

**ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. CHEDDI
JAGAN
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
GUYANA
TO THE HEMISPHERIC SUMMIT
CONFERENCE
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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I express my sincerest gratitude to His Excellency President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada and to the Government and People of Bolivia for the excellent conditions they have created for this historic hemispheric summit on Sustainable development.

The holding of a special summit on Sustainable Development gives recognition to the critical importance of this concept to the fortunes of all our countries. We the participants are therefore saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that we leave here with results corresponding to the seriousness of our task.

We consider that Sustainable Development is an all-embracing approach to socio-economic development. It is centred on the interaction of the economic and political, social and cultural and environmental features of global and national realities and goals.

This concept has gained increasing currency since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992.

Generally also, there has been much progress in developing special agreements, conventions and protocols on some of these principles.

A close examination, however, reveals that the implementation process leans heavily in the direction of the environmental issues with little emphasis on the social and economic factors.

We do appreciate that progress has been made on sensitive environmental issues. The Bio-diversity Convention, the Climate Change Convention, Pollution Prevention Programmes and other global partnerships are vital to the protection of our planet. We recognise, however, that the vital issues of financial resources and technology transfer are not adequately addressed in these processes.

Developing countries expect global partnerships to be maintained on a more realistic and just approach.

We want to implement all universally accepted requirements for the protection of our environment but we lack the resources to do so.

This situation needs to be recognised and understood by the developed world.

But world economic and social and social relations continue to be unjust, inequitable and destructive for under-developed countries and the poor of the earth.

We have had to endure deformed dependent development as a result of our colonial heritage and the unfair conditions imposed by those who benefitted from the historical advantage of rapid growth in the colonial era.

The prestigious World Economic Forum this year concluded that a mounting backlash against the effects of economic globalisation, especially in the industrialised democracies, is threatening to disrupt economic activity and social stability and is creating a mood of helplessness and anxiety.

These poverty gaps have gained momentum and are widening in the north as well as in the south, and between the north and the south.

It is necessary therefore for this limitation in the possibilities of developing countries to be recognised by the developed world with a genuine effort to assist.

We have noticed a tendency for developed states to try to revisit earlier commitments with a view to reduce or avoid them, and an approach in new declarations to de-emphasise the economic, social and political needs while shifting emphasis to environmental issues.

This Santa Cruz Declaration and the Plan of Action reflect this shortcoming. Guyana and the rest of the Caribbean support the Declaration and Plan of Action and will work towards their implementation, but we need to make it clear that we are disappointed with the failure to deal more comprehensively with the social and economic requirements of sustainable development.

With specific reference to the Plan of Action, it is regrettable that we are only dealing with issues of education and health in a limited way which emphasises their link to environmental consideration.

Health and education are major social issues which are crucial bases for the peoples of the world to make their contribution to sustainable development.

Our Plan of Action is also deficient in its limited treatment of the special vulnerability of small island and low lying coastal states which repeatedly have had their development processes hindered - in fact very seriously set back - by natural disasters.

Sustainable development might be an option for large countries but an imperative for survival of small countries, especially small island and low-lying coastal states. The small islands and low-lying coastal states in the Caribbean are prone to pervasive damage from recurring natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes and tropical storms. They are extremely vulnerable to potential man-made disasters such as oil spills, nuclear accidents and sea level rise.

The Caribbean economies are essentially coastal with more than 90 per cent of the population living within 10 miles of the coast. Economic activity in the form of tourism and

fishery are heavily dependent on the coral reefs, the mangroves and the beaches. These fragile eco-systems are very vulnerable to damage from man-made or natural calamities.

The special vulnerabilities of small island states, especially those in the Caribbean, and the challenges of managing the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) were recognised in the Declaration and Plan of Action from the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in Barbados. We are pleased that this Summit will give due recognition to the Declaration and Plan of Action from the Barbados Conference. We hope that over time, as a Hemisphere and within the Region, we will be in a position to allocate the resources necessary to facilitate meaningful and urgent implementation of the SIDS Plan of Action.

The Caribbean Community Governments are pleased that the Plan of Action from this Hemispheric Summit gives recognition to the Caribbean Sea. The Caribbean Sea impacts directly on two-thirds of the States represented at this Summit. Establishing and promoting the Caribbean Sea as a focus for sustainable development would be a major positive action by the Hemisphere in any overall thrust at sustainable development.

The sustainable development of the Caribbean will depend significantly on human resource development and availability. We have not focussed on this in any fundamental way for this Summit. The Caribbean Community believes that this issue is so important that it should be a focus for the next Hemispheric Summit in Chile.

The Caribbean Community was, frankly, very disappointed that its efforts to have these major threats to our continued existence, and indeed our sustainable development, addressed in a balanced and meaningful manner in the Declaration and Plan of Action from this Summit were not as successful as it had hoped.

In spite of our disappointment that the Declaration and Plan of Action could not be stronger in content, the Caribbean Community will join with other states in the hemisphere to ensure that the issues we have identified and emphasised are implemented efficiently in order to move our countries several steps further along the road of sustainable development.

We need to recognise however that these steps can only be limited and piecemeal.

Sustainable development is meaningless and impossible without fundamental changes in the relationship between states.

It is necessary to take a holistic approach of development and the environment, especially sustainable human development. In the past, they saw environmental degradation as a product of industrial/economic development. Now, it is becoming

increasingly evident that poverty is the biggest enemy of the environment.

We need our own strategy of development. The Latin American and Caribbean Commission on Development and Environment, sponsored by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in their report "Our Own Agenda", pointed out that we followed a model of flawed growth:

"More than a half century of flawed development has produced total stagnation for those of us in Latin America. The burdensome external indebtedness which deprives us of the capital needed for growth and the grave economic crisis which for 10 years has further exacerbated the condition of our underprivileged class are not the causes of our problems but rather manifestations of an outworn model of growth."

The Commission noted the need for a special strategy. The Commission reported:

"There is no universal strategy for sustainable development. The most successful strategies are based on an analysis of our own regional institutional, economic and social peculiarities and of our environmental problems. The achievement of sustainable development also requires the establishment of a medium - and long-term planning mechanism."

Such a development strategy must combine good governance, internationally, regionally and nationally, and must encourage North/South partnership, cooperation and solidarity.

This strategy must aim to alleviate, if not eradicate, poverty.

In December 1992, the lead document of the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology and Government for the North/South Cooperation Conference, called by President Jimmy Carter and UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, noted that world hunger could be reduced by 50 per cent by the year 2000. Regrettably, no answers are forthcoming.

I have circulated for your consideration a memorandum which analyses the dilemma facing developing states within the context of a global crisis which undermines the the path of sustainable development in all countries, but is exceptionally severe on poorer countries. Juan de Dias Parra, leader of the Latin American Association for human rights summarised the recent trends noting that:

"In Latin America today, there are 70 million more hungry, 30 million more illiterate, 10 million more families without homes and 40 million more unemployed persons than there were 20 years ago.. There are 240 million human beings who lack the necessities of

life and this when the region is richer and more stable than ever according to the way the world sees it.”

We cannot continue in such a direction .We need a New Global Human Order. My memorandum proposes inter-alia:

- a regional development (integration) fund
- debt relief
- an American volunteer development corps
- a separate global development cooperation fund

A collective effort in this direction will benefit developed and developing countries alike and will create a more conducive environment for sustainable development. We must also strive to build a more genuine democracy having as its objective “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”. This would be ensured when it is all embracing - not only representative (5 minute voting) but also consultative and participatory , particularly of women- and when not only civil and political rights but also economic social and cultural rights are realised. A person must exercise his/her right to vote but that right will be exercisable only if the food for life is available.

This must facilitate the broadest involvement of our peoples with a meaningful role for civil society in pursuing the goals of sustainable development.

In a few months we will be evaluating at the United Nations the achievements for five years after Rio.

We in this hemisphere must at this forum in a straight-forward approach of genuine criticism and self criticism identify the successes and failures of these 5 years. Especially we must see:

- what has not gone on as planned
- what we need to do to remove these obstacles and move on.

We have had enough of conferences, declarations and plans of action. We need to proceed by dealing not merely with symptoms but with the root causes of our problems.

Our specific targets in our Declaration of Santa Cruz and our Plan of Action must be implemented with vigour but must be set against the background of an international effort to secure a New Global Human Order.