



Our environment is not for sale :

Call for the creation of a Global Environmental Organization

At the dawn of the 21st century, widespread and irreversible environmental damage is still worsening at an alarming rate. Yet, the generalized irresponsibility to this regard has seen a poor response from the citizen and institution alike. Global climate warming, oil slicks, radioactive and genetic contamination, massive deforestation, air, soil and water pollution... This list of our exactions, far too long, is made longer mainly because of the institutions opposition to change and the inconsistency of their environmental policies.

In this respect, the outcome of Johannesburg Earth summit marks an edifying failure since its results are far from any kind of fundamental breakthrough, even after intense negotiations. More than thirty years after the first global Earth summit revealing the dead end to which our life style drives us, **the recognition of the rights of the future generations, of the principle of precaution or the principle of sustainable use of natural resources remain above all vain declarations without effects.**

More and more voices rise up and ask for coercive measures, which is the only way to call into question the productivist logic that still prevails. But the primacy of the economy over the environment makes all preventive measures largely uncertain and subject to the will of an agreement within the walls of the World Trade Organization.

This primacy thrives on the absence of a Global Environmental Organization. As a matter of fact, in the United Nations, the environment has been a victim of historic neglect. Whereas health, labour, culture and education, food and even intellectual property all possess their own specialised agency with proper funding, the environment is only endowed with a subsidiary program of coordination, without sufficient funding and mandate, namely the United Nations Environment Program. In fact, **the UN lacks a real political authority dedicated to the global environment, capable of limiting the merchandisation of our lives, our nature, our planet.**

Founded on the basis of the United Nation Environment Program, the GEO would constitute a unique framework for global environmental protection policies (climate, ozone layer, oceans, desertification, forest, biodiversity, fresh water, energy resources, agriculture, ecotaxation, environmental accountability of companies). Its construction would proceed from a reorganization of the environmental competences currently scattered within a dozen of international organizations and numerous secretariats of multilateral agreements on the environment. In parallel, a certain transversality of environment policies, inherent to the concept of sustainable development, will be kept.

But contrary to the other specialized institutions of the UN, the GEO must not be a technocratic tool distant from the citizen and increasing the rift between the North and the South. There are many ways to avoid this : **environment and sustainable development education for all citizens and adapted training for the delegations of the countries of the South -very marginalised during the negotiations due to the lack of qualified staff-, the organization of conferences of citizens on topics of society, the recognition of a right to petition opening an international debate on environmental issues... are all means to bring the GEO closer to the citizens.**

The world governance of the environment must no longer be the exclusive business of the states. The voice of citizens, local authorities, NGOs and economic actors must also find an echo in the choice of environment policies. Faithful to the principle of subsidiarity and to the logic « think globally, act locally », the GEO could impulse reinforced cooperation agreements between local authorities.

On the global scale, the current priority is to efficiently enforce the hundreds of multilateral agreements on the environment. With this intention, the GEO must become a real tool for prevention, actor of a clean technology transfer from the North to the South and financial assistant for the application of the treaties. Besides, under its impetus, the observance mechanisms of the treaties deserve to be harmonized and simplified. The GEO could also have the capacity to sanction through a World Court for the Environment open to the NGOs.

The GEO has to counterweight the WTO. The integration of the environment in the competences of the WTO cannot be an acceptable solution : first, it is not the function of the WTO, and it has proven

its reluctance to deal with the environment, second, the integration would amount to the fatal confession that we consider that the environment is for sale. **In reaction to the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF, the role of the GEO is to proclaim and apply the principles of sustainable development, clearly impose the primacy of environmental rules over commercial rules and promote the emerging concept of global public good in the environmental field.**

Another important mission of the GEO will precisely be one of scientific and technical reference in all domains of the environment, a place of gathering and dissemination of knowledge and good practices.

For all these purposes, funding must be a means and an end in itself. While promoting an ecotax designed to deter polluters and develop, thanks to fund transfers, preservation programs for our planet, the GEO plays a role of orientation of economic practices while sanctioning the most seriously polluting practices. The funding of the GEO must be a concrete interpretation of the principle of joint but differentiated accountability, important with regard to countries of the South

Finally, no one can ignore that such an international tool would contribute to the official recognition of our environment as an essential condition of the survival of humanity. **Major and irreversible harms to the environment should thus be considered as imprescriptible crimes against humanity and a reflexion on the right to interfere on an environmental basis should be pursued.**

« Alterglobalization » is elaborated by and for the citizens. The following months will be rich in international events : from the G8 to the European Social Forum, the year 2003 must see the idea of a GEO grow and lead to the reform of the environmental world governance.

The signatories of the present text mobilize and call state representatives and governments, especially those of the South, as well as the secretary-general of the UN, to engage this ambitious project with conviction. In order to do so, a first step is to rapidly convene an *ad hoc* international conference gathering officials from the UN, its member states and civil society. Let us hope that it won't be necessary to suffer another oil slick, nuclear disaster or a more than foreseeable climate warming to act. *Our common future is at stake !*

Premiers signataires : **Yann Arthus-Bertrand**, photograph ; **Denis Baupin**, deputy mayor of Paris ; **Pierre Beaudoin**, president of FRAPNA ; **Dominique Bernard**, president of Agir pour l'Environnement ; **Simone de Bollardière**, campaigner for peace ; **Allain Bougrain Dubourg**, president of the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux ; **Jerry Bourgeois**, president of Comité de Liaison pour une Autorité Mondiale de l'Environnement ; **Christian Brodhag**, President of Agora 21 ; **Andrée Buchmann**, presidente of Alsace Qualité Environnement ; **Michel Cantal-Dupart**, professor of the Chair in Urbanism and Environnement of the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers ; **Denis Cheissoux**, radio producer of the program « CO2 mon amour » ; **Yves Cochet**, former environment minister ; **Benjamin Dessus**, president of Global Chance ; **Olivier Deleuze**, former secretary of State for Energy and Sustainable development, Belgium ; **Stéphane Doumbé-Billé**, member of the Environmental law Commission of the UICN and coordinator of the network "Environmental law" in l'Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie ; **François Dufour**, vice-president of Attac - France, national spokesperson for la Confédération paysanne ; **Daniel Esty**, professor at Yale University (USA) ; **Daniel Evain**, member of the French Commission for Sustainable Development ; **Monica Fossati**, chief redactor of Ekwo magazine ; **Antonio Nicolás Gillari**, general director of « Multimedios Ambiente Ecológico » and president of « Fundación por la Paz » (Argentina) ; **Susan George**, vice-presidente of Attac - France ; **Roland Gérard**, environnement educator ; **Michel Giran**, ADOME founder ; **Géraud Guibert**, national secretary for the environment in the Socialist party ; **Christian Feuillet**, vice-president of the regional Counsel of Ile de France ; **Cédric Gossart**, administrator of the french office of the Fondation for Environment Education in Europe ; **Pierre-Henri Gouyon**, genetician, member of the French Commission for Sustainable Development ; **Marie-Angèle Hermitte**, director of research at CNRS ; **Albert Jacquard**, philosopher, writer ; **Marc Jolivet**, humorist ; **Susana Jourdan** and **Jacques**

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To sign this appeal : ape@globenet.org