



Resolution 747 (1981)¹

Global prospects - human needs and the earth's resources

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Taking note of the report on "global prospects : human needs and the earth's resources", presented by its Committee on Economic Affairs and Development ([Doc. 4706](#)) ;
2. Considering that, at current growth rates, the world's population would reach 6 000 million by the end of this century and could grow to 8 000-12 000 million during the first half of the next century, and- if insufficient counteraction be taken- may exceed the supporting capacity of the entire earth, which makes it necessary to implement such population policies as are compatible with the world's available physical resources and biological systems ;
3. Considering further, that population increase is particularly rapid in the developing regions of the world, and stressing the urgent need for a more balanced sharing of the world's resources so as to permit the creation of the socio-economic and cultural conditions in these regions that will lead to a deceleration of population growth,
4. Draws attention to the alarming growth of urban areas especially in the less developed countries, where many uncontrolled urban settlements of over ten million inhabitants will create unprecedented problems of squalor and social and economic chaos ;
5. Particularly concerned at the persisting problems facing the hundreds of millions of absolute poor in the world and the present slim prospects to reduce their numbers substantially unless decisive international action is taken to abolish hunger, malnutrition, diseases and illiteracy, notably through rural and agricultural development ;
6. Aware that, in spite of past development efforts, the gap between the rich and the poor countries is still widening and reaching such proportions that it would require a twentyfold increase in the developing countries' Gross National Product (GNP) to reach the European standard of living of the last decade ;
7. Warns against complacency so far as the availability of non-fuel minerals is concerned, since predictions show that within sixty years, the current and prospective reserves of aluminium, cobalt, copper, lead, nickel, sulphur, tin and tungsten will be exhausted, and disruptions of provisions due to political and economic crises could at any time cause disastrous results for the industrialised economies ;
8. Concerned especially at the interlinked problems of rapid desertification, large-scale deforestation, energy shortages, water deterioration and atmospheric pollution which in certain areas of the world have already reduced the land's capacity to support life ;
9. Stressing the vital interest of Europe and other northern regions in the success of global development policies in order to prevent mounting population pressures and political and military conflicts resulting from unequal distribution of fundamental resources and unfulfilled basic needs, such as water, food and housing ;

1. Text adopted by the Assembly on 12 May 1981 (2nd Sitting). Assembly debate on 12 May 1981 (2nd Sitting) (see [Doc. 4706](#), report of the Committee on Economic Affairs and Development).



10. Emphasising the fundamental European dependence on energy and non-fuel minerals provided by the southern countries, and the growing significance of developing regions as export markets for European industries ;
11. Concluding that the growing interdependence of the European and developing economies in the fields of trade expansion and the provision of energy and other basic industrial resources make it impossible to cure the inflationary and unemployment diseases of the European economies without simultaneously working for fundamental changes in European contributions to global development programmes ;
12. Considering that various reports by national and international agencies have outlined the fundamental features of human development and the limits to the earth's resources, believes that firm political decisions and policy executions are now needed so that members of governments and parliaments, in co-operation with other public opinion leaders, realise that they have a major responsibility for the future of mankind ;
13. Declaring support for the fundamentally important work of global, regional and national institutions which are implementing population policies, and expressing the belief that there is an urgent need for population control and that the success of such measures will depend primarily on the extent to which policies will be integrated in local health, education and social services and are supported by other efforts to enhance the social, economic and cultural status of women ;
14. Calling on the national governments and the parliaments of the Council of Europe member states to increase their financial contributions to the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) and to declare their support for the target, expressed in the Colombo Declaration on Population and Development adopted in 1979, for an annual contribution of 1 000 million dollars in international population assistance to be achieved by the year 1984 ;
15. Supporting the call in the Colombo Declaration to religious leaders to take into account the tremendous impact of population pressures on human, spiritual and physical well-being ;
16. Concluding that, in order to counteract the dramatic increases in global, notably urban, population, priority must be given to improving the social and economic conditions in the rural regions of the earth and that therefore in the next ten years the problems of rural development must be of fundamental concern to national and international agencies ;
17. Concluding further that it is of utmost importance to increase production and to achieve a fairer distribution of food in order to improve the shocking conditions of hundreds of millions of absolute poor and malnourished in the world, and to this effect help developing countries in carrying out irrigation projects, and other technical assistance programmes designed to improve farming techniques, in particular for small farmers, yields per hectare and to carry out land reform ;
18. Declaring support for the designation of the 1980s as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, and urging the international and nation authorities to instigate :
 - 18.1. regional water saving plans in all parts of the world,
 - 18.2. national projects for sanitation improvement, and
 - 18.3. country by country propaganda campaigns to establish a firmly based public awareness of the alarming fact that water is increasingly becoming one of the limited global resources ;
19. Pointing out :
 - 19.1. that, although vast increases in development finance are needed to secure general improvement in basic needs and the management of global resources, these financial requirements constitute only a small proportion of the annual armaments expenditure, and
 - 19.2. that using a low proportion of the funds now provided for new military technologies and military research would make a dramatic improvement in human conditions,
20. Urges the member states of the Council of Europe and other industrialised countries :
 - 20.1. to adopt a constructive attitude in the global round of negotiations towards a new international economic order to be held in the frame-work of the United Nations and its specialised agencies on such issues as aid, trade, the transfer of technology, recycling of surplus capital and international monetary reform, which should go beyond a mere reaction to the demands of the developing countries and be based on the perception of mutual interest and interdependence ;

- 20.2. to focus aid programmes on the specific needs of the poorest countries, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, aiming primarily at eradicating absolute poverty through agricultural development, aid in the fields of health and education, and energy and reforestation projects ;
- 20.3. to work out an internationally co-ordinated programme of ecological priorities to stop the constant loss of forests, crop and grazelands due to large-scale desertification, soil erosion and deterioration and atmospheric pollution, notably in the already most affected areas in Africa (Sahel) and Asia ;
- 20.4. to encourage energy saving and to promote energy production in the developing world in the form of oil, coal, natural gas and hydroelectric power as well as the exploitation of renewable energy sources such as wind, sun, biomass and geothermics, which is all the more important since firewood is the only available or affordable fuel for 90% of the people in the poorest countries ;
- 20.5. to stimulate economic growth in the developing countries by refraining from seeking protection against products from these countries, by taking part in sectorial consultations in the framework of the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) on the redeployment of industry from the industrialised to the developing countries, and by giving special assistance to the least developed countries to overcome the critical period necessary to achieve a situation of greater self-reliance ;
- 20.6. to assist the developing countries in diversifying their exports and stabilising their export revenues from commodities, in particular by the adoption of a more constructive attitude towards the implementation of the integrated programme for commodities in the framework of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) ;
- 20.7. to continue or undertake research into the earth's capability to meet future global human needs so as to facilitate the policy decisions necessary to avoid a worsening of poverty and human suffering, environmental degradation and resulting international tension and conflicts ;
- 20.8. to mount a sustained campaign to eradicate waste and the inefficient use of scarce resources ;
- 20.9. to support the establishment of internationally accepted codes of conduct in the areas of :
 - 20.9.1. investment and resources utilisation,
 - 20.9.2. financial and trade transactions by multinational companies,
 - 20.9.3. sale and production of arms ;
21. Reiterates its invitation to those developed countries, which have not yet done so, to commit themselves to increasing official development aid in regular stages to achieve the level of 0,7% of GNP by 1985 ;
22. Urges the international monetary institutions and banking community to adapt, as soon as possible, institutional and practical arrangements in such a way that the poorest developing countries will mostly benefit from concessional aid and middle-income countries from investment loans, bond lending and export credits ;
23. Stresses the need to co-ordinate the work of global, regional and national organisations, in order to obtain maximum utilisation and efficiency of financial contributions and manpower devoted to development work and improved management of global resources ;
24. Emphasises that, in addition to such an internationally accepted division of labour between global, regional and national institutions, the success of development policies depends on :
 - 24.1. country by country approaches by the responsible agencies ;
 - 24.2. co-operation between bilateral and multilateral donors particularly in order to secure the maximum of concessional aid to the poorest regions ;
 - 24.3. increasing co-operation between developing countries themselves as well as their respective regional organisations ;
25. Calls for an internationally accepted procedure to monitor global human development and resource prospects with particular emphasis on regional monitoring, especially so far as population growth, food and agricultural production, water supplies, energy and non-fuel minerals as well as availability and utilisation of financial resources are concerned ;

26. Calls for specific European initiatives in order to enhance public awareness of the global prospects so far as human needs and the earth's resources are concerned as well as promoting reinforced political and economic activities in a field so vital to the future of mankind, and therefore invites all Council of Europe member states :

26.1. to make better use of the appropriate Council of Europe bodies to promote public interest in and understanding of the need for North/South cooperation, particularly through :

- a. the European Youth Centre and Foundation which, by seminars for youth leaders and support for joint actions by national youth movements, can play a decisive role, and
- b. the Council for Cultural Co-operation which promotes development education in schools by holding seminars and preparing material for teachers and instigating publications ;

26.2. to take special initiatives such as a Conference on Europe's Contribution towards a fairer sharing and better preservation of the earth's physical resources to be held in 1982, so bringing together the European governments, parliamentarians and national and international organisations concerned ;

26.3. to further joint development contributions by European countries, taking into account such mechanisms as the Lome Convention and the Scandinavian aid programme, or any other methods designed to strengthen Europe's role through the linking of national efforts ;

26.4. to encourage the establishment of committees for the preservation of the earth's resources and the satisfaction of basic human needs, in which political parties, trade unions, religious organisations, youth movements and other civic associations can join hands and work for increased development and co-operation in order to improve the prospects for global human survival.