

ing court: that in this they have a powerful weapon, as the preparatory UNCED declaration passed by the G77 in June 1991 in Beijing unambiguously demonstrates. The West is dependent on their assistance to solve the global environmental problems. A start has been made: both the Interim Montreal Fund set up under the Montreal Protocol and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF)<sup>19</sup> are mechanisms for the financing of measures to control global environmental problems.

The Dutch contribution at present consists of development assistance funds, but it would be much fairer if these were to be supplied from taxes on excessive use of the environmental reserves by Western countries. The environment is no longer a free commodity: use of it must be paid for, and abstention from use rewarded.

The idea of tradeable emission rights is in line with this approach. UNCTAD, interestingly, has shown interest in putting such a system into operation, which places the use of (and trade in) the atmosphere on the same footing as the use of commodities for production purposes. A system of transferable emission rights, however, should *under no circumstances* be seen as an excuse for the industrialized countries to make less than the maximum effort to reduce emissions in their own regions.

The Executive Director of UNEP, Dr Tolba, put forward the idea of a user's fee some years ago, and the Brundtland report also suggests new forms of financing. Ideally, UNCED ought to produce concrete proposals on this subject, but there seems to be little chance of this: the discussions in the Netherlands on an international energy tax, possibly coupled with a climate fund, are of such complexity that there is no likelihood of the EEC reaching agreement in the immediate future. It is doubtful, therefore, whether the Community will be able to enter the international negotiations – which will involve confrontation with, at the very least, the United States and Japan – with a unified approach. UNCED probably comes too early for this.

The debate on compensation to developing countries for loss of income on exports of commodities to industrialized countries cutting back on their use to promote sustainable development (integrated cycle management) is still in its infancy. If ecological objectives are to be taken on board in GATT and the commodity agreements, however – and this must be the ultimate goal – compensation cannot be avoided, but here again UNCED may be too early. Preparatory work is needed, e.g. in the GATT Environment and Trade Working Group, and this could be instigated by the Netherlands, with the cooperation of other

members. The subject of trade and the environment certainly seems to have gained a place on the West's international agenda, with the UNCED process acting as a catalyst.

Lastly, the 'step back by the West'. The West's demands on the environmental reserves must be reduced. The letter from Platform Brazil 92<sup>20</sup> to the Ministers concerned and the Lower House<sup>21</sup> on the government memorandum on UNCED asks for special attention to be paid to this: '( . . . ) the industrialized countries must drastically reduce their demands on energy, natural resources and the environment'. Each country must do this for itself and there must be a coherent international approach. The Netherlands will have to make strenuous efforts in this regard, for, as the Long-Term Environment Policy Commission says, 'If the Netherlands, one of the wealthiest and most highly technologically developed countries in the world, and one of those which place the greatest strain on the environment, does not pull out all the stops in an effort to reduce environmental degradation, what country will?'<sup>22</sup> There is as yet no scenario for what is sometimes called 'selective growth and shrinkage' rooted in government policy; this could be one of the challenges for the Second National Policy Environment Plan (which is expected to be published in 1994).

Internationally it is important that the industrialized countries recognize that their demands on the environmental reserves must be reduced, and the government's memorandum on UNCED indicates that the Netherlands undoubtedly intends to work towards this goal. So far it has been difficult to achieve explicit recognition, although one of the decisions at the second meeting of the UNCED Preparatory Committee acknowledged the need for 'chan-

(19) The Global Environmental Facility (GEF) was instituted by the World Bank in November 1990. Its aim is to provide aid to developing countries towards activities which help to solve global environmental problems, esp. climate change, deterioration of the ozone layer, loss of biological diversity and pollution of international waters. The GEF is a joint venture by the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP.

(20) Platform Brazil 92 represents non-governmental organizations from many sectors of Dutch society, e.g. environmental organizations, the academic world, employers and trade unions, and consumers', women's, Third World and youth organizations. Its primary aims are to exchange information, encourage educational activities on the main topics of the Conference and help the government determine its position *vis-à-vis* UNCED.

(21) Letter of 14 March 1991.

(22) *Long Term Environmental Policy Commission, The Environment, perspectives for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 1990 page 612.

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ges in lifestyles and patterns of production and consumption'.<sup>23</sup>

These need to be specified however; some possibilities are:

- (1) achieving targets for CO<sub>2</sub> reductions under a convention on climate change;
- (2) attaching a protocol on energy and the environment, containing concrete targets for energy savings, to the European Energy Charter;
- (3) an Energy Efficiency 2000 campaign<sup>24</sup> including concrete steps for the ECE region;
- (4) far-reaching reductions in emissions of SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub> and VOCs in the ECE Region under the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution;
- (5) reductions in the use in industrialized countries of tropical hardwoods not obtained from sustainably managed forests; and
- (6) ending the production and use of bio-accumulative, persistent and toxic substances, e.g. many heavy metals and PCBs. Signals of this kind, taken in combination, would show that the industrialized countries are taking the matter seriously.

## Conclusion

There can be no doubt that the Netherlands would like to make a success of UNCED. The subject is also high on the agenda of the Dutch EEC Presidency. With its domestic policy the Netherlands will be able to make a reasonable showing at UNCED, but it is at the very least doubtful whether the international breakthroughs needed will be achieved in time to enable the Rio de Janeiro conference to be the watershed the world needs to achieve sustainable development and thus – ultimately – to survive.

(23) Decision 2/16, 5 April 1991.

(24) This campaign was decided upon in the Ministerial Declaration of the Action for a Common Future Conference in June 1990 in Bergen, Norway, which was concerned with the implementation of the Brundtland report in the ECE region. 'Bergen' was one of the regional UNCED preparatory conferences.

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## Dutch development cooperation and the environment: little said, less done

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P. HOEBINK

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Several international aid organizations, in particular the World Bank, came under fire from the environmental movement in the nineteen-eighties. Harm to the environment caused by dam-building and by colonization projects, were the most important examples of the environmentally damaging policies of these organizations.<sup>1</sup> The American environmental movement achieved significant victories in Congress, which led, for example, to the USA voting in the World Bank against loans to Brazil, which were to be used for opening up the Amazon region. Subsequently, the World Bank had to devote more attention to the ecological consequences of activities which it financed, or at least to pay lip-service to such an approach. To this end, an Environmental Department was set up within the Bank in 1987. Nevertheless, criticism is still to be heard: The World Bank still devotes 'too little attention to the weakest groups and to the natural environment'.<sup>2</sup>

It could be said to be remarkable that the Dutch Government has been largely spared this sort of criticism up to now. Qualitative deficiencies in Dutch development aid, when they are presumed to exist, are usually looked for in the excessive influence of the Dutch business community on the way in which development money is spent, and in the meagre attention paid to the poorest sections of society and to the position of women in developing countries. If a plan to supply trawlers meets with criticism, this is based

(1) For a survey of the most important points of criticism, see various numbers of *The Ecologist*. Also: B. M. Rich, 'The multi-lateral development banks, environmental policy and the United States', in: *Ecology Law Quarterly*, vol. 12, 1985, pp. 681-745.

(2) *Milieu door de bank genomen: visie van NGO's op het sociale en milieu-aspect in projecten en programma's van de Wereldbank*, Den Haag, NOVIB/IUCN, Augustus 1990.

on the position of small fishermen, and overfishing is seen first and foremost as one link in the argument designed to demonstrate their vulnerable position. Only occasionally have environmental issues come close to the heart of the criticism (artificial fertilizer supplies); sometimes this has been as part of an international discussion (transmigration projects in Indonesia), but this criticism has had far less attention, even in the Netherlands, than that directed against the World Bank.

Until recently, Dutch Ministers of Development Cooperation could not have been accused of showing great concern for damage to the environment, or of vigilance with respect to ecological consequences in all fields. 'An occasional memorandum and hardly any policy', could sum up the policy position up to the nineteen-nineties.

### The nineteen-seventies

Preventing and combatting environmental disasters was the prime motivation for convening the Stockholm Conference (1972), which resulted in the Action Plan and Declaration of Stockholm, in which principles for the conservation and protection of natural resources and flora and fauna were laid down. Developing countries were promised support for environmental research and the framing of environmental policy. Prior to the Conference there had been a meeting in Founex (Switzerland, 1971), at which the relationship between the environment and development had been discussed. The report of this meeting, in which a clear distinction was drawn between environmental problems in developed countries, caused by prosperity, and environmental problems in developing countries, caused by poverty, served as a basis for the discussions in Stockholm. All the documents mentioned above were vague on the question of how to prevent economic development being at the cost of the environment, though the Founex report did plead for environmental protection to be made part of development plans. The Dutch Government was among those which paid for the Founex meeting, and this could be seen as the first Dutch contribution in the field of the environment and development cooperation.

This Conference and meeting, the foundation of UNEP (1972), the Report of the Club of Rome (1972), the UN Conference on Desertification (1977), etc., did have some repercussions on Dutch development policy at first, but interest in ecological problems declined rapidly. A review of government memoranda reveals that the above events have not led to substantial attention being paid to such pro-

blems in policy-making or in the implementation of aid programmes.

Minister Pronk's memorandum 'For the Quality of Dutch Aid' goes no further than to say that an 'ecological approach' must be introduced alongside the distributive aspect: the effects of projects on the natural environment should be considered.<sup>3</sup> Although the question of distribution and the fight against poverty are elaborated in various parts of this memorandum, there is only this one reference to the ecological component.

In 1978 the first recommendations from the Nationale Advies Raad voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, the NAR (The National Advisory Council for Development Cooperation) appeared, entitled 'Ecologie en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking' (Ecology and Development Cooperation).<sup>4</sup> This quite short 'advice' was the result of an initiative by the Dutch branch of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the influence of which was clearly discernable. The Council pointed out that the Netherlands had signed a good number of international agreements on the environment, dating back to 1969, but had not ratified them. It also took the view that an environmental assessment should really be made for all projects, and that for large-scale projects this should extend to an environmental-effect report. According to the Council, one or more ecologists should be involved in the supervision of projects which could threaten the environment. In addition, the Netherlands should stimulate the growth of environmental knowledge and awareness, and support projects advancing reforestation and land rehabilitation. After 1978 there was a long period of silence, and it was not until 1990 that the National Advisory Council again made environmental considerations part of an 'advice'.<sup>5</sup>

The lack of influence of the 1978 recommendations, and the incompleteness of the 'ecological approach', became apparent in the year following the report's publication. In 1979, in the *Nota Verbetering van de kwaliteit van de bilaterale hulp* (Memorandum on the Improvement of the Quality of Bilateral Aid) of Minister de Koning, it was revealed that not much

(3) *Nota Bilaterale Ontwikkelingssamenwerking: Om de kwaliteit van de Nederlandse hulp*, Tweede Kamer, zitting 1976-1977, 14 1000, hoofdstuk V, nr. 3, p. 5 en 22.

(4) Nationale Advies Raad voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking. *Advies Ecologie en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, Adviesnr. 57, Den Haag, Staatsuitgeverij, April 1978.

(5) See *Briefadvies Tropisch regenwoud*, (Letter Advice on tropical rain forest wood) Den Haag, 15 May 1990; and shortly thereafter *Briefadvies Milieu en handel*, (Letter Advice on Environment and Trade) 8 November 1990.

had come of either the policy premises of the earlier note or the recommendations of the Council<sup>6</sup>. As far as environmental aspects were concerned, the improvement in the quality of aid was concentrated on just one question in the assessment of projects, viz., 'what is the effect on the ecology? Is it necessary to have a special preliminary inquiry?'

### The nineteen-eighties

It was not until July 1982 that the Minister of Development Cooperation reacted to the NAR report, after he had been called upon to do so by Parliament, in the autumn of 1981. The memorandum 'Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en Ecologie' (Development Cooperation and Ecology) gives a concise survey of ideas about the environment and development, and describes the activities of UNEP, Dutch policy and Dutch aid in this field.<sup>7</sup>

Dutch policy seemed to have made little progress. The memorandum contains little more than a few general statements, which for the most part concern aid policy in a general sense. Policy objectives go no further than the inclusion of an ecological paragraph in the country-policy papers, and a reference to environmental considerations in the yearly discussions with recipient countries on how aid is to be spent. According to the memorandum, only a 'limited number of aid projects' call for assessment on environmental grounds. Around twenty projects were mentioned among the financed activities in the field of nature and environment protection and conservancy, and these were mostly integrated rural development programmes and forestry projects. The Minister did announce that shortly before the publication of the memorandum the Commissie Ecologie en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking - CECOS (Committee on Ecology and Development Cooperation) had been established, the role of which was to advise the Minister on this point. Since this memorandum was intended to provide 'initial orientation', reference was made to the forthcoming findings of the CECOS.

The so-called 'Herijkingsnota' (Reassessment Memorandum), the main policy document of Minister Schoo, dated 1984, combined energy and ecology in one short section of only half a page. Reference was again made to the policy recommendations of the CECOS, which was supposed to come up with a more precise standpoint. For the first time environmental problems were mentioned (erosion, deforestation, soil deterioration), as were some causes (the cutting of timber, extension of cultivation, over-grazing).<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the separate budgetary category for 'ecology and energy' was abolished. Beyond these

points, it was again a matter of waiting for CECOS.

In May 1986, CECOS produced its long-awaited recommendations, which were transmitted to Parliament by Minister Bukman in October, without much comment.<sup>9</sup> The Committee identified three types of environmental problems which can adversely affect the essential functions of eco-systems in developing countries: exhaustion through over-use, pollution and disturbance through industrialization and urbanization, and damage and destruction through exploitation of resources.

The CECOS then described a number of ecological zones found in the Third World, and the environmental problems which occur in them. This resulted in a first recommendation, that the Netherlands, together with the recipient country, should develop an ecologically responsible policy for each country and region. Environmental profiles and basic environmental documentation (a kind of sectoral policy programme) should form the basis of such policy. An environmental section should be included in the policy programmes for all countries. CECOS felt that this point should have the highest priority.

The strengthening of environmental policy-making in recipient countries through improvement of institutional capacity and ecological control of programmes and projects were other important points, according to CECOS. Instructions for environmental assessment should be included in the directions given to officials to cover each of the various stages in the life of a project. With respect to personnel, environmental policy should be strengthened by the recruitment of more environmental experts, the establishment of a central point for environmental affairs within the Ministry, and the provision of courses for officials. Finally, the number of environment-oriented projects should be increased, and support should also be given to non-governmental organizations working for responsible environmental policies.

The letter from Minister Bukman which accompanied these recommendations was brief, and not very strong: the Minister made some pledges, without

(6) *Nota inzake de verbetering van de kwaliteit van de bilaterale hulp*, Rijksbegroting 1980, hfdst V, Buitenlandse Zaken, nr. 3, bijlage 2a, September 1979, p. 182

(7) Notitie 'Ontwikkelingssamenwerking en ecologie'. Tweede Kamer, zitting 1981-1982, 17 502, 15 juli 1982 (16 pp plus annexes).

(8) *Nota Herijking bilateraal beleid*, Tweede Kamer, Vergaderjaar 1983-1984, 18 350, nrs. 1-2, 1 May 1984, p. 33 (also p. 14).

(9) Commissie Ecologie en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, *Advies Milieu en ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, Amsterdam, Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, May 1986.

being very definite. He promised institutional improvement by means of training courses for various groups and the development of an environmental assessment procedure. Parliament was not satisfied, and the Minister had to provide a more detailed plan; this answer of the government was also on the slim side.<sup>10</sup> The Minister declared that 'the integration of environmental considerations', into policies was 'an essential factor in the struggle to improve quality', and that the policy on this 'would be continued and, where necessary, intensified'. Environmental profiles for regions in which aid was concentrated would be drawn up, and an attempt would be made to improve the level of knowledge of personnel. Environmental assessment would be introduced at various stages of project analysis. There were, however, no specific goals set in connection with these statements of intent, nor was a timetable established. The Minister did furnish further information a year later, in reply to questions from, and in discussion with Parliament; this is dealt with in more detail below. The opposition greeted the CECOS report with great satisfaction and the standpoint of the Government was said to be, 'satisfactory, at first sight'. However, concern was expressed that his standpoint was a 'bureaucratic' reaction, rather than a political one.<sup>11</sup>

In the memorandum, 'Quality: an assist for the 'nineties' of July 1989, Minister Bukman replied to the criticism of aid policies which had been expressed the year before. He announced a considerable expansion of the Eenheid Technische Advisering (Technical Advice Unit), in the environmental field among others. He stated that the handling of the question of ecology was one of the factors which could adversely affect the sustainability of development activities, but there was no elaboration of this point.<sup>12</sup>

In the meantime, Minister Schoof had stated in 1985 that funding in her budget for environmental management, in particular forestry, should be doubled: in five years there should be an increase to 100 million guilders. In his reaction to the CECOS recommendations, Minister Bukman stood by this intention. In 1989, the first National Environmental Policy Plan announced a further expansion of funding. An extra 50 million guilders a year would be made available for environmental projects and for the energy sector in developing countries. The overall figure was set to reach 250 million guilders in 1994, half of it to be devoted to combatting the greenhouse effect in developing countries. In the energy sector, the Netherlands gave particular support to World Bank programmes, but also sought to cooperate with non-governmental organizations. With respect to ecology, the first priority remained the establishment of

environmental profiles. In forestry projects there was, in particular, cooperation with TFAP.<sup>13</sup>

### The Nineteen-Nineties

In September 1990, Minister Pronk published his memorandum 'A World of Difference.' This document, containing almost 400 pages, was designed to be the central policy document for the nineteen-nineties.<sup>14</sup> For the first time there was now some evidence of an integrated development cooperation and environmental policy. One chapter outlines the growing risks to which mankind and the Earth are exposed, but in other chapters too, for example those dealing with regional problems, there are frequently analyses of environmental problems to be found.

Sustainable combatting of poverty is the central goal of Dutch policy. According to the memorandum, sustainable development has three component parts: first, economic growth (development); second, a fair distribution of wealth (combatting poverty); third, conservation of the eco-scope (ecological sustainability). Real sustainability, geared to the renewal of both natural and manufactured capital, would be the aim.

This led to the announcement of a number of measures designed to overcome the negative ecological consequences of aid projects and programmes and to promote international cooperation in the field of environmental conservation. In the first of these categories are to be found: the development of environmental planning modalities in the environment area, such as environmental-effect reports and environmental profiles, and the systematic checking of all projects for their environmental effects. In the second category are: a plea for the inclusion of environmental considerations in natural resource agreements, in trade and investment regulations and in structural adjustment programmes.

(10) *Regeringsstandpunt inzake Milieu en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, Tweede Kamer, Vergaderjaar 1986-1987, 19 767, nr. 2, 13 May 1987.

(11) *Introductie bij Jan Pronk 'Brundtland en verder'* at the conference 'Ecologie en ontwikkelingssamenwerking: een kwestie van overleven' held on 23 January 1988, Den Haag/Amsterdam, Tweede Kamer-fractie van de PvdA, May 1988, p. 57.

(12) *Nota Kwaliteit: een voorzet voor de jaren '90*, Den Haag, Directoraat Generaal Internationale Samenwerking, July 1989, pp. 22 (34).

(13) *Jaarverslagen Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, Den Haag, Voorlichtingsdienst Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 1988 and 1989, pp. 32-34, p. 23 and pp. 34-35.

(14) *Nota Een wereld van verschil: nieuwe kaders voor ontwikkelingssamenwerking in de jaren negentig*, Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 1990-1991, 21 813, nr. 1-2.

A special spearhead programme for the environment was introduced (alongside those for women and development, research and urban poverty). A staff of ten will be attached to the programme office, and will concern themselves with the global ecological problem, the development of policy on both the national and international level, the development of know-how, etc. The spearhead programme has funding of 125 million guilders for 1991; a sum which must increase to 275 million in 1994, 25 million more than was promised by previous Ministers.

### Evaluation

It could be argued that, until 1990, Dutch development aid policy lacked an integrated vision on the relationship between the environment and development, and the manner in which ecological and development problems should be reflected in the implementation of policy. There were some vague policy ideas and standpoints, and some first moves towards establishing environmental conservation goals in the execution of policy. However, the Ministry was inadequately equipped, in terms of both personnel and procedures, for environmental conservation and protection to have any real chance of being taken into account in policy implementation.

The Ministry recruited its first ecologist in 1984; a lone ecologist, who also had to give half his time to the energy programme. In Parliament, there were references to the 'half ecologist', and Minister Bukman spoke about the 'poor ecologist'.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, Minister Bukman was at first very unwilling to add to the personnel. Only in the memorandum 'Kwaliteitsverbetering' (Improvement in Quality) did he announce the recruitment of environmental experts for the Directie Sectorbeleid en Technische Advisering (Sectoral Policy and Technical Advice Department). In 1989 a second ecologist was appointed, and from 1985 onwards yearly one-day courses on the environment were held, each for twenty to thirty Ministry personnel. This all changed in 1990. The institution of the Spearhead Programme: Environment and Development, meant an immediate increase in the number of environmental experts, to ten, and at the same time there was a big expansion in the international environment section at the Ministry of Housing, Physical Planning and Environmental Protection (VROM).

In 1982, Minister van Dijk could list only 22 projects with an environmental component, while in 1987 Minister Bukman could refer to 111 projects which 'alongside structural combatting of poverty', had 'restoration, conservation or management of the natural environment, or the reduction of existing pollution,

as a goal of major importance'.<sup>16</sup> This was five per cent of the total number of projects. The majority of the projects were aimed at conservation, management and restoration.

Given past projects, it could be assumed that a large majority of these projects were concerned with forestry and erosion: projects which have long been part of aid programmes. It is difficult to be sure to what extent there had been an actual increase or if there really were new projects.<sup>17</sup> No details were given of the resources devoted to these projects.

Four environmental profiles were completed in 1988, and another seven were being prepared. At that time the Netherlands was giving aid to ten so-called 'concentration' countries, and many more as part of sectoral or regional programmes. All in all, more than 50 countries were receiving assistance. It should be pointed out that the environmental profiles referred to here were generally of a technical nature, and socio-economic aspects, local knowledge and the participation of the local population were rarely mentioned.<sup>18</sup>

From 1985 until mid-1988, three environmental-effect reports had been drawn up: in relation to the building of a dam in Bangladesh, a fenland project in Indonesia and a canal construction project in Colombia.<sup>19</sup> Since the projects list in each of these years ran to more than 2000 projects, it could be said that this form of reporting was not employed extensively. The same picture of scant attention for environmental effects can be gained by reading the answers to written questions addressed to Minister Bukman by the Labour Party (PvdA) Member of Parliament Verspaaget, about the supply of fertilizers. A criticism of the

(15) Vaste Commissie voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking/Vaste Commissie voor Milieubeheer, *68ste uitgebreide commissievergadering*, Vergaderjaar 1987-1988, 20 June 1988, pp. 28-29.

(16) *Ecologie en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, Lijst van Antwoorden, Tweede Kamer, Vergaderjaar 1987-1988, 19 767 nr. 4, 20 April 1988, p. 1.

(17) The OECD has pointed out that in cases such as this there is often a question of different nomenclature: integrated projects or rural projects suddenly become 'environmental projects.' See: Development Assistance Committee, *Development co-operation - efforts and policies of the members of the Development Assistance Committee 1990 report*, Paris, OECD, December 1990, p. 45.

(18) See also: E. de Wit/M. Marchand/G. A. Persoon, Milieuplanning in ontwikkelingslanden, (Environmental Planning in Developing Countries) in: *Milieu - tijdschrift voor milieukunde*, Jrg. 5, nr. 4, August 1990, pp. 97-103.

(19) *Ecologie en Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, Lijst van Antwoorden, Tweede Kamer, Vergaderjaar 1987-1988, 19 767 nr. 4, 20 April 1988, p. 5. (Ecology and Development Cooperation. List of Answers, Second Chamber, year 1987-8).

extensive supply of fertilizers as part of Dutch aid, from the ecological point of view, is that artificial fertilizers can promote erosion and acidification.<sup>20</sup> Two questions referred to these possibly harmful environmental effects. In his answer, Minister Bukman said that the possible acidification effects of the use of artificial fertilizer were mentioned in evaluations whenever there was reason to do this. Two passages from evaluation reports were annexed as evidence: the effects were discussed in a positive sense, in just a few lines. The Minister did not deal with the promotion of erosion by artificial fertilizers.<sup>21</sup>

With the arrival in office of Minister Pronk, and after the appearance of the memorandum 'A World of Difference', a major change in Dutch policy in the field of the environment and development should be prominent. The memorandum's analytical section on this topic was widely praised, and was seen as breaking the existing pattern. Translating this into policy does, however, raise questions. These questions relate not so much to the specific policy area of the development cooperation, but to penetration into the internal policies of the Netherlands. 'If more demands must be made on the eco-scope of developing countries because of the necessary increase in the standard of living there, does that not imply a contraction in the eco-scope in the Netherlands?' This is one of the questions which crops up when reading the environmental chapter of the memorandum. Is a higher standard of living coupled with less harm to the environment possible, or must we in the Western countries try to be happier with a lower standard of living? One of the points of criticism put forward by the ecological movement is that the way in which policies are developed to facilitate their implementation is ambiguous, and lacking in self-criticism.<sup>22</sup> It can be argued that the recruitment of extra personnel and the introduction of stricter procedures will, in any event, make for a 'greener' policy on aid. Whether or not the totality of development cooperation policy will undergo a similar colour change will depend, among other things, on the outcome of the 'battles' with other ministries.

The above criticism of Dutch government policy is not intended to suggest that private aid organizations are out in front in this field, and ahead of Ministerial policy. Despite the occasional noisy campaign of some organizations, the Dutch co-financing organizations 'discovered' the environment only in the late nineteen-eighties. Thus, in 1989 and 1990 NOVIB and (Catholic) Cebemo had their projects examined. In the case of NOVIB, ten per cent of projects had an environmental goal, with a large number having pos-

sible negative side-effects. In the case of Cebemo, ninety-five per cent of the projects had no relevance to the environment, while only one per cent had negative effects.<sup>23</sup> HIVOS (humanist) produced an environmental memorandum in 1989, in which the 'ecologizing' of the organization itself, as well as the funded projects and organizations, is a central theme. Three quarters of the recipient organizations whose activities could have consequences for the environment received this memorandum. Organizations which were 'low-scoring on environmental matters' ran the risk of losing their HIVOS funding.<sup>24</sup>

It seems clear from all the above that the relationship between the environment and development cooperation has, in general, remained under-exposed in the Netherlands,<sup>25</sup> and that the ecological and Third World movements had little influence on the policies in this field. Further evidence for this is that on only two occasions were motions put forward in the Second Chamber of Parliament, and on only three occasions were written questions asked on this topic, in the nineteen-eighties. The topic was apparently not 'lively' enough. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the Netherlands is behind other Western donors in this field. Various OECD donors, in particular the United States, are well ahead of the Netherlands with respect to the development of procedures, programmes, projects and the training of personnel on ecological questions.<sup>26</sup> A country which makes so sure that its development cooperation policy receives the best possible international image, should be moved to greater modesty by this fact.

(20) P. Hoebink, *Geven is nemen: de Nederlandse ontwikkelingshulp aan Tanzania en Sri Lanka*, (To give is to take: Netherlands' development help to Tanzania and Sri Lanka) Nijmegen, St. Derde Wereld Publikaties, 1988, pp. 134-139 and pp. 209-217.

(21) Tweede Kamer, vergaderjaar 1988-1989, Aangangselsel bij de Handelingen, pp. 1459-1460. (Second Chamber 1988-9 Appendix to the transcripts).

(22) See, inter alia: T. de la Court et al., *Ontwikkelingssamenwerking trend of breuk?*, (Development Cooperation trend or breach?) Amsterdam, Wise, September 1990; T. de la Court, De voorzet van Pronk, (Pronk's assist) in: *Natuur en Milieu*, jrg 14, nr. 12, December 1990, pp. 14-18; M. Nijpels, Milieu: een wereld van verschil tussen 'gelukkiger met minder' en 'meer met minder', (Environment: A world of difference between 'happiness with less' and 'more with less') in: *Derde Wereld*, jrg. 9, nr. 4, December 1990, pp. 20-23.

(23) *Onze Wereld*, October 1990

(24) HIVOS, Milieu-notitie, Den Haag, November 1989.

(25) The Inspectorate of the Ministry will shortly report on this, and will give a deeper insight into the matter.

(26) See: Development Assistance Committee, *ibid*, pp. 45-89.

# A New International Ecological Order

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JAN PRONK

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The first year in the last decade of the twentieth century, 1991, is a good point at which to carry out a stocktaking of the environment, world-wide. How is the world faring in this respect? Here are a few figures to begin with.

Over the past forty years the world's population has more than doubled to reach, roughly speaking, five thousand million people. The next thirty-five years will see another three thousand million in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and close on another two hundred million in the wealthy countries. Whereas, forty years ago, a third of the world's population lived in the developed countries, the present proportion is only half of this, one-sixth. Thus almost 85 per cent of the people in the world live in the Third World. There is, indeed, a 'world of difference'! The future well-being of Third World people is no longer dependent upon the economy alone; there are limits both to growth and to the 'ecoscope'.

The 1980s decade was the warmest of the century. If the present trend in emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and other 'greenhouse' gases continues, the temperature could well reach a level too high for Nature to adapt to. The result will not only be a raised sea level; there will also be a disturbance of the world-wide eco-system and an accelerated loss of wild plant and animals species. There are high emission levels of 'greenhouse' gases emanating from regions and countries all over the world, i.e., from China, Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia and the USSR, as well as from the USA, Europe and Japan. These areas are also experiencing the effects of such emissions. Responsibility is world-wide, a responsibility which no country can avoid, and this is why a world-wide approach is needed to lower the levels of such emissions.

A second main concern is land and water. Without fertile land, without living seas and oceans, there can be no food, no recycling of nutrients, no drinking water, no natural cycle. Nonetheless, 10 per cent of this earth's potentially fertile land has been turned into desert or waste through human interference, while a further 25 per cent is endangered. Every year eight-and-a-half million hectares are lost through erosion and silting. The same human agency results in considerable loss of water resources through excessive extraction from river basins, through exhaustion of ground water, and through pollution. The most

recent figures on deforestation are quite dramatic; twenty million hectares of tropical forest are being lost every year. The biological and genetic diversity essential for both the ecological cycle and future food supplies, is diminishing at a terrifying rate. At least ten thousand varieties of wild seeds, plants and animals have disappeared off the face of the earth since 1950.

The list of world-wide problems for the environment is a long one: threatened exhaustion of scarce raw materials; the excess of unprocessed waste matter; the poisoning of the soil; the assault on the ozone layer; the air pollution that threatens health – but I will refrain from wearying you with details! The conclusion is crystal clear; the problem of the environment is a world-wide one, and it is enormous. The conclusion for policy making in the 1990s is obvious: there has to be world-wide cooperation rather than merely national approaches in giving top priority to environmental issues.

Unhappily, this has never been achieved up to now. Our stocktaking of the world environment reveals two major deficiencies: an environmental debt to future generations, and lack of an overall policy, something which continually exacerbates that indebtedness. There is still a fundamental deficiency, despite all the grand words and promises, the Brundtland Report, the views expressed on 'interdependence', 'mutual vulnerability', 'our common interest', and 'our common future'.

Is there anything surprising in this? In the final analysis it concerns scarcity – an absolute physical scarcity – and therefore also, and by definition, power and sharing. The international ecoscope is not only limited; it is also divided inequitably. The countries that are technologically, industrially and militarily advanced – the powerful countries – have appropriated a large share of the world's ecoscope, thus providing themselves with lebensraum in a manner of speaking. The East and West together now constituting roughly a quarter of the world's population, consume 70 per cent of the world's energy, three-quarters of its metals, 85 per cent of its wood, and 60 per cent of its food. There is less and less for the others, per capita.

Thus a vicious circle has come into being because those 'others' include the poor of the world, for whom