



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION
114th Assembly and related meetings
Nairobi, 4 to 12 May 2006



Second Standing Committee
Sustainable Development,
Finance and Trade

C-II/114/R-rev
24 March 2006

**THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTS IN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
AND IN COMBATING GLOBAL DEGRADATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

Report prepared by the co-Rapporteurs
Mr. José Thomaz Nonô (Brazil) and Mr. Shuichi Katoh (Japan)

Introduction

1. The report *Limits to Growth*, published by the Club of Rome in 1972, rang an alarm heard by the entire world with its message that a world based on a growth-oriented economy would reach its limits and eventually collapse. In the same year, the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, pointed out the need for more prudent care for the environmental consequences of human activities, while calling for the defence and improvement of the human environment for present and future generations. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the adoption of Agenda 21 in 1992 represented other benchmarks for the international community in respect of sustainable development. Today, 34 years after the Stockholm Conference and 14 years after the event in Rio, we are faced with all kinds of environmental problems emerging on a global scale, such as climate change, ozone layer depletion, the extinction of wildlife species and chemical pollution. Global environmental problems pose a great threat to all humanity, and our wisdom and actions are now being tested.

2. Amid political and economic instability after the end of the cold war and the chaos of civil wars, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced a new concept called human security in its *Human Development Report 1994*. It aims to strengthen actions to address threats to the existence, lives, and dignity of human beings.

3. We must protect the freedom of human beings and the boundless possibilities for leading creative and meaningful lives. To this end, we must aim to establish a sustainable society and thoroughly reexamine our socio-economic systems as the likely cause of global environmental problems. For example, it is necessary to consider a Copernican revolution from a fossil fuel civilization to a fossil fuel-free civilization. At the international level, this transition requires States to acknowledge that they share common but differentiated responsibilities in the efforts to improve, protect and develop the environment.

4. Individuals provide fundamental support for such social changes. Today, in an attempt to change society, there is a trend to promote corporate social contributions and activities based on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and to support the Global Compact's 10 Principles advocated by the United Nations for responsible conduct within international society. Not only must corporate entities bear responsibility; consumers too must practice responsible consumption. Therefore, education and learning which have an impact on the awareness, lifestyle, and work style (e.g. production methods) of individuals play a great role in changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.

5. In this report, along with a comprehensive overview of global environmental problems, we would like to examine the role to be played by us parliamentarians, keeping in mind the importance of education in establishing a sustainable society.

The environment around us

6. We must face up to the reality of what is occurring on our planet. For example, during the decade of the 1990s, approximately 94 million hectares of forests, equivalent to approximately 1.6 times the area of Kenya, disappeared from the face of the Earth, and desertification is said to be progressing in approximately 3.6 billion hectares, or one fourth of the land in the world.

7. At present, 31 nations in Asia and Africa are suffering from an absolute shortage of water, and considering future population increases, some point out that 48 countries will be vulnerable to water shortages by 2025. As for wildlife, approximately 16,000 species are facing the danger of extinction.

8. Furthermore, in September 2000, the ozone hole above the Antarctic reached a record size of approximately 29 million square kilometers, almost equaling the total area of the African continent. According to Chinese survey data from 2003, acid rain was recorded in 54.4 percent of the 487 cities in China.

9. In addition, pollution caused by chemical substances is also spreading on a global scale. For example, a high concentration of PCBs has been detected in the breast milk of Inuit women in the Arctic Circle, who had previously led lives completely free of harmful chemical substances.

10. Lastly, climate change is currently recognized as a most critical global environmental and developmental issue.

Measures for climate change problems

11. In 2005, the Kyoto Protocol entered into force. While the international community welcomed the launch of full-fledged measures to combat climate change under international cooperation, climate change has continued to progress steadily.

12. According to the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued in 2001, for the Earth as a whole, the 1990s was the warmest decade since 1861, and most of the global warming observed in the last 50 years can be contributed to human activities. Moreover, by 2100, the average global temperature is predicted to rise by a maximum 5.8 degrees Celsius, causing the sea surface to rise 88 centimeters and threatening

to submerge a great portion of major cities around the world, and the entire land areas of South Pacific island nations.

13. The IPCC report illustrates a future scenario for the year 2100. Taking into account the urgency of the problems and possibility of changes in social infrastructure, let us set the time schedule to 2050. Though we tend to look at only the impact on human beings, we should also pay attention to the study of Professor Chris Thomas, that states that "climate change will threaten extinction for a quarter of all land animals and plants by 2050". Based on the climate stabilization clauses of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), we should clearly envision an image of the future in 2050 (e.g. with a temperature rise limited to 2 degrees Celsius). Looking back to the present time from there based on the concept of a back-casting approach, we should then seek ways of building an ideal low-carbon society. This approach should be taken if, and only if, the core principle of common but differentiated responsibilities among States is duly observed, as well as the leading role of developed countries and economies in transition in reducing emissions, adapting for and mitigating climate change, including in providing new and additional financial resources and access to new technologies to developing countries, as agreed in the UNFCCC.

14. According to current scientific knowledge, with a 2-degree rise in average global temperature, adverse effects will emerge in almost all regions of the Earth. The IPCC report points out that a 2-degree rise in temperature will cause sea levels to rise approximately 50 to 65 centimeters, resulting in high tides affecting more than 90 million people worldwide. With clear recognition of this "threat of 2-degree rise", we must take initiatives to change our social structures to attain at least a 50 per cent reduction of greenhouse gases.

15. While the Kyoto Protocol has entered into force, there are countless problems in implementing measures against climate change. The withdrawal from the Protocol of the United States of America, the greatest CO₂ emitting nation, is one, and the problem of emissions from China and India, where CO₂ emissions are expected to increase rapidly in the near future, is another.

16. With our eyes fixed on the period beyond 2013, we first of all strongly request that the United States and other developed countries not participating in the Kyoto Protocol join the international framework on measures against climate change. We can no longer postpone measures with the excuse of "scientific uncertainty" regarding climate change. We must reaffirm the significance of the precautionary approach, listed as Principle 15 in the 1992 Rio Declaration, and the objectives of the UNFCCC.

17. Meanwhile, according to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, China and India, countries without an emission reduction obligation under the Kyoto Protocol, accounted for 12.1 per cent and 4.7 per cent, respectively, of the total CO₂ emissions worldwide in 2000. In the future, emissions by such developing countries will become increasingly prominent, and total emissions from developing countries are predicted to exceed those of the currently developed countries. **[It is critical that developing countries participate in emission reduction and control in one way or another, and toward this end, developed countries are requested to expand technological assistance to developing nations - Contribution by Mr. S. Katoh*]**. It is critical that the international community devise, according to the principles of common but

* The text between square brackets was submitted by one of the co-Rapporteurs, but not entirely supported by the other.

differentiated responsibilities and the precautionary approach, fair and innovative mechanisms under the UNFCCC for dealing with the possible increase in CO₂ from developing countries .

Sustainable development and globalization

18. Global environmental and developmental problems as brought about by climate change can be said to be a negative legacy of economic expansion policies devoted to development. The concept of sustainable development was born from reflection on the past. Let us reconfirm here the meaning of sustainable development, a term which has become widespread since the 1980s.

19. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) defined sustainable development in its report, *Our Common Future*, as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

20. In 1991, the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and others developed another definition in their report, *Caring for the Earth*. It defined sustainable development as "improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems."

21. In the decisions taken at the 1992 Rio Conference, i.e. the Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Forest Principles, sustainable development was recognized as being composed of three important components: the economy, society and the environment.

22. In the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development, an outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), components of economic growth, social development and protection of the environment were confirmed as interdependent and mutually reinforcing components. Additionally, in the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD, peace, security, respect for human rights, fundamental liberties and cultural diversity were seen as essential in assuring that sustainable development benefits all.

23. It is important for us all to confirm our commitment to further promote sustainable development, which has evolved into its current concept in the process described above.

24. The greatest change since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, has been the expansion of globalization. Globalization has not only affected economic aspects, such as growth of the world economy and improved standards of living, but has also spread global technology and concepts, a sense of solidarity as global citizens, and ecological awareness as well.

25. On the other hand, negative aspects of globalization have also brought about a vicious cycle of environmental degradation triggered by the unsustainable practices of developed nations and poverty derived from expansion of economic disparities in the developing nations. Today, resolving this mismatch between globalization and sustainable development has become an urgent issue.

26. For many reasons, including the need to address these negative aspects of globalization, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000 listed a set of targets to be achieved by 2015. They include for example: to halve the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day; to halve the

proportion of people who suffer from hunger; and to ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling.

27. In January 2005, the UN Millennium Project, an independent advisory body, presented its report, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. The experts of this project estimated that the goals would be achieved if 0.54 per cent of gross national product (GNP), which is less than the developed countries' long-promised international assistance target, was provided as official development assistance (ODA). While we need to make further efforts in order to meet the target of 0.7 per cent ODA-GNP we are encouraged by this report to move forward with our efforts.

The need for change in lifestyle

28. Despite the fact that resources on this planet are finite, we have established a socio-economic system based on mass production, mass consumption, mass disposal, and resource-wasting, with an economic expansion policy with expansionist economic policies and unsustainable production and consumption patterns. To change this system, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation was adopted by the WSSD in 2002. The Plan calls for developed countries to develop a 10-year programme aimed at accelerating the shift towards sustainable consumption and production.

29. Wangari Muta Maathai of Kenya, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004, praised the Japanese word *mottainai* (too precious to waste) as a wonderfully rich expression born in a country with limited resources. *Mottainai* expresses the feeling of regret that something is being wasted without having its innate value used. At the same time, the word pays respect to and shows appreciation of every bit of hard work that went into making the object wasted. We fully support her call for this word to be spread as a universally common concept.

The significance of the role of education

30. In the 1979 report, *No Limits to Learning*, the Club of Rome emphasized the importance of learning by pointing out that the Earth's outer limits could be overcome by the limitless "inner margin" of human beings. In establishing a sustainable society, the role played by education is great, as education works on developing the inner aspect of each person.

31. For this reason, the significance of education in realizing sustainable development has been emphasized since the 1992 Earth Summit, where the UNFCCC was signed. At the 2002 WSSD held in Johannesburg, in response to a proposal from Japanese NGOs, the Japanese delegation proposed the proclamation of a United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, which was subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at the end of the year. Thus, in January 2005, the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) was launched.

32. The fundamental vision of the UNDESD is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behavior and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. In the International Implementation Scheme for the UNDESD (final draft) prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), it was indicated that education for sustainable development (ESD) is for everyone, and it takes place, therefore, within a perspective of

lifelong learning, engaging all possible learning spaces, formal, non-formal and informal, from early childhood to adult life.

33. The UNDESD is expected to play a role in wide-ranging global environmental problems, including measures against global warming, to improve these actions. We must reaffirm this fact, and to ensure greater sharing of responsibility, we must strive to organize an implementation system on the government level for securing ESD actions in each country, building partnership on the regional and international levels, and sharing information.

The need to reexamine the international environment regime

34. Since its establishment in 1973, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has carried out many activities as the world's leading agency in the field of environmental conservation. In the future, to respond to the great changes of the times, such as globalization of environmental problems and international political awareness on the relationship between environment and development, and to play the role of moderator in global environmental governance, further strengthening of its functions will become necessary.

35. Furthermore, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other international economic institutions that have great influence on the adjustment of the economic structures of developing countries are asked to secure policies that focus on the correction of inequality and the pursuit of sustainable development. An important question for the future is how to incorporate these international economic institutions into the sustainable development strategy.

36. Also, there are currently more than 500 multilateral environment agreements (MEAs). To guarantee more effective enforcement of these agreements, it will be necessary to combine relevant agreements according to each field, and to promote the sharing of information on each country between the respective MEA secretariats.

Viewpoint of a win-win approach

37. Though not sufficient, channels for huge amounts of investment and development assistance to developing countries are gradually being established. Against this backdrop, we are determined to avert marginalization of the socially weak and environmental destruction caused by the forcing of development and progress patterns, and to choose the path that takes us to a society of coexistence and co-prosperity instead of one in which the strong eat the weak. Taking this a step further, it is ideal for us to aim for a "new competition" from the viewpoint of a win-win approach. Here are some concrete ideas. When dealing with a humanitarian issue, such as full achievement of the MDGs, developed countries would rush to compete with each other in accomplishing the objective. In other words, it can be called "humanitarian competition." It is vital that we establish a global society in which developed and developing countries can both be happy. Then, because the threats of global environmental problems are common to all humankind, we will aim for a paradigm shift to a win-win approach.

38. On that basis, we will pave the way toward the age of humanitarian competition, focusing on our will to live in common.

39. The Monterrey Consensus, adopted at the International Conference on Financing for Development in 2002, confirmed the target for expanding the ODA to GNP ratio from the

current 0.25 per cent (2003 data) to 0.7 per cent, aiming at achievement of the MDGs. Additionally, there is a possibility that the currency transaction tax (CTT) discussed at the Monterrey event may constitute a financial source several times larger in scale than the total amount of ODA worldwide. We should continue to look into the possibility of using such methods.

40. As for the rapidly growing economies of Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, and China (BRIC), the focus of discussion will be on how to position them within the international framework of measures against global warming. We also request that the governments of these countries implement appropriate environmental management. In the 1960s, despite the fact that pollution had become a social issue, Japan boosted its economy at the expense of the environment. The BRIC countries must learn from Japan's experience. At the same time, we ask developed countries to provide assistance in necessary environmental conservation technology. Here again, the realization of a society of coexistence and co-prosperity and the viewpoint of a win-win approach become even more critical.

41. At the same time, we would like to reaffirm the interpretation of Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration, which reads, "States have common but differentiated responsibilities". In the Kyoto Protocol, in accordance with this principle, CO₂ emission reduction became an obligation of developed countries alone. In the future, however, it is estimated that the greenhouse gas emissions of developing countries will exceed those of the developed countries. From the standpoint of reaching the limits of the Earth's carrying capacity, we believe developing countries too should bear an obligation to reduce a specified amount of emissions in accordance with the polluter-pays principle (PPP).

Comprehensive environmental governance and establishment of multilevel partnerships

42. In a globalized society, to achieve a macro target such as sustainable development, it is necessary for diverse actors to fulfill the function of appropriate governance.

43. Agenda 21, adopted at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, positions nine groups, including NGOs, as stakeholders, and recognizes the significance of their roles. To fully realize sustainable development, a top-down decision-making process led by the State is not sufficient, and the participation of diverse actors is essential.

44. Moreover, considering the complexity and diversity of global environmental problems and the importance of different actors participating in the discussion, we would like to stress the need for promoting "environment partnerships", in which actors with different principles and standpoints cooperate in solving common problems. Since the 1992 Earth Summit, undertakings based on various forms of partnerships have been maturing, involving partnership in policy decision-making and also in the implementation of projects. We position various actors as equally important in carrying out environmental conservation activities for the public good. Establishing these two partnerships is especially important. In particular, it is effective to carry out programmes in cooperation with groups such as NGOs that are rooted in civil society. As the significance of their existence is undeniable in this increasingly complex international society, positive partnerships will continue to be vital.

45. The significance of global environmental problems involving humankind and ecosystems depends on the all-out battle for human survival, and the situation is so grave that it cannot be dealt with without the concerted efforts of multilevel partnerships between governments, parliaments, citizens, and businesses.

46. In light of this, one document that can be shared by diverse stakeholders and serve as one of the guiding principles is the Earth Charter. At the UNESCO General Conference in October 2003, a resolution was passed supporting the Earth Charter as an important ethical framework for sustainable development. A resolution endorsing the Charter was also passed at the Third IUCN World Conservation Congress, held in November 2004. As the Earth Charter is not confined to global environmental problems, it may serve as a comprehensive code of conduct for establishing a fair society and economy, based on democracy, non-violence and peace.

Effective options – The role of parliamentarians

47. Many of the global environmental problems are irreversible at the point when the damage becomes manifested. We parliamentarians must urgently establish effective measures, including legislative measures, in each State, and we ourselves must strive to form a multilateral consensus for establishing international cooperation. From this standpoint, let us confirm the following:

Establishing a low-carbon society, energy conservation, and assistance to developing countries

48. One important thing is to establish a low-carbon society. We would like to make clear the need to examine all kinds of policy menus, including by drawing up legislation, using ecological tax reform, and increasing in technical cooperation, for promoting policies to control global warming. The overarching international framework that must guide our efforts in this area is at present the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol.

49. At the root of global warming problems are our energy supply and consumption structures. In other words, the first step towards establishing a low-carbon society is to promote energy conservation, to achieve energy efficiency and to break away from our current dependence on fossil fuels. First of all, we will promote environmental protection by improving energy efficiency (energy conservation must be seen as yet another form of energy, equivalent to the discovery of a domestic energy source, or "Negawatt", as defined by Dr. Peter Hennicke), respect the ideology of the Energy Charter Treaty and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP) for building a framework for international cooperation in this field, and support the efforts of the International Energy Agency (IEA) in this field. And, valuing the viewpoint of the aforementioned win-win approach, the developed countries should actively assist developing countries by offering energy-efficiency technology that contributes to combatting global warming.

Promotion of renewable energies

50. What is even more important is securing alternatives to petroleum energy. We must boldly promote the switchover from fossil fuels such as petroleum and coal to sources of renewable energies with less greenhouse gas emissions.

51. The UNEP report issued in 2001, *Natural Selection: Evolving Choices for Renewable Energy Technology and Policy*, emphasizes that investment in renewable energy technology fosters an environment-friendly economy. The G8 Renewable Energy Task Force also presented a report that called for States to "ensure that renewables are adequately considered within the national planning processes" in view of the 2001 Geneva Summit.

52. We believe that switchover policies must set targets for the use of renewable energy sources. This would constitute a solid step towards a renewable energy matrix. The Council of the European Union adopted the Directive on Renewable Energy Sources to double the share of gross internal renewable energy consumption (to 12%) in the region by 2010. In South America, the Brasilia Platform on Renewable Energies, adopted by the region's countries in 2003, set the target of 10 per cent for the renewable share in the region's energy mix by 2010. Efforts such as these can be seen as a useful way to implement the switchover to a cleaner energy matrix.

53. The source of renewable energy should be chosen according to the economic situation and geographical and natural conditions of each country. UNEP implements a Solar and Wind Energy Resource Assessment (SWERA) for mapping potential areas appropriate for solar and wind power generation. From the assessment, it has become evident that the renewable energy potential in 13 developing countries amounts to several thousand megawatts. We believe it is necessary to clearly position the promotion of renewable energy in the aforementioned Energy Charter Treaty. In particular, as biomass is one of the useful resources, research and development and diffusion activities should be carried out vigorously. In Brazil, motor fuel using biomass ethanol produced from sugarcane is widely used. This is an extremely useful approach.

54. In promoting the diffusion of these renewable energy sources, public international financial institutions are requested to take positive actions.

Realization of a hydrogen society and technology development

55. The ultimate form of the control of global warming is the establishment of a hydrogen society. In Iceland, a grand national target has been set to realize a hydrogen society by 2030. We highly value this challenge undertaken by Iceland and believe that efforts should be made to make it a universal strategy shared by all States in the world.

56. In China, where it is estimated that the number of automobiles will increase to 387 million by 2030, the practical use and diffusion of hydrogen vehicles are anticipated.

57. Considering the current level of science and technology, we are still at the initial stage of development of infrastructure in this field. Along with further technological development, it will become increasingly important to promote actions for the diffusion of hydrogen energy by setting standards for hydrogen supply infrastructures and standardization.

Establishing a sound material-cycle society and 3R initiatives

58. Establishing a sound material-cycle society is also a major issue. Considering that resources on the Earth are finite, we must part with the present society based on mass production, mass consumption, and mass disposal. The basis of a shift to a sustainable society based on a new paradigm is the minimum exploitation of natural resources and minimum disposal in the natural environment. Instead of considering only recycling at the disposal end, it is necessary to establish a new overall image of a material cycle. At the core of this sound material-cycle society should be a clearly defined extended producer responsibility (EPR), and methods to guarantee this with laws and regulations will bear great meaning.

59. Furthermore, we respect the objectives of the 3R initiatives held in Japan last year to launch worldwide action to ensure a sound material-cycle society through the promotion of 3R initiatives (reduce, reuse, and recycle).

60. In the future, it will become necessary to shift to the concept of "a leasing society", that contributes greatly to the reduction of environmental stress. Realization of a leasing society depends on how much consumers can rid themselves of adherence to possession. In view of such a society in the future, we believe we must first aim toward the establishment of a sound material-cycle society.

Actual implementation and expansion of education for sustainable development (ESD)

61. Lastly, we must fully recognize the importance of ESD for empowering citizens as agents of sustainable development at the local level, and ensure that the International Implementation Scheme for the UNDESD (final draft) is fully realized. To this end, it is necessary to establish a solid implementation structure at the government level in each country, as well as to design a system for the periodic monitoring and assessment of implementation conditions.

62. In March 2005, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) adopted a Regional Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development and prepared its implementation scheme. In this implementation plan, the time schedule and prospects up to 2015 are indicated, and the formulation by experts of assessment indicators is also planned.

63. In the Asia-Pacific region, which includes Japan, the country that first proposed the UNDESD, a working paper that introduces the Asia-Pacific region UNDESD strategy was presented at a United Nations University (UNU)/UNESCO Conference in June 2005. In the same month, the Ibero-American Conference on Sustainable Development marked the launch of the UNDESD in Latin America.

64. While it is difficult to simply compare the progress in each country and region, it is necessary that we parliamentarians implement the necessary measures, keeping in mind the 10-year time schedule.

65. In establishing strategies for addressing global environmental problems and ensuring a sustainable future, it is essential that we share best practices. To this end, a venue for discussion must be established in which as many actors as possible can participate.

66. Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of the United Nations Human Environment Convention in Stockholm (1972) and the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro (1992), expressed the significance of the process of forming a multilateral consensus in a few words, "Process is policy."

67. Today, amid expanding threats to humankind, international negotiations on global environmental problems are primarily discussions about how to expand the roads to global interests and human interests. We must not be hampered by national interests, and as we parliamentarians constitute the body of legislation in this field, we should think of sustainability on a global scale, implement concrete and effective actions in each country, consciously advancing in the direction toward a win-win approach in the international society, and strongly appeal to governments in each country and those in charge of international negotiations to follow suit.