

Policy Implications

The two fundamental parameters of FEEEP are that the world is organized politically into states; and that these same states are becoming increasingly interdependent. Interdependence is most readily seen in terms of increasing economic integration and management challenges of the global commons. The concepts of national security and human security are no longer confined to national political sovereignty. Nationally and internationally, there is a need for governments to take a more systematic approach to addressing FEEEP linkages.

The FEEEP linkages suggest that all governments will need to reassess domestic and international policy approaches that address FEEEP issues. Efforts to date on generating global cooperation on environmental issues and reducing environmental stress in general have had mixed success. UNCED cannot claim much success in terms of concrete results, although it was a start and raised awareness of pressing issues.¹³ The comprehensive program for action - Agenda 21 - agreed to by governments at UNCED, lacks the force of law and the implementation of Agenda 21 is dependent upon best endeavours and not contractual obligations. As the world has seen since 1992, the political rhetoric has not become translated into effective programs. There remains ample scope for countries unilaterally or collectively to make firm commitments for pursuing sustainable development.

Financial assistance remains a powerful instrument for promoting environmental stewardship or improving social conditions. Such assistance could consist of aid, but might also involve debt forgiveness. For the greatest impact, aid would need to provide new and additional resources. This was agreed to in principle at UNCED, but has proven to be politically difficult for the developed countries. Yet, there are good

¹³ "The sad fact is that governments did not commit themselves, individually or collectively, to implement any concrete measures to reduce catastrophic rates of population growth, or to alter certain consumption patterns, say in fossil fuels. Nor did governments agree on any measures to roll back mass poverty, reduce the debt of poor countries - some voluntary announcements were made, but no collective agreement to increase poor-country access to rich country markets. There is nothing in the conventions on climate change and biodiversity that binds governments to concrete measures, with targets and timetables, to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases or to reduce high rates of deforestation or species loss ... So, the sad bottom line is that governments did not agree to implement any measures that would alter the dismal trends that brought them to Rio ... Our leaders left almost nothing unsaid and almost everything undone". Jim MacNeil, the former Secretary General of the Brundtland Commission, statement before the Canadian Parliament's Standing Committee on the Environment. Quoted in Thomas Homer-Dixon, "Environmental and Demographic Threats to Canadian Security", Canadian Foreign Policy, Vol. 2, No.2, Fall 1994, pp. 27-8.