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REPORT ON ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE WORLD SUMMIT, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA.

As a result of the meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research (IAI) in June, the Director, Dr. J. W. Stewart (E) of the IAI suggested that I should represent our organization at the World Earth Conference, which was to be held in Johannesburg, South Africa. The invitation to take part in the event had two points of interest; on one hand, it would allow me to use my position as Official Delegate of the Government of Venezuela, representing FONACIT (National Scientific and Technological Research Fund – Ministry of Science and Technology) and on the other I would be able to take part as delegate in the fora related to the subjects of greatest interest to the IAI. Finally, it would be a good opportunity to diffuse the brochures related to IAI activities.

BACKGROUND OF THE MEETING

In August, 2002, hundreds of governmental and non-governmental delegations and scientists and professionals from all over the world who work on the subject of environment met in Johannesburg, South Africa, in what was called the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD). WSSD is a United Nations conference whose main objective is to face the challenges of creating a harmonious integration between human development and environmental sustainability.

A similar meeting, which had taken place 10 years before in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, brought out the Declaration on Environment and Development. Its main interest was the eradication of poverty by reducing the gap between the standards of living of rich and poor. *As to the health of our environment, the primary goal of the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research, all nations were called on to cooperate in the preservation, protection and restoration of the health and integrity of the ecosystem earth.* It was also agreed that the topic of environment would be better handled with collective participation, not forgetting the importance of the participation of autochthonous communities.

HISTORY OF THE JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT

The ten years between the Rio and the Johannesburg summits have been described by many as a lost decade since, instead of placing human beings at the center of development, the interest of most of the governments of the world and in particular of the so called developed ones, has been market dominated through the transnational corporations, the main premise being the search for greater profits. So, for the impoverished majorities the conditions of life have not been corrected; on the contrary they have become more unsustainable.

On the other hand, it is noted that both poverty and diseases linked to it are on the increase. Furthermore, diseases, which at one time were under control such as

malaria and tuberculosis, have reappeared, particularly in underdeveloped countries.

With reference to care of the environment, the panorama is not promising either since during this decade, instead of having achieved a restoration of the earth ecosystem harmed in the past by practices little in harmony with environmental preservation, a significant increase of catastrophic events is reported. Global warming has increased as well as the unpredictability of meteorological patterns. All the above it is well known has important repercussions and direct effects on food production and hunger, particularly on the African continent.

THE JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT AGENDA

The Johannesburg Summit included two important agendas: the Official Meeting from September 2 – 4, 2002 dealing mainly with the topic of Sustainable Development and which resulted in the drawing up and signature of the document called “The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development: From our origins to the Future” (This document is annexed to the report).

Apart from the official agenda, the Global People’s Forum was held. It was an alternative Forum in which NGOs took part and which was held from August, 24 to September, 4.

THE OFFICIAL JOHANNESBURG DECLARATION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RELATION TO IAI ACTIVITIES

The official Johannesburg declaration consists of a document of 37 articles of which at least three are directly related to IAI activities.

Article 13 aims in particular at drawing attention to global climatic changes. It reads: “The global environment continues to suffer. Loss of biodiversity continues, fish stocks continue to be depleted, desertification claims more and more fertile land, the adverse effects of climate change are already evident, natural disasters are more frequent and more devastating, and developing countries more vulnerable, and air, water and marine pollution continue to rob millions of a decent life”.

Article 16 again brings forward a topic related to IAI work such as the preservation and use of biodiversity. The following appears in the same article: “We are determined to ensure that our rich diversity, which is our collective strength, will be used for constructive partnership for change and for the achievement of the common goal of sustainable development”.

The last article of political commitment, which we mention, however, because it involves topics related to food security, as well as basic requirements such as water and protection of biodiversity is no.18, which reads:

“We welcome the focus of the Johannesburg Summit on the indivisibility of human dignity and are resolved, through decisions on targets, timetables and partnerships, to speedily increase access to such basic requirements as clean water, sanitation, adequate shelter, energy, health care, food security and the protection of biodiversity.

At the same time, we will work together to help one another gain access to financial resources, benefit from the opening of markets, ensure capacity-building, use modern technology to bring about development and make sure that there is technology transfer, human resource development, education and training to banish underdevelopment forever.”

UNOFFICIAL FORA AND MEETINGS RELATED TO IAI

Apart from the official meeting, the Summit served as a forum for dialogue for numerous NGOs and regional and interregional scientific organizations from all the continents, particularly from the underdeveloped world. Here we will refer to events which are more closely related to IAI activities.

Forum on The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA): Ecosystem and Human Well-being. This forum took place on August, 26 in Ubuntu Village within the framework of the Fora on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development which were held during the Summit Meeting.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MEA) draws attention to our dependence for survival on ecosystems since they provide us not only with the basic needs of food and energy but also services, the most important of which is unpolluted water.

The MEA is the initiative of governments, civilian organizations and the private sector to help generate scientific progress in relation to the changes in ecosystems and the well being of mankind. The main research support of MEA is the production of a model to compare the state of ecosystems over time and spatial scales, which range from forests and cultivated fields to regions and global analysis.

The MEA meeting was cochaired by Prof. A. H. Zakri from the United Nations University and Dr. Robert Watson.

The agenda included case studies for the assessment of ecosystems in Norway presented by Dr. Peter Schei, South Africa by Dr. Robert Scholes, India by Dr. Y. Gokhale and China by Dr. Chen Chuanghong.

It is notable that in all the case studies only advances in assessment methodologies were presented but no specific information was provided.

Other fora important to the IAI and which we would like to underscore in particular refer to the environmental topics that were addressed on August 29 and which included the following subjects:

- Climatic changes and energy
- Biodiversity
- Forests
- Oceans
- Agriculture
- Mining

I would like to speak in particular of the Forum on Agriculture because of the regional relevance that this debate has for Africa. Around 180 million Africans do not have access to sufficient food to enable them to lead a productive life; this makes them specially susceptible to the devastation of malaria, tuberculosis and HIV-AIDS (Sanchez 2002). Arid soils, together with the concomitant problems of pests, plagues, and diseases are the biophysical cause of this low per capita food production. An intensive soil recovery program has been developed by the scientists and extensionists of the International Center for Research in Agriculture and Forestry headed by Dr. Pedro Sanchez. As to the IAI objectives, this project ongoing in Africa includes the development of “clean” mechanisms proposed during the debates on climatic changes to relieve the poverty of these land workers using fertilization with quick growing legumes, thus contributing to the removal of large quantities of carbon from the atmosphere.

Another important topic for the IAI is that of The Global People’s Forum held on August 29 within the framework of “Human Safety/Environmental Justice”- The subject of water was the most important. This topic approached with the “No Water No Future – A Water Focus for Johannesburg” motto speaks for itself: water is crucial for development. The world water crisis is defined by the difficulty a billion people have to access pure water. At least half of the world population lives in inadequate sanitary conditions. The water crisis, which affects humanity, is mainly a problem of governability (socio-political) rather than shortage of water so this is undoubtedly one of the major challenges facing sustainable development.

ALTERNATIVE POINTS OF VIEW

10 years after the Rio meeting the Official Agenda (Agenda 21) is still guiding the objectives, policies and practice of institutions and governments on the concept of sustainable development (Garcia-Guadilla, 2002). This occurs in spite of the great heterogeneity of alternative proposals made by the so-called environmentalist movements. Thus, the global community came to Johannesburg more divided than ever and with different agendas. This is due to a large extent to the differences on such crucial points as globalization, transgenesis, biodiversity, biobusiness and one which is of vital interest to the IAI: *climatic changes* (Garcia-Gaudilla, 2002).

The last decade may be a lost decade for sustainable development if drastic measures are not taken to establish a more open dialogue and this was the challenge for the Johannesburg Summit. But how to promote this dialogue which would reconcile the position of the industrialized countries with that of the Third World? The humanist approach must then be strengthened in face of the purely technological view or economic growth as such.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

García-Guadilla, María-Pilar. Environmental movements, politics and the Agenda 21 in Latin America: How to build consensus?. En Prensa. UNRISD.
Sánchez, Pedro (2002). Soil Fertility and Hunger in Africa. Policy Forum:Ecology. Science: 295: 2019-2020.

ADENDUM

Resolutions adopted by the Summit

Resolution 1*

Political Declaration

The World Summit on Sustainable Development, having met in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002,

1. *Adopts* the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, which is annexed to the present resolution;
2. *Recommends* to the General Assembly that it endorse the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development as adopted by the Summit.

Annex

4 September 2002

Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development

From our origins to the future

1. We, the representatives of the peoples of the world, assembled at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2 to 4 September 2002, reaffirm our commitment to sustainable development.
2. We commit ourselves to building a humane, equitable and caring global society, cognizant of the need for human dignity for all.
3. At the beginning of this Summit, the children of the world spoke to us in a simple yet clear voice that the future belongs to them, and accordingly challenged all of us to ensure that through our actions they will inherit a world free of the indignity and indecency occasioned by poverty, environmental degradation and patterns of unsustainable development.
4. As part of our response to these children, who represent our collective future, all of us, coming from every corner of the world, informed by different life experiences, are united and moved by a deeply felt sense that we urgently need to create a new and brighter world of hope.
5. Accordingly, we assume a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development, economic development, social development and environmental protection, at the local, national, regional and global levels.

* Adopted at the 17th plenary meeting, on 4 September 2002; for the discussion, see chap. VIII.

6. From this continent, the cradle of humanity, we declare, through the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the present Declaration, our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to our children.

7. Recognizing that humankind is at a crossroads, we have united in a common resolve to make a determined effort to respond positively to the need to produce a practical and visible plan to bring about poverty eradication and human development.

From Stockholm to Rio de Janeiro to Johannesburg

8. Thirty years ago, in Stockholm, we agreed on the urgent need to respond to the problem of environmental deterioration.¹ Ten years ago, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro,² we agreed that the protection of the environment and social and economic development are fundamental to sustainable development, based on the Rio Principles. To achieve such development, we adopted the global programme entitled Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,³ to which we reaffirm our commitment. The Rio Conference was a significant milestone that set a new agenda for sustainable development.

9. Between Rio and Johannesburg, the world's nations have met in several major conferences under the auspices of the United Nations, including the International Conference on Financing for Development,⁴ as well as the Doha Ministerial Conference.⁵ These conferences defined for the world a comprehensive vision for the future of humanity.

10. At the Johannesburg Summit, we have achieved much in bringing together a rich tapestry of peoples and views in a constructive search for a common path towards a world that respects and implements the vision of sustainable development. The Johannesburg Summit has also confirmed that significant progress has been made towards achieving a global consensus and partnership among all the people of our planet.

The challenges we face

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.73.II.A.14 and corrigendum), chap. I.

² *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vols. I-III

³ *Ibid.*, vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

⁴ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁵ See A/C.2/56/7, annex.

11. We recognize that poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development.

12. The deep fault line that divides human society between the rich and the poor and the ever-increasing gap between the developed and developing worlds pose a major threat to global prosperity, security and stability.

13. The global environment continues to suffer. Loss of biodiversity continues, fish stocks continue to be depleted, desertification claims more and more fertile land, the adverse effects of climate change are already evident, natural disasters are more frequent and more devastating, and developing countries more vulnerable, and air, water and marine pollution continue to rob millions of a decent life.

14. Globalization has added a new dimension to these challenges. The rapid integration of markets, mobility of capital and significant increases in investment flows around the world have opened new challenges and opportunities for the pursuit of sustainable development. But the benefits and costs of globalization are unevenly distributed, with developing countries facing special difficulties in meeting this challenge.

15. We risk the entrenchment of these global disparities and unless we act in a manner that fundamentally changes their lives the poor of the world may lose confidence in their representatives and the democratic systems to which we remain committed, seeing their representatives as nothing more than sounding brass or tinkling cymbals.

Our commitment to sustainable development

16. We are determined to ensure that our rich diversity, which is our collective strength, will be used for constructive partnership for change and for the achievement of the common goal of sustainable development.

17. Recognizing the importance of building human solidarity, we urge the promotion of dialogue and cooperation among the world's civilizations and peoples, irrespective of race, disabilities, religion, language, culture or tradition.

18. We welcome the focus of the Johannesburg Summit on the indivisibility of human dignity and are resolved, through decisions on targets, timetables and partnerships, to speedily increase access to such basic requirements as clean water, sanitation, adequate shelter, energy, health care, food security and the protection of biodiversity. At the same time, we will work together to help one another gain access to financial resources, benefit from the opening of markets, ensure capacity-building, use modern technology to bring about development and make sure that there is technology transfer, human resource development, education and training to banish underdevelopment forever.

19. We reaffirm our pledge to place particular focus on, and give priority attention to, the fight against the worldwide conditions that pose severe threats to the sustainable development of our people, which include: chronic hunger; malnutrition; foreign occupation; armed conflict; illicit drug problems; organized crime; corruption; natural disasters; illicit arms trafficking; trafficking in persons; terrorism; intolerance and incitement to racial, ethnic, religious and other hatreds; xenophobia; and endemic, communicable and chronic diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

20. We are committed to ensuring that women's empowerment, emancipation and gender equality are integrated in all the activities encompassed within Agenda 21, the Millennium development goals⁶ and the Plan of Implementation of the Summit.

21. We recognize the reality that global society has the means and is endowed with the resources to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development confronting all humanity. Together, we will take extra steps to ensure that these available resources are used to the benefit of humanity.

22. In this regard, to contribute to the achievement of our development goals and targets, we urge developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts reach the internationally agreed levels of official development assistance.

23. We welcome and support the emergence of stronger regional groupings and alliances, such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, to promote regional cooperation, improved international cooperation and sustainable development.

24. We shall continue to pay special attention to the developmental needs of small island developing States and the least developed countries.

25. We reaffirm the vital role of the indigenous peoples in sustainable development.

26. We recognize that sustainable development requires a long-term perspective and broad-based participation in policy formulation, decision-making and implementation at all levels. As social partners, we will continue to work for stable partnerships with all major groups, respecting the independent, important roles of each of them.

27. We agree that in pursuit of its legitimate activities the private sector, including both large and small companies, has a duty to contribute to the evolution of equitable and sustainable communities and societies.

⁶ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

28. We also agree to provide assistance to increase income-generating employment opportunities, taking into account the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of the International Labour Organization.⁷

29. We agree that there is a need for private sector corporations to enforce corporate accountability, which should take place within a transparent and stable regulatory environment.

30. We undertake to strengthen and improve governance at all levels for the effective implementation of Agenda 21, the Millennium development goals and the Plan of Implementation of the Summit.

Multilateralism is the future

31. To achieve our goals of sustainable development, we need more effective, democratic and accountable international and multilateral institutions.

32. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, as well as to the strengthening of multilateralism. We support the leadership role of the United Nations as the most universal and representative organization in the world, which is best placed to promote sustainable development.

33. We further commit ourselves to monitor progress at regular intervals towards the achievement of our sustainable development goals and objectives.

Making it happen!

34. We are in agreement that this must be an inclusive process, involving all the major groups and Governments that participated in the historic Johannesburg Summit.

35. We commit ourselves to act together, united by a common determination to save our planet, promote human development and achieve universal prosperity and peace.

36. We commit ourselves to the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and to expediting the achievement of the time-bound, socio-economic and environmental targets contained therein.

37. From the African continent, the cradle of humankind, we solemnly pledge to the peoples of the world and the generations that will surely inherit this Earth that we

⁷ See *ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up Adopted by the International Labour Conference at its Eighty-sixth Session, Geneva, 18 June 1998* (Geneva, International Labour Office, 1998).

are determined to ensure that our collective hope for sustainable development is realized.