

Developing Countries and the Politics of Sustainable Development

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A B S T R A C T

This thesis is about the political context in which global environmental policy decisions are made. More specifically, it is about the role and prospects of the developing countries of the South in the emerging politics of sustainable development. It is argued that there is indeed a 'South' and that neither its own internal diversity nor the end of the cold war has weakened this coalition because its abiding interest in seeking fundamental systemic change in a hostile international order remains as relevant and as unfulfilled as ever. Moreover, the differences now emerging on environmental issues should be seen as lying on the very same continuum as earlier North-South conflicts; the South seeks a rearticulation of the underlying concerns that had motivated its 1970s call for a 'New International *Economic Order*' in the North's newfound desire for, what may be called, a 'New International *Environmental Order*.'

This thesis focuses principally on what the South can do itself in this era of ecopolitics and suggests that the notion of sustainable development offers a window of opportunity to the South because this time the North is also interested in pursuing dialogue and there is the potential for joint gains in juxtaposing the North's concern for environmental sustainability and the South's desire for social and economic development. To avail of this opportunity, however, the developing countries will have to reconsider their negotiation strategy.

Finally, this thesis proposes a negotiation strategy for the South. This strategy builds upon the lessons of negotiation theory but is firmly rooted in the experiences of the South—the advice can be paraphrased as: "*Stop feeling angry at the North and sorry for yourself.*" The strategy seeks to redefine North-South environmental negotiations as a non-zero-sum game. It recommends that the South should focus on interests, not positions; cultivate its own power; be hard on issues, not on people; redefine the international environmental agenda; organize itself; develop its constituency; clean up its own act; and remember that good agreements are more important than 'winning'. It is argued that such a strategy would not only better serve the interests of the South, but would lead to a more productive international environmental negotiation process and thereby would also be better for the North.

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This thesis has been a true labor of love. In large part, that is why it has taken so much longer to write. That writing it has been such a source of tremendous learning for me is not special; that is what theses are supposed to do. That working on it has, in fact, never seemed like work and has been a source of so much intellectual stimulation and satisfaction, even perverse pleasure, was indeed a surprise. Maybe my friends are right and I do need to “get a life.” But then, maybe, it is they who are missing out on the great delights of forever broadening the horizons of one’s own ignorance.

The ideas presented here were born in a hundred different places. A few in the many classes I took at MIT and elsewhere, the many as I debated the issues and options with friends, acquaintances and those who would probably not like to be described as either. I would like to acknowledge the impact of these even if I cannot ascribe each individual causality. What I can, and must, acknowledge and ascribe is the deep and lasting impact on my ideas that has come from my mentor, **Syed Ayub Qutub**, who introduced me to so many of these issues when I worked with him, before coming to MIT, on the preparation of the Pakistan National Conservation Strategy. For this, I am in his debt.

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§ § § § § § § § § § §

I have had the opportunity to present the ideas that have become part of this thesis at various forums outside MIT, including the Third Global Structures Convocation, Washington DC; the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria; the Aspen Global Change Institute, Aspen, Colorado; and the Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan. I gained much useful feedback at these and other presentations. In addition, different variants of what is chapter #8 in this thesis have appeared as parts of journal papers by me—“An Environmental Negotiation Strategy for the South”, *International Environmental Affairs*, 1995, 7(3): 249-87 and “The South in International Environmental Negotiations”, *International Studies*, 1994, 31(4): 427-64. An earlier version of some of these ideas also appeared as part of my chapter in *Papers on International Environmental Negotiation, Volume III*, edited by Lawrence E. Susskind, William R. Moomaw and Adil Najam (published by the Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School, 1993). Some of the discussion in section I of this thesis builds on my 1994 working paper, “The Case for a South Secretariat in International Environmental Negotiation” (Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School Working Paper 94-8, 1994). These have provided the foundation for this thesis but have been substantively and substantially rewritten in the course of producing this document.

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CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter #1 **Introduction and summary**

This thesis is about the political context in which technical decisions about global sustainable development are made. More specifically, it focuses on the politics of sustainable development from the standpoint of the developing countries of the South. These countries are increasingly being asked to make major policy changes in the name of the environment. This thesis seeks to understand why they so often resist these changes; what the environmental interests of the developing countries are; how these may be different from the environmental interests of the industrialized North; and how the two may be reconciled through international negotiation. Importantly, this thesis looks exclusively at what the South can do itself to facilitate such change rather than what the North might do to assist the developing countries.

Section 1: **THE PAST—UNDERSTANDING THE SOUTH**

Chapter #2 **Defining the 'South'**

This chapter sets the historical context for North-South environmental policy debates. The intellectual contribution of this chapter is to define what exactly is implied by the 'South' and whether such an entity really exists as a relevant policy actor. This chapter seeks to understand what the developing countries mean when they describe themselves as the South, and why this is different from the narrow economic definition of what is often referred to as the Third World. It concludes that a 'South' does indeed exist in international affairs and, for the South, the defining feature of its unity is political rather than economic—it is not simply that these countries are poor but that they consider themselves to have been relegated to the periphery of an international order which they consider to be antithetical to their interests.

Chapter #3 **The institutional face of the South**

This chapter describes the principal institutions of the developing countries' collective which are relevant to international environmental governance and policy. Specifically, it focuses on the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G77). In international environmental policy, the G77 has become the most important collective organ of the developing countries and the depository of whatever common positions they have on the subject. The implication of this chapter is that the South is more than a simple fraternity of the poor; it subscribes to a defined agenda and has established institutions to further that agenda. Although the effectiveness of these institutions can be debated, their continuing existence cannot be denied.

Chapter #4 **Is the South defunct?**

This chapter responds to the criticism that the South is a defunct coalition. Such criticism is made on two grounds: structural criticism arguing that the South is not a homogenous coalition and historical criticism arguing that the South was an artifact of the cold war and should die with it. This chapter demonstrates that the South has survived both its own dynamic heterogeneity and the demise of the cold war—that heterogeneity has been endemic to the South and constitutes a management, rather than a definitional, burden; and that the South was never an artifact of superpower politics but a response to it which remains as valid in a unipolar world as in a bipolar one. It suggests that the South will remain an active coalition in international politics for as long as it believes the prevailing international system to be unsympathetic to its interests.

**Section II: THE PRESENT—THE SOUTH IN
INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS**

Chapter #5 A tale of two Cities: From Stockholm to Rio

This chapter reviews past North-South environmental policy negotiations, with particular focus on the Stockholm and Rio conferences held in 1972 and 1992 respectively. It maps the basic interests of the South in entering these negotiations, the strategies adopted, and how the South left on each occasion with what it described as its “bruised optimism”. The chapter presents a comparative analysis of the two conferences and through them of the evolving position of the developing countries on environmental issues. This chapter’s contribution is to review the conferences comparatively from the viewpoint of the South and to map the South’s unchanging interests, arguments and strategies in international environmental policy dialogues.

Chapter #6 From NIEO to NIEO

The chapter looks back at the interests and positions of the South in the 1970s during the New International *Economic* Order (NIEO) movement and makes an analytic comparison with the South’s interests and positions in, what may be called, the emerging movement for a New International *Environmental* Order. It makes the substantive claim that in nearly thirty years of formal North-South negotiation, the South has put forth a consistent agenda of its own which has been consistently ignored by the North. This has left the South frustrated by its inability to achieve, what it considers to be, its just and legitimate goals. The South, therefore, seeks to achieve through a ‘New International *Environmental* Order’ what it failed to gain through its call for a ‘New International *Economic* Order.’ It is important to recognize that for the South, conceptually as well as substantively, the two lie on the very same continuum.

Section III: THE FUTURE—NEGOTIATING FOR THE EARTH

Chapter #7 North-South dialogue: The next generation

While earlier chapters have set out the challenge of the global politics of sustainable development, this chapter lays out the opportunities. The premise of this chapter is that the growing concern for the global environment has triggered, what may be called, the second generation of North-South dialogue. It highlights the view that the notion of sustainable development can be the bridge that brings together the interests of the North and South; that sustainable development provides the potential for a win-win window of opportunity to both the North and the South in that it meets the environmental interests of the industrialized countries and the developmental interests of the developing countries. However, for this opportunity to be availed, both sides—but especially the South—will have to seek a new approach and strategy to global negotiations.

Chapter #8 A negotiation strategy for the South

Built upon the lessons of negotiation theory, but rooted entirely in the experiences of the South, this chapter prescribes an eight-point negotiation strategy for the South. The essential advice to the developing countries is to “*Stop feeling angry at the North and sorry for themselves.*” The proposed strategy calls for the South to focus on interests, rather than position; redefine the power-balance; be hard on the issues, not on the people; redefine the international environmental agenda; organize itself; develop its constituency; clean up its own act; and remember that ‘winning’ is not important, but good agreements are. In short, it is suggested that rather than trying to simultaneously invoke the North’s implied guilt and/or generosity, the developing countries will serve their own interests much better by trying to invoke the North’s self-interest.

G L O S S A R Y

AOSIS	Association of Small Island States
BATNA	Best alternative to a negotiated agreement
CIEC	Conference on International Economic Cooperation
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CSD	[UN] Commission on Sustainable Development
Earth Summit	Popular name for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
ECLA	[UN] Economic Commission for Latin America
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
G77	Group of 77 <i>(a caucus of developing countries within the UN System)</i>
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GATT	General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LCD	Less Developed Countries
LOS	Law of the Sea
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
NAM	Nonaligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NICs	Newly Industrialized Countries
NIE[co]O	New International Economic Order
NIE[nv]O	New International Environmental Order
NIEO	New International Economic Order
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PrepCom	Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
SELA	Latin American Economic System
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development <i>(Held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 2-14 June, 1992)</i>
UNCHE	United Nations Conference on the Human Environment <i>(Held at Stockholm, Sweden, 5-16 June, 1992)</i>
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development
WTO	World Trade Organization

#1

Introduction and summary

*There is nothing more
difficult to carry out,
nor more doubtful of success,
nor more dangerous to handle,
than to initiate
a new order of things.*

— NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

The 1990's have seen a reinvigoration of global conference diplomacy under the auspices of the United Nations. The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), the 1993 United Nations Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna (Austria), the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo (Egypt), the 1995 World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen (Denmark), the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women held in Beijing (China), the forthcoming 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements to be held in Istanbul (Turkey), and the forthcoming 1996 World

Food Summit to be held in Rome (Italy) are only some of the more prominent in a series of global negotiations on critical social and developmental issues.

There seems every likelihood that this trend of global negotiations will continue into the future. For those interested in international environmental policy, these negotiations constitute a significant trend for at least two reasons.¹

First, concerns about the health of the global environment—and more specifically about broadly understood, and loosely defined, visions of sustainable development—have been a recurrent theme not only at the majority of these conferences but at the many less prominent, and even more frequent, international negotiations that are attempting to establish global environmental regimes on a wide set of issues ranging from climate change to biodiversity, and deforestation to international trade. On the one hand, the end of the Cold War seemingly provides a new stimulus and opportunity for the realization of the potential of global negotiations in the setting of conference diplomacy. On the other, the possibly catastrophic nature of the looming environmental crisis provides the urgency for this potential to be realized where it has floundered in the past.

Second, North-South tensions have been a prominent and persistent feature of these negotiations and the differences in perspectives and priorities between the developing countries of the South and the industrialized nations of the North is becoming a defining polarization of all global deliberations. There is the growing realization that if a global compact on sustainable development is to be arrived at, a resolution to North-South tensions would have to be a necessary part of that compact. On the one hand, there is the hope amongst some that the end of the Cold War has freed the international system of superpower distractions to concentrate more fully on issues of international development and that the impending global environmental crisis not only underscores the need for such development to be ‘sustainable development’ but also provides

¹ These are, however, not the only significant trends marked by this series of conferences. Their frequency alone makes them a noteworthy trend in global governance. Moreover, these global negotiations have attracted an unprecedented and increasing presence of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), they have caught the attention of the world media and national leaders, and there is every indication that in the future we are likely to see more international negotiations, rather than less, on global issues.

the rationale and incentive for a grand 'North-South bargain' that remained so elusive and divisive in the 1970s. On the other hand, skeptics insist that this round of North-South negotiation is likely to be no less acrimonious and no more productive than its earlier incarnation.

These two features also happen to be the defining contours of what may be called the 'global politics of sustainable development'—the embodiment of the hope that in trying to synergize the North's concern for environmental sustainability and the South's desire for economic and social development the concept of sustainable development, loosely defined as it is, will provide a broad framework around which a global compact that would meet the interests of both North and South could be built (for more on the meaning of sustainable development, as used here, see Box 1).

The evidence till now suggests that the compact is not forthcoming and the promise of sustainable development has not yet been realized. Why is this so, and what will need to happen before the potential can, in fact, be realized? These are the broader questions that motivate this enquiry.

Box 1: Defining sustainable development

Providing a precise definition for the concept of sustainable development is not the mandate of this study. The term is used here as a political concept. It means exactly what those using it want it to mean. This assertion, however, should not be considered intellectual sloppiness; it is, instead, a recognition that the term has come to mean different things to different people and, in fact, it derives its greatest strength and popularity to its ability to do exactly that.

In a nutshell, this study views sustainable development as a 'constructive ambiguity' and considers its greatest value to be its ability to bring under one banner the North's newfound interest in safeguarding global environmental sustainability and the South's persevering desire to seek economic and social development. Having stated the above, what follows in this box is a brief discussion on the concept's definitional crisis and the strengths and weaknesses of using it in international environmental policy contexts.²

The concept of sustainable development was popularized in academic as well as policy circles by the publication of *Our Common Future*, the Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987), even though its distinctive antecedents predate the report. The essential feature of the concept is its attempt to reconcile the economic and environmental dimensions of human activity without explicitly pitting one against the other.

² For an especially useful review of the definitional debate about sustainable development, and the problems associated with operationalizing the concept in a policy context, see Lélé (1991).

By virtue of this expansive, to say the very least, mandate the concept of sustainable development has landed itself in a complex definitional crisis (Repetto, 1986; Pearce et al., 1990; Bidwell, 1992; Dietz et al., 1992). The World Commission had defined sustainable development as "a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations" (WCED, 1987: 46). For the WCED the concept was political rather than economic and there was much utility in leaving it loosely defined (see Lélé, 1991; Dietz et al., 1992).

Others, however, have attempted to analyze it more stringently as an economic concept and found it difficult to do so; not least because of the unresolved concerns about discounting rates, cost or benefit evaluation and temporal scale; to say nothing of resolving what we mean by 'development'. Popular textbooks of environmental economics also shy away from stringent evaluations except in the terms of conventional natural resource economics or in merely stating that it is the environmental equivalent of economic efficiency (*for example*, Tietenberg, 1988).

This is not to suggest, however, that the few bold attempts by those who have tried to come up with economic definitions have been entirely in vain. Pearce, Barbier, and Markandya (1990: 3), for example, suggest that "sustainability be defined as the general requirement that a vector of development characteristics be non-decreasing over time, where the elements to be induced in the vector are open to ethical debate and where the relevant time horizon for *practical* decision-making is similarly indeterminate outside of agreement on intergenerational objectives" (*original emphasis*). Although this sounds as generalized as most, the significance of this line of thinking is that a minimum ecological condition for development to be sustainable is set; that condition being that the natural capital stock should not decrease over time (*also see* Repetto, 1986).

The principal concern for those adhering to the sustainable development vision is to try to balance ecological and economic imperatives. To devise a framework which allows for the achievement of the legitimate development needs of people, particularly of the poorest people, without compromising the long-term ecological integrity of the natural systems that fuel this development. The quest has not been easy. But the alternatives for policy are entirely unappealing. One option is to apply strong controls on growth, at great cost to the rich but at even greater injustice to the poor whose future development options would thus be foreclosed simply because of the past environmental excesses of the rich. Another is to continue riding the unabated wave of growth in the hope that enough of it, all over the world, would create enough resources and enough of a will to tackle environmental problems before critical ecological thresholds are crossed or irreversible processes are set in motion.

Given the levels of uncertainty about either our ecological or our economic futures, both options would require a level of faith in the offered prescriptions that can scarcely be justified by the available evidence. It is in light of these alternatives that the concept of sustainable development—despite its lack of definition—begins looking attractive, at least as a direction of further enquiry.

The popularization of the concept of sustainable development may well be the most significant contribution of the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987). Seven years down the road, however, we are no nearer to understanding what the concept means in operational, especially policy-relevant, reality. The Commission itself did not suggest a concrete definition of the concept and those who have attempted to devise one have found the task extremely complex and frustrating. What, then, has been the significance of the concept for international environmental dialogue?

If the question is, whether the concept has allowed us to reconcile the economic and environmental dimensions of human activity; the obvious answer is, No. What it has done, however, is to provide us with a broad (even if ill-defined) formulation within which the possibility of such reconciliation can be discussed. What needs to be both understood and highlighted is that for the Brundtland Commission sustainable development was essentially a political formulation, it is as a political—as opposed to an economic or even a policy—concept that it remains most useful. At the very least, the term has allowed a convenient way of juxtaposing the ecological *sustainability* demands of the North with the economic and social *development* imperative of the South.

In essence, then, sustainable development is best understood as a 'constructive ambiguity'; or as Lélé (1991: 607) puts it: "to some extent, the value of the phrase does lie in its broad vagueness." Arguably, the popularization of a concept that defies precise definition but in which the various protagonists see a representation of their respective positions, when combined with the provision of opportunities/forums for them to thrash out what it really means—such as the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development or the meetings of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development—can facilitate a constructive dialogue between parties that otherwise might have little to say to each other. Ideally, this process of joint definition could ultimately lead to a shared understanding that is acceptable to all sides. Even if that does not happen, at least a dialogue has been initiated. This alone is not an insignificant achievement for an 'ill-defined' concept.

In short, it is important to lower our sights on what sustainable development is, or was ever meant to be. It was never meant to be, and certainly is not yet, a precisely defined blueprint for exactly how the demands of environmental and economic systems may be reconciled; it does not even suggest a clear description of where we want the planet to be, or how to get there. At its least, it is an invitation to think through what a precise definition of the above may look like. At its best, it provides a shared vocabulary to those who have very different images of the above so that they may work together to come up with a mutually acceptable, joint, more precise definition. In time, sustainable development might well become more than just this, but that time is not yet.

THE ARGUMENT

This thesis evolves around the premise that North-South environmental relations remain adversarial and the prevailing attitudes of confrontation on both sides—which are legacies of an earlier era of North-South hostility—threaten to hinder the achievement of meaningful global policies for sustainable development. Looking at the issue from the perspective of the South, this thesis seeks to understand why this is so and what the South can do to change the tone and substance of global environmental negotiations so that they can better address the interests of the South as well as those of the global environment.³

³ Approaching the issue entirely from the perspective of the South is justified not only because the author of this study, and his biases and concerns, happen to be from a developing country or because the topic is otherwise too broad to be dealt with meaningfully, but much more importantly because the Southern perspective is the more under-represented and less-understood perspective in our scholarly

This thesis seeks to enhance our understanding of the South as an enduring alliance of developing countries which is becoming increasingly important in the global politics of sustainable development. It looks at how the South, as a negotiation coalition, can better organize itself for the new era of ecopolitics and proposes an environmental negotiation strategy for the developing countries that would not only serve the South's interests better but would make North-South dialogue that much less confrontational and more productive.

The proposed strategy for the South argues that the bargaining power of the developing countries, which is essentially the power of coalition, can be made more effective by learning from their own experiences in earlier North-South dialogue and from negotiation theory. It is argued that North-South negotiation on the environment is fundamentally different from earlier negotiations on economic structures because the North is no longer a 'blocking coalition.' Moreover, the environment provides at least the potential for joint-gain, win-win solutions. The implication is that a South organized and prepared for serious negotiation is in the interest of both the developing and industrialized countries.

This enquiry begins with an examination of the proposition that a 'South' does, in fact, exist in international affairs. It finds that it indeed does, especially in the global politics of sustainable development. More importantly, the defining feature of the South's unity is political rather than economic—it is not simply that these countries are poor but that they consider themselves to have been relegated to the periphery of an international system which they believe to be antithetical to their interests and priorities. What they are seeking, then, is not simply more 'assistance' but a fundamental change in the international order.

Moreover, the shared conceptual foundations as well as the institutional mechanisms of South remain resilient in the 1990s and, if anything, have witnessed a minor resurgence. For the developing countries, the South—as institutionalized in the Group of 77 (G77) and the Non-Aligned Movement

appreciation of the global politics of sustainable development. Moreover, as the side that has persistently—for at least thirty years now—sought meaningful North-South dialogue, the South has a special interest and stake in ensuring that the opportunity provided by this North-South environmental dialogue does not waste in the quagmire of acrimony and confrontation as previous attempts have.

(NAM)—continues to be a useful and meaningful coalition and neither the internal diversity within the South nor the end of the Cold War has made this 'trade union of the poor' or 'alliance of the disenfranchised' any less relevant or any more unappealing than it was in the past.

The endurance of the Southern coalition and the resilience of its principal interests emerges as the most striking feature of the continuing saga of North-South relations. Just because the North-South dialogue stagnated in the 1980s does not mean that North-South differences have disappeared. For the South, the agenda of the 1970s remains unfinished business. The differences now emerging on environmental issues must, therefore, be seen as lying on the very same continuum as earlier North-South conflicts; the South seeks a rearticulation of the underlying concerns that had motivated its call for a 'New International *Economic Order*' (NIEO) in the North's newfound desire for, what may be called, a 'New International *Environmental Order*.'

The end of the Cold War—coming at a time of global recession, massive debt accumulations, trade imbalances, a negative flow of resources, and terrible terms of trade—gives three signals to the developing nations in the South: a) the size of the 'aid' pie is getting smaller; b) there are more claimants to the pie; and c) major donors have rapidly diminishing strategic use for their support. This is reason enough for the South to revive its sagging coalition and strategically prepare for a new round of global dialogue. The case for doing so is all the more compelling because of the additional reasons that a) the international agenda is no longer clouded by Cold War distractions and b) increasing threats to the global environment have provided the North with not just the inclination but the necessity to engage the South in a new dialogue.

In the 1970s, it was the South calling for a dialogue and the North resisting; in many ways the tables are now reversed. It is the North that wants a dialogue out of the realization that global action on the environment cannot be successful without the active participation of the developing countries. This presents the opportunity for ushering in, what we call, the second generation of North-South dialogue. In the dying moments of the last thrust of North-South dialogue during the NIEO movement Sidney Weintraub (1980: 456) of the US had

observed that “in order to negotiate effectively, the weak must find some lever to give them strength.” At about the same time, Pakistan’s Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980b: 276) had predicted that “only a real international economic or political crisis will convince all sides to rush [back] to the negotiating table... to revive the North-South dialogue.” Today, many in the South believe that the environment is that leverage; many in the North insist that the environment is that crisis.

The rebirth of North-South dialogue in this era of ecopolitics signifies an important structural difference over its earlier incarnation in the era of cartel-politics. This time the call for dialogue comes from the North as well as the South. The North, therefore, is no longer a blocking coalition. Equally significant as a sea change is the sense, even if it is a very cautious and hesitant sense, in both North and South that environmental issues are non zero-sum and have the potential for facilitating joint gain, win-win bargains. Irrespective of the fact that the North and South’s conceptions of what a New International Environmental Order would entail remains strikingly different, the environment—and especially the notion of sustainable development—has provided the two sides an opportunity to renew a dialogue that remained mired in acrimony and stagnation during the entirety of the 1980s.

Having said the above, the experience of recent North-South environmental negotiations, particularly the 1992 Earth Summit, suggests that neither side has learnt from earlier global dialogue. The prognosis of this thesis is that till now the South’s approach to international negotiation, including international environmental negotiation, has been reactive instead of proactive. The South’s strategy, if it can be called that, has been to try to simultaneously invoke the North’s guilt *and* generosity. This approach has, obviously, failed in bringing about the systemic change that the South has sought.

It is argued here that an opportunity exists for the South to formulate a new strategy for international environmental negotiations that could better serve the realization of its environmental and developmental goals. Since it is the South which seeks a redressal of the international status quo and a reinvigoration of North-South dialogue, it is the mandate of the South, rather than of the North, to redefine the dialogue. As the South has found the results of any negotiation

process is not simply a derivative of how strongly you believe in your positions or how legitimate your interests are, but of how effective a 'strategy' you can adopt. Anger alone—no matter how justified—is no substitute for strategy. The environmental negotiation strategy proposed here for the developing countries can be paraphrased as: *"Stop feeling angry at the North and sorry for yourself."*

The proposed strategy evolves from the principal lessons of negotiation theory. Yet, it is rooted entirely in the South's experience. The fundamental difference between this strategy and past practice is that it seeks to redefine North-South environmental negotiations as a non-zero-sum game. It recommends that the South should focus on interests, not positions; redefine the power balance; be hard on issues, not on people; redefine the international environmental agenda; organize itself; develop its constituency; clean up its own act; and remember that 'winning' is not important, but good agreements are. It is argued that the adoption of such a strategy would not only better serve the true interests of the South, but would lead to a more productive international environmental negotiation process and thereby would also be better for the North.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS THESIS

This thesis is about the role and prospects of the developing countries of the South in the emerging politics of sustainable development. What are the defining motivations and interests of the South? What has the South's experience been in trying to realize these interests? What can we learn from earlier experiments in North-South negotiations that might assist in making this set of North-South dialogue less confrontational and more meaningful?

Answers to these three questions are sought in the next seven chapters, organized in three distinct sections. Each section makes a set of separate but related arguments which culminate in a proposed negotiation strategy for the South for this era of ecopolitics. The principal points of focus, arguments and conclusions of the three sections are summarized below.

The first section (chapters #2, #3 and #4) is essentially *descriptive* and builds on evidence from the **past**. It seeks to determine what the defining interests

and motivations of the South are and whether these are still relevant. This section concludes that there is indeed a South with a shared philosophical basis as its identity and a distinct institutional mechanism for its operation. Moreover, neither the internal diversity within the developing countries nor the end of the Cold War threatens this coalition in international affairs because its abiding interest of seeking fundamental systemic change in a hostile international order remains as relevant and unfulfilled as ever.

The second section (chapters #5 and #6) is principally *analytic* and seeks to analyze the **present** predicament of the South in the international environmental policy enterprise. It examines the experience of the developing countries in North-South negotiations in general and in North-South environmental negotiations in particular and concludes that not only have the South's interests and strategies remained consistent in what have now been three decades of such negotiations but the fate of such negotiations has also remained consistently confounding and frustrating for the South. In essence, the South's interests in seeking a New International Environmental Order in the 1990s are no different from its motivations for demanding a New International Economic Order in the 1970s. For the South, conceptually as well as substantively, both lie on the very same continuum.

The final section (chapters #7 and #8) is entirely *prescriptive* and seeks to focus on **future** North-South environmental negotiations and what the developing countries can do themselves to improve their prospects in global policymaking for sustainable development. This section finds that for the South this new wave of conference diplomacy combined with the end of the Cold War and the rise of ecopolitics has ushered in the hopes of reviving a second generation of North-South dialogue. It suggests that the notion of sustainable development offers a window of opportunity to the South because this time the North is also interested in pursuing dialogue and there is the potential for crafting joint gains solutions. To avail of this opportunity, however, the developing countries will have to seriously reconsider their negotiation strategy. This section proposes an eight-point negotiation strategy for the developing countries in this new era of the global politics of sustainable development.

SECTION I: THE PAST

Understanding the South

زبا پتیا توں تے اکیہا سی
جا اوئے ہندیا جگ وانشاہ ہیں توں
ساڈیاں نعتان تیریاں دو لٹاں نیں،
ساڈا ایش تے حالیاہ ہیں توں،
ایس لارے تے ٹور کد پھیا ای
کبیرہ ایس نمائے تے پیتیاں نیں
کدی ساروی لئی اُو رت سائیاں
تیرے شاہ نال جگ کبیرہ کیتیاں نیں

مینوں شاہی نیں جاہیری رسیرے
میں تے عزت داکھر گناں ہاں
مینوں تاجگئی نیں، بھلاں ماڈیاں دی
میں تے چوہی دی نکھر گنا ہاں
میری مٹیں تے تیریاں میں متاں
تیری سونہرے جے اک دی گئی موڑاں
جے ایہہ رنگ نیں پھدی تیں رتا
فیر میں جاواں تے تکت کئی ہور لوڑاں

God —
you had promised
earth's viceregency to man —
grace abounding
and dignity.

But behold
our wretchedness —
see what this world
has done
to us.

Who cares for
wealth or power. All we want
is honorable bread
and something
to cover our nakedness.

If you accept our plea
we'll do
whatever you say.
if not —
we'll look for another God.

By FAIZ AHMED FAIZ
Translated by Daud Kamal (1988: 164-67)

All the world is linked together, inextricably. But it is linked in an asymmetrical and skewed manner... the countries of the South are politically, economically, and culturally subordinate to the much stronger and better-organized North... the relationship is one of dependence much more than interdependence.... Having for most part won the struggle for political independence, the countries of the South have been increasingly hampered by its limitations; it has not given them the power to determine their own policies and their own future... the conviction has therefore steadily grown in the South that there is a need to continue the struggle for independence, political and economic... A decision by the South to reject subordination, and to act on that repudiation, does not imply a desire for confrontation. The confrontation already inherent in the current domination by the North must be replaced by a more balanced and equitable management of global affairs which satisfies the interests of developed and developing countries alike and recognizes the interdependence of the world's people.

...the South seeks an undivided world in which there would be no 'South' and no 'North'; in which there would not be one part developed, rich, and dominating, and the other underdeveloped, poor, dominated. The South's goal is a world of equal opportunities in which criss-crossing lines of interaction—political, economic, cultural, scientific—may sustain global interdependence; in which nations in their variety would work together in pursuit of jointly agreed goals; in which peace, security, and dignity would be the birthright of all persons and all peoples; in which all can take advantage of the advances of science; and in which the world's resources may be prudently used to satisfy the needs of all and not merely the narrow self-interests of a few.

— **CHALLENGE TO THE SOUTH,**
The Report of the South Commission (1990: 8-10)

#2

Defining the 'South'

*"You know, Ernest,
the rich are different from us."*

— F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

*"Yes, I know.
They have more money than we do."*

— ERNEST HEMMINGWAY

Ours is a time of redefinition of the established world order. On the one hand, an 'end of history' is being proclaimed (Fukuyama, 1989, 1992).⁴ On the other, a 'clash of civilizations' is being predicted (Huntington, 1993).⁵ In the midst, the issues, the alliances, the coalitions, and the institutions that had dominated international policy in the last half-century are undergoing fundamental change.

⁴ In a much debated 1990 essay, and later in his 1992 book, Francis Fukuyama argued that the century's ideological wars are over, and liberal democracy has won. In the past, the two challenges to liberalism were fascism and communism. Fascism was destroyed by World War II and communism is currently undergoing drastic changes. He contends that liberal democracy is the final form of government and, therefore, we have reached the "end of history."

⁵ In another much debated essay, published in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, Harvard Professor Samuel P. Huntington argues that world politics is entering a new phase, in which the great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of international conflict will be cultural, not ideological. He contends that civilizations--the highest cultural groupings of people--are differentiated from each other by religion, history, language and tradition and that these divisions are deep and increasing in importance. He traces the fault lines of civilizations as the battle lines of the future.

The collapse of Cold War tensions has allowed other issues to take center-stage; issues such as trade, economic development, and environmental quality.

The upheaval in the geo-strategic landscape has rendered alliances from another era defunct; all across Africa, Latin America, and Asia, regimes that never had real support at home find themselves deserted by the superpowers that had long sponsored and perpetuated their rule. Coalitions whose very rationale had been the ideological divide between East and West, toil to adjust to a world whose fault-lines have shifted; some like the Warsaw Pact have crumbled, others like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) struggle to seek a new mandate and even new partners; yet others, like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), turn their attention inwards as the battles move from being ideological to economic and the tensions are not as much with foes outside as between friends within. International institutions—no longer required to serve as sparring grounds for Cold War politics—seek an expanded mandate, demand new powers; the World Bank with its gospel of structural adjustment, the United Nations in its role as global policeman.

It is within the context of this changing world order that the reemergence of the South as an “alliance of the powerless” needs to be understood (Williams, 1993: 9; Grant, 1995). Many have been tempted to write premature obituaries for the South. “The ‘Third World’ Is Dead” proclaims the *New York Times* (Crossette, 1994: s.4, pg. 1). If the North was merely another name for the West, and now there is no East, then how can there still be a South? Better still, if there is no longer a ‘Second’ world, how can there be a ‘Third’? For those who remain fixated on notions that define the ‘Third world’ or the ‘South’ only in the narrow terms of Cold War polarizations, the perplexity is profound and the conclusion is obvious: the emergence of Southern unity, they insist, was an artifact of Cold War politics, and with the Cold War being dead, the alliance should also be buried.

The evidence from the South, however, tells a different story. As we shall explore in chapter #4, and as Mohammed Ayoob (1995: 61) highlights:

The end of the Cold War has not resulted in making the Third World irrelevant as an explanatory category in international politics.... The relevance of the Third World, or the South, has been reinforced by the end of the Cold War because now the dichotomy between the developed, affluent, and powerful North and the underdeveloped, poor, and weak South is visible in even starker terms than earlier.... The end of the Cold War clearly has juxtaposed the vulnerabilities and insecurities of the South—an increasingly popular synonym for the Third World—with the power and affluence of the industrialized North.

In particular, the rise of what has been called 'ecopolitics' (Pirages, 1978; Alker and Haas, 1993) has given the South a new banner to rally under: with the international agenda no longer clouded by Cold War distractions it is reasserting its voice in international affairs. The South of the 1990s is *not* the South of the 1970s—it is more diverse, less idealistic; more disillusioned, less impatient. But it remains—or rather, has reemerged—as a not inconsequential player in international policy, especially in international environmental affairs.

UNDERSTANDING 'NORTH-SOUTH'

The growing concern for global environmental problems, and particularly about sustainable development, has given a new lease of life to the phrase "North-South." It is generally accepted that North-South differences are an important component of the international environmental problematique; that these differences are, in fact, a major impediment to global environmental cooperation; and that any international policy effort to address environmental problems is not only likely to be influenced by North-South rifts but will also have to somehow address—and 'manage'—them.⁶ North-South concerns are deemed to be most critical in relation to issues such as the transfer of financial resources and technology, global regulatory harmonization, and governance of international environmental institutions. (*See, for example*, Young, 1989; Caldwell, 1990; de la Court, 1990; Agarwal and Narain, 1991; Mathews 1991a; Porter and Brown, 1991 and 1996; French, 1992b; Peng, 1992; Petesch, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Choucri, 1993; Susskind, 1994a; Miller, 1995; Sell, 1996).

⁶ For example, Porter and Brown (1996: 108) argue that "in the UNCED negotiations North and South clashed on a wide range of economic and political issues related to sustainable development" and that "inequitable economic relations between North and South have been a crucial element of the political context of global environmental politics." Similar arguments are developed by Miller (1995: 2) who also points out that "the formation and evolution of environmental regimes have cast into stark relief the differences between the interests of the Third World and those of the industrialized states, a difference that is linked to the two groups' positions in the world economy."

Despite their pervasive use, however, the terms 'North' and 'South' are seldom defined. This first chapter focuses on what is implied by the term 'South.' More specifically, on what the countries of the South imply when they choose to self-define themselves as such despite all the historical baggage that the term carries. Implicit in this effort is the contention that understanding the term is not only integral to contextualizing North-South environmental differences but is critical to understanding why the South behaves as it does in the arena of international environmental politics and policy.

The Independent Commission on International Development Issues (popularly known as the Brandt Commission) acknowledged that neither North nor South is a "uniform or permanent grouping," and described them as generally synonymous with "developed" and "developing" countries (Brandt Commission, 1980: 31).⁷ On a similar note, Emile Van Lennep (1983: 15)—then secretary general of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development—pointed out that the North-South concept, "like all powerful ideas... has the virtue of grand simplicity."⁸ He added that:

...the force of the North-South concept derives from major historical and political realities manifested in the post-World War II era. It is true that over time, the distinction between North and South has become less clear in an objective sense. But the fact remains that there are two sets of countries which are widely comprehended to consist of the developed and the developing, each set sharing certain broad characteristics and psychological affinities. We have the countries of the North, with advanced or relatively advanced income levels and social conditions and a more or less completed process of national integration. The South comprises countries where the development process is still very much in train, where dual economies and dual societies are characteristic, and where, in many cases, hunger and poverty remain the dominant way of life for millions of people.

Such a simplistic understanding remains a still valid caricature of what many, especially in the North, consider the North-South divide to be all about. Indeed, the popular perception that the North-South divide is a binary distinction

⁷ Officially called the "Independent Commission on International Development Issues," the Brandt Commission is popularly recognized by the name of its Chairman, Willy Brandt, former chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. The commission included eminent scholars and leaders from both the North and the South including Edward Heath (U.K.), Olof Palme (Sweden), and Shridath Ramphal (Guyana). The commission's original report, *North-South: A Program for Survival* (Brandt Commission, 1980), was followed three years later by an update, *Common Crisis: North-South cooperation for World Recovery* (Brandt Commission, 1983).

⁸ It needs to be added that according to Van Lennep (1983: 16) this grand simplicity is a source of both strength and weakness. This is because "the phenomenon of North and South is by no means the only important political and historical reality of our times" and viewing problems too exclusively through this global lens may lead to ignoring the role of domestic policies.

between 'haves' and 'have nots' is a powerful, and not untrue, way of understanding the concept—as long as one remembers that what the South wishes to 'have' is not simply economic development, but a say in the (political) decisions that affect its destiny (Krasner, 1985; Thomas, 1987). The danger, however, is that the distinction is too often distilled only to its economic dimensions, leading to the image of a South forever knocking at the North's door with a begging bowl in hand.

Aware of this danger, the 1990 report of the South Commission defines the term in a decidedly more political, as opposed to the merely economic, context.⁹ It talks, therefore, not merely about economic poverty, but about the poverty of influence. For the Commission, the defining feature of the South is not merely its economic weakness, but also its political dependence. The self-definition of the South, therefore, is a definition of exclusion: these are countries which believe that they have been "bypassed" and view themselves as existing "on the periphery" (South Commission, 1990: 1):¹⁰

While most of the people of the North are affluent, most of the people of the South are poor; while the economies of the North are generally strong and resilient, those of the South are mostly weak and defenseless; *while the countries in the North are, by and large, in control of their destinies, those of the South are very vulnerable to external factors and lacking in functional sovereignty. (Emphasis added)*

To redress, what they consider to be an imbalance of influence, the developing countries have sought the vehicle of global negotiations, often referred to as

⁹ The South Commission was established in 1987 in response to the idea floated by Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahatir Mohammed, at the 1986 Summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at Harare. Chaired by Julius K. Nyerere, former president of Tanzania, with Dr. Manmohan Singh of India as its secretary general, the 28 person commission had representatives from all continents of the South. These included: Gamani Corea (Sri Lanka) former secretary general of UNCTAD; Michael Manley, former Prime Minister of Jamaica; Carlos Andres Perez, former President of Venezuela; Shridath Ramphal (Guyana), former secretary general of the British Commonwealth; and Dr. Abdus Salam (Pakistan), Nobel Prize winner in physics. The report of the Commission, *The Challenge for the South*, was published in 1990. A follow-up to the report, *Facing the Challenge: Responses to the Report of the South Commission* (South Centre, 1993) was published three years later.

¹⁰ Many developing country environmentalists build on such definitions to stress that the North-South distinction is not just a 'developed-developing' difference, but primarily a 'domination-dependence' divide; a divide created and perpetuated by five centuries of colonialism which, they say, turned into neo-colonialism and is now in the danger of becoming eco-colonialism (Agarwal and Narain, 1991; Peng, 1992). During the UNCED process even government officials from the South began echoing this sentiment. Consider, for example, this statement made by a Pakistani diplomat, Tariq Hyder, speaking for the G77 during the fourth preparatory committee meeting (quoted in *SUNS*, 4 April 1992): "We [the South] do not want our freedom after independence, which has been so short, and in many ways so illusory... to be constrained by new environmental conditionalities which could be equated with environmental colonialism."

North-South dialogue (see Gosovic, 1972; Menon, 1977; Haq, 1980; Jones, 1983; Murphy, 1984; Weiss, 1986a). Although Jones (1983: 1) considers “North-South Dialogue” to be “very much a phrase of the 1970s,” neither the terminology nor the concept of the North-South divide is new. Lincoln Gordon (1978: 5-6) credits former British Ambassador to Washington, Sir Oliver Franks, with having coined the expression “North-South relations” and having suggested that a world-wide cleavage along that axis might come to rival East-West relations as a central concern of world politics, in the late 1950s.¹¹

By the early 1960s the term was already in usage within the ‘development community’ (Ward, 1965: 3) and gained wider public recognition in the 1970s during the movement for a New International Economic Order (NIEO).¹² In NIEO debates, it gained legitimacy through its usage in United Nations documents and international policy fora (see Moss and Winton, 1976; Makiyama 1980 and 1982). During the 1980s, as the NIEO movement faded from international attention, the term was also confined largely to specialized academic discourse. However, the publication of the South Commission Report in 1990 and the term’s wide use by governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the media, and UN officials during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) process revitalized it in popular environmental contexts.

Conventionally, at least till before the end of the Cold War, the South generally considered East European countries of the Soviet bloc as part of the North (see Brandt Commission, 1980; South Commission, 1990). Formally, then, North equaled East plus West. Practically, however, the North-South divide has been much more of a West-South divide (Weiss, 1986a: 20). The East’s attitude towards the South has remained ambivalent, ranging from strong alliance on questions of redesigning international economic institutions to outright opposition in other cases such as the Law of the Sea negotiations.¹³ This

¹¹ Gordon does not provide a specific citation for when and where Sir Oliver Franks made this statement.

¹² The NIEO movement is discussed in chapter #6.

¹³ Cedric Grant (1995: 576) characterizes the Soviet attitude towards the South as “a posture of avoidance. It disavowed responsibility for the economic circumstances of the South, and limited its involvement to moral and political support for the NIEO.”

would suggest a triangular schema with the North equaling West, and South and East being distinct actors.¹⁴

Although this triangular schema still best describes our popular division of the world,¹⁵ the end of the Cold War has seriously disturbed the neat historical distinctions. The placement of East bloc countries within a North-South framework has become more difficult (Wallerstein, 1993). As will be argued later, some East bloc countries now fit better within the 'North' while others are distinctively 'Southern' in character, economically as well as politically. Moreover, the end of the Cold War has created a set of new states—primarily in the Balkans and Central Asia—with a strong claim to being of the South, even though they are not (yet) represented in the institutions of the South (Najam, 1993: 48; Ayob, 1995: 63).

WHY NOT 'THIRD WORLD'?

The terms 'South' and 'Third World' came into usage around the same time, were originally used to convey the same meaning, and still refer to roughly the same set of countries. However, in the context of popular, journalistic, and even academic usage their intent has substantially and substantively diverged. While 'South' retains its intent of being a political entity, 'Third World' has become a predominantly economic concept referring to poor countries, and more generally to the poor. In fact, it is no longer used exclusively for states; 'Third World conditions' has become a synonym for economic deprivation and is also used for describing poor communities in the North.¹⁶

¹⁴ Along this line, Hansen (1979, 3-4), for example, used the term North as "a shorthand description for the world's rich, industrialized noncommunist states" and South for "the world's less developed or developing states" which "range from the suddenly rich but yet-to industrialize oil states of the Middle East to the so-called Fourth World states, the poorest countries of the world." Academic debate on whether there is a Fourth World, whether dividing the world into such spheres has any utility and where the socialist bloc countries fit in the schema were in rage in the 1970s. For an fascinating exposition of this debate see Wolf-Phillips (1979), Worsley (1979), Muni (1979), Love (1980), McCall (1980) and Mountjoy (1980). In the shadow of the falling Berlin Wall, such discussion has been revitalized in the 1990s (see Weiss and Kessler, 1991; David, 1991 and 1992; Adams, 1993; Najam, 1993; Berger, 1994; Ayob, 1995; Grant, 1995; Kamrava, 1995; Magyar, 1995).

¹⁵ The nomenclature has, however, changed with the West (or North) often being called 'advanced industrialized democracies', the East now labeled as 'economies in transition'.

¹⁶ For example a report in *'All Things Considered'* on National Public Radio speaks of "almost Third World living conditions here in Texas on this side of the border" (NPR, 1995), while an interview in the *Los Angeles Times* talks about "importing Third World conditions" to USA (Mungen, 1996).

This is a serious deviation from the sense in which the concept originated. Alfred Sauvy, French demographer and economic historian, is generally credited with having coined the term 'Third World' (Angelopoulos, 1972: 9; Wolf-Phillips, 1979: 105; Love, 1980: 315; Keyfitz, 1993: 3).¹⁷ He introduced the term in an influential article in *l'Observateur* (14 August 1952; No. 118, pg. 5), titled *Trois mondes, Une planète*. Writing at a time when the Cold War was at its coldest, he stressed:

Nous parlons volontiers des deux mondes en présence, de leur guerre possible, de leur coexistence, etc. oubliant trop souvent qu'il en existe un troisième, le plus important... C'est l'ensemble de ceux que l'on appelle... les pays sous-développés... ignoré, exploité, méprisé... veut, lui aussi, être quelque chose.

[We gladly speak of two worlds facing each other, of their possible war, of their coexistence, etc., forgetting too often that there is a third one, *the most important*... That is the group of those that are called... the underdeveloped countries... ignored, exploited, scorned... *that want, they too, to be recognized*].¹⁸

The term *tiers monde* as it first became popular in French and then got translated into English as 'Third World' brought with it a certain history: its antecedent being French political concepts including 'Third Force,' 'Third Estate,' 'Third Way,' and 'Third Camp' (see Wolf-Phillips, 1979; Worsley, 1979; Love, 1980; Otter, 1981).¹⁹ Each of these carried a distinct, nuanced meaning. However, the commonality was that 'Third' represented a sense of neutrality and independence from the dominant poles rather than a descending numerical order. 'Thirdness,' therefore, indicated a specific meaning of independence, neutrality, exclusion, alienation, powerlessness, and a desire to change the order of things.²⁰

¹⁷ Worsley (1979: 101) questions the view that the term was 'coined' by Sauvy: Citing John T. Marcus' *Neutrality and Nationalism in France* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1958) he asserts that Claude Bordet used the term at least as early as April 1949. This assertion is, however, challenged by Love (1980: 315).

¹⁸ *Emphasis added*. Keyfitz (1993: 3) points out that the word "important" in French means both numerically preponderant, as well as important in the English sense, and Sauvy is using it here in both contexts. He adds that "Sauvy wanted to form our minds to the idea that the poor countries were a problem, perhaps the chief problem, of the rich countries, whether the latter realized it or not."

¹⁹ Love (1980: 315) adds the phrase 'Third Position' to the list of antecedents for Third World. This is of special significance since the 'Third Position' doctrine was forwarded by Argentina's Juan Perón as early as 1949 as a notion related to neutrality in the emerging Cold War; a notion that was strikingly similar to the non-alignment doctrine of many later Third World leaders.

²⁰ Wolf-Phillips (1979: 105) points out that "it may be that in the 1950s the phrase *tiers monde* was used more in the sense of 'Third Force' rather than 'Third World', indicating 'non-alignment' rather than 'underdevelopment'." He points out that *tiers monde* was originally popularized in France during the period 1947-9 to describe the political parties that took their stance between the opposing poles of Gaullist and Fourth Republic policies. Interestingly, as late as 1958 de Gaulle was to use *tiers monde*

These connotations and the historical context of earlier French use of 'Thirdness' made *tiers monde* an apt phrase for the newly independent, formerly colonized, poor states that were changing the international scene in the 1950s.²¹ Love (1980: 316) explains:

When Alfred Sauvy coined *Tiers Monde* in his 1952 article, *Trois mondes, une planète* his analogy was to the *Tiers État*. He wrote, "...this Third World [is] unknown, exploited, despised like the Third Estate; it, too, wants something." Here, of course, he was alluding to the Abbé Sieyès' ringing phrases of 1789: "What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been till now in the Political Order? Nothing. What does it want to be? Something." Thus, in addition to the idea of non-alignment (discussed by Sauvy in the same article), in this use of the term we find neglect, exploitation, and revolutionary potential.

The essence of the original usage of the term 'Third World' was that poverty was seen as a symptom, rather than *the* cause of the commonality. What bound the countries of the Third World, despite their internal differences was not that they were, for most part, economically impoverished but that they all felt politically disempowered. They had only recently become part of an international system that they had no hand in shaping, over which they had limited influence or power, and which they considered unsympathetic to their interests. It was this system that they wished to change.²² Or to use Sauvy's metaphor: the 'ignored, exploited, scorned' countries of the world sought 'something'—they wanted 'to be recognized.'

The above discussion may seem archaic, but its purpose is merely to underscore the important point that the term 'Third World' originally evolved as

to describe the role of France independent of US foreign policy alliances. Also indicative of the use of 'third' in this term was the 'Third Way' movement in France of the mid-1950s which saw itself as the alternative 'third way' to NATO and Stalinist militarism (see Worsley, 1979; Otter, 1981).

21 The same sense of alienation and exclusion is depicted in the term "periphery" (i.e. that which is outside the mainstream) popularized in the literature on *dependencia* theory developed out of the 'historico-structuralism' of Raúl Prebisch and the United Nations' Economic Commission for Latin America. (See Prebisch, 1950; Packenham, 1992).

22 Hedley Bull (1984: 217) in reviewing the development of international relations in this century points out that "the dominance of the European or Western powers at the turn of the century was expressed in their superior economic and military power and in their commanding intellectual and cultural authority but also *in the rules and institutions of international society*" (*emphasis added*); he adds that "the rules of international law which then prevailed had been made, for the most part, by these European or Western states... they were also in substantial measure made for them" (*original emphasis*). Bull (pgs. 220-3) goes on to argue that after the Second World War a "revolt against Western dominance" became strong enough to shake this system, and this revolt was based on five themes: a) struggle for equal sovereignty; b) anti-colonial revolution; c) struggle for racial equality; d) struggle for economic justice; and e) struggle for cultural liberation.

a *political* concept.²³ As Allen H. Merriam (1988: 20) reminds us, the term is “more than merely a sociological designation, it connotes a psychological condition, a state of mind encompassing the hopes and aspirations of three-fourths of humanity.” It was as a political concept that it originally became popular amongst scholars and amongst leaders of the emerging South (see Lyon, 1984). However, over the years, the meaning of the term has dramatically changed: from a political to an economic connotation (Muni, 1979: 121-3; Mountjoy, 1980: 753). As a political concept, the expression “neither [denoted] an inferior value structure, nor a descending numerical order” (Muni, 1979: 128). As an economic concept it has been corrupted to imply exactly that.

This is not to suggest that ‘Third World’ as a concept of simple economic gradation is without validity. Indeed, poverty is a major commonality of the nations we are concerned with here; it is also the major banner used by these nations in attempting to articulate their demands.²⁴ As an economic term ‘Third World’ has become an important, and useful, concept. But it no longer does justice to the political essence of what it originally implied. That essence is now best captured by the term ‘South.’ Since this thesis considers the political essence to be important, it will use the later term.²⁵ In some cases quotations from earlier authors use the term ‘Third World,’ it is important in these cases, to remember that the term is used in its original political sense.

WHAT WE MEAN BY ‘SOUTH’

For its proponents, and for the purpose of this study, the term ‘South’ implies not just a commonality, but a bond. The South Commission’s report, *The Challenge to the South* (1990), essentially echoes the views of the earlier Brandt

²³ What Keith Buchanan (1963) described as a “fellowship of the dispossessed” (*quoted in Worsley, 1979: 104*).

²⁴ However, note that the poverty aspect is also evoked in a political context. An excellent example is Julius Nyerere’s (1980: 7) description of the G77 as “the trade union of the poor”. The fact that he uses the decidedly political context of a trade union implies the intrinsically political nature of the coalition, as opposed to, say, the group of the 77 *poorest* countries, which the group is not and was never meant to be. This point will be further explored in later chapters.

²⁵ Even in advocating this term, it is recognized that Rothstein (1977: 48) is correct in suggesting that “on the broadest level there are so many underdeveloped countries, and there are so many differences between them, that any single label is bound to be misleading.” Our argument, however, is that of all the available labels ‘South’ describes our intent, of the political unity of the developing countries, best.

Commission (1980: 32) which had pointed out that the South's "solidarity in global negotiations stems from the awareness of being dependent on the North, and unequal with it." In many ways, the current usage of the term 'South' denotes what 'Third World' implied in its original, early form: a distinct sense of being dependent and unequal. It is erroneous to consider 'South' as another alternative term used to refer to what are essentially economic concepts: 'developing countries', 'less developed countries', or simply 'poor countries'.²⁶ As Roger Hansen (1980: 1105-6), a leading scholar of the North-South conflict, points out in a still relevant analysis:

It is increasingly misleading to equate North and South with rich and poor countries, industrialized and nonindustrialized countries, developed and underdeveloped countries. Each group contains states of enormous diversity by all economic measures.... [W]hile economic issues remain a central ingredient, they are only one of several fundamental elements in the North-South conflict. Like "the North," "the South" is a label given meaning not by the degree to which those countries share economic characteristics but by the decision of those countries to act as a diplomatic unit coordinating a large measure of their international activity. Properly used, the label "South" applies to a readily observable process in today's international politics, and not to an analytical categorization of countries based on relative levels of economic development.

Williams (1993: 9) argues that, even today, the South is still "essentially a political coalition":

Efforts to depict the Third World as an economic or cultural concept mistakenly attempt to reduce political behavior to a non-political explanation.... The unity of these countries arises, in the first place, from the inability of these states to exert significant influence on world events.... [M]aterial weakness and an inability to influence policy making provides a powerful stimulus of an alliance of the powerless.... [The] international division between the 'haves' and 'have-nots', did not by itself create the coalition although it established necessary conditions for bringing it into existence.

It is critical, therefore, to remember that the Southern coalition is bonded together not just in a common desire for economic justice, but in a shared demand for fundamental restructuring of international institutions and regimes.²⁷ In *The Poverty Curtain*, Mahbub-ul-Haq (1976: 167) stresses that

²⁶ In fact, Sabri-Abdalla (1980: 42) considers the term 'developing nations' as "nothing but a myth" and sees the South as "a fact of history and [of] the present World Order." Berger (1994: 260) cites Arturo Escobar as arguing that "to represent the Third World as 'underdeveloped' is less a statement about 'facts' than the setting up of a regime of truth through which the Third World is inevitably known, intervened on, and managed."

²⁷ The word 'regime' is used here in the sense defined by Krasner (1985: 4), as "principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge." He goes on to explain (pg. 5) that "changes in regimes can alter the control and allocation of resources among actors in the international system."

the struggle of the Southern coalition is against “systemic discrimination”; as such “the basic struggle is for equality of opportunity, not equality of income.”²⁸ On a similar note, though in making a different argument, Stephen Krasner (1985: 27) argues that Southern solidarity is motivated by political power and control as much as by economic wealth and development; that “vulnerability, not simple poverty” is the motivating force for the Southern coalition.²⁹

It is this larger concept of the South that this thesis embraces. As the following chapters will attempt to demonstrate, the behavior of the developing countries in international environmental policy arena becomes more understandable once such a broader, political, appreciation of their coalition and their priorities is recognized. Moreover, this broader conception is critical to making sense of the North-South politics of sustainable development. It begins to point towards the conclusion that operationalizing sustainable development is not merely about technical or market ‘fixes’, it is ultimately about reconciling deep-rooted normative differences between industrialized and developing countries about how the international system—including the international environmental system—is organized.

²⁸ That the South is, in fact, calling for systemic change has been obvious to the North all along. Writing in his 1979 book *Contemporary International Law: A Concise Introduction*, Werner Levi (pg. 274) lamented that “the division between developed and developing states has already disadvantageously affected the international legal system, and it is likely to do so in the near future. The reasons are, first, that the developing states are changing their tactics from making demands in international forums to assuming active roles in international institutions; they are trying to use international law to obtain a greater share in the world’s wealth; and above all and affecting everything else, the developed and the developing states take two totally different approaches to the regulation of their relationship.”

²⁹ Krasner’s (1985) study starts with the question: “What do Third World countries want?” (pg. 3). His assumption that “Third World states, like all states in the international system, are concerned about vulnerability and threat” (pg. 3), leads him to the conclusion that “Third World states want power and control as much as wealth” (pg. 3). He argues that “North-South conflict is endemic” because the power gap is already so great that vulnerability will persist (pg. 294). His prescription, then, is that “the international system would be more stable and less conflictual if the North and the South had less to do with each other” (pg. 30). Interestingly, the very last sentence of the book simply states that, “[T]here are some problems for which there are no solutions” (pg. 314).

#3

The institutional face of the South

*Before I built a wall
I'd ask to know
What I was walling in
Or walling out ...*
— ROBERT FROST

As the previous chapter demonstrates, the South is not—nor has it ever been—a simple concept to define analytically. Having said that, however, the wide acceptance and growing use of the term implies that even where the ‘South’ defies precise definition, it enjoys general recognition. Nowhere is this recognition more concretely manifest than in the institutional face of the South.

Institutionally, the international Southern coalition consists of two distinct organizations, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G77). While distinct in their objectives, organizational structures, and competencies, the two organizations demonstrate a degree of convergence in their membership and concerns, and may be considered “separate parts of a single coalition” (Williams, 1993: 11; *see also*, Hansen, 1980). Even though the

memberships of the two organizations do not mirror each other, the overlap between the 113 full members of NAM and 131 full members of G77 translates into informal as well as formal coordination (see Boxes 2 and 3).³⁰

The roles played by the two in furthering the agenda of the South have been distinct, though complimentary. According to Sauvart (1981a: 5), “while the Non-Aligned Countries [have] played a key role in making the development issue a priority item of the international agenda, the Group of 77 has become the principal organ of the Third World through which the concrete actions... are negotiated within the framework of the United Nations system.” This reflects the decision taken at the 1973 NAM Algiers Summit to entrust the pursuit of economic objectives to the G77, with NAM acting as a “catalytic force” focusing on the political environment within which such goals could be achieved.³¹

As a generalization, NAM’s rationale is primarily political while G77 is more focused on economic issues.³² This is obviously a rough generalization, and the agendas of the two have been converging over the years.³³ However, the

³⁰ A recent example of such coordination is the Joint Coordinating Committee established at the 10th NAM Summit in 1992. Point 17 of the “Jakarta Message” adopted at the 10th NAM Summit—held at Jakarta, Indonesia, in September 1992—states, in part: “We see South-South cooperation as vital for promoting our own development and reducing undue dependence on the North...we consider the coordination of our [i.e. NAM’s] efforts and strategies with the Group of 77 of crucial importance through the establishment of a Joint Coordinating Committee.” Subsequently, both groups have continued to work together on a number of issues including formulating common positions on issues such as the restructuring of the UN system and the UN Development Agenda (Raghavan, 1995).

³¹ See, *Fundamental Texts, IVth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, Algiers, September, 1973* (pg. 87). Cited in Searwar (1988: 10 ff4).

³² It is important not to confuse the distinction between *economic* and *political* here with that made earlier while discussing the term Third World. Both NAM and G77 are inherently political institutions, seeking the inherently political goal of structural change in the international system. It is merely that NAM has tended to focus more on power (or ‘high’) politics, while G77 concentrates on the (‘low’) politics of economics and development.

³³ Thomas G. Weiss, a longtime observer and scholar of North-South dialogue, believes that today the NAM and G77 are less distinct in their agendas and they now tend to focus on the same economic issues (*personal communication*). Searwar (1988: 12), however, insists that “nearly all economic issues are negotiated by the G77 and all political ones by NAM.” The distinction is certainly not as clearly defined as Searwar assumes it to be but nor have the mandates converged entirely. Indeed, the NAM has begun to focus more on issues of economic development, especially in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War (see reports of recent NAM Summits: Raghavan, 1992b; Ferrer, 1995). However, the broad political/economic distinction between the two remains essentially intact; even when NAM addresses economic issues, it tends to focus much more on their political dimension. The continuing validity of this distinction is best demonstrated in the recent debates about the various environmental regimes and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty regime—in the first case, G77 has been the principal voice of the South; in the later it has been NAM. As another example, consider the fact that a special report commissioned for the 10th NAM Summit held at Jakarta in 1992 (South Centre, 1992) was still trying to make a passionate plea that it is critically important for NAM to have an economic agenda because it is a prerequisite for achieving NAM’s political goals. The report insisted

distinction is still important in that NAM's mandate has been to seek a 'new international political order,' while that of G77 has been to work towards a 'new international economic order.' NAM, therefore, has been defined as the "political voice" of the South, and G77 as its "economic voice" (Hansen, 1979: 20; *also see* Sauvart, 1981a: 13; Searwar, 1988).

These mandates are themselves historical constructs and need to be understood in that context. The following sections will review the evolution, achievement and institutional structures of these two organizations which collectively represent the institutional face of the South. This is followed by an assessment of the efficacy of these institutions and a review of recent institutional developments, particularly the establishment of the South Centre, which has grown out of the Report of the South Commission (1990) and which, although not a coordinating 'South Secretariat', is the nearest thing there is to it.

THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM)

EVOLUTION: Although its roots can be traced to earlier anti-colonial movements, the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference held at Bandung, Indonesia, is generally recognized as the defining event for NAM, and for the South as a coalition.³⁴ Twenty-nine countries from Africa and Asia participated officially, as did representatives from many liberation and nationalist movements.³⁵ The principle of "abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any big powers,"³⁶ which was to become the defining feature of NAM, was first articulated at Bandung. The ensuing heated

that "success in achieving greater global economic *and* political balance is a decisive determinant of peace and security" (pg. 4) and that it is necessary "to recognize the linkage between the economic and political platform of the movement... a choice between a political and an economic agenda is not, therefore, a valid option for NAM" (pg. 9). The report was obviously addressing a NAM leadership not fully convinced about the efficacy of pursuing a vigorous economic agenda.

³⁴ Jansen (1966) and Rajamoorthy (1992) consider the 1947 Asian Relations Conference held in India, as the first landmark in the evolution of NAM. With most of the South still under colonial rule, the conference was held as a nongovernmental meeting attended by 230 delegates from 28 countries. Many were leaders of independence movements and were to become future leaders of Asia.

³⁵ Countries in attendance included: Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Peoples' Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, State of Vietnam, and Yemen.

³⁶ This was Principle 6 in what became known as "the 10 principles of Bandung."

debate on the concept of 'non-alignment' remains the most enduring legacy of the conference and was to convert what, till then, was a regional grouping into a cross-regional one. (See Jansen, 1966; Sharma, 1969; Rajamoorthy, 1992).³⁷

This was an era characterized by new states gaining political independence from colonial rule, a scramble amongst the superpowers for establishing 'spheres of influence,' and a growing concern amongst these new states that a world divided by the ideological animosities of the Cold War would only subvert their own hard-won independence.³⁸

The debate on non-alignment was, therefore, both important and divisive. What it did, however, was to convert a regional grouping of African and Asian states into a political alliance of self-avowedly 'non-aligned' nations. In the process, some who were present at Bandung decided not to join the ranks of what later became NAM.³⁹ However, the transformation from an Afro-Asian *coalition* into a non-aligned *movement* did mean that new allies from Latin America and Europe could now be inducted. Prime Minister Nehru of India and President Soekarno of Indonesia, who had advocated non-alignment at Bandung, were joined in the following years by President Nasser of Egypt, Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, and President Nkrumah of Ghana in championing the concept.

It was under the leadership of these five that a Summit Conference was convened at Belgrade, Yugoslavia in September 1961.⁴⁰ With leaders of 27 countries—including Cuba and Yugoslavia—in attendance, the founders of NAM sought to maintain their own independence and at the same time provide a principled response to the prevailing bipolar international order. The defining motivation remained a rejection of domination and dependence, one summed up by former Zambian President, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda: "we wish to be free to

³⁷ For a comprehensive record of the activities of NAM in its early years see *The Third World Without Superpowers: The Collected Documents of the Non-Aligned Countries* (4 volumes) edited by Odette Jankowitsch and Karl P. Sauvant (1978).

³⁸ For a useful discussion on the impact of decolonization on international affairs see chapter #3 in *Worlds Apart: The North-South Divide and the International System*, by Nassau A. Adams (1993).

³⁹ Most notably China and Japan.

⁴⁰ The Belgrade Summit is generally considered to mark the official birth of NAM (see Rajamoorthy, 1993; Williams, 1993; Jansen, 1966). However, Geldart and Lyon (1980: 80 ff2) point out, "the term non-aligned *movement*... with its implication of continuity and forward looking purposefulness, was first used and only became appropriate from the early 1970s" (*original emphasis*).

make our own assessment in matters which affect us and having done so, to be able to make our decisions without pandering to the ideologies of any nation or bloc" (quoted in Rajamoorthy, 1992: 22).

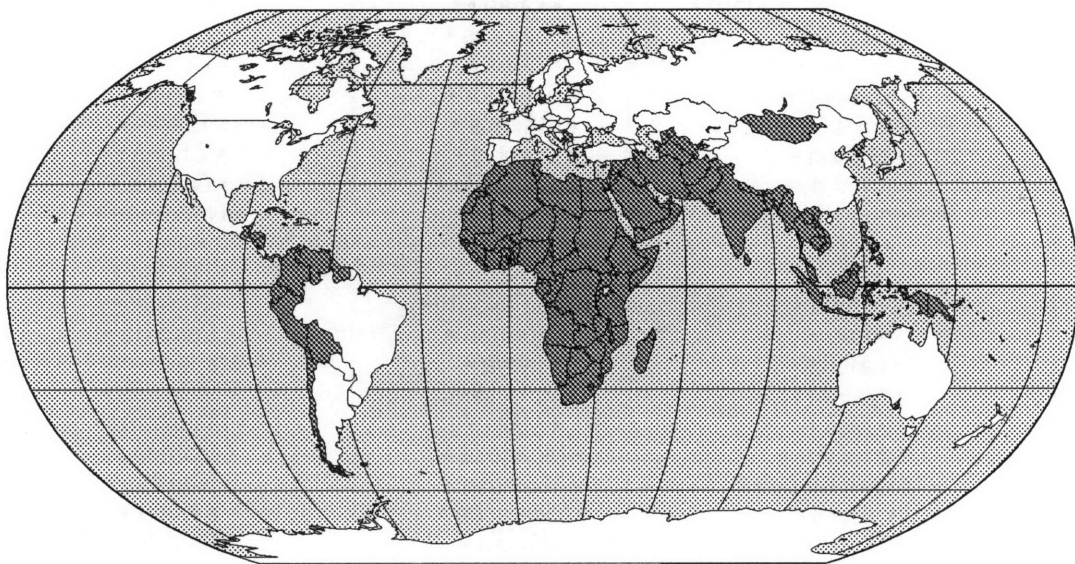
Box 2: Member states of the Non-Aligned Movement⁴¹

- Afghanistan •
- Bahamas •
- Barbados •
- Bhutan •
- Brunei Darussalam •
- Cambodia •
- Central African Republic •
- Colombia •
- Côte d'Ivoire •
- Djibouti •
- Equatorial Guinea •
- Gabon •
- Grenada •
- Guinea-Bissau •
- India •
- Iraq •
- Kenya •
- Lao •
- Liberia •
- Malawi •
- Mali •
- Mauritius •
- Mozambique •
- Nepal •
- Nigeria •
- Palestine •
- Peru •
- Rwanda •
- Saudi Arabia •
- Sierra Leone •
- South Africa •
- Suriname •
- Thailand •
- Trinidad & Tobago •
- Uganda •
- Vanuatu •
- Yemen •
- Algeria •
- Bahrain •
- Belize •
- Bolivia •
- Burkina Faso •
- Cameroon •
- Chad •
- Comoros •
- Cuba •
- Ecuador •
- Ethiopia •
- Gambia •
- Guatemala •
- Guyana •
- Indonesia •
- Jamaica •
- Korea (North) •
- Lebanon •
- Libya •
- Malaysia •
- Malta •
- Mongolia •
- Myanmar •
- Nicaragua •
- Oman •
- Panama •
- Philippines •
- St. Lucia •
- Senegal •
- Singapore •
- Sri Lanka •
- Swaziland •
- Tanzania •
- Tunisia •
- United Arab Emirates •
- Venezuela •
- Yugoslavia •
- Angola •
- Bangladesh •
- Benin •
- Botswana •
- Burundi •
- Cape Verde •
- Chile •
- Congo •
- Cyprus •
- Egypt •
- Eritrea •
- Ghana •
- Guinea •
- Honduras •
- Iran •
- Jordan •
- Kuwait •
- Lesotho •
- Madagascar •
- Maldives •
- Mauritania •
- Morocco •
- Namibia •
- Niger •
- Pakistan •
- Papua New Guinea •
- Qatar •
- Sao Tome and Principe •
- Seychelles •
- Somalia •
- Sudan •
- Syria •
- Togo •
- Turkmenistan •
- Uzbekistan •
- Viet Nam •
- Zaire •
- Zambia •
- Zimbabwe •

⁴¹ This list is complete as of April 1996. Turkmenistan was voted as a full member of NAM at the 1995 Summit meeting on Colombia while the applications of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Costa Rica were rejected (Ferrer, 1995). The membership of Yugoslavia has been suspended since 1992. For ease of readership the popular, as opposed to official, names of countries are used; for example, The Islamic Republic of Iran is listed only as Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as Korea (North), etc.

Since those heady days, eleven Summit meetings of Heads of State and Government have been held and NAM membership has risen to over 113 (Box 2; Map 1).⁴² An interesting recent development within NAM membership is the induction of a number of former Soviet states; something which G77 has been more hesitant in doing. Both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan are now full members, while Armenia, Azerbaijan, Croatia and Kyrgyztan have been given observer status.⁴³

Map 1: The World of NAM



The road for NAM has been far from smooth. Its relevance, never fully accepted by the Western powers, has come under serious internal question at least twice. The early 1980s saw the coalition fighting off internal threats to its continuity as member states repelled moves by the then Chair, Cuba, to promote the Soviet Union as the South's "natural ally."⁴⁴ The early 1990s have seen it successfully

⁴² NAM Summits have been held at Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1961); Cairo, Egypt (1964); Lusaka, Zambia (1970); Algiers, Algeria (1973); Colombo, Sri Lanka (1976); Havana, Cuba (1979); New Delhi, India (1983); Harare, Zimbabwe (1986); Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1989); Jakarta, Indonesia (1992); and Cartagena de Indias, Colombia (1995).

⁴³ Observer status has been given to: Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Brazil, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Dominica, El Salvador, Kyrgyztan, Mexico and Uruguay. Guest status has been granted to: Australia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

⁴⁴ Cedric Grant (1995: 575-6) points out that on top of the economic decline that marked the era, "political bickering and maneuvering within NAM in the late 1970s also severely tested the coherence of the Third World." He adds: "The most divisive issue was the attempt to radicalize NAM to the left. Cuba,

fighting off a similar challenge to its continuing validity, this time from the replacement of superpower bipolarity with unipolarity.⁴⁵

The resilience of NAM is, in large measure, a factor of its being an evolving institution; one that has had demonstrable impact in articulating and influencing the South's evolving agenda. Born in the 1950s as the anti-colonial voice of newly independent states, NAM began shifting its focus more towards economic issues in the 1970s. The fourth NAM Summit held in Algeria in September 1973 laid the political foundation of the South's demand for a New International Economic Order. The 1992 Summit saw the movement redirecting its focus more towards issues of environment and sustainable development. Similarly, the 1995 Summit in Colombia focused on the restructuring of the United Nations system and what this implied for the nations of the South.

ACHIEVEMENTS: NAM's achievements seem dismal if we take its rhetoric literally—i.e. its stated goal of substantively redirecting the path of global politics either by ensuring its own functional independence or by contributing to world peace through influencing a weakening of the bipolar system. Having said that, while it is tempting to write off NAM as irrelevant, it would be erroneous to do so (see Williams, 1993; Grant, 1995; McBeth, 1995). NAM's agenda has always been broader than its nomenclature. It has been a forum for the nations of the South to stress their common concerns for independence and sovereign equality, de-colonization and anti-racism, economic and social development, sovereignty over natural resources, cultural equality, universalism and multilateralism, and the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-use of force or the threat of force.

NAM's efficacy needs to be gauged not as much in the achievement of these goals, as in its ability to raise these issues at the international level. Hansen

which chaired the NAM from 1979 to 1983, promoted the view that the Soviet Union was 'the natural ally' of the movement. Several leaders poke openly against this thesis at the Havana summit, as a result of which no reference to 'a natural ally' found its way into the final declaration of the conference." Although the move was repelled, it did serve to further fuel the West's distrust of NAM.

⁴⁵ This is discussed below at greater length. There are those, like Chubin (1993: 91), who assert that "Non-alignment dies with the Cold War"; there are also others, like Grant (1995: 583), who insist that "that there is a role for the NAM is not in doubt." This thesis sides with the later view.

(1979: 123) points out that the solidarity of Southern nation's emerges from the "fear that unity is their only assurance of a seat at the present international diplomatic table." The validity—and the continuing relevance in the post war era—of this view was recently, and most explicitly, articulated by the incoming Chair of NAM, Colombian President Ernesto Samper (1995), in his address to the 11th NAM Summit meeting:

Co-operation among the countries of the developing world is not an option but an imperative *if we want to become actors on the world stage*, but above all if we want to endure as nations. (*Emphasis added*)

The durability of NAM through the turbulent 1980s, internal differences between member states, and the demise of the Cold War highlights the continuing value Southern leaders derive from the institution. This was demonstrated most strikingly at the 1992 Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia. What some had predicted to be a swan song for the organization turned into a rejuvenation.⁴⁶ Although the assembled Heads of State and government acknowledged the need for "a realistic reordering of priorities" in light of the changed global setting, the Summit was one of the most comprehensive in the organization's history—both in terms of attendance and the scope and depth of issues covered.

According to conference Chair, President Suharto of Indonesia, NAM was now "more than the voice of a collective conscience, and has evolved into a moral as well as political force that is capable of contributing substantially to the building of a new international order of stable peace, social justice, common prosperity and sustainable development." (Raghavan, 1992b). The 1992 Jakarta Summit was especially important for articulating a rationale for the organization's continued existence in a unipolar world (Misra, 1993). The South's view that "the desire to be independent is not dependent on the number of military blocs in existence at any given time," was most forcefully championed by Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr. Mahatir Mohammed (1992: 26):

How can we remain non-aligned when the two ideological adversaries have disappeared? Where before we had the option to defect to the other side, now we have none. Our new option is to submit or resist. Both involve a loss of leverage, and weak nations with no leverage can only become weaker.

⁴⁶ In fact, at a preparatory meeting for the Jakarta Summit, Egypt had proposed that with the Cold War having ended NAM should wind itself up and merge with G77. Instead, the leaders assembled at the conference came with a vociferous vindication of the utility of the movement even in a unipolar world.

Such a rearticulation of enduring NAM goals within the context of a unipolar world was not limited to a few outspoken leaders but was a striking feature of the entire meeting. For example, a preparatory report argued (South Centre, 1992: 1-2, 8):

For NAM... non-alignment was always a positive stand for peace, human rights, and an economically just world, which by inference meant a rejection of relationships which involved servitude and sacrifice of national self-interest by perpetuating injustice and inequity. The basic values and objectives of non-alignment not only remain valid in the current world, they need to be promoted and defend vigorously. This world is no less unjust, inequitable, unfair or dangerous than it used to be.... The logic of the developing countries working together has not weakened merely because East-West tensions have subsided. In fact, it was not the East-West divide but the desire of new states, mostly ex-colonies, to promote their common interests that lay at the origins of the Non-Aligned Movement. As long as the developing countries have interests of their own on the global political and economic scene the logic of collective action will remain valid.

The significance of the 1992 Jakarta Summit in the evolution of NAM is best summarized by Misra (1993: 14):

In the history of NAM the Jakarta Summit must be reckoned as a watershed. Without resorting to anti-Western rhetoric, the leaders made a sober and realistic assessment of the emerging international situation. *It was a moment of redefinition.* It was an occasion to take stock of their own possible role in world affairs.... The main contribution of the Summit, however, was that it helped in dissipating much of the uncertainty about the validity of non-alignment. The process of renewal was begun; the movement was back on the rails. *(Emphasis added).*

This process of revalidation was continued in Cartagena in 1995 where the new Chair, President Samper of Columbia, proclaimed that “never before has it been so clear that we cannot face the challenges of the new international balance individually” and that “our integration into the world cannot be a solitary, suicidal adventure” (Samper, 1995: 10-11). More important than the rearticulation of goals, however, is the redefinition of strategies. In his concluding address to the Summit, President Samper stressed the need for NAM to take “the step from confrontation to cooperation, from conflict to consensus, from individualism to solidarity”; this is a more sober, more pragmatic NAM: “We cannot continue complaining. We have to move from idealism to reality” (quoted in Ferrer, 1995: 25).

NAM's greatest achievement is its endurance as a platform where the leaders of the South can articulate their agenda. More than that, it has proved to be a forum where this agenda can evolve and respond to changing realities and

priorities. Furthermore, it has provided the weaker Southern states an opportunity to increase their participation in the international political economy beyond what the prevailing order would have otherwise permitted, while permitting the relatively stronger/larger states of the South to use the coalition's strength of numbers to enhance their own role in global politics.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE: If survival and redefinition have been the most outstanding successes of NAM, it may be because it has lacked any formal structure that might have imperiled its survival by resisting redefinition.

An instrument of political summitry, NAM meets every three years to renew (or redefine) its vows. Operating through ministerial committees the movement has no institutional infrastructure (except for the good offices of the Chairperson) to manage its activities through the interval between summits. The summits are held every three years, with meetings of foreign ministers held at eighteen-month intervals. Continuity is provided by the Chairperson-in-office (the Chair of the preceding summit), and a 'Bureau'—composed of permanent representatives to the United Nations at New York—that serves as a *de facto* 'steering committee' between major NAM ministerial conferences (Searwar, 1988: 10-11).

Although proposals to formalize the institutional arrangements have often been made, they have not resulted in much headway.⁴⁷ In part, the reluctance to 'institutionalize' itself formally has stemmed from the fear that rather than being an 'anti-bloc' movement, it would become a bloc in itself; or that it might be 'taken over' by particular states or groups of states from its own ranks (Ramphal, 1980: 18). However, the lack of continuity in domestic political systems of its member states, the unwieldy size of the coalition, and an absence of any institutional management structure has often led to the translation of genuine enthusiasm on the part of individual NAM leaders into inaction on the part of the movement as a whole.

Most recently, at the 1995 Summit, President Samper of Colombia vowed to make institutional development his "first commitment" as the new NAM

⁴⁷ These proposals, and their fate, are discussed in detail in later chapters.

Chairperson. A proposal from the outgoing Chair, President Suharto of Indonesia, was also accepted whereby a tripartite consultative group for NAM will be formed. The tripartite group is designed to improve continuity and coordination within NAM and will comprise of its recent, acting and succeeding chairpersons. (South Letter, 1995a: 13)

THE GROUP OF 77 (G77)

EVOLUTION: The Group of 77 (G77) has been defined by Julius Nyerere (1980: 7), former President of Tanzania, as the “trade union of the poor” and by Roger Hansen (1979: 90) as “the most dynamic of the developing-country institutions.”⁴⁸ Although it emerged around the same time as NAM, G77 has its own distinctive origins and, unlike NAM, was born within—and primarily as a result of—the changing composition of the United Nations in the 1960s.

The 1955 Bandung conference was a protest over the failure to achieve enough de-colonization since 1947-8 and the reduction of the United Nations into an arena for Cold War sparring. By the turn of the decade, however, the flavor of the UN had changed.⁴⁹ Geldart and Lyon (1980: 82) explain:

From January 1950 to November 1955 there was a deadlock within the United Nations system on the question of new members, and none secured admission. Then in December 1955 a tactic Soviet-American bargain enabled sixteen new members to join simultaneously and the doors of the United Nations were henceforth in principle open for further new members, so much so that in 1960 alone seventeen newly independent states were admitted—sixteen of them from Africa. Thus between 1955 and the early 1960s the basic political composition and character of plenary United Nations gatherings changed from being predominantly NATO-like to become more markedly Afro-Asian, even Third World, in character.

The new UN composition meant that newly independent, developing, and non-aligned nations (the three terms almost identified the same countries) had a majority in the General Assembly. While this group of nations was fraught with ideological, political, and even economic differences, the commonality in aspirations outweighed the differences. Although impeded by their unwieldy

⁴⁸ For a comprehensive record of the documents of the G77 in its formative years, see *The Third World without Superpowers, 2nd Ser.: The Collected Documents of the Group of 77*, (6 volumes) edited by Karl P. Sauvant (1981b).

⁴⁹ Arguably with some positive impact from the still nascent non-aligned movement (Sharma, 1969).

size and lack of experience in (or resources for) coalition politics, this unlikely group surprised—and annoyed—the major Western powers by incessantly demanding, and sometimes obtaining, more UN focus on issues of concern to them (see Sharma, 1969; Sauvant, 1981a; McDonald, 1982; Adams, 1993).

The most important such issue was that of international trade; particularly, commodity trade. Under the intellectual leadership of Raúl Prebisch, the dynamic and influential head of the UN's Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and later the first secretary general of UNCTAD, the developing countries became increasingly convinced that existing economic institutions placed the South at a systemic trading disadvantage, that their poverty and 'peripheral' status was historically defined, and that the only solution was to structurally change the international economic system. They considered the existing international economic organizations—particularly the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)—to be instruments of Northern interests and unsympathetic to their developmental concerns. They sought, therefore, an international trade organization controlled directly by the UN—an organization where they were in majority and over which, they believe, they could exert greater influence. (See Gosovic, 1972; Pakenham, 1992; Adams, 1993)

In revitalizing the call for an International Trade Organization in the early 1960s, the developing countries were, in fact, demanding a structural change that could accommodate their strength of votes as well as their concerns; Western industrialized countries, on the other hand, preferred to rely on existing instruments.⁵⁰ The result of this tussle was the 1964 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which was convened as a "second-best compromise" for everyone, and has since become an

⁵⁰ Ironically, the recently concluded Uruguay Round of GATT provides for the creation of a World Trade Organization (WTO), this time at the behest of the North. However, despite the similarity in nomenclature, original proponents of the International Trade Organization would arguably find the now proposed structure lacking for reasons not dissimilar to their original concerns about GATT (See Jackson, 1989). It is equally ironic that GATT, designed as a provisional structure, has flourished where more permanent organizations have not. As Geldart and Lyon (1980) remark, this "confirm(s) once again the truth of that French saying that nothing endures so much as the provisional."

institutionalized series of conferences.⁵¹ The conference is considered to be of “seminal importance” in the evolution of North-South dialogue (Adams, 1993: 90) and it was there that the Group of 77 was officially born. Geldart and Lyon (1980: 85) recount:

The first manifesto of the proto-G77 was released on October 18, 1963 in the UN General Assembly... when 75 member-states jointly sponsored a resolution entitled ‘Joint Declaration of the Developing Countries’. The 75 endorsed with enthusiasm the opportunity offered by the forthcoming Geneva conference [UNCTAD-I] as, ‘conducive to the development of their economies and to the integrated growth of the world economy as a whole’.... Twenty-one of these sponsoring states were from Latin America and the Caribbean, thirty-one from Africa, and twenty from Asia and the Middle East; the remaining three of the seventy-five were Cyprus, New Zealand and Yugoslavia.... During the three-month-long proceedings of UNCTAD-I in Geneva, from March to June 1964, this informal group of 75 became the Group of 77 when Kenya, South Korea and South Vietnam added their signatures to the Group’s Joint Declaration... and New Zealand withdrew...

UNCTAD-I came at a time of rising optimism and expectations in the South.⁵² A large number of countries had just gained independence, especially in Africa; developing countries were beginning to make their presence felt in international fora; and the industrialized world finally seemed to be responding.⁵³ This enthusiasm and the commonality of their aspirations allowed the new nations to

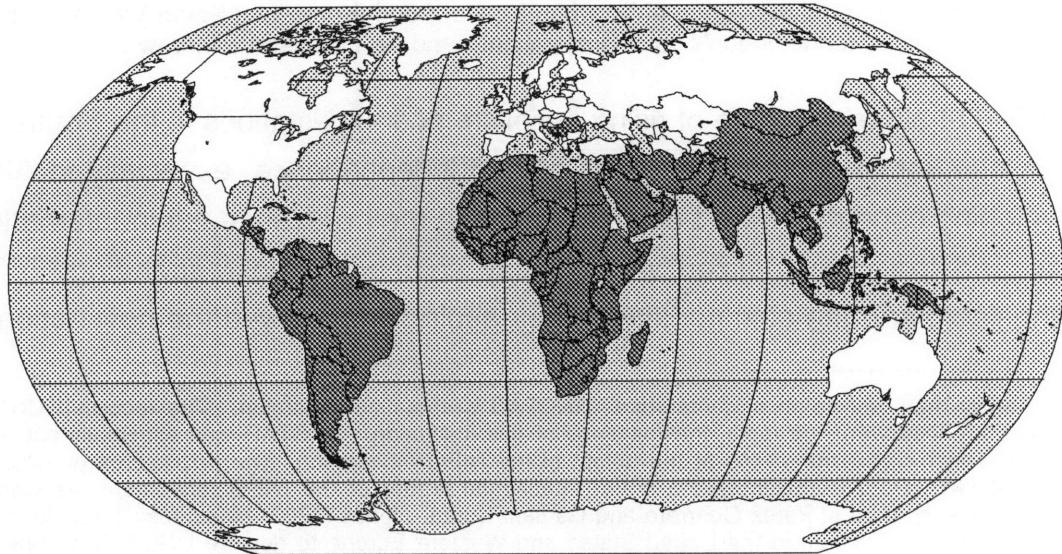
⁵¹ Rather than just being a ‘conference’, UNCTAD became an institution. The recurrent UNCTAD conferences were, de facto, the meetings of this institution. UNCTAD was especially active and influential during the 1970s at the height of the NIEO movement. The first secretary general of UNCTAD, Raúl Prebisch was a major intellectual leader of the NIEO movement, as were his successors Manuel Pérez Guerrero and Gamani Corea. Jones (1983: 28) writes: “It has long been conventional wisdom in the United States and Western Europe to deplore UNCTAD as unwieldy, unnecessary, and ineffective, yet it has undoubtedly been the central institution of the North-South dialogue over the past twenty years.” For insightful commentaries (although different takes) on the development of UNCTAD and the pivotal role this institution and its secretariat has played in North-South relations see Gosovic (1972) and Weiss (1986a).

⁵² Sauvart (1981a: 2) emphasizes the importance of UNCTAD-I to the South: For the first time, the Third World *as a whole* had participated in the elaboration of a comprehensive set of measures. Accordingly, ‘new’ was the theme of the ‘Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven’: UNCTAD-I was recognized as a significant step towards ‘creating a new and just world economic order’; the basic premises of the ‘new order’ were seen to involve ‘a new international division of labor’ and the adoption of ‘a new and dynamic international policy for trade and development’ was expected to facilitate the formulation of ‘new policies by the Governments of both developed and developing countries in the context of a new awareness of the needs of the developing countries’. Finally, a ‘new machinery’ was considered necessary to serve as an institutional focal point for the continuation of the work initiated by the conference.” The institutionalization of UNCTAD as an organ of the UN General Assembly became that machinery. (*See also*, Gosovic, 1972; Adams, 1993).

⁵³ For most part, the North responded under duress. The new-found unity of the South caught the industrialized countries by surprise and it was the South’s unity (and the support it elicited from the East Europeans) more than any genuine desire for compromise, that resulted in the North’s conceding to the creation of UNCTAD as a permanent mechanism (Gosovic, 1968; Sauvart, 1981a). Having said that, however, the spirit of enthusiasm and coalition building was not restricted to the South alone. In 1960 OPEC was formed; in 1961 the OECD came into being with the formal ending of Marshall Aid and the disbandment of the Organization of European Economic Cooperation (EEC); and the first Yaoundé conventions were held in 1962-63.

overlook and circumvent their internal differences. In a remarkable show of solidarity they arrived at Geneva as a single bloc, which by its sheer strength of numbers could no longer be ignored. This coalition of 77, otherwise disparate, nations was remarkable not only because it actually did speak with one voice, but also because it effectively changed (albeit temporarily) the direction of international polity (see Gosovic, 1972; Sauvart, 1981a). As Marc Williams (1993: 13) records, UNCTAD-I “was the first conference at which the North-South divide took precedence over the East-West division.”

Map 2: The World of G77 plus China



Emanating from a shared perception of powerlessness in the face of deteriorating economic conditions of the 1950s, G77 was designed as a pressure group to demand changes in the structure of the international economy, particularly with respect to primary commodities which were the mainstay of many Southern countries.⁵⁴ Created as a Southern caucus for UNCTAD, the coalition’s substantive business was principally directed to UNCTAD until 1971. Through the late 1960’s, UNCTAD allowed the G77 to become “the most comprehensively authentic voice of the Third World” and the

⁵⁴ For many countries, particularly in Africa, this is still so. For example, according to UN estimates, in 1988 coffee constituted 94.8% of Uganda’s exports; crude petroleum was 94.6% of Nigeria’s; ores and concentrates were 90.6% of Guinea’s; copper was 90% of Zambia’s; coffee was 81.5% and 80.% for Burundi and Rwanda respectively. Similarly, diamonds were 77.7% of Botswana’s exports, live animals 76.5 of Somalia’s; and sugar and honey 64.9% of Mauritius’s. (Bello, 1989)

UNCTAD Secretariat in Geneva came to be seen as a principal voice and *de facto* secretariat for the G77. (See Gosovic, 1972; Geldart and Lyon, 1980; Sauvart, 1981a; Weiss, 1986a and 1986b).

The period 1971-74 has been described as the “watershed years” for G77 (Geldart and Lyon, 1980: 91). The raging world monetary crisis, rising global inflation, further expansions in G77 membership, the decision by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to quadruple oil price,⁵⁵ the disastrous US performance in Vietnam, and the onset of détente diplomacy set the stage for the G77’s thrust for, what became known as, the New International Economic Order (NIEO). These were the heydays of Southern unity: NAM and G77 were in sync; OPEC seemed to demonstrate that unity could bestow power to the powerless;⁵⁶ the “Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States” was accepted at the UN General Assembly where the numerical strength of the G77 allowed it to win many victories over the industrialized countries in a number of resolutions; efforts to split the coalition over the oil issue were successfully repelled; and, finally, the North was forced into negotiations which it had so stridently resisted.

The euphoria, however, was short-lived. The changed economic and political climate of the 1980s left the NIEO movement, the hopes it had generated, and the solidarity it had fostered, much bruised (Adams, 1993). At the twentieth anniversary of UNCTAD (and the G77), Thomas Weiss (1986a) was pointing out that “the impression that the Group of 77 had a kind of countervailing power has been exposed for its emptiness” (pg. 2) and that the G77’s “numerical superiority is insufficient to compensate for its lack of economic power and bring about significant concessions from the ‘haves’” (pg. 155). Even the G77 itself acknowledges that despite the great (false) starts, “the entire North-South

55 What has been called the first “OPECalyse” by some journalists.

56 For the developing countries rising oil prices spelled pain that was as excruciating, if not more, as that inflicted on the industrialized countries. However, the developing countries saw in the event the hope that if united they could also band together in cartels of primary products and jack up the prices of these commodities to their ‘true’ levels. Also, the oil producers were careful to articulate their demands not merely in the context of oil exports but in the general terms of commodity exports. Thomas (1987: 3) points out that “those state in the Third World which suffered as a result of the [oil price rise], championed OPEC; the price rise were seen as a victory for the Third World.” Not surprisingly, the 1970s saw a hectic spree of commodity cartel formation; the 1980s, however, saw the carcasses of these cartels rotting in neglect and failure. (See Adams, 1993: 106-43).

dialogue was brought to a virtual standstill" by the end of the 1980s (G77, 1994: 12). Moreover, many believe that there is little hope of it being revived:

There is clearly no hope of reviving the North-South dialogue in the sense in which we have known it. The underlying basis no longer exists. The North, led as firmly as ever by the US, is now much too confident of itself, and much too complacent and self-satisfied with their achievements, both in successfully carrying forward the process of growth in their own economies and in successfully beating back past attempts by developing countries to bring about changes in the system, to contemplate wasting time even in listening to the complaints of the South, much less to engage in dialogue about reforms to the system. The South, beaten and in disarray, is in no mood to put up a fight. (Adams, 1993: 238-9)

ACHIEVEMENTS: Despite the widely prevalent sense that the South in general, and the G77 in particular, has failed in achieving its goals the coalition has refused to die. If anything, the 1990s has witnessed a mini-resurrection both of the South as a concept and the G77 as an institution. After the dormancy of the 1980s the new spate of global conference diplomacy has (once again) seen the G77 emerge as an influential and authentic voice of the global South.⁵⁷

While the persistent inability of the G77 in achieving its goals has been a source of concern to the leadership of the South it has not been a reason to disband the group because not only have the underlying common interests that brought the developing countries together under the banner of the G77 remained unmet—they have also remained unchanged. This reflects both a failure in having these goals met and a constancy of purpose in wanting to address them. Furthermore, in the absence of any other alternative, the ability of the G77 to at least provide a platform from which the South can articulate its concerns is in itself reason enough for the group to be viewed as an attractive option. An editorial in the *South Letter* (1994: 1) defends the rationale for continuity:

Individual developing countries, even the most powerful and influential, count for very little in the grossly uneven match with powerful nations of the North, a North which seems to act in unison on all major North-South issues. Lopsided global power relations are unlikely to bring peace and prosperity to the bulk of the world's population. Thus, a strong and effective Group of 77 is needed as much as, if not more than, ever to articulate and defend the interests and views of close to four fifths of the world's population—views and interests which otherwise would be ignored.

⁵⁷ Recent international conferences at which the G77 has played an influential role include the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; the 1993 United Nations Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna, Austria; the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo, Egypt; and the 1995 World Summit on Social Development held in Copenhagen, Denmark. An important aspect of this new wave of G77 activism is that it is restricted not only to trade but to more expansively defined concept of development, including environmentally sustainable development.

Box 3: Member states of the Group of 77⁵⁸

- Afghanistan •
- Antigua & Barbuda •
- Bahrain •
- Belize •
- Bolivia •
- Brazil •
- Burundi •
- Cape Verde •
- Chile •
- Congo •
- Cuba •
- Dominica •
- Egypt •
- Ethiopia •
- Gambia •
- Guatemala •
- Guyana •
- India •
- Iraq •
- Kenya •
- Kuwait •
- Lesotho •
- Madagascar •
- Maldives •
- Marshall Islands •
- Micronesia •
- Mozambique •
- Nepal •
- Nigeria •
- Palestine •
- Paraguay •
- Qatar •
- Samoa •
- Senegal •
- Singapore •
- South Africa •
- St. Lucia •
- Suriname •
- Tanzania •
- Tonga •
- Uganda •
- Vanuatu •
- Yemen •
- Algeria •
- Argentina •
- Bangladesh •
- Benin •
- Bosnia-Herzegovina •
- Brunei Darussalam •
- Cambodia •
- Central African Republic •
- Colombia •
- Costa Rica •
- Cyprus •
- Dominican Republic •
- El Salvador •
- Fiji •
- Ghana •
- Guinea •
- Haiti •
- Indonesia •
- Jamaica •
- Korea (North) •
- Lao •
- Liberia •
- Malawi •
- Mali •
- Mauritania •
- Mongolia •
- Myanmar •
- Nicaragua •
- Oman •
- Panama •
- Peru •
- Romania •
- Sao Tome and Principe •
- Seychelles •
- Solomon Islands •
- Sri Lanka •
- St. Vincent & Grenadines •
- Swaziland •
- Thailand •
- Trinidad & Tobago •
- United Arab Emirates •
- Venezuela •
- Yugoslavia •
- Angola •
- Bahamas •
- Barbados •
- Bhutan •
- Botswana •
- Burkina Faso •
- Cameroon •
- Chad •
- Comoros •
- Côte d'Ivoire •
- Djibouti •
- Ecuador •
- Equatorial Guinea •
- Gabon •
- Grenada •
- Guinea-Bissau •
- Honduras •
- Iran •
- Jordan •
- Korea (South) •
- Lebanon •
- Libya •
- Malaysia •
- Malta •
- Mauritius •
- Morocco •
- Namibia •
- Niger •
- Pakistan •
- Papua New Guinea •
- Philippines •
- Rwanda •
- Saudi Arabia •
- Sierra Leone •
- Somalia •
- St. Kitts and Nevis •
- Sudan •
- Syria •
- Togo •
- Tunisia •
- Uruguay •
- Viet Nam •
- Zaire •
- Zambia •
- Zimbabwe •

⁵⁸ This list is complete as of April 1996. The membership of Yugoslavia has been suspended and it cannot participate in the activities of the G77. China, although not a full member of the G77 is an associate member and most resolutions of the group in the UN are introduced on behalf of "the group of 77 and China." For ease of readership this list uses the popular, as opposed to official, names of countries; for example, The Islamic Republic of Iran is listed only as Iran, the Republic of Korea as Korea (South), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as Korea (North), etc.

The shared views on international economic justice and the belief that unity might bestow power to the powerless that had first crystallized the coalition have sustained it through the turbulent 1980s and beyond. Despite the failure to negotiate desired change, the ranks of G77 have swelled to a current membership of 131 (Box 3; Map 2). In large part, this is because “the initial reasons for the formation of the coalition, i.e. individual weakness to pursue national goals, Western indifference or negativism to suggested reform, the existence of an institutional channel of communication which augmented the trend to mass aggregation and the persistence of economic weakness, has helped to maintain the coalition and increase its attractiveness.” (Williams, 1993: 13).

As Cedric Grant (1995: 576) points out, in view of the weakened state of the South in international relations by the end of the 1980s it is easy to forget that South had earlier exerted considerable influence in international affairs:

Many advances achieved by the UN in the 1960s and 1970s were due to collective action and moral pressure by the developing countries, through the NAM and its twin institutions, the Group of 77. These countries increasingly determined the issues for the UN agenda and influenced their outcome. They were at the forefront of promoting international cooperation to deal with issues of global concern including apartheid, decolonization, development, disarmament and the Law of the Sea.

That the NIEO never achieved its goals notwithstanding, the very fact that the initiative was able to gather as much steam as it did in the political environment of the 1970s is no mean achievement. Particularly within the UN system, the G77 has exerted great influence in the agenda setting stages—while it has not often succeeded in having its concerns redressed, it has had remarkable success in having them placed on the table. Similarly, although instances where the South has had its preferred options accepted may be few, its institutions have had not inconsequential successes in shaping final compromises; most recently so in the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and at the 1995 review and extension conference of parties to the treaty on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons:⁵⁹

⁵⁹ The South's, especially G77's, role at UNCED is discussed in detail in chapter #5. The essential argument is that while the G77 was extremely influential in shaping the agenda of the conference and left deep imprints on the final documents, its gains were 'negative' in that it was far more successful in blocking the options it did not prefer (e.g. a global treaty on tropical forests) than it was in crafting its preferences into concrete decisions (e.g. large scale global transfers of technology and resources).

In short, despite its persistent structural limitations and its modest accomplishments, the G77 has been a legitimate and not uninfluential player in multilateral diplomacy. Born as a temporary caucus group for the first UNCTAD conference, it has been an authentic voice for the developing countries in the UN system. While the G77 may not have achieved the radical systemic change that it envisioned, it has won valuable concessions and small victories on a number of issues at these and such fora. Not least of these is its own survival and acceptance as an enduring player in the international polity.

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURE: The G77 evolved simultaneously with the UN group system which, as institutionalized for UNCTAD-I, lumped Africa and Asia (plus Yugoslavia) in Group A, the Western alliance in Group B, Latin America in Group C, and East Europe in Group D. Essentially, Groups A and C formed an alliance that grew up to become G77.⁶⁰ In its own operational structuring, the G77 has taken this regional system and built an organizational template around it. G77 functions through three constituent regional fora—Africa, Asia, and Latin America.⁶¹ This is a strategy for diversity management which allows each region within the alliance the ‘voice’ and the opportunity to have its views heard.⁶² Each group arrives at a regional consensus which is then aggregated into the general G77 position by full consensus.⁶³

In the case of extending the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, it was NAM, rather than the G77 which was the instrumental Southern institution. Influential members of the South were able to create a virtual deadlock because they were unsatisfied with the disarmament efforts of the nuclear powers and the excesses of the undeclared nuclear states, especially Israel. Grant (1995: 584-5) argues that it was the newfound diplomatic prowess of South Africa, a new member of NAM, rather than any ‘creative arm-twisting’ on the part of the US that was instrumental in crafting the final compromise.

60 The regional group system in the UN was introduced in 1957 to ensure “a balanced geographical distribution among its members.” Five groups were then introduced: Asian and African States (later separated into two groups), Eastern European States, Latin American States, Western European and Other States, and permanent members of the Security Council. The current group system, which varies in its specific composition, but not in its general outline has developed from this early conception. UNCTAD’s group system is somewhat different with the permanent members of the Security Council being subsumed within the Western or Eastern Europe group instead of having a separate group of their own. For a detailed discussion on how the group system works within the UN system and how the G77 has used it for its own structuring see Sauvant (1981a). For a insightful critical evaluation of the same see Weiss (1986a).

61 This has caused some problems for the few European members in the coalition. For example, founding member Yugoslavia was placed in the Asian group, as were Malta and Cyprus. However, Romania joined the Latin America group. This is because membership to G77 is obtained through the consent of the regional group to which you belong rather than through the entirety of the G77 (Gosovic, 1972).

62 These regional groups are sometimes assisted in formulating their regional positions by other regional institutions. For example, the African Group was often assisted by the Organization for African Unity (OAU) and the Latin American group by the UN’s Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and

Sauvant (1981a: 10) maintains that the group system in the UN, and particularly in UNCTAD, “was one of the most important factors in the consolidation of the Group of 77 as an effective interest group because it introduced institutional pressures for co-ordination and co-operation.” On the other hand, Thomas Weiss (1986a), while accepting the initial utility of the system, has argued forcefully that “group structures increasingly do not reflect international economic reality; and the reliance upon this fiction guarantees a continuation of past frustrations” (pg. 3); and that “by insisting upon confrontation across group lines, the South has condemned itself to stalemate” (pg. 5):

The group system, closely tied to the origins of the Group of 77 and solidarity among its members, has been responsible for launching the multilateral development dialogue between the North and the South, as well as for establishing some general principles governing international economic affairs. However, it has essentially outlived its usefulness. At best, it hampers progress and at worst works against agreement on specific and operational components of a more equitable international order. The G77 has become a prisoner of solidarity. (Weiss, 1986a: 6).

Indeed, the group structure imposes rigidity to G77 positions. The group structure makes internal negotiations within the G77 a burdensome proposition which often means that the position the caucus adopts as a whole is not only watered down to the lowest common denominator but is so finely crafted to be entirely inflexible. Once an international negotiation begins, the possibility of internal negotiations within G77 members and groups is all but foreclosed. This often means that in trying not to offend any member of the coalition, the G77 position ends up pleasing none and being all but non-negotiable to boot. On the other hand, as Sauvant (1981a) implies, the regional groups are the nearest thing the G77 has to an organizational structure; without them any form of decisionmaking or management of over 130 national positions would become

the Latin American Economic System (SELA). The Asian group has had the weakest common institutional infrastructure to assist. Just as the G77 (Groups A and C in UNCTAD) used their regional organizations and the UNCTAD secretariat as their unofficial secretariats, Group B, which consists nearly in entirety of the OECD states, used the OECD secretariat as its *de facto* secretariat and the East European countries used the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) for the same purpose. (See Sauvant, 1981a).

63 In discussing decision making procedures of the G77 for UNCTAD related activities, Sauvant (1981a: 44-5) describes this process of consensus building at the regional level to be “well structured” and following “a firmly established sequence.” He highlights the fact that “regions play a key role,” that “virtually all matters are first examined by them,” and that “the region’s positions, in turn, are harmonized in *ad hoc* plenary meetings of the Group of 77.”

all but impossible. This brings us to the more persistent and enduring criticism of the G77 regarding the lack of any permanent organizational structure.

Although G77 does have a skeletal staff at New York and Geneva to assist the chairperson, it is effectively makeshift.⁶⁴ This, despite the fact that passionate calls for a more permanent servicing structure have been made for many years (Gosovic, 1972; Searwar and Lewis, 1979; Hall, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980a, 1983; Ramphal, 1980; Commonwealth, 1982; Sewell and Zartman, 1984; South Commission, 1990; G77, 1994). Mission staff and delegations of member countries, and particularly of the G77 chair nation, serve as temporary service agencies which leads to a sporadic quality of work and very limited continuity. The lack of a formal institutional structure, however, does not imply a lack of a procedural structure; which is, in fact, highly developed especially in terms of regional balancing of responsibilities. Sauvart (1981a: 29) considers the G77's flexible procedural structure to be a source of its strength:

Although the procedures of the Group of 77 are essentially based on precedent, the Group has maintained a high degree of organizational flexibility... [which is] not rigid but subject to evolution. This flexibility, the informality of many of the Group's arrangements, the careful observance of equal regional representation, the openness of all non-plenary organs to all members of the Group, and the rule that decisions are to be taken by consensus are the principal sources of strength of the Group of 77 and have been the basis of its great capacity to grow and to absorb new developments.

Such enthusiasm, however, has mellowed over the years; most importantly because the intellectual support and resources the G77 enjoyed from various UN secretariats (especially the UNCTAD staff) is no longer afforded to it. The regional groups were a useful mechanism for harnessing political support for already well-defined intellectual agendas; they have, however, not proved to be a useful facilitative device to create new proposals and agendas in the absence of such intellectual support. On its thirtieth anniversary, a report written for the G77 (1994: 15-6) acknowledged:

The intellectual challenge facing the G77 is greater than ever before. But it comes at a time when the supporting role of the international secretariat is weaker than in the past. The ability of the G77 to recapture its credibility as an effective negotiating partner is, therefore, critically dependent on its success in mobilizing the research and analytical resources needed for its work. In the present situation, the need for some kind of a secretariat of its own is compelling.

⁶⁴ In New York, with the support of the Perez Guerrero Fund, one or two representatives from G77 governments are delegated to assist the G77 in its logistical and organizational work (G77, 1994).

Through the mid-1970s, as G77's size, visibility, and scope of issues covered increased, so did the arenas in which it operated. From being restricted only to the UNCTAD, it duplicated itself in all major international organizations and negotiations.⁶⁵ Functioning as informal caucuses for diplomats from member countries, G77 'hubs' have sprung up at New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna, Paris, Nairobi, and Washington where international bodies such as the UN General Assembly, the UNCTAD Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UN Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP), International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are based⁶⁶. In addition, G77 caucuses are active in most international negotiations where they adopt joint bargaining positions and strategies, and the group's chairperson serves as the spokesperson and chief negotiator for the entire caucus.⁶⁷ Williams (1993: 13) underscores an important organizational feature:

These different Groups of 77 are not subsidiaries of one central organization but rather autonomous bodies with certain key features in common. These include membership, the use of the group system, regional infrastructure and the ministerial meeting as the highest decision making body. The separate Groups of 77 also subscribe to common views on the reform of the international economic order.

GAUGING ACHIEVEMENT

Has the South, as institutionally represented by NAM and the G77, been an effective coalition?

Weintraub (1980: 459-63) puts its most bluntly: "The fundamentals of the international economic order have not been changed as a result of the North-South dialogue... No principles or rules have been substantially altered to accommodate the demands of the South... Stated broadly, the North has not

⁶⁵ For examples of G77 influence and role at various organizations and negotiations, see Johan Kaufmann's (1989) edited volume *Effective Negotiation: Case Studies in Conference Diplomacy*.

⁶⁶ Officially, the G77 does not operate in the World Bank, the IMF, and GATT. However, informally the caucus has begun to have some presence at these fora. Moreover, as a result on UNCTAD-III in Santiago in 1972, a Group of 24, representing the developing countries, came to be established in Washington at the World Bank and IMF.

⁶⁷ For example, G77 was extremely active and influential in the negotiations pertaining to the Law of the Sea negotiations, the UN Code of Conduct on Transnational Corporations, and the UN conferences on the environment (1972 and 1992) and population (1974, 1984 and 1994), etc.

agreed that systemic change is needed.” At about the same time, Sauvart (1981a: 27) proclaimed that the “concerns of the G77 now influence nearly all considerations of international economic issues in the United Nations.” Both statements are essentially correct. The systemic change the South sought has not been achieved; yet, the Southern coalition continues to remain a resilient and not insignificant actor in international affairs despite internal diversity and external threats. How, then, should one gauge the achievements of the South?

Firstly, any evaluation of the South must begin with a recognition of the nature of this coalition. As a coalition that derives its strength—and its very identity—from its shared weakness, the South is designed to minimize the vulnerability of its members to the prevalent international regime, rather than maximize their domination over it.⁶⁸ It is with this yardstick that the achievements of the South need to be gauged.

The motivation behind the creation and continuance of the coalition is the member’s realization of their own weakness. Although the rhetoric of the South is, understandably, laden with the hope of systemically changing the international order, the principal motivation is the fear that in not banding together, the vulnerability of each individual member state would be compounded. According to Williams (1993: 10), “[t]he Third World coalition is not necessarily a winning coalition but it minimizes the risk of defeat.” In addressing a 1979 Ministerial conference of the G77, Julius Nyerere (1980: 5-6), then President of Tanzania, candidly acknowledged that:

[W]hat we [G77] have in common is that we are all, in relation to the developed world, dependent (not interdependent) nations.... We are ashamed to admit it; but economically we are dependencies—semi-colonies at best—not sovereign states.... [T]he reality is that the unity of even the most powerful of the subgroups within the Third World is not sufficient to allow its members to become full actors, rather than reactors, in the world economic system. The unity of the entire Third World is necessary for the achievement of fundamental change in the present world economic arrangement.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the term ‘vulnerability’ as used here, see Krasner (1983 and 1985). Building on that work, Caroline Thomas (1987: 4-5) argues that “Third World states suffer from an acute lack of control over the international environment in which they must function, and of all the world’s states they are the ones for whom the economic alternatives of survive or perish are the most pressing.... In these circumstances of insecurity, Third World states have attempted where possible to increase their room for maneuver, to increase their ability to stabilize the environment in which they must function, and to minimize their vulnerability.”

The importance of this realization of their own weakness is critical in understanding the tenacity of the Southern coalition. First, admitting their own weakness has meant that even where the ideal aspirations are high, the realistic expectation of reaching them is low. Second, starting from an admitted position of weakness allows for a redefinition of success—success becomes broader than achieving that which is *better*, and encompasses averting that which might be *worse*. After defining ideal goals and aspirations, Southern negotiators have most often focused on averting, or reducing, the damage that existing or proposed systems imply. Success, therefore, is measured not in maximizing the gains but in minimizing the losses. This flows directly from the South being, what Nyerere (1980: 4) has called, “a unity of opposition.”

For example, in analyzing the South’s performance at the 1992 Earth Summit, Anil Agarwal (1992: 35) notes that the fear of giving up their development aspirations to Northern environmentalism compelled the South to search for ‘negative gains’ (i.e., not losing too much) rather than ‘positive gains.’ On a similar note, we shall later argue that at UNCED as well as the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment the South largely succeeded in ensuring that the issues and options that it liked least were kept *out* of the final texts but failed to bring the concerns and solutions that it did support *into* the texts of the agreements; as such, it exercised a ‘negative’ power; the power to stop, rather than the power to shape.

Secondly, the South is essentially a creature of the UN system, and it is there that it exerts its influence. Even NAM, which operates outside the UN system, is laden with references to the UN charter and has sought (from its earliest days) its influence via the world body. Krasner (1985: 8) has argued that “[i]f the United Nations had not existed, it would have been impossible for the Third World to articulate a general program for altering international regimes.”

Literally born and bred within the UN, the South realizes that it is there and not in the economic domain of the Bretton Woods sisters,⁶⁹ that it enjoys a

⁶⁹ The ‘Bretton Woods sisters’ refer to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Unlike the UN, which is ostensibly a ‘global’, or ‘world’ body these have effectively been ‘Western’ instruments and despite their ever-increasing activities and influence in the South are seen as ‘Northern’ instruments.

comparative advantage. This is important, in that the South has sought, and continues to seek, change in economic regimes via a body that is principally political (see Jaramillo, 1994). While that change has not transpired, the UN is much more of an economic animal today than it was thirty years ago; this is a testimony to the South's influence.

Finally, any evaluation of the South must recognize that as a coalition—and a very large one—the South has no separate identity, or authority, except that which is derived from its constituents. As such, it “essentially moves, or remains immobile, because of individual and concerted national policies.... [It] must be classified as illustrating the diplomacy of influence rather than of power” (Geldart and Lyon, 1980: 98).

As has been mentioned earlier, the very fact that both NAM and G77 have survived—despite internal heterogeneity and a status quo in the international order that has been unfavorable to their existence—should be seen as a major achievement. In addition, there have indeed been occasional triumphs. Successful struggles against colonization and apartheid, the passage in the UN of the declaration for the creation of a New International Economic Order, the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States, the emphasis on development within international discourse, the acceptance of “special needs” for developing countries, and occasional spurts of North-South dialogue are such achievements. In comparison to the original aspirations of the South, this is not much. However, it has been enough to keep the coalition intact; the South realizes that “whilst coalition politics does not guarantee victory on any issues, it does produce the possibility of increased influence. It turns the certainty of permanent defeat on all issues into the likelihood of occasional triumph” (Williams, 1993: 9-10).

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD AND THE SOUTH CENTRE

The (necessary) symbolism and rhetoric of accomplishment and unity aside, the South is fully aware that it has very few real achievements in its past, disarray and disillusionment in its present, and uncertainty in its future (see South

Commission, 1990; South Centre, 1992; G77, 1994). Weiss (1986a: 152-3) notes that the euphoria of the NIEO years is now a thing of the past:

Pragmatism has appeared in southern negotiating strategies. The widespread belief in the possibility of comprehensive structural changes in the existing international economic order that would suit the South has diminished. While rhetoric remains intact, simultaneously sobriety has been forced on the Third World.

His advise that “taking firm, if small, steps toward an alternative international economic order that is marginally more equitable is preferable to taking large, but ethereal, steps towards a utopian order” (Weiss, 1986a: 3-4) is well taken. The South’s new pragmatism is reflected in the still firm, but much mellowed, approach to North-South relations taken by the South Commission (1990) and articulated in the 1992 and 1995 NAM summits. The ‘street-politics’ tactics of confrontation that the South adopted in the 1960s were warranted to ensure that the South’s concerns were heard and placed on the agenda; however, to borrow once again from Weiss (1986a: 13) “it is difficult to remain *avant-garde* for [thirty] years.” As later chapters will detail, the challenge to the South and its institutions today is very different. It is not merely the challenge of having the South’s concerns noticed—it is the challenge of facilitating action to have those concerns addressed.

This new challenge—highlighted by a North that is increasingly impatient with the South’s demands (Adam, 1993), a unipolar world that leaves the South at a greater disadvantage (Ayoob, 1995), an international climate in which UN secretariats can no longer provide the South with intellectual leadership (G77, 1994), and a looming environmental crisis that provides the potential for a new set of North-South negotiations (Williams, 1993; Porter and Brown, 1996)—has found the South and its institutions largely unprepared (Grant, 1995). One sign of hope, however, may be the 1990 publication of the report of the South Commission and, as a result, the setting up of the South Centre.⁷⁰

Initially established as the follow-up office of the South Commission, the Geneva-based South Centre has recently gained the status of an

⁷⁰ The following discussion is informed by personal communication with South Centre staff.

intergovernmental organization, duly registered as such at the United Nations.⁷¹ Its organizational structure includes a Chairperson, assisted by a Board, and a Council of Representatives appointed by member governments. Membership is open essentially to member states of the G77 and China, with provision for other developing countries to become members upon approval by the Council. Amongst its main purposes is to provide technical and policy advise individually and collectively to the countries of the South, especially through NAM and G77. It has already made some important contributions in this direction—*e.g.*, South Centre (1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995). The Center and its leadership stress that it is intended to be a ‘think tank’ of the South and not its secretariat. However, even if it is not intended to be one, the Center is the nearest thing there is to a South Secretariat and may eventually grow into one.

Although it is yet to early to say definitively, the Center shows the promise of becoming a key institution of the South and providing NAM and G77 with the kind of technical and intellectual support that has been long demanded but never provided. Three facets of the South Centre’s institutional profile give reason for such optimism.

First, the Center grows directly out of the South Commission whose report, *The Challenge to the South* (South Commission, 1990), commands great respect within NAM and G77 membership and is widely considered to be the most authentic recent articulation of the South’s concerns and aspirations (*see* South Centre, 1993). Second, the Center commands respect within both NAM and G77 neither of which sees it as a threat and the Center has already established a record of useful collaboration with both (*e.g.*, South Centre, 1992; G77, 1994).

Third, the South Centre enjoys strong support and backing from influential leaders of the South, including those of the G77 and NAM. Eminent Southern leaders—including former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, Malaysian President Dr. Mahatir Mohammed, Indonesian President Suharto, Zimbabwean

⁷¹ With the UN secretary general acting as the depository of the agreement to give the South Centre the status of an intergovernmental organization, the agreement was opened for signatures in September 1994 and formally operationalized that status in September 1995, when the first meeting of its Council of Representatives was held in Geneva. Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania, was elected the first Chairman of the South Centre. Ambassador Luis Fernando Jaramillo of Colombia, former Chairman of the G77, was elected Convenor of the Council.

President Robert Mugabe, Former Jamaican President Michael Manley, Indian Finance Secretary Manmohan Singh and former head of UNCTAD Dr. Gamani Corea—have not only supported the South Centre’s formation but have actively worked for its creation.

If the South Centre is able to extend these three facets in its future institutional existence—i.e., continue producing authentically Southern analysis and advice of high intellectual caliber, maintain close working relations with both NAM and G77, and attract support from the highest level of Southern political and intellectual leadership—then there is every likelihood that the Center will, indeed, fill the long neglected research and analysis vacuum in the South’s institutional makeup.⁷² If the Center is able to do so, it would also make both NAM and the G77—and, thereby, the South as a coalition—that much more effective in international affairs, including international environmental affairs.

⁷² As discussed earlier, for a short time UNCTAD did fill the research and analysis vacuum for the South. However, this was restrictive in that the focus was principally on trade. Moreover, it was disturbing because even though the UNCTAD secretariat was very sympathetic to Southern concerns it was, by every definition, an international secretariat; this made for an uneasy existence because the North never really trusted the UNCTAD secretariat and the South could never really call it truly its own. (See Gosovic, 1972; Bhattacharya, 1976; Rasmussen, 1986; Weiss, 1986a).

#4

Is the South defunct?

*When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold
Colder thy kiss ...*

— LORD BYRON

The emergence of the South on the international negotiation map was very much a response to the polarizations and antagonisms of East-West politics. Unenthusiastic about the prospect of becoming pawns in superpower games of global domination the newly independent developing countries of the South saw solidarity as a strategy for introducing their own agenda of economic justice and social development onto the world stage.

With the Second World having now surrendered to the economic ideology of the First, and with the South being as heterogeneous as it is, it is tempting to proclaim the Third World as a “mere historical curiosity,” and the coalition of the South as “at best little more than an irrelevance and at worst an absurdity.” In

course of time, it may well turn out to be so. However, to write the South's obituary now would be, in the very least, premature. (Williams, 1993: 7-8; *also see* Chubin, 1993; Berger, 1994; Grant, 1996).

At the simplest—and yet most pragmatic—level, what Hansen (1979: 2) had to say in 1979 about why thinking in North-South terms was valid then, seems equally, if not more, valid now:

Simply stated, if over [130] developing countries time and again, in forum after forum, act as a diplomatic unit, they would seem to merit analysis as a potential actor of major importance in the international system.

Irrespective of what academic, or even popular, opinion may insist, if this group of states continue to act as a unified bloc in international fora—and they do—then it is simply irresponsible, not to say ridiculous, to label them deceased.⁷³

At a deeper level of analysis, it is important to remember that even though the South emerged as a direct response to the new patterns of dependence that were manifest in Cold War polarizations, it is historically rooted in five centuries of shared colonial experience whose economic, social, and political scars are far from healed. More importantly, for many in the South, the desire for unity in the face of an international economic order that continues to place these states at a systemic disadvantage still outweighs the internal diversity—which, in fact, has been a feature of the coalition's definition from its very outset.

Even if the NIEO agenda seems “discredited” to some Northern observers (Sebenius, 1991: 87), it remains a goal worth pursuing for many in the South (South Commission 1990; Mohammed, 1992; Samper, 1995; Grant, 1996):⁷⁴

A deaf ear must be turned to those who would divide developing countries against one another by arguing that there is no “South”. The argument that differences between developing countries render obsolete or ineffective all efforts to articulate and defend

⁷³ Keisuke Iida's (1988) empirical analysis of the voting patterns of the developing countries within the United Nations General Assembly, for example, yields some interesting results. It finds, that the South's solidarity persisted—and was, in fact, higher than in the 1970s—during the 1980s when the fortunes of the South with respect to their demands on the North were most precarious. According to Iida (pg. 394), one explanation for this could be that “when Third World states feel that they are losing power, they step up their efforts to coordinate their policy positions so that they will increase their bargaining power. When their power is growing, they have less need for presenting a unified front.”

⁷⁴ In making her case for why the Third World (i.e. South) remains an important actor in international relations Thomas (1987: 3) argues that “the most convincing evidence is simply that the Third World is a self-defining grouping of states.”

common interests has a hollow ring when coming from a North which itself devotes considerable efforts and resources to coordinating its own positions, irrespective of differences among [its] member states. (South Letter, 1994: 1)

If the recent stirrings in the G77 and NAM are anything to go by, the South is not about to become a casualty of Cold War cessation; if anything, a changing world may present the South with new opportunities to influence world politics and demand its vision of a new international order.

The validity of the South as an effective, or even a 'real' negotiating coalition has long been questioned on structural grounds. More recently, the collapse of Cold War tensions have revived such criticism on historical grounds. Not surprisingly, then, the South's self-definition—or rather lack of any concreteness therein—has been vulnerable on at least two fronts: the structural criticism about the lack of homogeneity within the coalition, and the historical criticism about the irrelevance of the coalition after the demise of the Cold War (see Williams, 1993: 7-8; Najam 1993: 47-8; Berger, 1994: 257-8).

After discussing these two streams of criticism, this chapter will lay ground for the argument, to follow in the following chapters, that the growing global interest in the environment has the potential to not only revitalize the Southern coalition but to also provide a fertile ground for rejuvenating the North-South dialogue.

THE CHALLENGE FROM HETEROGENEITY

The criticism about the South's heterogeneity and differentiation, which is a structural criticism on the very nature of developing countries' attempts at solidarity, has in fact dogged the South from its earliest days.⁷⁵ The criticism

⁷⁵ Predictions of the South's eminent demise have been equally persistent. Commenting on the same Hansen (1980: 1106, ff2) writes: "It is the shared perception of global inequity that can link over 120 'developing countries' with per capita incomes ranging from \$200 to \$10,000. Built on the historical evolution of North-South relations in both pre- and post-colonial periods, this perception provides the cement that binds the otherwise disparate and potentially discordant membership of the Southern bloc. It has been the most significant driving force behind the activities of both the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement since the inception of these groups.... Failure to comprehend the depth of this widely shared Southern perception was primarily responsible for endless, inaccurate Northern predictions throughout the 1970s that an inevitable appreciation of divergent national interests would quickly dissolve any developing country effort to institutionalize 'Southern unity.'" Writing elsewhere, Hansen (1979) himself questions the viability of continuing Southern unity. However, it is important to underscore that he suggests its weakening, as opposed to its demise.

has intensified in recent years. As a typical example, Sagasti and Colby (1993: 175) speak of a “fractured global order” and contend that “whereas ten or twenty years ago we could speak of developing countries as a whole, this is no longer possible, for differences between and within these countries have been continuously growing.” (Also see Sewell and Melcher, 1993)

Indeed, the South is a remarkably diverse group. The G77, for example, comprises of nearly 130 states of all sizes ranging from gigantic India and Brazil to tiny St. Lucia and Bhutan. It represents not just the geographical, cultural and religious diversity of every continent, but is equally diverse in politics and ideology—ranging from the still communist Cuba, to the stoutly capitalist Singapore, to royalist Saudi Arabia, to all the possible shades that define the varied political ideologies of countries such as Jamaica, Iran, Tanzania, Chile, Indonesia, and Myanmar. Even in terms of economic prosperity its members are spread across the world’s economic map—from South Korea to Somalia, Malaysia to Mozambique, and Chile to Chad.⁷⁶ Diversity, however, is not new to the South. Even in its founding moments in 1955, President Soekarno admitted to his colleagues at Bandung (quoted in Sharma, 1969: 6):

Yes, there is diversity among us, who denies it? Small and great nations are represented here, with people professing almost every religion under the sun... almost every political faith we encounter here... and practically every economic doctrine has its representative... [However,] all of us, I am certain, are united by more important things than those which superficially divide us. We are united, for instance, by a common detestation of colonialism in whatever form it appears. We are united by a common detestation of racism. And we are united by a common determination to preserve and establish peace in the world.

Writing in 1978, Ismail Sabri-Abdalla (1980: 22) reported that [as today] “the Third World as a concept is being challenged intellectually, and its usefulness as a tool of analysis and action is increasingly being questioned.”⁷⁷ However, he reminds his reader that “nobody has ever pretended that the Third World as

⁷⁶ A description of the South presented by Weintraub (1980: 454-5) is strikingly similar, signifying how neither the reality of, nor the criticism on, the South’s diversity is new: “The South is made up of tiny countries, like those in Central America and many in Africa, and of immense countries, like India. Some are relatively affluent, like Argentina; and some are desperately poor, like Bangladesh. Some have an industrial structure, like Brazil; and some are exceedingly primitive, like Zaire. Some are wealthy in natural resources, like Saudi Arabia, others are devoid of them, like Haiti. Some, like Paraguay, are dictatorships and others, Costa Rica or Sri Lanka, are democracies.”

⁷⁷ The essay “Heterogeneity and Differentiation—The End of the Third World?” was originally published in *Development Dialogue* in 1978 and later reproduced in the 1980 collection, *Dialogue for a New Order*, edited by Khadija Haq.

a group of nations is perfectly homogeneous” (pg. 41). He concludes that “dependence, with all its corollaries, is the basic common denominator” which unites these countries despite whatever economic, geographic, ideological, or physical resource differences these nations might have (pg. 40).

Writing more than a decade later in *The Poverty of Nations*, Michael Manley (1991: 9), former Prime Minister of Jamaica, points out that the Western mind is constantly confounded by the fact the over 100 different states representing the full range of the ideological, social, geographic, and economic spectrum find common ground in fora such as G77 and NAM. He, too, explains this as being possible because “there is an underlying and binding cement to be found in their common experience of imperialism and colonialism together with the common disadvantage they suffer under the present world economic order.”

The South Commission (1990), similarly acknowledges that the South is non-homogeneous and includes nations of widely varying economic, colonial, historical, political, geographic, and demographic characteristics. However, it asserts that “in this diversity is a basic unity,” and “what the countries of the South have in common transcends their differences; it gives them a shared identity and a reason to work together for common objectives” (pg. 1). The Report of the Commission identifies this commonality as the shared desire for a fairer world order and sees it being manifest in the growing membership of institutions such as G77 and NAM.

The essence of this acceptance of, even pride in, internal diversity is recognized by Williams (1993: 10) who posits that a “crucial feature” of the South’s coalition is “the members’ recognition of the essential heterogeneity of the group.” While the South’s defenders have not contested the inherent heterogeneity of the South, they have consistently contested the assertion that this heterogeneity is a ‘defining variable’ which might make the coalition defunct (see Muni, 1979; Brandt Commission, 1980; Nyerere, 1980; Sabri-Abdalla, 1980; Thomas, 1987; South, 1990; Manley, 1991; Mohammed, 1992). It is argued here that since the solidarity of the South “has never been based on some supposed general identity of economic interests by all developing countries” (Geldart and Lyon,

1980: 101), economic heterogeneity is insufficient—though not unimportant—for challenging the viability of the coalition.

Importantly, Williams (1993: 10) argues that such heterogeneity may create a “problem of management” but is not a “sign of irrelevance or disintegration”:

Those who argue that the coalition is irrational since it is based on an unsustainable diversity of interests would conclude that increased economic divergence would lead to the eventual collapse of the coalition. Following the logic of this view, the Third World coalition should have collapsed a long time ago. If, on the other hand, we accept that diversity was present from the inception of the coalition, increased economic divergence between coalition partners is viewed in a different light.... The economic perspective makes a clear causal connection between increased divergence and the unsustainability of the coalition. The political or bargaining perspective... investigates the strategies devised by members, either to counter increased economic divergence and maintain unity, or to foreground such diversity and unravel the coalition.

A related issue concerns the magnitude of the diversity. In a fascinating analysis of the South’s heterogeneity, Sabri-Abdalla (1980) argued that the economic differentiation within the South was in fact not as great as its critics suggested, even when one considered the “supposedly privileged” economies of OPEC and the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs). He also suggested that heterogeneity within the South was no greater than that between the North (as represented, for example, by the OECD).⁷⁸ He further concluded that even if differentiation increased it would not threaten the continuity of the coalition since it was based on the commonality of “dependence,” rather than mere similarities in GDP levels. Writing at about the same time, Roger D. Hansen (1979: 87-123) argued otherwise, predicting rapid fragmentation in the wake of “extraordinarily rapid [economic] differentiation.”⁷⁹

In retrospect, the “extraordinarily rapid differentiation” never really materialized. While some East Asian NICs have recorded sterling economic growth, other

⁷⁸ Sabri-Abdalla (1980: 40) argued that “the average per capita GNP of the higher income group [within the Third World] in 1975 was \$1,270.3 against \$142.7 for the lower-income group—that is, 8.9 times higher. To compare with OECD countries, let us recall that the per capita GNP of Switzerland is 9.3 times that of Turkey.... As for size, the difference between Senegal and Brazil is not much greater than that between Belgium and Canada. The same applies in the case of population: Ireland and the United States on the one hand, Somalia and Indonesia on the other. Finally, considering differences in natural endowment, we can ask how important are the natural resources of Netherlands or even Japan?” Comparable examples can be found in the North and South today.

⁷⁹ Hansen (1979: 123) adds that “if the South is viewed by some as an artificial unit today, it will seem far more artificial in the 1980s.” However, he predicted (rightly) that the South “is very likely to be found operating as a unit at the rhetorical, international norm-setting level nevertheless.”

would-be stars (especially in Latin America) have fallen short of their promise. The glitter of the oil producing economies has also faded. At the same time South Asian economies have largely stagnated while many African economies are poorer today than they were 25 years ago. While a focus on the giant strides made by the NICs might suggest a dramatically more heterogeneous South, a holistic look across the entire South suggests that the increase in economic diversity is far less dramatic than it is sometimes assumed to be.⁸⁰

Table 1: Annual average rates of growth *per capita* GDP of individual developing countries, 1960-89

	less than 0 %	between 0-2 %	between 2-4 %	more than 4 %	Totals
Number of countries with growth rates falling within these designated ranges	26	43	26	11	106
In the Americas	4	13	11	0	28
In Africa	19	20	6	3	48
In Asia	3	10	9	8	30
Share of total population accounted for by countries in each growth range (%) ⁸¹	7.0	56.4	30.7	5.0	100

Source: From Nassau Adams (1993: 12) based on data in UNCTAD, Handbook of International Trade and Development Statistics, 1989.

As Table 1 highlights, even if we were to accept the rate of growth *per capita* (in the 30 year period from 1960 to 1989) as the yardstick of changing prosperity, only 11 out of the 106 developing countries for which data was available show a growth rate of more than 4 per cent, and these represent merely 5 per cent of the population of these countries. The data suggests that not only has there been no substantial improvement in the general economic well being of the South, but the “dramatic differentiation” that had been anticipated has also not

⁸⁰ Nassau A. Adams (1993: 6-16) provides a detailed statistical discussion on the trends of economic differentiation in both developing and industrialized countries. His principal conclusion is that while a few countries (in East Asia) have indeed prospered dramatically, the bulk of the developing world has not; more importantly, he demonstrates that even with the growth recorded in the South the disparity between North and South today is far greater than it was 25 years ago.

⁸¹ Total population of the 106 countries covered in the table.

turned out to be as dramatic as was imagined. Another type of differentiation has, however, persisted and is much more dramatic:

The gap in average incomes between the richest developed and the poorest developing countries increased from about 50:1 in the early post-war years to about 130:1 by the end of the 1980s. A continuation of this pattern of differential in *per capita* income growth-rates would imply a gap of the order of some 350:1 in another 40 years. The magnitude involved would correspond to comparing average annual incomes of US\$ 70,000 in the [richest country] with US\$ 200 in the [poorest]. Present policies and trends do indeed indicate a continuation, if not an accentuation, of the past pattern. (Adams, 1993: 238)

If the South is a collective of the 'have nots' then its members have even less today than ever before and require the strength of their collectivity even more if they are to be heard by the 'haves'. The message for the South has been clear and unchanging. As Nyerere (*quoted in Iida, 1988: 375*) stressed: "The object is to complete the liberation of the Third World countries from external domination.... And unity is our instrument—our only instrument—of liberation."

Table 2: Total debt flows (all developing countries), 1970-95⁸²

	<i>(US\$ million)</i>									
	1970	1980	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Disbursements	13,225	118,945	123,774	122,152	139,551	141,979	163,109	178,452	176,295	225,290
Principal repayments	6,745	44,985	93,307	90,749	95,708	91,855	99,259	112,760	114,804	123,488
Net flows on debt	15,818	120,730	41,309	50,172	60,704	70,455	102,831	96,787	86,014	133,133
Interest payments	—	51,924	79,688	77,000	75,475	77,185	72,091	72,395	81,093	100,982
Net transfers on debt	—	68,806	-38,379	-26,829	-14,771	-6,730	30,740	24,392	4,921	32,151
Total debt service	—	96,909	172,995	167,749	171,183	169,039	171,349	185,155	195,897	224,470
Total debt service due	—	—	—	189,274	205,507	189,025	201,396	209,135	222,622	229,994

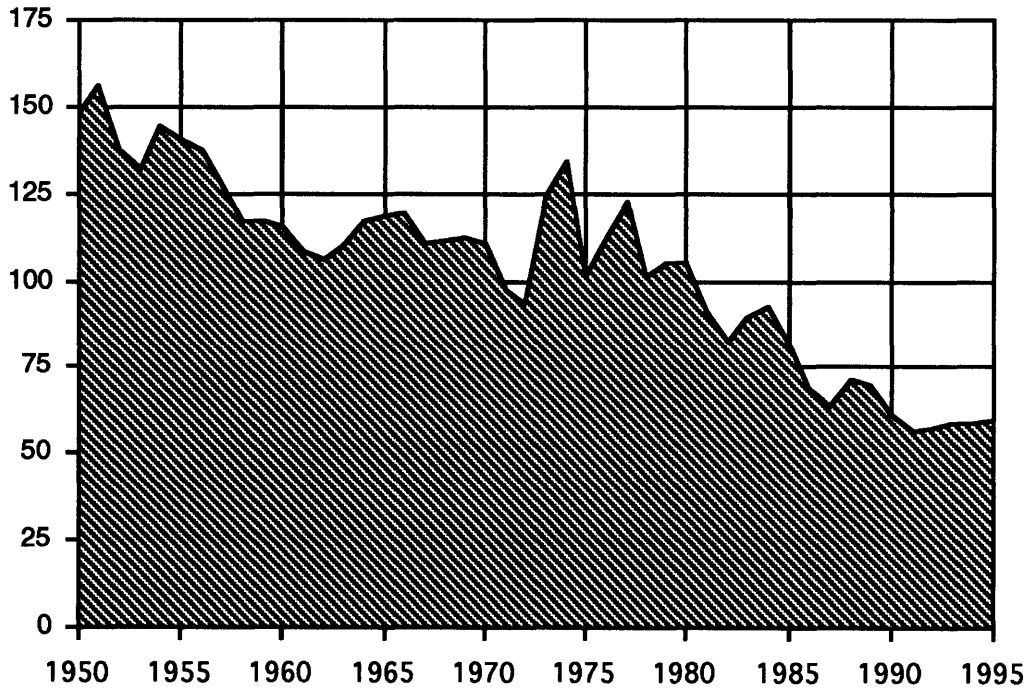
Source: From World Debt Tables, 1996 (World Bank, 1996: 192)

Dependence remains as much a state of being for the South in the 1990s as it was in the 1970s. Politically, the end of the Cold War seems to have left the developing countries even more marginalized and unimportant in international affairs. Economically, they continue to sink deeper into the quagmire of indebtedness (*see Table 2*). What is more, the prospect of their escaping from the debt trap seems bleaker than ever as the value of the primary commodities

⁸² Preliminary data for 1995.

that they depend upon so heavily for their foreign exchange earnings have continued to slump downwards since 1981 (see Figure 1).⁸³

Figure 1: Weighted index of commodity prices, 1950-95
(33 commodities excluding energy, constant US dollars, 1979-81=100)⁸⁴



Source: From Price Prospects for Major Primary Commodities (World Bank, 1991: xii)

Regarding the countries whose fortunes have, in fact, dramatically diverged from the general Southern trend, the most important point is that such cases are embarrassingly few in number. Adams (1993: 15-6) suggests only three: South

⁸³ The export earnings of most developing countries depend nearly entirely on just a few selected commodities, in many cases this dependence is growing even as their price volatility is increasing and the terms of trade are worsening. In 1975-77, for example, 73.8 per cent of Suriname's export earnings came from aluminum and rice, this had risen to 88.8 per cent for 1989-91. In both 1975-77 and 1989-91, 99 per cent of Guinea's export earnings came from bauxite, alumina and rice. Similarly, in 1989-91 Niger's export dependence on uranium was more than 90 per cent as was Uganda's dependence on coffee. Oil producing developing countries are equally dependent on a single commodity; for example, 99 per cent of the export earnings for both Iran and Iraq comes from fuel exports. Cambodia is a case where export dependence on a small selection of volatile commodities has grown more drastic with time—in 1975-77 the country depended on natural rubber, non-coniferous wood and soybeans to the tune of 45.3 per cent of its exports, by 1989-91 this figure had risen to 98.4 per cent. (UNCTAD, 1994: 421-22; see Avramovic, 1992 for an insightful discussion on developing countries in the international economic system).

⁸⁴ The 33 commodities do not include energy products and are weighted by 1979-81 developing countries' export values. Figures beyond 1990 are World Bank projections.

Korea, Singapore and Taiwan.⁸⁵ Even with these, the ultimate litmus test has to be whether they have made efforts to distance themselves from their less fortunate comrades in the quest for international change. Grant (1995: 569) provides the answer: “There has been no stampede among the NICs to disassociate themselves from the Third World, especially as the portals of the industrialized countries of the North have not been flung open to them.”⁸⁶

As for ideological heterogeneity, without going into too many details a case can be made that it has, in fact, lessened over the last few years. Arguably, the South was ideologically more divergent in the 1970s at the peak of Cold War polarizations than it is now. For example, the type of internal conflict that clouded the 1979 NAM Summit at Havana when Cuba and others tried to sway the South towards defining the Soviet Union as its ‘natural ally’ is much less likely today when superpower games of ‘spheres of influence’ have ceded. In general, one might say that developing country preferences regarding political or economic ideologies are more convergent today than ever before.

In summation, heterogeneity has been an enduring feature of the South. While it does make the management of the coalition that much more troublesome, it does not threaten the identity of the coalition for three important reasons:

- It is not a new threat but an endemic management burden to which the alliance has internally adjusted—e.g., through the regional format of the G77 and decision making through ‘consensus’ in both G77 and NAM.
- Over the years, the economic differences within the South have increased only fractionally and the ideological differences have, in fact, lessened. This, even as the differences between North and South have not only persisted, but grown. The coalition’s internal heterogeneity, therefore, poses no more of a threat today that it did earlier.

⁸⁵ Adams (1993: 16) adds that “Hong Kong, whose status as a country is unclear, may also fall in this category.” He goes on to add: “This is not to deny, of course, that some of the oil-rich countries may not in time use their oil wealth to build the physical, industrial and human infrastructure to form the base for a transition to developed country status. And in time other countries might also join South Korea and Singapore in making the necessary transformation. The main point that needs to be stressed here, however, is that in the four decades of post-war economic development there has been a widening of the income gap and virtually no change in the basic division of the countries of the world into the categories of developed and underdeveloped.”

⁸⁶ In fact, some of the countries —like Malaysia and Indonesia—which have been described as potential examples of Southern countries that should no longer be considered of the South have been at the forefront of Southern leadership. A possible reason is that while their newfound prosperity has not given them a seat at the ‘big table’ it *has* given them the ability to take on the North and its institutions with a gusto that their much more impoverished co-conspirators cannot afford.

- The 'defining' variable of the Southern coalition remains the shared view amongst developing countries that the prevailing world order is not sensitive to the South's interests. On this key issue, there is no divergence or heterogeneity of opinion.

In this respect, then, one can only agree with Caroline Thomas (1987: 3-4) that "the changes which have taken place in the last forty years have not sufficiently eroded the political, psychological or economic underpinnings of the grouping to warrant a reclassification. As a category in international relations, the Third World has not yet been rendered invalid." If anything, diversity is a case for improved management structures for the South rather than for its disbandment.

THE CHALLENGE FROM UNIPOLARITY

A second stream of critique that questions the continued viability of the South as a negotiating bloc in international politics concerns the end of the Cold War. This is very much in line with the 'end of history' type thesis of Fukuyama (1989) and uses the unfolding of history as the rationale for declaring the Southern coalition defunct. The argument is simply that since the East and the West are no more, therefore the South can also be declared deceased or, at the very least, it can be safely ignored (Buchanan, 1990; Van Evera, 1990).

This line of reasoning has been characterized as maintaining that "the demise of the Second World [entails] the disappearance of the Third World.... [And] if the Third World is now a mere historical curiosity, the existence of a self-defined Third World coalition is at best little more than an irrelevance and at worst an absurdity" (*as caricatured by Williams, 1993: 7; also see Berger, 1994*). Such criticism seems to rest on the assumptions that a unipolar world implies an undivided world and/or that the South was merely an artifact of the Cold War.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Grant (1995: 574-75) provides an interesting twist to the debate on unipolarity's effects on the Southern coalition by suggesting that the very notion of the post-Cold War world being a unipolar world needs to be examined more closely: "The unfolding situation... displays feature of both unipolarity and multipolarity. There is in a politico-military sense a single superpower, the United States, as made manifest by the Gulf War and the US response to Iraq's subsequent intimidatory maneuvers. But the United States and the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) face challenges from rival centers of power, namely Japan and the European Union (EU), both of which also no longer have to rely on coverage from the United States nuclear umbrella and are consequently likely to adopt more independent political stances in the future. Despite their economic rivalry, these three centers—the United States, Japan and the EU—are all fingers on a single political hand of the Group of Seven, which is egregiously influential in the multilateral financial institutions and in world affairs.... Although

The first of these assumptions can be credited to nothing but a flawed euphoria. An expression of such worthy, but misplaced, optimism is apparent in the hopes of those like Jan Pronk (1992: 21), the Dutch Minister for development cooperation, who believes that “the outlook which separated the different worlds—North from South, East from West and one nation from another—has fundamentally changed,” and that “dividing lines, once sharp, are fading away.” In time, that might well happen; but that time is not yet.

For all too many leaders of the South, the sense of subordination, alienation, and injustice that had initially brought them together, still persists. Not only has the end of Cold War polarities not triggered a buoyancy of hope in the South, it has raised new fears and apprehensions. This sense of lingering divisions is representatively expressed by Colombian Ambassador Luis Jaramillo (1994), the then outgoing chairman of G77:

In contrast to the euphoria created by the end of the Cold War, the changes in Eastern Europe, the reforms of economic liberalization, the new concepts of sustainable development and the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of GATT, the developing nations continue to face, at the dawn of the 21st century, a hostile international environment and a loss of economic and political standing in the so-called New World Order. While it is true that some progress has been observed in some developing countries, the list of adversities remains and in many cases has grown.... Developing countries continue to be subjected to constant pressures to weaken or abandon our collective interest for constructing a truly free and just world. *In the new balance of power, the relative situation of the developing world has worsened ostensibly. (Emphasis added).*

As Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir Mohammed (1992: 26) made passionately plain at the 1992 NAM Summit, “a unipolar world is every bit as threatening [to the South] as a bipolar world.” Cedric Grant (1996: 569) explains why:

The transition from a bipolar world does not render [the Southern coalition] anachronistic; nor does it justify the removal of the concept of the Third World from among the tools for analyzing international politics. On the contrary, the Third World, as an analytical concept, is likely to retain its usefulness so long as the world continues to be riven by serious economic and political disparities.

the military might and political influence of the United States are evident, regional middle power and regional conflicts have the potential of disturbing the comfort, or of easing the discomfort, of the scenario of a single superpower. The basis of ‘superpowerdom’ has shifted from military might to economic muscle, and in these circumstances neither US capacities nor present US ambitions and will-power can sustain a global *pax Americana*.... In [the] calculus of the evolving situation, Third World countries may figure significantly.”

As to arguments about the South being an artifact of Cold War politics, it is true that the emergence of the South was (in the case of NAM) a retaliation to Cold War polarizations and (in the case of G77) an effort to chart an agenda unblemished by Cold War distractions. In both cases, however, the South sought for itself an identity different from either bloc. It did so, not only because its own members included allies of both East and West, but also because it sought an agenda that neither superpower was ever seriously interested in.

Seen by the West as a “construct of the idle left” and often accused of being conceptually inconsistent by its critics, non-alignment has had a very precise meaning for its adherents. The essence of the South’s political identity was not merely a retaliation to *bi*-polarity, but to the very notion of *polarity*.

As its founder intended, the NAM was neither monolithic in organization nor homogenous in ideological orientation. Nor did membership signify equidistance from the rival power blocs. Non-alignment meant safeguarding the right to adopt positions that were informed by national interests, irrespective of whether those positions coincided with those of one power bloc or the other—or, for that matter, with neither of them. The notion, therefore, that it is only possible to be ‘non-aligned’ when there are two or more sides with which it would be possible to become aligned is erroneous. (Grant, 1995: 568)

Even where the South, or its component countries, ‘played’ Cold War politics, the predominance of East-West polarizations remained a hindrance rather than a help to the South’s larger goals. Arguably, then, the cooling of Cold War tensions provides an opportunity rather than a threat to the Southern cause; the de-escalation of superpower confrontation provides the potential for a shifting of the world’s geopolitical axis moving from an era of East-West conflict to one of North-South tensions (Lerner, 1992: 18; Peng, 1992: 5). Even if we were to agree with Chubin (1993: 91) that non-alignment (in its conventional sense) “died with the Cold War,” even he agrees that the South certainly did not—“Whatever else the new world order portends, it does not mean the end of international hierarchies or a new age of equality. Nor is it clear, whatever else its shape, how—or whether—it will incorporate the needs and demands of the South into its priorities or agenda” (pg. 93).

In essence, viewing things from a developing countries’ perspective, the rationale for the Southern coalition emanates not from how many, or which,

superpowers exist but on whether the resulting international order is any more equitable than before. For the South, it certainly is not (Grant, 1996: 569-70):

The majority of the world's people still face the basic problem of survival, of defending human dignity against the pressure of want, and of increasing the opportunities for freedom for themselves as individuals and as members of a community. In these circumstances, the existence of the [South] is based not so much on shared memories and common aspirations as on a sense of what is equitable and just. For so long as inequity in international relations exists there will be differing perspectives on, and interpretations of, economic and social reality between the wealthy and the poor, between the powerful and the weak.

Having said all of the above, although the end of the Cold War does not render the South defunct, it does present it with a new set of dangers. The dangers entail not as much in the South 'disappearing' in the post-Cold War world, as in being 'ignored' in the wake of its own diminishing geostrategic utility (see David, 1992; Chubin, 1993).

An articulation of this sense of being ignored in the post-Cold War world is captured by Shahram Chubin (1993). He articulates the view that "the South is under siege—from an international community impatient to meddle in its affairs. States of the South are losing their sovereignty, which in many cases was only recently or tentatively acquired" (pg. 88). He adds that while the end of the Cold War has robbed the South of a bargaining leverage, it has "freed the North to indulge its basic antipathy toward the poorer South... the South is often depicted as the 'new threat,' and some of its members as 'rogue' states" (pg. 91-2). All this is compounded by the fact that "the South struggles not only with its own problems of political and economic development, domestic instability, and regional antagonisms, but also with a changing international system that promises it little in the way of assistance or relief" (pg. 93).⁸⁸

⁸⁸ A Northern view, confirming some of Chubin's analysis, is provided by Steven R. David (1992) who senses the same Northern antipathy and uninterest in the South and argues "*Why the Third World Still Matters*." Like Chubin, David also focuses on security issues and is particularly concerned that "with the Cold War over, a new set of arguments has emerged reemphasizing the irrelevance of the Third World to American interests" (pg. 128). His argument, however, is different in that he stresses that "because war will not become obsolete in the Third World, and because many Third World states are becoming increasingly powerful, the threat that Third World states pose to themselves and non-Third World countries will persist. Preparing to address these threats must be a central component of American foreign policy in the post-Cold War world" (pg. 127). He builds on his earlier work (David, 1991) where he stressed that it is important for the North to understand the nature of and rationale for Third World alignments because "war has become a virtual Third World monopoly" and many issues that are likely to dominate international relations (e.g. trade and international economics, environment, population, drug trafficking, etc.) cannot be resolved without active participation of the South; as

Not only is there the fear of a North more belligerent in using its hegemonic privileges, there is also the emergence of new claimant to the North's sympathy in the former Soviet bloc. For the developing countries, these are impoverished competitors for already dwindling international assistance. The South is fearful of being marginalized further as attention and resources are diverted from development in the South to economic reconstruction in the East (Peng, 1992: 31; Singh, 1992: 170-171).⁸⁹

During the Cold War, some [developing] countries used to play First World against Second World interests and were sometimes able to benefit economically from this maneuver; with the end of the Cold War they have lost this leverage, and the interests of the industrialized world have shifted to the development of the resources and markets of the former Soviet bloc countries. (Miller, 1995: 4)

This new set of concerns emanating from the end of the Cold War are, however, seen by the South as signals to consolidate rather than disband their alliance. Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahatir Mohammed (1992: 26) makes the case:

The unipolar world is fraught with threats and challenges. To deal with them we need to cling even more closely to one another. Without the option to defect to the other side, we can expect less wooing but more threats. Alone we have to submit one by one. Together we may yet be able to sustain our independence and integrity.... We must decide ourselves or the decisions will be made for us by others. We cannot expect decisions made by others to favor us.

From the Southern perspective, the end of the Cold War seems to herald an even greater necessity to band together and maintain its unity. To the South, the new world order seems even more hostile than the old. At the same time, however, maintaining its unity also becomes a more difficult—even if a more necessary—proposition:

Though it may continue for diplomatic reasons to pretend otherwise, the North now has less incentive than before to resuscitate a substantive agenda for a wide-ranging [North-South dialogue] with the dramatic changes that have occurred in the post-1989 world.... [There is]

such, he argues, "far from being marginal actors, the Third World is central to the course of international relations, and it will become even more so" (pg. 254-5).

⁸⁹ Mistry (1993: 171-72) points towards other reasons why the fall of the Soviet bloc might bode ill for the South: "For [the South] the demise of the Second World as a globally influential partner and financial sponsor is a serious blow. Apart from depriving large parts of the South of a source of development assistance and subsidized trade, the Eastern European and Soviet Republics have now become impoverished competitors in attracting aid and Western capital. The eclipse of the Second World has also deprived the South of a source of 'moral' and political support in international fora... [this] is likely to lead to a refocusing of the United Nations as a vehicle for closing the East-West rather than the North-South divide."

a strengthened conviction in much of the North that time is on its side in influencing the future trajectory of global development. The implication is that the South must acquiesce, however reluctantly, to the North's views on how (and at what pace) the South should develop, politically and economically. A second corollary is that the South must accept and live with the intellectual and economic terms of trade established by the North in the distribution of gains and losses emanating from global economic transactions.... *For precisely [these] reasons, the South now has a much greater stake in reviving [North-South dialogue] with urgency...* [The South] stands disadvantaged to pursue an effective [North-South dialogue] at this juncture. But it has little choice, especially if its legitimate interests and concerns are to avoid being drowned in a sea churning with global and regional geopolitical ferment or, even worse, ignored as not being sufficiently threatening to the security and prosperity of the North. (Mistry, 1993: 170-71, *emphasis added*)

These are reasons enough for the South to revive its sagging coalition, seek strength in unity, and attempt reopening the stalled process of North-South dialogue. The prevailing prognosis about the South's ability to do so is generally negative (*see* Adams, 1993; Mistry, 1993; Wallerstein, 1993). The following chapters will, however, argue that in the North's growing concerns about the threats to the global environment—and the belief that such an enterprise cannot be meaningfully undertaken without the South's participation—has presented the South with an opportunity to seek in a call for a New International *Environmental* Order, what it failed to achieve in its ill-fated attempt at creating a New International *Economic* Order.

SECTION II: THE PRESENT

The South in International Environmental Politics

ہم کہ ٹھہرے اجنبی اتنی مداراتوں کے بعد
پھر نہیں گے آشنا کتنی ملاقاتوں کے بعد
کب نظریں آئے گی بے داغ سبز کی ہسار
خون کے دھبے مٹائیں گے کتنی برساتوں کے بعد
تھے بہت بے درد طے خستہ درخشش کے
تھیں بہت بے مہر صمیم مہربان راتوں کے بعد
دل تو چاہا پر شکست دل نے مہلت ہی نہ دی
کچھ گلے شکوے بھی کر لیتے مناجاتوں کے بعد
اُن سے جو کہنے گئے تھے فیض جاں صدتہ کیے
اُن کی ہی نہ گئی وہ بات سب باتوں کے بعد

*We who are strangers now,
after years of easy friendship;
How many times must we meet,
before we are reacquainted?
How can we reclaim
that old camaraderie?
When shall the eye see once more
that spring of spotless green?
How many monsoons are required
To wash away the stains of blood?
As heartbreak gave no respite,
the heart yearned
To quarrel as friends once more,
after the prayers of forgiveness.
But the word I had come here to speak,
With the offering of my life as sacrifice,
That reconciling word remained unspoken
After everything else had been said.*

By FAIZ AHMED FAIZ
Translated by Carolyn Kizer (1988: 4)

From their privileged technological perches, they will preside over a world that has embraced a common ideology of consumerism but is bitterly divided between rich and poor, threatened by a warming and polluted atmosphere, girdled by a dense network of airport metropolises for travel, and wired for instant worldwide communication. Money, information, goods, and people will move around the world at dizzying speeds.... Severed from any national allegiance or family ties by micro-chip based gadgets... the consumer-citizens of the world's privileged regions will become "rich nomads".... These wealthy wanderers will everywhere be confronted by roving masses of "poor nomads"—boat people on a planetary scale—seeking to escape from the destitute periphery, where most of the earth's population will continue to live....

And they will know that the prosperity that they are not theirs partly comes at the price of their well-being and at the price of the environment's degradation.

— **JACQUES ATTALI,**

Millennium: Winners and Losers in the Coming World Order (1991: 4-5, 14)

#5

A tale of two cities: From Stockholm to Rio

*It was the best of times,
it was the worst of times,
it was the age of wisdom,
it was the age of foolishness,
it was the epoch of belief,
it was the epoch of incredulity,
it was the season of Light,
it was the season of Darkness,
it was the spring of hope,
it was the winter of despair,
we had everything before us,
we had nothing before us...*

— CHARLES DICKENS

In his opening address to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, also known as the Earth Summit), the UN secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali described the meeting as “historic.”⁹⁰ It has been described by others as “one of the most significant international negotiation processes” (see Johnson, 1993: 4). Irrespective of how one views

⁹⁰ For full text of the Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s speech see Johnson (1993: 42-48).

UNCED's achievements, most would agree that it represented a landmark event in international environmental diplomacy (Haas, et al., 1992; Chatterjee and Finger, 1994; Susskind, 1994a; Porter and Brown, 1996).

Although its earliest proponents may not have wished it to be so, the UNCED process marked a reemergence from dormancy of the North-South dialogue. As Porter and Brown (1996: 108) observe, "in the UNCED negotiations, North and South clashed on a wide range of economic and political issues related to sustainable development." A more important insight, that has been lost on many other commentators, is highlighted by these authors (pg. 116): "UNCED was the first opportunity in more than a decade for developing countries to engage the industrialized countries in bargaining that could encompass the North-South economic issues of greatest concern to the South."

This chapter is concerned with understanding the significance of UNCED to North-South environmental dialogue. The discussion builds on the premise that we cannot begin to understand the impact UNCED might have on the future without first appreciating the imprint of the past that was writ large upon it. Other perceptive commentators have already pointed out that UNCED was not merely an event, it was a process (Johnson, 1993; Spector et al., 1994). This chapter extends that insight to argue that not only was UNCED the initiator of a 'process' of international environmental negotiations, it was itself part of a larger 'process' of North-South negotiation. In short, any attempt to understand the significance of UNCED without rooting it firmly within the historical context of earlier North-South encounters will give only an incomplete picture.

This chapter is an attempt to understand how the South viewed UNCED.⁹¹ What hopes and aspirations did the developing countries bring to UNCED? How were these tempered by the checkered and conflictual history of North-South negotiations? How has the South tended to evaluate the results?

⁹¹ Given the overabundance of general analyses of UNCED outputs, events and achievements, this chapter will not revisit the details of the process, procedures, landmarks and documents of the conference. The focus here is precisely on the perceptions that the South entered the UNCED process with and the ones with which it left the Rio Summit. Good overviews of the UNCED documents and process can be found in Haas et al. (1992) and Johnson (1993). Commentaries on UNCED's significance and achievements are numerous and easily found, particularly insightful analyses are available in Banuri (1992), Chatterjee and Finger (1994), and Porter and Brown (1996).

To answer these questions we will retrace the road that the South traveled from Stockholm (where the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held) to Rio de Janeiro (the venue of UNCED). Implicit in adopting this approach is the argument that the travails of journeying from Stockholm to Rio—as much as the events of Rio itself—will influence the ultimate course of the paths that lead from Rio to destinations yet unknown.

UNCED AND THE SOUTH'S LOST INNOCENCE

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)—held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992—had been billed by its proponents as “our last chance to save the earth” (see Thomson, 1992: 3) and was seen by its critics as “a carnival of dunces” (Smith, 1992: 30). A favorite description amongst journalists and participants alike was to refer to it as a “many-ringed circus” (Johnson, 1992: 81)—if it were a circus, it would have been dubbed the “greatest show on earth” (Khor, 1992c: 32). Not surprisingly, it has instilled strong, but mixed, emotions amongst those who followed it. While some have wondered whether it was “Noah’s Ark or Jesus’s Cross?” (Banuri, 1992), most have agreed that it “launched the world into a new era of eco-diplomacy, eco-negotiation and eco-lawmaking” (Gardner, 1992: 1).

In bringing together more than 100 heads of state and government, 150 nations, 1,400 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 8,000 journalists and 35,000 participants, UNCED was the largest conference of its kind (Haas et al., 1992). In mobilizing the amount of international public interest that it did and in getting more than 150 nations to agree on its products—specific conventions on climate change and biodiversity, a nonbinding set of principles for sustainable forests, a 27 point declaration, a 700 page action program called ‘Agenda 21,’ and a high-powered United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)—UNCED broke some important new ground.⁹²

⁹² Technically, the ‘official’ products of UNCED were the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the “Authoritative Statement of Forest Principles,” and Agenda 21, all of which were adopted by consensus (without vote) by the conference (the United States and Saudi Arabia did, however, submit ‘interpretive statements’ on both the declaration and Agenda 21). The creation of the Commission on Sustainable Development was proposed in Agenda 21 and was therefore never voted

Assessing the achievements of UNCED, however, is not simply a task of enumerating its products. Just after the fourth PrepCom at New York, when prospects of meaningful results were at their bleakest, the Chairman of the UNCED preparatory committee, Ambassador Tommy Koh of Singapore, pointed out that “there is a rhythm to UN negotiations. First, you have confrontation, then a period of crisis, and then resolution”; others pointed out that “the conference is condemned to succeed, because no one wants it to fail”; yet others were afraid that such a ‘success’ might be “a quiet failure masquerading as a success” (quotes from Newhouse, 1992: 64-78). In retrospect, all three statements were equally prophetic.

Most analysts, however, agree that its achievements lagged way behind its potential and were more in the way of articulating well-meaning ‘concerns’ than spelling enforceable ‘commitments’; especially since implementation arrangements and institutional capacity were conspicuous in their absence.⁹³ The general agreement seems to be that the concrete results of the conference were “relatively meager” (Sjöstedt, et al., 1994: 233). In fact, although UNCED’s secretary general, Maurice Strong, in a press conference after the closing ceremony, described Rio as “a shift in direction” because environmental concerns had been widely accepted and articulated; he added that “we leave Rio without a satisfying commitment for that concern” (*quoted in* Khor, 1992b). Similarly, Jessica Mathews (1992) found UNCED to be a “notable—perhaps historic—success,” but added that “UN conferences are notorious for commitments made and not kept.” Such mixed reviews of UNCED’s achievement were typical of a very wide range of scholars (*see* Banuri, 1992; French, 1992a; Haas et al., 1992; Hileman, 1992; IIED, 1992; Johnson, 1992; Khor 1992b; Mathews 1992; Raghavan, 1992a; Susskind, 1994).

upon and was later ‘created’ by the UN General Assembly. The conventions on climate change and biodiversity were products of independent, but concurrent, processes which were opened for signatures at UNCED and were signed by 153 nations each, with USA being the notable exception in signing the biodiversity convention and Malaysia refusing to sign the climate change convention. However, USA, under the Clinton administration has since signed (but not yet ratified) the biodiversity convention. For full texts of these and other related documents see Johnson (1993).

⁹³ For example, Susskind (1994b: 221) argues: “The most important measure of regime-building success in the environmental field is the extent to which institutional capacity to ensure sustainability (both domestic and international) is enhanced. By this measure, UNCED was only modestly successful.”

Having said the above, the reaction from the South was generally far more scathing than from those in the North (*see* Agarwal, 1992; Banuri, 1992; *Down to Earth*, 1992a; Khor, 1992c; Raghavan, 1992a). Leading environmental journals of the South described the Earth Summit as “all show and photo-opportunities [with] little substance” (*Third World Resurgence*, August-September 1992) and branded its assemblage of world leaders as “the class that failed” (*Down to Earth*, 15 July 1992); disappointed Southern negotiators lamented that the meeting had been “negotiating the size of zero” (*TerraViva*, 15 June 1992: 25). Martin Khor (1992c: 32) summed up the general feeling:

...Earth itself lost at the Rio Summit.... Southern countries hoping to use the environment as leverage to get some development benefits also lost out. The big winners were the transnational companies: no regulations were put on them and they were treated as ‘partners.’ The governments of the North preserved their global power but their people will also lose in the end if the environment isn’t saved. Perhaps we all lost at Rio.

A South that had entered the UNCED negotiation process believing that it was in a unique position of strength (*see* Kufour, 1991a; Peng, 1991; Raghavan, 1991; Khor 1992a; Lerner, 1992; Shiva, 1992a; Simons, 1992), left Rio with “a huge sense of anti-climax” (Khor, 1992c: 32).

Disenchantment with UNCED prospects, however, had set in long before delegates reached Rio. At the Geneva preparatory committee meeting (PrepCom), Ambassador Edward Kufour (1991b: 17) of Ghana, speaking for the G77, summed the South’s response to the initial drafts of Agenda 21: “We have not come here to negotiate away our permanent sovereignty over our natural resources.” By the end of the preparatory process the anger had given way to frustration as Ambassador Marker of Pakistan, then chairman of G77, admitted to nursing a “bruised optimism” (*SUNS*, 30 March 1992), while the head of the Chilean delegation complained that, “virtually no progress has been made on fundamental issues in two years of negotiations” (*SUNS*, 3 April 1992).

Before the conference, Gordon J. MacDonald (1992: 41) had predicted that “the views of the developing nations will determine the direction, and probably the ultimate significance, of UNCED.” The *New York Times* (17 March 1992) had echoed this view and noted that “for the first time... the developing countries

have an issue where they have some real leverage.” In retrospect, such sentiments even if not totally incorrect, turned out to be largely exaggerated.⁹⁴

For most part, the South soon found that its ‘leverage’ lay not as much in influencing what went *into* the treaties as in what was kept *out* of them. Arguably, the treaties signed at Rio, on climate change and biodiversity, were of some consolation to the North; the South, which had come to UNCED proclaiming that “development remains the primary [environmental] objective of developing countries” (Kufour, 1991a: 38), had little to show for their effort.⁹⁵

It may, however, be argued that the South was unrealistically expecting too much from the conference. Leading Indian environmentalist Anil Agarwal believes otherwise. Agarwal (1992: 35) considers the view that “the South came [to Rio] with over-heightened expectations of money and technology” to be a myth and feels that the opposite was true because the South reached Rio with an overarching fear that the Earth Summit “would end up with [the South’s] energy consumption levels being frozen at the current iniquitous levels without the West accepting limits commensurate to its responsibilities for the problem; that biodiversity conservation would become a convenient excuse for free access to this critical resource; and that its sovereignty over its forests would diminish to save the world’s climate.” He further argues that these fears compelled the South to search for ‘negative gains’ (in terms of not losing too much) rather than ‘positive gains.’ This in itself was a recipe for frustration.

To understand the roots of the frustration that the South left Rio with, one must travel back to Stockholm and the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE). The following two sections will do exactly that. They will highlight exactly how the concern, strategies, fears and hopes that the South brought to Rio were, in fact, on the same continuum as the ones that South had carried away from Stockholm.

⁹⁴ Such a view about the South’s perceived leverage in international environmental negotiation is shared by others too. For example, Oran Young (1993: 447), writing about climate change issues, believes that the South has “substantial bargaining leverage when it comes to the issue of climate change” and that “Northerners will ignore the demands of the South regarding climate change at their peril.”

⁹⁵ While these individual treaties are not the subject of this chapter it needs to be pointed out that even if ‘weak’ and ‘unenforceable,’ they give the North the basic framework for what it wanted, to the South they gave little, except in *keeping out* some of the things it opposes. (see Haas et al., 1992; IIED, 1992; Shiva 1992b; *Third World Resurgence*, 1992; McCully, 1993; Porter and Brown, 1996).

STOCKHOLM AND RIO: TWO DIFFERENT WORLDS

Like Janus, the Roman god who gave his name to the first month of the western calendar, every international negotiation is two-headed; one face looking back into the past, the other to the future. In trying to understand how the South's "bruised optimism" and frustration at UNCED is likely to influence international environmental negotiations in the future, we must first appreciate how it was informed by the past.

The obvious reference point for such a study is the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held at Stockholm, Sweden. In the intervening twenty years between Stockholm and Rio the world had changed dramatically. And yet, in at least three important ways the mood of Stockholm and Rio were strikingly similar: both were ground-breaking conferences within the UN context; both galvanized tremendous public interest; and both were held at times of hope and optimism about the changing nature of global politics.

Like UNCED, the Stockholm conference had boasted of being the largest United Nations conference ever, till that point of time. Both were revolutionary in their approach to NGOs.⁹⁶ Stockholm's 'Environment Forum' was nowhere as large as the gigantic 'Global Forum' at Rio, but was no less effective in 'keeping the national delegates honest.' Independent of the official documents, both triggered or coincided with the publication of influential works of environmental scholarship (*for example* Meadows et al., 1972; Ward and Dubos, 1972; Schmidheiny, 1992; Gore, 1992). Both received unprecedented media attention and generated immense public interest.⁹⁷

By coincidence, rather than intent, UNCHE in 1972 and UNCED in 1992 were both conceived in times when major global events were reshaping the prevalent geo-political and socio-economic balances of the world. Superpower relations were in a flux on both occasions, giving the developing nations an opportunity—and an excuse—to attempt playing a more central role on the

⁹⁶ See Rowland (1972), Caldwell (1990), Enge and Malkenes (1993), McMahon (1993) and Finger (1994).

⁹⁷ For more detailed analyses of the two conferences see Hill (1972), Rowland (1973), Clarke and Timberlake (1982), UNEP (1982), Caldwell (1990), Haas et al. (1992), Tinker (1992), McCully (1993), Chatterjee and Finger (1994), and Porter and Brown (1996).

international stage. Although a direct comparison with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War will be unfair, the early 1970s cultivated a surprising—in retrospect—sense of optimism about superpower relations; this despite the Soviet bloc's boycott of Stockholm.

The week before UNCHE, US President Richard Nixon had returned from a 'triumphant' summit visit to Moscow, which the world was hailing as a 'new beginning.' Even in retrospect, that meeting was more significant than the Washington summit between US President George Bush and Russian President Boris Yelstin in the week immediately following Rio.

So pervasive was the mood of superpower reconciliation in 1972 that the then US secretary of state, Henry Kissinger (1979), defined the events of that year as the emergence of "a new international order that would reduce lingering enmities, strengthen friendships, and give new hope to emerging nations." In a diary entry on January 9, 1972, marking his 59th birthday, Richard Nixon (1978) referred to 1971 as "perhaps the most successful from the standpoint of accomplishment to date" and predicted that 1972 "offers immense opportunities and, of course, equally great dangers."⁹⁸

Although the setting of the world had totally changed in those 20 years, within the differences there were striking similarities for the South. At Rio, the South's agenda gained prominence because the Cold War had ended. At Stockholm, the boycott of the Soviet bloc served the same function. Ironically, the conference boycott by Soviet Union and its allies—except Romania and Yugoslavia—was itself a manifestation of all-encompassing Cold War politics.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Ironically, 1972 turned out to be the year of the Watergate scandal.

⁹⁹ The Soviet-led boycott of the Stockholm conference came in response to the West's refusal to let the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) participate, but was a complex and delicately timed affair motivated more by the politics of the negotiations leading to Willy Brandt's cherished goal of *Ostpolitik* (Brandt, 1976). In response to a joint proposal from USA and Great Britain, the UN General Assembly, through its resolution 2850 (XXVI), decided to apply the 26-year-old 'Vienna formula' allowing full participation at Stockholm only to "State members of the United Nations or members of specialized agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency." This meant that West Germany, as member of UNESCO and WHO, could attend, but East Germany could not. The resolution received 104 votes in favor, with 9 against (Bulgaria, Byelorussia, Congo, Czechoslovakia, Hungry, Mongolia, Poland, Ukraine, USSR), 7 abstentions (Chile, Cuba, Guinea, India, Jamaica, Romania, Yugoslavia) while 12 nations were absent. Of the opposers only Congo participated at Stockholm; of the abstainers only Cuba stayed away; while the notable absentees were Albania and China. Ironically, the 'Big Four Accord,' that paved the way for the simultaneous entry of the two Germany's into the UN, was signed in Berlin of June 4, 1972, at about the same time as the UN secretary general, Kurt

The Soviet bloc boycott did not, however, diminish the shadow of the Soviet Union, and of Cold War politics, on the Stockholm proceedings.¹⁰⁰ In fact, the war in Vietnam and the issue of nuclear disarmament were amongst the most heatedly discussed issues at Stockholm.¹⁰¹ However, from the South's point of view, the physical absence of one superpower bloc at Stockholm did exactly what the end of the Cold War did at Rio—it allowed the Southern coalition a place under the international spotlight; an opportunity to focus on an agenda of its own without being distracted by Cold War bickering. At UNCHE, this was largely precipitated by the emergence of China as the major leader of the conference (see Box 4).

In short, the prevailing atmosphere of superpower relations not only 'allowed' the South to articulate its interests and negotiate as a bloc, but also influenced

Waldheim, opened UNCHE. (*voting records and resolutions from* Djonovich, 1975; also Pell and Case, 1972; Rowland, 1973; Clarke and Timberlake, 1982).

¹⁰⁰ It would be a mistake to believe that the Soviet absence from the UNCHE conference halls amounted to a lack of influence on conference outcomes. The USSR and its allies had been active participants during the UNCHE preparatory process and during the conference itself the UNCHE secretary general, Maurice Strong, held daily secret meetings with the Soviet Ambassador to keep him abreast of events. Hopes of a last minute arrival by USSR and East Germany were kept alive. In fact, 30 Volvos and Saabs, 220 hotel beds and one vice chairmanship was left open during the first couple of days in anticipation of a compromise. At one point, a compromise acceptable to the West Germans was reached which would have given East Germany working participation without the right to vote. However, an unfortunately worded *New York Times* story prompted the Soviet bloc to break off the talks. Yet, the Soviets remained an influential player through their participation in the preparatory process, through their allies at UNCHE and most importantly at the post-conference meetings of the UN General assembly. In fact, when the General Assembly operationalized one of Stockholm's key decisions by establishing the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), USSR was one of the 54 member states elected. Interestingly, both East and West Germany (who had just been admitted to the UN) were also elected, as were other boycotters, Czechoslovakia and Poland. (United Nations, 1972; Pell and Case, 1972; Rowland, 1973; Clarke and Timberlake, 1982). It could be argued that USSR shaped the UNCHE agenda more despite its boycott than its breakup states shaped the UNCED agenda in spite of their presence.

¹⁰¹ In a move that took his long-time American allies by surprise, the Vietnam issue was brought up first by the host Premier, Olof Palme of Sweden. In a strongly worded speech he condemned "ecological warfare" in Southeast Asia. However, the US State Department considered Vietnam "extraneous" to UNCHE and felt "deeply disturbed" at what the chief US delegate at Stockholm considered "gratuitous politicizing" of the conference. Nuclear test-bans was another Cold War issue that dogged UNCHE. Peru and New Zealand were the initiators, aiming their wrath against France which was then conducting such tests in the South Pacific. The US proposal to call for banning such atmospheric tests was met unfavorably by China, joined by some Southern nations, who wanted "the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons." The Chinese spoke out against "nuclear monopoly, nuclear threats, nuclear blackmail... [and]... nuclear stockpiling... by the superpowers." The result of this debate was Principle 26 of the Stockholm Declaration: "Man and his environment must be spared the effects of nuclear weapons and all other means of mass destruction. States must strive to reach prompt agreement, in the relevant international organs, on the elimination and complete destruction of such weapons. (United Nations, 1972; Hill, 1972; Rowland, 1973; Pell and Case, 1972; *New York Times*, 7, 8, 11, and 14 June 1972).

the negotiation strategy and positions that it adopted at Stockholm (see United Nations, 1972; Rowland, 1973; Hill, 1972; Pirages, 1978; Caldwell, 1990).

Box 4: China leads the South at Stockholm

Participating in its first major United Nations conference since having been allowed to take its UN seat in October 1971, the Peoples Republic of China was an unknown commodity in international diplomatic circles. Despite having missed the preparatory process, China emerged as one of the best prepared delegation and one of the very few which knew exactly what it wanted to achieve at the conference. It surprised all observers first by leading the South in a criticism of both superpowers, and later by stage-managing the reopening and redrafting of the Stockholm declaration.

While China had missed the Stockholm preparatory process, it asserted its leadership role very early at the conference itself. On the opening day, as delegates were still registering, and as Canada, Sweden, and USA were endorsing the draft Stockholm declaration, China made the first of its many stunning announcements by spreading word of its intention to propose major amendments to the draft prepared by the 27-nation preparatory committee.¹⁰² Soon, India and Nigeria had joined the Chinese bandwagon.

China insisted that it wanted to make a “positive” contribution to this important document and that the “democratic” thing to do was to allow a fair hearing to all 113 nations present. It stated: “The declaration is the main document under discussion at this conference. It sets forth the responsibilities of, and guide-lines for, future world action, and only when it embodies the views of a majority of the countries can it have political and moral effect. Otherwise it is empty paper” (*New York Times*, 9 June 1972). Battle lines were drawn when the US delegate informed the Canadians that it was “quite clear” that the Chinese were “out to wreck the declaration.” As 24 hours of frantic backstage negotiations remained divisive, China—in a risky move—put its support to test by abruptly introducing a resolution in the plenary, calling for a committee of all conference participants to review the draft declaration. The gamble paid off.

In a bipolar world, with very strongly defined alliances, held together by bonds of strategic and political dependence, China was uniquely suited to assert leadership of the developing world. The developing countries rallied behind China because they saw it as a nation big enough and strong enough to assert itself as a truly independent voice, and yet at a stage of development where it could identify with their interests. (See United Nations, 1972; Rowland, 1973; Hill, 1972; *New York Times*, 7, 8, and 9 June 1972).

At Rio, too, it was the prevailing—but by now very different—relations between superpowers that influenced what the South was able to do and what it actually did. Apart from the fact that scientific understanding of, and public concern for, environmental systems had substantially improved in the intervening two decades, the most significant difference between the world of 1972 and that of

¹⁰² Canada, USA and Sweden had presented draft proposals during the preparatory process. In *The Plot to Save the World*, UNCHE historian Wade Rowland (1973) writes that “the documents produced by USA and Sweden were innocuous in the extreme” and were described as “shocking non-declarations” by one delegate. It was from the Canadian proposal that the draft declaration emerged.

1992 was the demise of Cold War polarizations (Brown, 1992; Mathews, 1991b). The world's geopolitical axis had subtly shifted and East-West tensions were giving way to reemerging North-South ones (Lerner, 1992; Peng, 1992; Williams, 1993; Porter and Brown, 1996).

Consequently, some, like Sebenius (1991) were proposing that as the ideological conflicts recede into the past, more “creative solutions” would become possible. But a world without superpower antagonisms is also a world with very different perspectives on ‘development assistance’ for developing countries (MacDonald, 1991; Grant, 1995). Coming at a time of a global economic recession, massive debt accumulations, trade imbalances, and a net negative flow of resources, this gave three signals to the nations of the South as they prepared for UNCED:

- the size of the (‘aid’) pie is getting smaller, not bigger;¹⁰³
- there are more claimants (former Soviet bloc nations) to the pie;¹⁰⁴ and
- in a unipolar world, major donors have rapidly diminishing political/strategic use for their support.¹⁰⁵

With this realization, and without the East-West Cold War distractions clouding the agenda, the South found in UNCED the opportunity, the inclination, and the forum to rekindle the North-South debate (*see* Kufour, 1991a; Peng 1991 and 1992; Williams, 1993; Porter and Brown, 1996). It was not unsurprising, then, that the South approached UNCED waving the flag of ‘additionality’—fearful of

¹⁰³ Ewah Otu Eleri (1994: 147) calls this “a growing compassion fatigue among donors and creditors.”

¹⁰⁴ Grant (1995: 579-80) points out that this has been a persistent theme of the South in terms of its relations with in the North in the post-Cold War era: “Notwithstanding assertions of donor countries to the contrary, the developing countries take the view that they will find themselves short-circuited in the allocation process unless they forcefully remind the donor community that there is an essential difference between the economies of east and central Europe and those of the South. The difference is that the former economies are in transition from a command to an open structure while the developing countries are already integrated into the world economy, but on unequal terms.... The developing countries, therefore, argue that the response of the international community to their needs and those of the countries of eastern and central Europe should not compromise the requirements of either group of countries. Their argument was reflected in a UN General Assembly resolution in 1994 calling for improved economic and technical cooperation with economies in transition from centralized systems *as well as* with developing countries.” (*Emphasis added*)

¹⁰⁵ Shahram Chubin (1993: 91) points out: “No longer proxies, clients, and strategic bases, these states [of the South] are judged by their adherence to standards, values, and procedures that are now generally and unabashedly seen as full international responsibilities.... On the other hand, the end of the Cold War has freed the North to indulge its basic antipathy toward the poorer South, to dictate to it without delicacy or dialogue, and to dispense with the appearance of soliciting its views or the pretense of equality.”

its development aspirations being sacrificed not just in the name of environment but at the alter of new geo-political realities. Thus, despite having been proclaimed deceased, Cold War politics left a deep imprint upon UNCED and indirectly informed the South's strategy at Rio just as it had at Stockholm.

STOCKHOLM AND RIO: THE SAME SOUTH

While the distinctions between 'East' and 'West' were beginning to seem functionally redundant at Rio, the 'South' of 1992 was little different from that of 1972. It still found itself trapped in the same quagmire of impoverishment, dependence, and deprivation as it had at Stockholm. In some cases, such as those in the Pacific rim, the economic conditions had improved dramatically. However, in most countries things remained as bad, and in some—especially in Africa—had turned worse (South Commission, 1990; Bello, 1989):

Periodic improvements in the international system did not fundamentally change the status of Third World countries, which remained poor, subordinate and powerless. Indeed, the income gap between the industrialized countries of the North and developing countries of the South widened. (Grant, 1995: 569)

Grant adds that although this description does not equally apply to all developing countries, and some like Singapore and South Korea defy this caricature in its entirety, developing nations as a whole—including the 'newly rich'—consider themselves to be as marginalized as ever from the center of the international political stage. This has been especially true with regards to global environmental politics which the South—including countries like Singapore—considers to be driven by a 'Northern agenda':

The developing countries' views on global environmental issues have been shaped to considerable extent by their preoccupation with economic growth, their fears of high costs for environmental protection, and their general distrust of the policies of industrialized states.... Despite growing disparities among the developing countries between rapidly industrializing countries and debt-ridden countries that experienced little or no growth in the 1980s, developing countries share a common view of the relationship between global environmental issues and North-South economic relations.... [Developing countries] identify wasteful Northern patterns of excessive consumption as a key cause of global environmental degradation... [and] believe that the North should bear the financial burden of measures to reverse the ecological damage. (Porter and Brown, 1996: 111-2)

This assessment of the South's perception of global environmental politics was the defining common thread that remained substantively unaltered in the twenty

years that separated Stockholm from Rio. The South at UNCED was no different from the South at UNCHE in that it still saw the North as the principal global environmental culprit, it still viewed poverty and underdevelopment as its own principal concern, it still considered unequal global economic relations as the motor which perpetuated many environmental problems, and it still mistrusted the North's environmental agenda as a guise to perpetuate the South's sorry plight. It was this perception of the causality of the environmental problematique that informed the South's interests and strategy at both conferences. (See Founex, 1972; Rowland, 1973; Pirages, 1978; Clarke and Timberlake, 1982; South Commission, 1990; Kufour, 1991a and 1991b; Peng, 1991 and 1992; Raghavan, 1991; Agarwal and Narain, 1992; Agarwal, 1992; Bakshi, 1992; Hecht and Cockburn, 1992; Khor, 1992a; Shiva, 1992a).

The principal interest of the South at both conferences was the same, and can be described in one word: development. In viewing the conferences as a threat to this cherished (and illusive) goal, the reaction of the South to initial proposals for both conferences bordered on hostility. At one point before Stockholm there was the real fear that the developing countries might decide not to show up for the conference (Kay and Skolnikoff, 1972; Rowland, 1973). The early debates in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations on UNCED's 'terms of reference' were equally contentious with some Southern delegates questioning the very motivation of the conference and raising doubts not different from those raised by their compatriots about UNCHE.¹⁰⁶

Some developing countries had distrusted Stockholm as an attempt to "ratify and even enhance existing unequal economic relations and technical dependence, miring them in poverty forever" (Hecht and Cockburn, 1992: 849). Others argued that having created comfortable standards of living for themselves, the industrialized countries wanted to "pull the ladder up behind them" (Rowland, 1973: 47) to "slow planetary industrialization in order to replenish the spoiled ecosphere" (Pirages, 1978: 64). Exemplifying this mindset was the famous statement from Ivory Coast, which announced that it would

¹⁰⁶ Records of ECOSOC discussions on UNCED and personal communication with various developing country delegates to UNCED.

prefer more pollution problems [in comparison to poverty problems], "in so far as they are evidence of industrialization" (Rowland, 1978: 50).

During the UNCHE preparatory process a number of regional meetings were held to elicit developing countries' support and input. The most important of these was held at the small village of Founex, Switzerland, in June 1971. The Founex Report prepared by a distinguished group of Southern intellectuals became one of UNCHE's most important documents outlining the South's position. Some excerpts (Founex, 1972: 5-6):

The developing countries would clearly wish to avoid, as far as feasible, the [environmental] mistakes and distortions that have characterized the patterns of development of the industrialized societies. However, the major environmental problems of the developing countries are essentially of a different kind. They are predominantly problems that reflect the poverty and very lack of development in their societies.... These are problems, no less than those of industrial pollution, that clamor for attention in the context of the concern with human environment. They are problems which affect the greater mass of mankind.... In [industrialized] countries, it is appropriate to view development as a cause of environmental problems... In [the developing country] context, development becomes essentially a cure for their major environmental problems.

Despite the South's enunciation of its interests and reiteration of them at the conference itself, it gained nothing more than minor semantic victories in UNCHE documents. In large part Northern governments, NGOs, and media continued to dismiss the South's development agenda as 'pressure tactics' to elicit increased foreign aid (see Rowland, 1973; Hill, 1972). This experience compounded by that of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) movement which followed, made the South only more skeptical of the North by the time UNCED came about.

The reason that Rio's 'Earth Summit' was a conference on environment *and* development and not the 'Second UN Conference on the Human Environment' that it had originally been envisaged as, was the unyielding insistence of the developing countries to legitimize the environment-development linkage that they had fought so hard to establish at Stockholm.¹⁰⁷ From China's 1972

¹⁰⁷ The official report of the Stockholm conference (United Nations, 1972) as well as other accounts of its deliberations (Rowland, 1973; UNEP, 1982) fondly refer to it as the "first" United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, and foresee a "second" such conference. In fact, a resolution passed at Stockholm called on the UN General Assembly to "convene a second United Nations Conference on the Human Environment." Canada and Mexico even offered to be its hosts. Interestingly similar calls were also made at Rio, and once again Canada offered to be a prospective host.

statement, “poverty is the worst form of pollution” (Clarke and Timberlake, 1982) to the publication of the Brundtland Report¹⁰⁸ (WCED, 1987), the world had come a long way in accepting this linkage; but in the South’s view, maybe not long enough (Adede, 1992).¹⁰⁹

The South sought legitimacy for its concerns by influencing the enabling resolution for UNCED. Even though the principal proponents of UNCED were from the North, UN resolution 44/228 which sets the mandate for the conference was a creature of Southern interests. Crafted, after heated debate, in ECOSOC committees where developing states constitute the majority and where the majority vote wins, the South was better able to influence its final shape than it was able to affect final UNCED documents which required consensus.

The South’s concerns about the development-environment linkage is evident from resolution 44/228’s stress “that poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated.” In 1990, resolution 45/211 considered it necessary to reiterate this “fundamental” relationship. Resolution 44/228 also *affirmed* “that the promotion of economic growth in developing countries is essential to address problems of environmental degradation”; *reaffirmed* that “States have the sovereign right to exploit their own natural resources”; *noted* that the industrialized countries were the largest polluters and therefore had the main responsibility of combating pollution; *stressed* the “specific responsibilities” of transnational corporations; and *reaffirmed* that “the serious external indebtedness of developing countries and other countries with serious debt-servicing problems has to be addressed.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ The 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environmental and Development (WCED) is popularly known as *Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987), while the Commission itself is remembered by the name of its chairperson, Gro Harlem Brundtland, prime minister of Norway. The WCED Report was one of the motivations behind UNCED and was specifically mentioned in the first UN General Assembly resolution (No. 43/196) on the subject. Earlier, resolution 42/187 had, in welcoming the WCED Report, paved the way for the inclusion of the “sustainable development” concept into UN vocabulary.

¹⁰⁹ Even the world’s leading financial institutions have begun embracing the linkage, at least in words. The UNCED momentum was largely instrumental in the publication and timing of the first World Bank *World Development Report* that focused on ‘Development and Environment’ (World Bank, 1992). Interestingly, the 1992 report’s major thrust is little different from the statement made at Stockholm by the Bank’s then president, Robert McNamara: “There is no evidence that the economic growth which the developing countries so desperately require will necessarily involve an unacceptable burden on either their own or anybody else’s environment” (quoted in Rowland, 1973). Interestingly, at Stockholm the World Bank was proudly boasting of the (then) recently established post of environmental advisor while at Rio it was boasting of its (now) recently updated environmental division.

¹¹⁰ Italicized words and quotes from the original text of resolution 44/228.

In short, UN resolution 44/228 had already stated most of what the South wished the UNCED documents would say.¹¹¹ Resolution 44/228 laid out for UNCED an agenda and a mandate that the developing countries, justifiably, considered a victory for their position on environment and development. In retrospect—and not surprisingly given the ‘wish list’ nature of 44/228—it was an agenda and a mandate that UNCED proved incapable of fulfilling.

Unlike its predecessor—the 1968 UN resolution 2398 (XXIII) which convened UNCHE—44/228 was a phenomenally detailed set of responsibilities and goals, even by UN standards. Although it has been rightly stated that the resolution had “set an impossible agenda for the conference” (Holmberg, 1992: 8), this was the South’s way of trying to ensure that Rio, unlike Stockholm, would focus on the issues dearest to it. Considering what 44/228 had promised to deliver, it is not surprising that the South would prefer to hold UNCED accountable to this agenda and why it believes that Rio failed its mandate.

The South’s evaluation of UNCED inevitably focuses on three issues:

- financial arrangements,
- institutional governance, and
- technology transfer.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Resolution 44/228 went on to identify nine areas of “major [environmental] concern” (of which population was not one). It also laid down a set of 23 objectives for UNCED, which, apart from others, included: to identify strategies “for concerted action to deal with major environmental issues in the socio-economic development processes”; to recommend measures “to protect and enhance the environment, taking into account the specific needs of developing countries”; to promote “development of international environmental law... taking into account the special needs and concerns of the developing countries”; to accord “high priority to drought and desertification control”; to examine “the relationship between environmental degradation and the international economic environment”; to examine strategies “for defined activities to promote a supportive international economic climate conducive to sustained and environmentally sound development in all countries, with a view to combating poverty and improving the quality of life, and bearing in mind that the incorporation of environmental concerns and considerations in development planning and policies should not be used to introduce new forms of conditionality in aid or in development financing and should not serve as a pretext for creating unjustified barriers to trade”; to identify ways and means of providing new and additional financial resources particularly to developing countries for environmentally sound programs and projects in accordance with national development objectives... [and for] measures directed towards solving major environmental problems”; to consider various mechanisms for “ensuring, on a favorable basis, the most effective and expeditious transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries”; to examine “the role of the United Nations system in dealing with the environment and possible ways of improving it”; to qualify the financial requirements for the successful implementation of Conference decisions and recommendations and to identify possible sources, including innovative ones, of additional resources.”

¹¹² Porter and Brown (1996: 117) propose a somewhat different list of the South’s objectives at Rio: a) new and additional development assistance, b) reduction in the North’s consumption levels, c) no trade restrictions by the North under environmental pretexts, and d) transfer of environmental technologies.

Such an agenda was doomed to failure because, as Porter and Brown (1996: 118) testify, “the United States was prepared to veto any initiatives that could be viewed as redistributing economic power at the global level, that would create new international institutions, or that would require additional budgetary resources, technology transfers, or changes in domestic US policies.”

In analysis, then, the question of finance—of ‘additionality’ and ‘responsibility’—which the South thought had already been settled by resolution 44/228, were reopened and left hanging. While some very meager—effectively inconsequential—amounts were pledged, no framework of commitment was agreed to. In the case of institutional reform—i.e. of ‘democracy’ and ‘transparency’ in international governance—the ‘innovative’ mechanisms and institutional improvements that 44/228 had been looking for were not found and the status quo ensued. While the CSD is some small headway, the principal institutions of concern to the South—the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF)—remains as ‘undemocratic’ and ‘untransparent’ in their functioning as ever. GEF was retained as the principal funding mechanism and control over its dispensation was effectively retained by the North. The issue of technology transfer—which lies at the intersection of the institutional and financial arrangements—suffered a similar fate and was, from a Southern point of view, sacrificed at the altar of intellectual property rights. (See Agarwal, 1992; Banuri, 1992; Khor, 1992c; Shiva, 1992a; Porter and Brown, 1996)

In essence, then, the fate of all three issues demonstrates these commonalities:

- they lie at the core of resolution 44/228;
- they were the principal concerns of the South;
- the overwhelming bulk of time and effort in the UNCED negotiations was spent on these three issues since they were considered critical to the success of the conference;

This list is not, however, unsimilar to our analysis. The first and third, in fact, relate to the financial arrangements referred above; the last corresponds to technology transfer, also identified above. Although Porter and Brown do not mention it in their list, they also acknowledge the centrality of institutional governance for the South and stress that “developing countries did some of their toughest bargaining in negotiations relating to the environment when they resisted the donor countries’ proposed governance structure for the Global Environment Facility” (pg. 114). As to consumption reduction, it is argued that the South uses that argument as a basis for seeking financial resources by highlighting Northern ‘responsibility’ for the global environmental crisis and then demanding just compensation for it (more discussion on this follows in this chapter).

- at the end of the UNCED process the “innovative” solutions envisaged by resolution 44/228 had been found for none; and
- in each case the pre-UNCED, status quo situation prevailed.

Porter and Brown (1996: 127) argue that the South did gain something in the Rio Declaration which “reflects to a much greater degree than the Stockholm Declaration twenty years earlier the political agenda of the developing countries.” They refer particularly to the acceptance of principles such as the “right to development” and “common but differentiated responsibility.” If, indeed, these were concessions they were small ones since this was not the first time these principles were articulated or accepted by the international community. More importantly, whatever victory the Rio Declaration might spell for the South is hollow and semantic—not the concrete decisions in the areas of financial arrangements, institutional governance and technology transfer that the South was demanding. This, too, was not unlike the semantic concession the South got at Stockholm by having the development-environment linkage accepted.

For the South, then, the world after Rio does not look too different from the world before Rio; or, for that matter, the world before Stockholm.

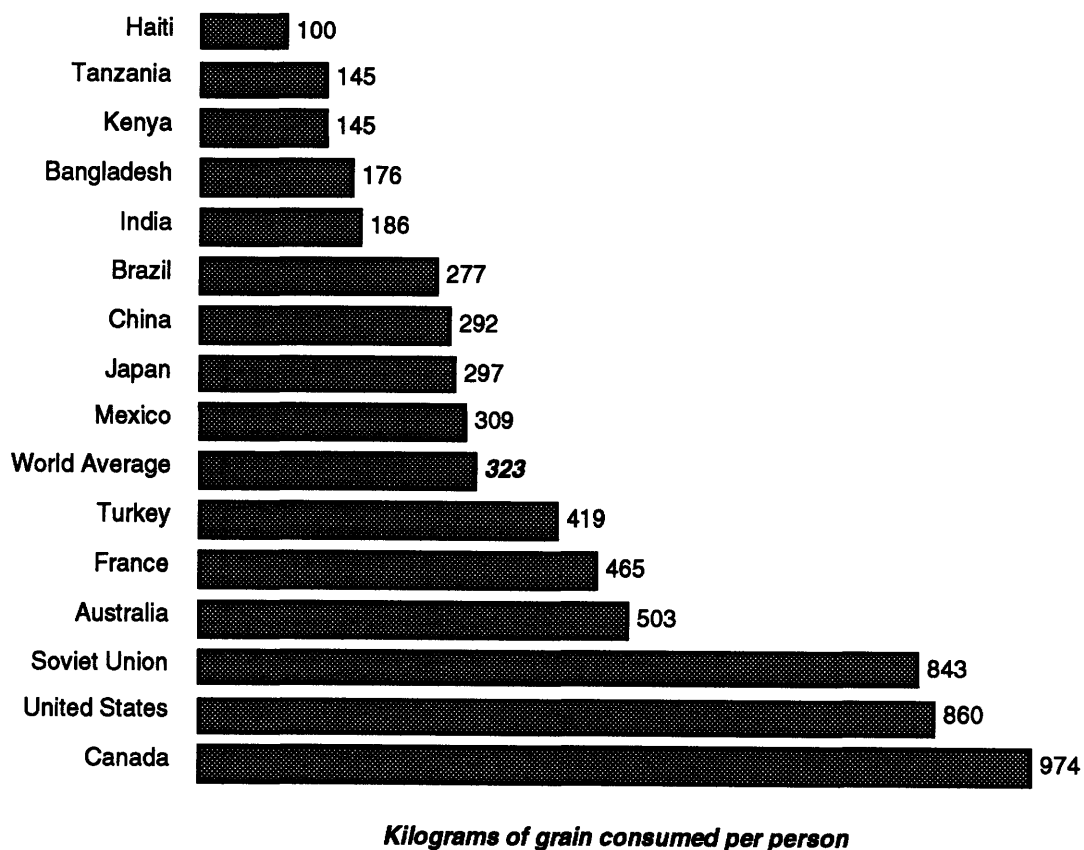
A PROFILE IN FRUSTRATION

The key to understanding the South’s fears and frustrations concerning international environmental negotiation is to appreciate the constancy of the South’s overarching concerns and the equal constancy of its inability to achieve its goals. What galvanized the North-South polarization at both conferences was the totally different perceptions that industrialized and developing nations hold about what the ‘real’ environmental issues exactly are (see Hill, 1972; Pell and Case, 1972; Rowland, 1973; Pirages, 1978; Agarwal and Narain, 1992; French, 1992; IIED, 1992; Khor, 1992c; Peng, 1992; Suskind, 1992).¹¹³

¹¹³ Given the South’s ‘strength of numbers’ the North has long been weary of allowing the South to play too forceful a role in international institutions. Werner Levi (1979) was pointing out 17 years ago that the international legal system is being “disadvantageously affected” because “the developing states are changing their tactics from making demands in international forums to assuming active roles in international institutions; they are trying to use international law to obtain a greater share of the world’s wealth; and above all, and affecting everything else, the developed and developing states take two totally different approaches to the regulation of their relationship.” His last insight is of great

Fueling the South's frustration is the fact that at both conferences, the South's arguments for focusing on excessive consumption and defining additional financial resources as 'compensation' from the North for having despoiled the planet's environment, was seen by the North as a distraction, as extortion, and as exploitation of the issues to "pry more foreign aid money out of the rich" (Rowland, 1973: 63; *see also* Pirages, 1978; Caldwell, 1990; Sebenius, 1991; Dumanoski, 1992; Simons, 1992).

Figure 2: Grain consumption per person, 1990



Source: From Postel (1994: 6) based on Worldwatch Institute estimates.

Instead, as Adams (1993: 200-6) laments, the South's effort to keep the focus on consumption in the North was rebuked, the environmental burden was shifted to the South and the developing countries became the "co-accused".

relevance. The single biggest hurdle in the UNCED process was the totally different meanings that the two sides attach to 'environment,' 'development,' and the 'environment-development' interaction.

The principal argument of the South—that excessive consumption in the North was the root cause of the environmental crisis and that this should be the principal focus of international environmental policy—was given short shrift. The South considered the glaring disparities in consumption levels in North and South to be its ‘clinging argument’ at both Stockholm and Rio (Founex, 1972; Agarwal and Narain, 1992). This was to be the ‘smoking gun’ which would demonstrate the North’s responsibility for creating the environmental mess in the first place and, by extension, hold it liable for the damages:

From the perspective of the developing countries—the South—such consumption not only deprives them of resources needed for future development but also contributes disproportionately to the world’s environmental degradation. (WRI, 1994: 3)

As it turned out at both conferences, even where the North accepted some past responsibility, it outrightly disavowed all future liability (Rowland, 1973; Porter and Brown, 1996).

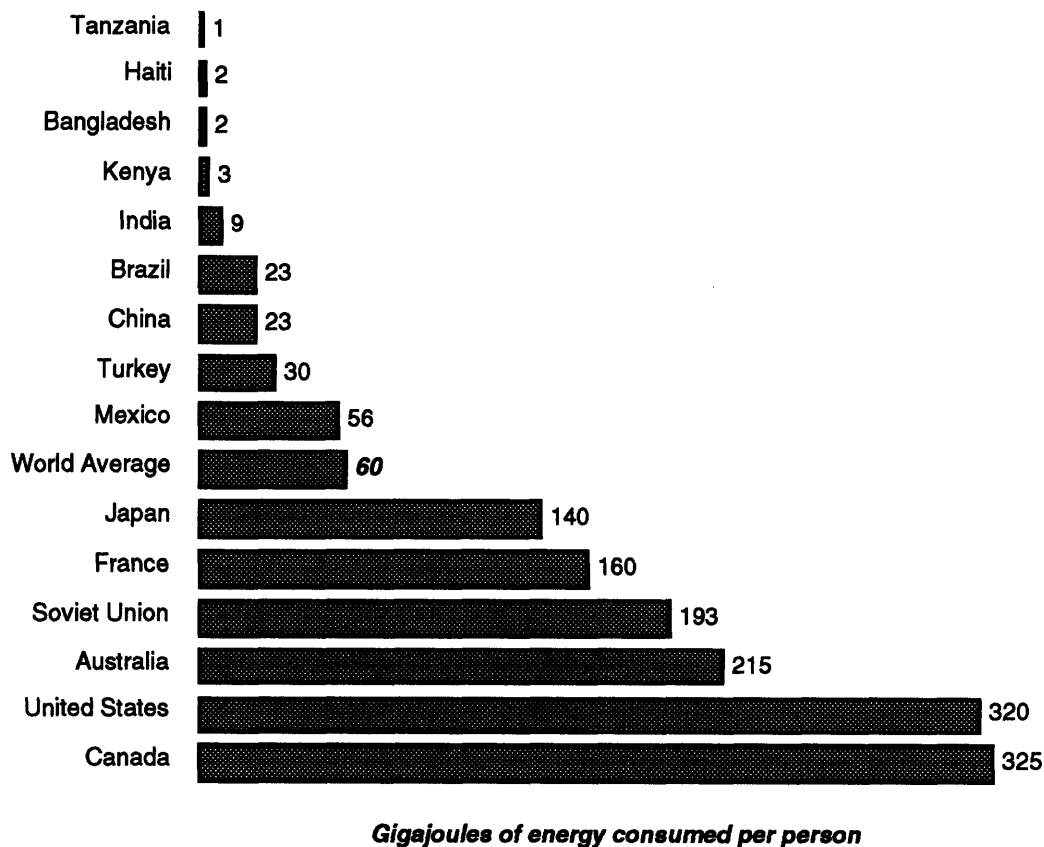
**Table 3: *Per capita* consumption trends, 1961-90;
distribution among industrialized and developing countries**

	'61-65	'66-70	'71-75	'76-80	'81-85	'86-90
Fossil Fuel Consumption (gigajoules/person)						
Industrialized	115.82	142.53	165.70	169.52	153.81	160.06
Developing	7.37	8.26	10.34	12.91	14.53	17.28
Aluminum Consumption (metric tons/100 people)						
Industrialized	5.99	9.00	11.89	13.50	12.56	14.13
Developing	0.13	0.23	0.37	0.51	0.58	0.69
Copper Consumption (metric tons/100 people)						
Industrialized	6.17	7.00	7.46	7.90	7.50	8.06
Developing	0.17	0.17	0.26	0.34	0.38	0.48
Roundwood Consumption (cubic meters/person)						
Industrialized	1.10	1.60	1.14	1.17	1.17	1.29
Developing	0.43	0.44	0.44	0.46	0.48	0.48
Beef and Veal Consumption (kilograms/person)						
Industrialized	24.53	27.37	28.59	29.65	27.69	27.17
Developing	3.98	4.06	3.84	4.21	4.05	4.29
Cotton Consumption (kilograms/person)						
Industrialized	6.91	5.32	5.30	4.70	4.77	5.35
Developing	1.93	2.29	2.40	2.29	2.76	2.60

Source: From WRI(1994: 3-26 based on data analyzed by the World Resources Institute from various sources.

Moreover, many in the South felt that the North was misusing environmental data and its own superiority in environmental information (Agarwal and Narain, 1991). The argument most often made in the North and considered most spurious by the South is that even though the North's share in consuming natural resources and producing environmental waste is orders of magnitude higher than that in the South, the South's share of these is growing while the North's is either not growing as fast, is stagnant or, in a few cases, declining (*for example*, WRI, 1990). To many in the South this is adding insult to injury.

Figure 3: Commercial energy consumption per person, 1991



Source: From WRI (1994: 334-35), World Resources Institute estimates.

In the case of energy, for example, consumption in industrialized countries remained relatively stable from 180 gigajoules per person in 1970 to 185 gigajoules per person in 1990; for developing countries, however, energy consumption jumped 75 per cent from 12 to 21 gigajoules per person between 1970 and 1990 (Lenssen, 1993: 104). Typically, the Northern observer tends to

focus on the consumption jump in the South, while the Southern mind remains boggled at how one can miss the fact that even with this increase the *per capita* use of energy in the North remains nearly 9 times as much as that in the South.

**Table 4: Consumption shares and patterns;
distribution among industrialized and developing countries¹¹⁴**

Category	Products	World Total (MMT)	Share (%)		Per Capita (Kg. or MSq.)	
			Indz.	Dvlpg.	Indz.	Dvlpg.
Food	Cereals	1801	48	52	717	247
	Milk	533	72	28	320	39
	Meat	114	64	36	61	11
Forest	Round wood	2410	46	55	388	339
	Sawn wood	338	78	22	213	19
	Paper, etc.	224	81	19	148	11
Industrial	Fertilizers	141	60	40	70	15
	Cement	1036	52	48	451	130
	Cotton & wool fabrics	30	47	53	15.6	5.8
Metals	Copper	10	86	14	7	0.4
	Iron & steel	699	80	20	469	36
	Aluminum	22	86	14	16	1
Chemicals	Inorganic	226	87	13	163	8
	Organic	391	85	15	274	16
Transport vehicles	Cars	370	92	8	0.283	0.012
	Commercial vehicles	105	85	15	0.075	0.0006

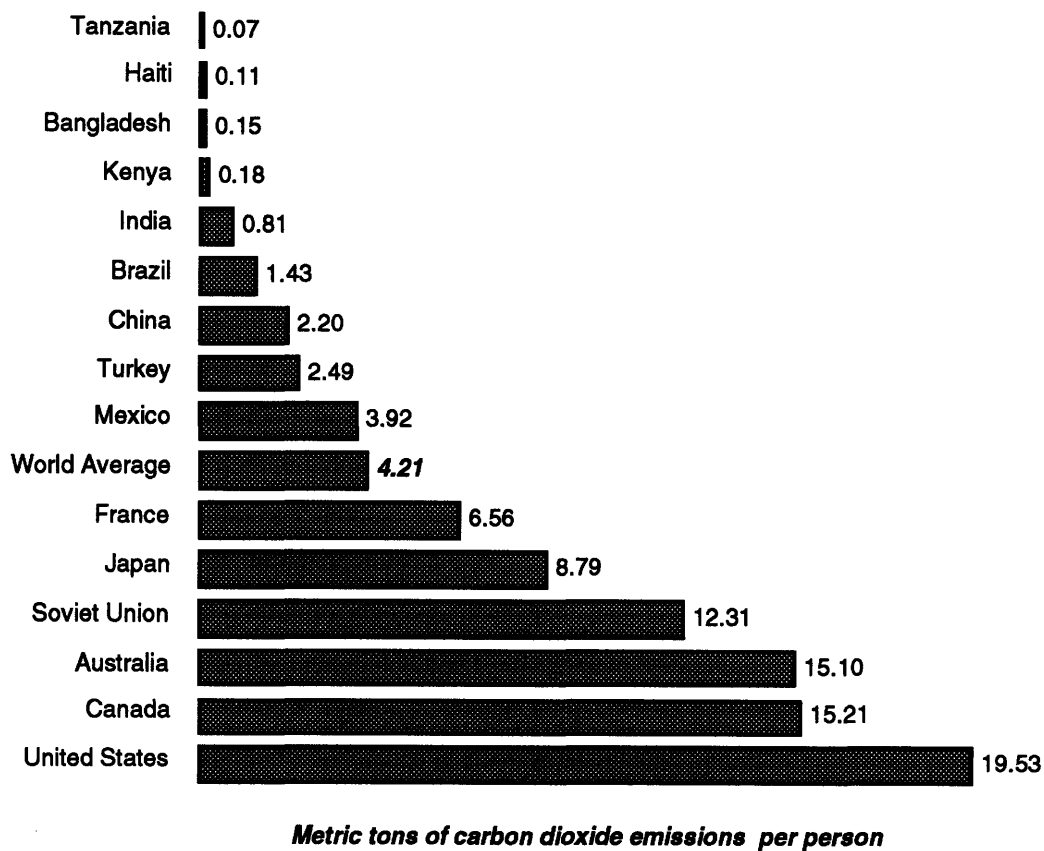
Source: From Porter and Brown (1996: 113) based on a report prepared for UNCED by the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Bombay (1991).

Table 3 highlights that not only have developing country consumption patterns increased less dramatically than often imagined, but even in cases where the South's consumption has increased, the magnitude of what an average person in the developing world consumes is so ridiculously less than what an average

¹¹⁴ Statistical notes on this table are available in Porter and Brown (1996: 113). Some important points include: a) most data is for 1987 or 1988; b) world totals are in millions of metric tons, the exceptions are cotton and wool fiber which is in billion square meters and transport vehicles which are in millions; c) per capita consumption figures are in kilograms per person, square meters per person or vehicles per person as appropriate; d) in the case of cotton and woolen fabrics, synthetics are excluded, also not included in this case (for nonavailability of data) are figures from USSR and China.

person in the industrialized countries consumes that the comparison becomes meaningless (*also see* Table 4). Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate that if the consumption data is disaggregated by individual countries, the disparities become even more glaring.¹¹⁵ Moreover, as Figure 4 shows for carbon dioxide emissions, the disparities are as wide—if not wider—for environmental emissions as they are for natural resource consumption.

Figure 4: Carbon dioxide emissions per person from industrial processes, 1991



Source: From WRI (1994: 362-63), World Resources Institute estimates.

Another related argument from the North has been that due to the higher populations and population growth rates in the South, even if the *per capita*

¹¹⁵ As a representative example, compare the *per capita* consumption of natural resources in the United States and in India. According to the World Resources Institute (WRI, 1994: 17), the average American consumes nearly 45 times the copper, 31 times the nickel, 12 times the coal, 43 times the petroleum, 184 times the natural gas, and 386 times the pulpwood as the average Indian.

impact is low, the net impact is substantial. The response from the South is that although this is not incorrect in substance, it still misses the point because even in aggregate terms it is the industrialized countries which are consuming far more than their just share. As Table 4 shows, the developing countries support nearly 75 per cent of the world's people but consume only 36 per cent of the world's meat, 19 per cent of its paper, around 14 per cent of its chemicals and drive just 8 per cent of its cars. From the perspective of the South, ours remains a cruel and unjust planet.

In essence, then, the fate of the South's strategy at Rio was no different from that at Stockholm—or, for that matter, from that in its other dealings with the North:

For the South, as a whole, UNCED showed up the failure of its own strategy. These countries had gone with the intention of seeking reparation from their rich counterparts for the damages caused to the world's environment. But they came back with nothing and looking less moral to boot. The North simply dismissed them as a penurious bunch, pulling at its purse-strings. (*Down to Earth*, 1992a: 5-6)

The single most striking conclusion of comparing the tone and content of North-South environmental negotiations at Stockholm and Rio is that in two decades during which the world map has been redrawn, very little—either in argument or in the predicament of the South—has actually changed (Brundtland, 1992).

The “development and environment” section of the summarized general debate in the official UNCHE Report (United Nations, 1972) can today be read verbatim as a surrogate summary of the development and environment discussions at UNCED. Some excerpts:

Considerable emphasis was placed by speakers from developing countries upon the fact that for two-thirds of the world's population the human environment was dominated by poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and misery.... The priority of developing countries was development. Until the gap between the poor and the rich countries was substantially narrowed, little if any progress could be made... support for environmental action must not be an excuse for reducing development.... there must be a substantial increase in development assistance.... Many speakers from developing countries stated that there was exploitation of their natural resources by developed countries for their own purposes; some protested against the activities of multinational corporations.... the only criterion of the success of environmental programmes was the substantial improvement of the conditions of life of the vast majority of mankind. To achieve this there must be an entirely new attitude on the part of the developed countries towards their responsibilities.... it would be intolerable if the nations which had created the world's environmental problems should expect others to meet the cost.

The evaluation of Maurice Strong, who was the secretary general for both conferences is representative of how little had changed, either for the South for the global movement towards sustainable development in the twenty years between Stockholm and Rio. Speaking at his last press conference at Rio he said: "Whilst this conference has been successful as a meeting, not a single thing has changed regarding our civilized behavior. We didn't succeed 20 years ago at the Stockholm conference and we don't have another 20 to waste" (quoted in Khor, 1992b: 4).

#6

From NIEO to NIEO

*We shall not cease from exploration,
And the end of all our exploring,
Will be to arrive where we started,
And know the place for the first time.*
—T.S. ELIOT

This chapter relates the previous chapter to the section before it. It attempts to place the experience of the developing countries in what has now been 25 years of international environmental policymaking within the larger context of the ongoing North-South dialogue. It builds upon a major substantive claim introduced in the previous chapter—i.e., in a quarter century of global environmental policymaking, the interests of the developing countries have remained consistent and consistently unfulfilled.

In going the next step, however, it is argued here that the abiding principal interests of the South in its emerging demands on, what could be described as, a New International Environmental Order (NIE[nv]O) are, in fact, a reflection of the very same fears and hopes that had prompted its call for a New International Economic Order (NIE[co]O) in the 1970s. It is, therefore, proposed that the North-South differences now emerging as a recurring feature of international

environmental policymaking can only be understood as lying of the same continuum as earlier North-South conflicts.¹¹⁶

The bulk of Northern environmental scholarship has, however, refused to acknowledge the importance of this continuum. A notable exception is Alker and Haas (1993: 166) who point out that “although it is not adequately describable as a return to the imperial/colonial world, contemporary global ecopolitics reflects somewhat analogous North-South geopolitical differences.” However, even the scholars who do not invest much faith in seeking historical parallel in the South’s current concerns would agree with Alker and Haas’s (1993: 164) forecast of “a new era in which global ecopolitics will define many of the terms, if not the practices, of world politics” and that “North-South tensions are likely to be a salient conservative feature of this new era” (*see, for example*, Young, 1989; Mathews 1991a; French, 1992; Gardner, 1992; Petesch, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Suskind, 1994a; Miller, 1995; Porter and Brown, 1996).

The following discussion will seek to highlight the evolving continuum of North-South dialogue and plot the emerging responses of the developing countries to initiatives for global environmental policymaking onto this continuum. A brief review of the New International Economic Order movement and its importance in the evolution of North-South dialogue will be followed by a discussion of why both Stockholm and Rio were important milestones within this evolution. Finally, it will be suggested that, for the South, the end of the Cold War and the rise of ecopolitics have ushered in the hopes of reviving, what may be called, the second generation of North-South dialogue.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER: A PRIMER

In *The North-South Dialogue: A Brief History*, Jones (1983: 1) explains the emergence and rationale of the NIE[co]O movement for both North and South:

Arab oil-power and American humiliation in South-East Asian combined to direct the attention of western politicians, journalists, and publics increasingly towards the

¹¹⁶ The New International *Economic* Order movement is generally recognized by its acronym, NIEO. For the purpose of our discussion here, however, it will be referred to as NIE[co]O to differentiate it from, what this chapter calls the South’s desire for a New International *Environmental* Order (NIE[nv]O). Wherever used, NIEO will still refer to the New International Economic Order.

interminable succession of technically complex international negotiations on trade, money, and a host of lesser issues, in which it appeared that a new balance of power was to be struck between the industrialized West and the successor states of the old European empires in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Satisfactory outcomes in these negotiations were regarded by the third-world states as essential to healthy economic and political development because it was widely assumed that the prevailing structure of international institutions served the narrow interests of powerful industrialized states at the expense of the poorer countries of the South.

Hansen (1979: vii) defines the NIE[co]O debate as a conflict about “conceptions about the management of society.” On a similar note, Krasner (1985: 27) sees it as the South’s fundamental challenge to the existing order of what he calls “global liberalism”; he points out that “vulnerability, not simple poverty” was the motivating force for these newly independent developing countries. In popular understanding, however, it is generally agreed that for the South NIE[co]O was a movement aimed at restructuring what it saw as an international system of iniquitous global economic relations; and for the North it became an effort to bring into the folds of the ‘global free market’ the two-thirds of humanity that lived in the so-called ‘Third World.’¹¹⁷

The oil-crisis of 1973, new strategic South-South alliances that emerged therein [especially those motivated by OPEC’s (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) desire to assert a leadership role], and a growing resentment in the South against what it considered to be an unjust world economic system, precipitated into what has been described as “one of the most important modern global conflict” (Murphy, 1984: 1).

Rallying its new found unity, the South gained what it then considered to be a major victory in a June 1974 special session of the United Nations General

¹¹⁷ For a comprehensive record of the development of the NIEO/North-South debate within international fora see *A New International Economic Order: Selected Documents 1945-1975* (Moss and Winton, 1976; also see Makiyama, 1980 and 1982). Insightful discussions on the events that led up to NIEO and shaped its documents is provided in *The North-South Dialogue: A Brief History* (Jones, 1983), *The Emergence of the NIEO Ideology* (Murphy, 1984) and *Global Dialogue: The New International Order* (Menon, 1977). Bhagwati (1977) and Doran et al. (1983) provide a good sampling of the dependencia debate; the story of the oil crisis of 1973 and its affects on the North-South dialogue are discussed in Allen (1979), and Askari and Cummings (1978). The implications of the NIEO movement for the South are discussed in detail in Agarwala (1983) and Haq (1980). A more Northern perspective is provided by Hansen (1979)—the author argues in his introduction that his analysis is likely to be perceived as Northern but is not intended to be so, nevertheless he acknowledges that his policy prescriptions have a decided Northern bias. Krasner (1985) provides a useful discussion on the South’s insistence on changing international economic regimes, while Williams (1993) provides a more recent analysis highlighting the significance of the Southern coalition in current environmental debates. For an authoritative sampling of the views that shaped NIEO see *The Poverty Curtain* (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1976).

Assembly. The session legitimized the South's demand for the creation of a 'New International Economic Order' by passing a resolution to that effect and drawing out a 'Plan of Action.'¹¹⁸ UN secretary general Kurt Waldheim reiterated the South's views by proclaiming that:

Many new nations, having won political independence, find themselves still bound by economic dependency. For a long time it was thought that the solution to this problem was aid and assistance. It is increasingly clear, however, that a New International Economic Order is essential if the relations between the rich and poor nations are to be transformed into a mutually beneficial partnership.... The international system of economic and trade relations which was devised 30 years ago is now manifestly inadequate for the needs of the world community as a whole. The charge against that order in the past was that it worked well for the affluent and against the poor. It cannot now even be said that it works well for the affluent. (*quoted in Menon, 1977: 2-3*)

The UN followed its call for establishing the NIE[co]O with the adoption, in December 1974, of a 'Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States.' In essence, the new order demanded "full and complete economic emancipation" for the developing countries; and the way to achieve it, they agreed (at the 1975 Dakar Conference of Developing Countries on Raw Materials), was "to recover and control their natural resources and wealth, and the means of economic development." The South decided to "change their traditional approach to negotiations with developed countries, hitherto consisting in presentation of a list of requests to developed countries and an appeal to their political goodwill." The new approach to negotiations, they decided, would involve common action to strengthen their bargaining position, more economic activity among themselves and a strategy based on "the principle of relying first and foremost on themselves." (*Menon, 1977: 3-4; also Moss and Winton, 1976: 533-73*)

These were the early days of high hopes and soaring optimism. Despite having considered many of the South's specific proposals unpalatable, even the US ambassador to the seventh special session of the UN General Assembly proclaimed buoyantly that, "perhaps never in the history of the United Nations has there been so intensive and so genuine a negotiation among so many nations on so profoundly important a range of issues. We have shown that we can negotiate in good faith and, in doing so, reach genuine accord" (*quoted in Menon, 1977: 12-13*).

¹¹⁸ For more details see Moss and Winton (1976), Menon (1977), Jones (1983) and Murphy (1984).

If 1974 was “the year of NIEO demands” (Murphy, 1984: 127), its euphoria was not to last long.¹¹⁹ The optimism reflected in UN resolutions and speeches proved misplaced and the differences persisted—the North accusing the South of adopting a confrontational approach and the South blaming the North for perpetuating its misery. It did, however, give the South one thing that it had been long clamoring for: the opening of a process of wide-ranging North-South negotiations on international economic issues. During the late 1970s the North reluctantly ceded to this demand by participating in the process leading up to the Conference on International Economic Cooperation (CIEC). However, it did so out of necessity, rather than conviction (see Gordon, 1978; McDonald, 1982).

The North-South dialogue acquired some momentum between 1974 and 1979. It was undoubtedly spurred by the fear of the developed countries that the newly found assertiveness of the South after the rise in oil prices in 1973 could lead to a damaging confrontation. For as long as that threat was perceived as possible, the North kept the dialogue going; when it subsided, the North withdrew. (South Commission, 1990: 216)

This view is shared by scholars from the North. Renninger (1989: 250) points out that the North viewed the South’s stand as rigid, inflexible, unbusinesslike, confrontational, and unrealistic and “never accepted the need for radical change and has certainly resisted any attempts to alter the bases of its power over international economic life. Essentially the strategy followed by the North [was] one of ‘damage limitation’... ranging from extreme hostility to acceptance in principle of certain kinds of changes to efforts to split apart the [South].” Hansen (1980: 1105) tells the same story:

Notwithstanding all the talk of a shift in the North from a policy of ‘confrontation’ to one of ‘negotiation’, Northern responses to Southern initiatives in the dialogue of the late 1970s remained fundamentally negative. Led by the United States, the North continued to reject almost all Southern proposals without engaging in serious negotiation and seldom, if ever, presented alternatives on its own.

¹¹⁹ It is important to understand the optimism that 1974 generated in the context of that era. As Craig Murphy (1984: 91-2) points out: “in retrospect the language of the 1974 texts has even more of an Alice in Wonderland quality than (commentators of the time) detected. But when they wrote the 1974 texts, new order advocates shared a new hope that the old order was failing. They believed that restating their views could do something more than ritual. Third World officials knew... that no genie with magic words, or even the wildest sympathizers with the UN, would be able to convince all governments of the truth of the Third World position. But changes in American economic policy beginning in 1971 appeared to signal the end of the postwar economic system. The system’s operation had begun to have unanticipated consequences unacceptable to its major supporters. By 1974 all national governments recognized a need to change the international economic order. The LDCs thought they had a chance to influence the change that was bound to take place.”

The [North-South] Cancun Summit of 1981 made a last-ditch, unsuccessful, effort to revive the dialogue, which then remained barely alive through much of the 1980s.¹²⁰ The failure of the Conference on International Economic Cooperation in 1977 may be marked as the beginning of the end of, what we are calling, the first generation of the North-South dialogue, the failure on the Cancun Summit as the end, and the failure to launch Global Negotiations at the 11th Special Session of the General Assembly as the end of the end.

In subsequent years, as geo-political events shaped new alliances, the South's unity as a bloc weakened. As the North's perception of the economic importance of natural resources in the South (particularly mineral and agricultural products) diminished, so did the perceived leverage enjoyed by the South. As an increasingly indebted South struggled more than ever to resist the ravages of an unkind international economy, the control of the Bretton Woods twins—the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)—became ever stronger. The NIE[co]O agenda began slowly receding from world attention. As will be argued in later sections, it was to reemerge as the 1990s eroded East-West polarizations and as a new generation of global negotiations, especially those pertaining to the environment presented themselves as a new rich ground for such dialogue.

ENVIRONMENT AS AN NIEO ISSUE

The 1972 Stockholm conference is often treated as no more than a footnote in much of the literature dealing with the history of the North-South debate. This is largely because soon after the Stockholm conference the world was brought to a near standstill by the 1973 oil crisis, which has been seen as the 'official' launching point for the movement for a New International Economic Order.

It needs to be appreciated, however, that NIE[co]O had been slowly brewing within the documents of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of 77, and the

¹²⁰ 22 Heads of State and Government met at Cancun in 1981 to find political support for continuing the process of North-South negotiations. However, by this time the South was itself in disarray and the North preoccupied with internal economic woes, and the effort collapsed. Other efforts, such as the one made at UNCTAD VI at Belgrade in 1983 (which attempted to revive the dialogue on the rationale that development in the South would stimulate the global economy and reinforce economic recovery in the North) suffered a similar fate.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) for at least more than a decade before it caught international attention (*see especially*, Moss and Winton, 1976). As Murphy (1984: 12) points out, the history of the New International Economic Order ideology begins “in the 1940s when the issue of creating regimes to help manage world economic relations first appeared on the international agenda”¹²¹ (*also see* Krasner, 1985).

Although the oil crisis was the event that brought NIE[co]O concerns to the forefront of global attention, UNCTAD was one of the first major international forum outside UNCTAD where the South consciously negotiated as a bloc and presented many of the very same substantive arguments and negotiation strategies which were soon to become the hallmark of NIE[co]O.

The South recognized the emerging environmental concerns in the North about ‘limits to growth’ as a distinctively North-South issue and in some cases as an effort to sabotage the South’s developmental aspirations.¹²² Soon after the Stockholm conference, for example, the 1973 NAM Summit in Algiers was attacking the North for exporting its environmental problems to the South and stressing that “environmental measures adopted by one state should not adversely affect the environment of the states, or zones outside their jurisdiction”; NAM leaders went on to add that “any infringement of the rights of effective control by any state over its national resources and their exploitation by means suited to its own situation, having respect for the ecological balance, is contrary to the aims and principles of the United Nations Charter and hampers the development of international cooperation” (Moss and Winton, 1976: 417).

Even more poignantly, Southern views on the environment expressed during the UNCTAD process reflect nearly to an exactitude the substance and the rhetoric of what was to become NIE[co]O (*most especially* Founex, 1972) and set up the environmental problematique in a decidedly North-South context:¹²³

¹²¹ The essential thesis proposed by Murphy (1984: 3) is that “the New International Economic Order ideology developed as an understandable response to real problems experienced by Third World states as a result of the Bretton Woods system’s creation and operation.”

¹²² This point is discussed in chapter #5. For an especially pertinent and scathing Southern critique of the ‘limits to growth’ paradigm see *The Poverty Curtain* by Mahbub -ul-Haq (1976).

¹²³ Williams (1993: 18) believes that “The Founex report marked the turning point in the definition of the international environmental problem.”

The developing countries sought from the pre-Stockholm negotiations to transform the agenda so that it reflected their concerns. Central to this strategy was the necessity to link environment to development since only through this device could the priority given to economic and social development be maintained. (Williams, 1993: 17)

Similarly, the protracted Law of the Sea (LOS) negotiation was very much a North-South sparring ground and provided another opportunity to New International Economic Order adherents to propagate their concerns even as other international fora shut out this agenda (Sebenius, 1984).¹²⁴

Neither the current North-South antagonisms in international environmental policymaking, nor the relevance of the South's behavior at Stockholm or Rio can be fully appreciated without first understanding the significance of the NIE[co]O ideology. For example, the essential motivation for NIE[co]O was the developing countries' desire to transform the governance and operation of the international economic system, or regime, as characterized by institutions such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the IMF and the World Bank (Krasner, 1984; Murphy, 1984). The principal concerns of the South at UNCED, discussed previously, were substantively on the very same plane; they related to seeking new patterns of operation and governance in existing and proposed international financial institutions.¹²⁵

As Marc Williams (1993: 20-1) underscores, "a remarkable degree of consistency is apparent in the aspirations and demands voiced by the

¹²⁴ For a detailed account of these negotiations see *Negotiating the Law of the Sea* by James Sebenius (1984). For the significance of these talks in the larger North-South dialogue see Hansen (1979).

¹²⁵ Although the direct influence and control that the Bretton Woods institutions now have over developing countries is even greater than it was in the 1970s, their general popularity in the South remains no different. It ranges from those who consider them to be 'tools of neocolonialism' to those who consider them 'necessary evils.' Works such as *Development Debacle: The World Bank in Philippines* (Bello, et al. 1982) have detailed how many programs sponsored by these agencies have been detrimental to the South's development. Few in the South, if any, consider the existing framework of these institutions as democratic or sympathetic to the South's interests (see Abugre, 1992; Bakshi, 1992; Bello, 1989; George, 1988; Lang, 1992; Peng, 1991; Shiva 1992a; South, 1990; Woddis, 1967). Illustrative of the reasons behind the South's disdain for the World Bank was a 1992 confidential memo from the Bank's then chief economist, Lawrence Summers, where he asked, "shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs [less developed countries]?" In preempting the arguments against such a proposal he notes that "[t]he problem with arguments against all of these proposals for more pollution in LDCs (intrinsic rights to certain goods, moral reasons, social concerns, lack of adequate markets, etc.) could be turned around and used more or less effectively against every Bank proposal for liberalization" (Economist, 1992). Like many in the South, Susan George found it to be "a perfect example of what the Bank thinks and is" (quoted in BankCheck, 1992).

developing countries on environmental issues since 1971.” He goes on to define four central themes which underpin the common Southern position:¹²⁶

- The insistence that the responsibility for global environmental problems resides in the North.
- The contention that any ameliorative measures taken must not hinder the South’s development prospects.
- The demand for free transfer of technology from North to South.
- The demand for transfer of additional resources to the South to enhance environmental protection.

In essence, then, from its very emergence on the international scene, the issue of the environment has been viewed by developing countries as being very much a part of the larger complex of North-South concerns. It has been an issue where they consider the North’s interests and priorities to be distinctively different from their own and the interests and priorities of their own collective to be shared enough to maintain a common position. It was, therefore, no accident—and nor should it be considered a surprise—that UNCED ended up being as polarized along North-South lines as it did.

THE SOUTH’S STRATEGIC USE OF THE ENVIRONMENT ISSUE

It is often suggested that the South cannot be ignored in global environmental policymaking because without its participation and support the said policies would not really be ‘global’ (see Young, 1989; Porter and Brown, 1991; Hurrell and Kingsbury, 1992; Susskind, 1994). This reasoning is not new. In fact, it has been argued that the North’s ultimate acceptance of indulging in a North-South dialogue was based partly on its recognition that on a number of ‘global issues’—prominently including the environment—the participation and support of the South was necessary. Roger Hansen (1979: 59) explains:

It has become increasingly obvious that the North cannot achieve its purpose without more constructive North-South relations. [One area which] illuminated this dilemma... concerned the capacity of international institutions and multilateral diplomacy to manage what have come to be labeled “global agenda” issues: nuclear proliferation, population control, food production, pollution, management of the oceans, and other problems that very often require the cooperation of most nations if significant progress towards their resolution is to

¹²⁶ Note that these four themes mirror the ones identified in chapter #4 as the South’s enduring environmental concerns.

be made. The 1970s were replete with international failures to make much progress in managing such problems; this record was in large part attributable to the growing North-South confrontation atmosphere, which produced little but rhetoric and deadlock. If Secretary Kissinger was correct in noting that “progress in dealing with our traditional agenda is no longer enough.... The problems of energy resources, environment, population, the uses of space and the seas, now rank with questions of military security, ideology, and territorial rivalry which have traditionally made up the diplomatic agenda,” and if Southern cooperation were the sine qua non of significant progress on these issues—particularly in the workings of international institutions and conferences—then the South really did matter if it continued to manifest a high degree of diplomatic solidarity.

What is more important to stress here is that the South has used this perception to its own strategic advantage by consistently employing opportunities afforded by negotiations on global issues—including both UNCHE and UNCED—to advance its abiding NIE[co]O interests. As Williams (1993: 19) suggests, “the possibility of linking negotiations on global environmental change with demands for change in other areas of North-South relations is one crucial reason for the continued participation of developing countries in negotiations of environmental problems.” An influential group of developing country intellectuals, brought together by the South Centre (1991: i), to advise the South on its negotiation strategy for Rio stated this explicitly: “[UNCED] provides an opportunity for the South to call for the adoption of an integrated approach to resolve the many outstanding global environment and economic problems.”

This needs to be highlighted as persistent strategic behavior on the South’s part: i.e., using issues—such as the environment—which are considered to be of greater importance to the North, and where the South’s participation is deemed necessary for meaningful global agreements, as platforms to raise issues that are of concern to it.¹²⁷ While the South has certainly used UNCED and other global conferences in the 1990s for this purpose,¹²⁸ this strategic behavior is itself the continuation of a pattern that goes back to the 1970s:

¹²⁷ Such strategic behavior by the South is not restricted to the issue of environment but spans all global issues (see Najam, 1995). This author’s earlier work (Najam, 1994 and 1996) details how the South’s use of global issues to further its larger agenda has been similarly consistent in international negotiations pertaining to population.

¹²⁸ Within the environmental context, the Southern caucus certainly acted as a bloc (through the G77/China coalition) during the entire UNCED process as well as during various international environmental policy deliberations in recent years. Developing countries have also continued to coordinate their bloc positions within CSD debates. Good summaries of these—and especially of how the developing countries have persistently negotiated as a bloc—may be found in the various issues of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, produced by the Canada-based International Institute for Sustainable Development, which reports on the proceedings of these global meetings.

The G77 quickly established a modus operandi, a program of action, and a range of shared values and norms of Southern behavior in international meetings which rapidly spread through the growing network of regional and international conferences of the late 1960s and 1970s. Some of these meetings were part of ongoing international organizational activity, for example annual UN General Assembly [UNGA], ILO [International Labor Organization], and IMF meetings. Others were special: the 1972 Stockholm conference on environmental issues, the 1974 World Food Conference, LOS III [Law of the Sea III], the two Special Sessions (1974, 1975) of the UNGA, and the CIEC (1975-77). The interesting point to note is that the Southern pattern of institutional behavior developed by the G77 in the UNCTAD forum was used in each of these settings to create the greatest degree of developing country unity possible prior to each conference and was used to caucus on every point of potential intragroup conflict in an effort to hold that unity in order to derive what was perceived to be maximum developing country advantage. (Hansen, 1979: 90-91)

It should not be considered a mere coincidence that the times when the South has actually been able to force the North to the negotiating table have corresponded with periods when interest in 'global issues' has been high. The confluence of important international conferences in the 1970s was not the principal cause of the peaking of NIE[co]O sentiments, but it certainly contributed significantly to the momentum that North-South dialogue was able to gain.¹²⁹ By similar token, the spurt of global conference diplomacy in the 1990s has provided the South the opportunity and the platforms to reignite and reinvigorate their unfinished NIE[co]O agenda.¹³⁰

TOWARDS A NEW INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORDER

The importance of the North-South dimension in international environmental policy is widely accepted in the literature (*see* Young, 1989; Caldwell, 1990; de la Court, 1990; Agarwal and Narain, 1991; Mathews 1991b; Porter and Brown, 1991 and 1996; French, 1992; Gardner, 1992; Peng, 1992; Petesch, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Choucri, 1993; Susskind, 1994; Sell, 1996). However, even in accepting the importance of the North-South split, there is a hesitancy amongst

¹²⁹ A few of the important international gatherings of the 1970s called to deal with 'global issues', included the Law of the Sea negotiations, the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the 1973 United Nations Conference on Population, the 1974 World Food Conference and the 1976 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.

¹³⁰ A few of the important international gatherings of the 1990s called to deal with 'global issues', included the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the 1993 United Nations Conference on Human Rights, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the 1995 World Summit on Social Development, the 1995 United Nations Conference on Women, the 1996 United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, as well as the many other global negotiations especially those related to various environmental treaty regimes.

many scholars to accept the 'new' North-South environmental tensions as an extension of earlier North-South—especially New International Economic Order—conflicts of the 1970s.

In large part, this is because of the *fear*—articulated by Sebenius (1991: 86-7)—that entertaining the South's development agenda within the environmental dialogue might rekindle old confrontations and protract ugly polarizations. This fear ignores the view that side-stepping what the South considers its legitimate concerns has created and prolonged these polarizations in the first place, and threatens to imperil the very future of international environmental negotiations.

The hesitancy has also been propped up by the *hope* that the growing public perception of a collective threat to the global environment may translate into political momentum for collective international action (Porter and Brown, 1991: 156-9; Petesch, 1992: 92-7), or that a new ideological commonality may grow around the concept of sustainable development (Sebenius, 1991), or that the demise of East-West tensions might themselves ease North-South misapprehensions (MacDonald, 1991: 42). The inaccuracy of such hopes was amply demonstrated at UNCED.

What this chapter has sought to highlight is that polarizations across North-South lines are unlikely to disappear either by ignoring them or by wishing them away (Thomas, 1992; Williams, 1993). The resilience that the South has shown in pursuing, what it considers, its legitimate agenda of economic justice and international systemic change suggests that all North-South negotiations, including international environmental dialogue, will be dogged by this agenda.

Although the South has seen its concerns being consistently ignored by a North that was not interested in them, the concerns themselves have not disappeared.¹³¹ They have persisted—in many cases compounded—in the

¹³¹ Illustrative of the fact that for the South the current set of environmental negotiations lie on the very same continuum as the economic negotiations of the 1970s is Julius Nyerere's 1974 definition of the NIE[co]O (*quoted in* Murphy, 1984: 1). By only changing the word "economic" with "environmental," this could be read as a definition of the South's environmental position today: "The complaint of the poor nations against the present state is not only that we are both poor in absolute and relative terms and in comparison with the rich nations. It is also that within the existing structures of economic [/environmental] interaction we must remain poor, and get relatively poorer, whatever we do... The demand for a New International Economic [/Environmental] Order is a way of saying that the poor

face of worsening economic woes and political alienation and are now reappearing in the South's articulation of its environmental agenda. That this environmental agenda of the South looks very much like a call for a 'New International Environmental Order' should not come as a surprise to scholars of the subject. As Hansen (1980: 1120) has pointed out, "in an era of linkage politics and strong Southern bloc institutionalization, the [South] will often attempt to accomplish in one setting what it is unable to accomplish in another."

Consider, for example, Porter and Brown's (1991: 124) description of how North-South relations have influenced environmental politics:

The tone and substance of North-South bargaining on environmental issues are influenced by the structure of the global economic system, which exerts indirect pressures on the policies of developing countries towards their natural resources and thus constrains the quest for global cooperation to save those resources.... Developing states' perceptions of the global economic structure as inequitable has long been a factor in their policy responses to global environmental issues. Those perceptions are based on the reality of the industrialized countries' dominance of world trade and financial systems and the continued evolution of those systems to the disadvantage of developing countries.

They go on to point out that, "many developing countries, particularly the more radical members of the Group of 77, have viewed global environmental negotiations as the best, if not the only, opportunity to advance a broader agenda of change in the structure of North-South economic relationships" (Porter and Brown, 1991: 129). Making the point more explicit, Marc Williams (1993: 25) asserts that, "it is not... a question of environment being co-opted into the North-South debate. It already exists in this debate and is conceived in North-South terms." Whether those in the North choose to view it as such or not, all evidence suggests that those in the South do.

In essence, the South's perception is that its environmental interests lie on the very same continuum as its economic interests; the 'New International *Environmental Order*' it now seeks is an outgrowth of the 'New International *Economic Order*' it was demanding 20 years ago. The current resurgence of North-South environmental dialogue needs to be understood as a continuation of earlier North-South dialogues.

nations must be enabled to develop themselves according to their own interests, and to benefit from the efforts they make."

The next chapter will argue that even though this new episode, or generation, of North-South dialogue extends many of the same basic conflicts that characterized the previous incarnation it need not be as unfruitful or frustrating. While the dangers of North-South dialogue remaining as contentious as ever cannot be minimized, the promise of the environment becoming a potential win-win enterprise is real—even though realizing this potential will be an uphill task that would require significantly new ways of approaching North-South issues on the part of developing as well as industrialized countries.

SECTION III: THE FUTURE

Negotiating for the Earth

روشن کہیں بہسا کے امکان ہوئے تو ہیں
گلشن میں چاک چند گریساں ہوئے تو ہیں
اب بھی خسروال کا راج ہے لیکن کہیں کہیں
گوشے رہ چن میں غزنواں ہوئے تو ہیں
ٹھہری ہوئی ہے شب کی سیاہی وہیں مگر
کچھ کچھ سحر کے رنگ پراشتاں ہوئے تو ہیں
ان میں لہو جلا ہو ہمارا، کر حبانِ دل
مخمل میں کچھ چراغِ خسرو زال ہوئے تو ہیں
ہاں کج کرو کلاہ کہ سب کچھ ٹٹ کے ہم
اب بے نیا ز گردشِ دوران ہوئے تو ہیں
اہلِ قفس کی صبحِ جن میں کھلے گی آنکھ
بادِ صبا سے وعدہ و پیمان ہوئے تو ہیں
ہے دشت اب بھی دشت، مگر ٹون پائے نصیب
سیراب چند خارِ نمسلاں ہوئے تو ہیں

*It is still distant,
but there are hints of springtime:
Some flowers, aching to bloom,
have torn open their collars.
Night is still where it was,
but colors at times take flight,
Leaving red feathers of dawn
on the sky.
Don't regret our breath's use as air,
our blood's as oil —
Some lamps at last
are burning in the night.
When imprisoned man opens his eyes,
cages will dissolve: air, fire, water, earth—
All have pledged such dawns,
such gardens to him.
Your feet bleed, Faiz,
something surely will bloom
As you water the desert
simply by walking through it.*

By FAIZ AHMED FAIZ
Translated by Agha Shahid Ali (1991: 16-17)

The only fundamentally unsolved problem in this unsteady interregnum between imperial ages which may be dying and a planetary society which struggles to be born is whether the rich and fortunate are imaginative enough and the resentful and underprivileged poor, patient enough to begin to establish a true foundation of better sharing, fuller cooperation, and a joint planetary work. In short, no problem is insoluble in the creation of a balanced and conserving planet save humanity itself. Can it reach in time the vision of joint survival? Can its inescapable physical interdependence—the chief new insight of our century—induce that vision? We do not know. We have the duty to hope....

— **BARBARA WARD,**
Progress for a Small Planet (1979: 277)

#7

North-South dialogue: The next generation

*Come writers and critics
Who prophesize with your pen
And keep your eyes wide
The chance won't come again
And don't speak too soon
For the wheel's still in spin...
For the times they are a-changin'*
— BOB DYLAN

According to Sir Shridath Ramphal (1980: 13) it was not until the mid-1970s that North-South relations “moved from the level of petition to that of negotiation” ushering in, what he calls, “the era of negotiations.”¹³² Although the dialogue languished into stalemate for much the 1980s, Ramphal’s description once again seems eminently apt for the 1990s.

¹³² Sir Shridath Ramphal, of Guyana, is one of the leading leaders of the South and scholar of the North-South dialogue. Formerly the secretary general of the (British) Commonwealth and the Foreign Minister of Guyana he has served on the Brandt, Palme and the Brundtland Commissions as well as on the South Commission. Most recently, he served as the co-chair of the Independent Commission on global governance and UN reform.

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the 1995 World Social Summit on Development, the formation of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and the talks leading to the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of GATT all became *de facto* fora for North-South negotiations. Although the recent spate of global mega-conferencing seems to be waning once again, indications suggest that this new “era of negotiations” is, by no means, over yet. Ongoing, more specific, negotiations—especially on issues related to international environmental policy, including those on biodiversity, climate change, deforestation and desertification—are equally, if not more, being defined in North-South contexts (Miller, 1995; Sell, 1996).¹³³

The important point is not the surge in the sheer number and import of global negotiations, but the central role within them of North-South relations. The next generation of North-South dialogue, one is tempted to proclaim, has arrived.

NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE: THE SECOND GENERATION

What we might call the first generation of North-South dialogue began in the late 1960s with UNCTAD-1, roughly covered the span of the 1970s peaking at the sixth and seventh special sessions of UNGA and the CIEC process, and fizzled out in the wake of Northern uninterest and Southern frustration in the early 1980s with the Cancun Summit of 1981 probably marking its essential demise. It left a decidedly bad taste in the mouth for all concerned.

Northern uninterest emanated from the belief that the industrialized countries had nothing to gain from North-South negotiations, a view articulated by Weintraub, 1980) who saw the demand for a New International Economic Order as “analogous to affirmative action” (pg. 458) and opined that “[North-South] negotiation has no end as long as some countries are poor and others are rich.

¹³³ Many believe that the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) held at Stockholm was the first of many international negotiations outside the UNCTAD framework where North-South dialogue took center-stage (see Rowland, 1973; McDonald, 1982; Williams, 1993). Interestingly, UNCED, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, seems to have marked the beginning of what we are calling the second generation of such dialogue (see Agarwal, 1992; Banuri, 1992; Gardner, 1992; Lerner, 1992; Najam, 1995; Peng, 1992; Porter and Brown, 1996; Raghavan, 1991; Rajan, 1992).

A concession to the South is merely the prelude for the next demand” (pg. 456). Southern frustration emanated from the realization that the North had not really been serious about a dialogue in the first place.

Intellectual leaders of the South could see that the process was becoming increasingly more meaningless. Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980b: 270) voiced the South’s frustration: “North-South negotiations have deteriorated to a ritual and a skillful exercise in *non-dialogue*” (*original emphasis*). Or, as Percy Mistry (1993: 170) was to note, by the 1980s North-South dialogue “appeared to be taking place largely between the conveniently deaf.”

In short, what Paul Streeten (1986: 191) had to say about UNCTAD was essentially true for all North-South dialogue:

UNCTAD suffers from being all give and no take, all *quid* and no *quo*, as far as the rich member countries are concerned, and from consisting of appeals, not backed by power, on the part of the poor. Its aims are noble but its achievements negligible.

Like most other analysts of the time, both Weintraub (1980) and Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980b) believed that North-South dialogue would not simply die out, but there was little prospect of its triggering any significant structural change in international affairs (*see*, Gordon, 1978; Hansen, 1979; McDonald, 1982; Osio, 1983). “In order to negotiate effectively,” Weintraub (1980: 456) argued, “the weak must find some lever to give them strength.” Mahbub-ul-Haq’s (1980b: 276) analysis was more sobering: “It is possible that only a real international economic or political crisis will convince all sides to rush to the negotiating table.” Today, many in the South believe that the environment is that leverage; many in the North insist that the environment is that crisis.

Irrespective of whether environment is the crisis or the leverage that might facilitate a ‘global bargain,’ it seems safe to suggest that we are likely to see a continuation, if not a growth, in the recent trend of international negotiations on environmental issues:

The past decade has seen an unprecedented explosion of international negotiations and cooperation on the global environment.... Today governments are involved every month in new rounds of international negotiations preparing for regimes that are soon to go into effect, reviewing and strengthening existing regimes, or negotiating new regimes. (Porter and Brown, 1996: 147)

Much of this negotiation is, and will continue to be, North-South in flavor.¹³⁴ Moreover, in a world where taking the 'global' view is increasingly fashionable, the environment will be a major, though by no means the only, area where we are likely to see increasing North-South dialogue.¹³⁵ In essence, what we are now witnessing, and what we are likely to see in the next few years, could be called the second generation of North-South dialogue.¹³⁶

The broad arena where much of this dialogue will take place may be best described as that of 'sustainable development'—which incorporates not just environment but related issues of development assistance, poverty, women's status, human settlements, population, social and human development, and if defined broadly enough, those of human rights, trade and even disarmament.¹³⁷ 'Sustainable development' is a fortuitous term in that it allows efficient packaging of issues of concern to both North and South—issues which they might otherwise have been hesitant to deal with individually.¹³⁸ As an illustrious group of developing country thinkers commented in preparing their advice to Southern negotiators at UNCED (South Centre, 1991: 1):

It is significant that this is a conference on Environment *and* Development. This twofold topic marks the recognition of the "link" and of the interdependence of issues and solutions concerning what has in the past been treated as two separate agendas of international negotiations, on account of the insistence of the North. Because of this "link" it is possible to mount an integrated approach to the global challenges of sustainable development.

134 The suggestion that there is likely to be more North-South dialogue should not be taken to imply that simply because of this reason it is likely to be any less conflictual.

135 Much of this dialogue, for example, is likely to happen around the issue of trade within GATT's successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO).

136 It is recognized that the history of North-South negotiations lies along a continuum spanning at least 40 years since the developing countries first started making their presence felt at UN fora. The imagery of first and second generation, although construed and constructed, is used for explanatory clarity to distinguish the current thrust of such negotiations (at a serious level) from the earlier thrust which was discernible in the 1970s and led to Ramphal's (1980) characterization cited earlier.

137 Sustainable Development is being increasingly used to link a number of these issues with concerns about the environment. See, for example, *Trade and Sustainable Development*, (Repetto, 1994); "Linking Human Rights and Environmental Quality" (Rea, 1994); and *Making Development Sustainable: The World Bank Group and the Environment, Fiscal 1994* (World Bank, 1994).

138 For example, it is highly unlikely that the North would have been interested in opening a dialogue with the South solely on issues related to development or that the South would have accepted to negotiate on concerns about the environment without linking it to development. It needs to be pointed out, however, that not all commentators consider Sustainable Development to be as fortuitous a term. Nassau Adams (1993: 200-7), for example, sees the term as a dangerous concept in that it depicts the developing countries as "co-accused" parties within the environmental context. For Adams, "the logic [of sustainable development] is that there is hardly room for newcomers, and that the poor must remain poor in order to save the planet" (pg. 205).

The second generation of North-South negotiations seems, therefore, already better placed than its predecessor in that there exists the mutually acceptable rubric of 'sustainable development' to frame the dialogue.¹³⁹

NEW DIALOGUE: NEW CHALLENGES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES

To accept that a new, possibly less confrontational, generation of North-South dialogue waits around the corner is not an easy proposition to sell, especially to those who still remember the entrenched antagonisms of the previous attempt or recognize the increased vulnerability that the end of the Cold War has implied for the South. Immanuel Wallerstein (1993: 118) believes that "the next 20 years of North-South negotiations are not going to be more significant or efficacious than the last 20."¹⁴⁰ Many in the South seem no more optimistic:

There is clearly no hope of reviving the North-South dialogue in the sense in which we have known it. The underlying basis no longer exists. The North, led as firmly as ever by the US, is now much too confident of itself, and much too complacent and self-satisfied with their achievements, both in successfully carrying forward the process of growth in their own economies and in successfully beating back past attempts by developing countries to bring about changes in the system, to contemplate wasting time even listening to the complaints of the South, much less to engage in a dialogue about reforms to the system. (Adams, 1993: 238-9)¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ This argument does not wish to belittle the fact that there is no consensus—either between or within the North and the South—about exactly what 'sustainable development' means (*see* Box 1). The argument merely is that even if there is no agreement on what sustainable development is, there is a general acceptance that whatever it is, is worth pursuing. The ambiguity about what it precisely entails may even be a useful factor in that sustainability becomes the pot into which all parties can throw their interests in the hope that the resulting stew would be acceptable to them all. From a negotiation point of view, it allows various parties to place differentially valued concerns on the table and trade across the differences. Moreover, from a practical environmental policy perspective, it may well be more important to know what 'sustainable development' is *not*, than to define what it is.

¹⁴⁰ Wallerstein (1993: 118) says this in commenting on the 1990 report of the South Commission. He adds (quoting from the report): "The reality is that it is most unlikely that the dominant forces of the world system will permit, let alone encourage, the creation of 'a global rule-based system built on the principles of transparency, multilateralism, and non-discrimination', the hope of the South Commission. If they did, it would mean the end of the functioning of the capitalist world economy as it has been known for the last 500 years. What the South Commission wants is a revolutionary transformation in the whole structure of the world system, and it asks for it very politely, almost timidly. Its wish will not be fulfilled."

¹⁴¹ The operative clause to note is "in the sense in which we have known it." As this chapter will later argue, the frustration at UNCED was caused by the fact that both North and South insisted on viewing the new North-South dialogue very much in the same sense in which they had once known it. The central argument here is that a *necessary* condition for the possible success of this new generation of North-South dialogue based on the global quest for sustainable development would be that both sides *stop* viewing such negotiations from the old familiar win-lose perspective.

Others, however, have expressed more optimism. Cedric Grant (1995: 582), for example, argues that “in many respects conditions are more favorable than at any other time for common ground to be established.” Such optimism was especially high in the run-up to the Rio conference on the grounds that the North’s new concern for global environmental problems provided the South with increased bargaining power because without the participation of the developing countries many such problems cannot be addressed effectively.

Such enthusiasm was apparent in the assessment of a developing countries’ working group (South Centre, 1991: i) which proclaimed that “UNCED... provides the South with an opportunity to exercise considerable leverage and bargaining power.” A Caribbean official expressed the same optimism in suggesting that “for the first time in more than a decade, the developing countries have an issue [i.e. the environment] where they have some real leverage”; India’s environment minister went even further to proclaim that “the begging bowl is [now] really in the hands of the Western world.”¹⁴²

In retrospect, the enthusiasm sounds decidedly exaggerated. Specific studies of just how much real leverage the environment might provide to the developing countries in particular issues have yielded more sober, although not pessimistic, assessments. For example, Miller (1995: 141) focuses on three global regimes relating to the ozone layer, hazardous waste and biodiversity and finds that “when there is a shared perception of environmental vulnerability, the Third World is able to gain a modest bargaining advantage.” Sell (1996: 114) looks at North-South environmental bargaining on ozone depletion, climate change and biodiversity and comes to similar conclusions even though she expresses them differently: “unless the industrialized countries are moved to a state of alarm over these environmental issues, as they were in the ozone case, one should not expect the developing countries to be in a position to extract significant concessions.”¹⁴³

¹⁴² Both statements are quoted in Rajan (1992: 135-6). Rajan cites an *International Herald Tribune* (18 March 1992: 23) report “Environmental War Heats Up” as the source for the statement from the Caribbean official, and a report in *India Today* (15 June 1992: 26), “The Earth Wars,” as the source for the statement by Indian Environmental Minister Kamal Nath.

¹⁴³ Rajan (1992: 147) focuses only on the ozone case and particularly on the concessions gained by India and China and concludes that “it does not justify the view that the environmental issue has delivered into the hands of the South a potent new bargaining weapon.” Again, while worded somewhat

Taking a more holistic look at larger North-South environmental relations and particularly reflecting these against the experience of the 1970s and of UNCED, one might argue that the fears of those who feel that a new dialogue will be no less acrimonious and no more fruitful than the old one, are not without foundation. Even in accepting that to be the likely tendency, some critical differences exist and could potentially prove otherwise. In the 1970s, it was the South which was calling for a dialogue and the North which was resisting (Hansen, 1980). In many ways the tables have now been reversed. It is the North that wants to engage the South in a dialogue out of the realization that global action on the environment cannot be successful without the active participation of the South (Strong, 1992: vii). For the first time, both North and South wish to engage in a dialogue. Furthermore, there is a sense of urgency on both sides, since the effects of both environmental devastation and abject poverty compound over time (see Ramphal, 1992).¹⁴⁴

Most importantly, it is the nature of the environmental issue that could potentially make the new dialogue more fruitful than its predecessor. As Rajan (1992: 146) points out, 'defeat' and 'victory' are inappropriate words in the context of the environment. Unlike the oil or debt crises of the 1970s, the environmental crisis is not easily defined in win-lose terms. Although the jury is still out on whether and how it might become a win-win issue, all indications suggest that it can very easily be transformed into a lose-lose proposition.

A principal cause of the failure of earlier North-South dialogue was the perception, especially in the North, that any such negotiation was essentially a zero-sum game (Gordon, 1978; Hansen, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980b; Weintraub, 1980; Sewell and Zartman, 1984; Renninger, 1989). Weintraub (1980: 455) had voiced this view in asking "What does the South offer in return?" With global environmental issues, the South has a potential answer.

pessimistically, the essence of his argument is that the *extent* of the environment's potency as a strategic bargaining weapon is exaggerated. He does not necessarily discount that the environment is a strategic advantage for the South, only not as much as is often assumed to be.

¹⁴⁴ This view is considered by some to be idealistic. For example, Williams (1994: 26-7) concludes, however, that "the evidence to date suggests that Third World bargaining power has not increased and the North is no more ready to listen in the 1990s than it was in the 1970s." Yet, others like Porter and Brown (1991: 148-52) invest much more faith in, what they call, "the Global partnership approach."

In reviewing an earlier era of North-South negotiations, Sewell and Zartman (1984: 389) had felt that “an invitation to find a common solution to a common problem is the beginning of a search for a jointly satisfactory formula.” For many in both the North and the South, the environment seems to be that common problem. To the South, it provides an opportunity to rearticulate its concerns about global systemic change; to the North, it provides a rationale for taking the South and its concerns a little more seriously than it has in the past.

There isn't a serious lack of consensus between North and South on the desire to tackle environmental problems, the question is how (*see* Ramphal, 1992).¹⁴⁵ The issue is one of ‘who foots the bill,’ both in terms of costs incurred and of benefits foregone. The New International Economic Order was seen, especially by the North, as a zero-sum game where it alone would have to bear the costs (Gordon, 1978: 20; Hansen, 1980: 1123; Weintraub, 1980: 456; Sewell and Zartman, 1984: 375; Renninger, 1989: 253). In and of themselves, international (especially global) environmental issues are often non-zero-sum games.

Delayed sea-level rise, or averted ozone depletion may help some nations more than others, but in general it will help all nations. However, the costs to be borne by different parties, the ability to bear these costs, and the responsibility for causing the problem, are differentiated. The question, then, is not as much of goals, as of means—who pays and why, by how much, and for what? These boil down to contentions about *past responsibility*, *present ability*, and *future priorities*. Serious differences exist between North and South, on all three.

From a negotiation point of view, one could ‘trade across the differences’ to arrive at mutual-gain solutions (*see*, Fisher and Ury, 1981; Raiffa, 1982; Lax and Sebenius, 1986; Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987). However, to do so we need to understand the nature of these differences. In popular, diplomatic, and even academic discourse, there exists a tendency to reduce the differences along only one axis: money. In a stylized view of the North-South conflict, the South is depicted as wanting to grab as much additional foreign aid as possible in the

¹⁴⁵ For example, in the run-up to Rio the June 1991 Beijing Conference on Environment and Development which was attended by 41 developing countries and the November 1991 Caracas summit of the Group of 15 developing countries both strongly voiced the South's commitment to the protection of the environment (Ramphal, 1992: 256-7).

name of the environment, and the North as resisting to pay up. For example John W. McDonald (1982: 1), a senior US negotiator at the UN, suggests that “the term ‘North-South dialogue’ is shorthand for describing the pleas of the poor, often newly-emerging countries of the southern hemisphere to the rich countries of the ‘North’ to share the wealth.” However, as Susskind (1994: 20) points out, “the issue is not how much more money the North will provide to the South, but whether the underlying North-South relationship can be shifted from one of dependence and confrontation to one of fruitful interdependence.”

From a Southern perspective, its posture regarding global environmental issues is not one of ‘extortion’ but one that demands ‘just compensation’ from the North for its past responsibility in despoiling the global environment and changes to ‘unfair’ international system; it also seeks a check on Northern consumptive lifestyles so that its own development aspirations are not held hostage to Northern consumption; and finally it calls for a change in the international environmental agenda to reflect issues such as clean water, soil erosion, and desertification, which are of immediate concern to its populations (*see* Agarwal, 1992; Banuri, 1992; Khor, 1992). From the North’s standpoint these demands may seem unreasonable.

On the face of it, the differences in perceptions may seem like a recipe for a deadlock. However, the different importance that North and South attach to different issues can also be used for issue-linkage. While issue-linkage is fraught with both dangers and opportunities, it can be “crucial to the success of negotiation[s]” that involve complex, multi-party, multi-issue bargaining (Susskind, 1994: 82).¹⁴⁶

While there is the danger of issue-linkage turning into blackmail—either by the North making its political and economic support conditional on the South following its environmental dictates, or by the South making its acceptance of global environmental treaties dependent on increased aid flows—there is a strong case for both to seek issue-linkages in their pursuit of meaningful dialogue on sustainable development.

¹⁴⁶ For more on the advantages and disadvantages of issue-linkage see Susskind (1994: 82-98), Sebenius (1984: 182-217), and Raiffa (1982: 275-287).

While issue-linkage that might incorporate the various interests is a potential strategy for breaking the impasse in North-South dialogue, it is by no means an easy strategy to operationalize. It would require a "level of political will... that [does] not appear to exist" (Porter and Brown, 1991: 152). From the North it would demand "a spirit of compromise" so that the South sees itself engaging in a "genuine dialogue" (Williams, 1993: 25). From the South it calls for setting "its [own] house in order," because "unless [the South] is able to get greater honesty, efficiency, and self-reliance into its own economic systems, it will be consistently portrayed as a beggar" (Agarwal, 1992: 36). More generally, issue-linkage will only succeed if it is seen as "legitimate," if not seen as such by all parties, it would amount to nothing more than "blackmail" (Suskind, 1994: 98).

The challenge, then, of this new North-South dialogue is to ensure that it does not plunge into the quagmire of frustration and acrimony like its predecessor. The opportunity lies in the potential of sustainable development becoming the win-win issue that could bridge the North-South chasm of how nations in the two camps choose to view the world. The challenge is compounded by the opportunity—if the opportunity is missed, the environmental crisis that the North and South are equally locked into could well collapse into catastrophe.

Can concepts such as issue-linkage and other negotiation strategies make this generation of North-South dialogue more meaningful and less confrontational? The evidence suggests that if UNCED is to be our guide, the prospects would seem bleak. On the positive side, however, this does not imply that the promise of issue-linkage on sustainable development is a false hope; only that with both sides still locked into the antagonistic 'win-lose' modes of negotiation, little real effort has yet been made by either side to realize the potential. The real challenge—and the real opportunity—of this new dialogue lies in how either side, but especially the South, will change its negotiating strategy to respond to the unique features of the environmental crisis before it becomes too late.

BEYOND UNCED

The opportunity that 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development—with its focus on sustainable development—presented of

reopening a new generation of North-South dialogue, was not entirely lost on the South (South Centre, 1991: 1-2):

UNCED offers... an opportunity for engaging in more balanced negotiations between the North and the South, and it could yield results that the developing countries have been seeking for some time. Global action on the environment cannot succeed without the full participation and collaboration of the South. Indeed, UNCED is an international conference where the North is seeking environmental concessions from the South, and where the South can make such concessions in return for firm commitments by the North to restructure global economic relations. This potential give-and-take relationship makes it possible for the South to bargain for a comprehensive compact with the North.

As discussed earlier, the achievements of Rio did not match the South's exaggerated hopes. The North was no more interested in "bargaining for a comprehensive compact" in 1992 than it had been in 1977. Having said that, however, there is no denying that UNCED reopened the North-South dialogue and moved it back to a place of prominence in world attention. A sampling of news headlines from the Rio process testify to this regained prominence:

- "North-South Divide Is Marring Environment Talks"
—*New York Times*, 17 March 1992
- "Planning Talks Split on North-South Lines"
—*The Boston Globe*, 5 April 1992
- "North-South Battles Dominate Run-up to Earth Summit"
—*Third World Resurgence*, May 1992
- "One Summit, Differing Goals"
—*International Herald Tribune*, 2 June 1992
- "Poor vs. Rich in Rio"
—*New York Times*, 3 June 1992

UNCED gave the Southern coalition a forum, an issue, and an audience that it had been denied since the late 1970s. The developing countries—represented by an active and influential G77—were not only successful in reopening the North-South dialogue, but effectively made it *the* focus of the Summit. For a South that had gone to Rio fearful that the 1980s had left the North-South dialogue "in tatters," that the clock on international economic cooperation had been "turned backwards," and that the prospects for North-South cooperation were "bleak," the very fact that the dialogue was resuscitated at Rio was probably UNCED's biggest achievement (quotes from Peng, 1992; 27-29).

The importance of this achievement, however, should not be discounted. From their very inception a stated objective of both NAM and G77 has been the

establishment of North-South dialogue.¹⁴⁷ More tellingly, it has been a goal that has, for most part, eluded the South.¹⁴⁸

In 1990, the South Commission was still calling upon the developing countries to “strive for a revival of the North-South dialogue on a more meaningful and realistic basis” (pg. 226). By the end of the Earth Summit, the then President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, was echoing the call, proclaiming that the “rebirth of the North-South dialogue is absolutely urgent” (quoted in *Terra Viva*, 15 June 1992). Holmberg (1992) of the UK-based International Institute of Environment and Development reached the same conclusion, as did Martin Khor Peng (1992) of the Malaysia-based Third World Network.

Jubilation in the South, however, has been understandably restrained. For many, the revival of the North-South dialogue at Rio came too late and accomplished too little (Agarwal, 1992; Banuri, 1992). Although one could argue that UNCED demonstrated the potential of sustainable development being an issue that could bring the North and the South back to the negotiating table, it gave no indication that this second generation of North-South dialogue would be any less conflictual or any more fruitful than its previous incarnation.

The North seemed as unrelenting and the South as hostile in the 1990s as they had in the 1970s. One could conclude that environment is not yet the crisis that would force the North to be more accommodating, nor is the global and interdependent nature of environmental concerns the leverage that would place the South in a position where its concerns would not be ignored, and nor is sustainable development the rubric that could conjure up win-win solutions to the environmental impasse. That would be one way to look at things.

¹⁴⁷ Repeated resolutions of NAM, meetings of G77, and statements of Southern leaders have called for such a dialogue, as have reports from the Brandt Commission (1980) and the South Commission (1990). The 1992 Summit Conference of the Nonaligned Movement held at Jakarta, for example, called for “the reactivation of a constructive dialogue between the developed and developing countries, based on genuine interdependence, mutuality of interests and benefits and shared responsibility.”

¹⁴⁸ The South’s general belief has been that in agreeing to establish serious North-South negotiations the North will, by definition, accept the South as a player of some importance in the international system. More than that, the conviction that the South has in its own platform and ‘moral case’ leads it to believe that once a channel of earnest negotiation is opened it would be able to convince the North of its positions and achieve at least some of its goals.

Another, certainly more optimistic, approach to interpreting the UNCED experience would desist from questioning either the gravity of the environmental crisis or the global and interdependent nature of the environmental challenge. It would, instead, accept the assumptions that the crisis is indeed grave and likely to become more so, that the problems are indeed interdependent, that in many cases the solutions would indeed need to be global, and that sustainable development does indeed possess the potential for joint-gains. The premise, then, is that the promise exists but the potential remains unrealized.

Given this set of assumptions, one possible explanation to the UNCED stalemate would be that the North and South were too entrenched in outdated modes of negotiation behavior which are designed for and suited to zero-sum problems and were, therefore, unable to extract the win-win solutions that the sustainable development problematique afforded them. After all, as Mistry (1993: 195) points out, "it is unlikely that much will be accomplished if the underlying tone of [North-South dialogue] continues to be regarded (by the North) as complaining on the part of the South and (by the South) as an arrogant unwillingness to contemplate overdue changes in the world order on the part of the North." UNCED seems to have exemplified exactly such a tone.

If this is indeed the case and if what we are seeing is indeed the second generation of North-South dialogue then each side would do well to learn from the lessons of the first generation of such dialogue. Since it is the South that has constantly demanded such dialogue, the developing countries have a larger stake in wanting to ensure that this generation of North-South dialogue does not end in the frustration and failure that its predecessor did. The next chapter will, therefore, focus on negotiation strategies that the South might adopt in this new generation of North-South dialogue on issues of sustainable development so that neither the frustration of NIEO nor the stalemate of UNCED are repeated.

Much useful analysis exists of why the first generation of North-South dialogue ended in impasse and what each side might do individually and collectively to change the outcome of future dialogue (*see* Gordon, 1978; Hansen 1979;

Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1983; Ramphal, 1980; McDonald, 1982; Sewell and Zartman, 1984; Thomas, 1987; South Commission, 1990); more recently, analysts have been focusing on how international environmental dialogue may accommodate North-South issues (see French, 1992b; Petesch, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Rajan, 1992; Miller, 1993; Williams, 1993; Young, 1993; Susskind, 1994; Porter and Brown, 1996; Sell, 1996). Reflecting on the accumulated experience of earlier North-South environmental negotiations and building on the key lessons of negotiation theory the next and final chapter will propose a negotiation strategy for the South. It is suggested that adopting such a strategy would not only make future North-South environmental negotiations less conflictual but would enhance the prospects of the developing countries achieving their goals in the global quest for sustainable development. More than that, such a strategy by the South is also more likely to move the world towards sustainable development policies which are acceptable to both North and South.

#8

A negotiation strategy for the South

“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.

“I don’t much care where...” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.

— LEWIS CARROLL

The evidence and arguments presented in the preceding chapters lead to four important conclusions regarding the role being played by developing countries, as a bloc, in the global politics of sustainable development:

- Despite persistent rumors of its demise, the South continues to exist in international politics as an influential coalition of developing countries. Moreover, the recent growth of interest in global environmental policy has revitalized the South and it is likely to continue being a consequential player in shaping international environmental policy.

- In nearly thirty years of formal North-South negotiation, the South has put forth a consistent agenda of its own which has been consistently ignored by the North. This has left the South frustrated by its inability to achieve, what it considers to be, its just and legitimate interests.
- The notion of 'sustainable development' has triggered a new generation of North-South dialogue. A window of opportunity seems to exist today for the South to achieve through a 'New International *Environmental Order*' what it failed to achieve through its call for a 'New International *Economic Order*.' For the South, conceptually as well as substantively, the two lie on the very same continuum.
- All evidence, especially that related to the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, suggests that the South is repeating in this second generation of North-South dialogue the very same mistakes it made in the first.¹⁴⁹ The result, till now, has been the all-too-familiar frustration, confrontation, and stalemate that characterized North-South negotiations in the 1970s.

Does this mean that all North-South relations, including those directed at the global pursuit of sustainable development, are doomed to impasse. If it were so, it would be unfortunate indeed; not only because it is unlikely that the South will soon be given another issue around which such wide-ranging negotiations can be structured, but also because the stakes are so high—the very sustainability of our planet and the future of unborn generations.

The analysis in this chapter is willing to err on the side of optimism. It posits the premise that frustration, confrontation and impasse is *not* intrinsic to North-South interaction. An explanation to why recent North-South environmental dialogue, especially at UNCED, has seemed to follow that route is that both North and South are still too locked into outdated and inappropriate modes of negotiation behavior—behavior which was not even advisable for zero-sum issues like the oil debacle and which is certainly not efficacious for a potentially positive-sum issue like the environment.

The suggestion that both sides are still clinging to negotiation strategies which are artifacts of the 1970s—strategies which are veritable recipes for deadlock—leads to the obvious implication that focus should be directed towards

¹⁴⁹ This statement is as true for the North as it is for the South. The North remains as adamant in its disdain for the South's demands as the South remains militant in the presentation of the same. Here, however, we focus on the developing countries because they are the subject of this enquiry. Moreover, being the side that has been calling for a renewal of North-South dialogue, it is assumed that the South's stakes are higher in seeing the dialogue move along a more meaningful trajectory.

rethinking these strategies. This chapter sets out to do exactly that for one party, the South. Built around its own experiences in earlier North-South negotiations, including global environmental policy dialogues, and rooted in negotiation theory this chapter proposes an eight-point negotiation strategy for the South which might allow the developing countries to avail of the opportunity afforded by this new generation of North-South environmental dialogue.

Although many of the recommendations presented here are based on an analysis of past mistakes, the thrust of the chapter is decidedly towards future international environmental negotiations. The question that this chapter seeks to answer is not what went wrong in the past but how North-South environmental negotiations might become more meaningful in the future.

**“STOP FEELING ANGRY AT THE NORTH
AND SORRY FOR YOURSELF!”**

Writing in 1980, Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980b: 270) concluded that “judged by any number of criteria, the world order [at] the beginning of the 1980s appears to be even less responsive to the needs of the developing countries than it was in 1970.” Today, the statement remains as true as ever, only more so.¹⁵⁰

The chronic inability of the South to make progress towards its avowed goals in North-South negotiations is itself evidence that the South’s negotiation strategy has left much to be desired. The essential premise of this chapter is not only that the negotiation strategy adopted by the South has been flawed but, more importantly, that an essential flaw of the South’s traditional negotiation strategy derives from the perception it has bred in the North of being ‘confrontational,’ ‘adversarial,’ ‘militant’ and ‘anti-North’—as opposed to ‘pro-South’ (see Gordon, 1978; Hansen 1979; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1983; Ramphal, 1980; McDonald, 1982; Sewell and Zartman, 1984; Thomas, 1987; Petesch, 1992; Simons, 1992).

Some in the South might argue that the confrontational path that North-South dialogue has often taken is as much a function of the South’s false hopes (of what they might achieve) as of the North’s false fears (of what they might lose);

¹⁵⁰ See chapter #4 and #5 for more on the South’s worsening predicament.

others would contend that the South's anger has neither been unjustified nor unprovoked (see Haq, 1980b; South Commission, 1990). Although a detailed discussion of whether these justifications are defensible or not is not the mandate of this chapter, the essential thesis of such arguments is the adage that 'it takes two to make a fight.' Yet, the flip-side of the same adage is that it takes only one to stop a fight. If, as this chapter assumes, the achievement of realistic goals and the fulfillment of genuine interests is more important than the mere 'retaliatory value' of confrontation—the 'getting even' mentality—then it is in the South's interests to realize that since no one is 'winning' it may be time to redefine the game from a 'zero-sum' battle to a 'win-win' enterprise.¹⁵¹

In advancing such a thesis it is assumed that the South's interests and concerns are genuine and legitimate. It is further assumed that the confrontation which has marred North-South relations is a factor of both Northern stubbornness and Southern frustration. The prescriptions in this chapter, however, focus entirely on the South. The rationale is that as the party that seeks change in the status quo the burden of innovation in the negotiation process rests firmly with the South. The responsibility for putting North-South negotiations back on track lies with the developing countries because it is they who have sought the dialogue and who have the most at stake in keeping it both broad-based and meaningful.

Having already bad-mouthed confrontation, let it be added that not all confrontation is necessarily bad.¹⁵² Like conflict, confrontation too, is natural, and sometimes even healthy. What is not natural, and certainly not healthy, is confrontation for confrontation's sake or simply for the sake of 'getting even.'¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Many commentators have faulted the false perception of it being a "zero-sum game" as the major reason for its acrimonious nature (see Hansen, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980b; Sewell and Zartman, 1984). Recently, others have suggested the possibility of global environmental issues being framed in non-zero-sum terms in North-South deliberations (see Susskind, 1994; Williams, 1993).

¹⁵² It is better, for example, to confront a problem than to ignore it. Similarly, when dealing with willful injustice and abuse confrontation can often be the only way out. Moreover, in instances of acute power differentials confrontation can be a strategy for the weak to get noticed by the strong. Also, the opposite of confrontation is not weakness. There are times to confront and there are times to negotiate, discerning between the two is what much of strategy is about. As President Nyerere of Tanzania (1980: 6-7) rightly stressed: "We [the South] have become very apologetic, as if to negotiate is somehow to surrender or to soften about the objective. And if dialogue gets us nowhere, we become apologetic about confrontation, as if we were being unreasonable—even irrational—and provoking an all-out war which we cannot win. I do not believe that is the kind of choice we have."

¹⁵³ *Getting to Yes* (Fisher et al., 1991) defines 'negotiation jujitsu' as the art of putting the other sides strengths to your own advantage. Confrontation for confrontation's sake can sometimes become, what may be called, 'reverse jujitsu' where a party utilizes its own strengths to its own disadvantage.

As Sir Shridath Ramphal (1980: 20), points out, all North-South dialogue is “bound to be disputatious... the real question is whether that dialogue is productive of agreement and so contributes to a more harmonious world, or is it to be so mired in discord as to enlarge global instability.”

This is the test to which all North-South negotiation should be held accountable. Does it, or does it not, lead to implementable agreements that bring us closer to the desired goals. If, in the process of negotiation, imbedded conflicts and frictions come out and are resolved through compromise and creative dialogue then the process has, in spite of any confrontations that might surface, been worthwhile. If, on the other hand, the process exaggerates the acrimony and discord but fails to identify points of resolution then the negotiation process as a whole, and the strategies of the various parties, need rethinking. Much of North-South negotiation till now has been a case of the later.

The need for a reasoned negotiation strategy emerges from the realization that the product of any negotiation is not just the agreement but its implementation; which, in turn, is nearly always a function of the process by which it is reached (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987; Saunders, 1991). In learning from negotiation theory, a ‘good’ negotiation process may be defined as one that:

- is perceived by the parties as being fair, efficient, wise and stable (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987);
- allows for efficient ‘packaging’ (Raiffa, 1982);
- can build a relationship between the parties (Fisher and Brown, 1988);
- fosters a problem solving attitude (Pruitt and Rubin, 1986); and
- leads to mutual gain solutions (Lax and Sebenius, 1986).

As the South has found, through bitter experience, a good process is not a derivative of how strongly you believe in your positions or how legitimate your interests are, but of how effective a ‘strategy’ you can adopt. Anger alone—no matter how justified—is no substitute for strategy.

In an insightful analysis of why the North-South negotiations failed during the NIEO years, Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980b: 271) stressed that the negotiation had “deteriorated to a ritual and a skillful exercise in *non*-dialogue.” The same could

well be said about UNCED negotiations. The reasons he gave then are equally true today. Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980b: 273-74) catalogs five major mistakes:

- The true objective of the dialogue was never clearly perceived or articulated.
- Many developing countries failed to recognize the importance of internal reforms.
- The developing countries insisted on presenting NIEO only as a "demand of the South".
- The South entered negotiations without adequate preparation.
- The South assumed that the new order would be *given* to them by the North.

In learning from the mistakes that the South has made in earlier negotiations, in sympathizing with the South's concerns, and in building on the lessons of negotiation theory, the advice this chapter offers to the South can most simply be summed up as: "*Stop feeling angry at the North and sorry for yourself.*"

The eight-point strategy proposed here builds directly on some of the principal lessons of negotiation theory.¹⁵⁴ It is rooted, however, entirely in the experience of the South in negotiating with the North, including international environmental policy negotiations. The fundamental feature of this strategy is that it seeks to redefine North-South environmental negotiations as a non-zero-sum game; where one side does not have to be any worse-off for the other to feel that it is any better-off. It seeks to shift the emphasis from the thunderous rhetoric of empty threats and unkept promises to realistic and creative problem-solving, where gains for one party are measured not in terms of losses for the other, but in terms of the tangible gains to oneself.¹⁵⁵ Where ultimate success is measured not by how much one side 'gives' to the other, either in terms of

¹⁵⁴ This strategy is based on the insights received from major texts in negotiation theory. Of particular importance are *The Art and Science of Negotiation* (Raiffa, 1982), *Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate, and Settlement* (Pruitt and Rubin, 1986), *The Manager as a Negotiator* (Lax and Sebenius, 1986), *Breaking the Impasse* (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987), *The Practical Negotiator* (Zartman and Berman, 1982) *Getting Together* (Fisher and Brown, 1988), and *Getting to Yes* (Fisher, Ury and Patton, 1991). Specifically on international environmental negotiation this strategy is influenced by Lawrence Susskind's *Environmental Diplomacy: Negotiating More Effective Global Agreements* (1994).

¹⁵⁵ Rajan's (1992: 147) refrain that "it is still a characteristic of the international system that states measure their progress in terms of gains relative to other states" notwithstanding, the point to be made here is to highlight the absurdity of considering a loss for the other to be a gain for oneself even when it leaves one no better off than before—this is one-upmanship, not statesmanship.

financial assistance or control over resources, but how much is 'gained' by humanity's present and future generations, in terms of the real quality of life.¹⁵⁶

1 • FOCUS ON INTERESTS, NOT POSITIONS

Development remains the primary objective of developing countries.... We shall pursue sustainable development. This we shall do to the best of our ability without prompting from anyone, because we believe it is in our interest to do so.
— AMBASSADOR EDWARD KUFOUR of Ghana (1991b: 17),
then Chairman of G77

In any negotiation, most parties come to the negotiating table with 'positions,' yet it is 'interests' that bring them to the table. Fisher et al. (1991: 41) define the distinction as positions being "something you have decided upon" and interests as "what caused you to so decide." As parties entrench themselves into win-lose positions the seeds of escalation are sowed (Pruitt and Rubin, 1986).

It is always important, and often difficult, to focus on one's own as well as the other party's interests. In the heat of positional bargaining, it is all too easy to get carried away with the emotional rhetoric that often surrounds positions—your own as well as the other's. Negotiators who fully understand and retain grasp of their own interests are less likely to leave the table with hollow victories like those that the South scored at UNCED. Furthermore, those who are able to appreciate and respond to the interests of the other party are most likely to stimulate creative, mutually advantageous solutions (Fisher and Brown, 1988).

As discussed earlier, the South's interests in global environmental negotiations have remained essentially unchanged: to seek 'development' and a better life for its people. Its positions, however, have varied anywhere from demanding the proverbial 'pound of flesh' for the North's historical sins to seeking 'charity' in the name of development assistance. The first forces the North to entrench deeper into retaliatory confrontation while the second puts the South into a

¹⁵⁶ In the parlance of negotiation literature this strategy may be described as "being unconditionally constructive" (see Fisher and Brown, 1988) or "principled nonconfrontation" (see Fisher, Ury and Brown, 1991). Yet, it needs to be stressed that this is *not* a 'soft' strategy. In fact, it is likely to require actions from the South far more stringent than those it has yet been prepared to take—both in relation to how the developing countries interact with industrialized ones and what they do domestically.

position of subservience. This proposed strategy recommends that rather than trying to invoke the North's guilt or generosity, the South's own self-interest will be best served by invoking the North's self-interest.¹⁵⁷

Such a strategy is better facilitated today (with environmental issues) than in the 1970s (with commodity issues) because of the North's desire to be at the negotiating table with the South, and the opportunity this offers to trade across issues that the two sides value differently (see Raiffa, 1982; Lax and Sebenius, 1986; Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987). The argument that poverty itself is the worst polluter has moral as well as intellectual potential to make poverty eradication—which is the 'development interest' of the South—to become an 'environmental interest' of the North. However, framing such an argument will require a major intellectual initiative, which can only come from the South. If the impacts are to be lasting, the South will have to develop a rational case for structural change making explicit how such change is better for both sides rather than be 'bought' by a few more crumbs in its beggar's bowl. The advice given by Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980b: 277) to NIEO leaders is equally valid for those negotiating for the South on issues of environment and development:

The developing countries, in their initial excitement of the battle, have sometimes confused short-term concessions for structural changes... It has not been clear at times whether their demand is for a little more foreign assistance, a few more trade preferences, or a quick dose of debt relief, or whether it is for the elimination of those biases within the international market system which prevent full and self-reliant development of their national economies. A clarification of objectives at both ends is vital for serious negotiations.

Wherever it can, the South must not only make its own interests explicit, but insist on making the interests of the North explicit. For example, if a North-South financial transfer is being made to defer the cost to the South of signing an environmental treaty that the North is interested in, then it is to the benefit of both sides to frame the transaction as a mutually advantageous 'environmental deal' (which it is) rather than an act of the North's 'benevolence' (which it is not, since the North is getting a 'service' in return).

¹⁵⁷ This is not to suggest that the past is past and therefore irrelevant. The South's case for demanding reparation is indeed compelling. However, while the past is never inconsequential, it must always be placed in context. The developing countries need to build their case for past compensation logically, rather than emotionally. For example, to ask the North to pay for the sins of Christopher Columbus and the havoc of five centuries of colonialism is tempting, but futile. Yet, to insist on changes in the systems that are the legacies of those practices is both desirable and reasonable.

This clarity in the terms of the deal will save the South from a sense of false indebtedness and ensure the North of better compliance since now the South can be held to its part of the bargain.¹⁵⁸ Such an arrangement is likely to give negotiators and implementors on both sides a clearer and unambiguous understanding of why the bargain has been struck and what is expected of each party. However, for such a deal to be struck both sides have to be clear not only about what they want from the agreement but what the other side needs. More than that, such understanding has to be shared before a mutually acceptable package can be designed.¹⁵⁹ The key lesson to be remembered in all of this is that the “[r]equirement for effective conflict settlement is neither cooperation nor competition, but... ‘enlightened self-interest’” (Rubin, 1991: 4).

2 • REDEFINE THE POWER BALANCE¹⁶⁰

*The South has only one option in this entire North-South debate.
It has never had much economic or political power.
It can only have moral power.*
— ANIL AGARWAL (1992: 34),
Indian Environmentalist

A skewed balance of economic, political, and technological power is the principal driving force of North-South confrontation. As Krasner (1985) points out, the North-South debate is not just about wealth, it is about power (*also see* Murphy, 1984; Thomas, 1987). More specifically, it is about the South’s perception of powerlessness. It is suggested here that although the South is certainly the weaker of the two parties it is not, in fact, powerless. The onus of redefining the existing power dynamics, however, lies entirely with the developing countries.

The purpose of this recommendation is not to suggest that the power imbalance between North and South is in any way irrelevant, unimportant, or unreal; far

¹⁵⁸ For the South it would imply greater transparency and a compensatory, rather than charitable, basis for the agreement. For the North it would mean a more implementable and accountable regime.

¹⁵⁹ In North-South environmental relations, the South is often adamant that the North has a deeper agenda of dominance and the North remains fixated on the notion that the South is merely begging for more crumbs off the ‘big table’. The debate often deteriorates into a diatribe of each side trying to convince the other about the falsehood of their perceptions rather than a problem-solving dialogue.

¹⁶⁰ This section is greatly influenced by presentations given by Prof. Roger Fisher (on 9 December 1992) and by Prof. Lawrence Susskind (on 8 April 1993) as part of various Program on Negotiation seminars. It is also informed by McCarthy (1991), Fisher (1991), and Fisher, Ury and Patton (1981).

from it, the South's disadvantage, as exemplified by the poverty and deprivation of its peoples and its position within the international system, is all too real.¹⁶¹

The dilemma, however, is that the more powerless the South feels, the less able it is to affect its power status quo with the North. North-South environmental negotiations are a perfect example of what Lord McCarthy (1991: 120) calls a game "more akin to poker than to chess." Many in the South have echoed the McCarthian argument that negotiation in these settings "is seen not just as a matter of logic and argument" but as a function of "the way the cards are dealt."

It is in accepting the validity of the McCarthy argument that a case is built here for applying what Fisher et al. (1991) call 'negotiation jujitsu.'¹⁶² Apologists in the South have based their pleas for charity on the 'desperate powerlessness' of the South; the militants, on the other hand, have over-estimated the efficacy of the South's 'power to disrupt.' Both cases, it is argued, represent a serious miscalculation of the power that the South does, and can, enjoy.

Both Stockholm and Rio demonstrated that the South does have power. For whatever it is worth, the South does have the power of numbers, especially in the context of UN institutions. It also has the power of moral persuasion in that it has been a 'victim' of the global environmental crisis—for example, although the South's contribution to global ozone depletion is minimal, it will be affected no less than those who have benefited from the chemical use that created the problem; similarly, the South is likely to suffer at the hands of climate change far disproportionately from its contribution. Although the limits of moral power should not be overestimated, the 'victim' argument has a certain appeal in the North which needs to be strategically cultivated by the South:

The willingness of Northern countries to permit developing countries to have a relatively long grace period before having to comply with the ozone and climate conventions reflects the general acceptance that poor countries had relatively little responsibility for those problems. (Porter and Brown, 1996: 114)

¹⁶¹ An insightful and revealing case study of how the strong nations use their economic power in international relations in their dealings with the developing world is available in *Jamaica: Struggle in the Periphery* by Michael Manley (1982), former Prime Minister of Jamaica.

¹⁶² Fisher, Ury and Patton (1991: 107-28) define 'negotiation jujitsu' as the art of putting the other side's negotiation strengths to your own advantage.

The South has used this power to its advantage at both Rio and the Stockholm in ensuring that the issues and options that it least liked were kept *out* of the final texts. However, it has failed to bring the concerns and solutions that it does support *into* the texts of the agreements. In this, its power may be seen as a 'negative' power; the power to stop, rather than the power to shape (*Down to Earth*, 1992b: 4). Marian Miller (1995: 132-33), in her study of three key environmental issues finds that:

...under certain circumstances, the growing perception of the environment as an integrated system can modify the way power is wielded within the global system. The Third World can exercise a measure of influence even if in most cases it is negative power—power to deny the regime its objectives. Therefore, although the Third World countries are constrained by their position in the world economic system, characteristics peculiar to the global environment have enhanced their ability to influence environmental regime outcomes.... [Moreover] industrialized country actors [have] realized that Third World countries [have] the ability to deny the regime its objectives.¹⁶³

Indeed, the North's much greater economic and political power itself greatly restricts the South's ability to apply anything but negative power. Having said that, the South has only itself to blame for not having better 'developed', and deployed, its negotiating power.¹⁶⁴ In believing that all power is fungible and economic or military strength is entirely transformable to negotiating power the South has trapped itself into the downward spiral of perceived powerlessness—where the assumption of powerlessness breeds the reality.¹⁶⁵ What it has failed to recognize, or develop, is the power of its own legitimacy (recommendation 4), the power of its own preparation (recommendation 5), and the power of its own credibility (recommendations 6 and 7).

Most importantly, the South has never tried to enhance its negotiation power by systematically cultivating its BATNA, or best alternative to a negotiated

¹⁶³ In deciding whether an issue will provide the South with additional power, Miller (1995: 132) considers the key questions to be "whether an environmental problem deals with a common-property resource issue and also whether the resource is held in open access or alternative arrangements."

¹⁶⁴ Prof. Roger Fisher (lecture on 9 December 1992) lists six "crippling assumptions" about negotiation: i) we are more powerful and therefore we can relax; ii) we are less powerful and therefore there is no point in trying; iii) all power is fungible; iv) the power to destroy is the power to persuade; v) pain is equal to pressure; and vi) military power is equal to negotiating power. In international environmental negotiations the North has long been caught in the first of these, while to varying degrees the South has succumbed to all the remaining five. Also see Fisher (1991).

¹⁶⁵ It needs to be stressed however, that the converse is not necessarily true. That is, while the assumption of powerlessness is likely to accelerate the reality, the assumption of powerfulness will not necessarily do the same.

agreement.¹⁶⁶ Every negotiation has to be seen in light of the larger goal. The South, however, has all too often succumbed to considering each episode of negotiation as an end unto itself.

At UNCED, for example, while the North may have had more 'power', it was the South that enjoyed the better BATNA. Arguably, the South could have walked away from the conference at any time and still held the moral high ground. The North never had that luxury. Yet, the South came back with frameworks on issues of greater interest to the North (climate change, biodiversity, and forests) which gave it nothing of what it was seeking, and without even statements of principles on the issues of that were highest on its priority list, e.g. desertification, poverty, water, etc.

3 • BE HARD ON ISSUES, NOT ON PEOPLE

A decision by the South to reject subordination, and to act on that repudiation, does not imply a desire for confrontation. The confrontation already inherent in the current domination by the North must be replaced by a more balanced and equitable management of global affairs which satisfies the interests of developed and developing countries alike and recognizes the interdependence of the world's people.
— CHALLENGE TO THE SOUTH (1990: 9),
Report of the South Commission

Nothing has influenced and shaped the South's frustration more than five centuries of shared colonial experience. While this might otherwise have been an unfair reaction on the South's part, it needs to be appreciated that the anger derives not just from their predicament in the past but from continuation of that plight into the present. The past is invoked primarily because the South sees

¹⁶⁶ If interests are what brings a party to the negotiation table and the process is what drives them towards mutual-gain solutions, BATNA—or best alternative to a negotiated agreement—is what tells them when to say 'yes' and when to walk out. In describing this concept, Fisher et al. (1991) stress that "the relative negotiating power of two parties depends primarily upon how attractive to each is the option of not reaching agreement." BATNA gives the negotiator a realistic measure of what exactly is a 'good', 'bad' or 'just acceptable' agreement. While BATNAs are liable to change as negotiations progress, and while BATNA assessment is never simple (Raiffa, 1982), investment of time and effort in carefully understanding and developing one's BATNA is always worthwhile. According to Susskind and Cruikshank (1987) there is no better advice for a negotiator than: "know your BATNA and don't lose sight of it." More difficult, but extremely important, is an understanding of the other party's BATNA. Whereas the knowledge of one's own BATNA affords the negotiator a safety net against 'bad' agreements, an appreciation of the other party's BATNA can accelerate 'good' agreements.

the current global systems of economics, trade, and governance as an extension of the same colonial legacy and as no less exploitative.¹⁶⁷ Not being able to influence change in these systems sometimes leads to the futile, but not surprising, resort to venting anger at people rather than at issues.

Within the vocabulary of the more militant South one sees the frustration of being unable to bring about systemic change being translated into an attack on those who are seen as 'offenders,' rather than on the 'offense.' It is not surprising, then, that the dialogue soon converts into a lock-in with each side entrenching itself deeper into what is seen as a 'defense of its identity'—the South insistent on unmasking the North's injustices and the North retaliating by attacking the South's militancy and paranoia. Even though such anger often comes as a last resort and as a means of venting frustrations at not making progress in more meaningful directions, it serves little useful purpose and only tends to further disrupt an already rickety negotiation endeavor.

When the focus moves from a dialogue on principles to an exchange of accusations, objectivity is often the first casualty and stalemate converts to escalation (Pruitt and Rubin, 1986). For example, with US President George Bush arriving at UNCED saying that "the American lifestyle is not open to negotiation," and the Indian Minister for the environment, Kamal Nath, responding that "our position is that USA is the biggest culprit in the world," there was little hope left for thinking about mutual gain solutions and meaningful dialogue (quotes from *Down to Earth*, 15 July 1992).

What is sacrificed is not just civility, but relationship—and the latter is a critical component of a good negotiating process (see Fisher and Brown, 1988; Zartman and Berman, 1982). More importantly, the focus shifts from issues to personalities. In a world where everyone—particularly the press—loves a 'bad'

¹⁶⁷ It is tempting to dismiss the South's persistent distrust and resulting militancy towards the North as the paranoia of historical baggage. On closer analysis, however, the South's charge of 'eco-colonialism' and 'green imperialism' suggests that its frustrations, even if originating from the voyages of Christopher Columbus and Vasco da Gama have been exacerbated by events in the much more recent past. The anger is directed not as much at subjugation in the past but at what is seen as subjugation today. The frustration emerges not from what had transpired in the past, but from the South's inability to influence what might happen in the future. (See Adams, 1993; Bakshi, 1992; Bello, 1989; Brandt, 1980; George, 1988; Kufour, 1991a; Manley, 1991; Peng, 1992; Woddis, 1967).

fight, the reason for the fight soon becomes irrelevant.¹⁶⁸ As issues are relegated to a peripheral seat, potential allies are lost; potential points, never scored. In attacking the 'offender,' rather than the 'principle' behind the offense, the possibility for any solution, let alone a mutual-gain, is soon foreclosed.

While such a strategy may make some feel like little Jack standing up to the giant, there is little, if any, substantive gain to be made.¹⁶⁹ In the heat of the grandstanding debate it is all too easy to forget that the fight is not *against* the Bretton Woods twins, but *for* accountability, transparency, and democracy in international institutions; not *against* US life-styles, but *for* more conserving patterns of consumption; not *against* the wealth of the North but *for* poverty eradication in the South.

It is ironic in surveying the results from Rio that while the South was extremely 'hard' on the people (i.e. US President George Bush, USA, World Bank, GATT, etc.) it was surprisingly 'soft' on the issues, and in the end agreed to the perpetuation of all the principles it was supposedly crusading against.

4 • REDEFINE THE AGENDA

*The ecological debt must be paid....
Hunger should be done away with....
Let this be the end of selfishness and hegomonism;
the end of callousness, irresponsibility and deceit.
Tomorrow it will be too late to do
what should have been done a long time ago.
— Cuban Presidente FIDEL CASTRO,
speaking at UNCED¹⁷⁰*

This recommendation, along with the next two, lies at the very heart of this strategy and could well become the difference between success and failure for the South in this second generation of North-South dialogue.

¹⁶⁸ This was especially true at UNCED which certainly received tremendous media attention but where petty political squabbles about who were the 'good' and the 'bad' guys took center-stage in public attention at the cost of more substantive concerns.

¹⁶⁹ An example of witty but unhelpful verbal jabbing from UNCED is Indian Minister Kamal Nath's statement that "the only biodiversity the [US] White House is interested in is savings the Bushes and the Quayles." He made the statement in reference to US President George Bush and Vice President Dan Quayle's attempt to use UNCED as a forum to advance their re-election campaigns for the 1992 US Presidential elections.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in *Third World Resurgence*, August/September 1992.

A major criticism from the South has been that the international environmental agenda is principally driven by Northern concerns (Miller, 1995; Porter and Brown, 1996). For example, developing countries argue that although global warming and ozone depletion may affect the South disproportionately they are a) of the North's making, and b) more important for the North since the South has more pressing survival issues to deal with; similarly, the issues of biodiversity and forests, as they are currently defined, are also of much greater interest to the North than the South (Agarwal, 1992; Agarwal and Narain, 1992; Peng, 1992; Raghavan, 1991; South Commission, 1990). This criticism is not unjustified. However, the hope that the North might, of its own accord, devise an agenda that reflects the South's interests rather than its own, is not only unjustified but demonstrates an unfortunate naiveté about the world we live in.

The burden of redefinition, it must be realized, lies with the South. While environmental activists in the South have begun demanding a redefinition of the international environmental agenda, government negotiators have found themselves increasingly constrained by the agenda already on the table. For example, Anil Agarwal (1992: 34) poignantly asks:

Which questions should [the world] try to solve first[?] Why ozone layer depletion or climate change or biodiversity conservation? Why not the international financial system, terms of trade or poverty, all of which have deep ecological linkages with the environmental problems of the South?

Arguably, the South has an appealing case. If the world needs a global climate change treaty to avert the uncertain likelihood of an unknown number of possible deaths and an equally unknown amount of possible agricultural loss over an unknown period of time, then does it not stand to objective reason that the world needs treaties on safe drinking water and soil loss much more, because these are already costing more lives and greater agricultural loss each year than the worst case scenario of global warming might do in 50?

Yet, to demand such an agenda the South has to invest effort and intellectual resources in defining, defending, and propagating it. It is up to the South to take the lead in linking it to the concerns of the North so that they do not feel 'left out' as the South feels left out of the current one. The creative linkages advocated in much of negotiation theory (Raiffa, 1992; Sebenius 1984) and stressed in

other proposals for reforming the international environmental negotiation system (Benedick, 1991; Eckaus, 1992; Mathews, 1991; Porter and Brown, 1991; Skolnikoff, 1990; Susskind, 1994) can be fruitfully served by such a redefined agenda that seeks to include the interests of both South and North.

An important manifestation of a redefined agenda is the reframing of issues already on the table. As an example, consider the thorny question of financial arrangements. The South demands financial assistance but is unwilling to relinquish control of its sovereignty. The North, even where willing to pay, doubts the South's capacity (French, 1992b; Chayes and Skolnikoff, 1992) and willingness (Hollick and Cooper, 1991) to fulfill the commitments it makes. Reframing the debate from one of delivering aid to 'compensation for liability and services'—as some in the South have been proposing (Agarwal and Narain, 1991; Peng, 1992)—may, in fact, be a potentially win-win solution.¹⁷¹

Agarwal's (1992: 34-35) proposal is that "the argument that the rich must pay their ecological bills must ring out loud and clear." At the same time, he realizes that committing to such a strategy will have to include going the next step:

...the South must be prepared to take the moral high ground, where it must make it absolutely clear that it is not looking out for any money whatsoever. It should ask for nothing less than systemic changes in the world's political and financial systems so that fair and equitable systems of environmental discipline can be enforced for all, including the South... And in this process the South should make it clear that if it gets anything, well and good, but otherwise it does not want a penny more.

The South's redefined agenda must also resist the temptation from the North to 'Balkanize' environmental treaty-making by focusing on smaller and smaller issues in hope of quicker results. Such a view—as well as the approach of the ozone depletion case, where the industrialized countries essentially finalized the treaty amongst themselves and then haggled over financial resources with the South later (Benedick, 1991)—should be resisted. Instead, the South must

¹⁷¹ First, it provides objective criteria of why the transfer is taking place; second, it addresses the issue of historical guilt and compensation; third, it puts the South in the position of a service provider rather than that of a beggar and thereby addresses the issue of conditionality and control; and finally, it affords the North the ability to demand provision of the service that was paid for, something that it cannot do if the financing was provided as charity. Such a model would obviously not work for all issues and all countries. However, in many instances (for example, global warming, forest conservation, etc.) this model, or variants thereof, have strengths to offer.

emphasize focusing on the holistic approach so that trading between issues (and treaties) that the parties value differently can be facilitated.¹⁷²

An important way for the South to redefine the international environmental agenda is to seek strength through linking issues. In negotiations pertaining to the broad rubric of sustainable development the North and South are bound to be differentially interested in different aspects of the agreement, or agreements on different issue. The potential for trading between issues is, therefore, rich. Negotiation theory stresses that issue linkage can be crucial to the success of negotiations that involve complex, multiparty bargaining (Raiffa, 1982, Susskind, 1994). As discussed earlier, issue linkage is not an easy strategy to operationalize; however, it is one that promises great benefits in complex and multi-faceted issues like the environment. This recommendation echoes the suggestion from Porter and Brown (1991: 148, 152) of using linkages to create a “holistic... global bargain strategy” based on “a recognition of mutual dependence and self-interest amongst countries, both North and South.”

5 • ORGANIZE YOURSELF

*For the South, in the era of negotiations,
effective unity is the mandate of the world's poor.
But without organization real unity will be forever a mirage.*
— SIR SHRIDATH RAMPHAL (1980: 21),
former foreign minister of Guyana.

The centrality of good organization in effective negotiation is an accepted cornerstone of negotiation theory (Raiffa, 1982; Sewell and Zartman, 1984; Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987; Fisher et al., 1991). Southern scholars have long been calling for a better organized South (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1976 and 1980b; Hall, 1980; Ramphal, 1980; Nyerere, 1980; South Commission, 1990). Though somewhat belatedly, environmentalists in the South are coming to similar conclusions (Agarwal, 1992; Peng, 1992; Khor 1992b and 1992c).

A useful insight into the importance of organization in coalition negotiation comes from Sir Shridath Ramphal (1980: 18):

¹⁷² For related discussion see Agarwal and Narain, 1991; Chayes, 1991; Mathews, 1991; Peng, 1992; Sand, 1991; Schelling, 1991; Sebenius, 1984 and 1991; Skolnikoff, 1990; Susskind, 1994.

The trouble is that an instinct for unity without organization has persisted into an era of negotiations when organization itself has become the concomitant of unity and the precondition for unified action. The organization of the South for effective negotiation with the North can never be free of difficulty; the question now is, however, whether effective negotiation with the North on even practical cooperation within the South is possible without such organization. All evidence suggests that it is not.

Environmental negotiations, although essentially political in nature, are often shrouded in scientific and technical complexities for which the individual nations of the South are often not prepared (Susskind, 1994; Caldwell, 1990). The time and expense required in protracted international negotiations is another limiting factor (Dubey, 1986; Porter and Brown, 1996). For an alliance as large as the South, coalition management can itself be a major task which, in the absence of efficient decisionmaking mechanisms, can lead to lowest-common-denominator solutions (Hall, 1980b; Sauvart, 1981a). All this is often compounded by the fact that those who negotiate treaties are usually professional diplomats rather than those directly concerned with environmental implementation (Khor, 1992c).

As a veteran diplomat and Southern negotiator, Machkund Dubey (1986: 92) of India, testifies most developing countries enter most global negotiations, especially environmental negotiations, in a state of gross under-preparedness:

Even with regard to national interests, very few [developing] countries come to a negotiating conference with a clear perception of their interests and well-defined positions designed to safeguard and promote such interests. Many developing countries do not have at their disposal the necessary expertise to analyze and grasp the significance of an idea that has matured into a negotiating issue, to assess how it affects their national, regional and wider group interests and to formulate a clear-cut position reflecting these interests.... Countries that go to a negotiating conference with a well-formulated position are the ones which assume the leadership role in such conferences.

Individual nations in the South need to cultivate the human resources and expertise required for complex environmental negotiations. More importantly, the South as a whole requires a coordinated strategy, which allows the scarce resources of time, money, and human capital to be pooled for maximum effectiveness (Ramphal, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980b; South Centre, 1991). Moreover, as international environmental institutions and initiatives proliferate it will become increasingly critical for the South to be able to create an efficient working relationship with them. Individually, few countries in the South can afford to invest the type of resources into negotiation preparation that most

countries in the North do. Collectively, they have between them the expertise as well as the resources to come in a better state of preparation.

A number of calls have been made for the South to better organize itself for negotiating with the North. A persistent effort has been made, for example, by Dr. Mahbub-ul-Haq of Pakistan who, since 1976 (pg. 182-83), has been proposing the establishment of a central Third World Secretariat to “develop negotiating positions... [and] well-documented, specific proposals which harmonize the political and economic interests of the Third World.”¹⁷³

Based on negotiation analysis and the assumption that “North-South negotiations do not have to be a zero-sum game,” Sewell and Zartman (1984: 375-88) concluded similarly that “the South needs its own institution, analogous to the OECD” which should “not only provide analytical support but should strive to identify priorities and to develop and propose strategies and tactics for the negotiations.” (*Also see Hall, 1980; Sauvart, 1981a; TWQ, 1989*).

The proposal was recently revitalized by the South Commission (1990: 200-05) which argued that “the South is not well organized at the global level and has [therefore] not been effective in mobilizing its shared expertise and experience or its bargaining power. As a consequence, it is at a great disadvantage in its relations with the North. This is also prejudicial to the process of South-South cooperation.” The report finds that in the absence of such organization individual developing countries have not been able to sustain solidarity in the face of the temptation to seek separate deals, and that the South as a whole has failed to respond to the needs of complex collective negotiation. It goes on to suggest that the establishment of a South Secretariat would facilitate:

...well-organized collective action [to] benefit all countries, with little, if any, significant sacrifice of national advantage... [will] establish common priorities... share technical and negotiating expertise... [encourage] constructive South-South cooperation... develop a

¹⁷³ Four years later, he was still trying to win support for such a secretariat by stressing that “little change will occur... unless the South begins to organize its countervailing power on a political, economic, and intellectual front” (1980a: 141) and that such an organization was “badly needed” to “shape a package of negotiations which would satisfy the different interests of [the South’s] various constituencies” (1980b: 274). Finding many nations in the South still not ready for the idea in 1983 (pgs. 5-6), he passionately argued: “Must all countries of the Third World come together before they can set up a substantive Secretariat of the Third World? If we mean business, such a Secretariat can be started by a handful of countries, with others coming along later.”

shared professional service to support [the South] on matters under negotiation... and update [the] negotiating agenda.

To this exhaustive list, two related priorities need to be added. The first is the importance of prenegotiation preparation which was amply demonstrated during the UNCED preparatory process. The second is the need for the South to come to all environmental negotiations with at least one draft treaty text. Given that there may be a multitude of sub-interests within the South, multiple drafts from various regional or issue coalitions may sometimes be necessary.

The importance of such drafts is exemplified by the process that led to the finalization of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.¹⁷⁴ After protracted debate during the fourth UNCED PrepCom at New York, and with only two days to go, no consensus was emerging.¹⁷⁵ At this point the plenary Chairman, Ambassador Tommy Koh of Singapore was asked to draft a new version as a last effort. Thanks to some powerful back-stage negotiations and Koh's leadership this version was adopted very late into the last night. Without taking any credit away from the mediation skills of Tommy Koh it needs to be appreciated that he succeeded in coming up with a draft that 'no one was happy with but every one was able to live with' because he was able to work with two draft declarations that had earlier been proposed by USA and the G77. Without those, it is doubtful if even he could have been able to craft the acceptable, though not uncontroversial, Rio Declaration. (See Koh, 1993)

In essence, then, the establishment of the South Secretariat to facilitate better preparation for complex negotiations, to coordinate the negotiating strategy of the South, to organize South-South sharing of knowledge and technology, and to provide intellectual rigor to the development of a Southern agenda for sustainable development is probably the single most important institutional step

¹⁷⁴ Unfortunately, but not entirely inappropriately, acronymed Rio DEAD.

¹⁷⁵ At one point during the protracted and unproductive debate, a Canadian delegate suggested that he envisioned it as a "poetic and inspirational statement that could inspire ecological values in the next generation: something a little girl could hang on her bedroom wall." To this, one Southern delegate reportedly replied, "in my country little girls do not have bedrooms." This was a defining moment in the debate which exemplified the stark differences between environmental perceptions of North and South. Interestingly, at Stockholm too the North had intended the declaration to be a brief poetic statement, while the South had insisted that it be a tangible statement of principles.

that the developing countries can take in positioning themselves better in this new generation of North-South environmental dialogue.¹⁷⁶

The pertinent question, however, is: Why would a South that has so long resisted all proposals for setting up a formal secretariat do so now? Many of the reasons that have long kept the South from creating such a secretariat remain equally valid today.¹⁷⁷ The difference, however, may be that the sheer pace, frequency and technical complexity of environmental negotiations may force the South into doing something that it should have done long ago. Moreover, one might hope that the recent establishment of the South Centre (see chapter #3) as a *de facto* South Secretariat of sorts would spur such an initiative.

6 • DEVELOP YOUR CONSTITUENCY

Ours is a kind of "Trade Union of the Poor."
— JULIUS K. NYERERE (1980: 7),
then President of Tanzania and
later Chairman of the South Commission

As elaborated earlier, the South is, in fact, not a homogeneous whole. However, the need for the South to negotiate as a single bloc has been

¹⁷⁶ A detailed case for why a South Secretariat will be useful in international environmental negotiations has been made and a possible structure for such a secretariat has been proposed by the author in *The Case for a South Secretariat in International Environmental Negotiation* by Adil Najam (1994, Working Paper Series 94-8; Cambridge Mass.: Program on Negotiation at Harvard Law School).

¹⁷⁷ Why have proposals for such an organization—having been made repeatedly by eminent scholars and leaders of the South—been so consistently ignored? Some of the reasons that have been identified in the literature include: control will be taken over by bureaucrats and the secretariat will become a supranational agency (Ramphal, 1980: 18; Sauvant, 1981a: 53); inordinate control will be taken over by coordinating governments (Ramphal, 1980: 18), or by those providing major financial support (Hall, 1980: 55; Sauvant, 1981a: 53); centralization of decisionmaking will dilute the power of individual states and of the regional clusters which have been an important feature of the G77 (Hall, 1980: 51); financing such an organization would be an added burden on already poor states (Hall, 1980, 56; Ramphal, 1980: 20; Sauvant, 1981a: 90 ff66); organization by the South might be viewed in the North as confrontational (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980a: 151; Ramphal, 1980: 20); conversely, a secretariat would tend to take a "mediating role" and might draw the South towards compromises that may not be in its interest (Savant, 1981a: 51); an intrinsic resistance to institutionalizing the processes of informal consultation by which the South has traditionally worked (Ramphal, 1980: 18); the desire not to proceed with such an organization until all members are ready for it (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1983: 5); and divisive questions regarding location and financing (Savant, 1981a: 53; Weiss, 1986: 93). In reviewing the debate, it seems that the very diversity of the South, which is a major rationale for setting up a formal secretariat, has been the biggest hurdle in its establishment. Over the years, NAM, G77, and the South in general, have used informal structures of decision-making as a method for managing diversity. The fear that more formal structures might accentuate the differences within the coalition has led to a hesitancy to create such structures. This is not to belittle the importance of other factors, including vested interests within the South and their fear that such a secretariat might reduce their power. Conservative forces have tended to argue that "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

effectively argued and is widely accepted within the South (see Brandt Commission, 1980; Nyerere, 1980; Ramphal, 1980; South Commission, 1990; Manley, 1991; Grant, 1995). The argument for doing so during remains as valid in the 1990s as it was in the 1970s:

The bargaining strength of the South derives from the feeling of solidarity among its members, their unity and cohesion.... The developing countries adopt common positions in negotiations not only because they see that their immediate interests are involved in the negotiating issues, but essentially because they have a shared understanding of the dynamics of the present international order and they agree among themselves on both the necessity and the method of removing disparity in the wealth and incomes between them and the developed countries. There is generally a tendency to underestimate the capacity of the developing countries to perceive their interest in this fashion in spite of their having demonstrated it time and again through negotiations in different forums. (Dubey, 1986: 99)

Dubey (1986: 103) rightly concludes that “it just does not make sense for the developing countries to give up the only bargaining power they have: that is their unity, their standing together as a group.” He is, however, pragmatic enough to contextualize his analysis by stressing that unity as a source of bargaining leverage has its limits (pg. 99): “for enhancing the bargaining strength of the developing countries, the subjective sense of unity must be backed by [a] material basis for solidarity.”

As the G77’s experience during UNCED exemplified, surviving as a supra-group is never easy—the cost of keeping a large coalition together can often be succumbing to the lowest-common-denominator. Such a strategy may ensure that no one loses anything but can also mean that no one gains anything either.

The “material basis for solidarity” that Dubey refers to is unlikely to emerge from lowest-common-denominator strategies. It can only be crafted through intricate *intra*-coalition prenegotiation where differences in priorities *within* the coalition are accommodated in developing strategic packages that leave both the coalition and its member better off than before. It is critical, therefore, for the South to adopt a strategy where comprehensive South-South negotiations are a necessary part of and precursor to all North-South negotiations (South Centre, 1991). Not only must differentially valued issues be traded between the North and the South, but similar trades must take place within the South.

For example, the specific environmental interests of the Sahel states of Africa may be markedly different from those of the rainforest nations of South America, or those of the irrigated agricultural countries of South-East Asia. All of these, in turn, could be totally different from the issues that concern the economically vibrant Far-Eastern states or OPEC members. Managing such a coalition should never be an *ad hoc* exercise. On the one hand, there lies the danger of suppressing any particular interest to an extent where particular sub-groups splinter out of the larger coalition. On the other, there is the danger of falling into the lowest common denominator trap in trying to keep everyone happy.

In the absence of meaningful prenegotiation the choice is between infighting and stagnation. Both are detrimental to the South's larger interests. One approach to avoiding either is to facilitate deals within the coalition where countries give in on issues that they are less interested in, in return for support on issues that are higher on their priority list. Such an approach, however, requires much more in terms of coalition management and preparatory prenegotiation between coalition partners.¹⁷⁸

Negotiation theory, particularly the works by Raiffa (1982) and Sebenius (1984), have some important insights to offer on the issue of coalitions. One important lesson for the South is that while coalitions are often built around broader issues, they usually fall apart around smaller—but more immediate—ones.¹⁷⁹ Any strategy for the South, then, must a) encourage South-South negotiations that allow the trading of differentially valued interests within the South, and b) focus primarily on the larger common issues of systemic change while allowing sub-groups the lead in focusing on issues of particular interest to them.¹⁸⁰ The important implication of the second point is that not everything need be collectively negotiated by the South—more specific issues may best be tackled

¹⁷⁸ This would be a principal task of the South Secretariat proposed earlier (recommendation 5).

¹⁷⁹ Dubey (1986: 102) validates this view in pointing out that “on broader long-term objectives of a more fundamental nature, the developing countries have repeatedly demonstrated their ability and will to remain united and alert.” The qualification he makes here—i.e. “on broader long-term objectives of a more fundamental nature”—is important to underscore.

¹⁸⁰ The second implies a strategy similar to that of the North where nations maintain a loose alliance allowing them to disassociate efforts when needed, without dissolving the larger tactical coalition.

by regional or issue coalitions so that the interests of sub-alliances are fulfilled without threatening the stability of the greater coalition (Suskind, 1994).¹⁸¹

Complementing South-South negotiations is the need for greater South-South cooperation (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980a; Manley, 1991; South Commission, 1990; Adams, 1993). There is much that the nations of the South can learn from each other's experiences. The South Commission (1990: 17) points out: "sub-regional, regional, and inter-regional cooperation has now become indispensable for [the South's] sustained growth... the rewards of cooperation can, in time, become considerable. But they have to be earned; resources and effort have to be invested, and it takes time to produce results." Environmental cooperation is likely to be especially beneficial and also devoid of some of the problems that arise in economic issues. Arguably, even in terms of technology issues, developing countries probably have as much to learn about sustainable development from each other, as from the North (Peng, 1992; Shiva, 1992b).¹⁸²

Finally, the single most important step that the Southern coalition must take in developing its constituency is to begin viewing nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)—especially, but not solely, in the developing countries—as allies, rather than adversaries. In fact, one can safely argue that, till now, environmental NGOs from the South have done a better job of winning attention for the South's agenda than Southern governments. At UNCED, for example, Southern NGOs played an important role in articulating Southern positions and often influenced the policies of their own and other governments (Livernash, 1992; McMahon, 1993; Princen, et al., 1995).

With NGOs taking an increasingly activist role in global environmental negotiations, an enhanced presence of Southern NGOs is not just desirable, but imperative. Anil Agarwal (1992: 36), who has himself made such an impact on North-South environmental dialogue as an NGO representative, makes the point: "the South has no other choice after Rio but to go out and engage itself in

¹⁸¹ The Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) has essentially been playing the role of such a sub-alliance, especially on the issue of climate change.

¹⁸² Reid, et al. (1988) provide examples of successful sustainable development projects in developing countries, which are often low tech, dealing with indigenous knowledge, and operating at a grassroots level. Such technologies and knowledge is often both more appropriate for the sustainable development enterprise and also more abundantly available in the South.

the international dialogue... Southern NGOs and intellectuals must play a key role in setting the terms of debate to the maximum extent possible.” Despite their persistent fears about the erosion of state sovereignty, individual developing countries as well as the South as a bloc would be well advised to incorporate their NGOs into the mainstream of international environmental negotiations, on behalf of the South. This will not only make Southern negotiators more representative of their true constituencies, it would also open new reservoirs of negotiation resources and creativity for the South.

7 • CLEAN UP YOUR OWN ACT

*All the diplomatic skills and rhetorical eloquence,
taken together, offer no substitute for the
tough decisions [required] within the South.
— MAHBUB-UL-HAQ (1980a: 141),
former finance minister of Pakistan*

If the flag of the NIEO was the interdependence of global systems, the marching tune was self-reliance. For the South, the advent of a New International Environmental Order would demand nothing less. The South Commission (1990: 24) reiterates this view in today’s context: “It is the South’s people who suffer most from the poverty and failings of the South... the responsibility to work for change in the present conditions therefore lies firmly with the South.”

The ‘power of legitimacy’, referred to earlier, can emanate only from what the countries of the South do within their own borders. The South’s criticism of the North’s environmental sins is bound to ring hollow if its own environmental record is sullied. If the South is to present development and the provision of a better life for its people as its principal environmental interest, then it must be seen to be working towards this same goal at home, independent of which way the negotiations go. If the South’s bargaining position is to be based on a high moral ground, then the its actions must justify that moral position.

The question posed by Madhu Kishwar (1992: 47) cannot be ignored: “Why don’t we set our own house in order first?” In way of an answer, India’s Anil Agarwal (1992: 36) underscores the strategic importance of domestic action:

The challenge to the elite leadership of the South has become clear after Rio. If it does not get its house in order, its own internal divisions will be used to clamp greater international

restrictions on it. And unless it is able to get greater honesty, efficiency, and self-reliance into its own economic systems, it will be consistently portrayed as a beggar and its morality snatched away. It will then be left in a very weak negotiating position.

The environmental record of the South itself leaves much to be desired. Till now, the developing countries have been able to get away with pinning the blame for the environmental crisis on the North because the North's contribution to these problems has been so disproportionately large, and the South's problems have been largely attributable to the lack of resources. Yet, not all of the South's environmental woes are results of the North's actions or the South's poverty. In many cases they are the results of the corruption, unaccountability, intransparency, and lack of democracy in national governance (Kishwar, 1992).

In many cases, the disparities between the rich and the poor within the countries of the South are as stark as those between North and South;¹⁸³ the environmental ramifications of this stark internal division and inequity are as glaring as those of international divisions and inequities. In essence, there is a North and a South within the South, and this internal North-South division has similar environmental repercussions as the global North-South rift. Cedric Grant (1995: 571) states the argument most clearly:

The feasibility of the goal of equitable international relations depends on the extent to which equity in relations exists within countries. It is an illusion to expect countries to be committed to equitable relationships among themselves if the distribution of national income, wealth and other resources within them does not bear the hallmark of social justice. In other words, it is difficult to translate domestic inequity into international equity. Equity, like charity, must begin at home.

If the South is to maintain the moral high ground—which is its principal source of strength in most environmental negotiations with the North— then it must begin by implementing at home the same systemic changes it is demanding internationally. If it does so, its case will be hard to argue against; if it does not, it will continue to be seen as nothing more than an irritant, not to be taken seriously in global environmental negotiations (Agarwal, 1992; Peng, 1992).

¹⁸³ In Brazil, for example, income disparity between the richest 20 per cent of the population and the poorest 20 percent is 26 times. Globally, if one were to focus on the richest one billion people in the world and the poorest one billion, the disparity between incomes is an astounding 150 times, and has doubled over the last three decades. (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1992: 1).

8 • GOOD AGREEMENTS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN 'WINNING'

In the final analysis humankind must develop economic and social institutions which are just in purpose and democratic in form. Otherwise the world will stumble from one disaster to the next.
— MICHAEL MANLEY (1991: 115-16),
former Prime Minister of Jamaica

As stated earlier, the hope that the fate of this new generation of North-South environmental negotiations may be different from earlier attempts at negotiating a New International Economic Order emerges from the belief that, unlike other international problems, many environmental issues are likely to be non-zero-sum in character—the pie can be expanded and mutual-gain strategies are possible. However, it is futile to play a 'win-win' game with a 'win-lose' mindset—where one party's 'victory' is measured by the magnitude of the 'loss' to the other party—because parties are liable to refuse a 'winning' strategy for themselves just because it does not represent a 'losing' outcome for the other.

The purpose of this last recommendation is to move the reference point for gauging 'victory' from how much the other party loses, to how much is gained for the planet's environment and our collective future generations. In standard economic (for example, trade) or political (for example, armament) negotiations it may be understandable to construe the game in a strictly win-lose framework. In global environmental negotiations, however, a loss for any party is, by definition, a loss for the planet and thereby for all parties.

This is not to deny that the capability of bearing the costs of mutual-gain solutions, as well as the responsibility for causing the problem, are nearly always differentiated and needs to be borne differentially. The point merely is that the win-lose mind-set that has dominated the world through the heydays of national independence movements and the Cold War is no longer appropriate for environmental diplomacy (see Benedick, 1991; Mathews, 1992; Porter and Brown, 1991; Suskind, 1994).

Even though the developmental and environmental priorities of the two groups may differ, the developing countries realize that protecting the global

environment is as much in their interest as it is in the North's. It is naive to presume that the developing countries will knowingly foreclose their own environmental support systems simply to make the North look bad. At the end of the extremely confrontational 1974 UN Conference on Population in Bucharest, Finkle and Crane (1975: 109) pointed out that despite their militancy at the conference "the developing nations will not turn away from their demographic dilemmas merely to spite the West." This remains equally, if not more, true about environmental dilemmas in the 1990s.

This realization should be a signal to both sides, but especially to the South, that sustainable development can indeed be a win-win proposition. Joint gains, however, do not emerge from thin air—they have to be meticulously sought and crafted. As Lax and Sebenius (1986: 88-116) describe in detail, the process of value creation is a rewarding, but tedious, enterprise that needs to be explicitly and concertedly undertaken—it involves "fashioning agreements that dovetail differences, cultivate shared interests, and exploit economies of scale."¹⁸⁴

Appreciating that negotiation—especially on issues such as the environment—lies not in discrete points but along a continuum, the South is advised to adopt a 'building block' approach rather than an 'all or nothing' approach. The wide range of environmental issues that are likely to be negotiated in the future allow the South the opportunity to build on success, across treaties.

Rather than seeking a single major victory that would change the world in one bold stroke, the South is better served to adopt a modular approach that seeks blocks of smaller successes that might lead to greater cumulative change.¹⁸⁵ What is being recommended here is explicit prioritization and planning. The South must come prepared with strategies and priorities not just for a particular negotiation, but negotiations beyond that. Success will be measured not just by what the South takes away from the table at the end of a particular negotiation,

¹⁸⁴ For an insightful discussion on facilitating joint gains negotiation see chapter #2 ("The Negotiator's Dilemma: Creating and Claiming Value") and chapter #5 ("Creating Value or Where do Joint Gains Really Come From?") in *The Manager as Negotiator* by Lax and Sebenius (1986: 29-45 and 88-116).

¹⁸⁵ It may be argued that this is already being done, though by default. To do so strategically, rather than incidentally, would not only save the South much heartache but would allow it the room to make explicit calculations about trades within and between treaties and negotiations.

but how its gains reinforce, if at all, its previous gains and how it manages to influence the setting of the table for the next set of policymaking deliberations.

Finally, it must be emphasized that the agreement that emerges from any negotiation is always more important than the fight that goes into it, and that the level of implementation that the agreement enjoys is even more important than the agreement itself. The practical significance of this self-evident advice is that making the other party look bad is not success; success is getting an agreement that will work. Once you have made the other side 'look bad' it is unlikely that they would sign on to an agreement that makes you 'look good.'

That the other party is on the table to negotiate should be evidence that they to want, or are willing to at least consider, a negotiated deal. But a workable agreement is, by definition, an agreement that meets the interests of both parties. To demand justice for five centuries of colonialism is all very good, but to expect it out of sheer benevolence is naive. This is not because the North is necessarily unjust, but because their perceptions of justice may be different from those of the South, or because they see the costs of what the South is demanding as excessive (*see especially* Hansen, 1979).

For a workable agreement to be reached both parties have to be able to say 'yes.' Till now the South has found itself forced into saying 'no' because the North's proposals have failed to incorporate its interests. It is now time for the South to take the lead in proposing solutions that are 'yesable' for both sides. The urgency articulated in UNCED's *Agenda 21* is, after all, expressing the South's sentiments:¹⁸⁶

Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfillment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future. No nation can achieve this on its own; but together we can—in a global partnership for sustainable development.

¹⁸⁶ From the Preamble of *Agenda 21*, as reproduced in Johnson (1993: 129).

WILL THIS STRATEGY WORK?

This chapter does not pretend that there are any 'easy' strategies, either for the South or the North. There is no easy fix to the environmental crisis we confront today. The prescriptions presented here are like a nasty but necessary medicine that needs to be gulped despite its taste. It does not even promise to be a cure. However, it could possibly be a first step toward recovery.

The alternative is to follow the advice of Stephen Krasner (1985: 30) who argues that: "The international system would be more stable and less conflictual if the North and the South had less to do with each other. From a Northern as well as a Southern perspective collective self-reliance is preferable to greater interdependence." Given the nature of global environmental issues, this advice, if followed, would not just be unfortunate for humanity but in all likelihood would be catastrophic for this planet.

Although the negotiation strategy presented here is addressed entirely to the South, its success will in part depend on how it is received by the North. Some in the North will always see any effort from the South to bargain collectively as an act of confrontation; this, despite the fact that the North has always organized itself as an alliance in negotiations with the South (Nyerere, 1980; South Commission, 1990; Ramphal, 1990). As Dubey (1986: 102) argues:

While developed countries tend to say that the functioning of the group mechanism [in the UN], particularly that of the Group of 77, has introduced rigidities in North-South negotiations, they themselves are very well organized into groups of their own.... They regularly and systematically coordinate their policies and harmonize their positions through the institutions of the OECD and EEC. They have at their disposal very efficient and prestigious secretariats, the world's top experts, and sizable resources.

Such organization has served the North well both in its dealings with the South and within its own alliances. Arguably, an equally organized South would serve the interests of the developing countries. More than that, it is suggested, that an organized South, with an explicit and clearly defined negotiation strategy, is likely to make North-South relations that much less acrimonious and the entire process of North-South negotiations, especially international environmental policymaking, that much more productive in meaningful global environmental treaties.

While a well-organized South—with clearly outlined interests, strategies, and goals—will certainly be able to negotiate more effectively, it would be to the North's benefit to deal with an organized South rather than with a South whose principal negotiating strategy derives from five hundred years of accumulated anger. The environment, or sustainable development, card has provided the developing countries with an issue where the North actually wants to (re-)open a process of dialogue with the South. The implication of this important sea change is that the North is no longer a 'blocking coalition' in North-South negotiations. For the North, therefore, a South that is better organized for negotiation means a South that it is easier to negotiate with. The North should welcome the opportunity to negotiate with a more organized and better prepared South because it has the potential to reduce the noise of rhetoric in the dialogue and raise it from the level of emotional accusations to that specific policy proposals.

Although any attempt by the South to organize its strengths and reaffirm its unity is likely to raise red flags for some in the North, an alternative interpretation of is to view such organization as graduation from the era of 'street politics' to that of 'conference diplomacy'—to use the imagery of Mahbub-ul-Haq (1976: 145), the adoption by the South of a comprehensive negotiation strategy, such as the one outlined here, would signify the conclusion of the era of shouting, raising slogans, and smashing windows and the ushering in of more serious dialogue.

If ensuring that the North reacts to a new—more organized, less militant—South more accommodatingly is not likely to be easy, it will be much more arduous to get the South to adopt a strategy that calls for change and sacrifice at home. The key to this strategy's success would be for the South to move from a reactive mode in international environmental negotiations, to a proactive mode.

This will require the South to wrest both the initiative and the leadership; to demonstrate its environmental earnestness, not only to the North, but to its own constituencies; and to take tough economic—and political—decisions. The advice given by *Down to Earth* (1992b: 4) is worth paying heed to:

The lessons are obvious by now and our [the South's] leaders should learn from them: firstly, stop begging for more aid, secondly, practice efficient management of one's indigenous resources, and, thirdly, as far as the global dialogue is concerned, propose and

jointly fight for their own, alternative vision for global management. Each of us—black, brown, yellow and white—has equal rights to this earth. Hence, a global management system should be proposed that would respect our rights in a way that those who are gluttons of the world's resources would face clear economic disincentives, while the well-behaved would gain clear incentives. If, in the resulting automatic flow of resources, some cash comes to the South, well and good; if not, the people of the South must learn the discipline of living entirely within only that which is rightfully theirs.

The proposals of this chapter are likely to be unpopular with both the militants and the apologists in the South. The militants are likely to see them as being too weak and condescending to the North; the apologists as too strong and aggressive. Even more important—but difficult—would be winning the support from bureaucrats and politicians who, as ruling elites themselves, will be required to change not just their negotiating strategy but their approach to domestic and international environmental policy.

While it is not suggested that winning over the support of any of these groups is likely to be easy, it is going to be necessary. The obvious, and persistent, failure of the South's previous strategy—of seeking charity while being militancy—may, in fact, be the greatest thrust for the adoption of a more pragmatic and reasoned approach such as the one outlined here. For the South to maintain its moral high position, such changes are inevitable and without them its rhetoric will soon be discredited. Such change cannot be easy. However, such change is the price that the South must pay to ensure a better environment for its children tomorrow, and a decent survival for its people today.

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