

OPENING ADDRESS FOR SCOPE/UNEP SYMPOSIUM ON ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

by

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This is no ordinary meeting of scientists convened to discuss the results of their research. This is a congregation of representatives from the communities of environmental scientists in the developing countries who have come together to declare their solemn determination to use science in the service of their people and in the rational development of their countries. This is no ordinary meeting of scientists, but the inauguration of a worldwide movement by which environmental scientists from the developing countries, and indeed from the whole world, pledge their devoted support to the betterment of life for their people. I say from the whole world because several scientists from the developed world — East and West — have joined us with support and sympathy for our movement; and because we made our march to Nairobi under the banner of SCOPE, which symbolizes the world community of environmental scientists.

We have chosen Nairobi as our meeting place. When Nairobi was made the seat of the United Nations Environment Program by an international vote, it was designated as a mecca for environmental scientists. This designation conveyed to us a special message: that developing countries are fully aware of environmental concerns and problems; and there can be no greater source of encouragement to scientists than the feeling that their nations need them and support them. The election of Nairobi to be the seat of UNEP, with all that UNEP stands for, gives us a deep sense of pride and a much deeper sense of responsibility. May I here pay tribute to the Government of Kenya for having the foresight to invite UNEP to reside in Nairobi. May I also, as an African, express my personal pride in the Kenyan initiative.

This congregation of environmental scientists is a noble achievement for which credit is due mainly to three bodies. The first is a body of some 200 men and women who concern themselves with the various scientific aspects of environmental issues and problems. They are nationals of some 65 developing countries. From this body of scientists we solicited and received advice and guidance on how to organize this meeting, what topics to discuss, and how best to bring the impact of environmental sciences to bear on the rational development of our countries. They have given of their knowledge and

wisdom willingly and with enthusiasm because they believe in the concepts which have brought us here and the movement which we today inaugurate. This body of scientists has, in a way, elected its 33 representatives and entrusted them with writing the basic documents for this meeting. To this body of scientists, and to their representatives, the authors of the invited papers who are with us here, and to their friends from other corners of the world who also helped to define some of the basic concepts and who came to Nairobi to give us moral and intellectual support — to all these men and women goes the credit for the intellectual and scientific foundation of this meeting.

The second body is the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE). This body is in the incarnation of the spirit which urges the world community of environmental scientists, in this era of environmental perils which endanger the present and the future of man, to raise their banners of warning and their torches of guiding light. When one of us, Professor Otto Soemarwoto of Indonesia, wrote to the President of SCOPE some 15 months ago, asking him what SCOPE could do to help the developing countries, the then President, Dr. Eric Smith, responded with sympathy and understanding. A committee met in Paris in January 1973, to consider Professor Soemarwoto's initiative and decided that it would be valuable to provide a forum where the community of environmental scientists in the developing world could discuss the issues and problems besetting rational development. This Symposium is that forum. To members of SCOPE, to its previous President, Dr. E. Smith, its present President, Professor V. Kovda, its Secretary General, Professor T. Malone, and its Executive Secretary, Mr. H. Southon — to all these men of good will and noble purpose goes our gratitude for their help and unfailing support.

The third body to whom the credit for our congregation goes is the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). When we first talked to Mr. Maurice F. Strong, the Executive Director of UNEP, he at once saw the special value of such a meeting. Not only did he give us his sympathy and encouragement, but he also made available to us the funds which made our meeting possible. His two senior assistants, Dr. M. K. Tolba, Deputy Executive Director, and Dr. R. Frosch, Assistant Executive Director, gave us every needed help and advice. We are grateful to these three men and to the members of the UNEP staff. They all gave us the moral and substantive support that made our dreams come true. I am happy to note that Dr. Tolba and Dr. Frosch are with us this morning and can accept our gratitude personally.

Before finishing my report, I would like to acknowledge a few of the other bodies who provided substantial support to our venture. The secretarial work for the preparation of this symposium was carried out mostly from an office in Cairo. The total cost of this office during the 12 month preparatory period was less than \$2000 US. I mention these ridiculously low expenditures to point out two things: (1) The asset of SCOPE as an organization of the scientific community; it can draw on many friends and colleagues who spare no effort. One of these men, Dr. Samir Ghabour, is with us here. I would like

him to know that we all appreciate his devoted help, and would like to ask him to convey our thanks to his several colleagues in Cairo. (2) The Arab League Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) provided us with office space and facilities. The Director General of ALECSO, Professor Abdel Aziz El Sayed, is with us this morning, and I would like him to know that we appreciate the valuable assistance that he provided for us.

The Holcomb Research Institute of Butler University, Indianapolis (USA) is funding the publication of the proceedings of this symposium. I would like Dr. T. Malone to convey our gratitude to the President and to the Board of Trustees of Butler University.

Several of the international agencies including UNESCO, FAO, WMO, WHO, the IUCN, ICSU, INTECOL, and many other regional organizations and foundations, provided us with valuable help in the form of publications and technical advice. These bodies have also sent representatives whose contributions to the discussions of our drafting groups were most valuable. We look forward to their active participation in the plenary sessions.

I would like to single out one of our colleagues, Professor R. Ojikutu of Nigeria, who contributed to the preparatory work. He was often critical, but his criticisms were sound and helped us to avoid several errors. I am glad to see him with us here and would like him to know that we appreciate his valuable contribution.