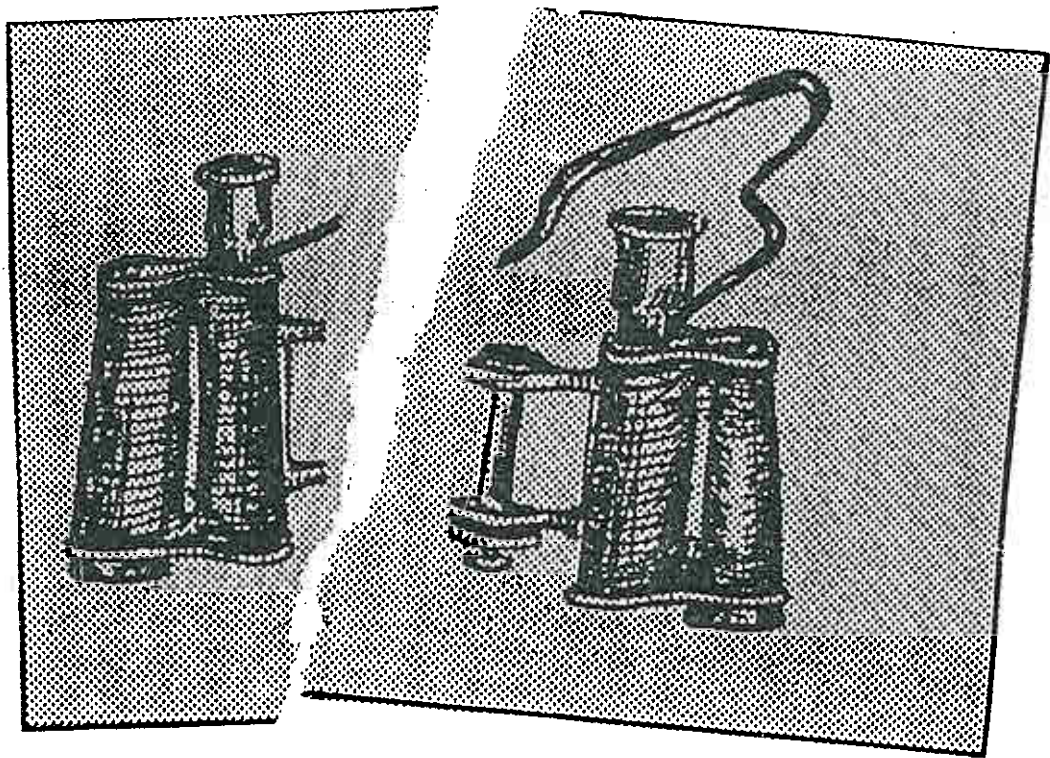


SPLIT VISION



*Southern reflections on the
Norwegian White Paper on North/South policy*

Split Vision

Norway prides herself of, and is internationally acclaimed to be one of the lead donor countries in the world. Time has come to reassess that role and the quality and intent of Norwegian aid and North/South politics in general. The Norwegian White Paper on North/South Issues (Stortingsmelding 51, 1991-92) gives us an opportunity to do just this.

- *There is an image today of a donor riding a bicycle and handing over a cheque to a voluntary agency in the South who comes to collect it driven by a driver in an air-conditioned car. All in the name of the poor.*
- *The Norwegian government's lack of vision is disappointing.*
- *The White Paper does not address the root causes of the problem.*

These are excerpts from the articles published in this booklet. The language and the views expressed are not usually applied in circles traditionally dealing with our aid policy or foreign relations matters. But then: The articles are not generated in these circles. They have come to our attention through an invitation so that we in the North can get responses from the South to the Norwegian White Paper. ForUM for Environment and Development; the North/South Coalition; Norwegian Church Aid; and RORG, the Norwegian NGO Information Network have initiated this response.

For the reader of these articles who are engaged in North/South politics, the following is brought to mind;

- ▶ *What have we in the North done to enable these Voices from the South to break through the noise and fundamental lack of confidence that seems to characterize North/South communication today? Will we, when being confronted with the Southern views, resort to labels such as "not representative", "unrealistic", "irrelevant", to cover the fact that our real agenda is "business as usual".*
- ▶ *Have we prepared ourselves or furnished our institutions with proper sensors and mechanisms to pick up and process the reactions that we invite? Are the Norwegian "Lords of Poverty" ready to realise the fundamental split vision of Norway's North/South policies, as addressed by Sibusiso Bengu: "The tragedy of the Norwegian foreign policy is that it seeks to reconcile the oppressive development model with a sensitivity to the needs of the developing countries."*

Who, then, are the voices referred to as "The Voices from the South" in this booklet? They are all in one way or another linked to the UNCED process on North/South environment and development questions. The authors, individually presented in a separate part below, are prominent and long-time participants in this discussion. They represent highly qualified research and expert groups with experience from universities, NGOs and UN bodies. Their competence and zeal, together with the Norwegian government's expressed determination to listen to Voices from the South, set a tone of hope for a substantially improved dialogue between our two hemispheres in the time to come.

The recently established national North/South Commission which has a mandate to analyze all aspects of our policy, will have to rely on such a dialogue, and on the contributions such as this publication, if it is to fulfill its mandate.

The refreshingly honest, outspoken and urgent arguments found below should be cherished by all who share the authors' dedication to put equity and solidarity back on the North/South agenda.

The Voices from the South can help us envisage alternative pathways to the future. But these voices are not one, they are many. Still, the views represented in this booklet, give - in spite of the lack of editing and co-ordination - an amazingly unanimous message. This message calls for attentive minds and no little revision on our side. We may choose to keep the message at bay for a shorter or longer period of time, but ultimately there is no escaping the challenge it brings - for it speaks about and on behalf of our common future.

NOTES ON THE CONTRIBUTORS

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He is Chairperson of ELCI, a global coalition for Environment and Development encompassing 700 organizations from 90 countries. A key network for cooperation amongst primarily Southern NGO's.

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He is the author/co-author of numerous publications, amongst these: *"Towards Green Villages; A strategy for Environmentally - Sound and Participatory Rural Development"* and *"The CSE Statement on Global Environmental Democracy"*.

Sunita Narain has worked in the Centre for Science and Environment, New Dehli since 1982. She was co-author of the above *"Towards Green Villages"* with her colleague Anil Agarwal, and co-author of a book challenging the basis for calculating greenhouse emissions entitled: *"Global Warming in an equal World - A Case of Environmental Colonialism."*

Currently she is Director of the Society for Environmental Communications, which publishes *"Down to Earth"* a bi-monthly magazine on Science and Environment.

Martin Khor is Director of Third World Network, Malaysia. Third World Network, founded in 1984, have offices in six countries. It's objective is to promote a wider articulation of the needs and rights of people in the Third World, through exchange of information and background analysis of structures forming the basis of current problems facing the Third World. Martin Khor is specialist within the field of economics, finance and trade, and frequently writes for *Third Worlds Resurgence*, *South - North Development Monitor* (some of the Third World Networks regular publications). Martin Khor had a key role within the NGO-community during the UNCED-process.

**RESPONSE TO THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER
ON NORTH/SOUTH RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT
CO-OPERATION (STORTINGSMEDLING NR 51)**

by

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There are relatively few countries in the Northern hemisphere that are as progressive and supportive of the developing countries as Norway, as is revealed by the policies expressed in the Norwegian Government White Paper on North/South Relations and Development Co-operation (Stortingsmelding Nr 51). There is, however, a difference between being supportive to poor countries in theory and identifying with the aspirations of the poor countries. To all intents and purposes Norway is still a Northern Country which has lately acquired wealth at the expense of the poor, and has benefited from the North/South economic and trade imbalance, that its solidarity with the poor remains more at a lip-service level. In my view, the Norwegian Government's articulation of the economic needs of the poor countries must be matched by a commitment to self-sacrifice. An analysis of Norway's commitment to sustainable development reveals that these policies are undermined by immediate domestic needs, in a troubled economic situation.

The tragedy of the Norwegian foreign policy is that it seeks to reconcile the oppressive development model with a sensitivity to the needs of the developing countries. This bridge policy becomes ridiculous when sustainable development is tied up to the economic growth model. Sustainable development is irreconcilable with the limitless economic growth model which presupposes that all economies attain certain levels of growth to satisfy the greed of both the producers and the consumers. It is assumed that the economic system developed in the North is capable of responding to the challenges of the environmental crisis.

"It is presumptuous to imagine that the environmental crisis can be met by waving the magic wand of economics." 1)

Economic growth is confused with economic sustainability. Even the most environmentally concerned and articulate Norwegian politicians, such as Mrs. Gro Brundtland in her book "Our Common Future", present a view which confuses environmental and human sustainability with economic sustainability. After presenting valuable ideas on environment she links them to the Northern patterns of thought, lifestyle and strategies which are the root causes of underdevelopment and the crisis of impoverishment in the South. Like many other Northern nations, human development is sacrificed on the altar of economic growth. The White Paper projects an analysis which fails to trace the intricate linkage between the degradation and death of the environment and human beings. In my view, it is irresponsible to attempt to save the earth and still call for unlimited economic growth and unredistributed wealth.

The ten point priority areas for Norwegian North-South policy outlined on pages 20 and 21 and subsequent pages of the report require closer scrutiny.

"Continue! efforts to achieve a more equitable international economic order, where the interests and problems of developing countries are better taken into account". 2)

This policy is vague, as it does not spell out those efforts to achieve a more equitable international order. When the debate on the new international economic order took place in the 1970's and 1980's the Norwegian Government was well-positioned to have been a Northern champion of the new international order. However, she let that opportunity slip by, preferring to stay with the Group B countries. Norway and other like-minded countries of the North had partially separated themselves to form a progressive sub-block which could have joined, or co-operated, with the Group of 77 nations that were articulating that new order. Some of us who were researching into options of the United Nations block system had evidence that it was not the economic ties but the militaristic ties which prevailed and compelled the Scandinavian countries to co-operate with the rich countries that were opposed to the new international economic order. Even with the emergence of an Eastern block after the collapse of the traditional Second World, the options for the establishment of new alliances have not convinced the Nordic countries to opt out of the club of the rich nations. One may therefore ask: What more equitable, international economic order efforts is the Norwegian Government proposing to continue with? The militaristic objectives of any group, including that of NATO, are not consistent with the new international economic order.

The second priority area for Norwegian North-South policy is

"efforts to ensure environmentally sustainable development, both in industrialized countries and the developing countries, by changing the utilization of resources and patterns of production and consumption, so that nature's tolerance is taken more into account". 3)

It seems to me that the best way of ensuring environmentally sustainable development is to denounce and opt out of the consumerist development model which is highly destructive of human and environmental resources. The vision of a new society which has emerged from SONED's analysis of the threat to life posed by environmental degradation, questions the current dominate economic order in which the Norwegian Government is a willing participant. There is nothing in the whole report which reveals that the Norwegian Government has become critical of the wanton destruction of natural resources in a race to become rich. The African philosophy of life lived in solidarity with the environment has not as yet been embraced by the Norwegian Government. The Norwegian people in the North of the country, who are experiencing serious environmental problems, are already sharing the same views as the groups from Africa, Asia and latin America. The Norwegian Government will do well to listen to the voices of these people who are already calling for truly sustainable development.

The third priority area is: the improvement of international conditions for developing countries through debt relief, and improved market access for the exports of developing countries. This is an arrogant and ambitious policy, recognizing that the impacts of actions by a small country like Norway are not likely to be far-reaching in terms of the sums of money involved and the number of developing countries which are in debt.

The fourth priority area is: supporting the reorientation of the national policies of developing countries, to promote economic growth and environmentally sustainable development, social equality, and improvements in living conditions for particularly vulnerable population groups. This support for the environment, and development liberation groups, may be very significant in so far as these groups could become change agents in their countries. If there is any doubt at all with regard to this policy option, it is on the moral justification of the Norwegians seeking to make other nations environmentally sustainable. Should this policy not be applied to the Norwegian society as well? We should be careful about attempting to make other people what we are not. This may be a question of charity beginning at home.

The strengthening of the production of foodstuffs, consumer products, and industrial products in the developing countries warrants merit. The countries of the North's development objective in Africa, Asia and Latin America should concentrate on supporting and strengthening the production of food and other

consumer- and industrial products. All I would look for in this policy area would be the level of aid to make food production a priority. It might be interesting for one to observe the types of consumer- and other products whose production will be encouraged in order to test the altruistic nature of this aid.

The sixth priority area is

"supporting the effort to promote democracy and human rights in the developing countries, and peaceful solutions to conflicts in the South". 4)

In the various studies I have undertaken on the root causes of hunger and poverty, I have convincing data which proves just how much of an impediment to development are the lack of democracy, the violation of human rights, and political conflict. The Norwegian Government is to be commended on the aid it has given to those groups which are struggling for democracy and an end to conflicts. I am a witness to the aid that has been given to end racial conflicts in the countries of Southern Africa. We do hope that the Norwegian Government will increase its financial support to newly established Governments in the regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Priority number 7 is

"reducing poverty and promoting human development in the developing countries by supporting education, health-related measures, and public participation in the development process." 5)

From my work as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Fort Hare it is as if I am in a laboratory in which poverty is being reduced and human development promoted each year through human resource training. I do recommend a stepping-up of aid in this area. My hope is that the Norwegian Government will respond positively to the Norwegian Council of Universities' programme in support of Historically Black Universities in South Africa. This includes the support for two women's residences at the University of Fort Hare.

The eighth priority is

"improving the position of women, limiting population growth, and improving living conditions for children in the developing countries." 6)

Targeting women and children is a good way of speeding-up the enhancement of human development in these countries.

The ninth priority is a reciprocal one, that is

"supporting increased economic contacts between Norway and the developing countries by introducing measures to ease market access for the developing countries and by promoting Norwegian trade with and investments in the developing countries." 7)

It is indeed true that protectionism in the industrialized countries is hindering the efforts which many developing countries are now making to adjust their economic policies. The OECD estimates that at present the developing countries are losing twice as much per year in export revenues due to non-tariff trade barriers as the development assistance they receive from the OECD countries. The economic gap between North and South can be bridged through improved terms of trade for the developing countries.

The tenth priority area for Norwegian North-South policy is

"supporting more direct contacts between institutions and organizations in Norway and the developing countries." 8)

The importance of institution-building and competence-building cannot be over-emphasized in development co-operation. Development co-operation stands to benefit from people-to-people and organization-to-organization contacts. We have come a long way to know that non-governmental organizations co-operating brings better results than the Government-to-Government contacts.

The commentary I have given on the Norwegian Government Report on priority areas of North-South policy is aimed at ensuring that the changes the Government is proposing are changes for the better. The critical remarks seek to get the Norwegian Government to go beyond its past and present commitment to development aid. Norway needs to deepen its analysis to accommodate issues that are new and foreign to international relations. The Norwegian Government's position on environment and development still needs to be reviewed, so that it addresses these issues differently from what is reported in the White Paper. The Norwegian Government's lack of vision in this regard is disappointing. More research has to be done on new non-polluting technologies and strategies drawn from the cultures of the people from the South. My humble submission on environment and development is that the Norwegian Government still has to grapple with the Southern perspectives on environment and development.

There is, indeed, merit in the merger between the Ministry of Development Co-operation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The politics of aid can be better addressed when these two Ministries understand that they have a common mission.

Thank you

FOOTNOTES:

1. SONED ON UNCED, A Southern Perspective on the Environment and Development Crisis, 1991 p. 44
2. Report No 51, 1991-92, Trends in North-South Relations and Norway's Co-operation with Developing Countries, p. 20
3. Ibid., p. 20
4. Ibid., p. 20
5. Ibid., p. 21
6. Ibid., p. 21
7. Ibid., p. 21
8. Ibid., p. 21

**THE RIGHT TO BASIC NEEDS AND MAKING CHOICES
NORWEGIAN AID POLICIES PREVENT PEOPLE'S ORGANISATIONS
FROM TAKING ROOTS**

by

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NEW MOMENTUM IN SOUTH/NORTH COOPERATION

Opportunities

*"Norway will base the dialogue concerning the choice and design of development activities with Norwegian funds on the development plans of recipient countries... The recipient country will have a greater degree of responsibility for the implementation of development activities..."
(Stortingsmelding nr 51 p. 27)*

Development without taking into account the self respect and dignity of indigenous communities, the socially vulnerable, and the culture of marginalised tribal communities, is no development at all. Aid of any kind that does not respect the skills of the community, and mobilising it for their own development, is really encouraging dependency. In the ultimate analysis it is local knowledge that is preserving the environment in fragile ecological zones today.

Everyone agrees that we are facing a crisis of catastrophic proportions so it is all the more unacceptable that the Norwegian Aid Policies should look for solutions in strategies that have already proved to be a failure. It is this casual approach to real life and death problems being faced by the poor in the South that is so disturbing. There is no urgency.

What is the point of giving doomsday statistics (The Lost Decade) when in the face of such urgency conventional casual solutions are being offered. It is a travesty and a farce: band aid solutions are being offered.

It is a myth that the democratisation process has led to a better human rights record of countries in the South. In many parts of the South it is called "guided democracy".

There are many millions, much below the official poverty line, who live on the verge of survival who are nowhere near reaching a voter's list, who are really non-persons in their own country. Openness, honesty and a desire to debate the issues must exist on both sides. If there is talk of population control in the South, the same amount of effort should be made in reducing and managing the life styles that are destroying the environment.

More important than self-reliance are the self-respect and dignity of communities who are recipients of Norwegian aid. This is often forgotten. Human development means organising people to give them the strength and ability to make choices.

Governments in the South have lost touch with their own people to the extent that politicians and bureaucrats do not really know the needs of the poor in their own countries. The North has managed to dazzle policymakers in the South with fancy talk, outdated equipment and technologies which are no longer acceptable in their own countries, and which are bought with aid received from the North. So, many countries are paying back for stuff they do not need or cannot use. In countries in the South where there is not enough drinking water, competent health and educational services, millions of dollars of expensive computers, sophisticated medical equipment, useless drugs and TV sets are lying unopened in godowns rotting or rusting away. All this because some countries in the South want to impress others of how modern and progressive they are. All because we in the South do not have enough self-respect, self-esteem, courage, and confidence to stand firm.

Of the 25,000 drugs being sold in the world market only 200 basic drugs are needed (according to WHO) to treat the majority of the world's diseases. In India we manufacture all the expensive drugs for modern urban ailments, like cancer and high blood pressure, but we still import drugs for TB: it is not economic enough (read commercial) to manufacture them in our own country. That is why manufacture and control of allopathic drugs to improve the country's health services are still, ironically, under the Ministry of Industry not under the Ministry of Health. The lobby of the drug manufactures in the North has managed to decimate, indeed neutralise, other sorts of inexpensive medical care which do not rely on pharmaceuticals. This sort of inexpensive care are now being called alternative medicine because it is traditional and natural. These forms of medicine have been sidelined as unscientific, however, the rural poor have believed in them. Homeopathy, Herbal medicine, Yoga and acupuncture are all environmentally friendly, and low cost, so it is not surprising to find the poor adopting them extensively. Southern traditional medicinal practices have all of a sudden found new markets in the North. However, it will be years before developing countries cease to become a dumping ground for drugs that are not required by the poor.

NEW MOMENTUM IN SOUTH/NORTH CO-OPERATION

Problems

"The main thrust of Norwegian development co-operation will continue to be long-term assistance in the form of united grants".

(Stortingsmelding Nr 51, p. 27)

Development assistance does not mean WASTE of resources and manpower. However, expertise is available in the South, why is it necessary to send "experts" from the North to the South? A Norwegian Ambassador to an African country once confided in me that at the same cost of keeping one Norwegian expert he could employ 400 Africans! By Norwegian standards perhaps the expert was drawing a modest salary: By Southern standards he was setting a very poor example by living an extravagant lifestyle similar to that of criminal.

There is, however, another reason which is often hinted but openly discussed: Unless a foreigner is attached to the aid package the donor countries fear that the aid will be misused, or somehow not reach the people it was destined for. These foreigners are not really experts but mere guardians, and it is based on their reports that decisions are being taken.

So what is this talk about equality, justice, and fair play?

Governments in the South, and indeed even in the North, are the worst breakers of their own laws. To avoid the strict environmental legislation binding industries in the North, technologies, know-how, and

equipment are being sent to the south in the form of aid.

It is far easier to conduct classes for illiterates in the South than to teach the literate population in the North to change their lifestyles. Policymakers in the North are found to be rigid, unbending and stubborn. It is in the South that they can learn how to live within one's means.

*"It is important that basic education and primary health services is available to all, regardless of social background, sex, income and place of residence. To the extent to which user fees are introduced it must be ensured that poverty does not prevent people from utilising the services."
(Stortingsmelding Nr 51, p. 31)*

It is narrowminded to pursue a policy of charity in the name of development. Development is about taking people into confidence and trust. Nothing, neither land or water, nor air, are free. There is a price we all have to pay directly or indirectly.

Development and the removal of poverty are also questions about choices. Today rural communities have no choice. The rural areas have to clothe, feed and house the urban areas when the financial and natural resources are just not there. Drinking water is being pumped from rural areas to cities and towns from villages where there is not even enough drinking water for the villagers.

More people have died as a consequence of hunger in the past five years than have been killed in all wars, revolutions, and murders in the past 150 years. Although the population has grown by 1,5 billion people in the past quarter century there is more food available per person on our planet today than there was 25 years ago. The question is an of distribution as well as a question of when the North will cease to use food as a political weapon to subdue and control the South. It is also a question of priorities. The money required to provide food, water, education, health, and housing for everyone in the world has been estimated to be \$ 21 billion a year... about as much as the world spends on arms every 2 weeks to kill each other.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Priority areas

*"The majority of the population in the poorest developing countries live in rural areas, and Norway will put particular emphasis on improving conditions for poor people in the rural areas... Norway will continue to participate in, and support, the development and rehabilitation of infrastructure in vital areas in poor developing countries."
(Stortingsmedling Nr 51, p. 31)*

The Priority is to improve economic and social conditions in individual developing countries. Sustainable development as perceived by whom? Who and what are we sustaining? And where in the North?

Why is it only when the poor are concerned that we put so much stress on economic viability? There are so many industrial concerns, that are heavily losing public funds. How come we do not close them down?

Sustainable development calls for sustainable practices first.

It is not only a question of developing countries as against industrialised countries.

Mahatma Gandhi said very prophetically; "The answer is not mass production but production by the masses." Small scale, village-based employment generation close to communities that are within the control of the people is the answer to sustainable development.

With the technology of communications making the world a smaller place to live in and the South getting

wiser in the process, what is disturbing is how the right to basic minimum needs - food, drinking water, education, health employment and energy - are being denied by the North to communities in the South. To add insult to injury the South is being blamed for unjust, unfair, and discriminatory policies formulated in the North for their own self-interest and to protect the prohibitive life styles they lead and which they themselves are not prepared to change.

Priority Areas for Norwegian South/North Policy in Sustainable Development

- Concentrate on the provision of basic minimum needs.
- Stop sending "experts" to the South and wasting resources. Instead the strategy should be to build local capacity. It should not be seen as an opportunity to provide jobs to Norwegians in the South. Then it is not "untied aid".
- Put more time and energy into developing people to people projects and exchanges.
- Identify successes in approaches, methods, and implementation as a result of development aid that could be duplicated elsewhere in other countries in the South.
- Promote low-cost, community based innovations with Norway acting as a facilitator.
- Stop training engineers, doctors, and professionals in Norway. They become misfits in their own country.

Norwegian development cooperation policy is to contribute to reducing tensions in one's own country and promoting confidence and cooperation between nations, groups and regions.

If that is the policy, then top priority should be given to strengthening indigenous local institutions as yet another way of promoting sustainability.

When it is replaced by alien institutions tensions are bound to arise between rural and urban, the literate and the educated, the rich and the poor.

But nowhere has this been identified as a major aim under the Development Cooperation programme

"Development Assistance will be used in such a way that it leads to the greater improvements for the poor sections of the population, the poorest developing countries shall be given priority and the aid must be designed in such a way that it creates the least possible dependency in continued assistance."
(Stortingsmelding nr 51, p. 27)

Development strategies today have led to a situation where any developing country is losing its self respect, their cultural identity and their dignity with the result that policy makers and decision takers in many countries in the South look down on their own roots.

Today the people who are speaking on behalf of the poor in Asia and Africa have no roots in their own country and have lost touch with reality. The only thing black or brown about them is their skin. Otherwise they think and act as whites. They are foreigners in their own country never having lived or worked in places where the majority of the population of their country survive-in villages, slums, shanty towns.

We should work towards removing misunderstandings that come from definitions. Time, space, and culture of nations have blurred simple definitions.

Who is a professional? To the community it is someone who has a combination of competence, confidence and belief. If we want communities to indeed be sustainable, then we have to have to accept this definition. Professionalism tends to compartmentalise when all along, the move by village barefoot professionals has been towards integration. At the village level life and services are integrated.

How do we define poverty? Why only in economic terms, when there is cultural, social, and spiritual poverty in the North that is equally damaging for environment.

The type of poverty being faced in the North is of a very different kind. Very sinister, very damaging, and

at the same time very revealing. In the North there is a poverty of new imaginative ideas, of spirit, of values, and indeed of courage that is just short of alarming. Almost every sensible citizen in the North has come to the conclusion that the extravagant and environmentally damaging life styles they lead are totally unsustainable. It is destroying the planet. What used to be hailed as symbols of development - cars, air conditioners, washing machines, cosmetics, dish washers, sprinklers, toilet paper-in the 90s are fast becoming symbols of waste and ecologically harmful consumer items that are threatening the very existence of the globe.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS - SEEN FROM THE SOUTH

Traditional solutions

The biggest threat to the Environment today is the Literate Man who has been vastly influenced by the West.

- To look for solutions to the West and this have proved disastrous by the introduction of alien institutions at the expense of indigenous ones.
- To look down on their own culture and their own people just because they have not acquired the right paper qualification.
- To thinking, living and working in rural areas is a waste of time.

If you do not show respect for the land and the water you cannot show or have respect for the people who live on it and off it. They know exactly how much to take and give back to the land. One does not have to go to any school or college to understand this fact.

Mahatma Gandhi: "Earth has enough for every man's need but not for one man's greed."

On traditional practices of farming alone the small and marginal farmers around the globe have fed the world. Local knowledge, village skills and practical wisdom collected over centuries by peasants living on the land and surviving off it, thus making the practice sustainable, have now been discarded to be replaced by large scale farming techniques - a gift from the North to the South. Only later the South came to learn what these industrial farming techniques have done to destroy soil and water in the North. Every decade 7% of the world's soil is lost through these techniques: in the US farmers have been abusing the soil so much that twice the size of California has been rendered unproductive. The use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides is responsible for over half the water pollution in the US. New pests immune to pesticides have tripled since 1960: nearly 1 million people are intentionally poisoned by pesticides every year. It can cause cancer, birth defects, liver diseases and reproductive problems. By the mid-80s both European and North American farmers were using about 22 billion tons of artificial fertilisers a year.

Quite apart from these problems the South will have to live with, and fight against, industrial farming techniques which have already given rise to serious problems - land grabbing, more small farmers becoming landless and migration to cities and land reform measures taking a back seat. Land is the ultimate resource where the owner controls everything and everyone on it. Almost everywhere it is the symbol of wealth. In the Third World land tenure is the main indicator of economic inequality. Industrial farming techniques have encouraged the concentration of land in the hands of the few:

Brazil	1% of the population own	40%
Bangladesh	22%	75%
Jamaica	25%	90%
South Africa	7%	87%
United Kingdom	10%	84%
US	1%	22%

Growing rural restlessness, social tensions, and an uneasy militancy among the poor in the South is perhaps exactly what some Governments in the North want. It suits them to divert the attention of the South from probing into the reasons why for instance Canada and Britain, which are the largest single suppliers, of woodpulp, use naturally self generating forest some 1000 years old. This wood is being used to produce 25,000/- tons of soft tissue. Consumers spend more than \$ 600 million on toilet rolls, kitchen towels, facial tissues and serviettes.

It is now considered a criminal act to waste natural resources like water, especially when the amount available is getting most costly to find, pump, purify and make safe drinking water available. Technologies in the North being transferred to the South take availability for granted. Flushed toilets wasting vast quantities of water, chemical purification plants using power to run them at enormous costs, sophisticated rigs gulping precious fuel in thousands of gallons have made water frightfully expensive in the South. Great sums of money are being wasted to "brainwash" engineers from the South under aid programmes for training in such environmentally unfriendly, indeed hostile technologies.

What about traditional technologies of rain water harvesting in the South? In desert and in water scarcity areas people have come up with their own low cost solutions without waiting for experts and government to step in. Hundreds of years ago when there where no "engineers" on the scene what did the people do? They built structures which function even today. Hundred thousand litre tanks collecting rain water have supplied drinking water to villages and small towns for years they have now been rejected on grounds that these sources are not supposed to be "safe". Yet studies have shown that even where piped water supply schemes have been started with international expertise there have been cases of cholera and water borne diseases, which means that water coming out of taps is not safe either. More and more it has been felt that on such flimsy grounds unreliable, and unsafe, drinking water technologies have been sold to the South for ulterior motives.

We expect the North to set an example and show they save water - not misuse and waste it. The Northerner wastes nearly 500 litres of water daily: the average American flushes away more water in his toilet every day than a Tanzanian family uses in 3 months. Presumably it is necessary to waste that amount of water so that the life expectancy remains high in the North and their resistance to contaminated water remains non-existent. A Northern household with its dishwashers, washing machines, flushed toilets and sprinklers in gardens wastes over 1000 litres per head per day: households in the South using public hydrants in the streets (20-70 litres/head/day), or open stream or hand pumps (5 litres/head/day), have set an example when it comes to how water can be used without waste. What the North classifies as a necessity is in fact a luxury in the world today.

POVERTY AND POPULATION ISSUES IN THE SOUTH

Distorted perceptions

We cannot discuss poverty and consumption in the North and the South without looking objectively at the issue of population. The disinformation campaign that has totally distorted the population issue needs to be corrected. There is a growing feeling in the South that it has been exaggerated. It is to the interest of the North to keep talking of the serious problems of over-population in the South. Because there are supposed to be too many people (so the TV and the experts in West say) poverty levels have increased, the trees are being cut and the environment degraded, the rivers are being polluted and the quality of life continues to deteriorate. While the problem is indeed serious and should be tackled on a war footing, the problem, it seems to me, is much more serious in the North: the wasteful lifestyle they follow is threatening the very existence of the planet with chemicals, gasses and other harmful by-products warming the globe. The North and the South have to meet each other half-way.

Pick up any document printed in the North and see how cleverly countries with a large population are made to feel small and guilty. The World Bank Atlas 1990, for instance, contains information on population growth, daily calorie supply per capita, life expectancy, total fertility rate, illiterate rate etc. The

introduction says it is supposed to present "the current economic and social indicators that describe trends, indicate orders of magnitude and characterises significant differences among countries... "To balance these alarming statistics it would have been fair to also mention the criminal over-consumption patterns of the developed (?) countries. The fact that the per capita consumption of milk, meat, sawwood, paper, metals, coal, and liquid fuels is five times higher in the North is not publicised. No one can deny that this has led to pollution and environmental degradation. But that it was not mentioned conveys a different belief that the strategy is to influence mass media to keep hammering on one topic-that in the South we are breeding like rabbits and its about time the Third World did something about it.

Most energy comes from non-renewable sources. America has 6% of the world's population but it consumes 30% of the world's energy. India, on the other hand, has 20% of the global population, but (even the biased North reluctantly admits) we use only 2% of the world's energy. Is this something to feel guilty about? Why are we not lining energy consumption to population in global forums? If a rational formula is arrived at, India can afford to produce a few million more babies!

What are we so defensive about when it comes to population in the South? The simple lifestyle that an average poor southern family leads allows for the family to produce more babies if they chose to. It is a problem that must be controlled. However, the end of the world will not come if there are a couple of million more mouths to feed. The same thing cannot be said for the North. The extravagant lifestyle of the North is fast destroying the planet - this world we are living in - and no one in the South can prevent it. Today the planet is being destroyed because there are too many cars, factories, power plants, burning oil, gas, coal contaminating the earth's atmosphere and polluting the water: it is not being destroyed because there are too many people. Everyday over 100,000 cars roll off the world's assembly lines and there are 500 million cars currently in use: most of them are in industrialised countries in the North. The US, Canada, Europe and Japan account for 16% of the world's population, but they produce 88% of all cars and own 81% of them. Cars harness only 10-20% of the potential energy in their fuel: the rest is wasted and pollutes the atmosphere. Cars, buses, trucks in the North generate more than 80% of the poisonous gases that are destroying the planet. As a result the Island country of Maldives, close to India, is going to disappear under water one day.

But these statistics are not affecting the transport policies of countries in the South. Public transport is being downgraded and man powered vehicles, trishaws, rickshaws and bicycles are being dismissed as inferior in the South. In many parts of Asia, pedal power is the most common form of transport. In China 90% of the population use a bicycle. Yet China plans to invest US \$ 10 billion in the auto industry and wants to produce a million cars a year in the next decade. In Haiti only one in 200 people owns a car. Yet a third of the country's import-budget is spent on fuel and transport equipment.

Poverty is a great detergent. Where there are vast pockets of poverty the lifestyle is simple. The poor people may have more children, but they travel by bicycle and use public transport. They are not real criminals who are setting fire to rainforests (50 acres every minute) so that cash crops are grown to feed the rich in cities. The real criminals are those who are prepared to see the world polluted, the natural resources overexploited and abused rather than do without a multi-billion dollar cosmetic industry (only possible through unspeakable cruelty to animals), hundreds of different brands of wash detergent, or electric tooth brushes.

What the North calls development is now equated with waste. Massmedia glorify this waste - more cars, dishwashers, more paper, more cosmetics, more air-conditions, so that while they lead a good comfortable life, the climate can change, the ice can melt in the North and South Pole. It does not matter: as long as they can buy a new car every year. Indeed, their life would be much better if there were less people in the South taking away global resources.

CHANGES IN DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATIVE POLICY

There is an image today of a donor riding a bicycle and handing over a cheque to a voluntary agency in the South, who comes to collect it driven by driver in an air-conditioned car. All this in the name of the poor.

We must acknowledge differences between

- ▶ welfare and development
- ▶ professionalism and commercialism
- ▶ information vs. knowledge. It does not follow automatically that merely providing information will lead to knowledge.
- ▶ literacy vs. education

There is a need for a change of perception and expectation. This outdated concept of giving and taking has to go. Increasingly the concept of SHARING is gaining importance. Money has always destroyed relationships between the North and the South: sharing of experiences and skills does not need so much money, but it will lead to understanding. What does this approach mean?

- ▶ we have to treat and respect each other equally, and show it
- ▶ we have to show respect for each other's knowledge and skill. It would be dangerous to presume that anyone who has any paper qualification has the necessary practical experience to work in the South.
- ▶ we should be capable of learning, and unlearning, from each other
- ▶ sharing will promote a development strategy that will not encourage dependency, but inter-dependency, across borders which are more healthy on the long run
- ▶ it means believing in the flow of information and knowledge both ways, without either becoming a tool for exploitation
- ▶ it means promoting an openness that allows the economically, and socially, weaker to make choices.

The future lies in a policy that allows people to depend on each other at the community level. Today the strategies of governments in the South is to encourage total dependency on government services and systems through a monopolistic system where voluntary agencies have no role to play.

It is our job as grass root groups in the South to create an environment where communities can exercise their collective will, and right, to make their own choice.

It is no longer economically viable, nor socially acceptable, to support big projects with a gestation period over several years. This is particularly true when it concerns infrastructural development projects like roads, buildings, or conventional powergrid projects, because these have led to massive unemployment, displacement of communities from ancestral land, and encouraged migration to the cities. And concentrated jobs in urban areas, not in villages.

The bigger the project the less chances there are of innovation and flexibility to try new ideas.

DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION THROUGH NGOs

Definition:

Voluntary groups in the South do not want to be called NGOs. It is a very negative way of defining positive constructive action. Coined in the West under which label all sorts of groups seem to flourish and thrive, all NGO's are not voluntary in nature. Co-operatives, Trade Unions, Farmers' Unions are NGOs where the spirit of voluntarism is missing. Many of the NGO's are party politicised where the workers are highly paid and they work with a profit motive: voluntary groups are political, lead a simple life style and

work on a no profit, no loss, basis. NGOs raising money from the public (OXFAM, Christian Aid, NOVIB, ICCO etc.) cannot be put in the same category as grass root groups living a hand to mouth existence. The difference between a voluntary group and an NGO is that the former takes a living wage while the latter demands a market wage. It is in the interest of large NGOs to prevent grass root voluntary groups to acquire an identity of their own. Norwegian Development Cooperation policy must recognise, and acknowledge, the fundamental difference between these two categories of groups.

For the first time across the globe governments in the South have sent the following strong messages:

- that governments cannot tackle the vast problems of environment and development alone
- that no durable solution is possible without taking the communities into confidence and getting them involved in the decision-making process from the very beginning
- that communities have started looking for their own solutions without official support, personnel or resources. They have become impatient and they are not prepared to wait indefinitely
- that self respect and dignity in rural communities demand that they no longer be treated as recipients, but as equal partners. Communities are no longer prepared to take what is given to them without questioning
- that communities no longer consider village skills and knowledge to be second rate, primitive or irrelevant, and unless these skills are mobilised sustainable development will remain a dream.

Preservation and protection of the environment can only be achieved out of conflict. Just by observing the law of the land a potential conflict situation can be generated.

Only pressure from below can sustain pro-poor policies. That is why voluntary agencies are so important in the new scheme of things. Government has lost touch with their own people and there are other motivations that influence them to follow narrow-minded, short term, policies. Norwegian Development Cooperation has to legitimately open another window to receive feedback and information of what is happening with their aid on the ground. This can be done without sending experts from the North to be their eyes and ears: it should be done through voluntary groups in the North and the South.

FOLLOW-UP ACTION - NORWEGIAN DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION AND COLLABORATION WITH THE SOUTH

When I took over as Chairman of the Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI), I found I had 700 members in 90 countries to answer to and 70% of them were grass root groups in the South. What could we do for these small members battling to provide basic minimum need, reduce poverty levels in the villages they were working in, and protect, preserve, and improve the environment around them. With Brenda Mc Sweeney of the United Nations Volunteers we came up with a solution. After hours of discussion in Rio (with Miguel Sotto of Costa Rica) and in Geneva it was decided to follow up on the UNDP Kathmandu Declaration of giving birth to a new type of volunteer in the 90s, working in the field of conserving the environment - the ECO-VOLUNTEERS.

In November 1992, for the first time in the history of the ELCI and the UNV, a contract was signed to identify 100 Eco-Volunteers in ten countries: Philippines, India, Costa Rica, Poland, Zimbabwe, Fiji, Uganda, Tunisia, Uruguay, and Canada. There were many others "firsts".

It was first the time that UNV has sub-contracted an entire project to a southern environmental organisation, based in Nairobi, Kenya:

- that UNV through the ELCI is identifying a new type of volunteer working at the village level
- that successful grass-root models are being identified in these 10 countries which are already tackling the problems of basic minimum needs in their own way
- that a southern based environmental organisation has financially supported an eco-project in the North, in Canada, with funds from the UN system
- that member organisations of ELCI are being supported in the Pacific (Fiji) and East Europe

- (Poland), South America (Uruguay), and Central America (Costa Rica) that there is a vast potential to replicate the idea all over the globe because the idea is simple, and there is very little money involved (US \$ 50.000,- for 2 years for supporting 10 Eco-volunteers).

Why Eco-Volunteers?

- ▶ Because a new concept of voluntarism needs to be promoted in the 90s where the living wage is given more importance than the market wage.
- ▶ Because grass root work in the field of environment and development needs to be recognized, respected, and given due importance and place, in the whole planning process.
- ▶ Because the dependency of the community on governments and international agencies have to be reduced. Individuals behind successful models promoting sustainable development, and providing basic needs, have shown the way - these people need our support and recognition. Individuals with courage and conviction who provide simple, workable, and low-cost solutions must be our teachers. We must have the humility to learn from them.
- ▶ Because these Eco-Volunteers have shown the value of self respect and dignity that no training or University can teach you.
- ▶ Because policy makers the world over are looking for low-cost, community-based alternatives of working models. Ordinary people have shown a way of using local skills, village knowledge, and traditional wisdom. By setting an example of a simple life-style they have shown systems at work that books or degrees in Universities, cannot teach.

Who are the Eco-Volunteers?

1. They are individuals who have already proved a significant point. On their own they have thought of an innovative idea and made it work.
2. They are not fresh volunteers from outside. They are very experienced and have lived and worked for a decade or more in the area itself, studied the predicament and come up with a simple solution that has received community sanction.
3. They have already faced terrific opposition from vested interests and yet made the idea work. They are already leaders. They need no training.
4. They are individuals with great dignity, self-respect. The environmental problems their community is facing is more important than their own physical comforts. Many of them are convinced that solution does not lie in spending more money, but utilising the existing skills, and knowledge of, the people for their own development.

By June 1993 100 Eco-Volunteers in 10 countries will be identified. The project through the UNV is for 2 years.

Code of Environmental Ethics and Conduct

In November 1992 the first meeting was organised by the Canadian Environmental Network (over 2.000 groups all over Canada) to meet officially with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and explore possibilities of working together. As Chairman of the ELCI I was asked to deliver the keynote address.

I mentioned the need to develop together a Code of Environmental Ethics and Conduct, where Northern and Southern groups, along with CIDA, sit and draft a code: where the development of poor and marginalised communities, and the improvement of their quality of life, was the first consideration, where technologies, raw materials, products, and appliances rejected in the North should not be exported to the South. Further I mentioned the need for environmental groups to be in a position to monitor what was being sent or received, where it was no longer a question of giving and taking, but the key-world was sharing with respect, equality, and dignity.

It was received with great enthusiasm by representatives of 2000 environmental groups in Canada as well as by the policy makers of CIDA.

The time has come to draft, and approve a Code of Environmental Ethics and Conduct. Under the Norwegian Development Co-operation Programme in the 90s, the government should begin a dialogue with environmental groups in Norway in touch with the South, to agree on an acceptable code that will minimise environmental abuses in the South and allow public monitoring of the impact of these aid projects.

**COMMENT ON REPORT NO 51, 1991-1992
TRENDS IN NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS AND
NORWAY'S COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

by

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The Norwegian Government must be congratulated for the forthright report it has produced on North-South relations and the role of Norway in promoting global harmony. Norway has been known for its active solidarity with developing countries on international issues and for its high development aid budget. It may be useful to point out that the Norwegian Government has often behaved like an NGO in the community of world governments, espousing causes like social justice, global harmony, and equality.

Not surprisingly, the above White Paper submitted to the Storting (National Assembly) rightly acknowledges the following facts:

1. Even though there has been a dramatic increase in global wealth, the gap between the North and the South has increased dramatically.
2. While the importance of commodities has declined in the world economy in comparison to other goods and services, there are numerous developing countries which remain heavily dependent on income from commodity exports.
3. The 1980s saw declining terms of trade, a clear increase in protectionism by the North, and partly as a consequence, rising debt. In the period 1984-88, there was a net flow of capital from the developing countries to the industrialised countries.
4. At the same time, there has been a steady trend towards the internationalisation of the world economy. Some of this internationalisation, or globalisation, has taken place under duress because of IMF policies in debtor nations advocating increasing openness to international competition, and improved export performance.
5. Environment problems have simultaneously grown -- the report could have added that they have grown with remarkable speed. They have definitely been shown to be far more serious than most people imagined. But the speed with which they have grown can be understood by the fact that problems like global warming, or ozone layer depletion, were not even mentioned at the Stockholm conference in 1972.

OUTDATED FRAMEWORK

While there can be nothing but praise for the report's extremely sensitive, and sympathetic, analysis of the problems faced by the South, it is however weak and relatively backward-looking in its prescriptions. Part of the problem, it must be admitted, is the fact that the South itself has not presented a cogent

prescription, and continues to insist on solutions posed in the 1970s, whereas the nature of the world economy, and polity, has changed dramatically. In other words, we are still applying decades-old concepts to deal with problems that will take us into the next century.

The report points out, for instance: *"The international community is facing important choices of direction in the near future. If the poor countries are to succeed in meeting the serious political and economic challenges facing them, the rich countries will have to make a contribution in the form of improved terms of transfer, large transfers of private capital, larger transfers of development aid, and debt relief for those countries that need it."*

The problem with this kind of statement is that it views the problem of North-South economic relations and the support that the North should give, far too much within an aid and charity framework. The basic trouble with an aid and charity framework is that it is adhoc, whimsical (because it is based on the whims of the donor), and dependency-creating.

It is also unfair to pose it as a solution because it does not address the root-cause of the problems.

Let us take the most important statement in the report: *"Poverty and environmental degradation are perhaps the greatest challenges facing the world today"*.

What do these problems arise out of? Not the fact that there is not enough aid. True, more of it can play an ameliorative role, but it does not stop the problem from emerging because root-causes have not been addressed. Poverty in the South does not arise only because of its economic relations with the North. Elitist governments in the South have consistently failed to take strong steps against the maldistribution of income and land resources that exists within their own populations. However, international economic relations have equally consistently devalued the labour, natural resources, and goods, and services of the South, seriously depressing its incomes. Let us take the case of the IMF and the implications of its policy prescriptions to debtor nations which are asked to undergo a process of structural adjustment. To increase international competitiveness of their exports, countries are recommended to devalue their currency. But what does this mean? Not the devaluation of some pieces of paper called currency notes. It means the devaluation of the country's labour, skills, knowledge, and natural resources in the world market. And devaluation has been a major instrument used by the developing world to gain, or to maintain, access to the markets in the North. This policy carries at its heart the engendering of poverty and maldistribution of incomes, both nationally and internationally.

What about the question of environmental degradation? These problems also arise because we do not ensure that market prices incorporate, and internalise, the ecological costs of our production and consumption. Industrialised countries produce numerous manufactured products and are increasingly setting up environmental management and pollution control facilities, and are internalising these costs. Therefore, we pay, if not the full, but at least the partial, ecological cost of producing the computer that we are typing this comment on. But developing countries produce a variety of commodities that are land-, water-, and forest based, - namely, tea, coffee, chocolates, peanuts, pineapples, bananas, beef, shrimps, and timber. However there is no international policy to ensure that ecological costs of consuming these products are incorporated in their market prices, which will provide considerable incomes to governments of the South to move towards better income distribution and environmental management.

Similarly, let us take the case of global warming. The problem has occurred because we have not been prepared to pay for the use of the atmosphere for dumping our gaseous wastes into it. But if we have to pay for the use of the atmosphere, we will have to first set up a system of property rights in the atmosphere. Even the World Bank admits that if one should pay only US \$ 25 per ton of carbon emitted, the North would have to pay the South US \$ 70 billion every year. But what does the latest aid mechanism in the environmental field, namely, the Global Environment Facility offer? Not even US \$ 5 billion.

Not surprisingly, UNCED was a disaster and the South so sullen. We cannot have the IMF and the international economy consistently devaluing our natural resources, our knowledge of biodiversity, our

rights to the global commons etc., while UNCED is trying to tell us that we must value our natural resources, our knowledge of biodiversity etc. UNCED was truly an unacceptable sham. There was no debate whatsoever on how to change the global economic processes so that the rich would no longer get a free lunch, but would be forced to pay the full ecological costs of their consumption. It would have been right for the North to argue, as the above report does, that the rich are not just in the North, and therefore such measures must apply in full and equal measure to the rich of the South. But given the fact that most of the world's rich are in the North, they would clearly have to take the lead in setting up such mechanisms. Without their co-operation, the economically less powerful South can do precious little.

GLOBALISED MARKETS

Why is the above discussion critical for our understanding?

Because any effort to bypass these weaknesses of the world market system, and the conditionalities imposed by the world financial system, would not just be a sham, but also because in a world economy dominated by the market any other solution would not touch the root-causes of poverty and environmental degradation, and would therefore be impractical or ineffective. This is especially true in the 1990s because now all of us who are rich, whether in the North or the South, are global consumers of ecological resources. And all our goods and services come to us through the world market system, which is becoming increasingly integrated. We can create a world in which some will be rich and the rest poor and marginalised, not because they don't work or don't contribute their knowledge or natural resources to the world economy, but because their contributions are systematically devalued by the world market. And if that be the key global reality then we must move towards a socialisation, and environmentalisation, of the world market, not through aid and charity but through interventions in the very functioning of the world market to change it sufficiently so that it works for the global human good.

DYING AID

It is quite possible that the Norwegian policy may remain honest and steadfast to its aid levels, and for which it must be lauded and appreciated, but there is no guarantee whatsoever that other industrialised countries, including the richest of them all, USA, will remain so. It is my firm conviction that aid is now a dying phenomenon. There were three key reasons for aid:

- A) to use it as a lever against the influence of the erstwhile Soviet Union
- B) to use it as lever to promote Western goods and manufactures in countries following self-reliance as a goal, through mechanisms like tied aid
- C) to help developing countries get out of the economic mess created by colonialism, and,
- D) to help the poor.

Different countries had a different mix of objectives when they gave aid. But it is clear that the first three objectives have now disappeared or are very remote. The Soviet Union no longer exists. The debts of the 1970s forced developing countries towards greater global market integration in the 1980s and hence tied aid is no longer as necessary to sell manufactures in the South. And colonialism is now too far in the past. So now the only real need for aid arises out of the goodness of the heart and out of values like social justice.

Norway has always exhibited its solidarity and goodwill towards the South, but I am not at all convinced that this will be the case with many other countries where economic and political self-interest was the key reason for aid. The South should also recognise this as fast as it can and give up its demand for additional aid at every opportunity.

If financial transfer will not come through aid then how can it come about? This is the biggest challenge facing humanity and Norway's North-South policy! What do we replace aid with? This obviously calls for a new vision.

The answer will lie in the nature of world economic relations on which we want to build and construct. If these relations are going to be built around the market, then interventions into the market to socialise it are essential and the only key to the solution. The market can't make the South lose probably US \$ 50 billion every year through financial transfers, losses of markets because of protectionism, brain drain, losses due to declining terms of trade, ecological costs of commodity production etc. while some pittance of US \$ 50 billion flows in as aid. Financial flows to the South should come through the socialisation of the market and automatic transfers so that social and ecological costs are incorporated in product prices. And through the commodification of the atmosphere and other global commons, and equitable property rights to them.

We dislike the idea of commodifying the atmosphere, but if the market is going to commodify everything, including the human being, then everything must be commodified. Not doing so amounts to cheating the South out of what is rightfully its share of the world's environment.

GLOBAL DEMOCRACY

The second major step that Norway must consider for its future North-South relations is the promotion of democracy. The above report states that areas like democracy and good governance, which were considered interventionist in the 1970s, came to be discussed in the 1980s. This is not surprising. Globalisation of the world market, and the simultaneous growth of communications technology, is making us global consumers and people with a global consciousness. Therefore, Germans feel bad, and rightly so, when they hear that carpets they buy from India are made from child labour.

But this globalisation is restricted to the world economy and not to world politics. World markets and world environmental problems can be controlled only if we are all world citizens and there is global democracy. But this an area where we are refusing to move in, especially the North. If Bangladesh today abuses human rights domestically, Norway may, and rightly so, cut off its aid to the country. But in reverse, if Bangladesh feels that Norway's high carbon emissions are threatening the country's future through global warming and drowning in the sea, then there is no economic, or political, lever it has to tame Norway. It is obvious that in the market system, the relatively poor citizens can control the excesses of the relatively rich citizens only through their political rights and that is what democracy is all about. Global problems are arising because we increasingly have a global market consumption pattern but no global democracy.

AID FOR THE POOR

Is there then no role for aid? Yes, there is. As it has always been through human history. As a matter of charity towards the poor coming out of the goodness of the heart. However, since the 1950s there was this crazy idea, promoted by the World Bank and "growth economists", that the poor can best be helped through project aid so that economic growth will reduce poverty. This entire process promoted a trickle down, which didn't take place at all, or was far too slow, and most of the money went to the more calculating and capable middle- and upper classes. Meanwhile, at the roots, the market devalued human labour and environment, and where this process was at its worst, created the maximum deprivation, famine, and economic distress.

Therefore, if aid has to be given, then it must be given in a way that goes directly to the poor rural communities to meet their needs today. It is possible to develop an international work programme which ensures daily wage for the poorest of the poor during periods of economic distress, while work is concentrated on the building up of the devastated natural capital so that sustainable livelihoods become possible tomorrow. In this way, the world will set a floor to poverty here and now, nobody will have to go to bed hungry without waiting for the growth economists to show their miracles.

If the North has the courage, then like a community of civilised nations, it will make this money available

to the poor through an international income tax on the world's rich so that, in an integrated world economy, the rich consider it a legal obligation to support the poor, like all civilised market economy countries do.

A final word. All these comments amount to an altogether different vision than the one presented in the above report. However, I can't think of a country, other than Norway, which will more appreciate the ideas exposed above. Which country has tried to socialise its market more? Which country has shown more solidarity and supported concepts of social justice in the international arena?

It is critical to recognise that Norway alone cannot change the North, let alone the world. But, all the more so, Norway must continue to play the role it has always played: that of an NGO in the world stage of governments. It must be the voice for change, for social justice, for the internationalisation of what we always try to externalise.

The sentiments in the report under review are most laudable. However, the framework of relations which tries to create is outmoded and archaic. We in the South don't want a penny more than what we truly contribute to the world economy and what is our rightful share of to the world's environment. This is the only just, proud and sustainable way to live.

COMMENTS ON THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT REPORT 51 ON TRENDS IN NORTH/SOUTH RELATIONS

by

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This is an interesting and serious document that traces the historical trend in North/South relations and then locates Norwegian aid policy for the rest of the 1990s. It is however not clear to the reader what are the actual policies for the current year or for the next one or two years in terms of the level of aid and where this will go. Thus it is not possible to comment whether the policy in this paper is being put into actual practice in current aid policy.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The document makes it very clear that the top priority in future aid policy will be "sustainable development". Indeed it may well become the new conditionality, together with human rights. It is still not clear however, what environmental sustainability will mean in practical terms. Especially in the interface between environmental problems and social structures, I would stress the need for access to land or to land reform to accompany sustainable agriculture or to reduce the pressures on the forests. Even more important, sustainable development for the world entails changes in Northern consumption and production. This being much more important than changes in development patterns in the South. The document agrees with this on page 9 para 2; "*Sustainable global development requires those in the North to adapt their patterns of production and consumption...*" How will this be put into practice, as this requires massive structural adjustment in the North?

There is a tremendous need for policy coherence in Norway. This is partly recognised on page 20 para 3; "The government wishes to ensure that Norway follows a coherent North/South policy where our efforts in various North/South related areas... and our development cooperation are coordinated..." This is good, but, should also be extended to coherence between Norway's North/South relations and internal Norway economic policies relating to altering domestic production and consumption patterns. If the South is to change models, the North and Norway must simultaneously change. And there must be coherence between the two sets of change, so that Norwegian change would not impact negatively on the South. This is a challenge that Norwegian policy makers also will have to address.

The document gives the impression that Norway has been a champion of the South in its efforts to reform the global economic environment in the past and up to now. The paper indeed carries many good analyses, of for example the debt crisis (p. 10.11) and shows Norway's role supporting the need for international reforms e.g. debt relief measures etc. Norway does enjoy a good reputation until now for being one of the more sympathetic among Northern countries in terms of attitude to the South.

NORWAY ADAPTING TO REALITIES - OR AN AGENT FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE?

However, the document seems to take position that we have to accept political realities, and adapt to them, rather than continuing to ask for fundamental changes in international economic relations. This pragmatic approach would in effect mean giving up the advocacy for changes which are needed even more today. The paper on page 15-16, traces the history of the NIEO and states (p. 16 para 2) that although the need remains for a coherent approach to Third World problems, a negotiated solution (as being sought in the NIEO period) is shown to be unworkable. But even in reading the paper, it is clear that the weaknesses were not caused by incorrect demands, but by a real lack of political will on the part of the North for pro-South reforms. The NIEO concerns and demands are still valid - or even more so - today. With political changes in the North (e.g. the loss of power of Mrs. Thatcher and Reagan-Bush, who were responsible for stopping the North/South dialogue) and with increased awareness of interdependence due to the environment crisis, there might be better ground for renewed North/South co-operation on trade, technology transfer, commodities, debt relief etc. Norway, having subscribed to the NIEO principles, although not in practice, should lead that advocacy among Northern countries. Norway should call for fundamental reforms, and not merely take a pragmatic approach.

AID AND TRADE

The same criticism applies to the paper's approach on commodity agreements (p. 16, p. 24). The agreements, and especially the Common Fund for commodities, have failed mainly because of the lack of Northern political will. This is a major reason for the decline in commodity prices and the South's terms of trade. The document says; "*With the high degree of market orientation now prevalent in most countries, it is unlikely that new commodity agreements will be negotiated...*" (p. 24). This situation should not be accepted. Instead Norway should take the lead in the North to rebuild the political will to make commodity agreements and the Common Fund work. Without consumer-producer agreements, with rationalisation of supply and prices to reflect social and ecological values, how can the South solve the commodity crisis, and how can we ensure environmental sustainability of resources from where the commodities are extracted and exported? Norway should not passively accept that the age of commodity agreements is over, but convince its Northern colleagues that a new round of agreements, this time also taking into account global environmental needs, is essential.

The issue of structural adjustment conditionalities in debt rescheduling and new loans to the South is not adequately dealt with in the paper. The document does comment in a number of places, that structural adjustment did lead to negative social effects. But, it seems to accept that these were somehow needed, given the overriding objective of restoring financial balance in the structural adjustment policy. The paper assumes that structural adjustment worked. In fact, many countries suffered the ill effects of adjustment. Their economies did not improve, and they are still as much, or even more, indebted. The document lacks a serious treatment of the merits and demerits of adjustment policies, without which many Southern countries will continue to be trapped in debt and poverty. Since, as the paper argues, a large part of the South's debt problem was caused by international factors beyond its control, such as falling commodity prices and high interest rates, debt relief must be the central method out of the crisis, accompanied by more sympathetic measures than those advocated under structural adjustment. As a multilateral donor, Norway should press this point more effectively.

As stated earlier, it is commendable that the paper recognises the need for policy coherence between development co-operation and other North/South policies, such as macro economic conditions, debt, trade, commodities, and environment (p. 20 of document). Indeed, aid is actually minor in comparison to trade, debt, and overall resource flows. It is the unbalanced nature of the world economy, that results in the massive South to North flow of resources which runs to \$ 200-300 billion a year if one includes losses in income due to terms of trade decline. The document implies that Norway will do its best in terms of providing better market access to developing country products, in terms of debt relief and in terms of helping to bring about a better commodity situation. It is true that Norway is only a small country, but

it should unite with like-minded countries of the North in this regard, create an effective caucus, and push hard for a renewal of Northern political will to redress international economic imbalances. Otherwise the North/South impasse will remain, and this will have serious negative consequences for the partnership required to resolve global ecology problems.

Whilst aid is only a part of the North/South scene, it is still an important part, especially since global reforms are so difficult to bring about. Whilst it is important to improve significantly the quality of aid, it is also important for Norway to maintain, or even increase, both aid quantum, but also the percentage of aid in the GNP. This was agreed to in Rio during the 1992 Earth Summit. Many Northern countries have failed to put into practice what they promised. Norway, being an aid leader in the North, must not fail in this regard. It would mean sending out the wrong signal, and it would have negative effects on North/South environmental relations.

The document makes only fleeting reference to the Uruguay Round, especially on the "new issues". It mentions that Norway will make efforts to introduce interim measures to safeguard the interests of developing countries in services, investment and intellectual property. This is a crucial point, and very inadequately addressed. Developing countries are concerned that their services sectors may be overwhelmed when liberalisation measures are introduced, for instance in financial services. Even more, the intellectual property rights regimes in TRIPs would make it very difficult for developing countries to develop their own technologies. The Round, if it incorporates Northern proposals in the new areas, may make the South even more dependent, and thus render sustainable development more difficult. Norway should review its position on the Round, taking into account developing country interests as top priority. This is an area where there may be conflicting interests between the Ministry of Development and the Ministry of Commerce. Where the two interests conflict (ie between the narrow commercial interests of Norway and the wider global interests where it affects the developing world) show how committed Norway truly is to the interests of developing countries and to global sustainability.

BUSINESS IN AID

The role of business in aid is an important and controversial one. On page 27, the document states that the main thrust of Norway's aid will continue to be untied grants, but that special assistance will be given to business, trade and industry, which "diverges from the principle of untied assistance." This kind of aid to business should be elaborated and debated further. If aid or North/South relations in other respects become subordinated to Norwegian commercial interests, then the partnership relation becomes distorted and therefore subject to cynicism. Such a move should therefore be considered with much caution.

The document (on p. 28) recognises the danger that preoccupation with Eastern Europe may divert aid and other preferential treatment away from the South. This is a real concern for the South. It is not clear from the paper what Norway's actual practical policy is.

It appears that the number of countries to be considered eligible for aid will be reduced (p. 33). For instance India and Pakistan are to be removed in 1995 and Uganda included. On what basis are decisions taken on which country to include and exclude?

The document also makes it clear that human rights and democracy are increasingly to be conditionalities for future aid. This relationship between aid and human rights/democracy should be treated with caution. There is a danger that human rights is being used more as a trade or economic weapon than as a principle being promoted in its own right. Moreover there are different definitions of democracy and different categories of human rights. The paper rightly points out that opening developing countries up to Western cultural influences has some negative consequences. If a developing country government take measures to control such opening up culturally, is it suppressing or promoting the rights of its citizens? Ambiguities like this abound in this area, and Norway would do well to clarify the whole relation and conditionality between democracy, human rights, aid and trade.

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Statement to the Press

SONED
Southern Networks for Development
response to the Norwegian Government White Paper
on North/South relations and development co-operation

SPLIT VISION

Oslo May 25, 1993

by
Tamara Kunanyakam,
on behalf of SONED,

Norway has been in the forefront of the international movement for sustainable development, and the Norwegian government has taken many positive positions in favour of disarmament, human rights, and global harmony. Norway's generosity in development aid is unequalled, and through its Report on *Trends in North-South Relations and Norway's Cooperation with Developing Countries*, it shows its intention to continue playing a constructive role in world affairs.

The Report has many interesting and positive aspects. Nevertheless, SONED would like to point out what it considers the Report's weaknesses in the hope that the Norwegian government will re-align its policies in a way that will point the world community in the direction of genuine solutions to the global economic and environmental crisis.

The Report's emphasis on the need for sustainable development correctly identifies present patterns of economic growth as threatening environmental devastation and the very existence of future generations. Its prescription as to how a sustainable world order should be created from the suicidal course we are presently on, however, does not clearly

identify the essential elements of sustainability, nor does it come out strongly in favour of the fundamental structural changes that will have to be made in order to bring it about.

In SONED's view, poverty, environmental deterioration, rising unemployment, migration, ethnic conflict, racism, xenophobia, fundamentalism, social upheaval, deteriorating health, decline in the quality of life and other problems in both North and South touched upon in the Report are guaranteed to worsen unless the real causes of these problems are understood and redressed.

The causes lie in a global economic system characterized by unequal distribution of, access to, and control over land, income, labour, natural resources, and technology as a result of which hundreds of millions of the world's people, mainly in the South, go hungry while the consumption patterns of a small minority, mainly in the North, overtaxes the planet's resources.(1) Without attacking these disparities, there is no hope for genuine change. Change can only come from cancellation of the foreign debt of developing countries, the payment of fair prices for commodities, improvement in terms of trade, an end to Northern protectionism, and especially through the strengthening of domestic economies. If a country is capable of generating capital internally, it would not need foreign aid, loans, or investment.

Norwegian policy on debt cancellation is a step in the right direction; but its acceptance of and support for structural adjustment policies shows ignorance of or lack of sensibility to the degree of human suffering, environmental deterioration, and economic catastrophe caused by the policies of the G-7, the World Bank and the IMF. Support for structural adjustment shows lack of recognition of the explosive implications of the continuing transfer of Southern resources to the North.

In a sustainable global system, resources would be used to satisfy the basic needs of all people. This would require, first and foremost, the development of domestic economies. It would call for an emphasis on the production of mass consumer goods (food, clothing, shelter, and basic necessities) rather than luxury items such as cars, electrical appliances, and other things that only the rich can afford; land reform; and priority to subsistence agriculture rather than cash crops for export as demanded by the international financial institutions' current so-called development model. It would involve helping local people to develop local resources, technology, skills, and knowledge. This is in contradiction to the Report's call for the export of Norwegian experts and technology. Northern technology has been developed to suit Northern conditions. It is capital-intensive and geared to the production of luxury goods. The South needs a completely different approach.

For genuine sustainable development to take place, democracy is essential. While the definition of this term is usually limited to multi-party political systems and adherence to privatization and the 'free market' (which is not free), SONED takes it to include socio-economic democratization. This means a redistribution of wealth, land, and control over resources. It means that people have a say in decisions concerning

what is produced, for whom, with whose resources, at what cost to human beings and the environment, and for whose profit. The attempt to tie aid to 'democracy', 'human rights', renunciation of child labour, or a country's implementation of structural adjustment is meaningless as long as countries are forced to carry out structural adjustment programmes, privatization, de-regulation, liberalization and acceptance of foreign investment. These policies result in the violation of human rights - to education, health, housing, work, and development. They cause damage to the health of workers, they damage the environment, and they force families to send their children out to work.

Changing these policies requires concerted international action on the part of peoples, governments, intergovernmental organizations, and the United Nations system. In this connection, the restructuring of the UN Secretariat that has occurred since the Nordic UN Project was completed should be cause for alarm. The social and economic development aspects of UN work have been downgraded and some functions are being turned over to the World Bank, the IMF, and GATT which are not founded on the democratic basis on which the UN is built. The downgrading of the Department on Disarmament Affairs, in whose creation Norway was instrumental, is a further cause for alarm. Norway should use its considerable weight and prestige to ensure that the UN concentrate on attacking the structural causes of global problems rather than focusing on crisis management or direct military intervention.

Cooperation for development requires a North-South alliance that recognizes the interdependent nature of the problems and collective responsibility for solving them. We expect Norway to take the lead in advocacy and in forging such an alliance as well as committing resources to promoting and facilitating South-South cooperation at the level of people and of States. The Norwegian government should push for the political will needed to result in policy changes both in bilateral relations with individual developing countries, in the multilateral financial, development and aid institutions, and in the EEC.

Norway was instrumental in forging the consensus on the need for a New International Economic Order. The concept of international economic order based on equity, cooperation, and justice are more valid today than ever. SONED urges Norway to lead in the advocacy that will be necessary for the transformation to genuine sustainable development.

(1) See papers by Martin Khor and Sibusiso Bengu