

Keynote Speech

Where on Earth Are We Going?

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President Sakamoto, Professor Cassim, Professor Takahashi, Professor Suzuki and other distinguished members of the Faculty and Administration, most importantly, the student body. Let me first say how very much I appreciate this occasion of visiting the campus of Ritsumeikan University with my colleague Professor Nay Htun. I very much welcome the opportunity provided by this visit and my visit to your beautiful Asia Pacific University campus at Beppu to get to know more at first hand of the very exceptional qualities, programmes and people at Ritsumeikan which have earned it such a fine reputation in the international university community and as a leader amongst Japanese universities, particularly in its international outreach and establishment of the Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. Indeed it is unique amongst Japanese universities in having almost half of its student body and faculty from overseas and students from over 60 countries. I am greatly impressed too, with the basic vision and objectives of the Ritsumeikan trust of “maturing global citizens who can play leading roles in various fields” and “developing into an international university with originality always seeking to be the best”, contributing to the goal of world peace through education and research in peace and democracy. It is clear that in celebrating its centennial anniversary last year, and marking this occasion with the opening of the Asia-Pacific University campus, Ritsumeikan has truly realized this objective. Its establishment of the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, as the only museum of its kind in the world founded by a university underscores Ritsumeikan’s commitment to contributing to the universal goal of world peace. What you have done is truly impressive by any standard and has prepared the way for an even larger leadership role at Ritsumeikan in education for peace, a role which I know can be further expanded and strengthened through your partnerships with the University for Peace, American University and the University of British Columbia, with both of which we also have cooperative arrangements.

The University for Peace was established by international agreement approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 1980 to serve and support the peace and security goals of United Nations Charter through education, training and research for it to promote

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peace with each other, peace with nature and peace with ourselves. I was so pleased to have been able to meet at United Nations Headquarters in New York with President Kazuichi Sakamoto when we discussed and confirmed the arrangements for this visit. It more than meets the high expectations I had of it and it fully reinforces my confidence, which is shared by Rector Martin Lees, Professor Nay Htun and other University for Peace colleagues, as to the promising prospects for our cooperation. The Rector, Martin Lees has close ties to Japan and joins me and Professor Nay Htun in inviting President Sakamoto and his colleagues to visit the headquarters and campus of The University for Peace in San Jose, Costa Rica and we look forward to their visit.

In the title of my recent book, I raised the question "Where on Earth Are We Going?" It is far more than a rhetorical question. For, indeed, the more I examine the state of our planet and of the environmental and life-support systems which sustain life as we know it, the more convinced I am that we truly are at risk that the future of human life on Earth is likely to be determined by what we do, or fail to do in this century, – and most likely in its first three decades. This makes governance – the manner in which we manage those activities which determine our future – our central challenge.

The emergence of the environment as an issue of growing public concern and political attention has its roots in the conservation movement which focused primarily on conserving nature and natural resources. But, environment embraces a much broader range of issues through which human activities impact on the quality of life in cities and towns, the health effects of pollution and contamination of the food chain, and threats to the Earth's life-support system through such global phenomena as impacts on climate change, ozone depletion and accelerated loss of biodiversity.

The Stockholm Conference put the environment issue on the global agenda and affirmed its inextricable link with development. The memorable statement at Stockholm of India's Prime Minister at that time, Indira Gandhi, that "Poverty is the greatest polluter" has become one of the best known and most widely quoted in the folklore of the environmental movement.

Preparations for the Stockholm Conference coincided with the emergence of the environment as a major domestic issue in Japan itself. Minamata and several other incidents dramatized the severe impacts on human health and the quality of life of the air and water pollution that has accompanied Japan's remarkable economic growth since the end of World War II. I recall, during a visit to Tokyo in 1971, and looking out over the city from the top deck of the Tokyo tower. That the view was almost entirely obscured by the gray cloud of polluted air that hung over the city. The deepening awareness of the heavy costs and risks this was imposing on Japanese society gave rise to what I call the second Japanese miracle: a concerted and highly successful effort involving all sectors of Japanese society to reduce air and water pollution, improve the environment of the cities and the countryside and reduce the negative environmental impact of continued economic growth. Your government enacted some of the strictest environmental regulations of any country accompanied by strong incentives to your industry. It responded by developing new technologies and management techniques to reduce environmental impacts and the energy and material content of your industrial production while consumers became much more

environmentally sensitive in their purchasing habits. A series of environmental laws was passed and the Environment Protection Agency established with strong powers to enforce them.

These measures turned Japan into the leader amongst industrialized countries in effecting a dramatic improvement in their own environment while demonstrating that this was fully consistent with a dynamic, growing economy. Indeed, in improving its environmental performance Japan significantly improved its industrial efficiency and added to its competitive advantage internationally.

This noteworthy domestic achievement was accompanied by the emergence of Japan as an important leader in international environmental cooperation for which its domestic performance provided enhanced credibility. My own activities in the environmental and sustainable development cause have benefited immensely by Japanese support and cooperation and have enabled me to establish some strong and invaluable personal and professional ties with Japan.

Indeed I am pleased to say that now I look forward to visiting the Tokyo Tower for the splendid view it so often affords of Mount Fuji in the distance. And in my visits to several cities in Japan as well as its rural areas, I am immensely impressed with the improvements that have been effected in the environment and the care and attention being accorded to environmental issues throughout Japan. Japanese industry, which has not always evidenced the degree of environmental responsibility in its international activities as it has domestically, is now extending this experience and expertise into its international operations and becoming a leading practitioner of sustainable development. This is particularly important in the need to support developing countries in their transition to a sustainable development pathway.

Other cities of the developing countries are not as fortunate as those of Japan but cope with unprecedented rates of urban growth and deteriorating environmental and social conditions with only a fraction of the resources available to these cities. These issues were the subject of the International Symposium on Asia Pacific Cities in the environment held at your Asia Pacific University campus in Beppu in the past two days, from which I learned a great deal.

After Stockholm, never more could the environment issue be considered only in the narrow context of the pollution problems of the rich, but as deeply relevant to the development needs and aspirations of developing countries, underscoring the imperatives for new dimensions of co-operation and equity in north-south relationships. This is a legacy that continues. The essential link between environment and development which was articulated at Stockholm has since evolved into the broader concept of sustainable development in which the economic, social, population, gender and human settlements dimensions of the development process can be seen in their systemic relationships with each other.

Although there was significant progress in many areas following the Stockholm Conference, it became evident by the mid-1980s that, overall, the environment was still deteriorating and that the forces driving it – increased population and wasteful, destructive patterns of consumption and production, were persisting. In response, the

United Nations General Assembly established a World Commission for Environment and Development under the chairmanship of Norway's Gro Harlem Brundtland. Its report "Our Common Future" made the case for sustainable development as the only viable pathway to a secure and hopeful future for the human community. Its recommendations provided an important input to the decision by the UN General Assembly in December 1989 to hold on the twentieth anniversary of Stockholm, the UN Conference on Environment and Development and accept the invitation of Brazil to host it. To underscore the importance of this conference, it was decided that it should be held at the summit level and it is now known universally as the "Earth Summit", held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992.

The Earth Summit produced agreement on Agenda 21, the Declaration of "Rio" Principles and on two historic framework conventions, one on Climate Change and the other on Biodiversity which have since come into effect. It launched the negotiating process, which led to agreement on a Convention on Desertification, an issue of special importance to many developing countries, particularly in the arid regions of Sub-Saharan Africa. And, it catalyzed and launched the successful negotiations leading to agreement on the Convention on Persistent Organic Products, "POPS" and the UN Forum on Forests.

From Stockholm through to Rio, the shared concern of developing countries has been the inadequate availability of funds for the financing of sustainable development and barriers to equitable access to technology. This remains the greatest impediment to alleviating the hunger, poverty and environmental degradation which continue to plague less developed countries.

Of the world's 6 billion people, 2.8 billion nearly half, live on less than \$2.00 a day and 1.2 billion, about one in five, live on less than \$1.00 a day. In rich countries fewer than 5% of all children under five are malnourished, in poor countries as many as 50% are. The average income in the richest 20 countries is 37 times the average of the poorest, and the gap has doubled in the past 40 years. But there has been some progress. In East Asia the number of people living on less than a dollar a day fell from around 420 million to around 280 million between 1998. But in Latin America, South Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa the number of poor has continued to rise. And in the countries of Europe and Central Asia in transition to market economies, the number of people living on less than a dollar a day rose more than 20 times.

Paradoxically despite setbacks and difficulties developing countries are now leading the revitalization of the global economy. Developing countries *are* growing. China, a special case, has been growing at the rate of some 8% per year. At this rate, China will, perhaps as soon as the next decade, rival the USA and Japan as amongst the world's largest economies in the aggregate, although on a per capita basis, it will continue to lag far behind the more mature industrialized countries.

Despite fights and turbulence and uncertainties, I am convinced that this great Asia-Pacific region will become the primary driver of the world economy and it is largely in this region that the future of the human community will be decided.

The governments and people of the industrialized countries will have to become accustomed to the fact that we are a minority – a privileged minority to be sure, but one on

which the majority is not only gaining in numbers but also in economic power. Indeed, we have yet to appreciate how the shift in economic growth to developing countries is changing the geopolitical landscape, a shift which I believe will be seen in the perspective of history as even more fundamental than the demise of the Cold War. Yet, this shift has not yet been reflected in the international governance structure, which is still largely based on the geopolitical conditions that emerged from World War II.

Of course, economic growth in the developing world is by no means universal. Africa has been largely left out and many African countries have actually slipped back from the progress they had been making since winning their independence and there are other troubled economies in both Asia and Latin America. Even in those countries, which have been experiencing the greatest economic growth, this has had little impact on alleviation of endemic poverty. In fact, it has deepened the gap between rich and poor.

We have learned a great deal about “development” since the term was first applied to the process through which the new nations emerging from the colonial rule in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean aspired to build viable self-reliant societies in which their people could achieve their aspirations for a better life. We have learned – perhaps more from our mistakes and our successes – that development is a complex, systemic process of which economic growth is a necessary, but not sufficient, component. We have learned that earlier, notions of foreign aid pumping money into developing countries over a limited period to help their economies “take-off” are much too simplistic and not valid however well intentioned they may have been. We have learned that it is much more effective to allow developing countries to earn their own way by facilitating their access to our markets for the products in which they can be part of, than perpetuating their dependence with uncertain and highly conditioned flows of aid. We have learned that development is rooted in the culture, values, social and political structures of each society and the manner in which it confronts and manages the challenges, constraints and opportunities of the modernization phenomena which is largely external, and often alien, to its own experience. We have learned that economic growth does not in itself produce development that is equitable and sustainable in environmental, social as well as economic terms.

Sustainable development is not an end in itself. Rather it is the means for effecting the transition to a secure and sustainable pathway through a positive synthesis between the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development which will ensure the future of civilized life, as we know it.

Let me cite briefly a few of the key factors, which bear on the challenge we face of building a sustainable civilization.

Food and agriculture have receded from our list of priorities largely because of the successes of the Green Revolution. But if there ever was a case for complacency, it has surely been overtaken by the sobering evidence of the challenge we face in doubling world food production by the year 2025 without undermining the environmental conditions on which its sustainability depends. It will be a formidable task. Even more daunting will be the challenge of ensuring that poor people in food-deficit areas receive the quality and quantities of food they will require for their basic sustenance. It is an area in which the process of reconciling environmental and developmental considerations is bound to become

more difficult and controversial.

Some two-third's of the earth surface consists of oceans beyond national jurisdiction. The Antarctic as well as the atmosphere and outer space are all common areas which are not incorporated into the territory of any nation. They are primary and indispensable elements of the earth's life support system. Caring for these common areas and managing the activities which impact on them is a responsibility which can only be exercised by the nations of the world cooperatively. Competing national interests in the use and exploitation of these common areas are likely to become the source of increasing tension and potential conflict, underscoring the need for a cooperative approach to dealing with these issues.

The availability of potable water is another issue with potentially explosive consequences in the next millennium. On a global basis more than 1 billion people do not have ready access to an adequate and safe water supply. More than 800 million of those unserved live in rural areas. In 1990, 20 countries suffered chronic water shortages. By 2025, the World Bank expects that number to rise to 34.

In all developing countries, except for those rich in oil and gas, energy is at the centre of the environment/ development nexus. Much of my own career has been spent in the energy field and I am particularly mindful, of the central role of energy in the successful transition to a sustainable development pathway. We have to face the reality that even with encouraging progress that has been made in developing new and alternative sources of energy, there is still no primary source of energy that is environmentally sound and economically viable that could replace our reliance on fossil fuels in the foreseeable future. This highlights the need to give high priority to improving the efficiency with which we use fossil fuels and reducing their environmental impacts.

In the new economy, knowledge and its application of technology, design, management and information systems are the primary source of added value and comparative advantage. For developing countries this gives rise to the risk of a new generation of disadvantage accompanied by a new generation of opportunity. Their full participation in the movement to free trade is thus the least means of ensuring that developing countries can benefit in the long term from growth of the world economy. But this must be accompanied by measures which not only open our markets to them, but enable them to access these markets effectively while affording their own economies protection from predatory trade practices during the transition to universally free and open markets.

Environmental impacts are felt most directly in their effect on human health. Air pollution, water pollution and contamination of the food chain are now threatening to undermine much of the progress that has been made in improving human health in recent times. The June 2001 bulletin on Global Environmental Change and Human Security states that poor environmental quality is responsible for around 25% of all preventable ill health in the world today, with diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infections, such as pneumonia, heading the list. And children are the most severely affected with some two-thirds of all preventable ill health due to environmental conditions occurring amongst children.

Some 5 years ago, I convened a meeting of leading scientists and asked them what

they considered to be the main risks to the human future. At the top of the list was the spread of communicable diseases, both in terms of resurgence of diseases like tuberculosis and malaria that had previously been brought under control and emergence of new diseases which had previously been either totally unknown like HIV/ AIDS or had been until recently or confined to small areas, usually in the tropics. They also pointed to the prospect that in an increasing number of cases, these were proving to be resistant to antibiotics and other treatments on which we have been able to rely for the control of such diseases in recent times.

The social dimensions of sustainable development are now receiving, as they should, a great deal more attention. Inclusion of and empowerment of women and minorities is at the very heart of the sustainable development movement. The role of women in the rural economy, particularly in developing countries, in the community, in the care and education of children and in their long undervalued contribution to the economy is one of the most important and necessary features of sustainable development.

Indigenous and tribal peoples whose traditional ways of life are threatened by the encroachment of modernization are often the main victims of environmental destruction and unsustainable development practices. Yet these people who have continued to live close to nature are the repositories of most of the evolutionary experience of the human species as well as the inhabitants and custodians of some of the Earth's most precious and endangered ecosystems.

Most of the world's precious biodiversity resources, are located in the developing countries of the South. These are faced with accelerating deterioration as the needs of growing populations, and the greed of the powerful and often corrupt few lead to the continuing loss of irreplaceable species of plant and animal life. But we cannot expect developing countries to bear themselves the cost of protecting these resources so invaluable to the world community as a whole and we must help them to manage them sustainably and to provide alternative livelihoods to those who depend on them.

The resource scarcities projected by the Club of Rome's "Limits To Growth" have not materialized. Technology has provided a wide range of substitutes for natural resources. However human ingenuity and technology are not likely to replace the many species of plant and animal life that are becoming extinct at accelerated rates or the forests and fish stocks that are being depleted through over-exploitation. There are clearly limits to the extent that this environmental degradation can continue without severe risks to human well being.

While these factors will impose physical and material limits on economic growth, they need not call a halt to the growth process. They simply require a change in the nature and the content of growth to a mode which is less physical and materials intensive and directed more and more to serving the cultural, intellectual and other non-material needs of people. After all, an individual's growth does not stop when people reach physical maturity which is a prerequisite to healthy growth in the non-material dimensions of human growth which are the real essence of our lives. Why should this not be so of societies?

A demographic dilemma of monumental proportions is in the making. Although there is now evidence that population growth rates in many developing countries are beginning

to decline, it is not likely that the world's population will stabilize much before the mid-point of the 21st Century at a level which is likely to be at least 50% higher than the current population. And most of it will be concentrated in the developing world where it will continue to intensify the pressures on scarce land and resources.

The more mature industrialized countries are facing the prospect of aging and declining populations. The pressure of growing populations and poverty with its attendant conflicts over land and resources in developing countries, will inevitably generate strong incentives for the people affected to seek every means, formal and informal, to migrate to the more industrialized countries. Indeed, in my view, this presents one of the most daunting challenges to governance in both industrialized and developing countries as well as countries in transition from communism in the period ahead and to the prospects for cooperation amongst them.

Thus the same forces which are driving the need for more cooperation between industrialized and developing countries also contain the seeds of deepening conflict and division which could threaten the prospects of cooperative governance.

Canada's Professor Thomas Homer-Dixon, cites the growing potential for eco-conflicts as a result of competition for land and other resources that become locally scarce and competition for shared resources like river systems and common areas like the oceans. In response to this prospect the Earth Council and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in cooperation with the UN University for Peace, are establishing an Ombudsman Centre for Environment and Development to help identify and prevent potential environment and resource related conflicts with an international dimension and to facilitate their peaceful resolution when they occur.

Since the demise of the Cold War the threat of global nuclear warfare has diminished. But there has been a proliferation of regional and local conflicts most of them in the developing countries, often based on ethnic differences, economic disparities, disputes over resources and urban violence. In most conflicts, civilians are the main casualties, and particularly women, children, the old and infirm. Often the safest place to be in such conflicts is the military. Such local and regional conflicts and urban violence are often related to the drug trade and organized crime which are producing major threats to the stability and security of societies, even in some cases undermining the integrity of nations.

The eradication of poverty and hunger is the highest priority for developing countries and an essential pre-condition to a secure and sustainable future for the human community as a whole.

As their development accelerates, developing countries are contributing more and more to the larger global risks such as those of climate change, ozone depletion, degradation of biological resources, and loss or deterioration of arable lands. China has already become the second largest source of CO₂ emissions and will almost certainly succeed the United States to the dubious honor of becoming number one. The prospect of a massive increase in Third World energy consumption over the next 30 years underscores the need for the industrialized world to reduce its environmental impacts in order to leave "space" for developing countries to meet their own needs and aspirations.

The agreement reached in Bonn and completed in Marakesch renewed hope that the

world community will respond to the perils of climate change, the most ominous and pervasive risk to the long term habitability of our planet. Japan's role in achieving this landmark agreement decisive deserves special appreciation, particularly in light of the difficulties Japan and other nations face as a result of the decision of the United States to withdraw from the Kyoto Protocol. The world community now looks to Japan to continue this leadership by being the first to ratify the protocol.

The Clean Development Mechanism to be established under the Kyoto protocol to the Climate Change Convention and the development of commercial trading in emissions credits offer promising prospects of effecting the least cost means of reducing emissions, while providing for new flows of financial resources to developing countries. In addition, I believe it would be both useful and timely for the World Bank and the United Nations to take the lead in establishing a Consultative Group on Clean Energy, based on the successful model of the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research, to facilitate the process of mobilizing financial and technological resources to invest and support developing countries to opt for Clean Energy.

The critical factors in avoiding the risks and realising the opportunities with which these issues confront developing countries are first of all a much greater emphasis on education, training, adaptation and use of technologies and secondly the need to fashion their own development model. Both these factors need to have as their purpose enfranchising and empowering their people – both their greatest resource and their most formidable challenge. This means helping their people to develop the skills and access the knowledge and technologies that will enable them to earn their livelihoods and make a positive contribution to the economies of their countries. The emphasis has to be on human capital rather than on financial capital, with scarce financial capital being deployed to strengthen and re-enforce human capital.

Developing countries cannot be expected to accept constraints on their development to protect the lifestyles of those whose patterns of production and consumption have largely given rise to global risks like climate change.

There is now overwhelming evidence that the industrialized world cannot continue in its historical patterns of production and consumption. Whether we opt to negotiate them or not, our lifestyles will have to change. But, we should not be afraid of such change. Already we have made significant changes in our lifestyles in the interests of improving our health and well being.

The role of civil society has assumed more and more importance in driving the processes of change – and in resisting them. The phenomena commonly referred to as “globalization” – have become the focal point for the backlash we are currently witnessing against the very currents of change which have made us the wealthiest civilization ever while deepening the disparities between winners and losers. It would be unrealistic to think that civil society can somehow replace governments and inter-governmental organizations. Civil society is too diverse, its own views too disparate. But it would be equally unrealistic to underestimate their growing influence.

The complex processes through which human actions are shaping the human future are systemic in nature and global in scales, but there is still a vast disconnect between our

current management and decision making processes and the real world cause and effect system on which it impacts. This dichotomy must be addressed if we are to develop a sustainable system of governance.

The realization that what happens in one part of the world affects others is not new. The first century BC Greek historian Polibius said when writing on the rise of Rome:

Now in earlier times the world's history had consisted, so to speak, of a series of emulated episodes, the origins and results of each being as widely separated as their localities. But from now onwards, history becomes an organic whole: the affairs of Italy and Africa are connected with those of Asia and Greece, and all events bear a relationship and contribute to a single end.

The difference today is in the scale and the speed of such actions.

No nation, however powerful, can go it alone integrated, into dependent world. We must join in precedented levels of cooperation not only amongst the nations of the world but by the other key actors often described within the general rubric of "civil society" – science, academia, non-governmental organizations, etc. While the United Nations is the centrepiece of the multilateral system on the principal political forum policy and decision making at the global level, it has much less power to implement its decisions and to carry out effective operations in many of the areas to which these decisions pertain than the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank or the World Trade Organization.

At the international level the multilateral organizations are clearly not yet sufficiently prepared for the new generation of tasks that will be required of them. Paradoxically, although the need for effective multilateral institutions has never been greater, support for them, both political and financial, is less than it has been in any time since their creation.

The difficulties of effecting fundamental changes in the multilateral system are underscored by the experience of Secretary General Kofi Annan in launching the most extensive and far-reaching program of reform of the United Nations undertaken since its inception.

According to UN estimates, the richest fifth of the world's people consume some 66 times as much as the poorest fifth, including 58% of total energy. And they own 87% of the world's vehicles, a major source of greenhouse gases. And the two hundred and twenty-five people who comprise the "super-rich" have a combined wealth of over one trillion US dollars, equivalent to the annual income of the poorest 47% of the world's people, Surely history tells us such imbalances are not sustainable.

One of the most disappointing trends since the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 is the lack of response by OECD countries to the needs of developing countries for the additional financial resources which all governments at Rio agreed were required to enable developing countries to make their transition to sustainable development. Progress towards meeting these needs has actually been further set back since Rio as a number of donors have reduced their Official Development Assistance. It is to Japan's credit that it has now become the single largest source of development assistance, though with recent reductions it is far from the 0.7% of GNP which is the target accepted by the more

developed countries though achieved by only a few of them.

With the continuing trend of reductions in Official Development Assistance we must be much more innovative in motivating private capital - now the principal source of financial flows to developing countries - to make a greater contribution to sustainable development.

Peace and security are an indispensable precondition to sustainability and overcoming poverty. Sustainable development and sustainable peace are inextricably related. War and violent conflict afflict devastating damage to the environment. And the human costs such wars and conflicts produce go far beyond the immediate deaths and suffering that result from them by destroying and undermining the resources on which even larger numbers of people depend for their livelihoods.

One of the most encouraging things that has occurred since the Earth Summit, and as a direct result of it, has been the adoption of local Agenda 21 by over 3000 cities and towns around the world based on Rio's Agenda 21 - including some 170 in Japan. This movement is generating cooperative action in many communities to protect and improve their own environment and ensure the sustainability of a high quality of life for those who follow them. I was greatly impressed by the initiative of students at the Beppu Campus in formulating their own "Personal Agenda 21". I intend to cite this promising example to others around the world in the hope that they will take it up. For personal commitment and action is the focal point for action at every other level.

As the 30th anniversary of Stockholm and the 10th anniversary of Rio approach the world community will rightly claim significant progress in understanding and dealing with the state of the Earth's environment on which these conferences focussed. Inevitably, and realistically, however, it will put the spotlight on the long list of deteriorating conditions, shortcomings and unmet commitments, which document the other side of the balance sheet. The initial decisions of the new administration in the United States and now the preoccupation with the "war" against terrorism have certainly cast a pall over the prospects for Johannesburg. The United States as the world's only super-power is also its super polluter - the largest source of the greenhouse emissions which are producing changes in the earth's climate. The World Community now looks to and expects a return to leadership by the United States.

Ours is the wealthiest civilization ever. We are yet to demonstrate that we are the wisest. On a global basis we have the knowledge, the resources, and the capacities to build in this new millennium a civilization and mode of life in which pollution and poverty are eradicated and the benefits which knowledge and technology afford made available universally to ensure all inhabitants of the earth access to the better life and a secure, sustainable future which is clearly in our reach. Jawaharlal Nehru commented on this paradox in an article on "The Strange Behavior of Money" in which he said that "the extraordinary spectacle of abundance and poverty existing side by side" and that "if capitalism is not advanced enough... some other system must be evolved more in keeping with science". And a recent article in "The Economist" - hardly a radical publication - stated that "if the Marxist prediction of a proletariat plunged into abject misery under capitalism has so far been unfulfilled, the widening gap between have and have-nots is

causing some to think that Marx might yet be proved right on this point after all”.

The real issue is why we are not doing it. Why is the movement for a better, more sustainable world stalled, and in danger of slipping back?

At the root of this dilemma is lack of sufficient motivation.

Economic self-interest is certainly one of them – at both the national and the individual levels. The economic motivations of people and corporations are strongly influenced by governments, through the policies, regulations, fiscal incentives and penalties that they put in place. A recent study by the Earth Council showed that in many cases they have the effect of providing disincentives to environmentally sound and sustainable behavior, imposing billions of dollars of unnecessary costs on people as tax payers and consumers. One of the most important things that governments could do in Johannesburg to foster the transition to a sustainable future would be to review and re-vamp this system to provide positive incentives for sustainability.

At the deepest level people and societies are motivated by the fundamental moral, ethical and spiritual values in which their beliefs are rooted. One of my greatest disappointments in the result of the Earth Summit was our inability to obtain agreement on an Earth Charter to define a set of basic moral and ethical principles for the conduct of people and nations towards each other and the Earth as the basis for achieving a sustainable way of life on our planet. Governments were simply not ready for it. So following Rio, the Earth Council joined with many other organizations and hundreds and thousands of people around the world to undertake this important piece of unfinished business from Rio. A global campaign is now underway to engage millions of people in the process of using the Earth Charter as a basis for examining and guiding their own basic motivations and priorities and challenging their communities, their governments their organizations to do the same. I am pleased to say that this movement is gaining encouraging momentum in Japan. Tomorrow, in Tokyo your distinguished former Environment Minister Wakako Hironaka and other Diet members will formally launch the Earth Charter in Japan. The Earth Charter promises to be a compelling and authoritative voice of the world's people at Johannesburg, which hopefully will inspire the leaders there not merely to endorse it but to use it as a moral guide to the awesome responsibilities they carry for our common future.

Inertia is a powerful force in human affairs as it is in the physical world. While recognizing in our rhetoric the need for change we continue along the pathway that is clearly unsustainable. Chief Executives of some of the world's leading corporations in their report to the Earth Summit stated that our present industrial civilization is not viable and made the case for a “change of course”, to a sustainable development pathway. We must make a fundamental shift in the inertia that continues to propel us towards an ominous future. I am convinced that the change of course this requires must be effected within the first three decades of this century or the prospects of doing so will be very dim indeed. For all the evidence of environmental degradation, social tension and inter-communal conflict we have experienced to-date have occurred at levels of population and human activity that are a great deal less than they will be in the period ahead. Our future is literally in our own hands and what we do, or fail to do, in this first part of the new millennium will

provide the answer to "Where on Earth Are We Going? ".

Together the University for Peace, the Ritsumeikan University and its Asia Pacific University can take a lead in forming the partnerships with our counterparts around the world that will help to ensure a positive answer to this question which will determine the fate of the human community.