

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

(Session of a special character -

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Statement by

DR. KARL-HEINZ NARJES,

Member of the Commission of the European Communities

in charge of Environment Matters

On behalf of the European Economic Community.

Mr. President,

1. May I first of all, on behalf of the European Economic Community, warmly congratulate you on your election as President of this Session of a Special Character. May I also extend my congratulations to the Vice Presidents on their election. I would also like to express at the outset my appreciation to our hosts, the distinguished representatives from the Government of Kenya, for their gracious hospitality and facilities provided for this meeting.

2. The European Economic Community joins with all those other delegations who have underlined the significance of this auspicious occasion. It is an occasion which provides both an opportunity and a challenge to this distinguished assembly of people representing the world community of nations :
 - It is an opportunity to take stock of the situation facing the world community, to feel the pulse and test the health of this planet and to determine the issues requiring urgent attention and vigorous action;

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- and it is a challenge, which is addressed to all of us, to uphold the 1972 Stockholm Declaration and undertake renewed efforts to ensure that the earth is maintained as a place suitable for human life not only now, but also for future generations.

3. It is appropriate for us to recall the commitments entered into at the Stockholm Conference held ten years ago where the Plan of Action was adopted, a Plan which provided the inspiration for action on an international level in the ensuing decade and set the basis for the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme. The Stockholm Conference was the culmination of a major effort on the part of many nations and committed individuals inspired by the rallying call of Barbara Ward and René Dubos for "the care and maintenance of a small planet" .
4. It was this same determination to undertake a concerted effort, which provided the impetus for the heads of state and governments of the Member States of the European Community assembled in Paris in 1972 to adopt a specific resolution on the environment. This was followed by the adoption of the first Action Programme of the European

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Community in the field of the environment.

5. The years that followed saw an impressive number of achievements which it is fitting to recall briefly at this stage.

Based on the pursuit of two guiding objectives - on the one hand, proper management of natural resources, economic assets of increasing importance, which are the common CONCERN of humanity present and future, and on the other hand, to introduce concern for quality into the conception and organisation of economic and social development, the European Community achieved some significant results, not least in the adoption of some sixty legislative measures covering reduction of air pollution, water pollution, waste and the protection of the environment, land and natural resources. And in the process there has been a steady evolution of thought - a growing recognition of the importance (in both economic and environmental terms) of preventive policies; there is now no doubt that, in the long term, prevention is more efficient and less costly than cure. These developments are all the more significant when one takes into account the unique nature, both from the point of view of decision-making and continuous development,

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7. But, Mr. President, as we stand on the threshold of the future, we cannot afford the luxury of merely contemplating the successes of the past. There are many urgent and pressing problems which require our attention. Some of these, such as desertification, while identified as requiring action as early as 1972, have worsened. Others, such as transport and disposal of hazardous wastes have emerged as major phenomena endangering the health and very lives of citizens, and thus requiring urgent attention on a global level.

8. With the pressures to which our environment is being subjected continuing to increase, and each day bringing with it new problems, new challenges, we must acknowledge that, despite all that has been done (and it is a great deal) we are still faced with a worsening situation. We must accept that - whether because of lack of political will or lack of resources or because they have been daunted by the very complexity of the task - governments have not yet shown sufficient determination to embark on renewed and vigorous action. It is a regrettable fact that, given the urgency, scope and global importance of the challenges before us, the efforts now underway around the

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world fall far short of what is needed. We must all pledge ourselves to do better in the decade to come.

9. As is so aptly described in the World Conservation Strategy, whose publication it must be said has done so much to focus world attention on the global issues confronting us, there are two underlying themes which characterise this period of constant movement and change :
- the first is the almost limitless capacity of human beings for building and creation, matched by equally great powers of destruction. The escalating needs of soaring numbers have often driven people to take a short-sighted approach when exploiting natural resources with devastating consequences;
 - the second is the global inter-relatedness of actions, with its corollary of global responsibility. The planet has shrunk to a neighbourhood; it is a community which has become so interdependent that even mistakes when they occur are exaggerated on a world scale.

10. Let us pause for a moment and reflect on some of these threats to the global environment and major problems

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requiring urgent attention and renewed commitments in the forthcoming decade.

11. As many reports and studies, such as Global 2000, have highlighted, environmental, resource and population stresses are intensifying and will increasingly determine the quality of human life on our planet. Latest estimates suggest that, by the year 2000, the world's population is likely to exceed 6 billion (with nearly 5 billion people just in the developing countries and over 1/2 of them crowded into cities). This is a challenge that we must all take up. A slow-down in population growth must surely be seen as a fundamental environmental concern.

12. Many of the environmental problems of global concern are concentrated in developing countries. With the high cost of oil and other energy supplies for example, many developing countries will have increasing difficulties meeting energy needs. For the one-quarter of human-kind that depends primarily on wood for fuel, the outlook is nothing but bleak, since needs for fuelwood will exceed available supplies by about 25% before the end of the century.

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Partly because of this growing need for firewood, partly to serve the demands of the developed world, and partly to create new agricultural land to feed the multitudes, forests in the third world are being cut down ten times faster than new ones are being planted. As a result, planet earth has lost about a quarter of its closed-canopy forests over the last 20 years.

13. Population increases will place great stress on world food supply. It is estimated that although food production may expand ninety percent by the year 2000, the increase will be less than fifteen percent on a per capita basis; and this is not sufficient to eradicate starvation. Of particular concern here will be the ability to improve world agricultural yields in the face of pressures leading to degradation of agricultural soil and water resources and the conversion of some of the best cropland to other uses.
14. With the loss of one species per day, it is estimated that as many as twenty percent of the species of plants and animals now inhabiting the earth could be extinct by the end of the century.

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15. Meanwhile the burning of fossil fuels is already causing damaging increases in the acidity of rain with alarming consequences for soil, vegetation and the aquatic environment in developed countries. It is also causing a rise in the concentration of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere with global implications. Protection of the ozone layer and the reduction of marine pollution - both fields in which UNEP is already active - are also matters of global concern. At the same time, while human beings benefit greatly from the advances of science, careless use of pesticides and other toxic substances and the haphazard disposal of by-products and waste from chemical and energy processes pose fundamental dangers and adversely affect every aspect of the earth's ecosystems and resource base, and ultimately mankind itself.

Mr. President,

16. Faced with this situation, our response must, indeed it can only be, both immediate and resolute.

The documents, including the plan of action, presented to us for adoption at this Session of a Special Character, give a brief insight on the way forward and the nature of this response which we must undertake.

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ALLOW ME TO POINT ⁹ TO A NUMBER OF KEY PRINCIPLES WHICH WE IN THE COMMUNITY CONSIDER AS CRUCIAL, AND ON WHICH THE COMMISSION HAS PUT THE MAIN THRUST OF THE COMMUNITY'S PROPOSED FUTURE THIRD ACTION PROGRAMME IN THE FIELD OF THE ENVIRONMENT TO COVER THE YEARS 1982 - 1987.

17. IT IS CLEAR THAT ALL COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD ARE FACED WITH SERIOUS ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES, AND THAT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES ARE INCREASINGLY UNDER ATTACK. THE FIRST POINT I WISH TO STRESS IS THAT, IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, WE HAVE RECOGNISED THAT ENVIRONMENT POLICY IS A STRUCTURAL POLICY WHICH MUST BE CARRIED FORWARD STEADILY WITHOUT REGARD TO THE SHORT TERM FLUCTUATIONS IN CYCLICAL CONDITIONS, IN ORDER TO PREVENT DEGRADATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND TO ENSURE THAT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL IS NOT SACRIFICED. IT SIMPLY DOES NOT MAKE SENSE IF WE ALLOW ESSENTIAL LONG-TERM ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES TO SUFFER OR BE IMPEDED BECAUSE OF SHORT-TERM FLUCTUATIONS, OR IF WE CUT CORNERS IN ORDER TO MAKE SMALL SAVINGS NOW, ONLY TO BE FACED WITH MASSIVE REPAIR COSTS LATER. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MUST BE SEEN AS SIMPLY PART AND PARCEL OF GOOD MANAGEMENT IN EVERY FIELD OF HUMAN ACTIVITY MOREOVER AS..

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has repeatedl clear, public opinion itself is still very concerned about environmental matters and despite economic difficulties, continues to support measures to protect the environment.

In the socio-economic context of the 1980's, environmental action must also take account of the major problems such as unemployment, inflation, regional disparities, etc.; and must be seen to contribute to solving many of these major problems. There is no doubt that this can be done - e.g. by stimulating the development of new and clean technologies and thus leading to the creation of employment in new industries producing goods and services designed to be resources- conserving or less polluting. In this and other ways environmental policies can make a real contribution to innovation - and to the evolution of the industries of the future.

18. Secondly, in seeking ways of addressing the global challenge, a guiding principle is the urgent need for the promotion of sustainable economic development. Only a concerted attack on the socio-economic roots of extreme poverty, one that provides people with the opportunity to earn a decent livelihood in a non-destructive manner, will permit protection of the world's natural systems. Nor will development and economic reforms have lasting success unless they are suffused with concern for ecological stability and wise

management of resources. Thus economic development if it is to be successful over the long term, must proceed in a way that protects the natural resource base of all nations, and in particular the developing nations. Ways must be found of ensuring that the free operation of competitive and market forces will orient themselves in such a way as to ensure that the environmental imperatives are respected. In many cases the necessary data is available. What we need to do is to redesign the data framework - the economic parameters - within which the market operates, so as to ensure the sound management of natural resources. This will not be easy - involving for example, the introduction of qualitative considerations into the planning and organisation of economic and social development. But it must be done. Just as we must press ahead also with the development and implementation of low and non-waste technologies as well as the technical means to recover, recycle and re-use wastes and secondary materials - all matters of crucial significance to the developed and the developing world alike.

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19. POLICIES SUCH AS THOSE PROPOSED BY THE WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY HAVE POINTED THE WAY FORWARD IN PROMOTING SUCH AN INTEGRATED APPROACH AND IN EMPHASISING THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BASED ON SOUND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT.

MANY OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD CONSERVATION STRATEGY, WHICH WAS ENDORSED BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN A RESOLUTION ADOPTED IN MAY 1980, AND BY THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES HAVE PROVIDED THE INSPIRATION FOR THE MAIN THRUSTS OF THE PROPOSED THIRD ACTION PROGRAMME OF THE COMMUNITY. THE COMMISSION AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SEEK TO INTEGRATE CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT INTO THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MAIN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES AND THUS PROMOTE THE CREATION OF AN OVERALL STRATEGY MAKING ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY A PART OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. THIS SHOULD HENCEFORTH RESULT IN A GREATER AWARENESS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION, NOTABLY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE, ENERGY, INDUSTRY AND OTHER POLICIES OF THE COMMUNITY.

20. THESE ARE SOME OF THE PRINCIPLES WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE THE IMPETUS FOR ACTION WITHIN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

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in the forthcoming decade. Indeed it has already undertaken a number of significant steps in several areas.

21. One of these is the environmental dimension of the Community's development policies. We in the Community were privileged to host only last month in Brussels the third meeting of the Committee of International Development Institutions for the Environment. This meeting, which was attended by the signatories to the Declaration of Principles on Environmental Management Policies and Procedures relating to economic development as well as by representatives from several bilateral aid agencies, highlighted the significant role which the Community is called upon to play in this area through the unique relationship it has developed with so many African, Caribbean and Pacific nations under the Lomé Convention. It was also the occasion for the Commission of the European Communities to adopt a major policy statement on environment and development in which it proposed, within the framework of future development cooperation negotiations with the ACP and other partner states, to lay particular emphasis on the following environmental aspects of development aid :

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- The conservation and sustainable utilisation of natural resources.
- The support of those development actions that are most adapted to the natural and cultural heritage of the peoples concerned.
- The preservation of those species and ecosystems that are most vulnerable both to human and to climatic disturbance (deserts, tropical forests, etc.).
- The creation of training, education and information programmes to assist developing countries to define their own priorities and actions in this area.
- The promotion of low energy-consuming technologies.

During the meeting in Brussels the signatories to the Declaration of principles, as well as the representatives of the bilateral aid agencies present at the meeting agreed on the necessity to pursue their cooperation whilst developing their efforts in the fields of environmental education and training, as well as in the elaboration of the environmental guidelines that are to be followed in every stage of the design and implementation of development programmes and projects. They also agreed on the necessity of giving assistance to developing countries in the improvement of their capacity to incorporate environmental concerns into the whole

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development process. The Community for its part committed itself to increased efforts in the coming year to contribute to these ends. These efforts are in addition to those actions the Commission has already proposed to undertake within the framework of its policy document of 1981 "Towards a Plan of Action to Combat World Hunger".

22. Similarly, through its participation in the negotiations for the preparation of a global framework Convention on the ozone layer, and its contribution towards an effective implementation of several existing international agreements and conventions dealing with atmospheric pollution, oil pollution at sea, and the protection of wild life and natural habitats, the Community will continue its efforts towards addressing some of the major issues demanding action on a regional or global level.
23. At the same time, it will pursue its promotion and implementation of Community policies based on preventive measures, notably its legislative action on the control of chemical substances and proposals relating to environmental impact assessment and the incorporation of the environmental dimension into physical planning.

Mr. President,

24. As I have already clearly demonstrated today, it is the Community's firm desire and intention to take up the challenge before us with determination and resolve. Within the Community institutions we are all united in this resolve.

The European Parliament, which plays so vital a part in the institutional and democratic development of the European Community have already expressed their determination to see to it that the Community and its Member States shoulder their responsibilities, undertake greater efforts to address the challenges of the future, and back their words and commitments with adequate resources, both human and financial.

25. Public involvement in the tasks before us is crucial. The decisions taken by those in authority affect the very lives and living conditions and lifestyles of each and every individual. We attach great importance therefore to the role of non-governmental organisations, so many of whom are represented here today.

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26. Clearly, the role to be played by UNEP in the ensuing decade is both vital and urgent. It behoves us all assembled here to ensure that UNEP is provided both with the inspiration and the MEANS which will enable it to address the challenges of the future with strengthened and renewed vigour. As a coordinator and a catalyst UNEP has a crucial role : we must see to it that it continues to have the capacity and MEANS sufficient to meet these challenges. To do so it will have to focus especially on those problems that are of truly global concern.

I wish in this context to pay a special tribute to Dr. Mostafa Tolba, the Executive Director, for his unstinting efforts as the man at the helm of UNEP in difficult times. During his visit to the Community Institutions in Brussels last November, we were all able to witness at first hand his dedication, and the determination with which he shouldered his onerous duties.

27. It is a sobering thought that, as has been so clearly demonstrated in the past, the careful husbandry of the earth is a sine qua non for the survival of the human

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species, and for the creation of decent ways of life for all the people of the world. Man must accept responsibility for the stewardship of the earth.

It is because there are so many potential paths towards points of irreversible "no return" that the selfrepairing cycles underlying all living systems, cannot be taken for granted, for they cannot survive indefinite overloading or mistreatment.

To interfere with the tropical forest cover or the vast untouched plains of the northern hemisphere is to tamper with the two great lungs of our planet through which its continuing health has to be assured. The intimate, inescapable interdependence of living things implies a fine balance, a certain stability, a certain dynamic reciprocity. In the words of Goethe's Faustian legend, we must ensure that the end is not torment but redemption and the protection and perpetuation of the delicate balances of the planetary environment.

An adequate response to the enormous and urgent challenges before us will require an unprecedented degree of global cooperation and commitment. Future generations will never forgive us if we do not undertake this response.

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We in the European Community pledge our collaboration with the rest of the world in a spirit of solidarity and justice.

Thank you, Mr. President.