

REMARKS OF U.S. SENATOR JOHN HEINZ (R-PA)
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM
JANUARY 24, 1990

Albert, very well said. Fran, it's a great pleasure to join my Senate colleague and friend Sen. Al Gore in welcoming what I think is an extraordinary turnout on the subject of sustainable development and its economics. And I commend the organizers and all who were involved in this convocation on a splendid convocation of obviously talented people.

I want to emphasize one thing that Al Gore particularly and quite typically most articulately said, which is that there is a growing interest and in some corridors in the Senate as well as the House a growing sense of urgency about the need to stop simply talking about sustainable development and doing something about it. Fortunately I have prepared answers to all of the questions that Al and the rest of you were going to ask. Unfortunately, I would be unable to stay and give all of them to you. I was asked to keep my remarks to five minutes and so, Fran, time does not permit me to answer those questions at least the way Al did but -- one of the questions that of course is central and I'm sure you'll get into is population growth. Although I was not present with Al Gore and Tim Wirth at the Forum of Global and Spiritual Leaders in the Soviet Union it was significant by the reports I've gotten that for the first time the church leaders took a great interest in the question of population growth and that the Grand Mufti of Syria, for example, who is a very important figure in the Islamic world, had a lot of interest and positive things to say and apparently to do subsequently, with this kind of concern. It's worth remembering that the civil rights movement in the United States never really made much progress until the black church leaders got involved with it, got behind it and with Martin Luther King as an archetype but by no means an exception finally were able to energize that movement.

And I commend Al and Tim and others for going to Moscow in January because frankly I didn't have the guts to do it. It's energy, it's conservation, it's renewable production, obviously critical. And of course the dichotomy between the have's and the have not's poses certain types of economic choices and my view of course is that it's a lot easier for the have's, the industrialized world, the developed nations to deal effectively, much more effectively than we do by the way, with the issues of the economics of sustainable development than we do.

I look around our country and I see why is it that out in California where we are still providing heavily subsidized water to the farmers to grow crops such as alfalfa, do we also provide them, whether or not that's a good policy, dairy subsidies to finance the overproduction of milk by the cows that eat the subsidized alfalfa. Why in the last remaining temperate rain forest, the Tongass forest in SE Alaska, do we subsidize to the tune of many million dollars a year the employment of a few hundred lumber workers and saw mill workers to cut down this virgin forest, that's as important as any standing forest in Brazil or the Amazon or anyplace else. It's irreplaceable, these three and four hundred year old and two or three hundred foot high trees that have been standing long before Christopher Columbus in a few cases came to this country and because there's no market for lumber from there, they're turned into wood pulp. Is that what we intended? The cost of all this, what are the politics of it? The politics of it is that several hundred people are employed at a cost to the taxpayer of \$33,265 each a year. Why don't we just give them the money and save the trees?

By the way I can't resist one gee-whiz statistic but when you open your Sunday newspaper just remember that every Sunday, just in the United States, we'll leave Europe and Canada and everywhere out, when you throw away that paper, just in this country, maybe with the help of some Canadians, we will have cut down 1/2 million trees just so Americans can read their Sunday paper on one weekend out of the 52 in every year. Why don't we do a better job of recycling? Why don't we encourage or pass laws to promote it? Why don't we use market mechanisms such as those that Sen. Wirth of Colorado and I proposed in a little yellow book, it's in large print though so that he and I can read it without our glasses. Project 88, Harnessing the Market Forces to Protect the Environment. I hope some copies of it at some point have been provided to you.

But what I'm really saying is for us in the developed world, we have the tools, we have the resources. All we lack I think is the will. I agree with Al Gore that we should have a heart full of hope, an outlook full of optimism. I do think that the going gets rough when you go to the developing worlds. Al

Gore and I went to the developing worlds together a year ago this January to the Amazon and it is clear above all that no growth, notwithstanding the quite accurate quote of Edward Abbey who once remarked that growth for growth sake is the ideology of a cancer cell, that no growth is not a morally defensible proposition, where people are in poverty, where people starve, where people have no prospects. And after yet what Al and I and Tim and Gerry Sikorski and John Bryant saw where, because of uneconomic tax incentives huge tracks of forests are cut down by large corporations that really couldn't care less, it's all a paper financial transaction for them, a few cows run for one or two years over a soil two or three inches deep that within two years turns to absolutely rock hard brick red hard pan that can never be used for anything else while the destruction of great and valuable resources, cures for cancer, AIDS, for lord knows what is being destroyed, the biological diversity gone forever. Means that we have a job to do.

First we have to set a good example in the industrialized world and secondly, we have to provide the ideas and the talents and some of the resources if we are going to get the planet as a whole in harmony and all of us, across the equators working together. I hope and I trust and we need this conference to be a success so that the urgency that Al and I and others feel can be given a sense of reality and direction and that there is a chance of success. Thank you very much.