take great care to explain what can be done nationally and what can only be done when countries work together.

The concept of the nation state - which has been the building block in our system of international organization during this century - is today very much part of the process of global change. The political leaders of our time have had their basis in the nation state. They will increasingly have to carry out their work at the international level. They will be dependent upon attitudes and perspectives which can be shared in a democratic sense with other countries and other nations. Those who advocate democracy locally and nationally must also be its champions internationally, for its values and principles are indivisible.

The new Independent Commission chaired by Ingvar Carlsson and Sridath Ramphal, who addressed you here last year, will deal with all these pressing issues, benefitting from the work of the earlier commissions, including the South Commission, and basing its outlook on the Stockholm initiative of 1991.

Global governance will depend upon our ability to develop international policies of legislation, redistribution and a system of caring and sharing with those who risk marginalization.

Burdensharing will remain essential. There are several bills that need to be covered in a turbulent, troubled world: bills for peace-keeping, refugee relief, famine and natural

disasters. Environmental threats and poverty, however, are cross-cutting, long-term, predictable and unavoidable unless we establish a world order of burdensharing, common perceptions and common responsibility.

From my experience of working with the previous independent commissions, following the Brandt Commission at close range, being a member of the Palme Commission and later serving as chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development, I am convinced that the international community will have to move from one earth to one world.

There is no such thing as a separate Swedish way to monetary stability, or an independent Norwegian way to full employment. There is no such thing as an Ethiopian solution to the drought problem, and Bangladesh alone cannot free itself from the threats of floods.

It has been said that we are the first generation that has the ability really radically to change the course of world development, and that we may be the last to have the possibility of doing it. That is precisely why our generation has a unique responsibility and opportunity to manage global change, and to do it in time.