

**CLOSING REMARKS AT TERI – NEW DELHI SUMMIT ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

11 February 2002

New Delhi, India

by

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Mr. Chairman,

We have now come to the close of this meeting on sustainable development. At this meeting we looked for societal transformation and for technological fixes. We have asked what governments ought to be doing as also what the role of the private sector should be. We have talked about ends and about means. But as we look to Johannesburg what we face is competing visions of development.

There is the vision embodied in the notion of the Davos Man - a vision that sees in a globalised world with open borders and a liberal market economy the route to prosperity. But even the Davos Man is uncertain and in the latest gathering of the faithful in New York, the themes that dominated discussions were the issues of global poverty and global health, the evidence of alienation and social stress and the threats to order that emerge from these.

Another, explicitly opposed, vision of development is articulated in Porto Alegre the gathering of social activists, protest movements and dissenting academics who are deeply sceptical of the benefits of the globalised market economy. Let us call them the Porto Alegre Protestors. Their vision of development gives precedence to the local over the global and hence is not convinced that liberalisation and the opening of borders is the route to prosperity for all. And they often argue that the world is getting globalized not because people have opted for it but because effective power is in the hands of the few. But in Porto Alegre too the move is from protest to dialogue.

What then is the vision of development embodied in Agenda 21 in Rio? What is the vision that we can seek to embody in the form of the Johannesburg person – let us call that person the Johannesburg Activist.

The Johannesburg Activist is enough of an economist to respect the need to compare costs and benefits and to recognise the potential of a properly managed market system to save us from the excesses and perversions of public control. The Johannesburg Activist is also enough of an engineer or technologist to recognize that the right sort of development requires not just the tweaking of the market but a systematic effort to

promote alternative technologies of production and consumption that are less aggressive in their use of natural systems. The Johannesburg Activist is also an ecologist who recognises that the inputs and outputs that need to be looked at in cost/benefit or technological analysis are not just the immediately obvious ones and that we need to judge every option after fully understanding the complex pathways through which it affects local, national and global ecosystems. In all of these as economist, engineer or ecologist, the Johannesburg Activist is guided by the principle that the real test of development is what it does to the self-respect, dignity and well being of the poorest person in society.

This is the vision of sustainable development that has emerged in the discussions here. It is a vision grounded in the large number of local projects, community initiatives that have successfully combined the social, economic and environmental imperatives into a coherent whole. It is a vision based on the potential of new technologies to promote decentralized developments that work with rather than against the local environment. It rests on an ethic of solidarity and responsibility to each other and to future generations.

You are the community of concern, the missionaries who believe in this vision and have come here for that very reason. So join me and the forty thousand or so who are expected in Johannesburg to tell the world that sustainable development can be made not the exception but the norm, that another development is possible.