

SELECTED DOCUMENTS

GEA

Tokyo Declaration on Global Commons^{*}

– Conclusions and Recommendations –

Conclusions and Recommendations for Action:

The "World Conference on Global Commons, Japan '99," held to seek new directions for proper management of the "Global Commons" from the perspective of sustainable development and through the strengthening of international momentum, formed conclusions and adopted recommendations for action in the following four areas: (i) Financial Mechanisms and Empowerment of International Organizations, (ii) Science/Technology and Information/Communications, (iii) Resources Management and Energy-related Technology Development, and (iv) Urban Environmental Problems and Regional Cooperation.

In the course of the discussions, several overarching themes emerged and received broad support. First, for successful implementation of the following recommendations, an accompanying shift in fundamental values, a spiritual affinity with the world around us, and strong political will and leadership, are all essential. Second, capacity building in nations and at the local and grass roots levels must be supported, as it is here that we find the forums for innovation and the mechanisms for change in the real world. Programs such as the Earth Charter, Local Agenda 21, the National Council for Sustainable Development, and Leadership for Environment and Development (LEAD) play important roles in finding innovative ways to build this capacity.

It is intended to bring these conclusions and recommendations to the attention of the broad community of individuals and organizations contributing to the global goals of environmental protection and sustainable development at local, national, and international levels. In particular, it is expected that these conclusions and recommendations for action shall be used at, and will contribute to, "Rio + 10" in the year 2002, the next comprehensive review by the UN General Assembly of progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, and will also be used in the international preparatory processes for this review.

I. Financial Mechanisms and Empowerment of International Organizations

1. Conventionally, there has been a heavy reliance on government funds to address global environmental problems. However, the existing reality is that Official Development Assistance (ODA) funds are declining and sources of new public funds are uncertain. In addition, many important activities, including National and Local Agenda 21 initiatives, cannot secure adequate resources.

2. There is a pressing need, therefore, to pursue policies and programs that will facilitate the internalization of environmental costs into the normal functioning of economic systems. In addition, the elimination of existing government subsidies that have negative impacts on the environment is also

necessary. Capacity building activities that support the development of improved governance and visionary leadership at the local, regional, and international level are also critical.

3. There was strong agreement that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is an innovative and successful mechanism for global environment management. It is important to further strengthen and utilize the GEF and to fully support a system where fund recipients take an active role in implementing projects.

4. There was agreement to continue to support the improved coordination among aid organizations and other funding bodies and to reverse the declining trend in ODA. Addressing regional and country specific needs through the development of specific assistance strategies and improved environmental planning in developing countries are important elements of improved coordination.

5. Further promotion of efforts to link private sector funds to sustainable development projects was strongly supported. This could include drawing up guidelines for private sector investments, directing private sector funds to the types of projects that have been supported through ODA in the past, and supporting the internalization of environmental costs.

6. It is recommended that introduction of innovative fund-raising mechanisms be pursued. This includes studying such options as levies on international fund flows and international travel, charges on the use of resources beyond national jurisdiction, emissions trading, and other similar measures.

7. Great interest was shown in an innovative proposal to develop an International Internet Global Environment Fund (Takeshita Initiative). This fund would use the unique functions of the internet, which allows direct cross-border communication among individuals and business organizations, to support the concept of "global citizenship" by providing special educational and incentive programs and an avenue for individuals and business organizations to make donations to specific environmental activities. Further consideration of the program is proposed, with special attention to be given to developing a credible and accountable system that encourages the active participation of citizens and the business sector.

8. The effective management of funding mechanisms is crucial to the achievement of successful environmental outcomes. Further emphasis of environmental considerations in non-environmental funding mechanisms should be encouraged. Supporting participation of civil society in the process of fund allocation and monitoring is a key aspect of this management. It is also critically important that global and local actions be guided by clear, scientifically based environmental goals.

9. The point was made that global environmental problems are being addressed in a piecemeal manner, and there is a resulting synergy gap. The conference participants felt that there is a need for

a more integrated and comprehensive approach to tackle various global environmental issues. One possible way to achieve this is to coordinate, and where possible consolidate, the work programs of the secretariats of conventions on the global environment, such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of Ozone Layer, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification. As a further step, efforts could be made to provide a legislative framework for a high-level structure into which the secretariats of various international conventions would be integrated. Such a structure would provide leadership to address global environmental issues in an integrated and comprehensive manner within the framework of sustainable development. It was suggested that such a structure should encourage the continued active participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local communities, and the business sector, as they could make positive contributions to the activities of this type of structure.

10. Furthermore, it was pointed out that we need a strengthened international framework to manage our "global commons" and to maintain the planetary security of environment and resources. It was proposed that we should consider the establishment of a UN Council on Global Commons, which would replace the current Trusteeship Council that has already completed its task. At the same time, every effort should be made to continue effective management of the existing system of organizations.

II. Science / Technology and Information / Communications

11. It is important to apply results from scientific research to specific policy recommendations that lead to concrete action for protecting the global environment. Also, scientists and journalists should strive to explain complex scientific issues in ways that are understandable to the general public.

12. It is recommended to study options for the establishment of an international mechanism to reach consensus among scientists from both the North and South on predictive scientific research dealing with key environmental issues, including utilization of information and communication technology. This mechanism could help exchange scientific opinion on methodologies and research relating to technology assessment. The conference agreed that there needs to be more recognition and understanding of the value of indigenous knowledge and traditional scientific methods in these processes.

13. It is recommended to study options for the establishment of an international mechanism or body to monitor and assess existing and proposed privatization of resources, such as patenting of life forms and knowledge systems that heretofore were in the public domain.

14. Information technology plays a crucial role in providing environmental information to the public

* 3–5 June 1999. See also page 238.

to achieve sustainable development. The international community needs to increase dissemination of information. Internet technology is a part of the global commons, which is rapidly evolving, and as such is an ideal tool to communicate beyond national borders and a way to democratize societies. However, information infrastructure in many countries is lacking and needs to be developed. Therefore, the conference recommends that to effectively disseminate information a best combination of the Internet and conventional information technology, such as radio, should be utilized.

III. Resources Management and Energy-related Technology Development

15. It is essential that riparian countries look upon transboundary river systems as a shared resource to be jointly managed in a responsible and sustainable manner, for example, by establishing high-level mechanisms for necessary management of water rights related issues.

16. High emphasis should be given to water conservation, efficiency, and sustainability in the utilization of water resources, with consideration to demand side management and through the promotion of environmental education and changing of lifestyles. For example, it might be beneficial for international cooperation efforts to make use of best available technologies and practices from Japan and other countries for saving water, utilizing rainwater, and managing paddy field rice farming and irrigation systems.

17. It is recommended that full cost accounting and externalities be taken into account when pricing resources in order to fully reflect their value. It is also essential to remove perverse subsidies and implement a new scheme of subsidies for areas of clean technology and alternative resources that have not been fully explored or subsidized.

18. It was felt that there are many energy related technologies which are ready for dissemination and which are approaching competitive strength. Special efforts should be made to advance these technologies more quickly. Different varieties of technological breakthroughs for regional-based energy efficiency must be explored and established on a sub-regional basis, through international cooperation.

19. With regard to new technology development, it is essential to build a recycling-oriented economic system, in addition to promoting joint projects of technological development across national borders and across different types of industries. In order to realize the above business field expansion, it is also essential to promote

decentralized types of energy supply systems in which the suppliers and consumers are located close to one and other.

20. It is essential to change social systems in order to facilitate the transition of energy systems, by developing energy-saving technologies for appliances which consume less standby electricity, by providing tax incentives for the development of energy-saving technologies for appliances, hybrid cars and co-generation, and by giving tax exemption to energy supply facilities from non-fossil sources of energy.

21. The conference recommends, as an essential short term goal, to prepare conditions for early entry-into-force of the Kyoto Protocol, incorporating mechanisms, such as Joint Implementation (JI), Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Emission Trading (ET). It is also recommended, as a long term goal, to develop a fundamental plan of action by which the entire world community would be able to manage the risks of climate change in a collaborative manner.

IV. Urban Environmental Problems and Regional Cooperation

22. Global urbanization trends are associated with an emerging variety of urban environmental problems, including air and water pollution and solid waste management issues. Accelerated by globalization processes, factories and other industrial complexes are concentrated in and around large urban centers and these often create severe localized pollution. Also, urban lifestyles require more energy and resources than those in rural areas. We must recognize, however, that these environmental issues affect cities differently; mega-cities, secondary cities and those in rural areas must be treated separately.

23. For environmental planning considerations, it is important to address entire human settlement systems, including broadly defined rural-urban linkages. Environmental problems cannot be addressed in isolation, rather they must be perceived through an overall framework of sustainability, which also includes social, economic, and financial aspects.

24. Of the responses to rapid urbanization and increasing inter-city linkages, the most important are those related to urban planning. Environmental considerations should be addressed, particularly in land use and transportation planning. The emergence of the automobile-dependent society threatens the further increase in energy use and air pollution. Alternative transportation measures should be promoted without delay, in particular mass transportation systems.

25. An important message coming out of this conference is the need for "model cities," defined as those progressing towards the goals of a sustainable city. In designing these cities special attention should be given to the possibilities offered by new telecommunication technologies, more self contained communities, and lifestyles which will minimize the city's ecological footprint. The tools for creating model cities include indicators for sustainable development and environmentally sound technologies, both hard and soft. In this regard, it should be noted that Local Agenda 21 has increasingly been embodied in local plans and implemented in a variety of programs. While the attainment of these goals is important to cities all over the globe, efforts, particularly those in cities of the developing world, should be supported by the developed world.

26. It is recommended that a strategy be drawn up for effective financing of the construction of environmentally sound urban infrastructure. This must proceed with improved capacity for urban management as an important aspect of "governance," which is an essential component for the effective implementation of sustainable strategies. Laws, regulations, standards, administrative systems and financing mechanisms for urban environmental management must be improved. Central and local partnerships, the participation of stakeholders for planning and decision making, and human development must all advance hand in hand in order to create sustainable cities.

27. Regional cooperation has been promoted at various levels of government, including national ministries and municipal authorities, as well as other societal sectors, including private sector entities and research and academic institutions. International activities addressing urban environmental problems are currently being promoted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations University (UNU) and through bilateral agreements and other mechanisms. To further these efforts, it is necessary to exchange mutually relevant information in the field of urban environmental management. A database that would include good practices and case studies of urban pathologies could provide important lessons for cities in developing countries. Sharing information and other practices and harmonizing research agendas are concrete examples for cooperation. □