ENDING HUNGER THROUGH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

MAURICE F. STRONG

FORUM OF FREE ENTERPRISE
PIRAMAL MANSION, 235 DR. D. N. ROAD,
BOMBAY 400 001.

"Free Enterprise was born with man and shall survive as long as man survives."

— A. D. Shroff
1899-1965
Founder-President
Forum of Free Enterprise

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By

MAURICE F. STRONG*

The task of ending hunger, to which The Hunger Project is so effectively committed, is inevitably and inextricably linked with the need to eradicate the scourge of poverty which continues to afflict so many of the people of our planet—most, but by no means all of them, in the developing world. This, in turn, has been one of the prime purposes of the process of development through which Third World countries have been striving to meet the aspirations of their people for economic and social progress. The development process has given rise to a complex set of institutions and relationships—multilateral and bilateral, official and private—through which the more developed countries have sought to cooperate with, to support and, yes, to influence the development process in the Third World countries.

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* *The booklet is based on the Third Annual Arturo Tanco Memorial Lecture delivered by Maurice F. Strong in Tokyo on 6th April, 1989, and is reproduced, with grateful thanks to Global Hunger Project. The author is an environmentalist, international official and business executive, and is recognised as one of the World's leading experts in international development and the environment. Mr. Strong served as Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment from November 1970 to December 1972. Subsequently until December 1975, he became the first Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). During 1985-86, Mr. Strong served as Under Secretary of the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa. He also served on the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission). Mr. Strong has received numerous international awards.*

The impressive economic performance of many developing countries throughout most of the 1960s and 1970s engendered confidence, in fact sometimes even complacency, that developing countries and their partners were, in general, on the right track. There was, of course, recognition of the need for improved management and policies on the part of developing countries together with higher levels of assistance and expanded access to the markets of the industrialized world for the products of developing countries. But this was seen largely in terms of more of the same. The severe economic deterioration of the majority of developing counries, particularly those of. Latin America and Africa, during the past several years, coupled with the increased evidence of widespread degradation of the environmental and natural resource base on which the economies of these countries so largely depend, has forced a reexamination of our development experience and the premises on which that experience has been based. This is reinforced today by the knowledge that there are more poor and hungry people in the world now than ever before in human history, and their numbers continue to mount.

DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

The issues were examined in depth by the World Commission of Environment and Development established by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1983, which was chaired by Norway's Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland. Japan's preeminent world Statesman, Dr. Saburo Okita, made a higly valued contribution as a member of this commission, and the Japanese government provided strong support, both politically and financially, for it.

The report of the Brundtland Commission, released in 1987, makes it dramatically clear that existing patterns of development are simply not sustainable, and that this is

particularly true for developing countries. The technological revolution which has produced unprecedented levels of economic growth and prosperity for the industrialized world has also produced immense and growing costs in terms of degradation of the environmental resource base of our planet and risks to its life-support systems and to human health and well being. We have been literally living off the Earth's capital, and that capital is being seriously depleted. We cannot continue to run our planet this way any more than we could run a business for long by running down and living off its capital. Indeed, our Earth, if it were an incorporated entity, would be headed for bankruptcy if we continue on our present course.

The costs and risks of the degradation of the Earth's capital are borne by industrialized and developing countries alike. But, industrialized countries have enjoyed the lion's share of the benefits that have accrued to them as the originators of and the longest players in the economic growth league. The economies of most developing countries continue to be based largely on the exploitation of their natural resources. The combination of rapid population growth with accelerated economic activity has given rise to the development practices which have caused such widespread ecological breakdown and destruction of the resource base. And this, in turn, had undermined the potential for future growth.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SECURITY

The World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as that which, "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."It states that, " the concept of sustainable development does not imply limits — not absolute limits, but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organization on environmental resources, and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities."

There is no area in which the sustainability of development is more important in terms of human welfare than in the field of agriculture. There will be no more important test of success in the achievement of sustainable development than in our ability to eliminate hunger on a permanent basis. This means ensuring that the entire population of our World community has access to the food supplies they require to meet at least their minimum requirements for food health and nutrition. This cannot, of course, be accomplished in isolation from the achievement of sustainable development on an overall basis. But I would contend that a clear and focused commitment to eradicating hunger through sustainable food security would contribute more than any other single thing to the realization of the broader objectives of sustainable development.

There are three principal requirements for the achievement of sustainable food security:

— That aggregate levels of world food production be sufficient to provide for the food needs of the entire world population on a continuing basis;

— That all countries have access on a continuing basis to the food supplies required to meet the needs of their people; and

— That individual people, at the household level, have access on a continuing basis to the food that they require to meet their basic health and nutritional needs.

Now, I use "access" here in the sense of both the physical availability of food and the availability of the means to acquire such food when the physical supplies are in the hands of others.

WORLD FOOD PRODUCTION

Our experience to date makes it clear that while it is essential that aggregate world supplies of food be sufficient to meet all needs for it, this alone does not ensure food security at either the national or the household levels. We have just come through a period of unprecedented increase in world food production. During the period 1950-1984, food production outstripped population growth, confounding gloomy predictions that the world was on the verge of the Malthusian nightmare. Instead, record food surpluses were seen as the problem.

In the meantime, the geography of food production has changed dramatically. Modernization of agriculture combined with massive governmental subsidies have enabled western Europe, traditionally the world's principal importer of food grains, to become a major exporter and to accumulate large surpluses of grains and dairy products. Technology and subsidies have combined to effect similarly dramatic increases in production of grain and dairy products in the United States and Canada. These countries have, since 1950, increased their grain exports by more than five times and they now account these two countries alone— for a higher portion of the world's grain trade than the Middle East does of oil.

In the meantime, more than one hundred countries, many of which have been grain exporters until recently, now depend primarily on North America for their food supplies. Africa has moved from a position of on-balance self-sufficiency in food production to a long period of decline in per capita food prodcution; only recently arrested, but this, I should say, has made Africa more and more dependent on imports. Latin America, formerly a significant grain exporter, has now moved into the deficit category too, with per capita

production diminishing and imports increasing. Although the green revolution enabled Asian countries to increase food production dramatically — in the case of India, by some 300 percent — Asia remains the principal food importing region. The Soviet Union and eastern Europe have become highly dependent on food imports, although there are some signs that they may be getting finally to the roots of this problem.

All-in-all, these shifts have produced a growing dependence on the Great Plains of North America as the world's "breadbasket" and vastly increased the number of countries and people who are chronically dependent on imports and highly vulnerable to decreases in food availability and to higher prices.

ACCESS TO FOOD

As we have seen, there is not a direct relationship between aggregate levels of food supply and access to these supplies on the part of those who need them. Food deficit nations which have adequate financial resources, of which Japan is the prime example, will always have access to food, even in times of tight supply unless, of course, affected by the kinds of exceptional boycotts or disruptions of transport that would occur normally only in the event of international conflict. On the other hand, poor countries, notably the least developed countries of sub-Saharan Africa, which do not have the financial resources to purchase their food import needs, must rely to a large extent on food aid. This is usually, — though not invariably, — available to them during periods when food aid offers a means of disposing of surpluses in the principal exporting countries. Such aid poured forth with exceptional generosity during the period of the recent African famine which has already been referred to and this, together with other humanitarian assisstance, helped save the lives of more than 30 million Africans who faced the

imminent prospect of starvation. When people are starving, policies are not enough. Immediate food supplies are the only way of relieving starvation. But leaving it at that is also not enough, because food aid also depresses prices and undermines the incentives for local food production when it is supplied, as too often happens, unfortunately, under conditions in which it competes with local production.

Even when sufficient supplies of food are available at the national level, there is no guarantee that they will reach those who need it at the household or personal level. Sometimes this results from inadequacies in infrastructure and transport.

More often it results from the fact that those who need it simply do not have the means to buy it. In the final analysis, it is at the level of the individual and the household that the principal challenge to the achievement of sustainable food security must be met. It is at this level, too, that our efforts to date have unfortunately been least successful.

SMALL-SCALE FARMERS NEED INCENTIVES

Agriculture is intimately linked to other aspects of development. This is especially true of its relationship to urban growth and the growth of urban incomes. It is paradoxical that those who sufferred most in the recent African famine were the poor people of the rural areas—the peasant farmers themselves. There was often little evidence of famine in the major cities, except in the informal encampments that grew up in the outskirts of these cities as a result of the influx of people displaced by the famine. The tendency of virtually all governments to set food prices so as to provide low-cost food to the people of the urban areas, rather than adequate incentives to farmers , has long been one of the principal impediments to increasing food prodcution. Experience has shown that peasant farmers respond to incentives fully as much as big farmers do, when they have the opportunity to show it, although they are more sensitive and vulnerable to

risks of experimentation when it involves taking a chance or their ability to survive.

The emphasis on cash crops, which began in the colonial era and has continued to such a degree up to the present time, has admittedly made important contributions on the positive side to overall economic growth. But it has also produced severe economic and social imbalances as well as ecological damage. And it has seriously disadvantaged the small farmers, denying them, in many cases, access to the best land, to credit, to extension services, to fair prices and other incentives. By perpetuating these practices, governments have squeezed and victimized the very sector of their own population which can do most to solve not only their food problems but their economic problems. The institutional structure devoted to supporting the small farmer has been especially weak and inadequate — in some cases, for all practical purposes, virtually nonexistent. High priority must be accorded to strengthening these institutions, but this should be aimed at enabling them to provide support for the organizations developed by the small farmers themselves at the community level, rather than imposing rigid, centrally controlled structures on them.

I need not repeat here the oft-recited statistics which illustrate in aggregate terms the dilemma of the food deficit countries of the developing world. Population growth rates without precedent in human experience, massive loss of soil through erosion and destruction of trees and vegetal cover, large-scale degradation of range and crop lands through the processes we refer to as desertification and deterioration of irrigated lands through salination. Migration of peasant farmers thus deprived of their means of assistance into the swelling cities and towns, has transferred poverty from rural to urban areas and added the potential for social disruption and conflict.

These conditions are exacerbated by extremes of weather like the extended period of drought which triggered the great African famine of 1984-86, as well as by international economic conditions and the debilitating and destructive conflicts which have afflicted so many parts of the developing world. These provide the macro environment within which the struggle to achieve sustainable food security must be waged. The report of the Brundtland Commission documents the situation cogently in making the case for the central role of agriculture in effecting a global transition to sustainable development.

CHANGING WORLD FOOD PROSPECTS

Let me refer briefly to some of the evidence pointing to the prospect today of significant changes taking place in the world food situation. I've already talked about some of them, but there are encouraging signs too in Africa of a possible turn-around when the World Bank reports, as it recently did, an annual rate of growth in agricultural output over the four years 1985-88 triple that of the avearge over the previous fifteen years and exceeding population growth for the first extended period since 1970. The principal changes occurred in those countries that have undertaken programmes of policy reform and structural adjustment under which support for and incentives to farmers were increased significantly. Resurgent food production in these countries provided the impetus for important improvements in their overall economic growth in countries where the primary dependence is on agriculture.

Other recent signs are perhaps less encouraging. Last year's drought in the United States, Canada and China reduced world grain output by some 76 million tons and resulted in a sharp reduction in food stocks to a level equal to only some fifty-five days of consumption, the lowest in some thirty years. As Lester Brown pointed out in Worldwatch's

1989 "State of the World" report and in his testimony to a subcommittee of the U.S. Congress recently, where we both appeared, this comes at a time when food production has been plateauing in many areas following the record expansion of recent years.

Now, we don't know whether or not these drought conditions resulted from the global warming trend which is now the subject of such widespread attention. But the impacts of global warming on agriculture, although they cannot be fully evaluated at this point, seem cleary to leave little question that they will be highly destructive and introduce a major new uncertainty into the future of world hunger. Thus, the ability to understand and foresee the consequences of these changes and to prepare for them has become one of the principal imperatives of agricultural planning and policy.

Whether we now face the prospect of a transition to a new period of food scarcity, as Lester Brown suggests, or whether the current reduction in food grain stocks represents an interruption that will prove to be temporary in a period of continuing world surpluses, remains to be seen. But it surely must shock us out of the complacency that has generally characterised our attitudes toward world food security in recent years, and make us realize how vulnerable the world really is to the kind of reductions in supplies that can result from even one year of drought in major food producing countries. Indeed, a recurrence of drought in North America this year could produce a new world food crisis, the results of which would fall most heavily again on those who are already underfed and malnourished. This issue could move right back into the center of the world agenda.

Now, let me say just a word on water. Water is intimately related to agriculture. Food production directly depends on water supply. The disruption of watersheds through destruction of Forests and soil erosion in various parts of the world has severely impaired the productivity of large areas of agricultural land in Africa,Asia and Latin America. Last year's North American drought again was a dramatic reminder of the immediate and large-scale impacts on food production of changes in weather patterns, which would produce reductions in rainfall.

Water is becoming an increasingly important issue in both industrialized and developing countries. Water has always been vital to human life and is an ancient source of conflict. But, in most countries we have come to take it for granted as a virually "free" good. Now, contamination of groundwater, lakes and rivers is becoming pervasive. Shortages of water supplies already exist or are becoming a threat in many areas. A recent study indicates that water may become more important than oil as a source of conflict in the Middle East within the next decade or so when the demands for water from the Tigris and Jordan rivers will exceed their capacity to meet those demands. Similar conflicts are looming in other areas.

There is a growing need for better management of some of the world's major river systems and the development of these systems and the regions they nourish also offers major new economic opportunities. Many water-deficit areas like Africa have extensive groundwater resources which have not yet been fully evaluated or developed. This represents another important area in which need combines with new economic opportunities.

There are many signs that water-related issues will move to the centre of the international agenda in the period ahead. Water will, in my view, become an increasing source of

constraints on food production. Water shortages and contamination will also produce a series of new crises which will inevitably demand the attention of the world community.

COMBINING TRADITIONAL AND MODERN EXPERTISE

Agriculture also is, in essence, a means of converting energy. Basically that's what agriculture is all about—it's an energy conversion business. Modern, high-yield agriculture depends on relatively high energy inputs and, in economic terms, this made good sense as long as energy prices were relatively low. But when the dramatic rise in oil prices triggered a general escalation in energy costs, much energy-intensive agriculture became uneconomic. High-energy agriculture also gives rise to substantial ecological costs. To achieve sustainable increases in future food production will require much more energy-efficient farming methods and, again, a synthesis between modern and traditional practices, for traditional agriculture is much more energy efficient in strict energy input/output terms than is modern agriculture.

In the more developed countries, there has been a great resurgence of interest in organic agriculture, partly as a result of the period of high energy cost and partially because of the growing awareness of the dangers inherent in the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. I have to say that I'm an organic farmer personally and I can testify to the economic viability of organic approaches to farming. Organic farming is traditional to the developing countries, but in introducing new technologies and techniques, development assistance agencies have too downgraded the value of traditional knowledge and practices.

It is now clear that both ecological and economic factors dictate that small farmers in developing countries should be very sparing in their use of chemicals, pesticides and fertilizers and in their dependence on them. These should be used to

complement and supplement not to replace their traditional techniques. External agencies and experts should realise that they have as much to learn from as they have to impart to the small farmer and should devise techniques of working with them to marry traditional and modern insights and practices rather than lending credence to the assumption that these are inherently contradictory.

The relationship of land values to the income that can be generated by the use of land has an important bearing on the ability to achieve sustainability. Where land values are much greater than can be justified by the economic returns available from farming the land, the tendency is for land to become inaccessible to those whose long-term interest is in using it for food production. It is this land too, which is most apt to be transformed to non-agricultural uses. Now, if you look at it in the aggregate you could think that there's a lot of extra land available in the world.

Rice, wheat, maize, sorghum and other food grains and oilseeds which are produced for direct and indirect human consumpton account for most of the world's crop land, employ most rural labour, take virually all pesticides and chemical fertilizers used in agriculture and account for almost all irrigation water. It is to increase production of these food crops that most new land is cleared and de-forested.

In Africa, only 25 percent of the potentially arable land area is now under cultivation; in Latin America, it is only 15 percent;whereas 70 percent of Asia's potentially arable land is under cultivation. But it would be wrong to draw the conclusion from this that easy increases in food production can be achieved by bringing new land under cultivation. In most cases, the economic and/or the ecological costs of doing so are very high, in some cases prohibitive. Converting these areas to crop land involves difficult trade-offs, as well as substantial risk and costs.

There has, in the aggregate, I have to say, been little discernible progress in reducing the ecological damage which has accompanied the efforts in recent times to expand food production. In most cases, the ecological basis for sustainability continues to deteriorate and, in all too many cases, there is evidence that this deterioration is accelerating.

SMALL FARMERS: KEY TO SUCCESS

On the positive side, there are a growing number of examples of projects and programmes where practices designed to achieve sustainability and food production at the level of the small farmer have indeed produced very promising results. Let me cite a few examples presented at a recent consultation on environment, sustainable development and the role of small farmers, held by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD):

— In two small Indian villages in the foothills of the Himalayas, the local people, with some support from the government Soil and Water Conservation Research and Training Centre, the Forest Department and the Ford Foundation joined in a programme of conservation and development to save an eroding watershed by building small dams, terracing, and planting of native grasses and trees together with measures designed to ensure equitable distribution of benefits to all villagers. This has increased both production and sustainability and created a new spirit of social cohesion and community cooperation.

— In an isolated, hilly and mountainous area of rural Nepal, a community programme of health and family planning was combined with a series of measures designed to improve agricultural output and place it on an ecologically sound basis through development of new water supplies, upgrading of livestock, irrigation construction, terracing, tree-planting and a series of other measures. It has

proven so successful that it has become a demonstration and training centre for farmers throughout Nepal who are in the process of applying the experience in their own areas.

— In northern Mali, a group of Nomads established a permanent settlement after the Sahelian drought with the help of the American Friends Service Committee and the Mali government through which the Nomad families developed a viable, self-reliant community. In the course of several years of experimentation, trial and error, they developed attitudes, skills and techniques which have made their village a positive centre of influence in the region and a source of valuable help and advice to other newly establishing communities.

— In Haiti, which has experienced devastating destruction of forests and soil erosion, U.S.AID funded a project through which three nongovernmental agencies joined with small farmers in a programme of extension of agro-forestry designed to combat land degradation, protect the soil and increase the income of farmers. Some 110,000 farmers have participated in the programme, making tree-planting a standard practice and substantially reducing ecological degradation.

A project with which I am personally concerned in the Talamanca region of Costa Rica has produced similarly encouraging results. There the local peasant farmers had largely abandoned growing of their traditional food crops in favour of growing cacao for export. When a disease destroyed the productivity of most of the cacao trees, they were left without livelihoods. Through their own agricultural cooperative, with help from the Netherlands Development Assistance Programme, they worked together to revitalize their local agriculture on the basis primarily of food crops. They relearned their traditional skills and combined them

with new technological and ecological insights available through the nearby Central American Tropical Agriculture Institute and the Costa Rican counterpart of the New Alchemy Institute, which pioneered development of organic methods of food production. The result has been a revitalization of the agricultural economy in the area as well as of its community spirit.

These and many other examples demonstrate that sustainability is achievable. But they make clear, too, that this depends primarily on local initiative and the will to cooperate on an integrated systematic approach to the social, ecological, economic and technological factors involved. They also demonstrate that external support in the form of finance, technical assistance and the sharing of experience with others can provide a significant impetus to such changes.

At the IFAD consultation on environment and sustainable development and the role of small farmers, to which I have already referred, an examination of the experience of many developing countries makes it clear that no standardised, mass approach to programming of this kind of change can be successfully imposed from above or from the outside. Each community is unique and each must develop its own best ways of defining and meeting its problems and creating the leadership structures and modalities through which its people carry out their own programmes. People and organizations from the outside can play only a supporting role. But this support can be critically important if it is provided in a sensitive manner which responds to the interests and needs of the local people and leaves the active leadership in their hands.

All of the examples cited have been based on helping the small farmer to improve his or her productivity on an ecologically sound and sustainable basis. This, in my view, will be the key determinant of success of our efforts to achieve sustainable food security. But measures taken at the level of the small farmer must be supplemented and complemented and encouraged by policies at the national level which encourage and facilitate the optimum allocation of resources including trade and exchange rate policies which do not discriminate against agriculture, market-oriented pricing policies for agricultural products and greater efficiency in the capital markets that serve agriculture. Taxes and subsidies can be regressive; but they can also be a useful tool in bridging private and social costs and inducting the socially efficient use of resources.

Policies at the national level, as well as projects and programmes undertaken at the local level, must reflect much greater emphasis on equity if they are to be successful in facilitating sustainable development. When the benefits of new technologies and external support flow to the more privileged, they tend to exacerbate the social and economic disparities which engender conflict rather than cooperation. The same is true when one sector of the population must bear the costs of such negative side effects as water pollution and destruction of watersheds that result from activities carried out largely by others for their own benefit. The kind of integration and cooperation at the local level required for the achievement of sustainable food security will only come about where there is equitable access on the part of all people affected to the benefits which such activities make available.

There is no standard formula which applies in all situations. But there are a number of key elements which must be

addressed, to varying degrees, in virtually all programmes designed to achieve sustainability. And let me just indicate the principal ones:

— Research. Developing countries need to give much higher priority to developing their own capacities for agricultural and food-related research and the wide dissemination of its results to small farmers. The research programmes of the international agricultural research institutes, financed through the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) have produced some impressive, indeed remarkable, results. But in most cases, national research efforts are lagging and there is not as yet, a sufficient link— and this is particularly true in Africa — between the work of the international agricultural research institutes and the actual experience and needs of small farmers. Nor have sufficient efforts been made to draw upon the extensive knowledge and experience that small farmers have gained through centuries of following traditional agricultural practices. It is of vital importance that this knowledge not be lost, but rather be joined with the results of research and experience in the modern agricultural sector. Developing country research efforts should be aimed especially at effecting a positive synthesis between traditional and modern knowledge.

— Extension services need to be strengthened to ensure that small farmers have access to the results of the latest research and experience and, as I mentioned, become active partners in it.

— Improved seeds. Small farmers must have acces to them and must themselves participate in programmes designed to test and develop new and improved varieties.

— Credit. Availability of credit to small farmers is essential in enabling them to develop their full potential. And recent experience in Africa has demonstrated dramatically how small farmers respond to the availability of the kind of credit previously only generally available to the large farmer.

— Land tenure system which give those who work the land security of tenure in one form or another and access to the added value which results from their own work in improving the land are essential to any programme of sustainability.

— Markets and prices. Reliable markets for their products at prices which provide the continuing incentive to produce are clearly indispensable. This is one of the principal areas in which government policy will be the determining factor.

— Improvement of infrastructure, including roads, irrigation works, water reservoirs and storage facilities must be given much higher priority in investment and in assistance programmes.

— Integrated pest management programmes represent both a high-priority need and a great opportunity for investment which produces high returns in both economic and ecological terms.

— Reducing waste offers one of the best means of increasing the effective yield from current production as well as generating a high rate of economic return.

— Trees. The relationship between trees and agriculture is becoming more and more important, more and more recognized, fortunately. Both those which produce crops and those which are primarily useful as a means of stabilizing the soil and watersheds and providing a source of firewood must all be planted in much larger numbers.

Today for every tree planted in Africa, ten are cut down. This, obviously, has to be reversed. The experience with planting of crop-producing trees in conjunction with field crops, which we know as agro-forestry, has proven to be an extremly effective and promising means of increasing productivity, preventing erosion and achieving the kind of ecological balance in land use on which sustainability depends.

— Livestock requires better management so as to eliminate over-grazing while increasing the quality of meat available from individual animals.

— Preservation of genetic stock of the trees and plants on which indigenous food production depends is vitally important and this must become a central priority of agricultural research in developing countries.

— Education and training. This is perhaps first and foremost the indispensible requirement for the successful implementation of all these other measures. It must be provided to a much greater extent in the rural areas themselves and education and training should, to the maximum extent, be integrated into the life and working patterns of the rural population. Formal educational practices must be supplemented by a continuing process of learning and feedback of experience by those involved in the ongoing work in each of these fields. Ecological insights must be inculcated in the training and practices of all farmers and rural peoples. Again, these should include the insights and knowledge available from both traditional and modern sources.

- Control of water-borne disease. Despite AIDS and all the other major health risks that we face, it is a simple fact that avoidable water-borne disease is still the greatest source of death and human suffering in developing

countries. Particularly— again in Africa— water-borne disease continues to be an unacceptable problem because of its avoidability. Eliminating it must be an important component of programmes of sustainable development.

— Family planning can best be addressed by integration with programmes at the local level designed to achieve sustainablity. Family planning in itself is important, but it works best when family planning programmes and education are fully integrated into overall programmes of community development. They should involve both the provision of access to socially and culturally acceptable methods of family planning to those who are already motivated to use them, as well as more general education designed to enable people to better understanding and evaluate the implications of family planning and population control.

WOMEN FARMERS PLAY A VITAL ROLE

It is encouraging to know that the role of women, who figure so prominently in all these issues in agriculture, and in rural life generally, has been the subject of much more attention recently. This recognition of the central role of women in both the economic and social dimensions of rural life is long overdue. In Africa, women are responsible for— in some cases— up to 90 percent of food production, processing and marketing, and of course. in virtually all rural households in the developing world, they are the principal source of informal education and values. Yet, deeply entrenched cultural and social patterns continue to inhibit women from access to the education, status and other means of realizing their full potential. Integrated programmes designed to achieve sustainability at the community level will help immensely to release this potential which, in turn, could provide a major source of the new energy and impetus required for the very success of such programmes.

BETTER USE OF FOOD SURPLUSES

Better use of food surpluses could make an especially important contribution to sustainable development and the elimination of hunger. Food surpluses which result from subsidies are a burden on the economies of the surplus countries, they are a source of distortion in world trade and a disincentive to production in areas which cannot afford to subsidize their farmers and therefore meet the competition. Such subsidies are, on balance, an impediment to the ultimate achievement of sustainable development. But surpluses, however they may arise, do have an important and positive part to play in the achievement of sustainability. For whatever may be the balance between world food supply demand on an aggregate basis, there will be supluses in some areas and deficits in other. The ways in which these surpluses are managed and these deficits met will have an extremely important bearing on the world food situation in the future and on the prospects for eliminating hunger.

"People must come to accept private enterprise not as a necessary evil, but as an affirmative good."

— Eugene Black

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