



Blue Planet Prize 1992

Commemorative Lectures and Symposium Report

September 25, 1992 New Pier Hall, Tokyo

Preface

This report reviews the first Blue Planet Prize commemorative lectures and symposium, held at the New Pier Hall in Tokyo on September 25, 1992.

More than a simple awards ceremony, the event provided a forum for debate on environmental problems. The success of the occasion owes much to the enthusiastic help of many people.

A plethora of ideas emerged during the course of the prizewinners' lectures, panelist presentations and ensuing question-and-answer session. This report aims to share those ideas with a wider audience.

The theme of the inaugural Blue Planet Prize commemorative lectures and symposium was "Our Future Inheritance—Toward the Creation of a New Civilization Which Harmonizes with the Environment." Japan has hitherto given the impression of being a country whose only contributions to the solution of environmental problems are financial or technological. The symposium aimed to contribute ideas from the viewpoints of the arts and social sciences. The questionnaire on environmental problems and the survival of humankind was conducted in the same spirit. The results of the questionnaire were released on the day of the symposium, and a brief synopsis is provided herein. For fuller details, please refer to the separate questionnaire report.

We sincerely hope that you find this publication of interest. Thank you.

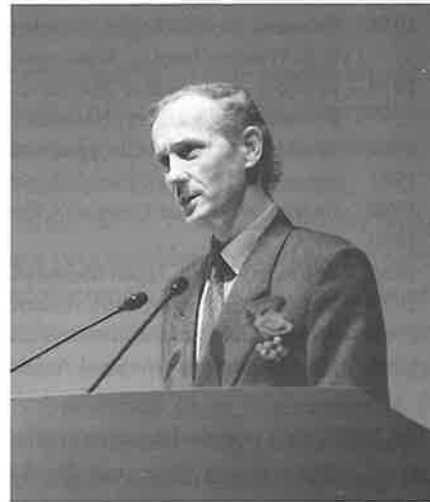
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Part One: Commemorative Lectures



International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) (U.K.)

Blue Planet Prize Development and Implementation Award Winner

Selection Rationale: Sustainable development research work and pioneering implementation activities



- History
 - 1971 IIED was established by Barbara Ward and other like-minded international development leaders.
 - 1975 IIED and the United Nations Environment Program established an information unit, Earthscan.
 - 1985 Together with the World Resources Institute, IIED coproduced a biennial World Resources Report. The Institute began to pursue practical solutions to problems through its projects.
 - 1988 IIED Field Services was established to provide sustainable development expertise and experience to donors, governments and nongovernmental organizations. It agreed with the U.K. Overseas Development Administration (ODA) to extend official links for a further year by renewing the joint Resource (formerly Manpower) Center Scheme agreement.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which took place in June in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was the venue for serious discussions on the environment and economic development among the world's nations. These talks centered on the key concept of sustainable development. As many people have pointed out, the conference was not a total success in terms of attaining worldwide agreement on solutions to urgent problems. However, it is clear that in the pursuit of sustainable world development and the happiness of human beings, we need such conferences in addition to consistent efforts to realize further societal development in harmony with the environment.

Barbara Ward, who coined the concept of sustainable development, was one of the founders of the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the first winner of the Blue Planet Prize Development and Implementation Award. Ward became the president of the Institute in 1972 and has conducted many activities to promote her beliefs.

During the 20 years since its establishment, IIED has endeavored to uphold its founder's vision and foster greater awareness through scientific research and the implementation of various projects.

Publications from the Institute's first decade include *Banking on the Biosphere*, which sparked a revolution in the environmental performance of multilateral and bilateral aid agencies; *A Low-Energy Policy for the United Kingdom*, which pushed for energy policy planning in Europe to move from supply- to demand-led thinking; *Shelter, Need and Response*, which foresaw the urban crisis; and *The Management of the Southern Ocean*, which predicted the crisis to come in Antarctic governance.

In this manner, IIED has functioned as a compass, guiding people in the direction of environment- and development-related matters. Despite difficult times that nearly led to its collapse, the Institute has constantly aimed to further its founder's ideas and principles--namely, that one will not care for the environment if one does not also care for people.

The Institute is involved in a large number of projects, including programs for drylands, sustainable agriculture, human settlements, southern networks, climatic change, environmental economics and forestry and land utilization. Such projects are conducted in many geographical locations, including the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as in developed countries. Since the Institute's motto is "Think globally and act locally," research and other activities undertaken by the Institute reflect local needs for social development in harmony with the environment.

In his foreword of *20:20 Vision*, a publication commemorating IIED's 20th anniversary, chairman of the IIED Board, Sir Crispin Tickell, states

We don't save rain forests. Not directly. Instead, we convince governments that forest conservation and sustainable agriculture may be more profitable over time than yet more forest clearing. We don't send food directly to famine victims. Instead, our agriculture and drylands programmes are working in every famine-prone nation of the Sahel, showing both farmers and governments how small farms can produce more food. We don't pass the begging bowl for the residents of Third World slums and shantytowns. Instead, we work with governments and citizens' groups to help those slum dwellers build safer, healthier, more prosperous cities for themselves.

The activities for future development in harmony with the environment suggested in Sir Crispin Tickell's message are exactly those that we were looking for in the winner of the Blue Planet Prize Award. The Asahi Glass Foundation is therefore very pleased to present the first Blue Planet Prize Development and Implementation Award to IIED.

“IIED’s Post–Earth Summit Strategy”

Summary of Lecture

International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

The world's press generally came to a set of negative conclusions after the UN Conference on Environment and Development at Rio. Most said the event was a failure because no firm agreements were made with targets for the protection of the atmosphere, for the world's forests and for biodiversity. IIED does not subscribe to this negative evaluation, or at least not fully. For us, the preparations and the event itself were full of achievements. Many of the achievements have much to offer that is both hopeful and positive, provided they are now followed through with international determination.

In making this commemorative lecture on the occasion of the first Blue Planet Prize, we want to concentrate on five themes that were well covered in Rio and that now need to be followed up. The themes are all drawn from experience in IIED in recent years and relate to issues on which we continue to work. This is a wonderful opportunity to share them with you.

First is the remarkable shift in attitudes that we have witnessed since the first environment conference in Stockholm in 1972. In the 1970s, environment was not regarded as an important issue by economists, international diplomats or by many politicians. That has all changed. In Stockholm the dialogue between the rich and poor nations was a dialogue of the deaf. The richer nations were concerned with pollution and the creation of international standards to abate it and not with natural resources management and constraints; the poorer nations wanted to advance their own development at any price, including pollution. The then communist countries did not even come to the event denying that they had such problems anyway.

By 1992 opinions and attitudes had changed dramatically--so much so that Rio as an environmental event was in fact more about development than many previous development conferences. Its sheer scale and complexity was unprecedented and such as to leave most people very bemused. Yet bringing together the environment and development agendas, and on such a scale, was a great and positive achievement, much of which is due to the nongovernmental community. Also, let us not forget that people, particularly if they are poor, have always known that their livelihoods ultimately come from nature. But now there is a widespread consensus on the same point among governments, corporations, diplomats and many diverse organisations. We have to protect and in many cases restore natural stocks and systems if we are to survive economically in the long run. We should not minimise this new, widespread understanding, nor should we take it for granted. It must be nurtured with a continuing programme of public information and education. But to have got this far is progress indeed.

A major challenge now is to integrate sound environmental practice with economic planning in order to achieve sustainable development at least cost and for the greatest number. The process was only begun in Rio. The conference set out a vast and complex agenda--a shopping list if you like--for achieving the goal of sustainability and called it Agenda 21. Agenda 21 is not a particularly entertaining read but it is a truly comprehensive document. Never before have so many important topics been integrated in quite the way that is achieved by Agenda 21, nor with the consent of so many diverse interests and cultures. But Agenda 21 does not set priorities; it lists all possible priorities.

We must have priorities if the entire UN and international system is not to collapse under the burden. Setting priorities is the business of politics, but we also believe that it demands rigorous economic analysis alongside the political process. What are the costs or benefits of various courses of action? How are we to translate the many environmental and developmental needs into activities that the private sector, NGOs and communities can provide? The challenge is to integrate economics and the natural and applied sciences in order to cost, set priorities, to design economic incentives and to design solutions. Economics must be involved, as regulations alone are not enough. How foolish it is to find certain so-called environmental regulations for health purposes in the OECD, costing billions per theoretical life saved, while other pressing needs in the Third World which would cost a mere dollar or two are ignored. We have to bring some order to all of this and we need research and analytical tools to help provide it. Of those tools, environmental economics is key.

The very mention of the private sector in respect of environment and development tends to provoke negative reactions. So many environmental organisations have invested heavily in opposing the multinationals, in blocking much of what they do and in accusing them of being the cause of problems. But our experience in the run-up to Rio, through the Business Council for Sustainable Development, was a very positive one. In helping to prepare the book *Changing*

Course, which brings together the best of practice from the world's largest private operators, we found many who wanted to be a part of the solutions and were open to change. Suffice it to say that the private sector has much to do in achieving higher levels of sustainable development in its operations. We know that. But we need the private sector and the markets they create. Governments and the not-for-profit sector do not deliver the goods and services needed for the relief of poverty and the provision of basic needs. Who supplies water? The private sector! Who supplies food? The private sector! Who builds housing? The private sector! The entrepreneur has a vital role to play in providing the needs expressed so coherently in Agenda 21. It is time that many more cooperated with it.

To move this forward, we need a series of intermediaries so that the cut and thrust of the market can be meshed with the realities of the urban and rural poor. Foundations sponsored by the corporate giants are a start--just look at their record worldwide, including that of the Foundation that brings us here today. Another step is to ensure that the large companies help the medium and small to develop low-impact and environmentally efficient technologies--cradle to grave thinking right down the corporate chain. Corporate leadership is needed to take on these issues, but we also need more corporate involvement in community problems. In the past this has been demonstrated with respect to education and social needs. Now it is the turn of environment and development. The Rio conference embraced the market approach; in return, the leaders of the market must embrace the needs of the environment and the poor.

Environment and development thinking assumes a very forward-looking approach to planning and management. But all too often, this is just not evident because human capacities (in terms of skills), institutions and organisations are not up to the job. We need to build capacities, human capacities. This implies training and skill transfer. It takes time to build up the capacities of organisations and managements, and that implies a long-term effort. We see all too little investment in building human capital, far more in paving concrete and building physical capital.

Rio made some Herculean assumptions about our collective ability to manage the world's natural resource base, yet most administrations run along a knife edge between total collapse and total exhaustion. Too few are left trying to cope with managing the chaos. Cities expand like topsy yet few accept investment in local government. Our economic systems expand and accelerate, haphazardly drawing in natural resources and pushing out pollutants. Again, too few are involved in energy and water management, in recycling resources, in conserving the land. One must marvel at the skill and persistence of the poor who cope with chaos and uncertainty every day of their lives. But as things get worse due to population increases and added environmental stress, they will not cope. Unless we improve management capacities to put all the fine ideas into practice, we are merely indulging in talk. For example, the national sustainable development plans called for in Rio demand a high level of informed and integrated techniques. We must now invest in training people in the ideas behind sustainability and teach them how to use the tools available in its application. Capacity building is a priority.

Finally, we come to those at the bottom of the international ladder: the very poor and the urban and rural communities in which they live. IIED believes in community-driven development--bottom-up development--enabled and empowered by top-down processes and frameworks. We call this Primary Environmental Care(PEC).

PEC is based on three very simple concepts:

- empowered communities
- the meeting of basic needs
- and safeguarding the environment.

The Rio conference and Agenda 21 had much to say on all three items and on the importance of community-driven approaches in general. This was a triumph for the advocates of the approach. Yet how many countries enable or empower their citizens to look after themselves? How many can claim to be decentralizing government, establishing equitable land holdings, establishing open and participatory modes of planning, improving the lot of women and so much more? IIED has so much experience in the Third World at this level. We have seen the positive results of empowering the poor. Deserts can be turned into productive land, trees and forests regenerated, barren land made productive, water and housing supplied. How has this been achieved? By giving people the right to organise, by giving them a stake in their future and rewards for their efforts, and by providing them with a knowledge of their environment. It all sounds straightforward but making it happen takes persistence and commitment and an attitude of mind that is centred on a belief in people.

The jury is out on UNCED--we cannot say it was a success or a failure but it was a good start. We believe firmly that the future will be bright if the achievements of Rio are acted upon positively.

IIED intends to be a part of that future by concentrating on 5 key points.

We want to help:

- to inform and educate the public;
- to reform economics to take better account of the environment and to provide incentives;
- to involve the private sector in delivering solutions;
- to invest in human capacities; and
- to reinforce community-driven solutions.

If governments, NGOs and academics work for policies in this direction, we will see answers to the problems of poverty and the protection of the planet within our lifetime. If we do not work with commitment in this direction, we will see an insecure, introverted, protectionist and besieged world of contrasted rich and poor. We owe our children better than this.