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***“Consultations on Energy and Environment for development, Chemicals  
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Ladies and Gentlemen, the environment of our region, West Asia and North Africa, or WANA to give it its appropriate acronym, has suffered the neglect of all victims of conflict and distrust. Political discord and social instability have allowed our leaders to overlook their responsibility to nurture hope of a better life for present and future generations. But the imagined notion of limitless resources and a patient and subservient environment is showing itself to be the chimera it always was. Time is running out and contingent planning by arbitrary decree has no place in a schema of environmental deterioration.

We must rise above partisan politics and look beyond our neighbourhood as merely a troubled patchwork of states and ethnicities. The future happiness and well-being of our peoples depends on good management of the human environment, and to that end, I would ask this gathering to take away with it the seed of an idea that has awaited planting in fertile soil for many years.

We in WANA and greater Asia are in dire need of a supra-national resource cooperative to balance human and physical resources and needs. Only a regional water and energy community freed from unilateral state interests can serve the needs, present and future, of our inter-dependent communities.

The achievement of such an ambition seems daunting in an increasingly troubled political climate, yet it has its precedents. Existing energy partnerships include the Energy Charter Treaty, an international agreement originally based on integrating the energy sectors of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe at the end of the Cold War into the broader European and world markets.

The European Energy Charter, which was originally signed in December 1991, contains a declaration of principles for international energy including trade, transit and investment, together with the intention to negotiate a

binding treaty. This agreement was signed in Lisbon in December 1994 and came into effect in April 1998.

The substance of this treaty provides a useful template for innovators in our region. The document focuses on five broad areas: (i) the protection and promotion of foreign energy investments; (ii) free trade in energy materials, products and energy-related equipment, based on WTO rules; (iii) freedom of energy transit through pipelines and grids; (iv) reducing the negative environmental impact of the energy cycle through improving energy efficiency; and (v) mechanisms for the resolution of State-to-State and/or Investor-to-State disputes.

If Europe, the last century's most turbulent battleground, can lay down its weapons and share a table to agree comprehensive resource management, then surely even our troubled region can stave off a looming catastrophe in a similar fashion.

I have sometimes been accused of offering pipedreams to the operatives of *real politique*. But can you blame me for seeking an alternative to a pipeline nightmare? Producers, consumers and those who live around energy production facilities and pipelines all have a stake in the current energy network.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Asia and North Africa, needs its own Water and Energy Charter to improve our general human condition and to ensure regional energy security. Looking further into the future, a body of trans-regional charters from around the world must be welded together to form an international body that regulates investment in, as well as trade and transit of energy.

This is a call that has gone unheeded in the past. In 1946 Pandit Nehru convened in Delhi an Asian relations conference to examine and explore the intra-independence between the nations of our West Asian region and of South Asia. Now, some 60 years after that initiative was inspired by one of the last century's great statesmen, we should all be statesmanlike in dealing with the dire crises affecting us.

We need more than *ad hoc* policies which narrowly focus on the exchange of oil and manpower, to ensure enduring growth in the quality of our

citizens' lives. Indeed, moving beyond a short-sighted fixation on supply and demand of these dual 'commodities' is long overdue.

In 1988, a statement of deputies of the Japanese Diet recognised what Nehru and others had perceived some four decades earlier – the security and contentment of our continent rests on a common resource-focussed community of oil producers and the hinterland states. Today, the need for human resource development programmes to satisfy a hunger for opportunity and for hope in the region has never been greater.

The 2005 World Bank Report on Economic Developments and Prospects in the MENA region states that close to 100 million new jobs will be needed over the next 20 years to keep pace with the new labour force entrants and absorb those currently unemployed. Such employment growth would require real economic growth rates averaging 6%-7% a year for a sustained period of time. But the benefits of this growth must be shared throughout society or the gains will lead to nought.

Hard economics must be motivated by the scientific requirements of all humanity, and the politics of energy security must place people over pipelines. We might refer to this approach as 'anthropolicy', an approach that combines the human and physical needs of all humanity. Perhaps only such a sea-change in policy-making can avert the impending tragedy threatening a region without a commons and without adequate governance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I believe a gathering like this is an appropriate forum to ask how we can expect the peoples of our region to cooperate in local communities when our prime ministers and their cabinet colleagues neglect to meet and form lasting institutions to deal with regional needs.

In this valuable UNEP meeting, I believe, discussion will focus on the three major challenges facing our human and physical environment; energy security, climate change, and providing ease of access to energy in the developing world to enhance economic growth and quality of life.

I would like to mention here the "*Limits to Growth Report*" which was presented to the Club of Rome in 1972, and was updated some 30 years later. The earlier report predicted social, economic and environmental decline; and three decades later confirmed that humanity has dangerously overshot the limits of our planet's carrying capacity. Another important

report is “*The Feedback on Climate Change*” by David Wasdell. These reports and numerous other studies must be taken seriously, considered thoroughly, and acted upon immediately by governments and NGOs alike.

It is no secret that our entire planet is in crisis. A bird’s eye view would put Sub-Saharan Africa at its epicentre, with continuing food insecurity, a rise of extreme poverty, stunningly high child and maternal mortality, and large numbers of people living in slums.

Our own continent, Asia, appears the most dynamic on paper, in terms of the Millennium development Goals, but in the shadow of high-rise development, hundreds of millions of people populate the slums of extreme poverty.

Pessimists assert that even if the UN millennium development Goals were met, in 2015 the world would still have 900 million people who have to walk more than a mile a day to get drinking water, 1.6 billion people with no sanitation facilities; and in 2020, more than 2 billion people would still live in urban slums.

Yet, in the face of this vista, the world’s producers of prosperity remain its only consumers. How can we accept a situation where 20% of the world’s population produces 80% of its environmental degradation? With the diminishing capacity of the natural world to neutralize the generated carbon dioxide; the problems created by growing energy use can only increase exponentially.

Indeed, we have no choice but to concentrate our abilities on alleviating the suffering of man and the environment. Total worldwide energy used today is 8 billion tons of oil equivalent per year, which will increase to 40 billion tons by the year 2060. Thereafter, the known deposits would only be adequate for the next 80-100 years depending upon the speed at which consumerist development steams ahead.

The Global Marshall Plan Initiative of 2004 provides a possible solution to rapid and unbalanced globalisation, and provides a workable alternative to growing social inequality and environmental degradation. If properly funded, this integrative approach could rapidly provide a broad and fast-growing network of stakeholders from politics, business and civil society.

Environmental proposals and regulations by affluent countries should not permit the purchase of other people's right to the use of fossil fuel, as a license to contribute additional carbon to the atmosphere. This while depriving large sections of the human family of their right to the minimum basic needs.

Many research initiatives show that the technology to change course already exists. The outcome of two scientific studies for the *German Government*, conducted by a think tank at the *German Aerospace Center* (DLR) and supported by the Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation, *TREC*, concluded that all energy demands for power generation and sea water desalination, for MENA and EU regions, can be solved by:

- Deserts as sources of solar energy
- Available solar thermal power technologies.

When will the Earth Charter, the declaration of international values and principles that is necessary for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful future, be endorsed by the United Nations? This potentially visionary document was drafted from early 1997 to March 2000, through an international, open process, yet has received no official endorsement so far.

If the United Nations cannot take the lead in environmental management, then we must initiate progress at a regional level. The first step is dialogue with a determined timescale for real progress.

In March, I will host a conference in Amman entitled: "*Voices from Asia: Promoting Dialogue and Mutual Effort*". The meeting is part of a continuing joint project with the Sasakawa Peace Foundation which aims to encourage partnership within the West-Asian and East-Asian region, which culturally includes Africa.

I believe that such an initiative is needed to marshal the political will for a Common Humanitarian Agenda, including the vital component of environmental responsibility. The fears of many in our region that the struggle for energy security is damning the poorest of the world's inhabitants to political and economic torpor drives this belief in the need for increased communication on many levels.

I believe a broad base of interaction is needed not only between governments, but among think tanks, NGOs and civil society. We hope to see West Asia/Africa getting closer to South and East Asia through a process of joint effort so that relations develop not only on the basis of oil, but also the rich cultural heritage - the federation of cultures – in our regions. This approach should expand the ‘space’ for resolving urgent issues like environmental security, the Palestinian-Israeli peace process and the reconstruction of Iraq.

How else can we Asians avoid the dire consequences of an ever-increasing drive for energy, particularly in the United States, Europe and China? This seemingly unquenchable thirst for energy continues to dictate obdurate policies that hold no hope of a better future for a silenced majority in Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the future security of the human environment is dependent upon the intimate involvement of our people. Only by making citizens into stakeholders in their built and natural environment can we successfully promote civil society and that harmonious democratising process that sometimes seems so elusive. Good governance within states, between states and within regions provides the key to unlocking human and environmental development potential.