

## THE ROLE OF THE NGO

(ngo declaration cont'd)

a) We reaffirm the concept of organized citizen support for the work of the United Nations and believe that the Stockholm conference and the ongoing work of the United Nations in the area of the environment can encourage all those who have long worked in this field and draw on the enthusiasm of new recruits. We therefore intend to urge our organizations to mobilize and expand their membership in support of the work of the United Nations in general and the Environmental Secretariat in particular.

b) In consultation with the existing conference Secretariat, we will seek the most appropriate ways in which our separate bodies can mobilize citizen support for the Stockholm decisions during the months between the Stockholm conference and this year's General Assembly. Thereafter we wish to establish permanent forms of liaison with the Secretariat, with each other and other interested bodies.

c) We will consult with each other to work out the most appropriate means of strengthening our various efforts, mobilizing joint pressure for environmental change and avoiding, where possible, overlapping activities. We will also seek to secure the support of various organizations for special fund-raising for specific environmental programs.

d) At the national level, all environmental organizations should seek to participate in governmental decisions affecting the environment and insist on advance information concerning projects of environmental impact.

As a particular year for reassessment, say, "The Planet in 1980," should be made the focus for official non-governmental and citizen programs and action in understanding and protecting the planetary environment.

We pledge ourselves, in our work, our loyalties, our contacts and our own styles of life, to try to live as citizens of a loved yet endangered planet and to share our common heritage with respect for all living things and in justice and amity with the people of planet Earth.

# Life Is One And The World Is One

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi Speaks to Plenary

### Extracts from the speech

One cannot be truly human and civilized unless one looks upon not only fellow-man but all creation with the eyes of a friend....

It is sad that in country after country, progress should become synonymous with an assault on nature. We who are a part of nature and dependent on her for every need, speak constantly about "exploiting" nature.... I remember Edward Thompson, a British writer and a good friend of India, once telling Mr. Gandhi that wild life was fast disappearing. Remarkd the Mahatma—"It is decreasing in the jungles but it is increasing in the towns!"

As we struggle to create a better life for our people, we cannot indulge in... practices (of exploiting the labor of the masses) even for a worthwhile purpose. We are bound by our own ideals. We owe allegiance to the principles of the rights of workers and the norms enshrined in the charters of international organizations. Above all, we are answerable to the millions of politically awakened citizens in our countries. All these make progress costlier and more complicated.

On the one hand the rich look astance at our continuing poverty—on the other they warn us against their own methods. We do not wish to impoverish the environment any further and yet we cannot for a moment forget the grim poverty of large numbers of people. Are not poverty and need the greatest polluters? For instance, unless we are in a position to provide employment and purchasing power for the daily necessities of the tribal people and those who live in or around our jungles, we cannot prevent them from combing the forest for food and livelihood: from poaching and from despoiling the vegetation. When they themselves feel deprived, how can we urge the preservation of animals? How can we speak to those who live in villages and in shums about keeping the oceans, the rivers and the air clean when their own lives are contaminated at

the source? The environment cannot be improved in conditions of poverty. Nor can poverty be eradicated without the use of science and technology.

Must there be conflict between technology and a truly better world or between enlightenment of the spirit and a higher standard of living?...

I am reminded of an incident in one of our tribal areas. The vociferous demand of elder tribal chiefs that their customs should be left undisturbed found support from noted anthropologists. In its anxiety that the majority should not submerge the many ethnic, racial and cultural groups in our country, the Government of India largely accepted this advice. I was amongst those who entirely approved. However, a visit to a remote part of our northeast frontier brought me in touch with a different point of view—the protest of the younger elements that while the rest of India was on the way to modernization they were being preserved as museum pieces. Could we not say the same to the affluent nations?...

We should re-order our priorities and move away from the... model which seems to have given a higher place to things rather than to persons and which has increased our wants rather than our enjoyment. We should have a more comprehensive approach to life, centered on man not as a statistic but an individual with many sides to his personality. The solution of these problems cannot be isolated phenomena of marginal importance, but must be an integral part of the unfolding of the very process of development.

The extreme forms in which questions of population or environmental pollution are posed, obscure the total view of political, economic and social situations. The Government of India... believe(s) that planned families will make for a healthier and more conscious population. But we know also that no program of population control can be effective without education and without a visible rise in the standard of living....

It is an oversimplification to blame all the world's problems on increasing population. Countries with but a small fraction of the world population consume the bulk of the world's production of minerals, fossil fuels, and so on....

The inherent conflict is not between conservation and development but between environment and the reckless exploitation of man and earth in the name of efficiency....

### Cause of the Crisis

All the "isms" of the modern age—even those which in theory disown the private profit principle—assume that man's cardinal interest is acquisition. The profit motive, individual or collective, seems to overshadow all else. This overriding concern with Self and Today is the basic cause of the ecological crisis.

It is clear that the environmental crisis which is confronting the world, will profoundly alter the future destiny of our planet. No one among us, whatever our status, strength or circumstance, can remain unaffected. The process of change challenges present international policies. Will the growing awareness of "one earth" and "one environment" guide us to the concept of "one humanity"? Will there be a more equitable sharing of environmental costs and greater international interest in the accelerated progress of the less developed world? Or, will it remain confined to a narrow concern, based on exclusive self-sufficiency?

### Life is One

Life is one and the world is one, and all these questions are inter-linked. The population explosion, poverty, ignorance and disease, the pollution of our surroundings, the stockpiling of nuclear weapons and biological and chemical agents of destruction are all parts of a vicious circle. Each is important and urgent but dealing with them one by one would be wasted effort....

We must re-evaluate the fundamentals on which our respective civic societies are based and the ideals by which they are sustained. If there is to be a change of heart, it is not an organization or a country—no matter how well intentioned—which can achieve it. While each country must deal with that aspect of the problem which is most relevant to it, it is obvious that all countries must unite in an overall endeavour. There is no alternative to a cooperative approach on global scale to the entire spectrum of our problems.

It has been my experience that people who are at cross purposes with nature are cynical about mankind and ill-at-ease with themselves. Modern man must re-establish an unbroken link with nature and with life. He must again learn to invoke the energy of growing things to recognize, as

