

PROCEEDINGS



THE FIRST NATIONAL PEOPLE OF COLOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The Washington Court on Capitol Hill
Washington, D.C.
October 24 - 27, 1991

Sponsored By
United Church of Christ
Commission for Racial Justice

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Charles Lee
Editor

Sponsored By
United Church of Christ
Commission for Racial Justice

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THE FIRST NATIONAL PEOPLE OF COLOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

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PREFACE

The Commission for Racial Justice of the 1.6 million-member United Church of Christ is pleased to publish these *Proceedings of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit*. As the sponsor of this historic Summit, the Commission for Racial Justice is especially grateful for the many individuals who helped to fulfill a vision to reshape and redefine the environmental movement.

Since 1982, the Commission for Racial Justice has been actively challenging the existence of environmental racism in all communities. In 1987, the Commission released its landmark study, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*. At that time, we said that people of color were the victims of racism but were "relegated to a defensive or reactive response, rather than a proactive position." The Principles of Environmental Justice, adopted by the Summit's delegates, is a living example of the tremendous progress people of color have made in the last five years.

The United Church of Christ, through the Commission for Racial Justice, has made a long-term commitment to seeing that justice is done along the lines of race. Because of that, the Commission challenged the unjust siting of a PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) landfill in Warren County, North Carolina. We believe that no community, regardless of race, should suffer environmental degradation. In the words

of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "An injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

The critical significance of the Leadership Summit must not escape a nation and a world in transition. Internationally, the conflicts between the north and south are quickly becoming more important, and the characteristics of these conflicts are not only economic and political but environmental in nature. The United States faces a century during which peoples of color numerically will become the majority population. Among other things, our cities sorely need a vision of sustainability and equity. Environmental justice, defined and articulated from a truly multiracial and multicultural perspective, may well be that vision for the 21st century.

Thus, the Leadership Summit is not an independent "event" but a significant and pivotal step in a crucial process whereby people of color are organizing themselves and their communities for self-determination and self-empowerment around the central issues of environmental justice. It is living testimony that no longer shall we allow others to define our peoples' future. The very survival of all communities is at stake.

*Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
Executive Director
United Church of Christ
Commission for Racial Justice*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In February 1990, Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. called for an emergency summit meeting of grassroots, civil rights and environmental leaders. This began the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice's two-year odyssey to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. It would be impossible to acknowledge everyone who have contributed much to the Summit's success, for the Summit was a product of countless persons. Appropriately, the first and perhaps most important acknowledgements go to the Summit delegates, the people of color grassroots leaders who gathered in Washington, D.C. and shared with us their experience, knowledge, wisdom, and visions.

More than any single group, the Leadership Summit is the product of the hard work of the members of a National Planning Committee composed of Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice (Chairperson), Dana Alston, Panos Institute, Pat Bryant, Gulf Coast Tenants Organization, Robert Bullard, University of California at Riverside, Donna Chavis, Center for Community Action, Richard Moore, SouthWest Organizing Project, and myself as the Summit Coordinator. This group began to work in earnest around the Leadership Summit in March 1991. It was their grasp, both individually and collectively, of the historic moment at hand in 1991 that laid the groundwork for the Summit and its ultimate impact.

The Co-Chairs of the National Advisory Committee also served as the moderators of the Summit, and in that capacity has represented us to the world in a most able and compelling way. They were Gail Small, Executive Director, Native Action, Toney Anaya, former Governor of New Mexico, Syngman Rhee, President, National Council of Churches, and Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. A National Advisory Committee composed of 112 members helped us immensely to ensure that the overall direction of the planning process and building a national consensus.

A center piece of the Leadership Summit proved to be the Principles of Environmental Justice. Among the most critical contributors to this process was a Drafting Committee composed of Susana Almanza, Vernice Miller, David Harrison, Kikanza Ramsey, Isaiah Madison, Miya Yoshitani, and Ralph Rivera, and chaired by Governor Anaya. Critical staff

support was provided by Minnie White of the UCC Commission for Racial Justice. In addition, an overview of that process was written for these Proceedings by two members of that committee, Isaiah Madison and Vernice Miller.

The speakers who framed the issues in informative, powerful and moving presentations include a long list of persons: Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Eleanor Holmes Norton, Richard Moore, Wilma Mankiller, Robert Bullard, David Lujan, Mililani Trask, Jesse Jackson, Dolores Huertas, Pat Bryant, Hazel Johnson, Charon Asetoyer, Neftali Garcia Martinez, Young Hi Shin, Michael Fischer, John Adams, Dana Alston, Jeton Anjain, Baldemar Velasquez, and Dollie Burwell.

Another important element of the Leadership Summit was the development of a cohesive and effective national agenda for environmental justice action. The framework for this agenda has been provided by the facilitators of the 23 workshops at the Leadership Summit. They are Vernice Miller, Gwendolyn Patton, Andrea Kidd Taylor, Antonio Diaz, Ellie Goodwin, Peggy Saika, Neftali Garcia Martinez, Michael Guerrero, Wendy Brown, Linda Rae Murray, Baldemar Velasquez, Jean Sindab, Bunyan Bryant, Laurie Weahkie, Ray Cook, Jane Sapp, Donna Chavis, Carl Anthony, Jeanne Gauna, Michelle Tingling Clemmons, Chris Peters, Michel Gelobter, Robert Bullard, Janet Phoenix, and Pamela Tau Lee.

The Summit has been widely noted for its spiritual character, as presented through ceremony and culture. The ceremonial elements of the Summit was coordinated by Donna Chavis. We are especially indebted to Rose Auger for doing the opening and closing ceremony. Culture throughout the Summit was provided by the Binari Korean Cultural Group, White Oak Singers, Nubian Theatre Company, Rafiki Nidata, rap contest winner A.K. Black, Jane Sapp and Rose Sanders. Video footage used at the Summit was produced by Deadre Searcy of Greenpeace.

Damu Smith of Greenpeace played an especially important role in coordinating the Summit's onsite logistics. He was ably assisted by Sophie Young and Nicole Brown. Logistics coordinators included

Della Owens, A.C. Byrd, and others. They presided over a group of nearly 100 volunteers, which included youth, students, and persons of color employed by national environmental organizations. Media outreach was provided by Leila McDowell and Gwen McKinney of McKinney/McDowell Associates. Lynn Moore did the audio taping of the Summit and copy edited these Proceedings. Doug Harris of Griott Productions video taped the Summit. Further video documentation was provided by the UCC Stewardship Council and Deaconess Health Systems in St. Louis, Missouri, in particular Stan Dawid and Chris Goering. Photographic documentation was provided by Roy Lewis.

Many organizations and foundations have contributed financially. These were the Beldon Fund, CEIP Fund (now Environmental Careers Organization), Nathan Cummings Foundation, Environmental Defense Fund, The Ford Foundation, Funding Exchange, Glen Eagles Foundation, Greenpeace, USA, George Gund Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Ruth Mott Fund, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Needmor Fund, Natural Resources Defense Council, New World Foundation, North Shore Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program, Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, Rockefeller Family and Associates, Seventh Generation, Inc., Sierra Club, Surdna Foundation, Winslow Foundation, and the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ.

My personal gratitude goes to the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice for its support of this project. The Commission is unique in many ways, having a history of over 30 years of existence

as a self-determinative people of color organization. In my opinion, had it not been for the existence of an organization such as the Commission, the Leadership Summit would have been impossible. The staff and board, chaired by Edwin R. Edmonds, assisted in so many ways to make this Summit a reality. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., the Commission's Executive Director, deserves special recognition for providing his overall leadership, critical guidance, unique skills, and moral support to the Leadership Summit.

Lastly, I want to give recognition to a most special group of people, the staff at the Commission's New York office who provided the day-to-day coordination for the Leadership Summit over a two-year period. They included Rita Simmons, Eva Marshall, Seong Dan Lee, and Melinda Crowley (who worked with us as a CEIP Fund Summer Intern). Vernice Miller provided assistance during the post-Summit period and the editing of these Proceedings. Their names are often unmentioned except when tasks needed to be accomplished, but within the products of their work, their dedication, hard work, creativity and sacrifice are resounding and unmistakable.

Not to be forgotten is my thanks to the families of my staff and those of many others, as well as my own, whose forbearance and support was matched only by their desire to see this Summit become a success.

*Charles Lee
United Church of Christ
Commission for Racial Justice
Leadership Summit Coordinator*

INTRODUCTION

Charles Lee

*United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice
Leadership Summit Coordinator*

In the eyes of many people, both persons of color and whites, the environmental movement in the United States changed forever on October 24-27, 1991. These were the dates of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C., convened by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice. More than 600 persons from virtually every state in the United States, including Hawaii and Alaska, Canada, Central America, Puerto Rico, and the Marshall Islands gathered for the first time in a dramatic display of environmental and social justice activism in people of color communities.

The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit was the defining event of the emerging movement for environmental justice. As the Summit's Call for Action stated, "Unlike traditional mainstream environmental and social justice organizations, this multiracial, multicultural movement of peoples of color is evolving from the bottom up and not from the top down. It seeks a global vision based on grassroots realities." The Summit demanded a "restructuring of the relationship between communities of color and government policy makers, the polluting industries, traditional mainstream environmental organizations and the philanthropic community which supports environmental protection, research and action."

The Summit put to rest forever any notion that people of color were not already providing significant leadership on environmental issues. As Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Executive Director, United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice stated in his opening speech, "We're not just announcing that there is a new movement, because we all know that the movement for environmental justice has been alive for a long time now. It's just that our society has not yet offered us opportunities to claim it." The Summit sought to provide that opportunity. It was, simply put, an exercise in exercising leadership for people of color on the environment. As such, it fulfilled in a most spectacular way the vision of something which had the "potential to reshape and redefine the environmental movement."

There were many themes that shaped the discussions of the Summit. Some of these included the idea that people of color must speak for ourselves, an inextricable connection between social and racial justice concerns and the environment, and a redefinition of environmentalism. However, the Summit's planners refrained from trying to impose on the process one theme or another. Nor did the Summit's planners try to impose an agenda, whether this be the creation of a national organization or otherwise. In discussions on how to move beyond the Summit, Richard Moore noted that "trust was crucial to moving forward." Indeed, the Summit was intended to be a forum for that process to being, where people of color leaders can articulate and share with each other their own realities and their prescriptions for action. And as the Proceedings show, this did not prove to be lacking.

It came as a surprise to some that the Commission for Racial Justice and the Summit planners had no agenda beyond this. We felt that to attempt to accomplish more without having a more inclusive and collective process for decision-making would have been impossible if not destructive. However, it was clear that no such imposition of agendas and themes was necessary to explain the need for such a Summit. The Summit brought together these entities whose time in 1991 had come. It was the juxtaposition of three entities, i.e., "people of color," "environment," and "leadership" that gave the Summit process its extraordinary resonance. When Eleanor Holmes Norton spoke of defining great movements, she said, "we have all the names we need in there."

Attendees at the Summit have used many varied superlatives to describe their experience there. Some spoke of their excitement in seeing so many different people of color together. Some spoke of the value of meeting others in struggle, exchanging information, experiences and support, and realizing that one was not alone. Still others spoke of the educational value of the sharp debate and consensus building that occurred as they engaged in a mutual exercise of self-definition of "life and death" issues so vital to the survival of many of our

communities. These descriptions ranged from "educational" to "informative," from "exciting" to "celebratory," from "energizing" to "inspiring," and from "culturally enriching" to "spiritually moving." Of all of these, the most meaningful of these descriptions from my point of view as a person of color was that it was **"a truly ennobling experience."**

The National Planning Committee designed the Summit along the premise that the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit was a process, not merely an event. It was a process among leaders of color to foster mutual support, information exchange, issue clarification, problem solving, agenda development, and network building around the environment. Such a process had begun long before the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice formally announced in November 1990 its plans to sponsor the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. This process is ongoing, with the Summit being one major step in our evolutionary growth.

GOALS OF SUMMIT

The major goals of the Summit, as formulated by the National Planning Committee, were:

- To facilitate an ongoing process for people of color leaders to strengthen their national, regional, and local organizations and communities which are involved in challenging environmental injustice;
- To provide an opportunity to initiate dialogue between people of color leaders and the heads of the national environmental organizations;
- To identify key environmental policy questions from the perspective of people of color leadership; and
- To impact the decision-making process in public policy in the interests of environmental justice at the federal, state, and municipal levels.

This was to be accomplished through the various plenary sessions, workshops, caucuses, and a process leading towards the ratification of a set of Principles of Environmental Justice. The plenary sessions covered the major themes of the Summit. As a whole, the workshops offer a framework for the development of an agenda for action. Perhaps

some of the most important work was accomplished in caucuses and informal meetings between individuals and groups. It was there that many plans were made for new projects and further network building. The process for ratification of the Principles of Environmental Justice took on a life of its own, with representatives delegated from each region and the youth and indigenous communities to do the actual drafting of language. The discussion of the seventh draft was done en masse collectively. The final ratification, after discussions till 3:00 a.m. on Sunday morning, also was done together as a body of delegates.

In addition, the Summit as a whole made the decision that on Friday, October 25th, they would demonstrate in solidarity with Native Americans on the steps of Capitol Hill to protect the Alaska Wildlife Refuge, an issue critical to the survival of their way of life as a people.

HALLMARKS OF SUMMIT PROCESS

In describing the Summit process, I found three interrelated words which, in my opinion, best described its essence. I first formulated them to describe what I thought were the challenges and responsibilities of members of the Summit's National Advisory Committee.

Imagination: As was reiterated by many of the speakers, the Summit was a visionary meeting. It was conceived with the idea that if we are to find solutions to the critical and intractable problems of environment and justice, we must think innovatively and alternatively. It was a venture that tried to put aside old assumptions and took risks.

Resonance: The Summit's success began with the extraordinary resonance created by its vision. Individuals and organizations were able to take ownership of this vision and, for the most part, incorporate within it their own realities and visions. This created a synergy that enhanced the Summit's national and international impact.

Authenticity: The time had come for people of color to speak for themselves on environmental issues. In a society dominated by racism, authenticity is critical for ensuring their much needed contributions are articulated in the manner they so wished. The Summit's planners were intent on making sure that it was the people themselves that had both the forum and opportunity to articulate their own understandings of these issues.

PREPARATION OF PROCEEDINGS

These Proceedings were prepared from audio tapes of the Summit sessions. In editing the Proceedings of the Summit, I have tried to ensure that they reflect as fully as possible a record of what actually transpired. Towards this end, we included most of the floor discussions and a detailed description of the process by which the Principles of Environmental Justice came about. Our reasons for doing this are many. We believe that one of the most significant elements of the Summit was the lively exchange of information and viewpoints from a gathering of people unprecedented in terms of its racial and geographic diversity.

As I have said, one of the hallmarks of the Summit process was its authenticity; this was to be a forum where people of color would speak for themselves. For this reason, we also have tried to retain the language used by and "voice" of the speaker as much as possible. We believe that each speaker provided much valuable information, which as a whole shape a new perspective on issues of the environment. Lastly, we hope that this set of Proceedings would represent a reference and archive for this historic event.

We saw the Summit process as a unique case study in the exercise of democracy. As opposed to Eurocentric models of democracy, the Summit sought to engage in a process that reached consensus. The success of a democratic process is in our opinion judged not merely by the achievement of a stated goal but also by the substance that informed that process. For this reason, we included in this Proceedings a description of the elements that informed the ratification of the Principles of Environmental Justice. Two members of the Drafting Committee, Isaiah Madison and Vernice Miller, assisted in writing this analysis.

The Summit also was a highly successful example of multiracial and multicultural organizing. This was an accomplishment in which the Summit's planners took great pride. It was of course the product of great intentionality, intended to reflect the past, present and future demographic realities our multiracial, multicultural and multinational society. We hope that this multiracial and multicultural diversity is reflected in these Proceedings as much as possible. However, it is one thing to read about diversity and another to actually experience it. In our racially polarized society, multiculturalism is bound to provoke strong

emotions and prejudices. It is something that one must see, touch and feel. As opposed to a merely cerebral understanding, full appreciation of multiculturalism takes place on a visceral level. For this reason we included in these Proceedings a set of photos from the Summit. In addition, the Commission has produced a two-hour summary video of this extraordinary event.

BACKGROUND AND PLANNING

Since 1982, the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice has played a pioneering national role on issues of race and the environment. In 1982, over 500 persons were arrested in predominantly black Warren County, North Carolina during nonviolence civil disobedience actions to protest the siting of a PCB landfill. The Summit was fortunate to hear Dollie Burwell, one of the leaders of the protest, recollect that struggle. "As we lay [our bodies in front of the trucks], we knew that we were neither politically or economically empowered enough to stop those trucks." However, this community of proud African Americans knew that they had to "put their lives on the line."

Chavis introduced her as "the woman who caused, in a real way, this conference." Indeed, over the past decade, similar stories would be told in an evergrowing number of people of color communities across the United States, proud communities responding to the indignities of being poisoned without consent. Although Dollie Burwell's story had a direct connection to the Commission's work on this issue, it was the protests and actions in all people of color communities throughout the United States that inspired the Summit.

A growing awareness of the broad dimensions of this issue prompted the Commission to issue its landmark 1987 report, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*, the first national study on the demographic patterns associated with the location of hazardous waste sites. This report has been credited with "changing the terms of the debate on issues of race and the environment." It was during the release of this report that Ben Chavis first coined the term "environmental racism."

Two regionally based organizing efforts stood out in the midst of this growing ferment of activity in hundreds of people of color communities. The first was the formation in 1989 of the SouthWest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice,

now a network of over 30 organizations covering eight states. The second was a campaign led by the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization to address the ravages of the petrochemical industry in the "Cancer Alley" corridor between Baton Rouge and New Orleans in Louisiana.

Beginning in early 1990, a series of letters were sent by the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization and the SouthWest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice to the mainstream environmental and conservation organizations. Their list of challenges included more than merely issues of diversity. In the words of Dana Alston, "the real basis of the challenge is how some of the actions and policies of environmental organizations have a drastic impact on the economic, social and political life of our communities."

Growing out of these developments, the Commission envisioned a vehicle which, as had been accomplished earlier by the *Toxic Wastes and Race* report with respect to issues of race and the environment, would change the terms of the debate on the nature of the environmental movement. This would take the form of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.

It was with this vision that the Commission for Racial Justice convened the National Planning Committee to assist in planning the leadership summit. In addition to Ben Chavis and myself, this Committee consisted of the following persons: Dana Alston, Senior Program Officer, Panos Institute; Pat Bryant, Executive Director, Gulf Coast Tenants Organization; Robert Bullard, Professor of Sociology, University of California at Riverside; Donna Chavis, Board Member, Center for Community Change; and Richard Moore, Co-Director, SouthWest Organizing Project.

In addition to this committee, a National Advisory Committee consisting of 112 persons was formed to provide input and build consensus around the goals, objectives and plan for the Summit. The four individuals who served as Co-Chairs of this committee served as Moderators for the Summit: Ben Chavis; Gail Small, Executive Director, Native Action; Toney Anaya, former Governor, New Mexico; and Syngman Rhee, President, National Council of Churches. This committee met twice prior to the Summit itself.

THE SUMMIT BODY

More often than not, Summit presenters remarked from the podium that any one in the audience could have been making such a presentation. Such comments truly spoke to the fact that the Summit was a gathering of leaders in the truest sense of the word. While the vast majority of these delegates were grassroots activists engaged in struggle around an environmental problems in their communities, they also included persons who were lawyers, doctors, academicians, labor and civil rights activists, and elected officials.

Richard Moore talked about building a "net that works," and pointed to some of the delegations from the Southwest who days previous staged actions at the EPA regional offices in San Francisco and Dallas to demand accountability. The Summit body was in fact a network, not yet formalized, but definitely in the making.

Indeed, one of the things of which the planners of the Summit are most proud was its diverse and broad representation. The Summit was remarkable in terms of its diversity -- racially, geographically, and genderwise.

Native American	54
African American	158
Latino American	62
Asian Pacific	24
Male	154
Female	144
Northeast	68
Southeast	66
Midwest	41
Southwest	59
Pacific Northwest	44
Hawaii	5
Alaska	3
Puerto Rico	3
Canada	5
Central America	3
Marshall Islands	1

Perhaps more important than the numbers was the way that various racial groups came together. This speaks to the use of culture and prayer in coalescing people from different backgrounds and experiences.

For example, after Rose Auger opened the Summit with a prayer, Toney Anaya's comments were "I think it is very appropriate, not only that we started with a prayer, but the we did it with the original environmentalist in this country, the Native Americans. It also helped to underscore the spirituality that we all feel for the air, water and land from which we breathe, drink and eat."

One of the reasons for the Summit's success was our attention towards making sure that we did not leave out groups not normally considered. These included Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, persons from Puerto Rico, Alaska and the Marshall Islands, farmworkers. There were, however, several groups which were lacking, primarily youth and urban areas, particularly in the Midwest and Northeast. There was, however, no reticence on the part of delegates in pointing out these shortcomings.

The Summit was designed so that people of color grassroots activist leaders would be able to have a forum that was truly their own. To the Summit's planners, achieving this goal spoke directly to the integrity of this process. We took great pains to insure that priority would be given to community leaders, both in terms of the roles they play and the access to resources to be able to attend. The Commission was able to provided travel for nearly two-thirds of the over 300 delegates attending. The need to insure the voice of people of color was a constant consideration, especially when given the momentum we knew this effort would generate, and the desire of many in more wealthier and established groups to attend. This was the primary reason for the division of the Summit body into Delegates, Participants and Observers. It was also the reason why the summit was restricted to delegates for the first two days.

Finally, it should be understood that the Summit Delegates were not selected from a truly representational process. The Summit Delegates, Participants and Observers were invited based upon recommendations from members of the National Planning Committee, National Advisory Committee and others. Delegates were in the main representatives of organizations. However, there was no formal process by which regions or racial groups selected their own delegates. The only exception was the SouthWest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, which had a process for choosing its own representatives. While the

delegates were highly representative of different regions and racial groups, they were not invested by these regions or groups to represent them.

However, this process began to evolve at the Summit in relation to the tasks at hand. The choosing of members of the Drafting Committee for the Principles of Environmental Justice was accomplished at the regional group workshops and in the Friday evening session where each region chose one or two representatives to participate in the Drafting Committee process. Particular attention was paid to the need for representation from indigenous communities and from youth.

PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND WORKING DEFINITIONS

The Summit was the defining moment in a new movement for environmental justice. It established people of color as key to the leadership of such a movement. It produced the seminal document of this movement, a set of seventeen Principles of Environmental Justice.

Clearly, this has set new parameters on the scope of the environmental movement in this country and beyond. The impact of these Principles have indeed been remarkable. Only a few weeks after the Summit, they were faxed to groups in Kenya who used them as models for the development of materials they were preparing for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Principles of Environmental Justice has to this day been reprinted in over 1,000 publications.

More than anything, I would like the reader to view this set of Principles in terms of being a working definition of environmental justice. As was reiterated often during the discussion of the Principles during the Summit, this is a working document, to be applied and adapted and transformed as our work continues. They are the product of the coming together of many realities. The Friday morning session panel on "Who we are and our Perspectives on Environmental Justice" was intended, in the words of Gail Small, for "discerning, recovering and seeking ways to build upon our historical and cultural roots." The Principles were the best expression of the many visions developing in many people of color communities described by Pat Bryant as one "where we would not be poisoned... and could have jobs, housing and educate our children."

now a network of over 30 organizations covering eight states. The second was a campaign led by the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization to address the ravages of the petrochemical industry in the "Cancer Alley" corridor between Baton Rouge and New Orleans in Louisiana.

Beginning in early 1990, a series of letters were sent by the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization and the SouthWest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice to the mainstream environmental and conservation organizations. Their list of challenges included more than merely issues of diversity. In the words of Dana Alston, "the real basis of the challenge is how some of the actions and policies of environmental organizations have a drastic impact on the economic, social and political life of our communities."

Growing out of these developments, the Commission envisioned a vehicle which, as had been accomplished earlier by the *Toxic Wastes and Race* report with respect to issues of race and the environment, would change the terms of the debate on the nature of the environmental movement. This would take the form of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit.

It was with this vision that the Commission for Racial Justice convened the National Planning Committee to assist in planning the leadership summit. In addition to Ben Chavis and myself, this Committee consisted of the following persons: Dana Alston, Senior Program Officer, Panos Institute; Pat Bryant, Executive Director, Gulf Coast Tenants Organization; Robert Bullard, Professor of Sociology, University of California at Riverside; Donna Chavis, Board Member, Center for Community Change; and Richard Moore, Co-Director, SouthWest Organizing Project.

In addition to this committee, a National Advisory Committee consisting of 112 persons was formed to provide input and build consensus around the goals, objectives and plan for the Summit. The four individuals who served as Co-Chairs of this committee served as Moderators for the Summit: Ben Chavis; Gail Small, Executive Director, Native Action; Toney Anaya, former Governor, New Mexico; and Syngman Rhee, President, National Council of Churches. This committee met twice prior to the Summit itself.

THE SUMMIT BODY

More often than not, Summit presenters remarked from the podium that any one in the audience could have been making such a presentation. Such comments truly spoke to the fact that the Summit was a gathering of leaders in the truest sense of the word. While the vast majority of these delegates were grassroots activists engaged in struggle around an environmental problems in their communities, they also included persons who were lawyers, doctors, academicians, labor and civil rights activists, and elected officials.

Richard Moore talked about building a "net that works," and pointed to some of the delegations from the Southwest who days previous staged actions at the EPA regional offices in San Francisco and Dallas to demand accountability. The Summit body was in fact a network, not yet formalized, but definitely in the making.

Indeed, one of the things of which the planners of the Summit are most proud was its diverse and broad representation. The Summit was remarkable in terms of its diversity -- racially, geographically, and genderwise.

Native American	54
African American	158
Latino American	62
Asian Pacific	24
Male	154
Female	144
Northeast	68
Southeast	66
Midwest	41
Southwest	59
Pacific Northwest	44
Hawaii	5
Alaska	3
Puerto Rico	3
Canada	5
Central America	3
Marshall Islands	1

Perhaps more important than the numbers was the way that various racial groups came together. This speaks to the use of culture and prayer in coalescing people from different backgrounds and experiences.

For example, after Rose Auger opened the Summit with a prayer, Toney Anaya's comments were "I think it is very appropriate, not only that we started with a prayer, but the we did it with the original environmentalist in this country, the Native Americans. It also helped to underscore the spirituality that we all feel for the air, water and land from which we breathe, drink and eat."

One of the reasons for the Summit's success was our attention towards making sure that we did not leave out groups not normally considered. These included Native Americans, Native Hawaiians, persons from Puerto Rico, Alaska and the Marshall Islands, farmworkers. There were, however, several groups which were lacking, primarily youth and urban areas, particularly in the Midwest and Northeast. There was, however, no reticence on the part of delegates in pointing out these shortcomings.

The Summit was designed so that people of color grassroots activist leaders would be able to have a forum that was truly their own. To the Summit's planners, achieving this goal spoke directly to the integrity of this process. We took great pains to insure that priority would be given to community leaders, both in terms of the roles they play and the access to resources to be able to attend. The Commission was able to provided travel for nearly two-thirds of the over 300 delegates attending. The need to insure the voice of people of color was a constant consideration, especially when given the momentum we knew this effort would generate, and the desire of many in more wealthier and established groups to attend. This was the primary reason for the division of the Summit body into Delegates, Participants and Observers. It was also the reason why the summit was restricted to delegates for the first two days.

Finally, it should be understood that the Summit Delegates were not selected from a truly representational process. The Summit Delegates, Participants and Observers were invited based upon recommendations from members of the National Planning Committee, National Advisory Committee and others. Delegates were in the main representatives of organizations. However, there was no formal process by which regions or racial groups selected their own delegates. The only exception was the SouthWest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, which had a process for choosing its own representatives. While the

delegates were highly representative of different regions and racial groups, they were not invested by these regions or groups to represent them.

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David Lujan concluded that looking at the earth as our mother, "nuestra madre tierra," takes a whole different mindset. "And that is something that we, as people of color, need to provide as an example to the rest of the world."

The Summit was instrumental also in helping to lay the basis for a working definition of environmental racism. Definitions of environmental racism were offered in many different ways by different persons. Ben Chavis gave a definition that "Environmental racism is racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and the enforcement of environmental regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of people of color communities for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of a life threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and the history of excluding people of color from the leadership of the environmental movement." Robert Bullard talked about the "inextricable link between exploitation of the land and the exploitation of people." Nearly everyone who gave an example of the disproportionate impact of environmental pollution on their communities contributed in one shape or form to a working definition of environmental racism.

One of the clearest contributions to a working definition of environmental racism came from Wilma Mankiller, who said, "One of the early extreme ideological differences that Native People in general had with the first European settlers was the way we view the environment and the way we view land... There was an immediate conflict when settlers came here and looked at the way we lived and our land as something only for exploitation and development." It should not be forgotten that the slave trade began on Christopher Columbus' second journey to the Western Hemisphere. Arawak Indians were taken and transported to Spain for sale as slaves.

Mankiller underscores the fact that environmental racism is not a phenomenon that came into being because recent studies now document disproportionate impact along lines of race. Nor is it a phenomenon that is the product of 20th century industrial and technological development. It is a phenomenon that has existed on this continent for 500 years. As we mark the quincentenary of the landing of Columbus in North America, we mark the quincentenary of the existence of environmental racism.

It is in this light that we should understand Donna Chavis' comments at the press conference that the Summit was not a conference of people reacting to the traditional environmental movement, but a proactive gathering. "We have been working on environmental issues for generations, if not centuries, as people of color from a variety of indigenous cultures that are still on these shores today."

SHORTCOMINGS

As is the case with any complex process, certain areas prove to be less developed than others. At the Summit, three such deficiencies are especially important to point out. These were the lack of youth involvement, urban environmental perspectives and an Asian Pacific perspective.

Both youth and non-youth commented on the limited amount of youth involvement in the planning and structure of the Summit. This was a serious oversight on the part of the planners. Although questions related to youth were included among the issues to be considered, and there were youths present, a strong and clearly articulated perspective from youth was not cultivated. However, to the extent that this problem was recognized during the Summit, steps were taken such as making sure a youth representative was included on the Drafting Committee for the Principles of Environmental Justice.

Likewise, persons from urban areas commented on the lack of urban perspectives, both in the composition of the Planning Committee and in the frameworks presented by major speakers. Although this was again an oversight, it is more appropriate to characterize this issue as Michel Gelobter did when he spoke of the contradictions between mainstream environmental rhetoric and urban reality for people of color. Although people of color understand this, we have yet to articulate the implications of the fact that "cities are the unspoken targets of much environmental policy." We have yet to explicitly define readily identifiable symbols for environmental justice, such as in Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton's case, the Anacostia River in Washington, D.C. Nor have we yet addressed the issues raised by Chris Mathis and Carl Anthony on urban infrastructures designed for the automobile with their inherent inequities and unsustainability.

Lastly, as an Asian American, I felt the lack of Asian Pacific perspectives on environmental justice especially glaring. This was alluded to several times by other Asian American delegates. Here, too, I think that this is an area waiting for further development and self-definition. The Summit did allow us to touch upon a few of the social, historical, environmental, and geo-political realities of Asian Pacific peoples. Mililani Trask's powerful presentation about indigenous Hawaiian perspectives on environmental justice linked environmental and sovereignty of her people in these contexts. Nor could one escape these links when the Summit paid tribute to Jeton Anjain for his struggle to achieve justice for people of Rongelap, victims of atom bomb testing in the Marshall Islands. Syngman Rhee touched upon the social realities of Asians on the continental United States with his now famous tale of the "yellow jelly bean." Perhaps nothing spoke more eloquently to the experiences of Asians in the United States.

CONCLUSION

In his welcoming message to the delegates, participants and observers at the Summit, Edwin R. Edmonds, Chairperson of the UCC Commission for

Racial Justice, said, "The critical significance of this Leadership Summit will not escape the notice of all who care about our future as people of color. You assemble as sisters and brothers in a dramatic fashion, a truly multiracial and multicultural people at a time in the history of our planet when racism is on a tide of rising ferocity. You face that tide looking at the 1990's as a time for action; action that no doubt has consequences well into the twenty-first century."

It is fitting to end this Introduction by noting Baldemar Velasquez's keynote speech at the Saturday night banquet program. The Summit's planners wanted to make an extremely important statement by having this presentation be made by a representative of one of the most marginalized and invisible groups in the United States, i.e., migrant farmworkers. There is perhaps no better way to summarize the essence of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit then to quote Velasquez talking about his childhood, "I said I want to be a worker; I want to be part of this community. Understand what I am saying, that was my job. My job wasn't picking the cotton. My job was making community. Because community is what nourishes us, **community is what makes life.**"

The first step in the process of environmental justice is to identify the problem. This is often done through community organizing and research. Once the problem is identified, the next step is to develop a plan of action. This plan should include goals, objectives, and strategies for achieving the desired outcomes. The plan should also take into account the needs and concerns of the affected community. Once the plan is developed, the next step is to implement it. This involves working with the community to carry out the plan and monitoring progress. Finally, the last step is to evaluate the results of the plan and make adjustments as needed.

Environmental justice is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach. It is not enough to simply identify the problem and develop a plan. It is also necessary to build a strong coalition of community members and organizations who are committed to the cause. This coalition should be able to mobilize resources and exert pressure on the relevant authorities to address the problem. Environmental justice is a long-term process that requires patience and persistence. It is a process that is ongoing and evolving, and it is one that requires the active participation of the affected community.

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PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

*The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit
October 24 -27, 1991
Washington, D.C.*

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF COLOR, gathered together at this multinational People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, to begin to build a national and international movement of all peoples of color to fight the destruction and taking of our lands and communities, do hereby re-establish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of our Mother Earth; to respect and celebrate each of our cultures, languages and beliefs about the natural world and our roles in healing ourselves; to insure environmental justice; to promote economic alternatives which would contribute to the development of environmentally safe livelihoods; and, to secure our political, economic and cultural liberation that has been denied for over 500 years of colonization and oppression, resulting in the poisoning of our communities and land and the genocide of our peoples, do affirm and adopt these Principles of Environmental Justice:

- 1. Environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.***
- 2. Environmental justice demands that public policy be based on mutual respect and justice for all peoples, free from any form of discrimination or bias.***
- 3. Environmental justice mandates the right to ethical, balanced and responsible uses of land and renewable resources in the interest of a sustainable planet for humans and other living things.***
- 4. Environmental justice calls for universal protection from nuclear testing and the extraction, production and disposal of toxic/hazardous wastes and poisons that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food.***
- 5. Environmental justice affirms the fundamental right to political, economic, cultural and environmental self-determination of all peoples.***
- 6. Environmental justice demands the cessation of the production of all toxins, hazardous wastes, and radioactive materials, and that all past and current producers be held strictly accountable to the people for detoxification and the containment at the point of production.***
- 7. Environmental justice demands the right to participate as equal partners at every level of decision-making including needs assessment, planning, implementation, enforcement and evaluation.***

8. ***Environmental justice*** affirms the right of all workers to a safe and healthy work environment, without being forced to choose between an unsafe livelihood and unemployment. It also affirms the right of those who work at home to be free from environmental hazards.
9. ***Environmental justice*** protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation and reparations for damages as well as quality health care.
10. ***Environmental justice*** considers governmental acts of environmental injustice a violation of international law, the Universal Declaration On Human Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Genocide.
11. ***Environmental justice*** must recognize a special legal and natural relationship of Native Peoples to the U.S government through treaties, agreements, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination.
12. ***Environmental justice*** affirms the need for an urban and rural ecological policies to clean up and rebuild our cities and rural areas in balance with nature, honoring the cultural integrity of all our communities, and providing fair access for all to the full range of resources.
13. ***Environmental justice*** calls for the strict enforcement of principles of informed consent, and a halt to the testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures and vaccinations on people of color.
14. ***Environmental justice*** opposes the destructive operations of multi-national corporations.
15. ***Environmental justice*** opposes military occupation, repression and exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures, and other life forms.
16. ***Environmental justice*** calls for the education of present and future generations which emphasizes social and environmental issues, based on our experience and an appreciation of our diverse cultural perspectives.
17. ***Environmental justice*** requires that we, as individuals, make personal and consumer choices to consume as little of Mother Earth's resources and to produce as little waste as possible; and make the conscious decision to challenge and reprioritize our lifestyles to insure the health of the natural world for present and future generations.

Adopted, October 27, 1991

*The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit
Washington, D.C.*

PRINCIPIOS PARA LA JUSTICIA AMBIENTAL

*Primera Cumbre Nacional Ambiental de Lideres de Color
24 al 27 de octubre de 1991
Washington, D.C., Estados Unidos*

PREAMBULO

NOSOTROS, LAS PERSONAS DE COLOR, nos hemos reunido en la Primera Cumbre Nacional Ambiental de Lideres de Color, para comenzar a construir un movimiento nacional e internacional que luche contra la destruccion ambiental y recupere nuestras tierras y comunidades, con el fin de re-establecer nuestra interdependencia espiritual con los elementos sagrados de nuestra "Madre Tierra"; para respetar y celebrar nuestras propias culturas, idiomas y creencias acerca del mundo natural y nuestra capacidad de curarnos a nosotros mismos; para asegurar la justicia ambiental; para promover alternativas economicas que contribuyan al desarrollo de estilos de vida ambientalmente seguros; para asegurar nuestra liberacion politica, economica y cultural la cual nos ha sido negada por mas de 500 anos de colonizacion y opresion, resultando en el envenenamiento de nuestras comunidades y tierras y en el genocidio de nuestros pueblos, en consecuencia, afirmamos y adoptamos los siguientes Principios de Justicia Ambiental:

1. **La Justicia Ambiental** afirma lo sagrado de nuestra Tierra, la unidad ecologica y la interdependencia de todas las especies y el derecho, asi como a quedar libres de la destruccion ecologica.
2. **La Justicia Ambiental** exige que las politicas publicas esten basadas en el respeto mutuo y en la justicia para todos los pueblos, sin discriminacion ni prejuicios.
3. **La Justicia Ambiental** exige que el derecho al uso responsable, etico y equilibrado de la tierra y de los recursos renovables en aras de garantizar un planeta sostenible tanto para los humanos y otras criaturas vivientes.
4. **La Justicia Ambiental** hace un llamado para que se proteja el medio ambiente de las pruebas nucleares, la extraccion, produccion y eliminacion final de desechos toxicos peligrosos que amenazan el derecho fundamental de los pueblos a disfrutar de aire, tierra, agua y alimentos sanos.
5. **La Justicia Ambiental** afirma el derecho fundamental a la autodeterminacion politica, economica, cultural y ambiental de todos los pueblos.
6. **La Justicia Ambiental** exige que se suspenda la produccion de toda clase de toxinas, desechos peligrosos y materiales radioactivos y que todos los responsables por su produccion pasada o presente asuman la detoxificacion y la contencion en el momento mismo de la produccion.
7. **La Justicia Ambiental** exige el derecho de la gente a participar equitativamente en el proceso de toma de decisiones en todos sus niveles desde el diseno, el estudio, la planificacion, hasta la implementacion, aplicacion y evaluacion.

8. ***La Justicia Ambiental afirma el derecho de todos los trabajadores a cumplir sus labores en un ambiente sano y seguro, y sin que se les obligue a tener que escoger entre una ida de inseguridad industrial y el desempleo. Tambien afirma el derecho de aquellos que trabajan en el hogar a hacerlo en un medio libre de peligros ambientales.***
9. ***La Justicia Ambiental protege el derecho de las victimas de la injusticia ambiental a recibir compensacion y reparaciones, asi como cuidado medico apropiado por los danos que se les hayan ocasionado.***
10. ***La Justicia Ambiental considera los actos de injusticia ambiental cometidos por algunos gobiernos como una violacion de la ley internacional, la Declaracion Universal de los Derechos Humanos y la Convencion de Las Naciones Unidas sobre el Genocidio.***
11. ***La Justicia Ambiental debe reconocer la relacion especial de caracter legal y natural que existe entre los pueblos indigenas de los Estados Unidos y el gobierno por medio de tratados, acuerdos, y pactos que afirman la soberania y auto determinacion de aquellas comunidades.***
12. ***La Justicia Ambiental afirma la necesidad de tener politicas ecologicas de limpieza tanto para zonas urbanas y rurales asi como para reconstruir nuestros campos y ciudades en equilibrio con la naturaleza, honrando la integridad cultural de todas nuestras comunidades, y ofreciendo el libre acceso a los recursos existentes.***
13. ***La Justicia Ambiental hace un llamado para que se cumplan estrictamente los principios de consentimiento mutuo, y para qu se detengan inmediatamente las pruebas experimentales reproductivas asi como las vacunas y procedimientos medicos experimentales en las personas de color.***
14. ***La Justicia Ambiental se opone a las operaciones destructivas de las corporaciones multinacionales.***
15. ***La Justicia Ambiental se opone a la ocupacion militar, la represeion y explotacion de las tierras, las personas, las culturas y otras formas de vida.***
16. ***La Justicia Ambiental hace un llamado para que las presentes y futuras generaciones se eduquen, enfatizando los asuntos sociales y del medio ambiente, con base en nuestra experiencia y la apreciacion de las diversas culturas.***
17. ***La Justicia Ambiental exige de nosotgros que, como individuos, tomemos decisiones personales, que conduzcan a disminuir sustancialmente el consumo de los recursos de la Madre Tierra y producir el minimo de desperdicios posibles. Debemos tomar una decision consciente de cuestionar y reorganizar nuestras prioridades y estilos de vida para asegurar la salud del mundo natural para presente y futuras generaciones.***

Adoptado 27 de octubre de 1991

Primera Cumbre Nacional Ambiental de Lideres de Color

Washington, D.C., Estados Unidos

A CALL TO ACTION

*The First National People of Color Environmental
Leadership Summit
Washington, D.C.
October 24 - 27, 1991*

This week at the **First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit** in Washington, DC, a new international movement of indigenous and grassroots peoples was born. It is a multiracial, multicultural convergence of existing local and regional grassroots movements and struggles which are already underway by people of color which are actively resisting various forms of environmental genocide against them throughout the world. We have come from all states of the United States, Central and Latin America, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, Alaska, Marshall Islands and Canada.

We are a new movement which raises the life and death struggles of indigenous and grassroots communities of color to an unprecedented multinational integrated level. The fight against the disproportionately harmful impact of environmental degradation upon peoples of color is not new. We have always been in this struggle, we have always known what is at stake. This movement addresses every aspect of our quality of life. Unlike traditional mainstream environmental and social justice organizations, this multiracial, multicultural movement of peoples of color is evolving from the bottom up and not the top down. It seeks a global vision based on grassroots realities.

We call for an immediate end to the systematic murder of peoples of color through global environmental genocide.

We refuse to accept the deliberate targeting of communities of color and the lands of indigenous peoples as dumping grounds for hazardous wastes and radioactive materials, and the production of pollutants.

We call on the president of the U.S., the congress, and all federal, state, and local agencies to discontinue all policies and practices of environmental racism and to properly enforce existing environmental protection laws and policies.

We call for a ban on the export of hazardous waste and radioactive materials that are devastating the world, particularly the lands of peoples of color.

We demand full reparations for all past injustices and further demand an immediate halt to all schemes that degrade the lives and lands of peoples of color with harmful development and hazardous waste disposal.

We call for a restructuring of the traditional relationships of mainstream environmental organizations and activists to communities of color and grassroots and indigenous peoples.

We demand the right to live in healthy communities, free of the illnesses and disease spawned by environmental degradation which affects our children, youth and families.

We call for the embodiment of our ratified Principles of Environmental Justice in grassroots social and political work within communities of color.

We call for an end to war, violence and militarism, because these are among the most environmentally and ecologically destructive phenomenon known to humankind, and millions of people of color have perished due to war.

We are here. We are united. We are strong. We are one! We have come together speaking out of our cultural diversity to our common oppression, as many members of one family -- Asians and Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and Pacific Americans, Native Peoples and Alaskans, Latinos and Canadians, Latin Americans and Central Americans, Africans and African Americans. In our collective unity, there is great strength. We have come together around many issues in many lands to unleash the power of our united will in a common struggle for a new environmental movement--a movement to eradicate environmental racism and bring into being true social justice and self-determination.

As peoples of color, we have not chosen our struggles; they have chosen us. We suffer disproportionate victimization by environmental degradation and a host of other forms of social, economic and political violence. We have no choice but to come together to overcome our common barriers and resist our common foes. Only in the diversity of our oppression are we able to clearly see the pervasive pattern of genocidal environmental racism. We gathered to speak for ourselves and to define the issues in our own way.

Adopted, October 27, 1991

*The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit
Washington, D.C.*

PRESS CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1991

11:00 A.M.

OPENING STATEMENTS

ROSE MARIE AUGUSTINE

President

Tucsonians for a Clean Environment

Tucson, Arizona

I come from Tucson, Arizona. I am President of Tucsonians for a Clean Environment. My community is 85 percent Latino. In Tucson, 30 square miles have been designated Superfund, where 47,000 people have been contaminated by drinking contaminated water. The water was contaminated by one of this country's major defense contractors, Hughes Tool Company.

We bathed in and we drank the water for over 30 years. In 1981 the EPA came in and designated Tucson a Superfund site. We didn't know anything about what had happened to us for five years, until a newspaper reporter did an investigative report and we saw the article that came out in the paper. It was a series of articles. We were never informed what happens to people who drink contaminated water. We knew that there was a large population in our area that was suffering. We were suffering a lot of cancers, and we thought, "My God, what's happening here?"

My neighbors, my friends, my family have suffered greatly. I have lupus; my husband has bladder cancer; my son has a rare form of muscular dystrophy. My first grandchild was born dead. My aunt died of cancer. That's four generations that we seen in our family. My neighbors recently had a child who had the chicken pox. His mother thought that he was having effects from the chicken pox, but they found out that he had lymphoma. We have mothers who had children born with heart-valve

defects. I had one mother tell me that she had three of her children die, and one of them died in her arms. She was asking me, "Could this be an effect from TCE (trichloroethylene)?"

We have noticed, by speaking with the women in the community, that the women are the ones that are suffering the greatest. I am not saying that the men don't suffer, but the women are the ones that have to take care of the illness. When someone has a cancer, they are the ones that have to take care of the family members; they are the ones that have to take care of the children when they are sick; they are the ones that are left. When the husbands can no longer stand the expense of the medical care and the illnesses, they are left with their children, and to take care of them.

Our community has suffered a lot. Our government has done nothing to help us. And we have a lot of fear in the neighborhood. We have a lot of concerns, and we have a lot of anger. And that is why I am here today. Tucson is not the only community that is experiencing these problems. We have communities throughout the country that are experiencing our problems. I am here today because I cannot do anything alone. In Tucson we have been fighting this for 10 years now, and I am hoping that by coming here the government will pay attention to what is happening to us. I think that if we stand together, we will become stronger. And we need one another.

BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.
Executive Director
United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice
Cleveland, Ohio

We wanted to begin this press conference with Rose Marie Augustine's story, because that is the reason why the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit is being convened. Her story can be repeated in thousands of communities throughout this nation. We have come to Washington, D.C. to catch the attention of the President and the Government, and all forces that have contributed to our sister's and her community's suffering and pain.

Native American, African American, Latino American and Asian Pacific American delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit will be arriving here today from every state in the nation, along with delegates from Canada, Puerto Rico, the Marshall Islands, Central America and Africa. The convening of this Leadership Summit has the potential to reshape and redefine the environmental movement.

The United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice is pleased to sponsor this historic Leadership Summit on one of the most critical issues of our time. Environmental racism is both a national and international problem. While our focus will primarily be on the environmental crisis in people of color communities throughout the United States, we are profoundly aware of the relationship between the U.S. domestic policies and foreign policies on the environment.

Environmental racism is racial discrimination in environmental policy making and the enforcement of regulation and laws, the deliberate targeting of people of color communities for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of a life threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and the history of excluding people of color from the leadership of the environmental movement.

The issue of environmental injustice in our communities has become an issue of life and death. We believe that there is a direct correlation between the disproportionate presence of toxic facilities and pollutants and the increase of infant mortality, birth defects, cancer, and respiratory illnesses in people of color communities. This insidious form of institutionalized racism must be challenged, and it must be stopped.

It is our intention to build an effective multiracial environmental movement with the capacity to transform the political landscape of this nation around these issues.

It is our intention to expose the blatant refusal of the United States Environmental Protection Agency to enforce equally this nation's environmental laws in regard to the well documented national pattern of environmental injustice in people of color communities. In other words, there is no equal justice under the law in terms of environmental protection.

It is our intention to challenge every member of the United States Congress to respond legislatively, and with their oversight authority, to the particularities of environmental injustice in all communities, but especially to the genocidal character of environmental racism in people of color communities.

It is our intention to say clearly to President George Bush: You have failed to keep your promise to use your good office for making the protection of the environment a national priority. It appears to us that the Bush Administration has had a greater commitment to protect the petrochemical industry and other large corporate interests rather than the environment.

It is our intention to call upon the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to ban permanently the storage or disposal of nuclear waste in Native American lands and communities. We are opposed to any attempts to export toxic wastes from the United States to people of color communities in Third World countries.

The living pain of Rose Marie Augustine, and of all of those women and children in her community of Tucson, Arizona, is not an isolated phenomenon. But their reality of suffering has been experienced by people of color throughout this nation. Our cup has run over, and we assembled here to join hands with all of the Rose Marie Augustines, who are valiantly standing up to this injustice.

Chavis introduces members of National Planning Committee and other National Advisory Committee Co-chairs, who make brief statements.

GAIL SMALL
Executive Director, Native Action
Lame Deer, Montana

I am a member of the Northern Cheyenne Indian tribe from Lame Deer, Montana. My Cheyenne name is Nisseyot, which means "Woman Standing in the Timber." I have traveled a long way to be here, to give you an understanding of the sacredness of the land. My tribe is approximately 6,000 people. Our territory is 500,000 acres of aboriginal ancestral homeland in southeastern Montana. Along with our Sioux and Arapaho allies, we defeated the United States Government in a military victory known as the Custer Battle.

Today, however, we are still fighting for our lands. We are still fighting for our reservations, the Chicano communities and black communities. My reservation today is being surrounded by major coal strip mining. The largest coal strip mine in America is 15 miles from Lame Deer, Montana. The coal is being used to fuel the cities of America: Los Angeles, Seattle, Minneapolis, etc. Major coal strip mining surrounding our ancestral homeland,

the land which our people died for and are still fighting for today. The environmental laws which this country passes do not protect our lands and our people of color.

It has been 500 years now since Columbus arrived in our world -- 500 years of colonization and oppression. "Conquer the Indians, conquer the land" is the white man's way of thinking. As human beings today, we must reestablish our spiritual connections to the sacredness of our Mother Earth. In order to do this, America's way of thinking must be challenged.

Our lands, our communities are being poisoned by white America's garbage. Indian reservations, black, Chicano, and Asian communities are becoming the dumping grounds for America. It must stop. As people of color today, we are challenging America's thinking, the economic thinking which poisons our people and our land.

TONEY ANAYA
Governor, State of New Mexico (1983-87)
Santa Fe, New Mexico

I am a former Governor of New Mexico, a state that today is the first majority minority state. We are now principally Hispanic American and Native American, with a good population of other people of color as well. My background in the environmental movement is not newfound. As with most people of color, we feel that we probably were the original environmentalists. With most people of color, the environment is something to which we have a profound spiritual attachment, where we have always respected and shown a deep love and attraction to the land, the air and the water.

In the past we have had to spend all of our time dealing with day to day issues, like putting food on the table, and perhaps addressing some of the environmental issues in another context: the context of human rights and civil rights, employment, and so on. But as we look around, we recognize that we have been disproportionately impacted by the adverse effects of the environmental policies of this country, to which this Summit will be addressing itself. We find that we have been disproportionately

impacted in the effects on our health, our very life, much less our livelihood, and we see the damage inflicted on the land, in the air and the water that we have always held so cherished in our lives.

We want to play a substantive role in the future debate. Some of us have been able to play some role in the past. When I served as governor, for example, I was also chairman of the National Governors' Association Subcommittee on the Environment, and sought to bring my fellow governors more aggressively into the national debate on some of these issues. I also sought to bring us into the international debate, particularly to look at the environmental implications of our industrial policies. But whatever opportunities we have had, they have been limited and minimal in the past.

We are not looking for solutions today that would lock anybody out; we are looking for a way in which all of us can be involved in the process, and try to help find the solutions. We are looking, for example, to come up with a technology and the

political will to insure that we force the polluters (the industrial plants, the military establishment and others) to detoxify at the point of production. We must stop producing toxins in the first place. We must find a more responsible way to dispose of toxic wastes where you just simply can't avoid producing them. We are not asking that you take it out of people of color neighborhoods and put it in white Anglo neighborhoods; we are saying it shouldn't be in anybody's neighborhood -- we all have to work together.

We are here in a responsible fashion, we are here to empower ourselves, so that we will have a greater voice to play, and through that, to help our government and our policy makers to find solutions. And, if need be, we are here to give them the political will to enforce those solutions.

Co-Chair Syngman Rhee, President, National Council of Churches was in transit from Louisville, Kentucky.

Other persons in attendance were Dana Alston, Panos Institute (Washington, D.C.); Pat Bryant, Gulf Coast Tenants Organization (New Orleans, Louisiana); Robert D. Bullard, University of California at Riverside (Riverside, California); Donna Chavis, Center for Community Action (Pembroke, North Carolina); and Richard Moore, SouthWest Organizing Project (Albuquerque, New Mexico). Answers to questions in Appendix I, Page 205.

Press conference and media relations were coordinated by McKinney/McDowell Associates, Washington, D.C.

OPENING PLENARY SESSION

OCTOBER 24, 1991

4:00 P.M.

Toney Anaya

Governor, State of New Mexico (1983-87)

Moderator

CULTURE

BINARI KOREAN CULTURAL GROUP

New York, N.Y.

WHITE OAK SINGERS

Rockville, Maryland

*Native drummers who drum in the northern-style tradition,
which is based in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Minnesota.*

OPENING PRAYER

ROSE AUGER

Cree Spiritual Elder

Good afternoon, relatives and all peoples of the world. My name is Rose Auger. I am a spiritual leader and a medicine person. I come from a long line of people who have carried our traditional ways for thousands of years. I come to share this with each and every one of you, from my whole being - from my body, my mind and my spirit. But, above all, from the spirit world of which we will all be someday.

As we gather together in the Creator's holy name, Great Spirit -- relatives in the spirit world -- we ask the holy ones, the great mystery to bring our minds together as one. And in that way what we will share together here, to the rest of the world, I ask that the spirit world will carry our love, our messages, and, most of all, the solution of our lives upon Mother Earth. So I will pray in my mother tongue, the Woodland Cree.

O Creator, Great Spirit, and the holy ones of all four directions, I call upon you this day, in the sacred manner, that you truly will hear our prayer and our plea for the existence of us, foolish children, and those of us who are still in ignorance and in no life, that you will bring us all together,

Creator, to bring about a change, a change that will be in harmony with all life, with all upon Mother Earth, and also to be in acknowledgement that the life you have given us is beautiful, and it is very powerful. But only when we become true people, true people in the manner that we acknowledge you, Creator, and we acknowledge our traditional, spiritual ways and ceremonies. I beg of you, Creator, to put us back on that path.

Let us help one another. Let us bring our minds as one, so that our children and those not yet born will have a place, will be able to drink the water, will be able to walk upon this earth free from radiation, and free from contaminants of our food and our plant life. O Creator, I call upon the holy beings to be with us as I sing the sacred song.

I am grateful to get this opportunity to be with each and every one of you. I have come many miles to share this great and beautiful way of our people, the red people. I am grateful, and I reach out to you, that we, in this little time that we have, that we will again, in many ways, be with one another in mind, spirit and body. All my relations.

TONEY ANAYA
(Moderator)

Brothers and sisters, what a tremendous way for us to come together here. My name is Toney Anaya, former Governor of New Mexico, where we learned to respect very much what we are about to embark on here today. I think it is very appropriate, not only that we started with a prayer here, but that we did it with the original environmentalists in this country, the Native Americans. It also helped underscore the spirituality with which we all feel a

relationship with the land, the air and the water that we live upon, drink, and eat from.

Introduces other Co-Chairs who will be moderating Leadership Summit: Dr. Benjamin Chavis, Ms. Gail Small, Executive Director of the Native Action and Rev. Dr. Syngman Rhee, President of the National Council of Churches.

THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND CHALLENGES OF THE FIRST NATIONAL PEOPLE OF COLOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.

Executive Director

*United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice
Cleveland, Ohio*

To our spiritual elder, Rose Auger, Mr. Chairman, fellow Co-chairpersons, and fellow Delegates: We have come to this historic First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit from throughout the United States and the world to join hands together in our common struggle to prevent the destruction of our peoples and our communities, and to rescue the environment from the clutches of persons and institutions gone mad with racism and greed.

Before I go further, I want you to meet my wife, Martha Rivera Chavis, my daughter, Anna Elizabeth, and my son, Franklin. It is important to introduce my family, because we all participate in the struggle based on what buoyancy we have at home. It would not have been possible to reach this point in the Summit process without a lot of planning and countless hours of work. I saw that procession march in. I heard the drummers play. I listened to our spiritual elder give a prayer. And I stand here now and look at your beautiful people of color faces. It warms the heart, because we know that the pre-Summit labor has not been in vain. There is one person, Charles Lee, who has worked night and day to help bring us here. He is on the staff of the Commission for Racial Justice. He directed the research and publication of our study, *Toxic Wastes and Race* -- a profound brother who gives of himself tirelessly, with the kind of commitment exhibited in our people of color communities.

We had a multiracial National Planning Committee and a multiracial National Advisory Committee. Now we are having a multiracial First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. In this racist society that tells us that we cannot be multiracial and multicultural, we have a profound responsibility to dispel that myth. One problem of life in this world is that the abnormality of racism appears to be normal. Too often, we accept the abnormality of racism and the divisions based on race, class, religion, and ethnicity which prevent us from coming together like this.

I want to introduce the National Planning Committee, along with Charles and the staff of the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice: Bob Bullard, Professor of Sociology, University of California at Riverside, Dana Alston, Panos Institute, Washington, D.C.; Richard Moore, SouthWest Organizing Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Pat Bryant, Gulf Coast Tenant Organization, New Orleans, Louisiana; Donna Chavis, Center for Community Action, Pembroke, North Carolina. And Damu Smith, Washington, D.C., a brother who was lent from Greenpeace to work on the Summit.

Let me also say that working with these three other Co-Chairpersons has been a learning experience and a blessing from the Lord. They are Governor Toney Anaya of New Mexico, Sister Gail Small from the Cheyenne nation, and Dr. Syngman Rhee, President of the National Council of Churches.

The Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ is pleased to sponsor this historic Leadership Summit around one of the most critical issues of our time. We come from the East and the West, from the North and the South. We have come from communities victimized by environmental injustice. Yet, we come from communities that are engaged in the struggle for environmental justice. We have come from Native American sovereign nations and communities, from African American, Latino American, and Asian American communities. Some of us have suffered defeats; some of us have won victories. Yet all of us are here tonight because of our commitment and our leadership responsibilities. This is a Leadership Summit.

Many of you were identified by sisters and brothers, your colleagues, who knew you would come to this place at this time to represent the hundreds of thousands of our communities out there engaged in struggle. We took the extraordinary effort to make sure that the right people would get the right invitations. I pray that when we, as Delegates, are

joined in large measure by the other folk (Participants and Observers), that we do not lose this moment. We should not try to be ashamed that we spent some time in our self-togetherness, so we can be ready to have the kind of critical, constructive dialogue that is going to be necessary.

A NEW ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

On Sunday morning, there is going to be a new environmental movement in the United States of America. On Sunday morning, there is going to be good news in our communities. With all of the bad news we have gotten from the White House, Congress and the EPA, our communities need good news. The first challenge of the Leadership Summit is for us to garner out of this historical experience not only the good news, but the mechanisms that make the good news real in our communities, in the nation, and in the world.

Environmental racism is racial discrimination in environmental policy making and the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of people of color communities for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the life threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in our communities, and the history of excluding people of color from the leadership of the environmental movement.

The issue of environmental injustice in our communities has become an issue of life and death. It is not a philosophical discussion, although we do need to question the philosophical ethos that allows a society to participate in its own destruction. But, for us, the issue of environmental justice is an issue of life and death. In the South Side of Chicago, **our children** are dying. Some die in their mother's womb. In Cancer Alley, it is **our children** who are dying. In the Southwest and among farmworkers, it is **our children** who are dying. On Native American reservations, territories and lands, it is **our children** who are dying. For Asian American sisters who labor in Silicon Valley, it is **our children** that are dying.

The issue for us is one of life and death, and we believe that there is a direct correlation between the disproportionate presence of toxic facilities and pollutants and the increase in infant mortality, birth defects, cancer and respiratory illnesses in people of color communities. This insidious form of institutionalized racism must be challenged and it must be stopped. It is our intention to build an

effective multiracial, inclusive environmental movement, with the capacity to transform the political landscape of this nation. The logical conclusion of having delegates from all 50 states is that we are going to go back and do some homework. We have to channel our anger into a constructive *modus operandi*, where our political will is felt by those that make policy in this country, by those that **make** those decisions.

It is our intention to build a multiracial movement that would have the capacity to transform the political landscape of this nation. It is our intention to expose the blatant refusal of the United States Environmental Protection Agency to enforce equally this nation's environmental laws in regard to the well documented national pattern of environmental injustice in people of color communities. There is no equal justice under the law in terms of environmental protection. It is our intention to challenge every member of the United States Congress to respond legislatively, and with their oversight authority, to the particularities of environmental injustice in all communities.

NO COMMUNITY SHOULD BE POISONED

We are not saying, "Take the poisons out of our community and put them in a white community." We are saying that **no** community should have these poisons. We must take the moral high road on this issue, and that is why I say that come Sunday there is going to be a new environmental movement. The problem with that larger movement out there is that they have refused to take the high moral road; they have refused to challenge the petrochemical industry; they have refused to challenge the multinational corporations. Many multinational corporations and petrochemical companies sit on their board of directors. You cannot have a symbiotic relationship with the problem and seek a solution.

It is our intention to say clearly to, with respect, President George Bush: "You have failed to keep your promise to use your good office for making the protection of the environment a national priority." It appears that the Bush administration has had a greater commitment to protect the petrochemical industry and other large corporate interests, rather than the environment. But I think we need to say more than that to Mr. Bush. None of us really expected him to keep it. It is not just about breaking promises. It is about being the President of a nation that is becoming more and more multiracial. If you want to see the future of

the United States of America, look around the room. This is the future. And until the George Bushes understand that change is going to come anyway, they are buying short-term time rather than long-term gain. But, it is really going to be long-term pain. Because we must worry about more than just the ozone layer. If we are not careful, there are not going to be any human beings for the ultraviolet rays to endanger. We must not forget what is going on the ground, in the water and in the air that we breathe.

It is our intention to call upon the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to ban permanently the storage or disposal of nuclear waste in Native American lands and communities. Now, I want to explain this because you will ask why not **all** communities. History will show that what we allow to go down on our Native American sisters and brothers will come to haunt us. You just have to live a little while longer. There has been too much tolerance of the genocide against our Native American sisters and brothers. If we do not say anything else at this national Leadership Summit when we must speak the truth, we must say that most of us have not taken up and embraced the suffering of our Native American sisters and brothers. We must say that!

We are opposed to any attempt to export toxic wastes from the United States to Third World people of color communities. U.S. foreign policy has always been connected to its domestic policy. Do not let the media tell you that Bush does not have a domestic policy. His foreign policy is his domestic policy. A nation which would deliberately dump on its own because of race is a nation which would dump on the global community because of race. The policy is consistent, both domestic and international.

The first challenge in terms of our visions for the future and our future responsibilities is that we not lose our spiritual unity. Secondly, we must identify our points of unity. If we do not identify our points of unity, those who hover over our oppression will not give us that opportunity. This is a historic opportunity, and we would not serve all the sisters and brothers that we are delegates representing if we do not identify our points of unity. As a result of identifying our points of unity, we need to develop a national plan of action. We are going to discuss and ratify a set of Principles of Environmental Jus-

tice. Later, Richard Moore will speak about the significance of our Principles of Environmental Justice. We are going to send a Call to Action on Sunday, to our communities and to the world.

We are not just announcing that there is a new movement, because we all know that the movement that I am talking about has been alive for a while now. It is just that our society has not offered us opportunities to claim it. One of the challenges before us is to define our reality in ways that are not only perceptible by our sisters and brothers in the community, but to define our realities so that we can wage a pro-active way. We are going to spend our time not only identifying our points of view in that action plan and communiqué, but giving life and value to the movement that we are part of. This is an on-going process.

The Summit, although we will adjourn, will not end on Sunday. There are going to be regional Summits. There are going to be community Summits. And we will take this struggle and embody it in our very life circumstances. The struggle is lifelong. It is not because there is a Presidential election. It is not because somebody wants to run for office and needs some people of color votes. The struggle is lifelong. One of the things that we have to ensure is that the next generation and the future generations have life. That we determine by the way we live our lives in the present.

Finally, many of you know that I was in prison. Some of you have heard me say this before that the God that has created us is not about to let us down. God has never been the problem. The Creator has never been the problem. The Creator created this environment. The problem has been there are some who would exploit. There are some that would do anything to anybody to advance their own personal or collective avarice and greed. We are saying that we have to pull the sheets off all such persons.

Let me say finally, because I do not want to be misunderstood, that evil can come in all colors. We are not organizing an anti-white movement. We are organizing an **anti-injustice** movement. We are organizing an **anti-racism** movement. We are organizing an **anti-environmental injustice** movement. That is the character of our movement, and that is the character of our victory, on this day and for all days to come. God bless you!

FLOOR DISCUSSION

Ellie Goodwin, Race, Poverty and the Environment Newsletter, San Francisco, California: As Dr. Chavis pointed out, we are all here for the same purpose, i.e., to eliminate racism, economic and environmental injustice and to do some cross-cultural and multi-ethnic healing, please remember that within all of our communities, the voice of women really must be acknowledged. I heard at the press conference earlier today that women are the ones that usually wind up caring for the hurt babies, the hurt families, and the hurt communities. In all of your sessions, please be aware of the female perspective; please be respectful of our voices; please be respectful of the things that we have to share, and the processes that we bring to this Summit.

Owenes Pritzker, Wolf Mountain American Indian Press Center (Yat Kitischee), Naples, Florida: I work with Seminole and Miccosukee traditionals on defense of sacred lands. Five years ago I was a delegate with the International Indian Treaty Council to the Second International Globescope Forum. I will read one paragraph which as a recommendation after more than six years has been totally neglected. The Native American representation at the upcoming Globescope Conference is going to be nothing more than symbolic tokenism.

This International Indian Treaty Council Globescope consensus statement recommendation entitled "An Indigenous Worldview" reads: "Because the knowledge of natural laws possessed by aboriginal peoples is substantial and proven, and concern for the next seven generations, conservation has always been an integral part of indigenous life. It is our recommendation that indigenous task force be established within the Globescope process nationally, and environmental and conservation organizations internationally, so that indigenous peoples are invited as equal partners in planning conference agendas, are invited participants in plenary sessions, and are invited in the development of policies in such areas as population control, genetic diversity, education, in such areas as surface and subsurface resources and other areas of concern to the environmental community, thereby bringing balance to the environmental community, environmental movement worldwide, and bringing the human society towards a world free of racism."

Marvin Robinson, Quindaro Ruins/Underground Railroad, Kansas City, Kansas: I work with the Quindaro ruins archeological underground railroad site that sits right at the edge of the Missouri River, where Browning Ferris, Inc. (BFI) wants to put a toxic waste dump. I come to this conference with a lot of gratitude from a lot of different people to the United Church of Christ for allowing us the opportunity to be a part of this forum. I do not know if this is the proper time -- but I think that it would be a good idea if we would have direct action every day that we are here. For example, we should demonstrate at the Washington Post. I think we should be doing everything we could to send a message clearly to these entities and institutions that we are here representing a lot of different interests. Because right now at a 260-acre archeological site, we have a state law protecting its water supply. We have a new federal law that a lot of people, even black people, do not know that Congress passed last November to establish a fund for the redevelopment of underground railroad sites. Still BFI has a 53 million dollar lawsuit against the people trying to preserve this site.

Andrea Carmen, International Indian Treaty Council, Palmer, Alaska: With me is Sarah James, representing the Gwich'in Nation. We would like to invite people to a march that we are having tomorrow during the noon hour. There are many, many very critical issues that people here represent, but there is one that is basic, both to the environmental health of our Mother Earth and to the sovereignty and human rights of indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. This is the issue of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge now threatened with oil development.

We are taking this opportunity to have a march because of the upcoming vote on the energy bill, which includes the destruction of what is called the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the breeding ground of the porcupine caribou herd is up for a vote this coming Tuesday. The Native American people will be marching, joined by supporters in the community. The march will be tomorrow during the noon break. We will be marching to the Capitol Building. And we will be back in time for the afternoon session. I want to again invite everybody to bring banners from your organization, from your indigenous nation, and from your community.

This represents all of the issues that are here on the table. But, again, this is the one that is coming to a vote right now, and we want to take the opportunity of being here in Washington, D.C., and show our views to those who are going to be making this decision affecting the life and the survival of the Gwich'in Nation of indigenous people in Alaska and Canada. I would like to pass the mike to my sister, Sarah James.

Sarah James, Gwich'in Nation, Anchorage, Alaska: I am from Arctic Village, Alaska, and my nation is the last one to contact on what you call the Columbus discovery. The destruction is continuing up there. The [Valdez] oil spill is not over yet. The small birds, like sandpipers, that hang around the shore are still gone. We have not seen them back since the oil spill. The whole ecosystem needs to work together, and even the loss of sandpipers and things like that eventually cause the whole system to shut down. In my country the ecosystem still works, and that is just where they want to do a gas and oil development. That is where the birds and the ducks from South America nest every spring. So it is very important to the Gwich'in Nation. I represent Gwich'in Nation, that is how I am recognized within my nation as an elder. I have material here that would direct you to what each of you would take an action on, so I will have this material at my table or out in the front later. Thank you, my relations.

Ruben Solis, Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, San Antonio, Texas: Thank you, it is great to be here. I am Co-chair with the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. I also work with a group of 1,150 Mexican American women that were laid off by a plant closing of Levi Straus and Company in San Antonio. And when we hear about our cause today and the beautiful numbers of people here today, we have to recall that one of the reasons why we have the kind of environmental racism that we have, and that we are going to struggle together against, is because of the economic blackmail that they have us under. And one of those is plant closings.

So I would ask that we support the Levi boycott and ask all of you that have Levi's or Dockers or Britannia, or Officer Corps, to please do not throw away the pants, but take the labels off. Send them to Bob Haas at 1115 Battery Street, San Francisco, California, 94111. Take the labels off every Levi product that you have, send them a message that

you will no longer buy their products until they have brought justice to the issue of the women in San Antonio. So they sent greetings from San Antonio and express solidarity with all of our struggles. Thank you. *(Request was applauded and address distributed.)*

Sharon Pomeroy, Hawaiian Ecumenical Coalition, Puhi, Hawaii: I am a Native Hawaiian. Five of us have been on a plane for about the last 15 hours to get here. We would like to specifically thank the United Church of Christ for putting this thing on and inviting us. I want to urge you, very strongly, to support these two ladies [from Alaska] in their march tomorrow. The bill they are talking about also affects Hawaii, because what it will take hydroelectric dams that produce less than 15 megawatts of energy and, say, go ahead and don't worry about the Endangered Species Act. It will destroy every endangered species left in the streams of Hawaii.

Hawaii is one of the few nations in this world that was illegally overthrown by five American sugar plantation owners and two ships of United States Marines 98 years ago. Today the Hawaiians are fighting for recognition of our nation, the right to our land, the right to be recognized as a sovereign people and to do justice to our lands. We are among the greatest ecologists in this world. We lived in Hawaii for 2,000 years. We never depleted our food supplies, we never poisoned our waters, and we always took care of our people. In a hundred years, the ecology in Hawaii is almost gone. Almost 75% of the native species in Hawaii no longer exist.

David Harrison, Sovereignty Network, Palmer, Alaska: I represent the Sovereignty Network, which is 20 to 30 traditional native governments who are asserting their sovereign authority, and telling the state and the feds they have no jurisdiction whatsoever in Alaska.

I have a concern and a desire for people to stop talking so much, and let's see some action. The words can go on and on forever, but, you know, I do not see too many people out there physically, actually doing it. So I would also ask this body to support the march to preserve my homeland, my sister's homeland, in Alaska from further oil and gas or other mineral exploitation. In my village, we are trying to stop coal companies from digging up our water filter. We have been arrested. But we are presently in a battle to protect indigenous

lands from these resource exploiters, who are taking our environment and turning it into some place that nobody wants to live.

Female (Unidentified): Mr. Chairman, I would so move that this Summit, by a vote, support this march tomorrow, and that we all back it.

Toney Anaya (Moderator): Let me make a recommendation and not to overrule or not to recognize that motion. Let me suggest that we continue through the evening and get to know each other, in the morning get to know each other, and then there will be enough time to take the action if that is the wish of the delegates. I am sure there will be other points that will be brought up. I would agree that this is an action body.

Jaribu Hill, New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health and Local 1199, New York, N.Y.: In representing workers who are victimized, workers of color, I am really proud to say that this conference is supporting the notion that there is a link, a direct link, between environmental racism and occupational racism, where brothers and sisters of color languish in dangerous, death-trap jobs because they have no other choice. And so we are this weekend to do battle, and I am so proud of my brother Ben and everybody else here. Thank you for this conference.

Chris Mathis, Labor/Community Strategy Center, Los Angeles, California: I am an organizer with the Labor/Community Strategy Center. I am here with several other people, and I am very grateful to be here. I stand here, as many of you are, the system's worst nightmare -- a black man who is conscious, who knows from where he comes, who knows where the struggle has to go and is not going to stop fighting until we get what we want.

In Los Angeles we are fighting to build a multi-racial, progressive organization to deal primarily with air pollution. We have the worst air pollution in Los Angeles, and, once again, we find the people most impacted look like me. So I just wanted to make the case and emphasize a little more what brother Chavis was talking about when he talked about the need for a pro-active strategy, and I would like to really make the case to state much more explicitly, in this group, something about standing up against corporate decisions, against decisions about production, about what is made and how it is made. We have to, of course, fight against what is coming out of the back end -- meaning the toxic

waste dumps and the incinerators -- of this terrible system we have. It is really working just for a very few people. But we have to stand up and stop participating in supporting the monster that is killing us all, both in the factories, where I, a former auto worker, come from and in the communities that live near those factories. We have to have a voice in production decisions.

In Los Angeles we are a car town, and it is not an accident that we became a car town. It is no coincidence that the city was laid out for the automobile. In the 1930's we had a public transportation system. A consortium of rubber, oil and auto companies formed a new company, took over that transportation system and destroyed it, making it a car town. So now that we have the worst air pollution in Los Angeles, some 1,600 people right now die from particulate deaths (from particulate matter that lodge in people's lungs). We have a high rate of emphysema, asthma, cancer in Los Angeles, and higher, of course, in communities of color.

Unless we make this movement of people of color for economic and environmental justice, a movement that is standing up against the evil of corporate capitalism, a production that is not about life, but about death and money, then we are not going to get anywhere. I just want to make the case for that.

Esperanza Maya, People for Clean Air and Water, Kettleman City, California: I live in Kettleman City, which is in Kings County, California. I live by a toxic waste landfill run by Chemical Waste Management. At the present, we are fighting a proposed toxic waste incinerator. Our town consists of about a thousand people. The population varies because it is a migrant Mexican-Hispanic town. There is a lot of racism there, and we say it is enough. Now we have toxic racism. We had a great fiesta on October 12th, and we did have the honor of having Rev. Jesse Jackson join us for our big rally and fiesta, and also Congresswoman Maxine Waters. It is a constant struggle. We have Kings County, State of California, in court. We are fighting, and we say enough is enough with this toxic racism. I am very happy to be here. It is all new to me. I have never been to Washington, D.C. before, and I am hoping to learn a lot, to take it back to our people. Thank you.

Edolphus Towns, U.S. Representative (D-NY) and chair of the Congressional Black Caucus brought greetings on behalf of the caucus, which consists of 22 black men and four black women.

DINNER SESSION

OCTOBER 24, 1991

7:00 P.M.

SYNGMAN RHEE

**President, National Council of Churches
Moderator**

CULTURE

NUBIAN THEATRE COMPANY, WASHINGTON, D.C.

*This group promotes African and African-American
culture all over the world.*

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

U.S. Representative (D-DC)

Washington, D.C.

It is my great privilege to say a few words to you at this historic moment of the gathering of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. As I look out over this sea of faces of people of color, I know that we have indeed inherited the earth. I know that I am supposed to welcome you to the District of Columbia. I will not do that, because I choose to believe that democracy will not forever fail in this country and in this city. So, in the name of the people of the District of Columbia, including the 70% who are people of color, I welcome you to a city that you shall one day see become an equal with other cities and states and jurisdictions in this country; and that we at last become what we deserve to be: the State of New Columbia.

DEFINING GREAT MOVEMENTS AND ISSUES

Brothers and sisters, it has been my great fortune to be involved in great movements in this country: in the movement for racial justice; in the movement for ethnic justice; in the movement for justice for women; in the movement for economic justice; in the movement for criminal justice; and now we see here the final leg, the movement for environmental justice. Somebody forgot to tell the people in this room that there are no such things as non-colored people's issues. You didn't get the word that there are some issues you are not supposed to be involved

in. There are issues that some would separate us with. This conference says, clearer and louder than anything I could imagine, that all these issues are our issues. And environmental justice is our issue. You know, I have often seen issues defined as white issues turn out, over and over again, to be issues of even greater impact on people of color than on other people. I recall the early days of the second feminist movement. Some say that was the white woman's issue, and somehow women of color didn't know they were women. Well, we found out pretty quickly. We found out what sister Professor Anita Hill told the world this month: sexual harassment is an issue we feel more deeply than others. For if a woman who is a department head and white in some great corporation can be sexually harassed, imagine what happens to a Hispanic woman scrubbing floors or a black woman filing cards.

If we want to know whose issues these are, let us look at where power is distributed in our country. We will not be defined out of any issues. And if the great environmental issues facing our country are issues like toxic waste, polluted air and acid rain, then we know who feels those more than others. We are here to say this. We are here to say that we have come to do something about it.

Our community has not always been on the defining edge of great movements, but we have always insisted that we shall not be defined out. The way

not to be defined out is to define these issues ourselves for our communities. "People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit" -- we have all the names we need in there. Because the name is necessary in order to educate those who do not know, including some of our own people. Our communities will not be organized around any of the great issues unless we ourselves do it.

I have never complained that anybody left me out of any issue, because the only ones who can put us into the great issues are us. Our people look to us for leadership. We are in coalition with environmentalists of every race and background, and yet our people in our community expect us to stand up in leadership when these issues come to our community. We have struggled in our community. We must define these issues appropriately for and by and with our community. Our community expects us, not strangers, to organize in our communities. And, for many, if they do not see us organizing around the issue in our community, they suspect that the issue is not for us. It is a burden we must accept. We need lots of help, and we need it across racial lines, but this issue needs our special leadership.

And so I thought, when I called his Honor, Mr. Reilly, to my office, and I said, "Let us have a conversation. I am an environmentalist." And he had seen some things that I had begun to do, and so he said, "Congresswoman, I am quite aware." And we talked about the greater involvement of the Agency in environmental matters as they affect people of color. At this very moment, my office is in discussions with administrators of the EPA in Philadelphia and Washington, so that some of the concerns of my own district may be carried forward. I encouraged his Environmental Equity Task Force, but I encouraged it to go forward with greater energy and with broader scope. I am pleased that the moderators and the organizers of this conference were in touch with my office, and with the office of the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and that we were able to speak with a broad array of your own organizers before this conference began, so that we could be a part of what is happening at this historic event.

SYMBOLS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

Let me leave you with what I think is necessary if environmental issues are to be brought home to our people. Often people from the majority group say

to me, "How come we do not see people of color in this movement or that movement," or "I don't see them at this event and that event," and I explain, as best I can, that when you are dealing with the kinds of issues that people of color have to face every day, it is hard to get out of your front door to a meeting on an issue that is more remote than the issues that come in upon us. It certainly is not that we are not concerned. But if there are 10 issues keeping you from getting out of the door, you don't always get to issues like the environment.

How do we get to issues like the environment? How do we make these issues, which, in a very real sense, must become more real to our communities because they suffer more from environmental neglect. How do we reach them when they must cope with issues like the issue we took to the House of Representatives in an all-night session last night? We went on the floor all night to argue for an extension of unemployment benefits, because we hadn't been able to reach this President with that issue. And we thought we would reach the American people and heighten the understanding of that issue. How do we heighten the understanding of this great issue, with its multiple parts?

I suggest, as we go back into our communities, that we take one great environmental symbol. I don't know what it is in your community. I don't know if it is one of the many toxic dumps, more of which are closest to our communities than to others. I don't know if it is the greater pollution of a factory that would not dare to do it in the suburbs but think nothing of it in the city. In my community, there are no factories. Washington is, in that sense, a clean town. It has government work and office work. I pick my words with some irony.

The environment is an issue that I feel keenly and deeply about, and there are many issues of the environment that hover around this capital city. But I am a federal official, and I wanted an issue that I could have an effect upon as a member of Congress, and it was staring me in the face -- the people's river. What we had in Washington was the Potomac River being cleaned up in the 1960's. It is closest to the tourists. Who wants to see all that brown water and garbage floating where 20 million tourists can see it? And, yet, there was the river that flows on the other side of the city, where the majority of the people who are poor live, a great environmental treasure, and one that flows also through the state of Maryland and had gotten some attention there. And I said to myself, "Wouldn't it

be wonderful if we could bring some equality to the rivers and make the Anacostia River the equal of the Potomac River. And wouldn't it be wonderful if youngsters could swim in the Anacostia River?"

We took a ride down the Anacostia this spring, and I saw black people fishing in the Anacostia River, and I said to one of the people on the boat, "Is it safe to eat the fish from the Anacostia River?" And he said, "Perhaps, if you don't eat too many..." But with poverty the way it is on the other side of the Anacostia, my guess is that there are many people who eat too many. So it seems to me that we ought to do something about the Anacostia, not only because it is one of the scenic wonders of nature, but because it provides food and sustenance, polluted or not, for many people, most of them of color, in this city. It flows in the same way through Maryland. There is great interest and concern about the Anacostia River reaching far beyond Washing-

ton. It involves a coalition of environmentalists from all around this area. Many of them, to their credit, have been paddling upstream to try to do something about the Anacostia for years. I noted that this year and next we have the reauthorization of the Clean Water Act, and I am going to submit my bill for the Anacostia when authorization time comes up.

What this conference is going to say to the Congress is that our bills have come due; our bills are overdue; our bills have been the last to be submitted, and we submit them now for immediate payment. The environment belongs to all of God's children. You asserted that this evening. America will one day hear you. This I promise you. This one member of Congress means to make sure that the Congress of the United States hears your call. We know we have inherited this earth in this generation; we mean to take our inheritance now.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

RICHARD MOORE

Co-Director

*Southwest Organizing Project
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

On behalf of the Southwest Organizing Project, we would like to congratulate you for making the long journey to Washington, D.C. On behalf of the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, we would like to congratulate you on the many successes you have had in the struggle for environmental and economic justice. And on behalf of the National Planning Committee for the First National People of Color Leadership Summit, we would like to welcome you to this historic Summit.

This Summit will bring our collective voices and strategies together to not only put the United States Environmental Protection Agency on notice, but county, state and federal governments as well. In other words, we will no longer allow our communities -- whether they be urban or rural, or whether they be villages, pueblos or reservations - to be the dumping ground for everything others do not want in their communities.

The military, industry, agri-business and government, at all levels, are the major polluters in poor communities. The harmful social, economic and cultural effects include loss of resources, such as clean air, land and water. For indigenous people, contamination of traditional holy sites leads to the loss of cultural and religious expression and freedom. Workplace hazards and environmental degradation impact severely on the health on us on the job and in our communities.

EXAMPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

In order to discuss the Principles of Environmental Justice, I am going to share a few statistics and examples with you:

- Children living near military installations have unusual high rates of cancer and other illnesses. In Mountainview, a neighborhood in Albuquerque's south valley, an infant almost died from drinking formula mixed with contaminated water from the family's well.

Mountainview is downstream from Kirkland Air Force Base, a suspected source of groundwater contamination in the area.

- Navajo teenagers have organ cancer 17 times the national average. Uranium spills from mining activities on Navajo land have contaminated their water, air and soil.
- Another indigenous people, the Havasupai of the Grand Canyon, fear the same kind of contamination in their area and have been resisting the permitting of United Nuclear Corporation by the U.S. Forester General to mine uranium on their sacred lands.
- Although the dangers of lead poisoning are well-documented, children in housing projects throughout the United States still live with lead-based paint on their walls.
- African American communities in Richmond, California are surrounded by dozens of industrial facilities that handle toxic chemicals.
- In and around farmworker communities, children with cancer are common. In Erliamont, California, for example, the children are affected at 12 times the expected rate. An estimated 300,000 U.S. farmworkers, most of them Latino and black Caribbean, suffer pesticide related illnesses each year.
- Latino and Asian American children of mothers who work in high-tech industry using dangerous chemicals have high rates of birth defects, are born prematurely and suffer low birth-weight rates. Children suffer loss of family due to the disablement and death of a parent

due to poisoning in workplaces and the community.

- The United States General Accounting Office reported three-fourths of communities near hazardous waste landfills in the Southeast are predominantly African American and/or poor.
- Three out of five African and Hispanic Americans live in areas with a hazardous waste site. This includes more than 15 million of the nation's 26 million African Americans and more than eight million of the 15 million Latinos.
- The nation's largest hazardous waste landfill, which receives toxics from 45 states and several foreign nations, is located in Emelle, Alabama, which is 78.9% African American.
- A community survey of Lake Charles, Louisiana, near the Browning Ferris Inc. dump site, indicated that in 1986 all the households had reported illnesses related to environmental pollution in the region. The residents are predominantly African American.
- Triana, Alabama, once named the most unhealthy community in America, is an all African American community whose diet has been based on fish contaminated with PCB's. In 1986, 12 residents had blood concentrations of DDT two to four times higher than the highest level previously recorded in medical history.
- The greatest concentration of hazardous waste sites in the United States is located in predominantly African American and Latino sections in Chicago.

Brothers and sisters, this is **environmental racism**.

Along with these problems is another that we call **economic blackmail**. In response to demands for decent, healthy jobs and a clean environment, many companies have chosen to relocate. For example, in Las Vegas, Nevada, 52 Chicago fiberboard workers were fired when they went on strike for a healthy and safe workplace and a clean environment in their community. The company threatens to move elsewhere if the workers and residents demand higher wages and environmental regulation. Sisters and brothers, these are only a few examples.

These are truly endangered communities. Poor communities are usually the least informed of existing toxic threats, and many lack the power and the organization to make polluters correct them. Too often our communities become the sites where toxic waste not wanted by the more privileged neighborhoods end up being dumped. Brothers and sisters, we are not your "not-in-our-backyard" communities. We are "in-nobody's-backyard," whether they be North America, Africa, Asia or Central and Latin America. No human being should have to endure the conditions that threaten our communities.

PUTTING EPA ON NOTICE

You may be aware that the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice has invited Mr. William Reilly, EPA Administrator, to have a dialogue with us in the Southwest. A letter was sent to him on July 31, 1991. His response thus far is unacceptable. There is a delegation of young people here that we have to recognize. Two weeks ago, in San Francisco, at the EPA regional office, there was a multiracial delegation from Northern California that put Mr. Reilly and the Bush Administration on notice that we will no longer allow the Environmental Protection Agency to continue to be a part of polluting our communities.

I want to close with just a few more examples of statistics of what the Environmental Protection Agency has told us about their commitment to the protection of our environment. As sister Rose Marie Augustine said earlier, we are talking about the "Industrial Protection Agency," not the "Environmental Protection Agency." Since the inception of the Environmental Protection Agency, we have requested its assistance in alleviating the disproportionate impacts from which we suffer. Our requests, our pleas for help, have fallen on deaf ears. Moreover, the Environmental Protection Agency pursues policies which have been detrimental to us and to poor communities.

Last week, we again told Mr. Reilly that we were coming to Washington. In Dallas, Texas, we had another action at the Dallas EPA Regional Office. There are some brothers and sisters from the African American and Latino community in West Dallas who deserve an applause for putting EPA on notice that we are still coming to Washington. After we go back home from here, we will still be coming back to Washington.

When we started dealing with pollution in our own community, we were told that it was an isolated situation. It was isolated that in our community the water was contaminated with nitroglycerin; it was isolated that in our communities in Albuquerque, we had nitrates 20 times higher than the level permitted by regulations. Then we looked at the other side of town, the same thing was going on. Then we looked at northern and southern New Mexico, and the same thing was going on. Then we stretched it, and we looked in the region, and the same poisoning was going on. And then we moved on, and we were sure that the poisoning is not an isolated situation, it is a deliberate intent of genocide to kill our people, and we have got to stop and put an end to it.

The following are a few examples of the lack of accountability on the part of the Environmental Protection Agency:

- Despite the fact that for years it was known that lead poisoning inordinately impacts inner-city youth, primarily youth of color, no action was taken by the Environmental Protection Agency until studies confirmed that suburban children were impacted by lower levels of the same poison.
- In 1982, the Environmental Protection Agency fought against civil rights organizations in Warren County, North Carolina, who contested the disposal of PCB-contaminated road service soil near local African American communities.
- Since 1979, the Environmental Protection Agency has consistently sandbagged farmworkers, farmworker communities and the general public by failing to develop comprehensive pesticide regulations. Moreover, the Environmental Protection Agency has only five staff persons working on pesticide issues -- we would argue that 500 are needed -- compared to 52 working to protect predominantly white middle-class single-family homeowners from Radon contamination.
- When it was determined that residents of the predominantly white Time Beach and Love Canal communities were walking on low levels of dioxins, which were contaminating the soil, the EPA moved quickly to buy out these communities and relocate residents.

However, when so-called subsistence populations in areas downstream and other places are poisoned by eating fish, the EPA did nothing. Their response was "Don't eat the fish."

BUILDING A NET THAT WORKS

We will find that there are a lot of similarities in our cultures when we really begin to share and do the kind of things that have brought us here and the work that all of you have been doing for the many years in the communities. As we begin to share our culture and our heritage and our exchange, and we begin to network. And as we begin to build a **net that works**, then we begin to realize that there is nothing that can stop us, as long as we are doing it together.

In the face of massive environmental racism and the EPA's inaction, communities of color have won many victories and, when organized, have incredible power. And that is what we are all about in Washington, D.C. -- **power-izing** ourselves to go back in our communities. Because what this is all about is building a movement. As a movement gets built, it starts from the bottom up. And those movements that we have seen develop from the top down are no longer there. So what we are about here is building a network, or building a net that works.

Before I formally present to you the fifth draft of the Principles of Environmental Justice, I want to give two personal stories which speak to their purpose. One of our members who was driving from San Francisco to Los Angeles in California, down Route 5, told me this story. On the way he was looking out the window into the ocean, and he saw some whales out there. And the whales looked like they had picket signs. So this brother, he said, "I never seen nothing like this before." He went through all kind of traffic to get over to the side by the water, by the ocean. And as he got closer, he said to his amazement, he parked his vehicle and looked out into the ocean, and there was a demonstration. The whales were holding picket signs that said, "We support people of color -- they're an endangered species, too." He said, "Right on." I think that's what this one's all about. We do love the whales, but we also love ourselves.

We went to visit the "maquilas" on the U.S.-Mexican border. As the time goes by, we tend to forget our brothers and sisters in Mexico. And we

tend to forget that most of the damages they are doing into our communities, now they are attempting to do in Mexico. And so we were having a discussion about that, and we were talking about how it is not our responsibility to tell our brothers and sisters in Mexico how to live. Nor in any other place of the world. But it is our responsibility to put those industries that are poisoning our brothers and sisters in Mexico on notice that we will not let them get away with that **in this country**. We will build the kind of coalitions and networks, with the organizations in Mexico, that will make those kind of changes.

PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

I want therefore to offer to you for discussion the Principles of Environmental Justice:

We, the people of color of the United States of America, in order to form a more perfect union, to reestablish our spiritual interdependence to the sacredness of the environment, to insure environmental justice, to promote economic alternatives which will contribute to the development of environmentally safe jobs, and to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our prosperity that have been denied by over 500 years of colonization and oppression, which results in the poisoning of our communities and land, do affirm and adopt these principles of environmental justice.

1. Environmental justice demands that public policy be based upon mutual respect and justice for all peoples, without discrimination due to race, ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, religion or culture.

2. Environmental justice calls for the universal protection from the production and disposal of poisons that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water and food.

3. Environmental justice affirms ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.

4. Environmental justice opposes military exploitation of lands, peoples and cultures.

5. Environmental justice recognizes the fundamental right of self-determination for all people.

6. Environmental justice affirms the right of all workers to gainful employment without being forced to choose between an unsafe job and good health.

7. Environmental justice requires all producers of toxins, hazardous waste, pollutants, radioactive substances and dangerous emissions to be held strictly accountable for the detoxification at the point of production.

8. Environmental justice protects the right of victims of environmental injustice to receive full compensation for damages as well as quality health care.

9. Environmental justice recognizes a governmental act of environmental injustice as a violation of the international law, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights as the United Nations Convention on Genocide.

10. Environmental justice mandates that the earth's resources be used responsibly, equitably, and in the interest of a sustainable planet.

This is the initial draft of the Principles of Environmental Justice. When we leave here this week, we will leave the Summit with a final set of principles that we will carry back home and institute in all of our communities throughout this country. This is our responsibility. The future of our communities is at stake. **Venceremos – we will win.**

FLOOR DISCUSSION

Syngman Rhee (Moderator): We have had a full day. We have some time for comments and inputs and questions, statements related to what our brother Richard had said, as well as some Principles of Environmental Justice.

INITIAL RESPONSES TO PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Running Grass, Three Circles Center for Multicultural Environmental Education, San Francisco, California: As an educator, I noticed right away that there was no explicit principle dealing with education. I think as all the speakers tonight reinforced the idea that really education is at the heart of what we do. No matter what form it takes, education is the vehicle by which we build this movement.

I would like to read as a suggestion for an 11th Principle of Environmental Justice: Environmental justice calls for environmental education strategies which link conceptually and experientially social-justice issues with both an appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives and a thorough understanding of natural systems.

Male (Unidentified): Because of the increased vulnerability of young people to environmental hazards, I would like to suggest that in Principle one children or youth be included explicitly as folks that should not be discriminated against in environmental issues.

Andrea Carmen, International Indian Treaty Council, Palmer, Alaska: Several of the Indian people here were talking, and this is a problem that we have always had. We just came back from Guatemala, too, and we had to keep saying this, too, that we have a problem being called "of the United States of America." So in the introduction I think it should say, rather, people of color in what is currently called the United States of America. Or maybe even to be stronger -- something along the lines of "in lands currently occupied by the United States of America." Also, in the Point #6 regarding all workers having a right to gainful employment, it is often forgotten that a lot of indigenous people still live off the land in their subsistence, and it is a lot of work, but it is not necessarily what people refer to as jobs. So somehow I think the right of indigenous people to a subsistence way of life needs to be included in that

more specifically when you're talking about workers and workplace issues.

Sulaiman Madhi, Center for Environment, Energy and Commerce, Atlanta, Georgia: I think, because of over 500 years of consistent genocide, that we need to demand reparations -- not only compensation but reparations -- by way of land and economic reparations. So I think, you know, just that the word "compensation" is just not enough for the genocide that we claim.

Rose Marie Augustine, Tucsonians for a Clean Environment, Tucson, Arizona: Today someone made the comment that the women have been leaders, and everybody's looking up to the women to save Mother Earth. And my experience has been that when I've gone to different communities, we see all these women out there, and the women are real fighters. So that means that the women have a lot of power. And the government is always afraid of people who have power. So I don't know if you people have become aware of what's happening with what the government, I feel, is trying to do to break this power that the women are getting. Have you noticed the spokespersons for your contaminating industry -- who are they? They are putting up front women spokespersons for this industry.

Another thing -- I don't know if you noticed -- and, again, you know, people are looking up to women as the saviors of Mother Earth. But look what happened -- Desert Storm. The women who are supposed to be protecting and are going to be the saviours of Mother Earth will now be the destroyers, just like the men. So I don't know if you've realized that, but something has got to be done. A lot of women don't want to do this, but, to me it is a strategy that the government is using against the women's movement. And we've got to make sure that it doesn't continue, that women are not the destroyers, that women are the saviours. Thank you.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Paul Rodarte, Indigenous Environmental Network, Southwold, Ontario (Canada): I can understand what a lot of people are talking about educating their own people. In 1985, I got involved in camping out on a bombing range in Stillwater, Nevada. The Navy dropped bombs 40 miles from

my house in Stillwater and it shook my house 40 miles down the mountain range. When I came back to where I live, people said, "Ah, you're crazy -- what happens if the Communists take over?" And I said, "Well, what are they going to do, take our land?" So we, as Native Americans, look at things a little bit differently sometimes, and what we wanted to do. We have had two conferences with the Indigenous Environmental Network. We first met in Dealcon, Arizona in 1990 -- we had over 200 people from over 30 different tribes. Last summer we met at Bear Butte, South Dakota, and we had over 500 people from over 57 different tribes.

There are a lot of ideas going around about alternative celebrations for 1992. Our network has come up with an idea: On October 13th, 1992, we want to unplug America. We recognize that a lot of people are doing alternative things on October 12th, so on October 13th, 1992 -- and it is not going to cost you any money, because what we are saying is to not use any electricity, gasoline or any other unsustainable energy, and we feel that this is a real cheap way to bring a lot of these polluters to their knees, because we want to hurt them where they hurt the most -- in their pocketbooks. And so that is what I wanted to share tonight, that is how we are going to celebrate Columbus.

Esmerelda Brown, United Methodist Office for the United Nations, New York, N.Y.: I am speaking as a Panamanian woman. As a black woman of Latin America who participates in many of the NGO meetings at the United Nations on environment, I found myself to be the only person of color. It made me feel as if we were not involved in the issues. And, unfortunately, the role that I usually play is to present that part of the world that is my concern, which is Latin America and the Caribbean.

Next year we are having the world summit, the conference on environment and development, in Brazil, and I still feel that our voices are not heard. We need to have a voice there. There are the pre-com meetings that take place, and the non-governmental organizations that participate at the United Nations, just as many of the environmental all-white organizations in this country, attempts to talk for us people of color, and not only here in the United States, not only here in North America, but for the rest of Latin America, the Caribbean and other parts of the Third World.

So I would like to see, out of this conference, for the United Nations and the international community to hear our voices. We also need to have a say in that world order, because we are the people that are being affected. My people in Panama were bombed, and the environment in my country is today very much affected. So if we have a voice, we must be the people that talk to that United Nations. Thank you.

David Harrison, Sovereignty Network, Palmer, Alaska: I am from Chickaloon Village in Alaska. One of the things that concerns me here, and we are here to talk about the environment. But, yet, we hold our conference in one of the -- in this hotel. The energy that it takes to light this hotel would produce or have power for my whole village! But, yet, we talk about how we are going to protect the environment. Why was this conference not held on the land, so that you people could reach out and pick up some of your mother and hold her close to you. This is devastating to my home, the energy that it takes to light this building. They are taking a lot oil and gas out of Alaska.

So I request that any further conferences where we discuss the environment, why don't we have it in the environment, instead of in this big building that is wasting the energies that our Mother Earth needs so that these plants can grow; so that our life is sustained as people, regardless of whether we are people of color or white people. We are sitting here talking about the environment, and we all should be ashamed of ourselves for having this conference here. It should have been on the land.

I also want to say that over the last couple of years I have been involved in organizing a couple of conferences on the land, and we had very much diversity of the world at these conferences. And we all had to sacrifice something to attend these conferences. So in order for things to go good and to accomplish the things that we want to accomplish here, we are going to have to give a part of ourselves to get this done. Because everything that we have -- the clothes on our back, the houses that we stay in, this building -- is on loan from our Mother Earth. So let's try and take care of her.

DECISION TO SUPPORT NATIVE AMERICAN DEMONSTRATION

Male (Unidentified): I think we all have learned from hearing everybody, and I don't think that in

any way we should invite Reilly to our Summit. You know the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice came prepared to propose to the body that we go and protest at the EPA, and not to have him come over here. We want to go over there and present our list of demands that we have for the EPA and for him. And until he responds to those demands we have nothing to talk about. So that if we are going to do something with the EPA, it's going to protest, if we go with the Native American peoples to Capitol Hill, we go also to protest the EPA and to take our list of demands to Reilly and let him respond to that via the media. But that is the only reason that we have to speak to Reilly, is to present our list of demands to him.

Benjamin Chavis (Moderator): We need to decide how we are going to spend our day together tomorrow. I personally would not like to see only our Native American brothers and sisters go up to Capitol Hill. We are a Summit together. And so if we have to make some adjustments to the agenda, then I think we have to make some adjustments to the agenda. But, at the same time, in making adjustments, we want to make sure that we do not violate the integrity of the spirit that brought us here. In the delegate selection process, a number of delegates from many different places asked what are you really trying to accomplish at this Summit? Are we really going to be able to spend the kind of

time, to do the kind of detailed work that is necessary so that we will have something really to take back to our home communities?

If you look at the agenda, it has been designed in a way to facilitate the delegates doing some work, and this is even before the participants and observers join us later tomorrow afternoon. So if we adjust the agenda, which I am going to recommend later, we need to be very disciplined about it. We need to covenant with one another. We will not let down those sisters and brothers from the communities that we have come from in any way, and I think the action could add to the import of the Environmental Leadership Summit itself.

If you look at your agendas you will see that we have caucus time between 12:00 noon and 2:00 p.m. I need to get a sense of the body. We have heard several proposals for actions. It is proposed that we assemble sharply at 12:00 noon, go to the Capitol, and have some form of demonstrative action around the various issues that have been raised thus far in the Summit. Now, if we do that, we are really going to have to be disciplined in terms of actually marching up there and marching back together, so that we can go on with the other business of the Summit. Now, can I get a sense of the body on that?

(Summit body affirmed with applause.)

PLENARY SESSION

BUILDING A MULTIRACIAL AND MULTICULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT

**OCTOBER 25, 1991
9:00 A.M.**

GAIL SMALL
Executive Director, Native Action
Lame Deer, Montana
Moderator

I am Gail Small. I am one of your co-chairpersons. I am from Northern Cheyenne country in Montana, and it is a real pleasure for me to be here. Our gathering this morning is to build upon yesterday's strong beginning. Today we hope to begin building a multiracial and multicultural environmental justice movement by discerning, recovering and seeking

ways to act upon our historical and cultural roots with respect to the environment. Our panel session is entitled, "Who We Are and Our Perspectives on Environmental Justice." We have an excellent group of panelists to trigger your thinking on this issue this morning. I am very honored to be your facilitator.

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

WILMA P. MANKILLER
Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Native Americans in the United States represent over 500 different and very distinct tribal groups. Some tribes live on rancherias that are only about one acre and some live on reservations which span three states. We belong to tribal groups that range in size from 100 to one tribe with a membership of over 200,000. Most of our people now live off the reservation and away from their ancestral land base, away from their tribal communities.

A little more than 50 percent of the Native population live in urban areas. Many people ended up there as a result of a U.S. governmental policy in the 1950's designed to break up tribal communities and tribal people. It was designed to move them away from their language, culture, history and a sense of tribalism. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Relocation Program was yet

another "solution to the Indian problem." It was obviously a very failed policy. Many of our people participated in that program because they were told by the federal government that they would have a better life for their children. For many people the better life ended up being an urban ghetto somewhere. Many Native people now living in urban areas are the children and the grandchildren of people who participated in that program. Interestingly, the person who administered that program, the BIA Relocation Program, was the very same person who was in charge of the internment of the Japanese during World War II.

There is no universal Indian culture nor a universal Indian language. There are many, many different tribal peoples, each with a distinct language, history, culture and government. Our governments existed

long before there was a United States government. Though there are differences among and between tribal peoples, there are a significant number of commonalities also. And one important commonality is the way we view the environment and the way we view land.

EXTREME IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCE

One of the early extreme ideological differences that Native people in general had with the first European settlers was the way we viewed the environment and the way we viewed land. To indigenous people, the environment and land are all connected. Human beings are one part of an entire system. All these parts must work together to sustain us as people. We understand clearly that everything in nature has its place and works to sustain our lives. There was an immediate conflict when the first European settlers came here and saw indigenous people, the way we lived, and our land as things only for exploitation and development.

In order to have some sense of balance and harmony, we had to understand both our significance and our insignificance in the totality of things. Human beings are not the only chosen beings to live on this earth. In the traditional belief of our tribe, we believed that there were animal nations and plant nations. All things that are alive have an important part in this whole interconnected way of looking at things.

The old people tell a story of the bear nations getting together, holding a conference, and talking about how to counter this siege on their nation. That kind of conflict -- the way we viewed animals and their rights, and we viewed the environment -- put us in immediate conflict with the Europeans and the European philosophy. To us, everything has a place; rocks have a place, the trees have a place, the water has a place, and it is important for us to sustain that in order to live. We are still engaged in that conflict today. At one time ranchers overtook our lands and got rid of the buffalo. Today they look at our lands as potential sites for nuclear waste dumps.

TARGETING NATIVE LANDS

There are many conflicts going on within Native communities today. I thought, until I saw this conference, that this was an issue that only we were dealing with. We have always known that somehow or another that these very toxic facilities ended up

in Native communities and poor communities. I did not realize until reading this study that it was a universal problem among poor people and particularly people of color. This is one reason I made such an extreme effort to get here, because this kind of networking and coalition building together is very, very important to us. I think that a lot of people do not understand the extent to which poor people and people of color have had to fight by themselves these kinds of issues.

Let me give you an example. In our area of eastern Oklahoma, we had a very unsafely operated facility. Ironically, it was called Sequoyah Fuels, named after one of our tribal patriots and heroes. (Sequoyah invented the Cherokee alphabet.) No one ever dealt with the issue that the facility was very unsafe. No institution dealt with it, none of our congressional leaders dealt with it. One woman who lived near that plant decided to take on this whole facility and started a little organization called Native Americans for a Clean Environment. And she has been successful in stopping their operation. It is closed down right now; whether it will stay closed down permanently I do not know, but it is closed.

I am not sure that the mainstream environmental organizations realized what we have done and what we are doing in our communities. I am very happy to say that those battles are going on. We wage those battles without the resources that the major environmental groups have. This woman raised money by bake sales and that sort of thing, to take on this facility.

One of the most serious and difficult issues today, and one that makes me particularly angry, is the discussion in the United States Congress about opening the Arctic area for development. No one ever learns this lesson. People talk about progress and they talk about development when they want to develop our lands. Well, whose progress is it? And whose development is it? Is it our progress? Do we progress? Does that development help us in any way?

I have written letters to politicians about this issue. It is very interesting because we are not even communicating at any level. I talk about the disruption to tribal traditional life and other kinds of natural systems that are in existence there. They never even deal with that issue in their response. It is always an economic decision. And again, I would say, "Whose economy is it? And who is it

going to affect?" We are back again to this same kind of fundamental difference. I would say, because of this fundamental, different view of things, that we have an inherent conflict with much of the development that is going on.

Because reservations in this country and tribal communities have a degree of autonomy from state and federal regulation, the nuclear industry and many of the other unsafely operated industries have targeted Native communities for placement of their facilities. Why have they done that? They have done that because many of our people are very poor and many of our people need jobs and because of the fact that they could attempt a kind of economic blackmail. So far they have not been that successful. Once in a while you will read about a tribe that has bought into that kind of system. But by and large it is not happening to the extent that they expected it to happen.

So that has created a lot of dialogue and a lot of conflict; the conflict is around this issue. For people who are interested in the environment and preserving and protecting everything around us which sustains our ability to live on this planet, if a tribe is considering placing a nuclear waste facility there, sometimes people have gone to battle against that tribe, not by giving them good information but by going to the state legislature and trying to get the state to regulate the tribe. That is the wrong approach. The approach that has worked in stopping these facilities is education. Trying to diminish the rights and the sovereignty of the tribes is not an appropriate approach. It sets up a battleground of sorts between environmentalists and tribal governments. In every situation that I know of, education has been the most effective approach. So I think people working on environmental issues certainly need to become aware this fact.

A VERY TENACIOUS PEOPLE

We Native people are a very tenacious people; we are people who have maintained our culture, our self-identity, and much of our sense of history and nationhood. If you look for a minute at history from

a Native perspective we first had, essentially, the most powerful country in the world try to wipe us off the face of the earth and then instituted a number of policies over a couple of hundred years that were designed to make sure that we did not exist in 1991 as a culturally distinct group of people. It has not happened.

And so, I think that more than anything, we are tenacious people. And the fact that we have survived all that and that we are still here in 1991, and that our tribal ceremonies that we have had since the beginning of time are still going on, that our language is still being spoken and that we still hold on to the view that is very, very clear to us, that it just does not make sense for us to try to destroy the very things that sustain us.

And I just do not understand what is going on in this country. Why is it that 80 percent of all people -- not just people of color, but conservative people, white people, Indian people, all kinds of people -- think that the environment is one of the single most important issues that we need to deal with? And why is it that no national leaders have taken this on as an issue? I do not know what is going on. I do not understand that.

I have come to the conclusion lately, in both the environment and the other issues that face us in our communities, that the way that we need to do things is your way. We must look into our own history, our own culture and our own communities for solutions to our problems. I used to think that there was going to be a national leader who would take on the environmental issue or many other issues that concern us. I hoped someone would come along and set the tone and provide leadership. It is not going to happen. No prophet is going to come along and save us, and no leader is going to come along and articulate for us our own vision of what we should be doing. I think that, very clearly, there is only us. We have to continue to take charge of our own lives and make sure that we preserve an environment that will be good for our children and our children's children.

AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

ROBERT D. BULLARD

*Professor of Sociology
University of California at Riverside
Riverside, California*

I am pleased and honored to be here and to participate in this historic event, the continuation of a struggle that is over 500 years old. This struggle has been against exploitation and systems of domination, whether by the military, the economic structure of capitalism, or the eco-genocidal nature of what we are facing today. If we are to dismantle the systems of domination, we have to understand the link, the correlation, the relationship between exploitation of land and the exploitation of people. The two are inseparable.

I look out into the audience and I see the future of this great nation. The diverse groups, organizations, and people that we have assembled will frighten a lot of people. But not me. I see you as this nation's future. You represent the shifting demographics of this nation. African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans represent the future majority. It is time for us to stop acting like helpless "minorities." This nation has never been a "white" country. White power brokers, however, have acted as if people of color did not exist or matter. We have been invisible too long.

THREE BASIC TENETS

This country was built on three basic tenets: **free land, free labor, free men**. The land was stolen from the indigenous people, our Native American brothers and sisters. We know the history. The historical footprint is clear. Free labor -- we know who provided the free labor. It was not cheap labor, nor was it temporary labor, it was **free** labor. Africans were brought to this country in chains on the bottoms of slave ships. They were packed in the bottom of the ships like sardines. They worked the land, built this country from the bottom up with their blood, sweat and tears. Our African ancestors subsidized this nation's wealth and its path to super-power status. We also know who the free men were: only white men with property could vote. It is hard for us to run away from this legacy, a legacy of domination, subjugation, cultural

genocide, exploitation, state-sanctioned terrorism, and psychological warfare.

We are still struggling to make this a free land. There is a direct correlation between the exploitation of land and the exploitation of people. When we begin to understand this link, we can begin to undo the damage heaped on African Americans and other people of color. The history of African people in this land is a story of struggle for justice. This is true from the anti-slavery movement to the environmental justice movement. This more recent movement is an extension of the first protest against being uprooted from our homeland and brought to a strange land.

NO TO GENOCIDE!

The struggle for clean air, clean water, and a safe workplace is a struggle for basic human rights. We are faced with life and death situations. We are fed up with being dumped on!! We say no to eco-genocide. We are in support of wilderness areas, natural areas, old growth forests, and wetlands. We are also in solidarity with those who are poisoned (lead contamination) in our cities.

Our African ancestors who ran away to the Sea Islands, the barrier islands in South Carolina and Georgia, to escape the degradation of slavery, are now threatened by developers, preservationists, and people who want the land. Sappalo Island, Henderson Neck, Mackintosh County, and the entire culture (Gullah language) are now threatened with extinction.

We have to resist and throw off this state-sanctioned terrorism, whether it is the KKK or the EPA. We must resist domination and manipulation of our lives. The collusion between government and industry threaten all of our health and freedom. No community is safe -- black, brown, red, yellow, white -- as long as we allow for some areas to become "sacrifice zones."

I am a sociology professor. But before I had a Ph.D. I was black. And my grandmother told me that if I planned on being black forever I had to understand that life is a struggle. Nothing comes easy. I understand what she meant. We have to understand that African Americans in this country have a long way to go before we can relax and let our guards down.

The environmental justice movement that has taken root in the African American communities all across this country is a continuation of those earlier struggles. We are still struggling against a society that thinks we are not quite human, less intelligent, less patriotic, less likely to possess the work ethic, and more prone to crime.

NOT JUST A POVERTY THING

I say it is inhumane, stupid, unpatriotic, callous, criminal, and racist to target African American communities for industrial poisons that no one else wants. African American communities have been inundated and systematically targeted for all kinds of locally unwanted land uses, commonly referred to as LULU's. While the larger society may refuse to call this practice by its real name, I am not. It is plain and simple *environmental racism*.

We must organize against environmental racism, and the other forms of racism that permeate all of this nation's coal institutions. Organizing is our strength. We organized against slavery, Jim Crow, the KKK, and now the neo-conservative, who wants to turn the clock back. My fellow African Americans, we are over 30 million strong. We have to use our numbers and purchasing power as an economic and political weapon.

More than 75 percent of us live in urban areas. We have to go to bat for our brothers and sisters who face some of the worse environmental problems in this nation. Fifty-three percent of us live in the southern United States. We have to get our forces in place to wage a long-term battle. This is war and we must be prepared to do battle.

We can clearly document that the environmental problems that confront our communities cannot be reduced solely to class; it is **not** just a poverty thing. Middle-class African American communities are just as affected by environmental racism as poor, poverty-stricken urban ghettos and rural "poverty pockets" in the Deep South. It is not a class thing. Racism cuts across class. And we have to

understand that and drive that point home every time some white media person tries to spin it into "it's a class thing."

From West Dallas to West Harlem, we are struggling, we are fighting, and we are winning. We have victories that need to be shared, because it is only natural that people want to know that have been winners. We have to know **when** we have won. The enemy will never tell you that you have defeated him. There have been a lot of victories. I am sure we will have many more victories.

I accidentally backed into looking at the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on African American neighborhoods in Houston, Texas. As an urban sociologist, I look at community development, housing, urban land use, and other similar issues. In 1979, I was asked by my wife, Linda McKeever Bullard, to collect some data on the history and pattern of siting municipal landfills and solid waste sites in Houston.

This data was part of a class action lawsuit my wife (a young, energetic, African American attorney) had filed on the behalf of a middle-class African American suburban neighborhood. The waste disposal giant Browning Ferris Industries (a company headquartered in Houston) proposed to build a municipal landfill in this community. I collected data for that case. Once I documented the history and pattern of waste facility siting from the early twenties up until 1978, it was clear that this siting pattern did not happen by accident.

During that period, five out of five of the city-owned landfills were located in African American neighborhoods. Six out of eight of the city-owned incinerators were located in African American neighborhoods. When the city said, "We do not want to do this any more," and turned the disposal service over to private business, the private disposal company followed the lead of the city. Three out of four of the privately owned landfills were located in African American neighborhoods. African Americans made up only one fourth of Houston's population. Any fool can see, the statistics are so overwhelming, this is not a random pattern.

In a city that did not have zoning, and does not have zoning to this day, these decisions were made in a board room and city hall, places where African Americans were excluded up until recently. It was not until 1972 that Houston got its first African American elected to the city council. We do not

have to limit our discussion to the South. I wrote the book *Dumping in Dixie* and looked at this phenomena in the southern United States. As Brother Malcolm X said, "Dixie is everything that's below the Canadian border." That's Dixie for black people. The environmental racism exists in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Detroit, Memphis, and Rahway, New Jersey. It would take all day to name all of the places where our communities are disrespected. We are talking about totally disrespected. Dred Scott lives today. "No black community has any environmental rights that whites are bound to respect."

Our communities are raped and violated each and every day. As recently as June, 1991 in King and Queen County, Virginia (a county that is nearly divided between blacks and whites), a federal judge decided that it is not unconstitutional for the county board of supervisors to build four out of four of that county-run landfills in African American communities. The judge reasoned that the county board of supervisors balanced the economic, environmental, and the cultural aspects of their site selection. Now, what does that mean? It means, in essence, that African American communities are compatible land use for garbage; we are garbage and therefore it is okay to put garbage with garbage. We say no to genocide, we say no to this massacre.

NEW ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

We have always fought for justice. We have not, however, always been included in the traditional environmental movement. We have our own indigenous grassroots organizations; we have social justice organizations throughout this country that are knocking the doors down and saying, "We will not take any more of being left out of environmental decision making."

African American grassroots groups are fed up with being sprayed, poisoned, and dumped on, while elected officials sit around and cut deals and take PAC money from polluting industries. We have to make our elected officials accountable. Our leaders have to be informed and it is up to us to inform them and **lead** them. We have to do this, otherwise we can not depend on them to act responsibly.

Finally, I would like to share with you my vision of the future. **You are the future.** As I said before, this country is changing demographically, and California is a prime example of the future that is now. It is scaring a lot of white people to know that they will soon have to start calling themselves "minorities." We have the numbers, we have the brain power to change and restructure this new environmental movement. Let's go ahead and do it.

CHICANO HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

DAVID LUJAN
Executive Director
Tonantzin Land Institute
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Thank you very much for having me and for having Tonantzin as part of your program. We are greatly honored and it is a great pleasure to be here with everyone.

I will start with my personal experience and then talk about the future that we as Tonantzin feel the horizon holds for us. I grew up in Roswell, New Mexico. It is in the southeastern part of New Mexico known as Little Texas. It is known as Little Texas for the overt and blatant racism exercised by Texans on the Mexican people. It is a place where the [Cerna vs. Portales School District] established the right, the constitutional right, to bilingual education in this country. It is a place where overt and blatant racism is still exercised against the Mexican people.

As Chicanos it is impossible to characterize us in any one way. The best that I could do is just tell you in different words what we are. We are Chicanos. As Chicanos we are Mexicanos, we are Españolas. We are Gauchupinese, we are indigenous. We are Paisanos, we are Latinos. We are Suromatos, we are Manitos. We are Negros and Blancos. We are Morenos and Gueros. As Chicanos, we are all these things but above all we are human beings. We are members of the world family with a specific role to play. One of the most important roles that we have taken up as Tonantzin and as Chicanos in today's world is to act and to serve and to offer ourselves as the bridge between North and South America, as a bridge for all the colors, all the people, in North and South America. We are at 500 years of East and West thinking. Chicanos, along with everyone here in the room, can and **should** play a major role to change that thinking and give it a balance of North to South. It needs another balance.

To do that in our struggle we have tried to understand part of the problems that people have identified and that you know very well exist in this country. This is the way we look at the problems. There are two fundamental problems in this country that we face, and both are driven by racism. The

first problem is that the Europeans and the Christians who came to this continent could not, have not and are not disposed to accept that other people can, in their life way, become spirits and animals. All traditional people have been able to do that to this day. Even if it is in our collective memory, we all know the importance and the sacredness of the eagle. We all know the importance and the sacredness of the serpent. And we know the jaguar is sacred and important to our people. It is important for us, even if it is out of our collective memory, to keep that in sight. In spite of the odds, we need to begin and continue to recoup those things that have made us traditional people.

The second fundamental problem in this country is the hypocrisy that the governing powers use in exercising or manifesting notions about property. They raise the notions of private property to the highest court, and do everything in their power to uphold that notion. And that is okay. But where it becomes wrong is when they turn our notions of common property and use them against us.

And you all know it -- the Forest Service was the point agency using the public domain notions to take our property. It is doing it today in the development of natural parks to preserve them; they are doing it our expense. But when we say we want to maintain and hold those notions of common property for the common good for our people, they say, "This is a private-property system." It is pure hypocrisy and we have to change it.

We are very, very excited by the climate of the day, of the times. Coming into 1992, in the past year and this year coming, we are excited by the many, many forums, such as this one; for people of color, for people with traditions, with roots, are coming forth and saying, "We are going to take control of our lives."

On Tuesday we are going from here and we are going with your strength and your power and your prayers. We are going with a group from Big

Mountain area, called the Cactus Valley Red Willow Sovereign Community, we are going to the office of Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar of the United Nations. We think that what we are going to do there is not expect to have things resolved, but to open the door for all people of color, whether it is a group, an organization or a nation. We are going to open the door to the other governments of the world, to the family of the world, and say, "There are some people that are not able to exercise power over their own destiny. And we want that right. And it is your responsibility as a world family to allow us that right in whatever shape or form that we design it."

Those people have worked hard, they have gone to Geneva, they have gone to the U.S. Congress. They are at the vanguard as freedom fighters in this country, of not civil rights, but beyond civil rights: a basic seeking of human rights. We hope and ask for your prayers. We know we are going to open

some doors, but not alone. We are going to open those doors to the world community and we are going to open them with each other. The Congress is not going to do it.

The final point is, I think, my answer to one of the questions posed earlier. Why is it that the environment is so important to this country and no leader has taken it up as a critical national issue, no leader has? So I will tell you why: Because the controlling society, the controlling forces in this society cannot accept a different notion than private property or territory. Because if they do, they will have to admit and they will have to comply by the notions of looking at the earth as our mother, **nuestra madre tierra**, and that takes a whole different mindset. And that takes a whole different kind of acting. And that is something that we, as people of color, need to provide as an example to the rest of the world.

INDIGENOUS HAWAIIAN HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

MILILANI TRASK
Kai'Aina, Ka Lahui Hawai'i
Hilo, Hawaii

When you ask a Hawaiian who they are, their response is "Keiki hanau o ka aina, child that is borne up from the land." I am a Native Hawaiian attorney. I also have the great honor and distinction, as well as the great burden and responsibility, of being the first elected Kia'Aina of Ka Lahui Hawai'i, the sovereign nation of the Native Hawaiian people, which we created ourselves in 1987.

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to be here to address a group such as yourselves on such a momentous occasion, the first time that the people of color gather to consider the impacts of environmental pollution on our common land base.

LOSS OF SOVEREIGNTY

I thought I would begin by giving a little bit of history about Hawaii Nei because many people are not aware of the crisis there and the status of the Native Hawaiian people. As we approach the United Nations' celebration of the discoverers, we are celebrating not only the arrival of Christopher Columbus but also of Hernando Cortes and Captain James Cook. In Hawaii Nei we are celebrating 500 years of resilient resistance to the coming of the "discoverers."

In 1778 Captain James Cook sailed into the Hawaiian archipelago. He found there a thriving Native community of 800,000 Native people, living in balance on their lands, completely economically self-sufficient, feeding and clothing themselves off of the resources of their own land base. Within one generation, 770,000 of our people were dead, dead from what is called "mai haole, the sickness of the white man," which Cook brought: venereal disease, flu, pox, the same tragic history that occurred on the American continent to Native American Indians and the Native people of Central and South America.

In 1893 the United States Marines dispatched a group of soldiers on the Island of Oahu for the purpose of overthrowing the lawful kingdom of Hawaii Nei. Prior to 1893, Hawaii was welcomed into the world family of nations and maintained

more than 20 international treaties, including treaties of friendship and peace with the United States. Despite those international laws, revolution was perpetrated against our government, and our lawful government overthrown. In two years we will mark the one hundredth anniversary of the abolition of our right to be self-determining and self-governing.

In 1959 the State of Hawaii was admitted into the Union of the United States of America. There were great debates that occurred in Washington, D.C. that focused around the fact that people were afraid to incorporate the Territory of Hawaii because it would become the first state in the Union in which white people would be a minority of less than 25 percent.

When Hawaii became a state in 1959, something happened that did not happen in any other state of the Union. In all the other states, when the U.S. admitted that state into the Union, America set aside lands for the Native people of those states as federal reserves. Today there is a federal policy that provides that Native Americans should be self-governing. They should be allowed to maintain their nations, and to pass laws, environmental and otherwise, to protect their land base. That did not occur in the state of Hawaii. In the state of Hawaii in 1959, when we became a state, the federal government gave our lands to the state to be held in trust, and gave the Native Hawaiian people, of which there are 200,000, to the state in a status of perpetual wardship. We are not allowed to form governments if we are Native Hawaiian; we are not allowed to control our land base. To this day our lands are controlled by state agencies and utilized extensively by the American military complex as part of a plan designed by Senator Daniel Inouye.

INHERENT RIGHT TO SELF-GOVERNANCE

In 1987, we decided to exercise our inherent rights to be self-governing. In 1987, the Hawaii Visitors Bureau decided to declare the Year of the Hawaiian for a great tourist and media campaign. We took a look at our statistics: 22,000 families on lists waiting for land entitlements since 1920; 30,000 families dead waiting for their Hawaiian homelands awards; 22,000 currently waiting. We thought to

ourselves, "How are we going to celebrate 1987?" And we decided that the time had come to convene a constitutional convention to resurrect our nation and to exert our basic and inherent rights, much to the dismay and consternation of the state and the federal government, and certainly to the shock of Senator Inouye.

We have passed a constitution that recognizes the right and the responsibility of Native people to protect their land base and to ensure water quality. Because western laws have been unable to protect the environment, we decided to lift up and resurrect our nation in 1987. We passed our own constitution. We are proceeding now to come out and announce that we are alive and well, and to network with other people. I have come to announce that a state of emergency exists with regards to the natural environment of the archipelagic lands and waters of Hawaii, and also a state of emergency exists with regards to the survival of the Native people who live there and throughout the Pacific basin.

THE MILITARY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

We have many environmental injustices and issues that need to be addressed; most of them have dire global consequences. The expansion of the United States military complex presents substantial threats to our environment. Right now on the Island of Hawaii and on the Island of Kauai, Senator Inouye is pressing for what he calls the "space-porting initiative," which we all know to be Star Wars. It will distribute large amounts of toxic gases, it will scorch the earth beyond repair and, most importantly and offensive to us, the lands that have been chosen are lands set aside by the Congress in 1920 for the homesteading of Hawaiian people. These are the lands that are pursued on the Island of Hawaii.

Our response to that is "kapu Ka'u." Ka'u is the district; kapu is the Hawaiian way for saying, "It is taboo." We cannot allow desecration of sacred lands, desecration of historic properties that are the cultural inheritance of our people to be converted for the military complex and for the designs of those who would further the interests of war against others. It is an inappropriate use of Native lands.

The United States Navy continues its relentless pursuit in the bombing of Kahoolawe Island. Not only have they denuded the upper one-third of that island, but as they have blasted away the lands and

the trees and the shrubs, all of that siltation has come down to the channels between Kahoolawe and Maui Islands, the channels that are the spawning grounds of the whales that migrate every year to Hawaii Nei.

We now have information coming from Lualualei on the Island of Oahu that there is a very high incidence of leukemia and other cancers among the Hawaiian children who live there. We believe that this is due to electromagnetic contamination. In Lualualei the United States military is taking control of 2,000 acres of Hawaiian homelands, lands set aside by the Congress to homestead our people. These lands were taken over and converted for a nuclear and military storage facility. Ten years ago, in 1981, they issued a report saying that there was electromagnetic radiation there. After the report was issued all the military families were moved out of the base, but nobody told the Hawaiian community that lives in the surrounding area. We have taken it to the western courts, we have been thrown out, because that the court ruled that Native Hawaiians are wards of the state and the federal government and therefore Native Hawaiians are not allowed standing to sue in the federal courts to protect our trust lands' assets. We are the only class of Native Americans, and the only class of American citizens, that are not allowed access to the federal court system to seek redress of grievances relating to breach of trust.

Ka Lahui Hawai'i is pleased and proud to join all the other Pacific Island nations in opposing the federal policy which is being perpetrated by Mr. Bush and Senator Daniel Inouye identifying the Pacific region as a national sacrifice area. What is a national sacrifice area? I did some legal research and found out that national sacrifice areas usually occur on Indian reservations or in black communities. They are areas that the nation identifies as sacrifice areas, primarily for the dumping of toxic wastes. As the Greens celebrate in Europe what they perceive to be an environmental victory in forcing America to remove its nuclear and military wastes from Europe, we in the Pacific region have been told that Johnson Island and other Pacific nations have been targeted for storage and dumping sites. We will not allow that and we will continue to speak out against it.

TOURISM

Tourism and its attendant evils continue to assault our island land base. We have brought with us the

1989 Hawaii declaration of the ecumenical coalition on tourism. We have enough copies for everyone here. If you are interested in the negative impacts of tourism, please feel free to get a copy from our brothers that have come with me for the delegation. Hundreds of thousands of tourists come to Hawaii every year. They are seeking a dream of paradise. They drink our water, they contaminate our environment. They are responsible for millions of tons of sewage every year, which is deposited into the Pacific Ocean. In addition, they are subsuming and taking lands from our rural communities.

Tourism perpetuates certain Western concepts of exclusive rights to land. Tourists do not like to see other people on their beaches. Tourists do not like to allow Native people to go and fish in the traditional ways. Because of toxification of the ocean due to release of sewage in Hawaii, there are many places where you can no longer find the reef fish. You cannot go there and take the opihi, the squid, or take the turtle because they are gone now. So in the few remaining areas where there are fish, the state and the federal government have imposed public park restrictions, imposed to prevent Native people from going there to lay the net and take the fish. Because if the fish are taken out, what will the tourists see when they put on their snorkels? Native people are not allowed to fish so that tourists can view through their goggles what remains of the few species we have because their own tourist practices destroyed all the rest of the bounty of our fisheries.

Tourists need golf courses, golf courses need tons of pesticides, herbicides and millions of tons of water. Hawaii is an island ecology, we do not get fresh water from flowing streams. All of the water that falls from the rain in Hawaii is percolated through the lava of the islands and comes to rest in a central basal lens underneath our island. As the rains percolate down they bring with them all the herbicides and pesticides that have been used for years by agribusiness, King Cane, Dole Pineapple, United States military. Already on the island of Oahu we have had to permanently close two of our drinking wells because of toxification. Nobody in the state of Hawaii or the Hawaii Visitors Bureau is going to tell you that at the present time there are 30 contaminants in the drinking water in the state of Hawaii.

GEOTHERMAL DEVELOPMENT

The specter of geothermal development lays heavily upon our lands. For 25 years the United States and

its allies have been developing geothermal energy in Hawaii with money from Israel being given to Wyoming corporations for the development of this Native resource. It is destroying the last Pacific tropical rain forest on the Island of Hawaii, Wao Kele o Puna Forest, sacred to the lands of Tutu Pele, our Grandmother Pele, who erupts and gives birth to the earth. This is her home, this is the place in which geothermal is developing. And as it proceeds, Native people are denied their basic right to worship there. That case we have taken to the United States Supreme Court. It was struck down along with the Native American Indian freedom of religion cases because the court ruled that religious worship in America must be site-specific. If you take the Akua, if you take God, put God in the building, American courts will understand. But if you take God and say, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it, the Black Hills of South Dakota, the lands and forests of Tutu Pele," American courts do not understand because God is not site-specific to them.

This past year we have had two geothermal blow-ups, explosions, in the state of Hawaii. Despite the fact that we are in court to stop geothermal development while the civil defense was removing a thousand families, vacating them and state of emergency declared, the governor and the representatives of these developers issued press statements celebrating the explosion because it demonstrated to them that there was great deal more of energy that they could harvest than they had initially anticipated. Their press releases ceased 48 hours after the explosion when it was reported that Hawaii had now recorded their first prenatal death as a result of geothermal toxicity. That case will proceed to court, but I can tell you one thing, there is no jury award, there is no amount of Kala (the white man's dollar) that will pay compensation to the family that lost that child. There is no dollar figure on that kind of loss.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

International fishing practicing, gill netting and drift netting, are genocide in the sea. As a result of these practices the Native fisheries are diminished and depleted and in some areas our marine fisheries are depleted to the point that we can no longer harvest that resource.

The newest emerging threat in Hawaii is radiation. There has never been a comprehensive plan put forward by our state to collect radioactive materials

and waste, not from hospitals, not from military users. Only in the last two years has the state begun to address it. Why? Because radioactive materials and syringes washed up on the shore at Waikiki upset some of the tourists that were laying on the beach. Now we have eco-technology, the new approach to addressing radiation. You know what it is? You know what the state is proposing? They are going all through the islands, collecting the radioactive materials, bringing it to one island and putting it in a factory. Then they are going to take all the papayas and fruits, put it on a conveyor belt, move it through the radioactive materials so that the radiation will kill the insects and we can safely ship the papayas to your table. That is eco-technology, a capitalist way of justifying continuing toxification and magnifying the problem so that we ourselves will take it in.

Deep ocean leasing, manganese nodule harvesting from the oceans will present a threat that is of global magnitude. Everyone needs to be concerned with this. The United States is now proceeding to subdivide the ocean surrounding Hawaii and lease it out so that manganese nodules can be harvested. The leaching of these minerals has a highly toxic by-product that will be deposited in the Pacific Ocean and distributed globally by the Pacific tides within a period of eight to ten years. We need to be aware of all of these things.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO PERCEIVE JUSTICE

What is the appropriate response to this environmental and human outrage? In Hawaii Nei we have undertaken to address these things through sovereignty and the basic exertion of the rights of Native people to govern and control their own land base. These are political issues, certainly. But they spring from a very ancient source, a source within our heart, a source that all Natives and people of color understand: our relationship in the global context. As Hawaiians say, "Keiki hanau o ka cuna, child that is borne up from the land," understanding that there is an innate connection to the earth as the Mother. We are called upon now as the guardians of our sacred lands to rise up in the defense of our Mother. You do not subdivide your Mother, you do not chop her body up, you do not drill and penetrate and pull out her blood life. You protect and nurture your Mother. And the Hawaiian value for that is aloha ai'na, love for the land, malama ai'na, care and nurturing for the land. It is reciprocal. It gives back to the Native people. Our people know that the Akua put us here

on this earth to be guardians of these sacred lands, it is a God-given responsibility and trust that a sovereign nation must assume if it is to have any integrity.

And so we in Ka Lahui have undertaken this struggle. Environmental racism is the enemy. The question is, "What is our response? What really is environmental justice?" I will tell you one thing I learned in law school at Santa Clara, the way that they perceive justice. Do you know how they perceive and teach justice? The white schools of this country? A blind white woman with her eyes covered up by cloth, holding the scales of justice. And if you look at it, they are not balanced. The Native scale and the environmental scale are outweighed by other priorities.

Well, environmental justice is not a blindfolded white woman. Environmental justice is everybody that is sitting right here. When I saw that in law school, when I saw the woman with the scales of justice in law school, I thought to myself, "You know, if you blindfolded yourself the only thing you are going to do is walk into walls." You are not going to resolve anything. And that is where we are with Western law. I know that there are many attorneys here and others who are working on environmental cases. I support them. We have received a great deal of support from attorneys working in environmental law. But do not put your eggs in the basket of the blind white lady. We must try other approaches.

CLOSING MOTTO

In closing, I would like to say on behalf of myself and the Hawaii delegation that we are very renewed in coming here, and that when we return to Hawaii in two or three days we will have good news to share with our people, that we have come ourselves these many thousands of miles, that we have looked in the faces of people of color, that we have seen there, in their hearts and in their eyes, a light shining, a light of commitment, a light that is filled with capacity and a light that is filled with love for the Mother Earth, a light that is the same that we have in our hearts.

I try to do one thing whenever I finish speaking. I try to leave the podium by telling people what the motto of Ka Lahui Hawai'i is, the motto of our nation that we are forming now. I find it to be very applicable to the situations that we are in. We are facing a difficult struggle. Every bit of commitment

and energy is needed to save our Mother Earth and to insure the survival of our people and all the species of the earth. It is a difficult row to hoe. There is going to be a great deal of strife and a great deal of pain. But we must proceed; we have no alternative. This is the same position that the Native people of Hawaii Nei found themselves in

1987 when we committed to resurrecting our national government. At the time that we passed that constitution we also adopted a motto. It is a motto that I think you might want to live by as we proceed in this environmental war that we are waging. That motto is that **"A difficult birth does not make the baby any less beautiful."**

FLOOR DISCUSSION

Gail Small (Moderator): At the core of our nations' and our struggles is our Creator, and I was thinking of that as Mililani was talking. I believed she called their Creator "Akua." In our language it is "Maheyut." And we need to keep that in mind as we build this movement. The core, the key to our movement, to our struggle, is our Creator.

I was also thinking of my own experience. I was a tribal sociologist before I left my reservation to go to law school. And I was dealing with a number of lawyers, some Indian lawyers as well as white lawyers. We were doing a water code to protect our water from the coal mining surrounding my homeland. I went out in our five villages to ask the people, "How do we quantify our water for agriculture, for domestic, for industrial uses?" The first issue most of them wanted to talk about was, "There has to be sufficient water for the water spirits, the water beings in our lakes, in our rivers, but particularly in the springs."

So I did my survey and I met with these lawyers. I told them, "In terms of developing this water code we must ensure that there is enough water for the water spirits." They started laughing at me. And these were Indian lawyers, too. And they told me, "Gail, we go into a court of law, they are going to laugh us out of court if you require us to put enough water in the Northern Cheyenne water code for water spirits."

So I went to law school. Now I am home and we are doing our water code. We are putting in water, first, for the water spirits and the water beings. Mililani Trask's message to me is, "You cannot rely on the western courts, this blind white woman." We have to go home and think innovatively, use our imagination, to protect our environment. This is what this movement is about. We have to double-think: Think like white folks, think in terms of what in their minds could be water beings, water spirits. Perhaps a minimum stream flow. That is their sterile thinking. Protect the aquatic life. But they cannot get beyond that perspective to the water spirit, the water being.

This is double-thinking. Now is the time to start building our multiracial and multicultural environmental justice movement. It is time for you to take the floor.

I have been asked to remind you all of the need to begin strategically thinking. We need to take the opportunity to strategize on how are we going to build this multiracial and multicultural environmental justice movement. How do we build this? Where do we go from here? If I could ask that you help us define that this morning. And we will be having folks who will take your comments down.

Tom Goldtooth, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Bemidji, Minnesota: I am the Environmental Coordinator for the Red Lake Nation. Our Tribal Council and our elders said to come to the Summit and listen. But listening to my sisters speak really brought out some feelings that I want to talk about. Warrior women in this day and age are not allowed to exist, so I encourage all of our Native women to speak out on these issues of the environment, which are the issues of Mother Earth.

Working at Red Lake Nation, I am proud to be able to help them to develop management plans to address these environmental issues. Because this is a nation that has been exercising its inherent sovereignty, we have natural laws that we go by. Red Lake has always stood fast in defending its sovereignty. It never came under the Nelson Allotment Act of the late 1800's. It resisted. It is not an Indian Reorganization Act community. It maintained its traditional chief structure. Its government structure was that of a traditional hereditary chief until the 1950's when Red Lake made its own decision to have an elected governing tribal council. But they continue to have input from the hereditary chiefs.

So I feel good that sovereignty was mentioned. And in talking about this issue of environment, it hit the core this morning with me in listening to my sister from Hawaii; is that before we have environmental justice we have to change this mentality of the way we look at our mothers, our sisters, our aunts, our grandmothers, the women throughout the world.

And to repeat, the current system that I see, this mentality, does not allow warrior women to exist. I think my brothers and sisters here know how any time people of color, both men and women, speak out, somehow they are not allowed to exist and they disappear. In talking to many brothers and sisters

in the Native community, we know what this is all about. We talk about it. Many of us feel helpless. True, many of our own leadership have given in to another value system that has been imposed on our people throughout these Indian lands, Native lands. It is like a disease and it is really strong; I acknowledge that strength in that disease. It has taken many of our people with them. Our people have gotten sick from this. Many of them are no longer here, millions of our people are no longer existing because of this disease that causes us to look at another people's value system.

Just in recent years I have seen a strength coming from our Native people, and this strength is spiritual. And we are starting to look at ourselves. We can continue to struggle and fight this government system that has been imposed on us. From my experience, many times when I have stood fast in defending our Native rights, going to D.C., going to workshops and conferences, trying to break down some of these doors of Congress, very often those doors got thicker.

But there is something that they could not take away, something that is building throughout Indian country, Native country, indigenous country here: our spiritual strength. Our ceremonial fires are continuing to burn and get stronger. I see that with my own eyes. We have been doing a lot in that area. Our elder Rose told us that. We had a Native caucus and she told us about this. And what also gave me strength is that we have a spiritual way here. And part of that spiritual way they cannot take that away from us. Those fires are strong, those prophecies. They told us this was going to happen. If you read the writings of one of our chiefs that has gone on, Chief Seattle, I see his words reprinted in many papers and articles and books on environmental issues of his prophecies talking about environment.

Many of the early statements that our people made that was documented all mention our Mother Earth, Inamaka. It is that this mentality has to change, the way we view our Mother, our true Mother, the earth; that she is alive. She is alive. That is something I feel that the world does not really understand. America does not understand this. George Bush does not understand this. That the world is alive, our Mother. Hurricanes, geysers, earthquakes -- that's all Mother Earth. She is trying to heal herself. There is a lot of pain and suffering there. If something happens on the other side of the world, maybe something of great pressure, it is

going to appear on the **other** side of the world. So everything is affected by what we do.

So it makes me feel good that now we have people of other cultures that are starting to look at us, and that now we recognize you, especially a lot of this new age group. They are starting to recognize that you folks have something to teach us. But this is not the first time that our Native people have been talking. We have to give credit to those people that have been trying to bring these issues up for many years now. American Indian Movement brought these issues up, these very issues of the environment. Maybe that word was not used but it all was rooted into the Mother Earth. Right here in D.C., many times our Native people were here trying to educate the people here. What is it that gives us strength to come back again? Many times -- we have different runners all the time, different faces, but we are all receiving the same teachings.

So this mentality I wanted to address, that wants to disempower, take away that strength of our mothers, that shows in our domestic violence, that shows in child abuse. So that same rape of our daughters and our sisters that is perpetuated by society, by this disease, the same rape happens to Mother Earth; it is only natural that takes place. So we have to change that. Because these people that came to this land, they lost it somewhere, they lost their understanding of the natural laws. They lost their understanding of their connection to the earth. Somewhere along the line their fire died out. So this industrial greed, this mentality, the way that we look at things economically, it all has a bearing on what we are talking about.

So we have to look at our personal life, our dreams, our goals for ourselves and our family. Do we want that shiny, brand new car? That big house out in the suburbs? We have to look at how we are contributing to this issue also in that way. A gentleman brought that up before, earlier. I do not know if it was brought out the way he wanted it to. That was the other one.

And the last thing I wanted to say was environmental justice -- this came to me two days ago -- it is looking at the principles. America cannot have environmental justice until it recognizes the treaties of our Native people. These treaties have been broken. America cannot be great until it recognizes these treaties. I do not know how they could stand at these United Nations meetings, I do not know how they can say things that they say,

that America is great, until they face up to their own people here, who were here from the beginning.

Geraldine Brussart Beloney, River Area Planning Group, St. John Parish, Louisiana: I represent the River Area Planning Group, which is a group from St. John Parish, about 40 miles outside of New Orleans, Louisiana and about 45 miles west of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It is an area known as Cancer Corridor.

We got involved in the struggle haphazardly. I was not born an environmentalist. I come from an area on the west bank of the Mississippi River, which is about 98 percent African American. It is a rural community that is very unique. Approximately 90 percent of the African Americans own their own land or are landowners, and have done so since the late 1700's and early 1800's. This area has been targeted as a national sacrifice area, to use the terminology that I heard earlier. We had an opportunity to meet Dr. Ben Chavis in Baton Rouge, Louisiana when we marched from St. John Parish. We joined the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization, Mr. Pat Bryant, who really encouraged us. It is a disenfranchised community which is speaking empowerment.

I listened to the brothers and sisters from the various cultures talk about the spirit is strong in the audience. I came here seeking spiritual refreshment because we have grown weary. As you all probably know, Louisiana is at the bottom of the chart as far as the literacy rate is concerned. St. John Parish is at the bottom on the chart in Louisiana. So we have a very high illiteracy rate coupled with a high unemployment rate. And they are bringing in a Formosa Chemical plant to this agricultural, rural community which has absolutely no plants there now. On the other side of the river I think there is something like six chemical plants in a 60-mile radius. So they are really bombarding the community.

My husband's family is in the funeral business. And when we started taking note of the problem he noticed that the amount of deaths, cancer-related deaths, had increased within the last 10 years in frightening numbers. And not being an environmentalist, he had to step back and say, "Wait a minute, what is happening in our community?"

Our community needs help. We need guidance as far as how to empower our people to stand up and

take a stand and fight the things that are happening in the community. We need help with educating people who are being promised jobs. We have also the highest unemployment rate in Louisiana, and with the promise of a job and the sacrifice of a life, we are fighting an uphill battle. We need guidance. We need help with fighting legal battles. We need to know how can we build coalitions. We basically got to a point where we started to feel isolated. And I am enriched to know that it is not just a community problem but it is an international problem. How do we build coalitions so that we can have connections with national organizations to get legal advice, to get media -- assistance with getting some media attention? These are the kind of things that I would like to see addressed -- building networks, be it a "1-800" number or computer connections; getting funds to have computers and fax machines so that we do not feel so isolated.

And, you know, we have been sold out even by our own elected officials. We thought we could go to them to represent us and we found out that these things have been on the drawing board for 10 years. So we have already been sacrificed by our elected officials. So where do we go from here? And how do we connect with all of these beautiful people that are here today?

This is the kind of information that I came to seek and I feel confident that I am going to find it. And I thank those of you who put this thing together. It is a long been waiting for. And how do we get down to the bottom line of forming a real coalition that is going to be a working body where we can, you know, contact some folks and get some help from the outside? These are the kind of questions that I would like to see. I would like to see us get down to the nitty-gritty at this stage. (*Moderator: Thank you. So we have gotten suggestions for media attention, a "1-800" number, technical assistance for computers and fax machines, networking, and strategies to impact the political process.*)

Pamela Chiang, Nindakin People of Color for the Environment, Berkeley, California: I really feel that Asian Americans and Pacific Asians are being thrown together in one basket. And I really feel that there is such diversity in our peoples.

I am really asking in a way a question, "What is Asian?" And I ask that among the Asian people here, and among all of us. Do we really know? And do we know all the different kinds of problems

in Asian immigrant and Asian American communities?

My heart is beating fast because I am frustrated, but I am excited as I bring this to the floor. I really think that we need to understand what Asian people are in this country and their different backgrounds. We have the Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Laotians, Vietnamese, Hmong, and many more. And we cannot just be thrown by the wayside. And the Native Hawaiian and Native Pacific Island issues are so important because these people are being continually exploited through American colonization.

But there is continual immigration going on in this country. While it may appear that there is limited environmental organizing in Asian immigrant and Asian American communities, that is not to say environmental problems do not exist. There are people here from Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, and Pam Tao Lee, who can tell you the statistics of working in the semiconductors. The problems are there. And I am researching why it is hard to organize these communities. (*Later, announcement was made of the formation of an Asian American caucus.*)

Sulaiman Madhi, Center for Commerce, Energy and Environment, Atlanta, Georgia: I am very inspired by the Hawaiian sister who talked about land sovereignty. I believe that African American people need to address this question. During the Civil War African people were given the promise of 40 acres and a mule. We were given the territory from Charleston, South Carolina to St. Augustine, Florida, 30 miles inland, all the islands along the coast. We were told we were free, but the means by which we could be free was taken away from us as a sellout to bring white slave masters back into the Union.

I feel we really need to emphasize this particular stretch of land. One is the historic land in which the Cree Federation and African people mixed, particularly in the branch called the Seminole Nation, an African and Native American nation. I think we need to recall this land -- or reclaim this land as a Seminole reserve, put it in land trust. It has a rich history of the Gullah people who have maintained the most African culture in this country. It is a culture very much in harmony with Native American people.

Malcolm X told us land is the basis of freedom. I do not know why our people continue to run away

from the question of land and reparations. We have the president of Nigeria calling reparations for African people in Africa because the slave trade underdeveloped Africa, but the Africans that were taken from Africa are not demanding this land. We must have land. Land is the basis of freedom, land is the basis from which we get all of our resources. And we must develop this land in a sustainable land.

I live in a paper-mill town. This town was polluting the water and the air and so forth. So it became a question to me of not only freeing the land, reclaiming the land, but also we must have this land returned in a sustainable way, otherwise it might not be any good once we get it.

I hope that this conference will address that whole question of sovereignty, land sovereignty, for African Americans and support the initiative of having this particular stretch of land reclaimed for African and Native people as the Seminole land.

Richard Perez, National Congress for Puerto Rican Rights, New York, N.Y.: In discussing strategy, one of the things that I wanted to raise was to ask everyone here to keep in mind the great number of our people that live in the central cities, in the urban areas. Eighty-five percent of Puerto Ricans who live in the United States are concentrated in Northeastern urban centers, and in those areas we are fighting for survival, for local self-determination. And my brothers and sisters from Puerto Rico will talk about the struggle of the Puerto Rican nation in the nation of Puerto Rico, but I want to talk about those of us who are here now.

Our organization has been involved in the past -- we are a civil rights organization, but as time has gone on that question has broadened out to be a human rights organization and it led us to address the question of the environment as a question of local self-determination. So we have been involved in Newark in a struggle against dioxin dumping in the Ironbound district; we have been involved in Williamsburg, where toxic wastes have been stored in a predominantly Puerto Rican and Dominican community; right now we are involved in a struggle to close down a medical waste incinerator that has been located in the South Bronx, the poorest community in this country of the urban centers. And we had a rally there recently. For those of you who are not familiar with the urban centers, we do not see trees, we do not see grass. Our slogan as we marched through the streets -- we had 400 people,

150 of whom were school children -- our slogan was: "Whose air? Our air."

Our struggle around the environment is one which, as was mentioned yesterday, is a life-and-death struggle for us. There are people here from a group called CATA, they are agricultural workers who are fighting against pesticide poisoning as well as the slave-like conditions in the agricultural camps. I am asking that as part of our strategy that we place on the agenda the needs of the urban centers and the needs of what used to be called the ghettos, but those are our homes also. And those are places for us to struggle.

Mildred Coleman, Southern Association of Black Educators, Savannah, Georgia: I have four points. (1) I think that a part of our strategy must include the educating and the training of our youth at the high school and college level, because they are a very important part of this movement. The "grayhairs" in here will soon be taking a seat and we must allow foot soldiers to follow. (2) The governor of Georgia has finally agreed that the Savannah River Plant is contaminating the groundwater of Georgia, South Carolina and Florida. Not only that, the Department of Energy is trying to reopen the Savannah River Plant by December of this year so that it will be in the business of producing plutonium. We must challenge this reopening. (3) We must also remember and resist Africa, Central and Latin America becoming the dumping grounds of the industrialized nations. (4) Finally, for all of us here, a part of our strategy must be found in the song that says, "We who believe in freedom cannot rest."

Jose Morales, Toxic Avengers, New York, N.Y.: I am the advisor of the Toxic Avengers of El Puente. We work against Radiac (a chemical and radioactive waste storage facility) in north Brooklyn. This movement has to deal with the question of production in this country and the decisions around what is produced and how it is produced. We do not make this stuff to begin with; we do not have to deal with it where it gets dumped anywhere. This is hitting on some very key and central points. Herbert Hoover said, "The business of America is business." We are dealing with the fundamental business of America here when we get into production decisions.

I work with young people, that is my job and my duty. I would not invite my young people here unless I knew there were going to be other young

people here. We must start young; young people have a lot of energy and we have to move on that. I would say it is a weakness of the Summit that we have not made a much more intense effort to deal with the leadership of young people. (*Announces formation of a Latino caucus.*)

Magdalena Avila, Berkeley Environmental Justice Coalition, Berkeley, California: In developing strategies, we need to reassess the knowledge and the resources that we have because, right here, we have a tremendous amount of resources. The real challenge for us when we leave this Summit, and we get out there and we find ourselves struggling for funds, will be not to fight against one another. How can we strategize, in terms of approaching funders so that my organization can survive but not at the cost of another organization? Basically, that means reframing our approach in terms of developing our own funding bases and determining the agenda regarding philanthropy.

When we are looking at mainstream organizations that are now bringing in people of color to develop their own programs, my concern is twofold, i.e., that we critique and educate these mainstream organizations, but at the same time give support to those of us who are working within those organizations that have been hired. How do we get these mainstream organizations to institutionalize these so-called temporary programs that they have set up to address the minority issue so that it is not a trend issue but part of the overall long-term development plan?

Jorge Fernandez Porto, Mision Industrial de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico: We are a 21-year-old environmental organization. No matter what the decisions or resolutions or whatever that come out of this conference, everything must be based on the strengthening of our community organizations. I propose that all our discussions take place within the context of strengthening our community organizations to begin proposing alternative, not only ways of living but ways of production. From that we have to organize more regionally so we can have a network that really works. We need to speak for ourselves.

Leah Wise, Southerners for Economic Justice, Durham, North Carolina: I first want to thank deeply the organizers of this conference and particularly this fine panel this morning. I have four points that I hope to offer to contribute to the discussion of strategy.

The first one has to do with workplaces. Most of you have heard of the recent disaster in Hamlet, North Carolina, where 25 poultry workers were murdered and 55 landed in the hospital as a result of racism, as a result of capitalist greed, which has targeted a community of color and poor people. I want to stress the question of us understanding the workplace internally and externally as an environmental question. Because if we are to build a broad movement we have to build as many constituents as possible. Traditionally, at least in our state, environmentalists never look at workers as people who have environmental concerns daily.

Second, I want to say that racism puts all of us at environmental risk. Because racism in workplaces is what causes to work under stress, what causes women to go home in pain, cannot read to their kid, get fired up because they are under stress. This is a question that we have to understand. What I am speaking to is our effort to change the way that we characterize what we are talking about so that other people can plug into this issue, which they need to see is central to their core and being. So, as a constituency I think we need to broaden out and I think we need to try to link these places. And it is not just the workplaces because they are producing the pollution, which they are, but they are currently threatening community residents and the people who go there every day. We need to make those connections.

Third, as much as we have criticized the current policies and practices of industrial capitalism in this country we have not offered yet in this dialogue what kind of alternative economy are we talking about. It is important that we have this vision, because those of us who are fighting want to be able to put that forward. I was told before I came up here, "Look, poor folks cannot eat ideology." That is not what will make them respond to the theory that what they are currently doing is killing themselves and their children because they have to put food on the table that night. We have to be able to respond concretely to that challenge.

Strategically, I think we need a national think tank that can help bring together the kind of visioning that we can then take and utilize, those of us who are organizing in our communities. And we certainly can contribute to it. But we at this point do not have that kind of apparatus. Those involved in such a think-tank process should then make it their business to attend cultural-worker conferences, to go to media conferences, because it is our

cultural workers who will then translate that to the people. I am very concerned about the condition of the mentality of the African American community at this time, particularly of our youth. What I have to say may not be relevant to other communities of color, I do not know. But our people suffer from extreme, extreme, internalized depression and have adopted much of white mentality. If we are to mobilize our people, not the people who are currently active and leaders here, **our people**, in this struggle, we have to recognize what work we must do to bring them along.

This is why this question of racism, I think, is so critical. Because racism has not only contributed to our environmental destruction, but it negates our political practice. Disenfranchised communities need to be active to be a part of our movement. Enfranchisement has to be a part of the environmental justice movement.

I think, strategically, that we can network best on a regional level, so I support the earlier comments. I know that there are two current regional networks, one in the Southwest and one in the Southeast. I do not know what is happening up in the Midwest and Northwest and Northeast. I think the point of regional networking is that we can teach each other. And that is how you begin to pool resources, monetary, intellectual and strategy. We can come together at least yearly, perhaps more, you can get there without expensive airplane tickets and that sort of thing. So I think in our regional meetings that people ought to begin making plans for how to do that kind of networking.

Lastly, we must also think about constant international connections. If we are to win this battle, we must link up with those in West Africa, Brazil, Thailand; those who are suffering the same kinds of situations with tourism, toxic contamination, and dumping. We have the same challenge on this question of economy. Workers across continents need a fair trade policy. Free trade is an international question which is an environmental question critically. So on a national level we need to be thinking about these issues that are coming up that unite us and that we all must plug into.

Louis Elisa, Boston NAACP Chapter, Boston, Massachusetts: I am very proud to be here at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. I consider this the United Nations because when I look around I see a

spectrum of people that represents all the cultures that are in the diaspora of the world's communities. I also see a commonality which other people seem not to recognize, that when we look at all the faces that you can see just traits that are common, which means that somehow we are a lot closer than we give ourselves credit for being; that other than Mother Earth linking us all together, there is a common thread that holds us together, that comes from, whether it is one continent or whether one Mother Earth, as we call it, but there is just something that is binding us all together.

We need a think tank. We need now to do what every other successful movement in this nation has done, we need to put into process what we are doing here today so that there is a continuum of what we have started at the Environmental Leadership Summit on a daily basis. We need to have an institute that houses the minds, the thoughts, and the actions of these people that have come here today.

I am a contributor to the World Wildlife Fund, I am a contributor to the Audubon Society, I am a contributor to almost every environmental group that sends a letter to my house. There has not been one environmental group of color that has ever sent a letter asking for a donation. I am saying, among us, within our own selves, we have the power, the financial resources, to maintain an institute, a think tank, a progressive process which will allow us to say to our people, "Here are the facts, here is the information, here are the legal resources you need." If we need somebody to help us in an agrarian problem or help us in a community problem whether it is an urban area or rural area, we can go to that institute, that think tank, and they are sitting there with that information. We need to have legal people in a place that we can call and use their resources and that we can send them out to do the work that has to be done, the same as the World Wildlife and the other groups do on a national and international level.

The resources are within our means. We can go to the nations of Africa and we can go to the nations of Latin America and we can go to the other cities and towns and we can challenge the institutions such as the churches and colleges of higher learning to contribute to that think tank so that we can have the resources to do what we have to do in order to make ourselves whole as a movement that is going to challenge the traditional so-called environmental movements. Let us be clear: We are the original

environmentalists, we are the original conservationists, we are the preservers of the land.

And so, we can spend all the time trying to get the so-called recognized environmental groups to bring us into the process, or we can do what we have already started here: we can build on this process. Leah Wise made it very plain -- it is very simple -- you are sitting here with the foundation of the most progressive environmental movement in the world at this point. No one can set our agenda for us. Africans say it is highly unlikely that someone will come from America and tell them how to preserve their natural resources and the rainforest. Native Americans have said it is highly unlikely that the same person who has killed the beaver and murdered the bison is now going to come and talk about preserving the land. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to take this germination, this seed, these people right here today, and go to an institute which we already have a foundation for and build on it.

Esmeralda Brown, United Methodist Office for the United Nations, New York, N.Y.: I speak as a black Panamanian woman from Central America. I want to reinforce what the compañera, the sister, said earlier in terms of the international connection. We need to strategize with our natural allies, particularly our allies in Latin America and the Caribbean. I call my people in that part of the world, the Third World's political. We need effective networking with Native Americans and black brothers and sisters in Latin America and the Caribbean because, by the way, they are black brothers and sisters who are also very much affected by the U.S. policies in terms of all the dumps in our region. You see, we cannot afford for dumping of garbage to take place. About two years ago the garbage that was not wanted in the United States was taken to Belize and because of the economic situation. The garbage was to be bought in Belize because the government felt that the few U.S. dollars would have helped to feed the people. And we had to fight against that. But nobody in the United States fought against it.

We have to avoid the continuous use of pesticides in Colombia, where women agricultural workers are dying. We need to avoid, for instance, the continued passage of nuclear bombs through the Panama Canal, because it happens and nobody, maybe, knows about it. We need to also deal with the military bases in our countries, the justification by the U.S. government of attempting to get rid of the coca leaves.

For us, the New World Order of George Bush, his free-market economy, means the continuation of exploitation, it means that multinationals in this country will feel free to really see Latin America and the Caribbean as the dump in backyard. And we need to stop that. We need to say that whatever affects the people there also affects people in the United States, and vice versa.

Charles E. Cobb, UCC Commission for Racial Justice, Washington, D.C.: We have been considering this matter for a long time. Yet in 1992, this is the first national meeting of people of color to discuss this crucial matter. As I have listened to all the comments that have been made, I could not help but reflect on the past years, how we came to make an impact. I am going to suggest that we cannot afford to let this issue languish; that we must take steps to deal with it on a continuing basis. And given our experience in the United Church of Christ and in the National Conference of Black Churchmen, what we did was organize ourselves.

I am suggesting that before we leave this conference on Sunday that we organize ourselves so that we can work in the many regions that are already organized but have been brought together for the first time in this national meeting. When Martin Luther King wanted to do his thing he organized the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. When the Congressional Black Caucus wanted to bring into being a focus on Africa, they organized Trans-Africa. I am suggesting that people here organize themselves.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.: On this march, we are going to be led by our Native American sisters and brothers. There is a solemnness that we have been asked to respect. The Summit leadership has recommended to Summit delegates that we, as an act of our solidarity, as an act of our joining in the spiritual unity of what our Native American sisters and brothers have put forth as an action, that what we will listen to going to the Capitol is the drumbeat which is the cultural way Native American sisters and brothers want to approach this particular question. I wanted Andrea Carmen to come just to add a word of the real spiritual significance about what we are intending to do. You know, we began our Summit on a very high moment of spirituality. And because we are taking this action we do not want it to be assumed that this is a break in the Summit; this is the Summit in action.

Andrea Carmen, International Indian Treaty Council, Palmer, Alaska: To us the drum is the heartbeat of the people; the drum is the heartbeat of our Mother Earth. And we are marching for that prayer that the heartbeat of our Mother Earth, of the land, stay strong so that the heartbeat of our unborn children can be strong. By having the drum lead us it means our heartbeat will be as one, all of us that are marching together, that our prayers for the land, our solidarity, our support and all of our actions of mind, spirit and body will become united in this way. I want to thank everybody who choose to participate, and I really want to thank the conference as a whole for taking this action onto yourselves.

THE PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: FORMATION AND MEANING

Isaiah Madison, Vernice Miller and Charles Lee

INTRODUCTION

The seventeen Principles of Environmental Justice fashioned during the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in October 1991 have been heralded widely in the United States and abroad as an "historic" philosophical, political, economic, cultural, and spiritual statement. People far and wide have extolled the Principles for laying the foundation for the first real global multicultural, multinational, grassroots environmental justice movement. The Principles have found their way into over 1,000 publications and the proceedings of numerous national and international conventions and gatherings on environmental, economic justice and development.

In this chapter, we will try to recover some of the elements which informed the process by which the Principles were formulated and to interpret from our point of view their substantive significance and meaning. This will be done largely through the eyes of the persons who had much to do with their development and formulation.

FORMATION OF THE PRINCIPLES

The process by which the Principles of Environmental Justice came into being is in itself an object lesson in the "give and take" of multiracial and multicultural movement building. It was a process which revealed both the extreme difficulty and extraordinary promise of cross-cultural grassroots organizing on a national and international level. It illustrated the extraordinary degree of openness, patience, dedication, and sacrifice required to foster sufficient trust across immense cultural barriers to create a powerful multiracial, multinational peoples movement. To see the significance of the Principles and the process of fashioning them in their correct light, we must consider them against the backdrop of the larger context of the Summit itself, i.e., how and why it was convened, who were invited to attend, and how the actual gathering was conducted.

On hindsight, a number of insights and judgments on the part of the National Planning Committee

during the planning and execution powerfully impacted the essence and final content of the Principles as well as the manner in which they were created. A motivating force behind the Summit was the growing awareness in people of color communities about the threat of environmental contamination, which was spawning a transformation in thinking and action among leaders of such communities. This understanding formed the basis of the Summit's invitation message:

Growing out of a long tradition of connection with the land, concern for the natural world, and fighting for social justice, people of color have broadened our understanding of the environment. Environmental issues afford us the opportunity to address many of the critical issues of this decade, including employment, community and urban development, energy and defense policy, resource exploitation, public health, and self-determination. We believe that our transformation in thinking will ultimately play a pivotal role in the redefinition of issues of the environment and in building an environmental justice movement in the United States and throughout the world.

Having discerned the historical moment at hand in 1991 for people of color to proactively redefine the environmental movement, the Summit's planners searched for an instrument that would be rooted in diverse historical and cultural traditions, value-based, and transformative in essence. That instrument was the Principles of Environmental Justice.

In the Call for Action, the Summit delegates described their movement as one which sought "a global vision based on grassroots realities." Environmental issues are often projected on a broad sweeping scale without a place for the individual. The Principles are one place where global and individual values are connected and somehow reconciled. In our opinion, the Principles are intensely personal in nature. At their essential core, the Principles are a collection of intensely personal statements, melded together from the most deeply

held values, convictions, and visions of profoundly dedicated persons from diverse racial, cultural and faith backgrounds.

Among the other important insights, the following were most significant:

1. The vision of a truly democratic process in which people of color can speak for themselves and, just as importantly, listen to each other;
2. The wisdom to make the formulation of a set of collectively agreed upon "principles" a central objective of the meeting rather than to focus primarily on trying to hammer out particular organizational or programmatic strategies;
3. The insight that cultural and spiritual experiences are a central part of how people of color understand their integrity as peoples and their respect for the environment;
4. The understanding that the Summit was a value based process, intent on redefinition and, more importantly, transformation in a personal and global sense;
5. The desire to make the participation as broad and as representative as possible in terms of race, geography and gender; and
6. The selection of four extremely warm, sensitive, and experienced persons as moderators to give skillful leadership to the conduct of the Summit.

Of course, there were some obvious negatives (such as the underrepresentation of Asian Americans and the virtual absence of youth) which strongly impacted the consensus-building process and the content of the Principles.

Deliberative Process

The Principles submitted to the delegates for discussion and ratification were in their sixth draft. They had been reworked as the result of two previous meetings of the Summit's National Advisory Committee. They had even been revised the day before the opening of the Summit. This had proven to be a very critical consensus-building and vision-clarification process among the conference organizers prior to the actual gathering. The importance of the pre-Summit process to the successful conduct of the meeting cannot be over-emphasized, especially in fostering the extraordinary

degree of trust the leadership team invested in each other and in the delegates. It set a high tone for the entire conference, especially the process by which the Principles were redrafted.

The delegates in the general plenary session on the Principles raised the following concerns, among others, relative to the form and content of the Principles:

- A tendency to focus on issues in a negative light ("destruction", "exploitation", "rights of victims", etc.);
- A failure to acknowledge subsistence living as a viable environmentally sustainable economic system;
- A failure to recognize the continuity of the struggle of resistance on the part of people of color and oppressed nationalities against European imperialism and colonialism over the past five hundred years;
- A failure to address the responsibility of individuals to act consciously in their individual behavior to ensure the health of the natural world and the well-being of future generations;
- A failure to explicitly challenge the consistency of our inherently exploitative capitalistic economic system with a non-poisoning and wholesome environment;
- A failure to explicitly affirm the need to protect the right of children and youth to live and grow in a safe, clean, and healthy environment;
- A failure to recognize that all communities have a right to a significant role in the design of production systems which impact them to prevent the generation and disposal of poisons that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water, and food;
- A failure to explicitly acknowledge colonialism and imperialism as environmental issues;
- A failure to affirm the right of indigenous people to self-determination and the violation of aboriginal treaty rights as contributing to the exploitation of natural resources and the contamination of the environment; and
- A failure to call for the cessation of the production, storage, and transportation of radiative

and other contaminating substances which are incapable of detoxification.

One of the highlights of the plenary deliberations on the Principles was the extraordinary openness of the leadership and the skill of the moderators, in particular Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., to the wide-ranging and, in some instances, radical feedback of the delegates and the extensive adjustments made to the planned agenda in order to accommodate that feedback. The moderator saw themselves as trying to achieve the building of consensus. Since the Summit, many delegates have pointed to this as the most critical occurrence in the entire gathering--which kept it together and prevented it from coming unglued and falling far short of its expressed goals.

Drafting Committee

When it was clear that the disagreements--expressed by delegates on the plenary sessions--could not be easily resolved, the Summit agreed to a proposal initially put forth by delegates from the Northeast regional workshop that a drafting committee be formed. This committee was to be composed of delegates chosen by each of the respective regions. It was this group which worked for nearly twelve hours to digest all the comments, proposals, and sentiments expressed on the plenary floor and to reconcile the differences in terms of nomenclature, language, and nuance that was necessary before a set of principles was acceptable for adoption by consensus.

We have only heard the process by which the Principles were redrafted described in exceptionally positive terms. This was particularly the case in regard to the members of the Drafting Committee and others familiar with its deliberations. We would have found questionable some of the articulations of the drafting process given by members of the Drafting and Planning Committees if we had not been a part of the process and personally experienced many of the things related us. Following are among the most frequent articulations of the significance of the drafting process:

The Members of the Drafting Committee Became a True Community: Several members of the Drafting and Planning Committees felt that the thing which most contributed to the successful melding of the radically different and contrasting sentiments of the delegates into a single Statement of Principles embraced by the entire Summit was the deep trust and unity which came to characterize the

deliberations of the Drafting Committee. The atmosphere of extreme honesty and openness which marked the Committee discussions served to break down immense barriers and facilitate communication and cooperation which enabled it to arrive at a balanced articulation of the legitimate interests of the widely disparate conference delegates. The process was an object lesson in building a climate of trust and unity between groups with multiple differences in fostering multicultural and multiracial cooperation and collaboration.

The climate of honesty and openness between members of the Drafting Committee was unlike anything many of the participants had ever witnessed--in having different individuals, who were supposed to be arrayed against each other, being generally as concerned about each other and meeting each other's needs as they were about being heard and having their own needs met. The result was that the members of the Committee developed a profound sense of closeness and camaraderie which made it possible for them to overcome extraordinary political, cultural and language barriers on their way to fleshing out one of the most important multicultural, multinational statements of principles articulated in modern times. It was sufficient to enable a gathering of a diverse group of peoples of color to genuinely define itself in its Call to Action with the proclamation: "We are one."

Despite the regional, ethnic, cultural, age, geographical, and experiential differences of the participants, there was, to use one Committee member's language, an "unspoken equality" that bound the group together. No Drafting Committee member felt him/herself to be more important than any other member. Everybody's ideas were respectfully received and considered; nobody felt excluded or unaffirmed. Here, the Committee's process modeled the very democracy we were advocating. This made the Principles a "living testament of the work of the Summit" which will continue to powerfully impact the environmental justice movement both locally and globally.

The members of the Drafting Committee, like many of the delegates in the Summit were determined to get beyond the exclusionary mindset and practices which are the norm in our society and the mainstream environmental movement. Practicing genuine community became the number one challenge of the Drafting Committee. Members made efforts to ensure that all interests and concerns reflected at the Summit were fully represented.

The group worked within the "seamless web of mutuality" affirmed by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." This is a totally different worldview from the customarily individualistic and self-centered mindset of our society.

The vision of a nonviolent, nontoxic, caring environment which we held for the world became in a more passionate way our vision for ourselves. For two and one-half days, we struggled to live up to the highest and best in ourselves and, therefore, to reflect back to each other the best in one another.

The Decision-Making Process Was Inclusive and Empowering: The exceptional openness and inclusivity of the process was very empowering within both the Drafting Committee and the overall Summit. The fact that people felt included mellowed or eliminated any tendency to be critical or uncooperative by giving them a sense of ownership and enabling them to feel empowered. One Committee member said: "The process underscored that multicultural organizing with intentionality is possible and can be successful and rewarding." A member of the Planning Committee asserted:

The Drafting Committee process was crucial in giving voice to the diverse interests represented at the Summit and finding a way to meld all the various pieces together into one overall document that spoke for us all.

In the dominant society, difference is often responded to in an adversarial and competitive manner. Many persons honestly believe that diversity invariably has to lead to conflict and contentiousness. The Summit demonstrated in clear and concrete terms that difference can be cooperative instead of competitive, that diversity can lead to higher harmony rather than deeper hostility. This is the fundamental difference between the Northern and Southern paradigms. The process which gave birth to the Principles demonstrates the efficacy of the Southern paradigm of cooperation and complementarity over the Northern paradigm of competition and conflict.

The deliberations of the Drafting Committee demonstrated a deeper sense of democracy than the way in which it is ordinarily understood. Its effectiveness in building consensus between the members was due not so much to the "sharing of power" as to the "power of sharing". The

adaptability of the Summit organizers and conveners to sharing power with the delegates and the equitable manner in which the Committee was organized were the real glue that held the whole venture together and melded it into a powerful vehicle for fundamental socio-economic change.

The Drafting Committee Became the Summit in Miniature: An additional important reason for the success of the drafting process was that its collective outlook and modus operandi come to be infused with and guided by a sense of the whole. While the members of the Committee--like the delegates in general--were extremely diverse in culture, ethnicity, class, language, religion, age and experience, we achieved in the drafting process a capacity to transcend our many differences and to identify and focus clearly on our common needs, concerns, priorities and interests.

The Committee was aware of its mandate of drafting a set of principles which the whole Summit would embrace. But what pressed down even more heavily on us was the shared feeling that if we failed in our task, the whole Summit could disintegrate. Most of us were noticeably humbled by the awesome responsibility that had been vested in us, which is why we quickly got beyond the purely personal or sectarian in the way we approached the deliberations and in our understanding of the issues. We ceased being mere representatives of particular groups with specialized interests and became in the highest sense of the word representatives of the whole.

One member of the Committee who is Latino described the process as having exemplified "En Cada Ser esta La Comunidad. In each one of us, therein lies the community." Continuing she said:

I have never been with a group that was more tolerant, sensitive and understanding of different views from numerous cultural perspectives. The group demonstrated tremendous cultural respect for one another and the airing of differences that took place....

The group addressed some very delicate and sensitive matters, the going was tough...However, I have never felt such openness, even during the grimmest moments. I have never seen any group of individuals uphold with greater integrity what they had been entrusted to represent...

We participated and underwent so many different group processes...there was pain, frustration, milestones, joy, harmony, and reciprocity at each level. The most extraordinary aspect of all the processing we experienced is that we never lost sight of the reason we were all there... and that is that we all walked together equally; we were of color, but we were one...

This is an utterly alien idea to our customary "me, myself and I" Euro-centric worldview. Yet, it happened in Washington, D.C. in October 1991. The difficult thing is being able to get over to the rest of the world what really took place.

MEANING OF THE PRINCIPLES

From a substantive standpoint, the Principles of Environmental Justice represent the most fundamental restatement of the meaning of the environmental movement in history. The sense of the movement which comes through the Principles is fundamentally grounded on a moral premise--"the sacredness of Mother Earth" and the organic unity of all life. This contrasts sharply with the legalistic or expedient orientation of the traditional environmental movement. This means that the Principles are all-encompassing in their application--embracing cultural integrity (#12 and #16), political democracy (#2, #7, & #13), economic justice (#8 and #9), biological survival (#1 and #4), social accountability (# 14), as well as personal responsibility (# 17). "Environment", as understood by the Principles, is all-inclusive, being "whenever people (and other sentient beings) live, work and play".

Moral Foundation of Environmental Justice

Underlying the rejection of the systematic poisoning of communities of color and the demand for reparations and just compensation for all victims of environmental degradation is the fundamental moral view that all life is sacred and that justice is an inescapable imperative in human society. This notion is conveyed in Dr. Martin Luther King's frequently quoted assertion that "the moral arc of the universe is long but it bends toward justice."

It is a fundamentally moral perspective on life that leads the Principles to take issue with the greed-driven ethos of our capitalist economy and call for "economic alternatives" which produce "environ-

mentally safe livelihoods" and the reprioritizing of individual "lifestyles to insure the health of the natural world for present and future generations." The extremely destructive impact of environmental degradation is the natural consequence of an immoral industrial policy in our society which consistently puts profits above people, sacrificing human need to material greed. The drive for short term material gain destroys many cherished institutions and traditions of our society including the family and religion, as evidenced by all the largely empty talk about God and family values in the 1992 presidential political campaign.

It is the moral point of view that led many delegates to issue an unadulterated call for a change of consciousness in the dominant society. One delegate, after describing how native people are sacrificed to fuel the insatiable carnivorousness of large cities, said: "The white man's way of thinking --to conquer the earth and to conquer the land--must be changed." It is becoming increasingly obvious that it is our way of thinking that causes the systematic destruction of life and poisoning of the planet. The violently exploitative conditions and structures of society are merely a natural and logical consequence.

Henry David Thoreau once observed that "There are thousands hacking away at the branches of evil to every one who is striking at the root." It is the Principles' moral critique of our political economy which enable them to get beyond the "branches" of the evils of environmental degradation to begin striking at its root in the gluttonous ethos of our capitalist society.

The Principles recognize the inherent immorality of sacrificing the environment for short-term material gain. Protecting profits at the expense of worker safety is inherently immoral and will eventually come to a destructive end. The Principles affirm the moral imperative underlying the created order which the mainstream environmental movement seems to have forgotten. In our monopoly capitalist society, material greed has no sense of responsibility to anything except itself; it sacrifices all for a higher financial return.

Many delegates enunciated the concept of private ownership of land and natural resources being inherently immoral because it is unavoidably destructive to the environment. It is inherently incompatible with a sustainable planet and with the ethical, balanced and responsible use of land and

renewable resources. Owning the land in common is a prior right of aboriginal human society.

The Principles emphatically pose the question: "What is in the offing for those nations which abandon and disregard the fundamental laws of creation?" "Will they be visited by dire catastrophes, now man-made in nature?" Whatever the answer to these questions, the delegates took the position that the human species must be responsible for its actions; there can be no equivocating on this question. It will reap what it sows.

The fact that the Principles present a fundamental moral challenge to our existing capitalist economy cannot be overemphasized. They embrace the widely held view of indigenous people of color communities that the whole idea of development as practiced in the highly industrialized nations only benefits the few at the expense of the many. Native people have a fundamentally different view of "development" than the majority society; their concept of "development" calls into question much of what is done in the name of "progress". The Principles are a very revolutionary document because they challenge the whole idea of private property and affirm that the land and the whole earth is given for the benefit of all life forms. No particular race or species has a right to act in a manner that endangers the well-being of any other species.

A Redefinition of Environmentalism

One Committee member stated that "...these documents represented how people of color define environmental issues for ourselves, as issues of social and economic justice." Another member said, "The Principles and Call to Action represent the fullest articulation of our reality as oppressed peoples of color. More importantly, [they] come from our mouths, based on our experiences and our daily lives... Through these documents we have set forward our vision for our communities and our world."

Through the Principles, people of color spoke with finality and authority concerning their definition of environmental degradation and their vision for the future. For people of color, environmental justice is not an abstract, impersonal concern; it is a here and now, life and death situation with a very human face. The degradation of the environment for people of color translates not merely into personal discomfort or aesthetic distortion but into diminished

income, deterioration of health, mangled bodies, early death. If the question is who will play the leading role in fashioning and directing the environmental movement, clearly it is those who suffer the most who must be given major consideration.

Their clear universal appeal notwithstanding, the Principles--in some circles--have been condemned as narrowly representing the "special interests" of people of color. Often, this is meant as African Americans in the United States. Nothing could be further from the truth. In commenting on the significance of the Principles, one Committee member said: "They speak to the basic human needs that people all over the world have. [They] represent the real experiences of people and a very concrete response to those needs."

The Principles are highly relevant and much needed in a world where the accepted paradigms of Western scientific inquiry and reasoning are proving to be less and less capable of resolving its interrelated environmental and social dilemmas. In the past, the basic paradigm of scientific endeavor was "curiosity-driven," devoted to the acquisition of more scientific knowledge. After World War II, with projects such as the construction of the atom bomb and the space program, the paradigm shifted to be "mission-driven." The demands of scientific endeavor and policy making in today's post-industrial era has created the paradigm of an "issue-driven" science.

According to mathematician Silvio Funtowicz, "issue-driven" science is the product of a world with the following conditions:

1. facts are uncertain,
2. values are in dispute,
3. stakes are high, and
4. decisions are urgent.

By virtue of both the Principles' substantive meaning and the process by which they came about, the Principles are important for the development of new paradigms of science endeavor and policy making capable of meeting the above conditions.

Because of the rootedness of the Principles in everyday human reality, they speak universally to oppressed people throughout the world. This is why they have been so extensively incorporated into the gatherings and agendas of groups and organizations around the world. In the words of

one Committee member, the Principles "gives voice to the spirit and the intent of the Summit, because we got together all these people who feel very strongly about what's happening in their communities, from genocidal atrocities to exclusion by the mainstream environmental movement. The document gives voice to the pain we have experienced."

One of the unique attributes of both the Summit and the deliberations of the Drafting Committee was their exceptional inclusivity. A determined effort was made not to silence or lock anybody out. According to the Summit organizers, its principal goal from the beginning was to create a truly inclusive environmental movement.

It has been said that "truth is the world seen from the perspective of the truly disinherited." Far from being a "narrow, one-sided" document, the Principles--because of their consistent "bottom-up" view of environmental issues--present the most universal view to date of the legitimate nature and objectives of the environmental movement. They present a truly global vision based on grassroots realities. Elite agendas are by definition fragmented perspectives. The view from below is always the most inclusive and universal vision. The fundamental issue here is that of the right of people to decide for themselves. This is a universal goal of authentic grassroots democracy.

FLOOR DISCUSSION ON PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
PLENARY SESSION
OCTOBER 25, 1991 - 4:00 P.M.
(Excerpts)

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., (Moderator): We now call the attention of the delegates to the sixth draft of the Principles of Environmental Justice. I want to say a word about the purpose of this document. Prior to the convening of the Summit, we thought it important that there be some discussion at the grassroots level around certain principles that hopefully we could covenant and make an agreement upon with one another.

The Planning Committee thought that it was very important for the people of color delegates at this Summit to take our self-determined action on this before we have the entrance into the body of the observers and the participants, who come already with a set of principles that are already operative. And our desire to, just in terms of the Summit process, make sure that we would be self-determined even on the principles of dialogue, the principles of making the network, the principles of being engaged once we leave the Summit.

And that is why we tried to hopefully generate discussion about the Principles prior to the Summit. The first draft was discussed at the first meeting of the National Advisory Committee in May. We came up with a second draft, which was sent out to most of you in the mailings that you received. When the National Advisory Committee met in New Orleans earlier this month, we went over the Principles again. There the addition of a preamble was suggested. Draft #5 was aided significantly by my Co-Chairperson, Governor Toney Anaya, who sat up one night at the typewriter to get it ready.

What you have now is Draft #6. The document does not belong to the Planning Committee or the National Advisory Committee, it belongs to the delegates in session at this Summit. And it is our document to begin to move toward some sense of ratification. In this process, I would like to find out what it is we can reach consensus on. If there is some principle here that we have significant division on, that principle should not be added; but that we do at least agree on some principles.

So we have before you now for consideration the sixth draft of the Principles of Environmental

Justice. In terms of our process, I would recommend first dealing with questions or clarification on this draft.

Sharif Abdullah, Forum for Community Transformation, Portland, Oregon: Before I make my specific comments, I want to thank all of you who put this together. If none of my recommendations are considered I believe that I can vote wholeheartedly in favor of this. You all should be applauded for what you have done. I would appreciate your taking my comments as constructive ones. Please recognize that I do not have anything negative to say at all.

-- *Recommendation on language:* "the sacredness of the earth," instead of "the sacredness of the environment." This has a different resonance.

-- *Recommendation on language:* "Contribute to the development of an ecologically sustainable economy and environmentally safe jobs." Our problem is an economic system which drives environmental degradation.

-- *Recommendation on language:* "Environmental justice also demands that the same rights we extend to ourselves be extended to all other species." When we say, "All our relations," it means the trees, the four-leggeds, and the swimmers.

-- *Recommendation on language:* "Environmental justice affirms our love for the earth. Environmental justice also affirms our ecological unity, sacredness and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction." This is the heart and soul of what we're doing here.

-- *Recommendation on language:* "Environmental justice recognizes the fundamental right of self-determination of all people and the extension of that right to all other species."

-- *Recommendation on language:* "Producers be held strictly accountable for the non-production and/or detoxification at the point of production." We have to hold the producers of poison liable for producing it in the first place.

-- *Recommendation on language*: "The earth's resources be used lovingly, responsibly, equitably and in the interest of a sustainable planet." Notes apprehension over use of the term "resources," i.e., if the earth is our Mother, she is not a resource.

-- *Recommendation*: Incorporate Chief Seattle's comments, which is a statement of the interdependence of life, specifically, "Man has not woven the web of life, we are but one thread within it."

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): Let me discuss our process. We have to arrive at some level of consensus shortly. However, rather than going directly through each suggestion, I feel that the better approach would be to give others the opportunity to speak and we would not necessarily begin legislating on just your recommendations. *Requests recommendations be submitted in writing.*

Paul Ruffins, International Bricklayers and Allied Craftsmen, Washington, D.C.: *Notes the absence of any acknowledgement in all principles of personal responsibilities to conduct ourselves in certain ways*: Many of us have criticized the mainstream environmental movement for focusing too much on what individuals can do and ignoring some of the systematic elements of going on. But yet, as we speak about the fact that we are important because we are children of God, we are an increasingly large part of the population of this nation, we too have to hold our own selves responsible. There is nothing here that says that we are subject to all of the principles that all human beings are. We must put in a resolution that speaks to everyone's personal responsibility as well as the broader issues of justice. You cannot operate on injustice through a personal unrighteousness.

Donele Wilkins, Southeast Michigan COSH, Detroit, Michigan:

-- *Recommendation on language*: Addition of word "unemployment" to the end of the sentence: "Environmental justice affirms the right of all workers to gainful employment without being forced to choose between an unsafe job, good health and unemployment."

Oannes Pritzer, Wolf Mountain American Indian Press (Yat Kitischee), Naples, Florida:

-- *Recommendation*: Principles should call for treaty rights to be specifically included in national and international environmental strategies and policies, thereby recognizing the rights of all indigenous people to self-determination and because the

violation of aboriginal treaty rights contributes towards the exploitation of natural resources and the resulting pollution of air, water and land.

Male (Unidentified):

-- *Recommendation*: Term "Ecological Justice" would better describe the nature of our struggle, in the sense that ecology deals with the concept of the interrelationship of life.

-- *Recommendation*: Link the ill effects of toxics with need for compensation and health care.

Rose Marie Augustine, Tucsonians for a Clean Environment, Tucson, Arizona: We should recognize the existence genocide, especially toward the indigenous people. But what are we going to do about it? I would like to suggest that we have a people's court, not one that is controlled by government or industry.

Devon Pena, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado:

-- *Recommendation on language*: "Ecological justice requires restoration of the land." We don't want to just get compensated for damaged land, we want to restore the health of the land. For people of color this means two things: first, restoring the health of the land and secondly, restoring the land and water rights of people of color, including Native Americans, Chicanos, African Americans and other Native peoples so that we can engage in our own sustainable and autonomous development and production.

Leah Wise, Southerners for Economic Justice, Durham, North Carolina:

-- *Recommendation on language*: "Environmental justice requires the cessation of production, storage or transport of toxic substances for which there is no detoxification." This was based on lack of detoxification to date for sodium methyl isocyanate at Bhopal, India.

Male (Unidentified):

-- *Recommendation on language*: "All Native and indigenous peoples must be recognized as those people having first rights as to specific lands, land usage and gathering rights, and absolute authority in governing and enforcement of those rights."

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): Due to concerns expressed by a Native American delegate, we have changed "people of color of the United States" to "people of color, in the United States."

Andrea Carmen, International Indian Treaty Council, Palmer, Alaska:

-- *Recommendation on language:* Should read "in what is now called the United States of America." We should not be perpetuating the false history that the land that is called the United States really is the United States. It perpetuates the violation of the treaties and lies which say that Hawaii and Alaska are part of the United States.

-- *Recommendation on language:* "The blessings of liberty to our Mother Earth recognize that this is a living woman whose rights are being violated and that we always need to put that first before our own interests and even the interests of our children."

-- *Recommendation on language:* "Environmentally sustainable economic systems, and subsistence is the most environmentally sustainable economic system that is still being practiced."

Cheryl Calloway, Attorney, Okemos, Michigan:

-- *Recommendation on language:* Forms of discrimination not be specified, so as not to assume unspecified forms are acceptable.

-- *Recommendation on language:* Change "the right to clean air, land, water and food" to "the right to clean air, clean water, productive land and healthy life."

-- *Recommendation on language:* Change the word "workers" to "people" in order not to ignore persons who work in the home.

-- *Recommendation:* Focus on how people of color spend their money, given their huge spending power.

Art Cribbs, United Church Board for World Ministries, Cleveland, Ohio:

-- *Recommendation on language:* "Environmental justice is committed to the physical health and the spiritual well-being of all persons and seeks to protect human life against the damages of hazardous chemical, synthetic, narcotic and alcoholic contaminants and resulting related violence. It calls for humane and spiritual remedies to these problems and treatment through care for those affected."

Young Hi Shin, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, Oakland, California:

-- *Recommendation:* Principles should note language as one form of discrimination. I work with monolingual and limited English-speaking persons.

Without translations, it is very hard for these women to participate in this proceeding or understand the dangers of their work place.

Male (Unidentified):

-- *Recommendation:* Should be new principle around urban ecology: "Environmental justice affirms the need for an urban ecology program to clean up and rebuild our cities and neighborhoods in balance with nature, and that this program should honor the cultural integrity of all our communities and provide fair access to all for the full range of urban resources."

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): *In response to suggestion made from floor that ratified set of principles be considered a draft:* One of the concerns is that sisters and brothers were really wanting to take something back home that we have said, we have reached a multiracial, national consensus upon. I am going to, after I hear the last speakers, go through a process that I think there are some things that we can agree upon before this session is over. If we don't agree upon all 14 or 15 principles before we leave here, there ought to be some principles that we can minimally reach consensus on. And I would not want to call those which we reach final consensus on a draft, because we need to keep in mind, **this is our opportunity to define and redefine for ourselves.**

I just want the delegates to keep in mind the opportunity that we have before us to do something that we have never done before. And that is why, in a sense, there is a tentativeness to the whole process. But in another sense, one of our ancestors always said, "Always be able to discern the historical moment that one is presented with." And I beg the indulgence of the delegates to understand profoundly what is at issue here is not a mere editing and re-editing. What is at issue here is our ability, our capacity, to speak clearly to ourselves, to our peoples, and forthrightly to all those forces out there that have caused us to be in this situation of having to deal with environmental injustice. I am not speaking to this suggestion in particular; I am just saying that it is of urgent importance for us to agree on some things that we can go back to our communities and say, "We have reached this multi-racial consensus on these points of environmental justice."

Female (Unidentified):

-- *Recommendation on language:* "The underlying principle of environmental justice is the inherent

right of all life forms to exist in beauty, health and balance according to their own instructions from the Creator, with their own inherent right to their existence, apart from human beings' right in relationship to them."

-- *Recommendation on language*: "Environmental justice demands that we as human beings act consciously in our individual actions to ensure the health of the natural world for the future generations."

Male (Unidentified): At the Indigenous Environmental Network conference in June, we came up with a Code of Ethics. There are some basic differences in the perspectives of indigenous people that I would like to see added. For example, there exists manmade borders that we do not recognize. We recognize each other as humans and people north of the so-called border of the U.S. are just like us. We need to be inclusive of all people in North America and in this hemisphere. So we decided that we recognize indigenous people throughout the hemisphere.

We, as indigenous people, also recognize that there are natural laws which are in effect whether you recognize them or not. Those natural laws supersede any manmade laws because Grandfather, "He made those laws and only He can change those laws." We want people to start paying attention to those natural laws because, no matter what manmade laws there are, the natural laws supersede them.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): One of the things I want to share at this point is that we are all in some sense dealing with the problem of language. That is not to say we should not struggle and try to arrive at specificity in our expressions. But if you have listened very carefully, we come at the same terms from our different cultural perspectives differently. That's okay. And so the struggle of the Drafting Committee is not to make a decision of whose culture we're going to choose, but to try to come up with a term where at least we have clarity on among us.

Isaiah Madison, Institute for Southern Studies, Durham, North Carolina:

-- *Recommendation on language*: "Ecological justice necessitates the pursuit of a system of economic production consistent with the fulfillment of human need, rather than human greed." This squarely meets the question of the inconsistency of the values

inherent in a capitalist economy to the types of values that we want to uphold.

Janice Dickerson, Gulf Coast Tenants Organization, Baton Rouge, Louisiana:

-- *Recommendation on language*: "Environmental justice protects the right of children and young people to grow and live in a safe, clean and healthy environment." In the South, we are attempting to organize thousands of young people to take up the environmental struggle. A principle needs to speak to that issue, so we want to use this document at the grassroots level.

Jose Morales, Toxic Avengers, New York, N.Y.:

-- *Recommendation on language*: "Environmental justice requires that all communities, especially communities of color, have the right to a significant role in the decisions concerning the design of production systems to prevent the generation and hence disposal of poisons that threaten the fundamental right to clean air, land, water and food."

Charles E. Cobb, UCC Commission for Racial Justice, Washington, D.C.:

-- *Recommendation*: Violators of environmental justice should realize real penalties for the violation, not just held accountable, which often turns out to be just a slap on the wrist.

STATEMENT FROM NORTHEAST REGIONAL WORKSHOP

Vernice Miller, West Harlem Environmental Action, New York, N.Y.: In our workshop, the Northeast Regional Workshop, major issues came up around the Principles of Environmental Justice in terms of either a preamble or an overarching political statement. Our delegates want to see that reflected before they talk about a document that they would ratify. This is the overarching statement from the Northeast. And this reflects consensus of the body of the people who participated in this workshop. They feel the following:

The overall focus of the Principles of Environmental Justice is not politically clear. For example, the concept of "people of color" remains within the realm of racism, it emphasizes biology as opposed to social effects. We suggest that we as a people be referred to in this document as "oppressed nationalities" or something that is more inclusive on that line. I know you have had a lot of debate on that subject but they want to debate it even further.

The process for development of these principles must be democratic; the process is as important as the outcome. Some of the principles as stated are not principles but short-term statements directed towards government calling for basic equity. These include Numbers 1, 6, and 7. We suggest that the Principles are still a work in progress and not yet the final, all inclusive word, but rather they are a statement of environmental common ground, a point of departure, if you will; and that these Principles should be a set of guidelines that we live by, by including specific planks that speak to economic issues, class questions and urban environmental issues.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): The Chair has the need to understand the import of your recommendation and does not want to put the words in your mouth. What is the import of your recommendation vis-a-vis the sixth draft of the Principles that we have before us? *Discussion centered around two basic issues: 1. Debate over terminology, i.e., use of "people of color" vs. "oppressed nationalities," and 2. process for revision.*

DEBATE OVER TERMS

Andrea Carmen, International Indian Treaty Council, Palmer, Alaska: I know that several of the indigenous people have commented since that suggestion was made to change "people of color" to "oppressed nationalities," that we don't want to be defined in terms of our oppression or the process of colonization.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): On that point, I want to make sure we recognize what it took to get us here. The name of the Summit itself went through a process. And the term "people of color" was what all four, not unanimously in each community, but there was growing consensus in all four of the people of color communities that are here that would be the term. And that is why we used the very name of the Summit. It does not mean that it is locked into concrete. But it does mean that was the term that enabled us to get here.

If we use different definitions for the same term, we're all going to be at variance with our level of understanding of what is being transmitted. One of the problems with oppression, and one of the problems with the English language is its uncertainty of meaning. And that's one of the things that we have to deal with and struggle with.

So I am letting you make all of your recommendations because it is educational in itself to hear it from you, from your perspectives, your comments, and I think it is instructive to the process. If we don't vote anything, this is instructive to the process for our own self-education.

Neftali Garcia Martinez, Servicios Cientificos y Tecnicos, Hato Ray, Puerto Rico: I wish to discuss further the "people of color" concept. When one talks about color one speaks basically about biology, not about social issues. White people also have color. Japanese have color, Native Americans have color and blacks have color. What I am saying, and we have been discussing, is that we have to go beyond the concept of color because if we remain within that concept we remain within the realms of biology. And what we are basically saying with that word and that concept is that the basic difference is biology, not society, not economic structures, not exploitation, not oppression, not domination.

Of course, I can recognize that we come from Puerto Rico, and although we have racism it has different manifestations. And, of course, I am aware, well aware, of the racism that Puerto Ricans are subject to in the United States. What I am saying is that be it here, or later on, it should be discussed, because one cannot get away from the limitations of racism, of biology, by stating one's own ideas with the same type of language that those that oppress, that those that dominate, that those that exploit, that those that control economic processes and the government use. If one remains captive within the same concepts and words, one cannot become free.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): I agree with you. But the Chair would just like you to give, from your prospective, what phrase would be a non-biological description of our realities?

Neftali Garcia Martinez: Oppressed peoples and nationalities.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): The Chair does not want to debate; it is for clarity for the body. I thought I understood some of our Native American sisters and brothers to say they did not want to be described with the word "oppressed". And the reason why I am pointing this out, it points to the complexity of what we are trying to arrive at. I agree with you, we need to struggle with one another until we arrive at a commonality of

understanding, even in the coinage of terms that we use to self-define ourselves and our peoples and our communities.

Neftali Garcia Martinez: I would ask those from Native American groups and nationalities, then, if they feel dominated or exploited? How do they describe the relationship, then, with what is called the United States? Do they consider themselves a colony **within** this totality? We Puerto Ricans, at least some of us, consider ourselves a nation but without political liberty, therefore being a colony. There has to be a concept to define the social relationship. But that has to be a social concept, not a biological concept, which is color. Because, after all, color is used by those that dominate us to divide us. As long as we remain within the limits of color we are facilitating that exploitation, domination and oppression. Those concepts of biology also tend to divide the oppressed, tend to divide the dominated and exploited. Even if it is not today, we have to discuss it further and we have to come to common grounds.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): The Chair and you are at the same place. And the struggle is how do we arrive at that common ground where there is a mutual, not only awareness, but a mutual consensus on what is the term. I have let this discussion go on because it is for our own benefit that we become even more clear on this problem. It is a problem and I thank you for identifying it.

Female (Unidentified): I think the terminology "people of color" is the phraseology that brought us all here together. **It is our common ground.** And I think that it is what we have in common, irregardless of nationality or socio-economic status. I agree with the Native American sister that "people of color" is what we all have in common, be we Asian, African American, Afro Hispanics or whatever our varied nationalities.

Male (Unidentified): I like to say that "people of color" is a political concept. It is a concept of people who were oppressed for many years -- discriminated against politically, socially, economically and culturally. "People of color" is a very political concept, not a biological concept. I say that as an Indian person because of the integration of Indian peoples and other so-called minorities. Our voices have been denied for 500 years, and "people of color" is a very appropriate concept at this time.

Ivette Perfecto, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan: I come from Puerto Rico, one of the last remaining colonies in the world. I think this discussion about oppression and colonialism should be a continuous one. And I think I am gaining a lot by hearing our sisters and brothers from the United States and Native Americans. My suggestion is to ask somebody that comes from a colonized country. I think that we should include colonialism and imperialism in the Principles of Environmental Justice. They are very much related. They steal our resources, they pollute our land, and through this process colonization has been achieved. It is not just a political issue but an environmental issue.

I also am really glad that I have not heard yet anyone say that people are causing the environmental problem. This is one of the main defenses of the mainstream environmental movement. Perhaps this concept should be added. They are referring to certain populations, i.e., our people of color populations. And I think that people of color are not the problem; they are the solution. We are seeing that today and throughout this conference.

PROCESS FOR REVISION

Jaribu Hill, New York COSH, New York, N.Y.: *[In response to moderator's question after Northeast Regional Workshop statement was read.]* We thought that it would be really important to develop a process for revision, that process would be completely democratic and open to the various people that are represented here in terms of regional representation and that the regions would designate people that they have worked with who would be interested in participating in further revision. Because what we were concerned about is that there are certain people, certain elements of people, that we feel are missing in terms of their input. And we know that the process started a long time ago. But some of us -- for whatever reasons -- were not part of that process. So to facilitate being part of it from henceforth, we would suggest that there be a regionally representative revision committee, and if revisions are warranted, a committee be developed out of this gathering before we leave, so that people can come together and not do what we usually do, which is to say we are going to revise a draft or finalize something later and never do it.

Donna Chavis, Center for Community Action, Pembroke, North Carolina: I have been getting a lot of questions from delegates who are unclear as to where we are headed or what our process is. We have a ceremony of inclusion scheduled to take place soon. So there is concern now in terms of actual clarification of our process.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): According to our schedule we have about 20 minutes left to finish what was supposed to have been a ratification of the Principles of Environmental Justice. In my opinion, we are really not involved now in a ratification process; we are involved in an educational process where we hear from delegates in response to a draft that they have been given. As the moderator, I have decided to allow this to go on, because one of the functions of leadership is not only to speak, but also to listen. It is not only to teach, but also to learn. I think that we all have learned something by hearing from each other's voices and experiences. They point to some of the dilemmas of language and terminology. In spite of these dilemmas, I believe we will be able to arrive at some consensus on some principles.

Now, every single suggestion you've made is being recorded. If we have more discussion, we will have more. So I do not believe that it is possible to arrive at a final ratified document in the next twenty minutes. However, I do not believe we have wasted our time, because it points to the seriousness with which we are self-defining a new multiracial environmental movement.

There has been a suggestion about a further draft to be developed with a committee made up of persons from different regions. I believe that makes sense. We also need to hear those regional reports. My suggestion is that if we have to delay the entrance of the other folks, we may have to delay that in order to make sure that we get the business that we came here for in this session completed. I would like to hear quickly from those at the microphone, and then move to take some specific action. If there is unreadiness with the body about doing that, we will entertain suggestions for process.

Chris Mathis, Labor/Community Strategy Center, Los Angeles, California: I am going to make my comments to the body. I want to raise something here. If every single point, comma, concept, notion, is not in the general principle of this thing, are individuals, organizations here committed to trying to at least come up with a

common understanding or not? It seems to me that people really need to do some serious self-searching, see the historical opportunity that is here before us, and then decide how they are going to act. If we don't have the trust with each other to allow some give and take, we will not come up with a general definition in the next twenty minutes, the next twenty days, the next twenty weeks, or the next twenty years. We really need to look at this. I myself am at home with the draft that I saw before I got here three months ago. It is adequate. It is not perfect. I am speaking for myself, but I have some questions about are our people really looking at themselves and asking if every single point is necessary. If this goes on, we are not going to have anything.

Jorge Fernandez Porto, Puerto Rico Industrial Mission, San Juan, Puerto Rico: Our problem is a real one. Puerto Ricans were never asked to form part of the Union. We were invaded. In that sense, a preamble that says, "We people of color in the United States," is something we could not sign or subscribe to.

Michel Gelobter, NYC Dept. of Environmental Protection, New York, N.Y.: We should not be forced into rushing the business of this session in order to meet with the white folks... Basically, my point was that this is a space we have had for the last two days that we must keep. We must carry in our next efforts as well, and have a little less pressure than the pressure that in the next two days is going to put on us. And I would urge that we take a moment of reflection at the end of this to at least consider that experience.

Linda Rae Murray, Cook County Hospital, Chicago, Illinois: I have a thousand recommendations which I am not going to make. I have a specific motion. We are all family here. One of the purposes for us meeting like this is so we can be real. And this is a leadership Summit. I know everybody in this room knows if you went home in your kitchen with your family, it would take you ten years to agree on a set of principles. We should be real. And we have accomplished a great deal today. There is a common thread that brought us together. But we also know, as in any family, there are a lot of things that we differ on.

I did not come to this meeting thinking that the documents were perfect. I knew that when I left that I was not going to think what we agreed on was perfect. I knew there would be issues and questions

that would not be addressed that are important to me. I knew there would be things that we would agree on that I haven't the faintest clue what people are talking about? I have heard things that I thought seemed crazy, and I have heard things that made me wonder why didn't we obviously include that?

I belong to no organized religion, but let me speak to you in the sense of spirituality. You know what we did here yesterday, you know what we did here this morning. Now we may describe it in a million different ways, but we know what we did.

I think we should leave here with something on paper. None of us are Europeans; having something on paper doesn't mean anything. It is just something that we can work from; it doesn't mean it is set in concrete. I want to be able to say when the others join us that we agree on this; I think that is important; it cost too much time and money to get all of us here.

So my motion is real simple: That we allow the Drafting Committee based on this discussion make appropriate revisions to the preamble only, which I hope would be only four, five, or six words. In the spirit of our people, we also endorse the sixth draft that we have in front of us, and that we try to set up a mechanism to allow specific recommendations, discussions, theses and philosophies behind those principles to be included in the proceedings of this conference.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): *Motion was seconded and opens discussion on motion.*

Marjorie Moore, Hunter College Community Environmental Health Center, New York, N.Y.: I know we are tired; it has been a long day. I think the thing for me that is getting lost is that process is extremely important -- that is what democracy is about -- even to the point of who the chair is. Delegates are here to elect chairs, to make decisions that we are going to take home, and I feel strongly that we ought not, in our haste to get something on paper, lose the historic moment that we have all been hollering about since we got here. If it is going to take a little more time to carve and chisel a finely honed movement of people of color that we are proud of, then we need to take those few extra minutes. We've been struggling for a long time in this country; we need to take a few more minutes. I think if democracy is the issue -- it needs to start here with us. We are not practicing what we preach. And I know we are tired. And

I am tired. And you all did a Herculean job putting this thing together. We needed you to put this together, because these issues need to be brought out. But we must not lose sight of the long distance. The long distance that we've all worked so hard for. *(Clarifies that she was speaking against the motion.)*

Male (Unidentified): I would like to propose some reconciliation between the motion and the discussion here, which would be in effect a seventh draft based on the recommendations that have been brought forth. The motion is premature.

Dollie Burwell, Warren County Concerned Citizens, Warrenton, North Carolina: I would like to speak in favor of the motion. I think that to say that at this point that we are rushing things is incorrect. We are forgetting how long the committee has worked and come up with what we have here before us. And I think we need to bring about some sense of reality to what we're doing. Realistically, at the rate we are going, we cannot come up with a perfect set of principles even if we stayed here another three or four hours.

Female (Unidentified): I want to talk against the motion because I feel like we have spent already two hours here, and it would be disrespectful to the brothers and sisters who have already been talking throughout these two hours. I think that we are very close to getting a seventh draft that won't be perfect, but will be closer to perfection. So I want to vote against the motion, and I agree that we should have a committee work on a seventh draft and have it approved then.

Jaribu Hill, New York COSH, New York, N.Y.: I want to speak against the motion, because when we came up before from the Northeast region, we talked about some of the concerns that we had with the Principles within our region. We were not throwing the whole baby out with the bath water, so to speak, but we did have serious questions about process. We suggested that there be a revision committee to review the suggestions that have been made so far. The importance of looking at what everybody has said since the sixth draft will be thrown out with this motion. So I think it's important that we not rush through this.

Running Grass, Three Circles Center, San Francisco, California: Before we split any further about those who are for and those who are against, I just want to say -- from my hearing of the motion

-- that I did not hear debate on this being cut off. I heard a process suggestion, an imperfect compromise, an acknowledgement that the draft was imperfect, and a desire to move forward tentatively. Also, I do sense that there is a big middle ground here. Let's look for the middle ground and come up with a compromise.

Ron Daniels, Project New Tomorrow, Youngstown, Ohio: I want to believe very strongly that we have to deal with the principle of adequacy when we have diverse groups. Indeed, it is impossible for us ever to really agree on all the five points, and all the details. So we have to really begin to ask ourselves the question that the very first speaker raised when he went to the microphone. He said if there were no changes made that he could live with the document. The first speaker said that. And I think that we have historically, in our various movements, we have a tendency to what I call waging war about resolution. This becomes the struggle, instead of the real struggle. I am speaking for the motion, but I want to ask a question. And that is -- the Northeast region made a proposal on process, which it seems to me fits in with the recommendation that the maker of the motion suggested. And that is: what is the possibility of us, in fact, making the changes in the preamble and accepting, for the purposes of this meeting, in order for us to move forward -- the nine points, with the proviso that the revision committee incorporate the process that the Northeast region recommended. That is to say that there would be regional representation on the revision committee, and that the discussion that went on today -- which is really the seventh draft -- would be reviewed by that committee and then be presented at the next Summit.

Female (Unidentified): I would like to speak against the motion. I don't think that we're very far from a consensus. There was only one issue that was even raised that anyone spoke in opposition to -- and that was the whole issue of "people of color" versus "oppressed nations". I think everything else that was said was basically acceptable to the delegates. I would like to see the seventh draft, and at that point we go ahead and adopt that seventh draft that we have all been working on this afternoon to create as the imperfect and evolving draft that came out of this conference. I would like to ask when there would be time for us to formally proceed when we have the seventh draft -- including the rewritten preamble and the suggestions that have come out this afternoon worked into it.

Pamela Tau Lee, Labor Occupational Health Program, Berkeley, California: With respect to the sister that just spoke, I don't think that we are that close. I think that there are a variety of things that were raised which would involve a lot of debate. This is the first time of many times that we will be coming together, and I appeal to the delegates here to look at the work that has gone in to this and asked the question, "Can we live with this? Can we bring this back into our community?" This is a living document; it is not something that is just going to stay forever and ever. This is going to grow. I want to respect democracy and everybody's input, but I think that the issues raised will take a very long time for us to come to a unified understanding on. Is this a bottom line that we can all live with and work with, and to continue to nurture into a living document? I am speaking in favor of the motion.

Peggy Shepard, West Harlem Environmental Action, New York, N.Y.: I am speaking in opposition to the resolution. The success or failure of this conference for me is not whether I leave here with a piece of paper entitled Principles of Environmental Justice. I believe that the issue of process is a critical one. I believe that the issues that have been raised here today are important, as well as the hour or two that we have begun to have a dialogue together on it. Because I believe that if we are not unified in understanding and sensitivity together when we leave here, we cannot go back to our communities and do what is necessary, because so often what we have got to confront in our cities, in our communities, is each other. We must begin to have a dialogue with each other. I think process is very important. And as I said, those principals right now are irrelevant to me going back and organizing in my community. What is very relevant here today is developing a dialogue and an understanding together.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): I see no further discussion. Here is the position you have put the Chair in. I could rule the motion out of order, or I could take this vote (which I think will split the Summit). I could lock the doors, but that would not be fair. I sense a look of your faces that there's a bewilderment -- a tiredness. I also sense that we really should not go out of the doors and peter this process off one by one, delegate by delegate. I believe that if we take a break, and I ask you to come back, I am not so sure how many of you will come back because you are tired.

I do believe in democracy. But I do accept the Euro-centric framing of the term democracy. And what we have before us is also an indication of the struggle that we've had even to get here. In struggle, sometimes you learn something more important than even the goal that you were trying to achieve. And I believe this afternoon we've had a learning. I appeal to all of the delegates not to let our position on this issue divide us. I think I have a responsibility to let the motion be voted upon, but it is not a win/lose vote. It seems to me this is a vote on a sense of direction of how to handle this. And therefore I am trying to create a situation where we do not begin to get into this situation of "my recommendation won and theirs lost."

The maker of the motion restated her motion. The revised preamble was read. Discussion ensued to identify and articulate the issues around which there was general consensus. These were the following: 1. It was clarified that the drafting process would continue after the "vote" on the motion with a Drafting Committee. 2. A recommendation was made and accepted for the mechanism by which this regionally representative Drafting Committee would be established, i.e., regional workshop groups will select their own representatives. Having established a process around which all in the body had a sense of ownership and agreement, there was no longer major disagreements on direction. The "vote" became a way to formally establish that there was a general consensus around the revised preamble. This consensus, while not unanimous, was one that everyone could live with. The session concluded with moderator Ben Chavis asking Syngman Rhee to sum up the points of agreement.

Syngman Rhee (Co-Chair): We have decided on two things: 1. Regional representatives will be included in the new drafting of the seventh draft; 2. We just went through a process of adopting the preamble. Those two things done. I would suggest as the next step that each region would select a person to be included in the Drafting Committee.

When the Draft Committee takes all the inputs and examine all those suggestions made and come back to the floor tomorrow or Sunday so that we can vote on that once again. I think that is where we are. If you have further proposals, please give them to the Drafting Committee, so that we will consider all those recommendations. It is not a closed session at all. That will move us to next step. Therefore, I move that we recess at this point.

After the dinner break, at beginning of the October 26, 1991 Evening Plenary Session, the following details on process were announced.

Gail Small (Co-Chair): We are proposing is that we establish a Drafting Committee to develop the Principles of Environmental Justice into its seventh draft. This Drafting Committee will be comprised of one representative from each of our five regions, one representative from our Planning Committee, and one of our Co-Chairs. By 10:00 p.m. tonight, your regional representatives should be selected and you should notify me as to who they are. These representatives will comprise our Drafting Committee, they will report back with the seventh draft by 5:30 p.m. on Saturday. They will bring the seventh draft back to the general session on Sunday morning. Your comments will all be part of the proceedings, and the Drafting Committee will ensure that everyone's comments will be weighed equally, and considered in doing this seventh draft.

POST-BANQUET PROGRAM SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1991 11:30 P.M.

Toney Anaya (Moderator): Since we all feel the spirit now, we have one final item that we want to complete here tonight. Yesterday, after a long debate with many hours of discussion and considerable amount of input from you as delegates, you charged us -- the Planning Committee and your Co-Chairs and individuals that you selected from your own regions -- to go back and take the

Principles of Environmental Justice, rewrite them, taking into consideration the many recommendations you had made. As a result of your directives and your input yesterday, this morning we started meeting at 7:30 this morning. We met straight through with no breaks until we had completed your work, your assignment at 5:30 this afternoon, ten hours later.

I will tell you up front that we went through each and every one of your recommendations that was typed out and presented to us. We tried to capture the spirit and intent of everything you said exactly as you said it. At the request and recommendation of the delegates, we started our meeting with a prayer for guidance and unity that we would be able to complete your work in the way in which you had asked us to do so. We had a hard and excruciating session. It was not easy to meld together all the ideas, cultures, languages, and nuances. There were quiet members who kept their peace until the appropriate time and then with great wisdom slipped in the right solutions. There were other drafting members, forceful in their presentations, but compromised when needed, not on principles but as the result of respecting what we were attempting to do as a group. There were others who, as we debated, quietly sat there and wrote the solutions, and when we thought we could no longer find the right words to proceed would simply hand it to us and they proved to be almost always the right recommendation. It was an educational session for us, a display of a tremendous amount of maturity, coming from all the members, including from the youth on the committee.

Asks for acknowledgement of Drafting Committee: Susana Almanza (P.O.D.E.R.), Magdalena Avila (Berkeley Coalition for Environmental Justice), David Harrison (Sovereignty Network), Isaiah Madison (Institute for Southern Studies), Vernice Miller (West Harlem Environmental Action), Kikanza Ramsey (Labor/Community Strategy Center), Ralph Rivera (Puerto Rican Institute for Civil Rights), Miya Yoshitani (Student Environmental Action Coalition). Moderators Syngman Rhee, Gail Small, and Benjamin Chavis also took part, as well Donna Chavis (representing the Planning Committee). Staff assistance was rendered by Ms. Minnie White (UCC Commission for Racial Justice).

Susana Almanza, P.O.D.E.R., Austin, Texas: The persons up here are the delegates that the regions elected to the Drafting Committee. The regions caucused and entrusted these persons to represent them. Before we started this morning, the first thing we did was we prayed to God, to the All Mighty Creator, the Great Spirit, to open our hearts and our minds and give us the wisdom and the guidance that we were going to need to make these decisions. We knew that they weren't going to be easy, but we had to look at a bigger picture. We have to go beyond rural lines, we have to go beyond urban lines, we have to go beyond county lines, we

have to go across the borders, we have to go across the universe, because these lines and borders were not something that we set up. We need to be culturally aware of that. These are borders that the white system established, and we have to go beyond that. Everyone came with different points that were sensitive to the particular needs in their communities and regions, but the final scope that we had to look at was that we were coming together as a nation of peoples of color.

We wanted to come together as a nation of people of color. Our ultimate goal is to form that organization together, because we are in danger. Our children are in danger and we are dying. And we are going to have to stop being nit-picky about little bitty words and get on with the agenda, because we have to show the world that black, brown, yellow, and red is coming together. We are tired of our children and our people and our land and our animals dying. So we ask that everyone here open their hearts and their minds and try to work together and try to get a consensus on the things that we need to do to pass forward.

Vernice Miller, West Harlem Environmental Action, New York, N.Y.: This document is fluid. The very first thing the Drafting Committee asked was what is the state of concreteness of this document once we ratify it. The response from Tony [Anaya], Ben [Chavis], Charles [Lee] and others on the Planning Committee was that this is a fluid document. We need to have something which states our principles and our goals when we walk out of here tomorrow afternoon, so that we can go back with a charge to continue this work in a connected fashion. But if you and your regions, based on the work that you do at home, decide that things need to be changed to more accurately reflect specific conditions in your region, you have the right to do that. When we come back together at another time, we will go over another draft of this document. We must come out of here with something tomorrow. The reason why we need to come out of here with something is because we need to define what we did.

Miya Yoshitani, Student Environmental Action Coalition, Urbana, Illinois: I was just supposed to address the fact that youth were represented among this committee. We convened a caucus last night that brought the concerns of youth to the body, which will probably be addressed at a future date. And I want to say first of all that I feel very privileged to be here among these leaders tonight.

But that I also think that this was an inspiration that I wish so many more youth could have been a part of, because you will see yourselves reflected in us, the work that we do, and the work that we are going to continue in this struggle. On this committee, Kikanza and I, as youth, were more than respected. We were more than just tokenized young people on the group. We were not compromised as youth. There was equal participation among all of us in gender, in cultural ethnic background, and in age, and I think that really speaks to the movement that we are trying to create and I think that is really important -- that we didn't have to struggle to achieve this. It was a natural progression that just came together, representing many different perspectives.

David Harrison, Sovereignty Network, Palmer, Alaska: As an indigenous person of this land, I was asking for the other members of the Drafting Committee to do some things that they did not quite understand. But after our discussions, they have a better understanding. Every single one of the Principles you have before you was done by consensus. We all agreed upon these, that we could live with what was there. I said I wanted a true consensus basis in preparing the document, otherwise I would not participate. In our way of doing things, we have true consensus. If one person dissents, it makes the rest of us have an obligation to help that person understand what it is we were trying to get across. So what I am asking here is to have a true consensus. And again, that if you cannot live with those words on those pieces of paper, until we can go home and discuss them in our communities with our families, with our peoples, then we want to hear from you. But otherwise, we ask that you take this time to look inside yourself and ask yourselves, "Does this hurt me? Does this hurt my people? Is this a document that may help us? Is this a document that may help clarify some of the cultural diversities that we all have to deal with in our day to day lives?" Whether we like to hear what the other person said or not, we truly listened to each other. I hope that this body does the same. I thank you for giving us this opportunity to work for and with you, and I hope that we can keep this alive and ongoing so that we can protect our children and our environment.

Gus Newport, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative, Boston, Massachusetts: As one who has been in movements for a number of years, who has served as the mayor of Berkeley, California for eight years, I see this as an extremely fine piece of

work. You are to be commended. Tonight was one of the most spiritualizing conferences I have been to in the last twenty years. I would hope that we could maintain this spirit. There is no need for any of the Drafting Committee members to feel defensive. *Makes motion on process, i.e., that sensing that few have serious differences with the document, the body does not add new points but should consider only points where there are differences or need clarification. Consensus recognized by Moderator.*

David Lujan, Tonantzin Land Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico: We appreciate the work of the group, and this preamble represents everything we need to take back to our communities. It represents the spirit of everything we have done in these days and we want to take it as seriously as we can. It embraces the words that we feel have been spoken here and that we feel are sacred. When our words are spoken, regardless of how tired we are, there are some communities that consider our words so sacred that they would not even have them written down. That's the way we're taking this preamble back to our community.

-- *Recommends language change in Preamble to read, "to begin to build a national and international movement," in keeping with solidarity with indigenous brothers and sisters from South America and in the spirit of 1992, our brothers and sisters of Africa in the fight against apartheid, and so on. (Words underlined is language added and adopted.)*

-- *Recommends language change in Preamble to read, "Fight the destruction and taking of our lands," recognizing that this practice continues to occur. (Words underlined are added and adopted.)*

Neftali Garcia Martinez, Servicios Cientificos y Tecnicos, Hato Ray, Puerto Rico: Meeting should be characterized as a "multinational" meeting; meeting may have started as a national meeting but has changed in character. **Leah Wise, Southerners for Economic Justice, Durham, North Carolina:** My concern is that as a historical moment, it is very important that we locate ourselves. I am not sure that the word "multinational" satisfies that. *(Concern was satisfied by noting setting, place and date where Principles were adopted.)*

Female (Unidentified):

-- Principle #16: Point was made that education should be grassroots in character. *(Body felt this was covered under word "social.")*

Espananza Maya, People for Clean Air & Water, Kettleman City, California:

-- Principle #8: Question to make sure language "affirms the right of all workers" includes migrant workers of all languages and colors. (*Body affirmed concern.*)

Roberto Roibal, Taller Media, Albuquerque, New Mexico:

-- Principle #5: Suggestion to change "affirming their sovereignty" to "affirming Native American sovereignty and self-determination." Instead of "their" because "their" implies "them" and "us." (*Adopted by consensus.*)

Wendy Brown, National Conference of Black Lawyers, New Orleans, Louisiana:

-- Recommends that a legislative history for principles be developed.

Janet Phoenix, Alliance to End Childhood Lead Poisoning, Washington, D.C.:

-- Principle #16: Recommendation to add to following language: "provide scientific and technical resources, both human and organizational, to communities of color." Issue was raised in Health Strategy Group that more people of color scientists need to make themselves available to our community. (*Concern was addressed by making sure this was part of a strategic action plan.*)

DISCUSSION OVER PRINCIPLE #11

Due to the chaotic nature of this discussion, the editor's intent was to present different points of view. As much as possible, the voice of the speaker was retained. The speaker was intentionally left unidentified.

-- Yesterday for the first time, I learned that Hawaiian people have no legal relationship with the United States, and so I think we cannot, having that knowledge, present these principles without saying something to that.

Draft Principle #11 reads: "Environmental Justice recognizes the special legal and natural relationship of Native Americans to the U.S. Government through treaties, agreement, compacts, and covenants affirming sovereignty and self-determination."

In response to concern, Drafting Committee members also proposed a new principle: "Environmental Justice opposes the legal/political disenfran-

chisement of the Native Hawaiian, Puerto Rican and other indigenous peoples."

The concern and proposed language raised discussion of the concept, definitions, perspectives, and usages of the term "indigenous peoples."

-- Puerto Ricans are as the result of cultural, racial, ethnic mixture of Spanish, Indian Natives, and Afro Antillans not indigenous. We are a historical result. There are no longer indigenous people in Puerto Rico. Historically speaking, Puerto Ricans are not an indigenous people.

-- There are a few people, including one member of the National Advisory Committee, who identify themselves as Tyno, people indigenous to what is now Puerto Rico. So, this is a political discussion.

-- What we were trying to get across here is that the indigenous people of this land are the original peoples here. Everyone else that is living in our homeland are immigrants to this land.

-- One of the very important aspects of what we are doing here is affirming each other's being and each other's native rights. We have worked for over ten or fifteen years, hand in hand, with indigenous representatives of indigenous nations, and one of the things that has kept us together in our struggle throughout those years of the Indian struggle is the Treaty of Guadalupe. For them, I have to ask that you add Chicanos in this statement.

-- We believe that Chicanos in this country are considered as Native Americans. They are indigenous people. (*Response to this statement was, "I can say with all sincerity that I truly believe and accept that, but not all my Chicano brothers and sisters do."*)

-- The issue of trying to define indigenous people carries the danger of leaving out people who are here, but who are not indigenous and, like Puerto Ricans, have been disenfranchised even though it's not their native land. You have to include African American people.

-- The Drafting Committee debated this question extensively, and decided not to address it. That is the only way we seem to be able to get beyond this point. People should note that we debated this question and the African Americans on the committee debated the question. It did not speak to our

specific reality at all. But we were willing to do it anyway because we felt it was important and significant to address the specific reality of the Puerto Rican and Hawaiian peoples. But if we can't get beyond this, then we should take the whole thing out.

-- There was no point that took up more time [in the Drafting Committee] than this one. And I, representing Mother Earth and our region, which is Puerto Rico and the Northeast, when the brother from Alaska made the point about the unique position of the native peoples of this land, I mentioned that for my delegation, the consensus was that if you're going to do that, you must include the Puerto Ricans. However, in the interest of not loading more Principles, we decided that we should let it out and give the unique position to many other peoples. So it is there representing the Southeast, that we have the same position that you have, and the interest of not complicating this any further, we will add it. So that's why we left it out entirely. It was not an oversight.

-- There are things that we have in common and there are some important differences, and those differences need to be raised up and respected. Three concepts are being discussed here: 1. Recognizing that the Government of the United States has broken treaties with certain Native America peoples in this land; 2. Indigenous people with whom the U.S. Government have no treaty relationship that would include Hawaiians as well as some people on the continental United States, but ought to have so. It seems to me that if this is the point missing, maybe we could draft a point that deals with that; and 3. Land rights for other peoples, or otherwise reparations, is another separate issue, which I don't think we need to confuse with these two points.

-- Two changes were recommended: 1. "Environmental Justice must recognize a special legal relationship," and 2. Change Native African to Native Peoples.

-- We want to say peoples, because most of the time when you say Native American peoples you're not talking about Hawaiians, or other people. I think that just by adding the word "peoples" everyone would feel like they're being included.

-- The original language was approved by the Hawaiian delegation before it was submitted.

-- There should be a protection that comes along with treaties here, in terms of protecting the environment. This is the important critical issue we're advancing here, and not necessarily any special privileges. There are some very significant laws already established that Native people manage the land much better than the corporate American. And recognizing and affirming those treaties is essential to the preservation of the ecology in the native country.

-- There was a caucus of the Native delegations this afternoon, whereby the discussion that in terms of the document as a whole, that they had decided not to challenge it, even though there might have been particularities or whatever they disagreed with, because in spirit was there. And we feel like fighting territorial battles for ourselves. So I was asked to say that is why the brothers and sisters have been quiet over the whole document. *Asks if any Native American has an objection to the change of language from Native Americans to Native peoples.* I would like no one else to speak except for the Native delegation. Is there a major problem with changing that word? If there is, please speak.

Having heard no objection, moderator announces consensus on issue. Full text of Principles of Environmental Justice can be found on Page xiii.

RATIFICATION

Louis Elisa, NAACP Chapter, Boston, Massachusetts: My only statement is that when we were coming to this point last night at this time, it was a consensus of everyone in the room that this body would be selected to represent us and our points of view and our interests. We have installed in them a trust and a responsibility which they have fulfilled, they've come back to us beyond the scope of what process required. I suggest that we give unanimous approval to this document as it now stands, and act in concordance with the decision of the body.

Toney Anaya (Moderator): *The Chair recognizes this motion, which is seconded. The body ratifies the Principles of Environmental Justice at 3:30 a.m.*

PLENARY SESSION

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1991
8:00 P.M.**

SYNGMAN RHEE
President, National Council of Churches
Moderator

BINARI KOREAN CULTURAL TROUPE
New York, N.Y.

We are incredibly happy and honored to be here among so many people of color working on environmental justice together. In speaking about environmental justice, we feel that Korean participation is crucial, because just as the people of color in the United States have suffered the most from the environmental abuses, we must not forget that internationally it is the people of the Third World who are subjected to the most dangerous and grave consequences of the environmental destruction. In South Korea, for example, the U.S. has exported its industries with no consideration for the Korean man, the environment, and the people. The U.S. has sold numerous defective nuclear power plants to Korea that did not pass safety regulations in the U.S. The U.S. has exported factories that spew out pollution that not only destroy the environment, but cause Korean workers to be sick and diseased with lead emissions and other hazardous working conditions.

The U.S. environmental policy has been parallel to the policy -- the military and economic and political policy which is keeping Korea in a state of war -- which is keeping over 40,000 U.S. troops there and conducting war games on our land. It is becoming more and more obvious that the environmental issue -- just like the economic, political and military issues -- it is the First World against The Third World. And, so today, here, what we would like to do is to celebrate together. People of color and the people of the Third World have the power to define our own future, to define our own agenda.

Let me just explain the instruments. These are traditional Korean farmers instruments. You can tell how the farmers lives are very close to nature. For instance, these are instruments which represent the sun, the moon, the stars and lastly man and woman.

SYNGMAN RHEE
(Moderator)

This is the time that we include not only delegates, but also participants and observers. Since yesterday, some three hundred delegates have been working hard in this place for a very crucial issue before all of us. Now it is our pleasure and joy to welcome and include the participants and observers.

I would like to ask all of the participants and observers who are joining us this evening, those of you who are able to stand, would you please all stand. You are also a very important part of this struggle that we have together.

THE HERITAGE OF JUSTICE FIGHTING FOR THE RIGHT TO BREATHE FREE

REVEREND JESSE L. JACKSON

President

National Rainbow Coalition

Washington, D.C.

Thank you so much. Let me express how good it makes me feel to be in the presence of Ben Chavis, who has paid such great dues, and has so many stripes in his body. In the best tradition of King and Mandela stands one Ben Chavis, who has used the stripes on his body -- like Ash and Isaiah -- to heal with, and not to hurt with. He is a man of great redemption, whose spirit is that of renewal. It is always good to be with you.

To you and to the other moderators of this historic gathering, I am delighted to be with you on this occasion. I would have been with you yesterday, but we were in Hope and Earl and Jacksonville and Little Rock, Arkansas, fighting for environmental and economic justice. And earlier today, we were fighting in New Hampshire on this same agenda.

I am just delighted to have had the opportunity to work with the moderators -- to have a chance to now share with you some observations. It is good to see people of color dwelling together in unity, in quest of justice, as a prerequisite for peace tendered by mercy. To restore and preserve our Earth is to affirm our kinship and to affirm our integrity with God. It was John, who saw a new heaven and a new Earth, and we too must see that new heaven and new Earth and work towards that end.

I say to you brothers and sisters tonight -- power is in your presence. It is not out there someplace, it is in here. Power is in your presence, power is in your unity, pride is in here. Power is in the capacity to forge coalition. We are bound by a common need, by a common purpose, by a common oppression, by a common suffering. Tonight we fight the various pollutants that poison our atmosphere, not the least of which is race, sex and worker harassment.

Tonight we gather to fight for the most basic right. As we fight for racial justice, for gender equality, and for equal protection under the law, tonight we gather first for environmental justice. We fight not for that which came from the duplicity -- the minds

of slave masters -- but from God, the Creator. Tonight we gather fighting for the right to breathe free. There is no invitation that has with it more honor than the invitation, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses who yearn to breathe free." And even though the invitation was limited -- and pointed -- there is a universal appeal in the words "the right to breathe free."

Brother Daniels, Jesse and John and I were staying in a hotel in Illinois, where I was to preach the next morning for Reverend Singleton in Joliet. About four o'clock in the morning, there was a knocking on our door. We thought it was some people coming back drunk from a party, for they were loud and kicking the door. It was disturbing. And then somebody said "Fire!", and somebody else said "Fire!", and we began to hear the choking. We opened the door, and the smoke came in. Thanks be to God we were about ten feet from the emergency door, because somewhere between our door and the ten foot mark, almost all four of us perished. We had the right to stay in the hotel of our choice, and the ability to pay our way out. We had the right to vote, the right to be mobile. But without the right to breathe, nothing else really mattered.

We inherit from our God the right to breathe free, and inherit from our God a Garden of Eden in which there is no polluted air, and there is no contaminated water, and there is no dioxin in the Earth, and no carcinogens abounding. If God provides this Garden, then only the devil, only some demonic spirit, only some ungodly virus, would assume the arrogance of destroying the Garden of Eden.

THE SEARCH FOR ROOTS

This is a time of great discovery. As I look into your faces, and we move closer to 1992, we could not live at a more opportune time in the history of this country for new discovery of values, and for what makes us up, and who we are in relationship to each other and to the earth.

As I began the search -- the record of my own heritage -- and began to get an even greater sense of understanding, I found that the sheriff of Greenville County -- a Sheriff Cox -- raped my great-grandmother Vanya, who was part African and part Cherokee. When his wife was sent to town, he would harass and rape the girls on the plantation. My great grandmother could not tell the sheriff's wife. She could not tell the police chief -- that was his card playing partner. She could not tell the judge. She could not testify. She had to absorb the pain on the one hand, and not tell anybody on the other. And then my grandfather, Jesse, and his brother Jacob -- who were Black Hawk -- seized her and her sister from the plantation, stole them and held and kept them, and they begat Noah my father. And that relationship with my mother begat me.

As we unearth -- as we excavate what is covered up in the American culture -- we find that we are not just Negroes. We are "new grows." We are new people in search of our universal identity. Having been formed from a relationship between the raped and the rapist -- we are African American. But we are much more than that. We are all that has gone into us. And so our sense of search, and our sense of dignity, really cannot separate carcinogens in the air from calling some people Redskins. For in a true historic sense, while African Americans were considered three-fifths of a human being -- we were brought here against our will to work -- the Native Americans had to be killed to take the land. And to go from massacre to mockery is not right.

This notion of Redskins has a history that is steeped in pain and agony. For there were bounties on the heads of land-holding -- owning -- Native American people. Whites would get paid to bring the bodies of Native Americans because of the bounties. That became impractical and too heavy. The wagons could not carry but so many decayed bodies. So they began to bring heads, and pay for heads. And then the wagons couldn't hold the heads, and they began to bring the skins -- eighty cents for a male skin, and sixty cents for a female skin, and twenty cents for a child's skin. And so that is the heritage of "redskin." And so we must reject Redskin and Tonto and all that goes into making a mockery of a people, and degrades them, and robs them of their humanity, and then drives through their sacred burial grounds just to build more pollution-creating factories.

It seems that this conference has that kind of meaning for all of us. There are so many of us

here tonight who have been struggling together across the years. Our lives have been blessed to grow together towards a higher consciousness. We are not who we were at the Black Power Conference in Gary, nor who we were on Hide Street in Newark. We have been blessed to grow, and to see more and to do more and to have greater obligations. We have been blessed to take the issue of morality and justice and lift it above the polluted sea of politics and race to its rightful place on the universal agenda. Rosa Parks refused to go to the back of the bus -- she did not get any support from the Senate. She did not have a budget. When she was arrested, her weapon was dignity and character.

COALITION AND COMMON GROUND

For too long, I have been convinced that the poverty movement has been too black, brown and red. And the peace movement is too white. Now, why do I make that case? Because the poverty stricken people are mostly white and female and young in this country. So even to project it as black, brown and white and red is to distort it, and therefore to demean it, and leave it undealt with. The poverty movement has been too black and brown and red, thus we have had to bear too much of the burden for it, when we in fact do not represent it in the levels of our protest. On the other hand, the peace movement has been too white, because black, brown and red -- preoccupied with day to day survival -- have not counted the cost of who dies and who is bombed, and who is affected by these war policies. This is the part of the evolution of our consciousness -- of our coming into our full maturity.

We just came back from Arkansas, the state with the fifth largest amount of on-site toxics in the nation. Arkansas -- settled by Chief Arkansas -- and Kansas -- settled by Native American people. Your challenge to the anemic character and exclusivity and elite policies of the essentially white environmental movement is on time. It is time to build an authentic coalition which represents the people effectively.

We were in Hope, Arkansas, standing with striking workers at the Champion parts rebuilding plant. That plant was in the top ten emitters of carcinogens in the state -- in the top twenty of those causing birth defects. The workers have lung and breast cancer, and the company has slashed their health benefits. Two hundred workers have been replaced. We went to Little Rock, and next to Jacksonville, where they are storing twenty-eight thousand barrels

of toxic waste. They already possess three Superfund sites, and now the state wants to start up an incinerator.

The people suffer from miscarriages, cancer and birth defects. The EPA will not answer their plea -- it has even come after the women fighting for their lives to protect business interests. We have seen and struggled against the destruction and injustice across the country. Just this month, we are going to Kettleman City, California to fight the incinerator. We have gone to Bridgeport, Connecticut. We have stood with farm workers in California and Texas, for the dump sites across the street from their churches and places where they live -- to Ellington, Connecticut, where they want to build a nuclear waste dump -- and to Hamlet, North Carolina, where twenty-five workers were burned up in the fire, trapped by locked doors and right-to-work laws.

White, black, urban, rural, poor, working class -- the nation is fighting for its life, and the Lord's Earth as he has created it. What are we to do? First, the National Rainbow Coalition joins hands with you as we organize a national Southern Crusade -- an organizing drive across the South. Why do we choose to focus on the South? The South has half the nation's toxic waste dumps. The most working poor. Half the nation's poor children. The Southern Crusade is working to organize workers, to end right-to-work laws, to register voters, to bring environmental justice, and demand national health care. Tonight, school children, because of the '54 Supreme Court decision, are protected from state's rights on children's school options. Because of the Public Accommodations Bill, our right to live in the hotel/motel of our choice is protected by federal law. The right to vote is protected by federal law. The right to open housing is protected by federal law. But our right to work is not protected by Federal law. We who fight for this movement must fight to end the right-to-work law oppressive scheme.

ORGANIZING THE SOUTH

Where workers are poor, intimidated, harassed, threatened -- black, red, brown -- unorganized, unregistered -- they suck up toxic waste everyday. The South has the richest soil and the poorest people -- and the worst environmental destruction. But you cannot say it is just a Southern problem -- that's like saying I am only sick from the waist down. You can't say it's just a black thing, or a brown thing,

or a red thing. You can't say it's just a reservation thing. For they may dump toxic waste on the poor side of town today, but as surely as the wind blows, as surely as it's one planet Earth, what affects any of us in the morning affects the rest of us by sundown. We either live together as brothers and sisters, or perish apart as fools.

That is why there can be no elite environmental movement -- it must be universal. That is why we can't get trapped fighting over who is going to control this little piece of poison. "I got the red poison -- and the black poison -- and the brown poison -- and the white poison." Poison should not belong to any of us. Let's wipe out the poison and not wipe out each other -- and let's build coalition. We've got to clean up our entire nation, and we've got to save ourselves. We need to organize workers to fight for the environment and to fight for safe working conditions. We cannot let workers get trapped in this debate about jobs or lungs. "I'm going to keep my job, I can't worry about the environment." How much sense does it make to have your job, get your gold watch, and for your eyes to be too blurry to read what time it is? What does it matter to have your retirement plan, and then spend your pension on chemotherapy?

We should have jobs and a healthy environment. We need an economy that can grow and flourish without destroying the land and the people on it. We have the brains -- we must invest in new production processes, those that do not kill. We must register voters to protect the right to breathe free. We must have the political will and the coalition to make it happen.

Let us not forget there was once another ancient Pharaoh who was destroying his economy, and destroying his people. He started having nightmares because he could not interpret his dreams. He was having nightmares because he was coughing up poisons. Having nightmares because he was being mean to people. Having nightmares because his schemes had run out. And so he said to those who were close to him -- "Help me interpret my dreams, I cannot sleep at night." But his economy was in trouble. He turned to his Quayle, and his Quayle couldn't help him either. After all, you know your economy is going to be in trouble when you have -- like the U.S. foreign corporations -- eight hundred billion dollars in assets, five hundred billion dollars in receipts, and three billion dollars in taxes. You are going to have economic nightmares.

THE WORKERS' ENVIRONMENT

The old scheme is to turn workers against workers. For while some ocean or some mountain may separate us geographically, it does not separate us spiritually. We can't get upset that some other suffering worker is going to take the job -- the Mexicans are going to take jobs from us. That is not true. Mexicans did not take Zenith's jobs from us -- Zenith took the jobs to them. Not to help them, but to exploit them. Cheap labor there, relaxed environmental standards there -- prices up, profits up, wages down, workers busted. They set one group of workers against another, who are both divided as fools, and don't fight for jobs, justice and our environment together.

Don't stop there. Why is our economy in trouble tonight? Jobs have not gone from Buick, Chrysler and Oldsmobile to Soul Mobile. Affirmative action didn't take the jobs. We now drive Honda, Toyota, Mitsubishi and Lexus -- they didn't take jobs from us. We took jobs to them.

After World War II, we cut the deal with the Japanese. "We're the big guys!" we said. We make the big stuff. We make stuff like the MX missile, the B1 bomber, chemical warfare. You make little stuff like chips and computers, TVs, cars, electronics. Then we have a war in the Gulf, and we fight the war with foreign technology -- foreign technology and public school children. Private school children were not in the Gulf. They were wearing yellow ribbons.

It is not hard to love the troops while they are troops. It is not hard to pull for someone, and cheer them, as they volunteer to die for you. The challenge is to love them when they are no longer troops! If you really love them, guarantee them the same health care policy that the Congress that sent them there has. If you really love them, guarantee them adequate housing. If you really love them, educate their children. If you love them, you cannot look at a woman who flew combat missions, who dug holes in the sand, who avoided SCUD missile attacks, and who left her babies home with neighbors, and sometimes with no daddys. Salute her! Give her a purple heart! And then snatch out her meat heart by denying her comparable worth, day care, or an equal rights amendment.

We call on America tonight to clean up the toxic waste -- not just in the gutter, but also on Capitol Hill and in the White House. The primary

contributor to environmental pollution is the President. He doesn't like public housing, and he looks down on the owner who comes out of public housing. That is why he stays in Kennebunkport so much. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth, gold slipper on his foot, he always had privatized education, privatized housing -- he can't adjust to the White House. I grew up in the housing projects. And that is why I know I could adjust to the White House, because it is public housing.

A TEST OF LEADERSHIP

We need to clean up our political environment, and clean up the poison that comes dripping from the lips of those who would dare destroy us. There is always some attempt to divert our attention away from building this relationship.

They said, "David Duke is coming." Last year Ronald Reagan was coming. Then Hussein is coming, and then Bishop is coming -- always somebody coming. I have known some David Duke or another all my life.

Let's run a test. When they first started desegregating the schools in the '60s, they thought that if the teacher saw your name and you were black, they'd give you a bad grade. So they started a process: one teacher gave the exam, and another group graded the test. And we didn't trust that, so they started putting just a number on the exam, so you could only deal with the number and no name.

Now let's run that test on Reagan, Bush, Quayle and David Duke. No names, no hoods or ex-Klansman, just the test. Which one of these gentlemen would turn the nation against black women, and refer it to the stereotype of Welfare Queen? Which one of these gentleman would lay a wreath at the head of S.S. troops grave at Bitburg? Which one of these gentleman sought to destroy the heritage of Martin Luther King, Jr., and deny the existence of Malcolm X? Which one of these gentlemen would use Willy Horton to turn the nation against black men? Which one of these gentlemen would use quotas to divide and conquer, and distort our view of the economic crisis? Which one of them would try to thwart the mission of the Civil Rights Commission? Which one of them is against the affirmative action as a remedy and relief of conservative alternatives to reparations? Which one of them would keep sanctions on Angola, and take sanctions off of South Africa? Which one of them would distort the history of America's origins

and continue to make a mockery of our Native American heritage? Well, when you take the tape off, they all make 100.

CONSERVATION AND LIBERATION

What is even more disturbing, now that they have passed their test, is that they have raised up a generation of African Americans whose views are philosophically compatible with theirs. Conservative means exclusive, it means to lock out. Liberate means expand, make room for. The tradition that was embraced by Pharaoh aimed to conserve these powers. And then there is the liberal -- a liberator, named Moses, one who was born in Africa and who led a movement to Canaan, and who gave ten ethical commandments from Mount Sinai, a mountain in Africa. That is a liberal tradition. And the political liberator had ethically conservative values, because the politics were not worth preserving, but the ethics were worth establishing. So there is no conflict between having ethically conservative views like Under the Lord thy God, your wife, your spouse and your children, and having a politically liberative view of life. There is no contradiction there.

There is Pharaoh the conservative, and then there is Moses the liberator. And there is Herod the innkeeper, the conservatives, and there is Jesus the liberator -- the mass feeder, the mass sharer of good news and health care. And there are slave masters, -- the conservatives, and there are the abolitionists -- the liberals or the liberators. There are the writers of the Constitution, who said only white male landowners have the right to vote. Not even whites who didn't own land could vote, until they took some from Native Americans, and became homesteaders. And their own wives and mothers and nieces could not vote. And African descendants could not vote. Native Americans could not live. And then there is the Bill of Rights. The abolitionists -- they are the liberators, or the liberals; the segregators, the authors of apartheid, they are the conservatives. Then there are those who fight the breakup and fight those laws; they are the liberals, the liberators.

There is a heritage, a line of those who would destroy the earth. They conserve their own privilege at the expense of God's domain. And then there are those who say we must see the earth as sacred, and our burial ground as sacred -- they are God's liberators, seeking to liberate the earth -- not just themselves.

And so conservatives pollute the earth with carcinogens and toxics, and racism and sexism and anti-Semitism and anti-Arabism, and Asian bashing, and Native American bashing; they are the conservators of the wicked privilege. We must expand the consciousness. God has no step-children -- he couldn't be God and have them. He would undercut his own divinity -- by definition he is a liberator, an expander of the spirit.

THE THOMAS NOMINATION -- ETHICS OVER ETHNICITY

What is different today is that they have been able to get someone to chop down the tree from which they pick fruit. That is why we must choose ethics over ethnicity, because sin is deeper than skin. Mr. Thomas -- what were his qualifications? His first qualification was academic. When subjected to the qualifications and judicial experience ABA of 23 judges, he was number 23 of 23 -- the least rated judge in the history of the ABA. What were his qualifications beyond the academic? He had to convince the enemies of our heritage that they could trust him. He had to convince them he would discredit the heritage of Medger, Martin and Malcolm. He had to convince them that they could trust him, that they could not grow a leader bottom up, that they could pick one for us top down.

At the height of Dr. King's power, Hoover called him a threat to national security, and said "We've got to find some leader of our own." That is when we first heard the name of Sam Pierce, as far back as the '60s. That didn't work out, but they sent the message. The role of Hoover's FBI was to disrupt, discredit, and destroy the black movement, and to stop the rise of a black messiah, or whoever could unify the black masses. When the character and physical assassination failed, they came to neutralize him.

So now they raise up somebody whose race is in conflict with reason. At some point when reason and race have a rent, reason will prevail. Thomas said our leaders just bitch, bitch, bitch about racial justice. But when the heat was turned up, he went from the Judge Bork to Huey Newton in six hours. Judge Bork was his hero on Thursday -- Huey Newton on Friday. I am just talking about polluting air.

That is why we need D.C. statehood. Because 14 all-white upper-middle-class wealthy males are unrepresentative of the character of our nation. And

they know their own weaknesses. So they design a scheme to aim at their own weaknesses. They say, "You sit here with your relatives, and you talk. When they talk privilege, you talk poverty. When they talk wealth, you talk work. When they talk substance, you catch amnesia."

The set-up was all too clear. You know that anybody who says they have not discussed *Roe v. Wade* in 1991 is either unintelligent or lying. When Senator Brown asked Anita Hill "What did you disagree on?" Biden cut her off. Her answer would have been -- "We used to debate *Roe v. Wade*." If she had been allowed to give her answer, Thomas would have been seen as having perjured himself.

It's thicker than skin, it's thicker than party. While the White House had a black whip system, calling organizations, those who had grants, and those who needed favors, the Senate leadership did not convene even the Congressional Black Caucus or elected Senators from Washington D.C. If I might use a Star Wars analogy -- Thomas sat there shooting beneath their shield, as he talked about working and praying, grand-daddy pickin' cotton. Well, all our grand-daddys picked something, but whatever he was talking about, they just sat there, avoiding substance. The substance was that on the question of EEOC, his record was so bad that he had to go before Congress twice for not enforcing the law. The EEOC was never a primary experience of those Senators. Affirmative action was never a primary experience of theirs. Choice for women was never a primary experience of theirs. There they sat, all white male, upper-middle-class and rich -- and Thomas shot beneath their shield. When Anita Hill sat down, they didn't even pick her up on their radar.

And yet, when it came to the test, and poverty didn't work, up came race. "I, I think that sometimes I feel like I'm gonna to get lynched. Gonna get assassinated." Thomas was in no danger of assassination. Malcolm X, Medger Evers, Martin King, the Kennedys, Gandhi -- all of them were frontline leaders who were on the cutting edge of change. There is no history of someone going through three layers of metal detectors, five flights of stairs, past four desks of secretaries to assassinate some bureaucrat. That doesn't even fit. But since the fourteen of them had no sensitivity to that, they sat there unable to cope, because they were not qualified.

Thomas went further. He said stereotypes! Hi-tech lynching! Uppity black! Now, first of all, uppity blacks is white language -- Negroes do not talk that way. They might say a brother is kind of low down, or kind of low life -- but uppity is someone else's language. Uppity black. Lynching! In response, Hatch sent set-up questions. Biden said that he couldn't say anything. Now, if I had been sitting there, I would have said "Brother, give me an example of stereotype, and describe to me the basis of the "lynching" stereotype." Has any black woman ever participated in the lynching of a black man? In fact, lynching arose when a black man was accused of relating to some white woman. It created the most ugly side in whites. It was always some black man/white woman combination. Now anybody who marries a white woman from rural Georgia -- and lives in Virginia -- and can walk into a courtroom with Jesse Helms on one arm, and Strom Thurmond on the other, is not scared of stereotypes or a lynching.

MORAL AUTHORITY

And so, Brother Ben, I understand why you had to go to jail. You had to go to jail to gain the moral authority. You had to go there to get the stripes which have the power to heal. It is not the first time it happened. And when the Pharaoh had the nightmares, his henchmen couldn't give him the answer. The economy was in trouble, but his guys said, "We don't know the answer." We know who has the answer, but we are reluctant to tell you. Because the guy who understands in depth, in his flesh, blood and bones -- the man who really can interpret your dreams, and translate them is in jail. And his name is Joseph. And he is a minority. And he speaks another language. He didn't have papers to come in the country. His brothers tried to kill him. And he was accused by your captain's wife of trying to go to bed with her, so he is an accused rapist.

And Pharaoh said, "Well, I don't like those things, but the point is: can he interpret this dream?" Yes. Well, bring him on. Colored, man of color, North Carolina, in jail and got a degree in environmental science -- didn't get messed up at Yale, he just likes to breathe free. Bring him on! Well, Joseph got shaved and bathed to meet the king. He got there, and when you have something that the king needs, kings can get humble. Glad to see you Joseph, my man. Been looking for you a long time, didn't know where you were. Heard you were down

here somewhere. Joseph -- you understand -- you know I got these dots, spots in my eyes, I can't speak too well -- I've been having these nightmares. What's wrong with you, King? Well, I just can't sleep at night, and ... What happened? Well I'd be having these nightmares, and I'd be dreaming and seeing these different things. And I heard you can answer my dream riddle.

Then Joseph says, "I'm sorry, but I can't." Why are you here? Why did you bring him here? I don't want to disappoint you King, but I can't solve your dreams -- but God can, through me. That's a way of saying no matter what quote we're trying to get, no matter what leadership role we're trying to play, we're not here because we're lucky. We're here because we're blessed. We are not here because of an accident, we're here because of providence. God, through us, can save the whole world! That's why they're saying we shall overcome in Tiannenmen square and in South Africa -- because somewhere between Selma and Montgomery, the whole world came alive. God, through us, can do marvelous things.

And as he began to say, seven years of recession, and seven years of plenty, and save in the plenty and distribute it fairly.

It was the minority, the man of color who interpreted what the deal was. Then Pharaoh said -- you have to give Pharaoh credit now -- Pharaoh could've been so racist he could have said I would rather die with a headache than get the answer from a minority in jail. Pharaoh chose life over habits. Joseph could have said, "I've been locked up here, falsely accused" -- I would have let him go to Hell and go to Hell with him than to bail him out. But both Joseph and Pharaoh rose above their pain. And once Joseph showed the whole nation a way out, Pharaoh then said, "You know, now that you've explained to me how to organize my economy -- how to save my environment -- you go back now and get your daddy, and the whole housing project full of brothers of yours, and bring all them to the kingdom."

BY SAVING THE NATION WE SHALL SAVE OURSELVES

It is a way of saying, just maybe, that we who have been locked up in the jails, we who have been falsely accused, whose identities have been raped, and whose graveyards have been driven through by the ball parks -- just maybe we -- when the

Pharaoh's having nightmares -- and air is coming out of his balloon, just maybe, we at this conference have the power to save the whole nation. We are bigger than race, that's one of Pharaoh's problems -- we're bigger than sex, that's one of his problems -- we're bigger than one religion, that's one of his problems. Because we can see all of that, just maybe we can interpret the dream, and by saving the whole nation, save ourselves.

That is why I want statehood. We lost the Civil Rights Bill by one vote. If we had two votes from D.C., we would have overridden Bush's veto. More people live in Washington than there are Kuwaitis in the whole world. More people live in D.C. than Vermont, Delaware, North Dakota, Wyoming and Alaska. I received more votes than Joe Biden -- he was the chairman on that failed committee. I received more votes than Alan Simpson -- he sat there from Wyoming. And yet, I cannot vote.

And so the struggle for statehood is in the lineage of the right to vote. For if we indeed can be against all-white country clubs and all-white police cars, we should also be against an all white Senate in 1991.

You know, they can vote in South Africa. They can vote in Soweto on their own mayor, on their own city council. They have their own police chief, their own fire department, their own teachers union. But they cannot vote on policy in Pretoria. We in D.C. can vote. We've got our own mayor, our own city council, our own police chief, own fire chief. But we can't vote on Capitol Hill.

To free D.C. can help free South Africa because we'll have the power to do so. Don't miss having two environmental senators from Washington. Don't miss having two senators from Washington who will fight for the women.

HAMLET, NORTH CAROLINA

Why is Hamlet important to us? I stood there last week and watched working women. Twenty-five of their relatives had died in that fire, more women than men, more white than black. When the smoke came, they all looked alike in the dark in those body bags. One woman came to me holding her wrist, "I can't bend my wrist," she said, "'cause I got the carpal thing. I pluck a hundred wings a minute, and then, and then they fires us 'cause we can't work no more -- we can't address our grievances."

"They never inspected this plant in 11 years. The meat got maggots in it! Then the environment is rotten, the workers are oppressed, and they put us on welfare and calls us lazy bitch." I said no, you're not lazy, and you are not bitch and you are not alone. And, and she cried. Her friend came over, "I'm seven months pregnant. We work with water an inch above my ankles. And we have two five minute bathroom breaks a day. And I had to stand there working, with three children and no husband, and hold my water. And sometimes my water would break, and then I have to lock my bowels. And sometime when I couldn't hold my water nor my bowels I would faint."

This struggle is as deep as women with locked bowels. As deep as eating meat with maggots on

it. As deep as workers trapped under right-to-work law conditions, who then cannot fight for the environment because they cannot fight for their babies. When we dig up this hole -- it will not be for America's rooftop and penthouse -- it will be for America's foundation. When the storms blow -- and they will blow -- and the roof blows off, the penthouse is in trouble. And when the foundation shakes, everybody has to make an adjustment. You are the salt of the earth. You are the foundation. When you come together and organize, you shake up the whole universe. Keep on shaking until you shake the dirt out, so we can see a new heaven and a new earth.

Thank you very much.

LESSONS FROM A FARMWORKER ORGANIZER

DOLORES HUERTA
First Vice President
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Keene, California

Unfortunately, we still have one large group of people in our country who are still living in slavery. These are farmworkers. I am going to give you one vivid example of this. In Florida and Louisiana there are about 20,000 farmworkers that are brought in from Haiti, Jamaica, and the Barbados Islands.

These are sugar cane workers. They do not have the right to immigrate to the United States. They are brought in to work, and when they finish working they leave. They do not get social security. They do not get unemployment insurance. When these workers have tried, on different occasions, to organize themselves, the police were brought in and the workers were jailed. We had a strike back in the 1970's. The first martyr of our union, a young girl named Anna Friedman, was killed in a Jamaican sugar cane strike.

In 1985, one thousand Jamaican sugar cane workers went on strike. The police came in and told the leaders, "You either go to work, you go to jail, or you get deported." They brought in police dogs and they jailed the leaders. The 500 workers who refused to go back to work were deported. Within one week, the immigration service had brought in 500 more Jamaican workers to take their place.

When we were working on the immigration bill, we made it a point to include the legalization of farmworkers. We needed to counter the growers' desire to get more people from other countries, especially from Mexico, to come in under a contract labor program. And we made it a very special point to put into that bill that workers from Jamaica, Haiti, and the Barbados. However, the Reagan Administration wrote regulations which said that sugar cane workers could not be legalized because sugar cane was not a perishable crop. All of these years the sugar cane workers have been exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act because they were agricultural workers working on perishable crops. All of a sudden, the Farm Bureau uses this to prevent workers from becoming legalized. This is blatant racism. This country still really does believe in institutionalized slavery.

The same thing is now applying to the other farmworkers, Mexicans and Asians in other parts of the country. In California, under the leadership of our president, Cesar Chavez, we were able to get many improvements for the farmworkers. Because of our grape boycotts, we were able to get great improvements for farmworkers. We won union contracts that had full medical coverage for the family. By 1980, the minimum wage in our contracts was up to eight dollars an hour.

REVERSAL OF CONTRACT PROTECTIONS AGAINST PESTICIDE USE

Then we had a reversal. A Republican governor was elected in the state of California and the clock was totally turned backward. As a result of this, we now have a situation like the Grapes of Wrath. And so now, we go out into those fields, we see farmworkers who are living in shacks. One house had 53 farmworkers living in one house with one toilet. With so many workers that are out there in the field, the growers continue to bring in more undocumented workers even though we had a legalization program that legalized over one-million-and-a-half workers. They still keep bringing in more workers because they don't want to give jobs to the local farmworkers. They want to bring in workers that they can exploit. And we have lost the protection from being poisoned that we had won in our contracts.

I want to go back just a little bit in time to our first grape boycott. When we signed those first contracts we made the growers ban the use of DDT. Rachel Carson wrote about DDT in her book. Whatever we do in the area of environment, I think that it is important that we attach some action to it. It is not enough to talk about it. When we read Rachel Carson's book and farmworkers came and told us that a farmer uses DDT, we filed a lawsuit against him. And when we signed those first contracts covering close to 100,000 farmworkers, we said that you have to ban DDT, and we won't sign the contract until you do. So we had banned DDT maybe six or seven years before the government did.

Now when we lose those contracts, we lose any way to make the growers to take care of their farm workers. We find that things got very bad. The growers started using pesticides like crazy. In towns like McFarland, California, children have died of cancer. The cancer rate is four times the national rate. McFarland, a town of about 5,000 people, nine children have already died of cancer.

Up the road about ten miles in the great growing area of California, we have the little town of Erliamart. Here the cancer rate is twelve times the national rate. We went door to door to find out how many children had cancer or were born with deformities. We found children that had little hands with no fingers -- a little boy who loved to play baseball but could never catch the ball. We found children with no arms and no legs. The worst thing we found was one family who had a baby that had no eyes. Another family that had a baby that had no brains. And this is all caused by the pesticides.

Many wells in the San Juquin Valley are poisoned. They've got EBCP and nitrates in them. So we embarked on another grape boycott because we thought that this was the only way that we were going to stop this madness. We were going to get the growers back to the negotiating tables. We were going to make them sign contracts that give workers back their wages, their benefits, and also protect them from these pesticides. So we started another boycott.

Let me tell you that it has worked. We have been boycotting grapes now since 1984. Already they have banned three of the pesticides that we asked to be banned. One of these pesticides is Captan, which causes birth deformities. They banned it on everything except grapes and lettuce. They banned Dinoseb and Parathion just a couple of months ago on grapes but they left it on other crops. This is not enough; it's got to go further. So we ask everybody to support us on this boycott.

If we can get a contract out there in those fields, we can get the drinking water, we can get the wages, we can get the health plans. But the main thing is that we can get them to stop using these pesticides that are so damaging to the workers. That is a com-

mitment that we have to the public. You know, the public is what helped us get our contracts to begin with -- and this is what we have to go to again.

CESAR CHAVEZ FAST

Our president, Cesar Chavez, is a man who has had his life threatened many, many times. He has had to sometimes go into hiding for months at a time and run his office from a phone booth somewhere. He could not let anybody know where he was because of death threats. Once they caught one of the assassins that was going to kill Cesar. The sheriff's office let him have a press conference at the jail cell. So Cesar felt he wasn't doing enough with just the boycott. He went on a 36 day water only fast. I am talking about a 62 year old man. Jesse came out there with Cesar twice, and Jesse was there when he ended that fast.

We are not giving up. We know we are going to win in the long run. We are going to win this table grape boycott, and we are going to win with your support. And not only are we going to win this boycott, but when we win this boycott we are going to get rid of the pesticides. It is not enough to get a contract with 10 dollars an hour, but have farm-workers like Jose Martinez getting killed out there from pesticides. He was sprayed in an orchard and went into convulsions. At the hospital they said he had a heart attack. When we demanded an autopsy at a press conference, they admitted that the man died of Parathion poisoning. It only takes about 80 milligrams of Parathion to kill you; he had 480 milligrams of Parathion in his body. We don't want any more children to be born with deformities. We don't want any more children to be dying of cancer. We don't want any more mothers to have cancer and have miscarriages. We want to have them clean, and make sure that not only the farm workers are safe, but all the people out here who are eating that food are also going to be safe.

Can we build a world that is clean, that will let us participate in this country of ours? We say we can do it. How do we do it? By being organized, by working together, we say it can be done.

PLENARY SESSION
OUR VISION OF THE FUTURE: A REDEFINITION
OF ENVIRONMENTALISM

OCTOBER 26, 1991
8:30 A.M.

BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.
Executive Director
United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice
Moderator

This plenary session is on the very important subject of "Our Vision for the Future: A Redefinition of Environmentalism." We are going to have a panel discussion with a response by two chief executive officers of national environmental organizations, and then we will have a discussion of the Summit in plenary. We felt, in some sense, that this is a very important time for us to be in dialogue with one another and each other.

It is, in fact, a defining moment, as we have come from around and throughout this nation, and from other countries in the world, to provide an opportunity not only for us to have the dialogue but for us to reach some consensus of understanding, lay a basis for mutual respect, lay a basis for our working together in a more effective way from this

moment forward. We want to make sure that everyone gets a chance to be heard and be responded to. As chair of this session, my role is not to direct it but just to help facilitate it.

We have this morning sisters and brothers who are engaged in the issue of environmental justice, who are engaged at the grassroots level and at the national level and at the regional level. And one of the reasons why they have been chosen to give their presentations is because they bring the gifts of those experiences and those learnings that need to be shared by all of us.

I call for your attentiveness so that at the appropriate time we all can be responsive to the call to redefine environmentalism.

A VIEW FROM DOWN BELOW

PAT BRYANT
Executive Director
Gulf Coast Tenants Organization
New Orleans, Louisiana

I have been led by the spirit all my life. I have been locked up 58 times since I grew up in North Carolina, in the Freedom Movement there in the 1960's and in the movement to free Rev. Ben Chavis in the 1970's. Last night we got an overview. This morning you are going to get another view, one from down below where we were struggling, and I hope that the "amen corner" would help us out. The "amen corner" was ready last

night when Rev. Jesse Jackson spoke to us from the depth of his heart. The spirit was here. I hope that the "amen corner" this morning will do the same.

The "amen corner" in the black church experience are those few front pews reserved for spiritual leaders who constantly talk back to the person addressing the audience. We want to get that spirit moving here this morning. The spirit moves me

this morning, Rev. Chavis, to lift up a song that brought us so far. We used to sing it in the black church. The song was originally "Over My Head I See Jesus In The Air." We were out there struggling against Jim Crow, and over our heads we saw a vision of freedom in the air. That song made a difference. There has never been a great movement in the history of the world that didn't have some songs to sing. (*sings "Over My Head"*)

BEGINNING OF ENVIRONMENTAL STRUGGLE

Somebody must be asking the question, "Why is a worker amongst the tenants in the deep South standing here talking about a vision of the future?" We have come a mighty long ways. We stand in the footprints of many brothers and sisters who have died. Our struggles just did not begin. The environmental struggle just did not begin six years ago when the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization began to look at the poisoning of people in Cancer Alley. The environmental struggle did not just begin ten years ago when the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice helped us to begin the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization. It did not just begin in the Freedom Movement of the 1960's, nor with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Southern Negro Youth Congress. This environmental struggle that we are dealing with today began when Christopher Columbus discovered that he was lost and asked somebody to save him.

The Gulf Coast Tenants Organization has taught me a lot. We have made a number of victories. We were able to kick out of housing projects many racist and sexist managers and administrations. Tenants even took over the administration of a housing authority in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. But our folks said, "We won that, but we open our windows and we get something that's coming over from Union Carbide. We're getting chemicals coming from Shell Oil Company, Monsanto, Occidental, and others." All these chemicals are coming to our houses, and the biggest social occasions are funerals. Our folks kept saying that we have to do something. However, we realized that we were no longer talking just about the housing authority. We were talking about Fortune 500 companies and people who assassinate leaders all across the world through the CIA and the U.S. military.

We knew what were fighting, and we knew that it would be an uphill journey. But we were able to develop a vision where we would not be poisoned, that we could have jobs, housing, and educate our children. That is what we want to share with you this morning.

SEARCH FOR ALLIES

We knew we needed allies. We could not go up against some of the world's biggest corporations alone. But when we reached out to the Sierra Club, we found that only one Sierra Club member could understand us. The rest could not understand how the sons and the daughters of sharecroppers could be talking to them about coalition building. They could not sit with us. Racism was a problem.

We kept moving and kept in dialogue for a couple of years. Finally there was an opportunity, an historical moment. Greenpeace was sending a boat down the Mississippi River. We had continued to agitate and organize. We knew that it was important to bring attention to what was going on. Twenty-eight percent of the petrochemical companies in this country are located and doing business in the area between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. These companies, it seemed, had a big divining rod. Wherever there were communities built by slaves and former slaves, these companies came down with their divining rods and located right beside them. Reveilletown, Morrisonville, Reserve, Coleman -- these are all towns that came up from slave communities, with petrochemical companies sitting right beside them. White folks knew it was wrong. The white folks in those communities had to know that this meant death! The environmental groups all across this country had to know this meant death! They had to know this is genocide!

TOXIC CORRIDOR

But somehow, racism covers itself in nice fancy clothes; somehow, racism has made itself palatable to the intellectuals and to the environmentalists. For example, there is the concept of acceptable risk. Acceptable risk means that it is all right to refine the petroleum and have all these poisons coming out, because the products, the plastics, the Saran Wraps, the fuel that we need to run this industrial society have to be made. Their by-products are necessary things. The risks can be absorbed; the affluent in society won't have to be closely

associated with the risks. We had to accept the risks in the South, because we have been dirt poor. The South has been underdeveloped and everybody must have jobs.

We have almost a billion pounds of chemicals being put into the environment between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. If you want to see what this acceptable risk means, just come down and we will show you. Almost a billion pounds of poison is being pumped into the ground through deep-well injection. They say the poisons won't travel. But Louisiana is all water. How can you put a half billion pounds of poison in Louisiana's marshlands every year and not poison the shrimps out in the Gulf that reach America's dinner tables? How can you keep putting a half a billion pounds of poison into the Mississippi River and not poison the trout that you eat?

Where do we go from here? We have worked in coalition. I think there is fertile ground for coalition and cooperation. But it can not happen unless we adhere to some very basic principles. The first is that we have to revamp this acceptable risk policy. We have to revamp this policy that chemicals are innocent until proven guilty, because they are killing us. We cannot coalesce; we cannot work to toil the fields of anybody who cannot join hands with us and confront this genocide of people of color. This is not happening just in Louisiana. It is just so vivid and graphic there, but it is happening all over the country.

We cannot join hands with anybody who will not join with us and say that we have a right to live. And having the right to live means that we also have the right to housing, health care, jobs and education. We cannot embrace environmentalism until it talks about a program of building safe and clean plants. Let us develop some industry in specific communities to put people to work. We need our friends who are environmentalists to look at a total program for human uplift.

THE MOURNERS' BENCH

We have been building our movement. In the last few years we sent a letter to the environmentalists.

It says: "It is also imperative that our leaders, that the leaders of our movement confer to examine the practices, past and present, that result in poisonous waste disposal and location of poisonous industries in the Third World communities in the United States." That is why we are here and conferring. We have to deal with the principle that whatever funds available for organizing be equitably distributed. It is a struggle daily for all of us to keep our doors open. There may a funder or two out there on the "mourner's bench." We have to come up with an equitable way of funding the Southern Organizing Committee, the Southwest Organizing Project and the other organizations out there struggling. We cannot be struggling out there with brothers and sisters who have got resources unless we divide these resources equitably. So I am saying that the Southern Organizing Committee, the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, and all these organizations have got to be dealt with equitably.

We have come a mighty long way. Whether we are able to develop a relationship is going to depend a lot on you. This movement is going to build; we will not be stopped. We will not be stopped by the U.S. military; they are within our sights. We look for a period in which the vast majority of our tax dollars will not be spent on the military. We look for a period in which we will redefine the products that are produced and our relationship to those products and to the productive sector of this society.

Our vision can happen. It is happening. People are sitting on the "mourner's bench" every day. We have to do a lot of work in our communities. We have got to make accountable a lot of folk who rode in on the Voting Rights Act in 1965. I want to throw out an idea. It would be a great thing if we took Earth Day and gave it new life. Why shouldn't we change the date from April 22nd to August 6th, the day on which the Voting Rights Bill was signed. And why don't we have simultaneous demonstrations all across America? And why don't we put all those "aunties and uncles" (the "Clarence Thomases") -- who we would be able to reach if we have one big mobilization in Washington, D.C. -- on the hot seat, on the "mourners' bench?"

LIVING IN CHICAGO'S TOXIC DOUGHNUT

HAZEL JOHNSON
Founder/Chief Executive Officer
People for Community Recovery
Chicago, Illinois

This is a dream. I told Ben Chavis a year ago that I would like to see some people of color getting together. I have been fighting around environmental issues for nine years on a daily basis. People have called me on Christmas Day, questioning me about the environment. Mostly everywhere I went for the past eight years speaking on the environment, I was the only black among three, four or five hundred whites. And I am happy to see so many of my sisters and brothers are here today to fight for this struggle.

I live in a housing complex that was built on a landfill. Our area has been the dumping ground for 163 years. I consider it to be a toxic doughnut. We have seven landfills; a sewer-treatment plant; the Ford Motor Company; a paint factory; numerous chemical companies; and steel mills. The Calumet River is located just a few blocks away from us. It is so highly contaminated that they say it would take 75 years or more before they can clean it up; that is, if they can clean it up. We have three lagoons that emit over 30,000 tons of poison into the air each year. We also have asbestos in our apartments.

HOW I GOT INVOLVED

I got involved because I found out that our area had a high rate of cancer. My husband died of lung cancer. It took him 10 weeks before he left us. I was left with seven kids; the youngest was two and the oldest was 16. I worked nights in order to be with my kids during the day. So I really wanted to know what was the cause of so many people in my community having cancer. I started calling around and asking questions.

The first place I went to was a community where senior citizens have lived for over 25 years. Their water was so highly contaminated they were never able to drink it. When they turned on the faucet, it smelled like rotten eggs. It had high levels of cyanide, benzene, and the whole works. So I went before the legislature and complained. I was fortunate that they agreed to do something for these old senior citizens. They got money to put in pipes

for water. Then they found out that they did not even have a sewer system. They had to go back and get more money to put in a new sewer system. Now these individuals have city running water for the first time in over 25 years.

Next, we fought for the removal of asbestos. A lot of people thought I was crazy and did not know what I was talking about. But I did not mind. I was concerned about removing the asbestos from our area.

We have had many demonstrations. We did a sit-in demonstration at CID, which is owned by Waste Management. CID has two huge mountains of hazardous waste and they want to put in another landfill in our area. And we refused to let them build any more landfills within our area. We already had seven, we thought that we did not need any more. We turned around 57 trucks that day. We had all the news media there. After the media left, Waste Management called the police and had us arrested.

Through our protesting, Illinois' EPA finally took Chemical Waste Management to court. Under a court consent decree they were forced to hire community people to monitor that incinerator. Within a month, they found 27 violations. The United States EPA took Chemical Waste Management to court and fined them 3.5 million dollars.

I have asked for health studies. When the Centers for Disease Control first came out, they told us that the project was too big. It was too complicated. They had never done anything of this nature. So we were rejected. Illinois' EPA came out to my community and said they wanted to do some testing of the soil. They found DDD, DDE and DDT at levels 20 times higher than in regular soil. A few months later, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry came out and they are now working with us. They have a bad reputation for not giving a true analysis. When I heard that I said, "Well, they're not going to give me the runaround. I am going to find out for myself." So I went around getting doctors, toxicologists and chemists

to work with me. I know I am not a professional by a long ways, so I wouldn't know what was going on anyway.

MULTIPLE EXPOSURES

How many people have to suffer this way? We have a lot of kids born with birth deformities and cancer. We had two kids right next door to each other. One died at three, a beautiful little girl. She had tumors on the brain plus multiple other problems. And right next door to her was an infant who died at seven months. She was born with her brain protruding from her head, and she was blind. There is another kid right now, age four, who had brain surgery before she was a year old. Before she was two years old, she had to have more surgery. She has seizures, she is blind, and she cannot even walk.

We had many other problems. We have people with respiratory problems. I am one of them. Some people must have oxygen tanks in their home. This is sad. A lot of people have skin rashes. And if you happen to see me digging and scratching and carrying on, this is me being affected by all the chemicals that we have in the air.

They were concerned about 201 chemicals that were being emitted in the air. The majority of these chemicals cause cancer. Some cause nerve disorder. Now, just think about it. All their concern is about what one chemical could do. But if they would put all these chemicals together into a study, they will know what is going on. But they do not want to do that. All they do is just give tests on one chemical at a time. But we are demanding for them to do a mixture of chemicals. Even if they just mix up ten of them it is bad enough, let alone 201. But they do not care what happens to us.

HAZEL JOHNSON'S REPUTATION

I have been going around speaking on the environmental problem. And I feel good about it, because I have never been to a university or college. But I am going in making speeches. I am here to tell you that I have shaken up Illinois' EPA. Now when they hear the name Hazel Johnson, they move.

We are abusing this planet. We never think about what the earth does for us. We poison it. We have to think about what this planet has done for us and stop abusing it. We have to take care of it. If we don't start doing something now, it will be too late.

WOMEN ORGANIZING ON THE YANKTON SIOUX RESERVATION

CHARON ASETOYER

Executive Director

*Native American Women Health Information and Resource Center
Lake Andes, South Dakota*

I would like to thank the organizers of this Summit for making sure that so many of indigenous people were able to attend and to participate on the main panels. I live, work and raise my family on the Yankton Sioux reservation in South Dakota. In 1985 a group of women on the reservation formed a community-based health organization. For almost three years we ran programs from the basement office of my home, and we started dealing with women's health issues: fetal alcohol syndrome, nutrition, infant mortality and others. The infant mortality rate on that reservation is 28.7. It is the highest out of all the Indian health services in the United States and one of the highest in the nation. Fetal alcohol syndrome births were extremely high. Almost one-quarter of all births being fetal-alcohol related. Housing, sewage, and poor nutrition are perpetual problems on reservations throughout.

We are now nine fully staffed, fully paid women from the community who own three pieces of real estate. We run a domestic-abuse shelter, a resource center, which is a comprehensive approach to empowerment and deals with issues of women and family, and another piece of real estate that we rent out to Native American families in town.

The reservation geographically is approximately 64 square miles. It is one of the smaller reservations in the great Sioux nation. However, the Missouri River runs through this reservation, and it has been targeted by the multinationals for toxic waste. The water tables are high and the spring runoff eventually ends up into the Missouri River. The Missouri River is the only river left in the United States where the 26 tribes along the Missouri River basin have never quantified their water rights. They have never relinquished their water rights so that the river cannot be used by multinational corporations from upstream. This is very important because they wanted to use it for coal slurries and other economic development projects.

A couple of years ago the tribal attorney, not a Native American, introduced the tribal chairman to representatives from a corporation that wanted to

bring a major commercial recycling program onto the reservation. They promoted this as the end-all to the economic development problems on a reservation where there is an 85% unemployment rate. Out of desperation, the tribal government brought it forth to the general council, composed of members of the tribe, to decide whether or not they wanted this.

Our agency, a group of women within the community, was not quite sure what would be the effects of a project like this. So we got information so that the tribal members had a broader frame of reference in order to decide whether or not they wanted this kind of a project on their reservation. They voted it down.

Nonetheless, several corporate representatives again approached the tribal leadership to place a major commercial landfill on the reservation. Once again, we went home to home with packets of information. This time we had developed some relationships with other environmental groups. For example, Native Americans for a Clean Environment, based in Oklahoma, helped us get more information and nurtured us along.

We started to network with groups who could give us information about health. And, of course, being women we were questioning why cervical cancer was already so high in the community; why other forms of cancer are so high; why there are so many miscarriages. When they tried to tell the tribal chair that they would not have to worry about leaks because of the clay liner, we investigated and found out that just about every clay liner around has leaked. However, we were not scientists and the tribal government did not want to believe us. Nor did they like the fact that we were sticking our nose into their business.

RESOLUTION ON HAZARDOUS WASTES

When another company tried to bring in a commercial medical waste incinerator, there was another general council and it was defeated. The Yankton

Sioux, which traditionally referred to themselves as the Ihanktunwan Dakota Nation, passed a resolution, which is one of the most powerful resolutions that has been passed by tribal nations in this land:

WHEREAS, the Ihanktunwan Dakota Nation is a sovereign entity by birthright and recognized as such by the United States of America through valid treaties with that same government;

WHEREAS, pursuant to such birthright of sovereignty, the Ihanktunwan Dakota Nation reserves the exclusive right and authority to ensure that its citizens' inherent right to be safe in their homes, workplaces, and our children's right to grow up strong and healthy, not diseased, deformed or to die before they've had a chance to live, but to be safe in their homes, free from cancer-causing asbestos or other hazards, and to play in their backyards or anywhere in our territory free from erupting chemical pits, contaminated water or soils shall not be abridged; and

WHEREAS, allowing our territory to be targeted or be utilized as a waste disposal site for any imported waste of any type shall constitute such an abridgement.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Business and Claims Committee shall hereby be directed to develop public policy (subject to approval of the General Council) that serves to prevent toxic waste/pollutants from entering our territory or from passing through our territory. The Business and Claims Committee shall have ninety (90) days to develop such policy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that henceforth there shall be no development of any waste disposal initiatives within the territorial boundaries which involves in any way the importing of waste of any kind to be disposed of in any way within our territorial boundaries.

*Resolution No. 91-37
General Council of the
Ihanktunwan Dakota Nation
Marty, South Dakota*

That was passed on April 5th, 1991. It means that the trucks cannot even come through. It was the

people that passed this because the tribal leadership disappeared. We stood up there and exchanged dialogue with the corporate representatives. It got to be a very uncomfortable situation, because we are talking about millions of dollars. These companies were offering a dollar a ton to the tribes, even though the going rate is anywhere from five dollars on up depending on the toxicity of the waste. The middlemen stood to gain an horrendous amount.

At the time when we were approached, 43 different tribes throughout the country had been approached by these corporations. Today, it is approximately 53. We seem to be an easy target. At one time we were the keepers and their nurturers of this entire country. We have now been reduced to approximately 3% of this country's land holdings. Not just this tribe, but all reservations, all tribes in this country, hold less than 3% of the land holdings. They have 97% of the land, and they want to come after the remaining 3%.

LINKS TO PUBLIC HEALTH

As a group of women, we started wondering why and questioning: Why all the birth defects? Why all the spontaneous miscarriages? Why all the cancers? We know that government commodities has something to do with it. We also know that we live in an agricultural community where the non-Indian farmer deposits huge amounts of herbicides and pesticides on the land. And, again, these herbicides and pesticides are running off into the Missouri River. They are contaminating the groundwater and the wells.

Every week we get a phone call in our office reporting someone with cancer or a miscarriage. And now the children are starting to be affected. We are seeing cancers in young children and diabetes in teenagers. The life expectancy in this particular reservation has gone down from 47 to 45.

When we talk about the environment, we have to talk about our own personal environments. We have to talk about the food chain. We have to talk about chemicals. Not only are they being dumped on the Mother Earth, they are being dumped in our bodies. And what about the natural food chain, which is contaminated by herbicides and pesticides? The Department of Transportation, how they come along with their herbicides and pesticides and spray all the choke cherries and the buffalo berries that the indigenous people harvest every year and dry out and eat. They do it with no problem at all. They

spray the berries because they feel they get in the way of the roads. The deer eat the corn that has been sprayed with herbicides and pesticides. And the wild turkeys also eat the natural food chain that has been contaminated. So we have to talk about the natural food chain.

This is why I have a problem with the word "productive land" because we have to remember that the land has been very productive for the multinational corporations, the Dole Fruit Companies and for the Peabody Coal Companies and now for the toxic waste industry. We have to preserve our ecosystems, realizing that subsistence

is a reality for many of us. And we are getting the same chemicals that you are getting in the little cellophane-wrapped food that you buy at the supermarket. Think about the well water that is being contaminated and the fish in Lake Andes that is being contaminated. Our people fish and eat this food, serve it to their children, and we wonder why the infant mortality rate and the spontaneous miscarriage is so high. We must look at all these things that we are contaminating ourselves -- the winged, the finned, the two-legged, the four-legged and the roots, the above-ground and the below-ground. They are all essential.

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF OPERATION BOOTSTRAP

NEFTALI GARCIA MARTINEZ

*Executive Director
Servicios Científico y Técnicos
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico*

Buenos días. I am not going to speak about the 498 years of colonialism in Puerto Rico. We would not have time. Therefore, I will basically direct our attention to the last 45 years or so. Many of you probably know the term "Operation Bootstrap". It has supposedly been a pacesetter in terms of economic development. I want to shed some light about this experiment.

Operation Bootstrap began around 1947. It was based on some basic ideologies. Puerto Rico supposedly was overpopulated and lacked the natural resources, the technology, the scientific knowledge, the entrepreneurs, the prepared, educated people necessary for economic development. Therefore, we had to import development, capital, technology, managers, and raw materials. We had to offer, in return, cheap labor, cheap rent for buildings, electric energy and water subsidies, plus tax exemption on profits.

During the first 15 years or so of this experiment, apparel companies, shoe companies, electrical parts industries, refineries, tourist activities, the Korean War and migration of Puerto Ricans were the main components of this strategy. 750,000 Puerto Ricans migrated from Puerto Rico to the U.S. between the mid-1940's and mid-1960's. At the present time, more than 2.5 million Puerto Ricans live in the U.S., many in the Northeast region, but nowadays throughout the country. Actually, the first migration of Puerto Ricans took place to Hawaii, in 1903, resulting in the presence of some Puerto Rican descendants in that state. In the 1930's, there was migration to Cuba and the Dominican Republic because, at that time, these countries were economically better off than Puerto Rico. Puerto Ricans were dying of tuberculosis and were anemic as a result of extremely low salaries in sugarcane and tobacco production.

In the mid-1960's, the emphasis of investment changed. The refineries that had been built in the 1950's had expanded. Petrochemical companies were located in the southern, southeastern, and northern

regions of the island. Electrical parts industries had expanded and the electronics industry arrived. Pharmaceutical companies transformed Puerto Rico into one of their most important centers of production in the world. Of course, these industries received tax exemptions as well as electric and water subsidies. They also began to obtain what amounts to environmental exemption. Even though U.S. federal laws apply in Puerto Rico, we know that laws need concerned people so that they can be applied, and that people are subject to all kinds of pressures: economic, political, social, etc.

Even if federal regulations apply within the political boundaries of the United States, you can notice differences in the way they are applied in California, Puerto Rico, West Virginia, or southern Louisiana. After all, laws and regulations are social products, they are the result of social struggles. Usually they are not used to further progress or development or to protect health, but are often used to protect private property and industries instead of people.

LONG HISTORY OF VICTORIES IN PUERTO RICO

The environmental struggle began in Puerto Rico in the 1960's with the opposition to Kennecott Copper and Amax plans for the exploitation of mineral resources in the central mountainous region. In the late 1960's, the movement grew, expanded, and began working in the areas of pollution generated by pharmaceutical companies, petrochemicals, refineries and so on. During this period, an experiment with a nuclear plant to generate electric energy had already taken place in Puerto Rico. There were emissions from the plant in the mid-60's. We found this out in 1970 and had additional information to fight against the plans developed in 1968 to expand the use of nuclear power. In 1976, these plans were finally abandoned, and there are no nuclear plants in Puerto Rico today.

The struggle to stop the exploitation of mineral resources in Puerto Rico lasted from 1965 to 1988,

when the Puerto Rican government finally decided that it was not worthwhile at the economic level. In addition, they concluded that it was too environmentally risky and it would be better to reforest the area, use a portion for agriculture, and to protect water resources. A 25-year struggle ended, therefore, with a victory.

Actually, we have successfully stopped about 95% of those large projects that we have chosen to oppose, we must say that in regards to large projects, be they nuclear plants, mining, pharmaceutical, chemical, hazardous or domestic waste dumps. We have not been as successful in reducing pollution because that is more difficult than stopping projects. But, we have been able to force the Navy to reduce the destruction of fishing grounds, reefs, and lagoons on Vieques Island. We have not been able to get the Navy out, but sooner or later we will.

We have stopped projects like Voice of America, because of the electromagnetic pollution it would have generated and the effects it would have had on people's health, fishing and agricultural areas. We have been able to force Union Carbide to use some of the money that workers produced in their plants to control pollution and to reduce the contamination that was affecting Ingenio, a small community in Yabucoa in the southeastern part of the island. We have also been able to force Sun Oil to reduce air pollution in Yabucoa that has been affecting agriculture and the health of many people.

As a result of a struggle, companies like Westinghouse, Bristol Meyers, Storage Technology and others in an industrial complex in Mayaguez, in the west, have reduced air and water pollution that was affecting the nervous, respiratory and immunological system of workers and neighbors. We use this system to protect ourselves from diseases -- and from those very same chemicals. However, our bodies have not been able to evolve or to change biologically to the extent necessary to deal adequately with the likes of benzene and other chemicals. It would be preferable if the companies themselves would evolve and stop air and water pollution, so that we wouldn't have to die first.

We have also dealt with issues of water pollution in places like Vega Alta, where companies like General Electric discharged polychlorinated solvents that polluted the aquifer and the water wells of a municipality of 28,000 people. Here we have found

increased rates of leukemia, similar to that found in Wolburn, Massachusetts some years ago. We forced the government to close four wells, and we are still fighting. We are fighting so that the companies that caused the pollution will clean the aquifer. And, of course, we also have problems with EPA.

We have nine Superfund sites in Puerto Rico, yet only one has been partially cleaned by the Upjohn Company. The others have been under study, on the average for more than 10 years. There are eight additional sites currently being studied to be added to the list and approximately 190 more areas in Puerto Rico that could contain dangerous chemicals and are listed for further consideration. We think that probably 20% of these sites will be found to contain hazardous chemicals to the extent that they need to be cleaned up. All this on a Caribbean island that is 100 miles by 35 miles.

This is a product of Operation Bootstrap, as is the 17% official figure of unemployment, and the 55% of Puerto Rican families that receive food checks. Another product of Operation Bootstrap is the high rate of crime and other social problems we have in Puerto Rico. At the same time that we have these social problems and these high rates of unemployment, one-fourth to one-third of all the migrants -- some 35 to 40 thousand people that currently go to the U.S. and other countries each year -- are professionals. We are exporting educated people, skilled workers. In the 1940's, we were told that we had a problem of overpopulation. Now, after 45 years of Operation Bootstrap, we are overpopulated with skilled, educated and professional people.

Of course, we are also overpopulated, as they put it, with unskilled young people, especially men, that cannot get jobs, have been out of school for many years, and do not have the skills needed to hold a job. Puerto Rico is a land of contrasts, of tremendous contradictions as a result of Operation Bootstrap. While nothing is completely good, nothing is completely bad. There are some of us that have been able to study and become educated, and at least some of us have not forgotten our origins.

FOUR ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL STRUGGLE

We have used an approach towards environmental problems in Puerto Rico that includes four main

aspects that are integrated and interrelated. The central core of the environmental struggle, is community organizing, grassroots organizing. It has been so since the beginning. We do not have an elitist approach to environmental struggles in Puerto Rico, although we have had some groups with that tendency. Communities organize in committees that are in charge of the basic decisions: when to write letters, to meet with government representatives, to go to the mass media, to hold community meetings, and to picket agencies. Even if we have 22 years of experience, we never go to a community and say, we have to picket tomorrow. That is a decision that each community has to make, based on its own experience.

The leaders in the communities increasingly include women (especially poor women), people who were in Vietnam, people who migrated to the U.S. and had to fight racism in their communities, people who have been out of their communities, at least for some time, and have a broader perspective of life.

The second aspect is the integration of knowledge from the natural sciences, the social sciences and that which comes from people's experiences, and the experiences of the scientist, because we, too, have experiences. We don't take an elitist approach to knowledge. Knowledge is a social and historical process and product. What we have learned comes both from other scientists and from others who have knowledge, because even if it is not systematic, it is still knowledge. We don't have the money to build the laboratories, to build the facilities needed to do the research, to get all the information relating to complex environmental issues. We depend on people's noses, ears, and eyes to generate some of the basic information we need. Consider how government agencies use wind and temperature information from the San Juan airport to deal with an issue in the central region of the island where that information is not applicable. It is better to have information that comes from the people who live locally, information which is therefore superior to that which would come from San Juan or from somewhere in the U.S.

Of course, there is general scientific information that applies. Our knowledge obtained in formal schooling, and the knowledge obtained through reading books and technical information produced by the companies, by the government, and by other scientists, is used in the process of analyzing problems. What I am saying is that you have to

integrate people's knowledge into the analysis of these problems.

The third aspect is communication, be it bulletins, leaflets, the use of local and regional radio, or national television (by national, I am referring to Puerto Rico) We have used the mass media in such a way, for so many years now, that environmental news has become weekly news in Puerto Rico. There is not one single week when there is not a press conference, a press communiqué, a radio program, or a television program discussing the environmental and natural resources issues.

The fourth aspect is the legal or juridical level. We always say that it is secondary, but it is sometimes important. Sometimes you need time, and you have to stall a project through legal means. Many times bureaucrats think that all the information is confidential until proven the contrary. This is more so in Puerto Rico. Of course, we have our people within the government, too, and the flow of information out of the agencies depends on many of these workers. We also have some lawyers to help us whenever they do not want to give the communities access to such information.

However, you cannot depend on the legal aspect as the center of your struggle because people then tend to believe that lawyers, scientists and judges will solve their problems. They get derailed from their struggles. After all, as I have said, laws are the product of human beings in society, so they cannot be neutral. Even the dead are not neutral, if they have left any remnants; children often expose some of their parent's ideas. We don't believe at all that laws, judges or regulations are neutral. We believe in social struggles, using juridical means sometimes, but not becoming dependent on them.

Today, we are not only talking about all the ills of Operation Bootstrap, we are also putting forward alternatives. In the agricultural sector, fishing, the industrial sector, etc., we are moving towards taking an offensive, as opposed to a defensive position. It is clear to the industries and to the government that we are not only talking about environmental problems and natural resources issues, we are challenging Operation Bootstrap. We are challenging what has happened in Puerto Rico in the last 45 years.

Through social practices and through organizing, we are trying to break away from the ideology that we

Puerto Ricans cannot make it by ourselves. We are breaking away from the colonial ideology that we lack the natural resources, that we lack the capacity, that we cannot deal with our own house, our own island, our own country. It is a very slow and contradictory process. It is not easy to break away from 498 years of colonialism. It takes time and a

lot of patience, but we are moving towards it. And in doing so, it is very important for us to exchange ideas, experiences, and to understand what others are doing in Hawaii, Louisiana, Texas, Illinois, Mexico, and other areas of the world because we can learn a lot from each other.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS OF IMMIGRANT ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN

YOUNG HI SHIN

Executive Director

Asian Women Immigrant Advocates

Oakland, California

Our organization, Asian Immigrant Women Advocates, is a community-based organization and legal organization. My talk concerning the concerns of low-income, monolingual, and limited-English Asian immigrant women will be very much applicable to other low-income, limited-English immigrant communities. With this in mind, I would like to share some stories of Asian immigrant women workers.

Last week I met a Korean woman who worked in the electronics industry for three years. She is now bedridden and paralyzed. She does not know what caused her paralysis. She came home from work one day and she started to throw up. She then lost consciousness. She recovered after several days of rest. Then she had to go back to work. She worked another year before she got another stroke. This time the entire left side of her body was paralyzed. Her employer did not have Worker's Compensation. Her husband's insurance covered her hospital bills for a while, then the insurance company refused to cover her any further. So now she has been discharged without further treatment.

I also heard a Vietnamese immigrant seamstress saying the dust in some of the factories is so thick you can see it in the air and you develop allergies. So sometimes we work with masks made by ourselves. Otherwise we would be sneezing all the time. When I went home from work sometimes, and when I would blow my nose, the colors of the fabric I worked with that day would appear on my Kleenex. Some women have lung and breathing problems because of having worked in garment manufacturing for so long.

Also, how about a Chinese hotel room cleaner who complained about horrible smelling cleaning products dripping and making holes in her clothes? Constant backaches developed from cleaning toilets all day. Chronic pains developed in her right thumb due to pulling the bed covers all day.

For these and thousands of other immigrant women, safe and healthy working conditions is far from reality. The San Francisco Bay area is one of the few areas in the U.S. which has a high concentra-

tion of Asians. Asians compose 30% of the total population. Among those, approximately 50% are immigrants.

Most immigrant women, at one time or another in their journey to American life, worked in the hotel, garment or restaurant industries. Younger women tend to be out of these industries relatively quick. Women over 35 usually spend 10 to 30 years of their lives in these industries. In the Bay Area, the garment industry employs an estimated 25,000 workers, 85% of whom are Asian immigrant women. In the hotel industry, one-third of the 6,000 employees of the major hotels in San Francisco are Asian. The majority are Asian immigrant women who work in the labor-intensive, lowest-paid jobs, such as room cleaners, sewers, menders of uniforms and waitresses. And in the Silicon Valley of South Bay, 80% of the estimated 80,000 production line workers are women. The majority of the women are immigrants from Asia and Latin America. Again, Asian immigrant women are located in the most lowest-paying and dangerous jobs.

The concentration of Asian immigrant women work force in these industries is no accident. These industries employ Asian immigrant women because our cheap labor and a total lack of a marketable opportunity in this society. Being immigrants and women, and a racial minority, systematically and institutionally put us at the very bottom end of these industries and put us in very unhealthy and unsafe working conditions.

Some say, "Why don't you change your job, to work under healthy and safe working conditions? Why don't you tell your employer to change your working environment?" Also, some make comments, with very good intention: "You have every right to know what dangerous chemicals you work with." Employers need to make the manual, which explains hazardous risk and toxic substances of the chemicals you work with, available to you. Why don't you report to a government agency about your unhealthy and unsafe working environment? And we have heard, over and over, the struggles of the Asian immigrant women workers at the

workplace is not environmental issue. It is the issue of workers, immigrants and women's rights.

These statements display a total disregard or a lack of understanding of the struggles and difficulties and vulnerabilities of Asian immigrant women in this society. First of all, we need to think, how many jobs are available to monolingual, limited-English-speaking women? Also, do we really expect an immigrant woman who has five kids and old parents, and needs to support them with her \$2 to \$5-an-hour wages -- we are talking about the high cost of California standard of living -- will risk her job and tell her employer that my working environment is very dangerous?

RIGHT TO KNOW

We hear, over and over, that workers have a right to know what chemicals they work with. Apparently, by law, employees have the right to have access to the manual explaining the dangerous risks and effects of toxic chemicals. However, the reality is, none of the Asian immigrant electric assemblers have heard of such manuals, let alone even seen it. If the industry is really concerned about the health and safety of their employees, why is it so hard to make the manual readily accessible to immigrant women employees? Or, even if it is readily available, the manual is written in English. You wonder what the employers have in mind. The majority of a work force who would be adversely and dangerously affected every day at their workplace speaks Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, Spanish -- languages other than English. Do they really expect this work force to understand manuals written in English? I guess, even for English speaking persons, most of the manuals are written in such a language which is ambiguous at its best, if not totally confusing.

It seems very simple to advise the employees, "Your health is in danger." It is very difficult, if not impossible, to report the unhealthy, unsafe working environment to a government agency, when a government agency does not have a bilingual staff to understand the complaint of immigrant women. Also, for a while in California, there was no government agency to handle the safety and health issues of the workplace. I guess there are regulations and laws protecting the health and safety issues of the employees. However, these laws and regulations seem to be sitting on the shelf when it comes for immigrant women to understand and to use them. The government agency sits very far

from these immigrant women. The burden is always and only on the immigrant woman to come forward and make complaints to the agency when the rules and regulations are incomprehensible and are written in our mother tongues, and have no bilingual staff to hear our complaints.

Also, historically, these everyday struggles and difficulties of the immigrant woman, to enjoy a safe and healthy working environment, have not been recognized by the environmental movement. When immigrant workers talk about environment, we talk about working environment, where we work and breathe for 10 to 14 hours a day. It is only right that our workplace issue receives its due priority in the environmental movement.

NEED TO EDUCATE OURSELVES

Our members clearly understand that we need to further educate ourselves to develop and strengthen leadership and advocacy skills in order to deal with health and safety issues of our workplace. At the same time, we are very much aware we need to reach and educate the general public about the racist practices of the industries, industrial policy which puts first cost effectiveness before human life and ineffective enforcement of a government agency.

With the support from our friends and general public, we need to demand that employers provide limited English-speaking immigrant women with readily accessible information on their dangerous working environment through manuals, posters, and written and oral instructions. We need to demand that government agencies produce bilingual materials, conduct outreach which is culturally sensitive, and hire bilingual, bicultural staff who can really hear and deal with the complaints of the immigrant woman.

More important, in order to achieve environmental justice for low-income, limited-English-speaking immigrant women at our workplace, we need the support from and be a part of progressive, broader, inclusive environmental movements, like we have seen in the last one and a half days, which includes workplace issues, along with other environmental issues. Only doing so, we can start changing the practices and policies of the industries, government and the environmental movement. Safe and healthy working environment, where we breathe for 10 to 20 hours a day is a must. We need jobs which do not slowly and permanently disable or kills us.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

MICHAEL FISCHER
Executive Director
Sierra Club
San Francisco, California

In Pat Bryant's words, "it's time now for some words from the mourner's bench," to see whether those of us sitting there sensed the spirit. We listened closely and have learned much from them and from others to whom we have spoken yesterday and in the last several hours.

The Sierra Club, a young organization, works a lot on rocks and trees and mountains and scenic beauty, and the spirit and the sanctity of wilderness, and we always will work on those issues. But that is not all we do. It is most important to know that, particularly in the last 10 to 15 years, much more of our energy has gone into a very broad mission, at the local level especially. We environmental organizations, including the Sierra Club, work on toxics issues. Our chapters tell us at the top of the list of our chapters' agendas.

We also work on land-use issues, freeways (which have threatened to cut through neighborhoods) and urban sprawl (which leaves the central city behind). These are all issues which all of us in this room share as part of a common cause. We know, not just because we are told in this important historic conference, that it is right to be in the front of the battle lines for environmental justice. I am humbled and privileged to be here and to learn from those of you who really literally put your lives on the line every day to improve the health and beauty of the environment in which you live.

CONSPICUOUSLY MISSING

We know that we have been conspicuously missing from the battles for environmental justice all too often, and we regret that fact sincerely. I believe that this historic conference is a turning point, however, and while we can still say the *mea culpas* from time to time, this is a charge to all of us to work and look into the future, rather than to beat our breasts about the past.

We national environmental organizations are not the enemy. The divide-and-conquer approach is one that the Reagan and Bush administrations have used all too successfully for all too long. And we are here to reach across the table and to build the bridge

of partnership with all of you. Beyond the fact of it just being right, we must be practical. We in the environmental movement know that it is in our enlightened self-interest to be fully involved in seeking environmental justice, or we risk becoming irrelevant: irrelevant in the eyes of a growing number of Americans; irrelevant in the eyes of a growing number of judges, of city council members, state legislators and federal officials. We will not become irrelevant. We will be there with you.

But we need your help, just as you could use ours. We need your help, your understanding, your assistance and your welcome to join in the struggle. Changing the old regretful patterns of the past won't happen automatically. We have energy, we have commitment, we have clout, we have experience that we will bring to bear toward the cause of environmental justice, but we need your help to focus our energies in common cause. We need your help, frankly, to open up the eyes and to open up the hearts of our members, the people to whom Pat turned some years ago. I think you may find a different reception now. The environmental agenda that will succeed is not an environmental agenda that the Sierra Club decides on, it is an environmental agenda that is built together, with mutual trust and respect between our communities, and we wish to work closely with you at the chapter level and the national level, to build that agenda.

Pat Bryant also mentioned the concept of acceptable risk. This is a concept which scientists and technocrats seem to put great store by, not we at the Sierra Club. We reject the concept of acceptable risk and wish to work with all peoples to eliminate all risk in communities. Remember this: Just because you're a NIMBY doesn't mean you're wrong. Those of us who are NIMBY's and reject polluting industries in our backyards must work with other NIMBY's to make sure that no polluting industry goes in anybody's backyard.

HISTORIC TURNING POINT

The hallmark of the Sierra Club is that we are volunteer-led and volunteer-driven, and Dr. Benjamin Chavis said at one point that you wanted

to hear from the head of the Sierra Club. Well, I am here to tell you that the executive director is not the policy-making head of the Sierra Club at all. Ours is a volunteer-led, volunteer-driven, grassroots activist network. We have more than 500 chapters and groups around the country. I would like you to feel free to call on them. If you need our help in helping to respond to them, I would like you to let us know that, but we are working with them, and there are committed volunteers in almost every chapter that I know of who wish to move out and work with you.

One of the examples that we can use to communicate with you, as well as with our own members, lies in those whom we award, those to whom we give our honors. This past May, the highest award of the Sierra Club gave our John Muir award to Wangari Matthai. Wangari has established a woman-led organization in Kenya to seek reforestation of that land, and she has worked with this grassroots organization against repressive bureaucracies. We wish to celebrate that sort of

individual leadership. We would like to work with you to recognize similar leaders, in the vein of Mickey Leland and Chico Mendes, both here and abroad. That is one way, a small way, that we can communicate a change of values to our members.

Although we have not always been successful, we seek to be a group which is insistent, demanding, aggressive and never satisfied. Health, life, freedom of the kind that is denied to the people who spoke with us today, these are issues which cannot be bargained away or compromised, and we are not that sort of organization. We seek your help in achieving that objective.

This Summit clearly has given all of us energy, and it has given us, also a chance, Reverend, for a new beginning. I believe that this is an historic moment. This weekend gives us an opportunity to make it an historic turning point. Let us pledge to each other that we will make it so. Thank you for the invitation.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIP BASED ON AN AUTHENTIC COMMON AGENDA

JOHN H. ADAMS

Executive Director

Natural Resources Defense Council

New York, N.Y.

Good morning. First of all, I want to say that there are a number of environmental people here, and there are only two of us speaking, and these are my friends and they are your allies, and Audubon, Friends of the Earth, people from National Wildlife Federation and other organizations are present in the audience. And while I speak for NRDC, and I speak for myself, I think the words that you are hearing from Michael and you will hear from me are really words that all of us would like to have a chance to say to you in one way or the other.

I want to start by saying that I really am honored to be here today. We at NRDC were pleased from the beginning to be a part of this Summit, and I particularly want to thank the conveners, who have worked so hard to put this together, for inviting several of us to come up here and speak. I, too, believe this event is of historic significance. It will mark a major turning point in the environmental movement, and, I can tell you, it will change NRDC. I would argue that the people who put it together really had a vision. It is indeed a visionary meeting, because it is going to unite a whole new segment of life together in a common fight.

IMPACTING NRDC'S MISSION

NRDC, as an institution, and I personally have come to realize over the years, and maybe more recently, that the issues of racism, poverty and environmental degradation are intertwined and inseparable. They are all a part of the same policies and practices that shape the quality of life, and the environmental movement cannot solve one without solving or helping to solve the other. The kind of exchange and dialogue that has taken place here in the last several days, and some of it was moving, and some of it was funny, and some of it was the kind of thing that makes you want to rethink what you have been doing. And I could talk about Pat, and I could talk about the Reverend Jackson last night. But all of these things are now impacting and will impact NRDC's mission. We have a number of our people here, and they are deeply committed to this process, and they are going to change internally how NRDC does things.

I do not want to hesitate one bit in saying I did not come here just to talk or just to listen, but I came here to engage in a new partnership. We want a partnership to pursue an authentic common agenda, and I know that that's what you are working on. That agenda, when we understand it, will be a part of our program.

For 20 years NRDC has relentlessly confronted the massive problems associated with air, water, food and toxics. These issues form the core of NRDC's agenda, a public-health agenda. Above all else, these issues are matters of public health. That is to say, that violations of the environment are violations of the people. And to the extent that these environmental violations impose a disproportionate negative impact on people of color, they must command a high-priority response with disproportionate resources aimed at them. I am not the first person to say this, but as a simple matter of fairness, all people are entitled to clean air, water, and to a healthy and safe environment. Environmental problems threaten all of us, but it is clear that the problems are worse in some communities than others. I don't have to recite examples, but I want to, so that you know that at least we know some of these examples.

Three out of four toxic waste dumps are in African-American or Latino communities. Two million tons of radioactive uranium tailings have been dumped on Native American lands. Lead poisoning effects eight million African American and Latino children. And 300,000 or more Latino farm laborers suffer from pesticide-related illnesses. And examples like this abound, and we could go on -- and they have been listed, and they will continue to be listed. Disproportionate impacts on communities of color is especially unacceptable and constitutes one of the grossest forms of environmental injustice.

NRDC has challenged these and other practices in the past, and we will continue to do so in the future, because the environmental movement cannot fulfill its mission without addressing those environmental health issues that affect all communities equally. I believe that integrity is a key word in building a

working relationship with the environmental movement and with communities of color. There is no environmental justice or integrity when communities of color are used disproportionately as dumping grounds for toxic wastes or incinerators.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: DIVERSE AND ALL-INCLUSIVE

When it comes to health and the environment, there are no borders or acceptable parts of town that you can treat with neglect. Environmental justice is diverse and an all-inclusive issue. It must be treated so. NRDC has worked hard over the years to attack these problems that generate disproportionate impact, as well as those affecting large groups of people, so we have worked on the Clean Air Act, the Water Pollution Control Act, the Toxic Wastes Acts.

I will not recite all the lawsuits or the programs that we have been engaged in over the years, but only to say that in my own judgment I believe the efforts we have engaged in are significant. We want to continue this working relationship, this partnership, and we want it to be with you. We want to work with the leadership, the organizations that are represented here, individual clients, communities of color. You cannot win this battle, as Michael said before, alone -- at least, I do not believe you can. And I know we cannot, because we have been

trying for 20 years, and we are a long way from achieving anything that is like a victory. Which means, very simply, that we all need each other.

There are many things NRDC can do to be supportive of organizations in communities of color: we can provide legal assistance; we can provide scientific assistance; we can join you in lobbying efforts in Congress and elsewhere; we can share information; we can share contacts. And we will do these things, and we will do more, because it is indeed our mission. We believe in the rights and integrity of all people, all of you here. If it falls within our organizational mission, we are committed to doing it. In the seeds of a partnership, which has been mentioned several times -- and I think that the seeds are here, I hope they are -- we should not let this opportunity pass. The environmental movement must be a diverse movement, reflective of our country and of the globe.

Our common experiences, which we have heard about so many times in the course of the last several days, our common environmental experiences, whether good or bad, give us a common bond, one that many of us have been looking for. What we need now is a common effort. NRDC is ready and committed to join that common effort, and I believe in this sense I speak for my friends in the audience from the environmental community, they are ready to join this common effort with you, too.



*THE FIRST NATIONAL PEOPLE OF COLOR ENVIRONMENTAL
LEADERSHIP SUMMIT*

PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS

Photographs by Roy Lewis



Opening Ceremony: Rose Auger, Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.
Gail Small, Toney Anaya, Syngman Rhee



Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.



Binari Korean Cultural Troupe



Nubian Theatre



Eleanor Holmes Norton



Richard Moore



Wilma Mankiller



Robert Bullard, David Lujan, Mililani Trask

March and Rally at Capitol Hill



Jesse Jackson



Donele Jean Wilkins, Akua Budu-Watkins



Benjamin Chavis, Jr., Charles Cobb, Jesse Jackson



S. Garry Oniki

Neftali Garcia Martinez



Rose Auger



Gail Small



Linda McKeever Bullard



Rose Marie Augustine



Baldemar Velasquez



Tom Goldtooth



Linda Rae Murray, Cynthia Harris



Luis Sepulveda



Susana Almanza



Young Hi Shin, Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Michael Fischer, John Adams, Charon Asetoyer



Pat Bryant



Dana Alston



Donna Chavis



Richard Moore, Jeanne Gauna, Leah Wise



Makini Coleman, Mililani Trask, Gail Small



Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., Jeton Anjain, Toney Anaya



Charles Lee, Syngman Rhee



Jean Sapp



Closing Ceremony

MOVING BEYOND THE BARRIERS

DANA ALSTON
Senior Program Officer
Panos Institute
Washington, D.C.

Many would not envy the responsibility I have here this morning. Out of the 300 delegates that have come here, it was I who was selected to respond for us, the delegates -- not to react to the environmentalists who have come here today. Our movement is not a reaction to the environmental movement. We have come here to define for ourselves the issues of the ecology and the environment. We have to speak these truths that we know from our lives to those participants and observers whom we have invited here to join us. We have come for you to hear our understandings from our mouths directly, so there will be no confusion and no misunderstandings.

ENVIRONMENTALISM AND THE CRITICAL ISSUES OF OUR TIME

For us, the issues of the environment do not stand alone by themselves. They are not narrowly defined. Our vision of the environment is woven into an overall framework of social, racial and economic justice. It is deeply rooted in our cultures and our spirituality. It is based in a long tradition and understanding and respect for the natural world. The environment, for us, is where we live, where we work and where we play.

The environment affords us the platform to address the critical issues of our time: questions of militarism and defense policy; religious freedom; cultural survival; energy and sustainable development; the future of our cities; transportation; housing; land and sovereignty rights; self-determination; and employment. We can go on and on.

We understand nuclear development and militarism. Native people die at every single level of nuclear development from the mining of uranium at the beginning of the process to the processing of nuclear material. The Havasupi have told us about their struggle with uranium mining. The Native Americans for a Clean Environment have spoken about Sequoia Fuels. We understand underground nuclear testing and its environmental and health impacts from the Western Shoshone. We know

about the ultimate end of this nuclear process, i.e., the targeting of Native land for the disposal of nuclear wastes.

We understand the issues of transportation. We all saw the earthquake in San Francisco and we saw the highway entrance ramp collapse. That highway goes through the middle of a black community. We all know where all the highways go through around the cities in this country; they go through our communities. So the Clean Air Alternative Coalition in the Bay Area has built a multiracial movement to deal with where they are going to rebuild that highway.

We know these things from our daily lives. We know the issue of the environment is a housing issue. We know what Marjorie Moore has told us -- we realize that black and Latino children who have been poisoned by lead. But the media didn't want to talk about that too much, until they found out that white children also had lead poisoning.

We know about how racism works in this country. We have heard the delegates about the boycott of Levi Strauss and how Latino women have been crippled by making Docker Jeans. When they were so crippled and they couldn't work anymore, the company closes down with no notice. The workers come back from Christmas vacation to find out that they don't have a job. After asking the company before Christmas, "Are you going to close?" They were told, "Oh, no." So the women went out and bought Christmas presents, bought the trees, celebrated the holidays with their family, only to come back from the Christmas holiday to their gift -- a pink slip. And that company then moves where? To Latin America, where they cripple and poison there.

ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT RESTRUCTURING

We realize that the environmental movement is restructuring, floundering, and in some sense searching for a new vision at this time. Environmentalists know that the majority of this

society has clearly said that the environment is one of the chief concerns in their lives. But the environmental organizations haven't been able to come to grips with how to tap into all of that concern. So there is an attempt to merge several movements with the environmental movement.

There is an attempt to merge the population movement with the environmental movement. Population is a fast-growing issue. But when we're talking about population control, whose population are they talking about controlling? We have experienced this population issue before. We experienced them in the 1970's. People of color do not look at population issues in the same way. When you come to talk to us about population, you have to understand that black women in Harlem and throughout the South have been the victims of sterilization without consent. Latino and Asian people represent the statistics that has been put together by the population movement, and used by the right wing to institute repressive immigration legislation. We would like to see some population folk go and talk to our Native American brothers and sisters about limiting their population growth, knowing that they have been the victims of genocide.

We have had to confront in the past advocates of eugenics who want to control population to create a pure, white, strong, highly intellectual race. So be very careful before you start pushing population issues in our communities. You might be liable to get your feelings hurt. Because when you raise population issues you must understand the historical role of racism in this issue.

Now we also have an attempt to merge the environmental movement with the peace movement.

We understand this to be a good thing because we see the role of militarism and defense policy in this issue clearly. When the East and West power struggles were going on in the past, the wars generated from that tension were fought among peoples of color around the world. When people of color went to the peace movement and said, "Yes, we would like to talk to you about peace and war but we also would like to talk to you about South Africa." And they said, "Oh, yeah, that's a terrible situation, but you really need to understand this weapon system." When we wanted to talk about Central America and Grenada, they said, "Yes, yes, okay, okay -- but right now we need to talk to you about Star Wars. You need to educate your community about Star Wars." Today, an even

harder question would be: "What about justice for the Palestinian people?" When we talk about building a coalition, our concerns also have to be brought to the table and dealt with.

We all understand the impact of underground nuclear testing on our environment. We have heard the peace movement speak to the ramifications of underground nuclear testing. But as I hear the environmentalists and the peace movement talk about this issue, and we see their films and their literature, we can visually see what is happening. Never do we see the issue of race come out of their mouths, the fact that the Soviets tested their bombs in an Asian republic among Asian people. The British tested their bombs on aboriginal land in Australia. The French tested their bombs in Algeria and in the South Pacific. The U.S. are testing their bombs right now on western Shoshone land here in the United States. This is the legacy of colonialism and racism, but you don't ever hear that come out their mouths.

Our brothers and sisters have been sharing with you today tales about the targeting of our communities for waste and poison and hazardous industries. As it gets more difficult to place wastes here in this country, there is an attempt to move them around the world. And where is it going? The same places that it has been going here: where people are poor; where people are powerless; and where people are not white -- in Africa, in Latin America, in Asia, in the Middle East. It is the same pattern.

CHALLENGE TO ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

What should be the basis of our relationship with the environmental movement? I agree with our guests about what is needed for the basis of the partnership. The Gulf Coast Tenants Organization and the Southwest Organizing Project sent letters to many environmental organizations. The Southwest Organizing Project's letter was signed by hundreds of people and sent to all the major environmental/conservation organizations with a challenge. In that challenge was more than just a diversity issue of how many people you hire and who is on your board. Now, that is an important thing, but in the lineup of priority issues in that challenge, diversification is toward the bottom. The issue of diversity is one that environmental organizations and the media could get their hands on.

The real basis of the challenge is how some of the actions and the policies of environmental organizations have a drastic impact on the economic, social and political life of our communities. We know that the boards of directors of some of the environmental organizations are the very companies that we are struggling against. I had to struggle long and hard to decide whether we were going to name some names today. But the sister from Hawaii who really touched me and moved me told us that her delegation traveled 15 hours on a plane to get here. So I cannot really leave this room without telling some truths here because I need to be able to look that sister straight in the eye.

We know that the National Wildlife Federation and the National Audubon Society has Waste Management, Inc. (WMI) on their boards. And that we know that one of the chief perpetrators of environmental injustice in this country is Waste Management, Inc. We know that Waste Management, Inc. placed the largest hazardous waste landfill in the U.S. in Emelle, Alabama -- a community of poor black people. We know that Waste Management, Inc. is trying to site this incinerator in Kettleman City, where folks are struggling in court charging environmental racism. Three existing and two proposed WMI hazardous waste incinerators are in neighborhoods composed predominantly of people of color. We know that Waste Management Inc. has a hand in the destruction of the South Side of Chicago. We know the company well. What we don't know is why they're on the boards of The National Wildlife Federation and the National Audubon Society. It's your actions and policies that we want to deal with. It's important that our brothers and sisters get hired to work in your organizations, but it's what you do and how you do it that's most important to us.

Now we have to talk about some of the real big ones, i.e., the World Wildlife Fund and Nature Conservancy. Raising money to save the rain forests is important because they are the lungs of the world. But what we cannot accept are these organizations going into "debt-for-nature swap" agreements under the premise of helping developing countries reduce their debt and preserving the rain forests and biodiversity. These agreements are made with total disregard for the indigenous people who have lived there for centuries. These swaps are made without the participation or permission of the true owners of that land, the people who have lived as one, in true harmony, with the land for centuries.

Here in the United States, the Nature Conservancy buys huge tracts of land in the Southwest, displacing Chicano and Native American peoples' abilities to continue to live and draw sustenance from land where they have lived, worked and played for decades. Again, this is done without their permission or their participation. It's just not overseas, it's right here at home.

On the issue of biodiversity, we are dealing with the practice of organizations, corporations and universities going into developing countries and acquiring rare plants and flowers. These are needed for a cure to cancer and a cure to AIDS. We have no quarrel with that, but that is not the issue. The issue is that of a new colonialism, just like they came from the North and took our diamonds, our gold, our uranium and everything else. Now they are coming to take the plants and the flowers with no compensation. It took 10,000 years for indigenous people to understand the connection between specific plants and specific illnesses. The scientists are saying, "It's going to take us a hundred years to test all these plants and find out what indigenous people already know. So now they are coming to get the intellectual property (what people know in their heads), again without compensation.

BASIS FOR A JUST PARTNERSHIP

We are interested in making a partnership and a relationship. But as resources become available from foundations and donors, we have to understand that environmental organizations might go out in the name of working with us and raise a lot of money. While our organizations continue to struggle over every penny and every dollar, we need the resources to build and sustain the capabilities of our own organizations. These organizations are self-determined, deeply rooted in our communities, and truly capable of dealing with our issues.

What we seek is a relationship based on equity, mutual respect, mutual interest, and justice. We refuse narrow definitions. It is not just ancient forests; it is not just saving the whales or saving other endangered species. These are all very important. We understand the life cycle and the interconnectedness of life. But our communities and our people are endangered species, too. We refuse a paternalistic relationship. We are not interested in a parent-child relationship. Your organizations may be or may not be older than ours. Your organiza-

tions definitely have more money than ours. But if you are to form a partnership with us, it will be as equals and nothing else but equals.

We have learned these lessons from past movements. The women's movement, for example, seemed unable to come to grips with diversifying themselves. They were unable to really work across race lines, across class lines, and were unable to bring men into it. To create structural change, you cannot do it from a narrow part of the population. We have learned this. We have learned this from the peace movement, who still have problems with dealing with justice issues.

It takes all of us. We have, for the last 10 years, worked on this challenge. First we were real nice

and we tried to talk. Then the letters came out from the Gulf Coast Tenants and the Southwest Organizing Project to the environmentalists. It wasn't until the newspapers said "environmental racism" that we started getting more attention. But we have spoken on this; we have written extensively on this; we have laid out what is needed for a just partnership. So, gentlemen (representatives of the Sierra Club and the Natural Resources Defense Council), the only thing I have to say is, it is up to you who have come here today and laid out your understanding, to challenge your brothers and sisters on this. It cannot continue to be our role alone to keep raising this issue and keep going through a lot of changes about it. We will continue our challenge from the outside. You must confront the situation within yourselves and your colleagues.

FLOOR DISCUSSION

Carter Camp, Campaign for Sovereignty, Red Rock, Oklahoma: I am from the Ponca Nation. I represent the oldest conservation group in this nation. I had intended, Mr. Chairman, to express my gratitude to you and the people who have led this conference, but in the interest of time I want to dispense with that, and I will tell you personally later how much I appreciate this.

Indian people recognize four sacred colors. In the first part of this conference, we gathered together three of those colors -- one color was missing. During that conference we were able to come together in a unity that I have never seen in all my years as an activist. Yet, in order to complete that circle so we can be effective, we must have that missing color come amongst us. So this last half of the Summit is very important to us. It is very important for us to allow these participants and observers to understand what is happening in this United States of America.

Over the years Indian people have had many dealings with conservationists and environmentalists. Those dealings were almost universally bad for Indian people. They were almost universally bad because of one reason, and that reason is a racism that refuses to see Indian people as human beings and wants to treat us as a natural resource also.

One of the things that galvanized and inspired the environmental movement was the scene in the frozen northlands of some Indian people whacking out some baby seals. It galvanized the environmental movement to show the world these animals getting whacked by Indian people. The world saw their beautiful little eyes and knew that those seals were going to die. So they started giving money to the environmentalists to stop that. They did stop that, and perhaps that practice was wrong. But who looked at why those people came to do that? Who looked at the fact that, in the 1800's, the tribe was removed to that island and forced to do that labor. That is the only way they could subsist. No matter how brutalized they may have been, these men also saw beautiful eyes. They saw beautiful eyes of their children that they had to feed. The environmentalists didn't look at them as human beings. They took their livelihood from them and reduced them to even more poverty.

I would like to talk a little bit about the people that hate to see us wear furs on our bodies. Many of our people, particularly in Canada and Alaska, utilize the natural environment for their food. In the Indian way, we believe in utilizing the entire animal. We don't believe in taking that fur and throwing it away and wasting it -- we wear it, we utilize it for our warmth and for our bodies, and we will continue to do so. But never have we driven one of our animal relatives to extinction, and we will never do that.

Many times the environmental movement have been told about the Indian regard for this planet -- the Indian regard for the sacredness of our Mother Earth. But to them it has always seemed like a mystical, far-out statement by Indian people. But the fact is, our regard for the natural circle of life on this earth is based on a scientific fact that America is only now becoming to realize. The sacredness of Mother Earth is something that we, as Indian people, want to give as our gift to the environmental movement. And when they can understand that, and when they can bring America to understand that, we are going to be able to live in harmony on this Mother Earth. In this conference, when it consisted only of people of color, I have finally been able to find people that understand us -- the black and the yellow people that have gathered together with the red people here understand what we were saying. And it has touched my heart, and I thank you for that.

Now I want to be very specific about the way that the environmental movement could help Indian people. A terrible underhanded collusion has been formed between the waste companies and the Interior Department. They have decided -- in a very cynical exploitation of reservation poverty -- to make the little land that we have left. They think that by waving their big-money trash dollars they can force Indian people to accept America's waste. And I am going to tell you, we do not want your waste. If you use it, you can keep it.

On my reservation we have Conoco's headquarters, the largest oil refinery in this country. There is a creek that flows out past that refinery, down through our reservation. It used to be a creek that we had

drinking water from. Our people call it Stink Creek because its oil and benzene is now used to cure mangy dogs. But that's the only way that we could use the water now from Stink Creek.

The attacks, based on the Interior Department domination of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, are going on in every reservation in this country. In the last two years, my organization, the Campaign for Sovereignty in American Indian Movement, has stopped five of these waste plans in my immediate neighborhood. We stopped a toxic waste injection well; we stopped a waste tech incinerator; we stopped them from spreading sewage sludge from New York; we stopped a plan to bring in solid wastes from Chicago and Cleveland. All these we did without the resources that we need. All these things we did on our own, without support.

We were able to do these things because our people have a sovereign right to govern their own lands. Now there is a move afoot in the U.S. Congress to take away that sovereignty from the nations and to provide a path through the EPA guidelines for these companies to come and establish themselves on the reservation. We need help in Congress. We need help from every person in America that can call a Congressman and say, "These toxic-waste dumps must be barred from Indian land." They should not be used as the economic development mode for the Indian tribe, because they are not real.

Last night Jesse Jackson talked about the fact that Washington, D.C. needs statehood. Washington, D.C. does need statehood, because they can't vote in presidential elections. Indian people were only made citizens in 1924, the last of all America's minorities. And right now we are like Washington, DC. We can vote for our tribal councils and our tribal representatives, but we have no voice in the American Congress; we have no voice in the American Senate; we have no voice in the United Nations. There are no Native people represented in any of these bodies that govern our lands and govern our lives. As Washington, DC needs statehood, Indian people need two senators in this Congress. We need four representatives in the Congress, and their only constituency will be Indian people; the only people they answer to will be Indian people, and they will represent us in the Congress of the United States.

George Bush made a big deal, in his Indian policy statement, of welcoming the Indian nations to the family of sovereignties upon this mother in

America. He welcomed us as sovereign nations, and every President, every Supreme Court, from George Washington to George Bush, has recognized our sovereignty. But why are Indian people the only people that has to go outside their sovereignty and ask someone else to represent them in a Congress? Doesn't the Constitution say, "No taxation with representation?" We pay taxes -- where's our representation? We want to be represented by red people because we are red people. We demand a voice in America's government.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr. (Moderator): I am prepared to listen as long as people have something to say. However, we have a logistical problem. If we are going to have the workshops we need to make some decisions in terms of the Summit itself. If we continue to have a long time in here, it is going to sacrifice those strategy and policy workshops. So what I would like to ask the sisters and brothers who would like to say something to please do it in brevity. You notice my style is, I have not interrupted anybody because I've been trying to be fair. I always to end on the spiritual way in which we began, because there has been a certain spirit that has flown through here. Even though we have had some disagreements on some points, the spirit of unity has held, has prevailed, and I want to make sure that is the character of the Summit throughout.

Maurice Sampson, Urban Recycling Institute, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: *Makes announcement for meeting to collaborate on the issues of the urban environment.*

Devon Pena, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado: What does it mean to be Chicano? As was pointed out yesterday, we were a people born 500 years ago. We are the offspring of a raped culture, of all the Native peoples of America who were raped, first by the Spaniards and then by other people who came in. For those of us in the Southwest who are dealing with environmental issues from a cultural survival point of view, we say this to the environmental organizations: You cannot solve the environmental problems of the Southwest without addressing the land-grant claims of indigenous Chicano people. You cannot separate the land-grant issue from the environmental issue. These points apply to the case of the Taylor Ranch in Costilla County, Colorado, and others regions.

When you look at the founding documents that established in 1891 the Carson National Forest and the U.S. Forest Service, you will find that these were our common lands which were stolen without any compensation or due process. Moreover, when you look at those founding documents, you will find that they were pristine. We took care of those lands. When you look at the work of Aldo Leopold (the founder of "environmental land ethics") and the U.S. Forest Service Archives in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, New Mexico, as I have been doing for 10 years now researching this question, you will find that we took care of these lands.

These lands were pristine when they were converted to the public domain after 1891. We need those lands back -- not only because they are rightfully ours, but because our local cultures in this region, are as endangered as the spotted owl. Furthermore, we have a sustainable agri-ecology in place. A lot of what we have discussed at this Summit focuses on the very serious damage being done to our environment. We need to realize that there are alternatives out there already. The environmental movement recognizes this, to some extent, in terms of the ethnoscientific traditions of rice farmers of Bali or the Yanomami Tribe and the Mebengokre of the Xingu Watershed, both in the Amazon Rain Forest.

Chicanos and Native Americans also have ethno-science. We have sustainable agriculture that is being undermined, not just by the industrial mining and the water barons, like American Water Development, Inc., but by the environmentalists, like Nature Conservancy and other organizations, who either steal our land in the name of conservation or who ignore our pleas for help. I have a recommendation to make to the Big Ten: Establish a multimillion-dollar community land-trust fund so that we can buy back our land. Congress isn't going to do it, and certainly the U.S. Forest Service or the Bureau of Land Management isn't going to give it back to us. Help us buy our land base and water base back.

Lutrece Rutland, Alabama New South Coalition, Tuskegee, Alabama: I am a youth organizer who is grassroots oriented, grassroots funded and grassroots committed. So often, when we talk about the future of inclusion with other groups, we fail to talk about the growth from within. Many of these organizations who have money are recruiting our youth away from the grassroots, and eventually because of this our kids will become our environmental adversaries. As we discuss the future, we

must discuss the youth and grassroots orientation, i.e., teaching, organizing, mentoring, reciprocating.

I am yielding to the desires of the youth group that met yesterday. The youth met and have something to say to this grassroots Summit, and we are trying to be as respectful as possible to the plan that is in place. But we want to make sure that before this conference ends that we are a very functional part of that plan, so that we can begin to attract our peers. So I hope that the youth will be listened to very seriously. We have worked very hard to make sure that, with all due credits to the history, we will say that we are going to be the spark that keeps this thing moving. And we understand, to some extent, for every spark there is some friction. But it takes friction to get the engine going.

Louis Elisa, Boston NAACP Chapter, Boston, Massachusetts: We have to keep our eye on the prize. We have to remember what we are here for. We can spend all of our energy and time trying to address an issue which has gone on long before us, but, we came here for a reason. Part of that reason is to begin to network and talk with each other and develop our own environmental movement. In this whole process, let us not leave here without having that organization in place, a plan for a process that allows us to have a continuing dialogue, continuing communications -- maybe a think tank, maybe an organizational homeland, so that we can begin to address our issues as a people.

In addition, those who work in so-called environmental movements have to begin to refocus the definition of environment. You clearly have to begin to look at the environment as a whole, as each person has told you, from the Native Americans to those who come from the islands that are under colonial oppression. As organizations that consider yourselves to be environmentalists, you have to begin to redefine the environment. You not only have to begin to work with grassroots organizations, but you have to begin to look at the urban areas of this nation, the homes of 60 percent of our population, as being a very integral part of the environment.

We are not going to have a successful environmental movement until you begin to do that and to make sure that your resources are available so that we train the youth of this nation to understand that the issue of the environment doesn't begin with what happens in the oceans and the bays but what happens in their homes. I hope that you will be

thinking about using your resources and time to invigorate, to sponsor and to make sure that the education of all our youth take place. I can tell you for a fact that in the city of Boston and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, though we did not play much part in polluting Massachusetts Bay, we all have a part in cleaning it up. And, unfortunately, those who have the least, in terms of economic resources, pay the most, in terms of penalty on the environment.

Jay Feldman, National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, Washington, D.C.: I want to be frank about an issue that has divided us in the environmental community. As long as we allow unnecessary poisons to be used in the production of food, we will allow the poisons to flow through the production pipeline. We have to make that connection in everything we do as environmental groups and public-health groups. And yet, I am worried that we leave here today, and lobbyists for both the Sierra Club and NRDC go up on Capitol Hill on Monday and, in effect, either by their silence or actively support the passage of legislation that is now before Congress that endorses the idea of acceptable risk, of negligible risk, which doesn't take into account the fact that we are using unnecessary carcinogens, amino toxins, neurotoxins in the production of food. I am also worried that we will not confront our friends in Congress. (cites the Kennedy sponsored Safety of Pesticides in Food Act)

We cannot, on the one hand, say that we don't want to see community people poisoned, and on the other hand support negligible risk, acceptable-risk legislation which gives to EPA the discretionary authority to use risk assessment in a way that allows the genocide you've heard about here today to continue. It undermines sustainable agriculture; it undermines food safety; and it undermines the fact that we want to shut down a lot of these production facilities, or convert them to safer technologies.

The same thing is happening with our export legislation. That bill is protecting the consumers of food imported back into the United States that's grown with banned pesticides. It is not protecting workers in developing countries to which we export technologies that cannot be handled safely. You two guys alone can turn these two situations around overnight. You two guys [Mr. Fischer and Mr. Adams] can send a letter which says, "We do not support negligible risk. We do not support EPA risk assessment." It is genocide for the community

of people I've met with this weekend, and you can stop Mr. Leahy from allowing his rhetoric to promote legislation that continues to dump on the Third World. I would like a response.

John Adams, Natural Resources Defense Council, New York, N.Y.: I will answer very briefly by saying that NRDC has spent 15 years working on pesticide issues, and it has been one of the principal issues. We have worked with farmworkers throughout the country, and I cannot answer what we are going to do on this specific legislation, because I am not certain of the details. But I think that our record is very clear on the work that we have done on this issue on behalf of farm workers throughout this country.

Michael Fischer, Sierra Club, San Francisco, California: I don't know about that specific piece of legislation. As you heard me say, we are in the fight of our lives right now on S-1220 (Arctic Wildlife Refuge Bill), and we are devoting a lot of resources to that. I will, first thing Monday morning, talk to our legislative director and, if possible, get out the kind of letter that you're talking about. I don't know whether any of us knows the details of this bill, or whether we are in a position to affect the committees that it is in. But if we can do something, we will.

Male (Unidentified): I work for the Fair Trade Campaign. I ask a very specific question on behalf of women along the border who are working in the Maquiladora sweatshops operated by U.S. corporations that have decided to close down their factories. These same companies closed down and put the women out of work in San Antonio and are constantly scouring the globe for the poorest, most desperate people who will accept any conditions of work because they have no other choice. The group of women who have organized their association along the border asked for help from environmental organizations. They went to the National Toxics Campaign Fund and they got help from them. They even got help from the Sierra Club. They are very proud that you are helping them in Washington, D.C. right now to stop the Free Trade Agreement that is making it possible for U.S. corporations to operate throughout the globe and do things to other, poorer, more desperate people they would never be able to get away with in this country. And their question to Mr. Adams is that they feel betrayed by you. Because these women, who have struggled for a decade to organize themselves to try and improve conditions, they are making 60 cents an hour. They

are not allowed to take bathroom breaks; they are being exposed to toxic chemicals on the job and in their communities that would be illegal in this country but are an everyday occurrence there. When they ask for your help, and when they ask you to stop the railroading of the legislation that was going to ram through this Free Trade Agreement without any discussion, debate, without any amendments, some organizations came through -- the Sierra Club and others stood by. But they tell us that your organization was personally lobbied by William Reilly at the EPA, and personally by President Bush. And when push came to shove in the final hour, you lined up against them, and with the White House, and prevented that discussion, that debate, and, instead, have been appointed to sit on a committee, along with The National Wildlife Federation, The World Wildlife Federation. And those organizations are now sitting on advisory committees, while the folks who are working on the border have had their position undercut. And the question is simply this: They ask if you will please come to the border and visit them in their homes and their communities and their factories before you make any more decisions that affect their lives. And if you will be so inclined to honor them with a visit, so that they could explain their situation to you, they would appreciate it if you would respond right now about the opportunity to come and make that visit.

John Adams, Natural Resources Defense Council, New York, N.Y.: Absolutely, I will be pleased to go down there. And we have supported the Free Trade Agreement, and we have received a lot of support from within the communities of color because of our position on supporting the Free Trade Agreement. There may be controversy on both sides here. We will not support any issue in the Free Trade Agreement that does not protect environmental values and public health values on both sides of the border, and we think that it is time that we tried to help our friends across the border get some of their issues elevated, too.

Michael Gelobter, Assistant Commissioner, Dept. of Environmental Protection, New York, N.Y.: I speak today as a trained professional environmentalist of color. I speak with some knowledge of the environmental movement, of environmentalism, from the mainstream perspective as well, because I was trained in a mainstream [academic] program. As a child of the 60's, I want to basically say that people should understand that the mainstream environmental movement was, in

fact, a reaction to the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the antiwar movement and the movement to end poverty. It was, in many ways, a successful reaction. Today, it is not inconceivable that I could be the environmental director of Dow Chemical. The environmental movement has, contrary to the corporate belief, created more jobs than it has eliminated. But the question is for whom those jobs have been created. Who works in the Sierra Club? Who works in the industries that build the scrubbers and develop catalytic converters?

So, I want to talk a little bit about the things that the environmental movement has left behind, because we have to remember that it was a reaction to our movements. You are even less diverse, in many ways, than the corporations that you fight. Their modus operandi is all too familiar to us when we look at the way in which you operate. So we wonder why we got left behind. Today is an opportunity to start redressing that, but it is going to take fundamental change. Within environmental laws are institutionalized many of the things we fought for in the 60's. In environmental action we see a lot of nonviolent direct action; in environmental laws we have the right to sue the government for a clean environment. And we must remember that Martin Luther King, and others in the 60's, believed that our Constitution and our laws also guaranteed not just a clean environment, but a job, housing and education. The environmental movement must join us in making sure that those are rights that we can enjoy, not just sue for.

Nilo Cayuqueno, South and Meso-American Indian Information Center, Oakland, California: I am Mapuche Indian from the Southwest of Argentina. Next week, I am going to a meeting of the Committee of Indigenous People of the Bolivian Rain Forest Basin. We are working with over two hundreds indigenous organizations and communities in Mexico, South and Central America. As an indigenous and Third World person, I want to say that we do believe in partnership. In fact, the meeting in Bolivia will be about making alliances with environmental organizations around the world.

But we have testimonies from the Conoco Oil Company, from the minutes of meetings where you (Natural Resources Defense Council) would participate. They indicate that you were trying to negotiate with the Indian people, in trying to set up a trust and the interest going to the Indian people, but in return the Indian people should let the

company build the road in order to exploit the natural resources in the Indian land in the rain forest of Ecuador.

We need to talk frankly with you, and with all people, because this type of thing has been going on for years. Many of the environmental organizations based in United States today are negotiating with the companies or the governments to set up a national park, when this land has belonged to the indigenous people practically forever. We think that it is not right for any U.S. organization to negotiate with any corporation or any government on our behalf.

Not only are the organizations here, like National Wildlife Federation or World Life Federation, and the national conservancies, are negotiating with industry and government, but they also are trying to divide some of the community. For example in Bolivia, the natural conservancies are trying to pay some of the Indian community a salary, in order they can get support from them. They are trying to divide the community against the unity of our people.

I want to talk in a positive way. I would like to talk to you and all our allies, because we think we need you. But I think we need you to understand and to consult with indigenous people on these issues before you make any decisions. I would like to make an invitation to talk frankly. And I am glad that these gentlemen [from the environmental organizations] were invited here so that we can have a dialogue.

Cynthia Harris, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Atlanta, Georgia: First of all, I would like to thank the committee for inviting me here. I feel honored to be a delegate at this conference. It is precedent-setting what we are here for the good of people of color on the subject of environmental contamination.

It is very important that I say this first, before I tell you what my name is. Some of you already know me. The panel this morning charged all of us to take responsibility -- not only industry, but government as well -- to look at the impact of environmental contamination on our communities. If you remember, one particular woman by the name of Hazel Johnson gave a very compelling talk about her community's health concerns. She said, "We brought them to the attention of the Centers for Disease Control and the ATSDR, and if Cynthia

Harris is here, I'm sorry but I'm going to tell the truth." Well, I am Cynthia Harris... And the first thing that I wanted to let you know is that Hazel does not owe me or my [government] agency any kind of apology. If anything, based upon the resources that we had to address the health concerns of Southeast Chicago and the time frame that it took to finally start to get those concerns addressed, we owe her an apology. So I am going to take time to do that.

Hazel Johnson's community has a special place in my heart. When the Centers for Disease Control first started looking at that community, they said it was too big. It is a 65-square mile area and we just cannot do a health study. The community had no other recourse but to petition the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to do a health assessment on this site. Well, God works in mysterious ways. In April of 1990, the Agency chose a little African American black scientist from Kansas to head up a branch called the Community Health Branch and address the health concerns of communities whose sites may not be on the National Priority List.

I started looking at what we had to do and noticed that the Southeast Chicago community's health concerns had not been addressed. We went to the Assistant Administrator and said that we have to do something. As a result, we did not turn that petition down and we are currently very active in Southeast Chicago. We have started holding community panels of persons nominated by the community. We fly in from Atlanta to their communities. They hold the community meetings. They nominated the people to guide us because no one knows better what's happening in that community than the community people themselves. What we have started is a prototype for community panels across the country. It is the very first one that we have had, and we will continue to have many more.

I just want to leave by saying, for all of my health-care professional colleagues -- whether or not you are in public health, academia, the state or the local sector. You must remember that the struggle and the responsibility that you had in getting those positions. Contrary to popular belief, you did not get those positions without the blood, sweat and tears of some people that are in cemeteries right now and others who have gone to jail. As far as your responsibility is concerned, it would be morally and ethically wrong for you not to at least make sure that your own communities are taken care of.

Christina Bryant, Seventh Generation, New York, N.Y.: My ancestors are of three nations: two are indigenous and one was brought over when the indigenous people were killed. We talk about corporations here, but we have to remember that the corporations are made up of people. And the mind-set that came over here with that first ship is still here. The philosophies of Native people are the basis for the Constitution of this country and organization of the states, and the foods that we develop have fed the world. The growth of Europe came from the riches from this land.

I put together a program in New York to teach the three R's, based on the philosophies of Native people. It has been two years that I have had my license with the Board of Education, and I believe that one of the things that we have to really think about is changing that mind-set. Our children are growing up and they are going to school. Indigenous people teach their children from very, very young to have respect for other people and, more importantly, to have respect and responsibility for the earth.

Sarah James, Gwich'in Nation, Arctic Village, Alaska: I was raised up on the land. My parents never worked for wages, and I never learned how to speak English -- up to 13 years old. I finished high school within a six-year time, and I learned that the outside world is cruel and great greed and waste, and it is still happening. Animal rights groups came along and said that we can't trap. Well, that's how I grew up, and that's how my father made a living for us. It shows that they don't know the spiritual belief around using the land -- when I look at the land, my life depends on it. When I look at the mountain, my life depends on it. I need to climb that mountain for something to eat and to gather berries or medicine. I don't go there just to prove how high I can get up; or how different it is from other places. That does not mean anything to me. My life depends on the mountain. And although my life depends on it, I have to take care of it, and in return it will take care of me.

When they talk about animal rights, they say that Indians have no right to take animals. Well, this is how we see it. We have a spiritual relationship between the animal and the Indian people that use [the animal]. What they should stop is Ninja Turtle exploiting other animals' spirituality. We have respect; we don't dress animals in human dress. That's the kind of relationship we have; they should

stop Piggy and Froggy. I can't even keep up with what they exploit out there, because I can't understand it. For Indians to go back to the things that work for them, we have to go back to our sacred ways. In order for this movement to work, the sacred way is Indian dancing. It is not a show; it is not entertainment. We do it for our life, to continue living in this harmony with the environment. And our religion is good. There is nothing secret or magic about it; it is just respecting Mother Earth. And in order to get back in control, we have to take our sacred ways. We have to take the wooden statue of the Indian away from the cigar, cigarette, tobacco shop, and we gotta stop exploiting the "red skins."

There are many things that as Indians, we have spirit and sacred belief that we respect, and in return respect Mother Earth -- in return, she'll take care of us.

Ernie Witt, West County Toxics Coalition, Richmond, California: I have been fighting in the trenches for 18 years. I have been out here fighting in trenches. I have never been paid for what I've done. I enjoy what I am doing, helping people in all communities. But I noticed a rise in the awareness of people in the last 10 years, especially people of color around the country. Our organization started out approximately 17 years ago, and I was not aware that they had any environmental organizations that was run by people of color around the country. Now I see them springing up all over the places. In Richmond, we have as our neighbors approximately 60 chemical-producing companies and two oil refineries. We have three incinerators in our area. We have a cancer rate 40% higher than any other place in California. They have attributed this to our lifestyle. I know it's a lie, and everybody else knows it's a lie. I've been all over the United States, and we've got to address this problem in the right way. I think and I feel that we must look into our political and judicial system. We must do a march on Washington to stop the moving in and the hazardous dumping into our people of color communities, and we got to do it now!

Bradley Angel, Greenpeace, San Francisco, California: I want to thank you all for inviting us to participate in what is truly a historic conference. For several years, we have been working in many of your communities. We have had the privilege of being invited into your communities to work hand in hand in your struggles that are on the front lines

of the fight for environmental justice. And I am proud to say that Greenpeace realizes that the fight for clean air and the fight for clean water is a fight for justice, a fight for democracy, is a fight to control what happens in all of our own communities. Greenpeace understands that this is a fight for a clean workplace and for toxic-free neighborhoods, and we will continue working with you.

On June 7-9, 1991, there was another historic conference, called "Protecting Mother Earth: The Toxic Threat to Indian Lands." It was held at the sacred mountain of the Lakota and Cheyenne people called Bear Butte in South Dakota. Over 500 indigenous delegates came together at that conference, which was hosted by the Lakota people of Pine Ridge and Rosebud, and their organizations that have successfully fought to keep the waste companies off their land. The delegates decided to form the Indigenous Environmental Network. They also issued a challenge, to all of us and, specifically to the environmental movement. They adopted a code of environmental ethics, in which they challenged all our organizations to agree that we, the environmental groups, will not speak for the communities of color and indigenous people. They challenged us not to make deals with the polluters that are raping and pillaging the land.

Greenpeace has learned much from your struggles. We are inspired by your struggles in East Los Angeles, California (where the Mothers of East L.A. stopped an incinerator), to the Navajo people

of Dealcon, Nevada (who decided for themselves that they didn't want to turn their land into a toxic dumping ground), to the people of Kettleman City, California (who will stop the incinerator that is being proposed). I am glad to say that we have been standing with them, at their invitation. Environmental groups, I believe, must work in communities of any sort only by invitation in a manner and in a role that they are invited to play by those communities themselves. And we ask the other environmental groups to throw the polluters off your board of directors, to stop taking the money from Waste Management, and to go to Kettleman City, and to go to these other communities.

Last November 14th, a so-called public hearing regarding Kettleman City, California was held 40 miles from this Spanish-speaking community in the white community of Hanford. The people of Kettleman City drove in buses to voice their democratic rights and say what they wanted to do with their community. When the Spanish-speaking farmworkers at Kettleman walked into that room, they were told by the racist government officials that all the Spanish speakers should go to the back of the room. I am inspired to say that in the spirit of Rosa Parks, they refused. With the cry "Adalante," they went to the front to claim their rightful spot.

Greenpeace was proud to be part of their struggle; it is proud to be part of your struggle. We hope we can continue to contribute and improve the way that we participate.

BANQUET PROGRAM

OCTOBER 26, 1991

8:00 P.M.

OPENING STATEMENT

HENRIETTA MANN

*American Indian Religious Freedom Act Coalition
New York, N.Y.*

A long time ago, when we were set upon this earth and were given our ways as the Cheyenne people, the greatest of our two prophets came out of Bear Peak carrying four sacred arrows. And as he came out, he was preceded by one of the four sacred beings of the four directions, who carried some sweet grass with him. And with that sweet grass, he purified the entire world. Tonight, I think that is a way of purifying our hearts, our minds, our spirits, our voices. You honor me by having me here. I cannot ever remember having the opportunity to offer the prayer and to speak at a gathering of this type.

One of the things that I am going to ask for in my prayer is that all of us be very thankful for life, which is the most precious and the most cherished of all guests. I am going to ask that the food you are going to eat will bring you good health, happiness, and long life so that you walk in a very strong and sacred way across this earth as you journey from the Creator back to the Creator. And that as you go, you be blessed with the good heart, mind, and spirit to accomplish what it is that you want for this earth, who is our grandmother. It is she who gives us life. If we can but take but one second to think of our grandmothers or our mothers, we know that we cherish them.

We have used the term called "environment." In our language, the word acknowledges the Great Spirit and his creation. We have to be very carefully when we use words and how we define them. We are all inter-dependent. We are all related. Our wise elders say that everything in this world is composed of four elements: earth, air, fire, and water, all in different compositions. And if we are all made up of the same substances, then we are all related. Our hearts are the same; our spirits are the same; our voices are the same.

Of all the things about which we differ as a people, we should never differ over religion. Yet I am here because the courts of this land have taken a very hostile posture toward American Indians, and have essentially eroded and withdrawn our First Amendment rights under the United States Constitution. When one of the Supreme Court Justices ruled against the use of peyote as a sacrament for the members of Native American church, he also directed that legislation was the avenue for us to regain our religious freedom. I think that it is ironic and tragic that the very people who were first to love and to live with creation are having to legislate their religious freedom as a people. I hope that when you hear of the American Indian Religions Freedom Act you will support it and join our coalition.

A TRIBUTE TO JETON ANJAIN

TONEY ANAYA

*Governor, State of New Mexico (1983-87)
Santa Fe, New Mexico*

It is a tremendous privilege to bring to you a living example of why we have gathered here tonight. I present to you Senator Jeton Anjain. For over twenty years has represented the people of Rongelap in the Marshall Islands, in a grueling and often lonely quest to learn the truth about the after effects

of U.S. nuclear weapons testing upon his people and their lands. The Marshall Islands are located in the Central Pacific, about 2,500 miles southwest of Hawaii.

On the heels of World War II, the United States

assumed trusteeship over the Marshall Islands. Almost immediately, the United States initiated atmospheric nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands. Between the years 1946 and 1958, the Marshall Islands was the scene of 66 atmospheric nuclear weapons detonations, conducted by the United States. The most notorious of the detonations occurred March 1, 1954, referred to today by the inhabitants thereof as "The Day of the Two Suns." On this day, the U.S. detonated a hydrogen bomb having a force of 1,000 times greater than either of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima or Nagasaki. The near-lethal levels of fallout from this nuclear blast rained upon the downwind community of Rongelap for almost two days before the U.S. Navy finally removed the people to safety.

Since then, the inhabitants have experienced cancers, deformed and genetically effected children, and other serious illnesses not previously known to them. In 1985, the people finally fled from their ancestral homeland of over 4,000 years. Ever since, the inhabitants have lived in exile upon the remote and desolate islands of the Marshalls, from which they have refused to move until independent radiological studies have been conducted and their ancestral homeland is either declared safe, or made safe, for rehabilitation.

Leading them in their fight has been Senator Anjain. In the early 1980's, he resigned his position as Minister of Health in protest over the capitulation by the Marshallese government to United States demands that Marshallese radiation victims be barred

from pursuing their claims in U.S. courts. He has since pursued his people's claims against the United States on his own, more often than not with his own money and with little help from the Marshallese government.

He has pushed for independent funding from Congress for a study to determine the radiological effects, and to determine the safety the Rongelap Atoll and its surrounding waters. It was only until just this week, even though funding was approved in 1985, that he was finally able to convince Congress to force the release of those monies so that studies could proceed. He has confronted one of America's most formidable foes, the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Defense Programs, the office within D.O.E. that builds and tests nuclear weapons.

Recently, although his struggles have often proven lonely, he has particularly come in recent years to receive some of the just recognition that he should have. In 1986, the National Committee for Radiation Victims bestowed upon him its Justice Award. In 1990, he was named by both Rolling Stone Magazine and the German magazine *Natur* as one of the foremost environmental leaders of the last twenty years. And just this month, he and his people were chosen to share in receipt of the International Right Livelihood award, often referred to as the "alternative Nobel prize". In selecting him and his people, the Right Livelihood Foundation specifically honored the people's resolute effort to oppose U.S. nuclear colonialism in the Pacific.

JETON ANJAIN *Senator, Marshall Islands*

For twenty years, I have struggled on behalf of my people to find the truth of the question we have been asking, "Is our homeland safe?" A few weeks ago, the United States Congress started to answer that question. But we haven't got the truth yet. I remember a great man from this nation said, "I have been over that mountain. And I have seen the promised land." This morning, we sang a song, "Over my head, I see freedom in the sky. Over my head, I see justice in the sky." Brothers and sis-

ters, freedom and justice is that promised land that the great man of this nation, Dr. Martin Luther King, told us about. What do we do now? Keep fighting. We should stand together in solidarity, fighting and fighting. Otherwise, our ship will sink, and we will not reach the shore of that promised land. Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of my people, especially our children, thank you very much. (*Audience sings "Over My Head"*)

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

SYNGMAN RHEE

President

National Council of Churches

Louisville, Kentucky

I have to tell you a story. Almost 30 years ago, I was teaching at the University of Louisville. In the 1960's when the Black Student Union movement was just beginning, we had no black faculty at our university. The student organizations had to have a faculty advisor. Black students came to me and said, "You are at least half-baked." And because we marched together, they said, "You will do." So, I was the first faculty advisor for the Black Student Union at University of Louisville.

In those days, the late Martin Luther King came to Louisville. Arm-to-arm we marched down the street. Sometimes the white folks there jeered and called us all kinds of names. At the black marchers, they said, "You niggers." At the white students, they said, "You white niggers." Then came this little yellow person. They didn't know what to say. All of a sudden, one of them popped out and say, "You yellow nigger." That's my contribution to the English language.

One day when we were out demonstrating, we were all arrested. By the way, we used to sing "We Shall Overcome" and there was a second verse, "black and white together." Our friends always made sure it was "black and white, yellow together." There is always a yellow in there because we are doing it together. Once after spending a night in jail, I came back to my office and found a dish of jelly beans. There were some black jelly beans; there were some white jelly beans; and one yellow jelly bean. There are not many Asians in these movements, but there was at least one yellow jelly bean among the black and white, because all of us were together.

The experience of energizing and empowering in this Summit has been beyond our own expectations. Our Keynote Speaker began working in the fields at the age of six. He followed the crops from one

place to another place with his family. But those difficult situations did not put him down. He made himself a person of worth, purpose, and a will to live. He was the first member of his family to graduate from college.

But he did not forget where he came from. After his education, he went back to the farm and began to organize the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC). He decided that the target of this struggle should not be individual family farms but the huge corporations, which decide the price of tomatoes and pickles. He emphasized a need for three-way negotiations and focused on the worker education, cooperatives and legal clinics. He led the largest agricultural strike in the history of the Midwest of over 2,000 workers.

In 1983, he led 900 farm workers on a 600-mile march from his headquarters in Toledo, Ohio, to Campbell's headquarters in Camden, New Jersey. He negotiated a formation of an independent commission, which was chaired by Harvard Professor John Dunlap. Finally, the Dunlap Commission conducted election among all farm-workers in the area. FLOC won with over 60% of the vote. The contracts, therefore, provided raise increases and benefits among some 600 to 800 workers on 28 farms in Ohio and Michigan. And Campbell Soup Company, their growers and FLOC signed the first three-way contract in the labor history.

He is a man who remembered from whence he came and continued to dedicate himself for that cause for all the people who are struggling to be the kind of person that God has created to be. It is my honor to present to you a person who has struggled so that we may all have that blessing of being the true human being. Let me present to you Baldemar Velasquez.

MAKING COMMUNITY

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BALDEMAR VELASQUEZ

President

Farm Labor Organizing Committee

Toledo, Ohio

Thank you, Dr. Rhee, for such a tremendously humbling introduction. Before I came down here tonight, I went up to my room and I got into some prayer. While I was up there, I felt the spirit of the Holy One. My question was, "What shall I tell all these kind, beautiful people, all of whom could easily stand up here and give us words of encouragement?" And the voice said, "Tell them that they are my witnesses. Tell them that I brought them here together this weekend. They are to go out, as my witnesses, to heal my land... Some of them are prophets... And you know what I have done when they have not listened to my prophets.... Tell them that I am on their side. And that if I am on their side, who can be against them?"

The humbling odyssey that my life has gone through came out of the fields in South Texas. It began by the Rio Grande, twelve miles from the United States/ Mexican border. It began with one little experience when I was about six years or seven years old in the cotton fields of Texas. I was going out to work for the first time in the cotton fields. In those days, you picked it by hand. You had those long bags that our fathers and mothers dragged through the field. As I was dragging that bag, I felt so happy because I was going out to work with my grandfather, smelling the sweat mixed with the cotton and the soil.

I got out there and I was putting all that cotton into my bag. Pretty soon, all the other workers were all way ahead of me. My bag got bigger and fuller. And because I was so little, I couldn't drag that bag anymore. Those bags weigh well over 100 pounds when they're full. I could not drag it anymore. I wasted my whole morning. Things were going through my head like "I can't do the things that I wanted to do by coming out here." You know what I really wanted to do? In the labor camp, we were being housed in an old, abandoned schoolhouse. You know, we were some of the first homeless people. They put us in anything they found. But, in that camp, we had a little tradition among the crew that whoever felt they did very well in the picking for that day, they would buy soft drinks for

the whole crew. I said, I want to buy those soft drinks. I want to make good money today so I can buy soft drinks for the whole crew.

That was the mark of a full-fledged worker. I said I want to be a worker; I want to be a part of this community. Understand what I am saying: that was my job. My job wasn't picking the cotton. My job was making community. Because community is what nourishes us; community is what makes life.

Well I was out in that field, and I was stuck out into that field. I yelled and I waved my arms. My Aunt Amalia came to my rescue. A little short woman. She picked up that bag; took it to the scales; weighed it in; and stuck beside me the rest of the day. But the night, that night, she went home. And she told me, "Come over here -- bring me your bag." She cut it in half, and sewed the end, so that I could no longer fill that bag beyond my ability to drag it out of the field. She helped me do my job. She helped me be part of that community. And that next day, I didn't waste a whole lot of time being stuck out in the field. I was able to buy the soft drinks for the whole crew.

SHARE-CROPPING AND ECONOMIC SLAVERY

As we came North to Ohio, we had a different problem making community. There we experienced one of the old, archaic economic institutions that has been around since the days of the Civil War. They called it share-cropping. When they freed the slaves, those plantation owners had to figure out a way to keep the slaves on the plantations and not call them slaves. So they called them share-croppers. The modern-day agricultural establishment has taken that old archaic system and brought it to farmworkers in northwest Ohio. We're technically share-croppers in Ohio. And I'll tell you what the scam is. If you're a share-cropper, you're an independent contractor and you're self-employed. Now, the few laws that exist to protect farm workers don't apply to independent contractors. Like the Fair Labor Standards Act, or any of the

other things that apply to "employees." And the companies and the agricultural industry save their share of the Social Security. They don't have to pay Workers' Compensation. They don't have to pay Unemployment Compensation. They are taking food out of the people's mouths. And they can do with us what they want, because we're independent contractors.

So we tried to hold them accountable. The growers, which are small family farmers. To us, they were the red-necks who that exploited our people. They grow mostly corn, wheat and soybeans. But pickles and tomatoes are good cash-crops. They get a return on these crops, which helps them balance out the farm economy, specifically, the bad prices they get on their corn, wheat, or soybeans. So, off the sweat of our back, we have contributing a major factor to saving the family farm.

The family farmer would tell us, "Well I can't pay you any more money because I've got a contract with Campbell Soup. I've got a contract with Vlasic Pickles and this is what they pay for so many pounds of pickles. They've got to give us more so we can give you more."

When we went to the company, they told us, "We're not the employer. Go back to the farmer. He's the one you work for." Now, it doesn't take a fool to figure out that if you're going to negotiate an agreement to help the people out there (remember about community; help them form communities) that you have to talk to all of them. Because they all make the decisions that affect my life personally. I don't care if they're not the employer. In our case, nobody is the employer because we are all independent contractors.

In 1978 after they would not listen to us, we said, "We will drop our tomato hampers and walk out of the fields." We walked out of the fields, and stayed out of the fields for eight years. I can't count the number of people that were arrested. Our attorney, an Irish fellow from Cleveland, came down. The sheriff very promptly tried to arrest him on a traffic violation and take him into custody. The sheriff beat him up in front of over 50 witnesses. He banged his head on the pavement. Our attorney suffered cranial nerve damage. To this day, our lawyer is disabled. When the sheriff couldn't break the strike, they brought in the Ku Klux Klan in northwest Ohio. They burned the crosses in front of our field headquarters. They shotgun-blasted out the windows of our field office.

THREE-WAY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Our major demand was a three-party collective bargaining agreement. We launched the boycott of Campbell Soup, in which many of you participated. We went all over the country, and we were told by the legal experts and the leadership of America's unions that we could not accomplish what we were asking. Campbell Soup would never sign an agreement with a group of people that were not their employees.

There is nothing in history that says this can be done. But there was another organizer that we learned from. His name was Moses. And God didn't call him out of the fields of south Texas. He called him out of the desert at Sinai. He said, "Moses, I want you to go back to Egypt. I want you to unionize all of those bricklayers over there." Moses said, "But God, I can't do that. I can't speak; I can't do nothing." God said, "Well, just go."

When Moses went back into Egypt and started organizing those people, he went to Pharaoh and said, "Let my people go." Well, Pharaoh came up with all kinds of excuses; there was some debate. And it reminded me, when all those labor officials were telling me, "Baldemar, that cannot be done" Well, no sooner than Moses led the people out of Egypt after God was done with Pharaoh, the people started complaining and whining right away. "Why did you take us out of there?" No sooner than they got out there they saw Pharaoh with his chariots following them. They were trapped against the Red Sea. And you know what happened there? God saved them again. No sooner than they crossed the other side, they got to the episode of the snakes. Moses yelled again and went to God. God said, "Keep your eyes high and don't look down at those snakes." So when these folks are telling me, "Baldemar that can't be done," I heard the message: Don't look down at those snakes.

We were able to do the boycott with the help of many good friends in the National Council of Churches and many communities of color throughout the United States -- that's where our support was. It didn't come from the big unions. It didn't come from the major, organized establishments. It didn't come from the great established white organizations -- however liberal they might have been. They asked me to speak afterwards at some of their conferences and I always remind them that they missed the boat.

But enough pressure was brought on Campbell Soup so that in 1986 they did what they said they'd never do: they signed a three-party collective bargaining agreement. I'll never forget the day we signed that agreement. We had a break after some heated discussion when they saw the writing on the wall. One of our folks happened to be in the bathroom when they all walked in there together, complaining to each other because the last item on the table was: You have to bring your growers in an organized fashion to sign it as a unit. And the guy from the company said, "We spent all these years keeping these growers from organizing against us, now we have to organize them for these sleazy so-and-so Mexicans."

MULTINATIONAL FINANCIAL WAR

The next day they signed that agreement -- three parties. We didn't stop at getting the agreement signed until we had them recognize an independent commission that we had formed to mediate the negotiations. Now, this goes with my point about legislation and politicians, which I never got too much excited about them. Well, the Dunlap Commission is our response to collective bargaining legislation. We are never going to get laws that are going to protect us in the presently established political system in this country. We need to understand who is running it.

Let's make no mistake about this. When I went to a shareholder meeting of the Campbell Soup Company during the boycott campaign, it shocked me to see who was running Campbell Soup. It wasn't the family operation. It was some of the world's biggest financial centers such as JP Morgan Guarantee Trust, Prudential Insurance Company, and the Philadelphia National Bank. They all sat there in their blue suits like someone had cloned them. I said, "What do all these people have to do with tomatoes?"

It was the beginning of my education about what it was that we were fighting. We weren't fighting a tomato war; we were fighting a financial war. So when we negotiated this agreement, we realized that we had to change our focus to what it is that we are really fighting; what it is that we are really organizing. The same people who were running Campbell Soup were also trying to stop other movements of people of color.

We did this corporate campaign with Campbell because of this revelation. The Philadelphia

National Bank, for example, held 2.2 million shares of stock in the Campbell Soup Company, held in a trust for one of the its family members. The President of Campbell Soup sat on the board of the Philadelphia National Bank. And then we saw how they invested in the oppression of other people of colors. They were the major sellers of krugerands. So we made an alliance with the anti-apartheid movement, because we are fighting the same people. We began to see how this industry is organized and their investment in other parts of the country.

No sooner did we sign this agreement when we were told that if we made it too expensive to harvest tomatoes in Ohio and Michigan, they would just bring more from Mexico. So I turned to my co-conspirator, Mr. Fernando Cuevos, and I said that we have to go to Mexico. But down there, they talk our language. So, we went to Mexico. We found out where the Campbell Soup tomatoes were being grown. We realized that we had to answer some questions because those brothers are naturally going to be suspicious of any North American. I was ready to answer two questions: What do you want? And, what's in it for you? My answer was, we want your people to have a better contract with Campbell Soup and what's in it for us, is that it is going to put us in a better negotiating position with Campbell Soup up North. Because frankly they're telling us that you guys work too cheap. So if you work too cheap, don't work too cheap. Ask them for more. We'll be on your side asking them for more. Within a year and one-half, they negotiated the best agreement that they ever negotiated in the history of the union: 15% over the Mexico government's ceiling on wage increases. So, when it came our turn to negotiate our contract with Campbell again, we didn't hear a word about Mexico.

We have been trying to unify and organize the entire pickle industry in Ohio. We signed Vlasic Pickle; we signed Heinz U.S.A. The only company outside the bargaining was Dean Foods. They are a mammoth corporation. Deans owns Kate's Pickle, based in North Carolina and they own Green Bay Food, based in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Green Bay operates two grating stations in northwest Ohio that contracts with 35 growers in Ohio and Michigan. On the Kate side, they own Angine Pickles, that contracts with about 25 growers in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan.

Dean Foods signed the agreement and it will be announced in a couple of weeks. With Campbell's we had a three-party agreement. With Dean Foods,

we had a five-party collective bargaining agreement. We had them all at the table, signing one agreement. They all make the decisions that impact our lives. And we should insist on talking to those people, and creating these kinds of agreements, whether they're our employers or not. That does not matter. You use the power of the people and do a boycott and do what you have to do to get them to the table. Once you get them to the table, ask them for everything. Because everything they have, we play a hand in making.

Vlasic and Deans have the two biggest market share of pickles in North America. And they grow pickles in three states in Mexico. So, we signed an agreement with our sister union in Mexico calling for an agricultural commission to oversee the organization of the negotiations of workers who work with one company in both countries. The reason for that is that we are less and less the citizens of a country in which we are born and more and more the citizens of the company for whom we work. And as long as they can divide us country by country, they're going to use us against each other.

Let's get this straight about citizenship: I didn't have any say about where they put that border. As a matter of fact, there is still debate in my heart as to what is Mexico and what is U.S.A. Go back to the beginning: there were other people in the world who have done the same sort of thing when they encountered the Native American people in this country. Now Hitler did something like that. And if we read our history books, they called it a "vicious dictatorship." The Japanese did something like that and our history books called it "imperialism." Now, when it comes to the U.S.A., they called it "manifest destiny."

Now, make no mistake about what the real intent is. It was always about the investment of money and slowly capturing the land so they can use and abuse it. People of color are used to doing the dirty work. Why do you think our foreign policy is one of propping up favorable dictators from Mexico south to Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Caribbean? They want to create a safe haven for the investment of dollars to rape the land and the people so they can bring that money back into their coffers. Who do you think they are? They are the same financial centers that sit on the board of Campbell Soup. They sit on the same boards of

these multinational corporations. Because to them, that's the vehicle that they use to put money in, and get money out. Unseen powers are at play here.

MOVING MOUNTAINS

God's word tells us, "That which flows from the mouth, originates in the heart." Do you know what is the topic of the first two Commandments? They are about love. Didn't God tell us, "First, love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your might, and all your strength." And the second greatest Commandment is, "Love your neighbor as yourself." That is what we are practicing here tonight. That is not what is in the hearts of those unseen powers. The Commandment didn't say, "Exploit your neighbor." It said, "Love your neighbor." And it tells us in Ephesians, that we battle, not against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities.

And let me say that, each one of you is being empowered here tonight with the power of the Holy One inside of you. Did Jesse Jackson not tell us this last night. You see, we have been so disobedient to the prophets, that God had to send somebody in person to deliver the message.... And he said, and he said,... in his own words, that you are the new wine. He said, but I have to go, so that the Holy One can come -- and not dwell beside you, but dwell in you. That you have that power, at your disposal. Now, those people with that money -- that ain't coming out of their heart. That's not what's coming out of their heart. Jesse told us last night: The promise of a new Jerusalem, and a new earth -- a new world that is to come upon us.

Now, Martin Luther King went up to the mountaintop, and he crossed the great divide. And he told us what he saw. But sitting here, in this room tonight, are the new prophets. Martin isn't here anymore with us. He can't lead us in those marches right now. It's some of you that will have to do that now. We have to come down from the mountaintop and into the valley. And it's all right because the power of the Holy One is in you. And he said, I shall make the valley rise, and the hills made low. You don't have to worry about going up and down anymore. Because you are the new wine. And as you know, the new wine can't fit an old wine-skin. He said you've got to have new wine-skin for new wine. And Jesus told us that. He said it is in you.

And so you know that those corporations that exploit us and oppress us through their poisons, their money, and their power are the mountains that are being made low now. It says in God's word that if you have the faith of a mustard seed, that mountain will move. Well, Campbell Soup was a mountain that moved. Dean Foods was a mountain that moved. Heinz U.S.A. was a mountain that moved. Each one of you has a mountain, my brothers and sisters. Be encouraged and have faith and those mountains are going to move before your very eyes. We have to come out of our communities and go where we need to go to move those mountains.

Everything that has been written and prophesied says that you are on the right side. The polluters are on the wrong side, whether they're polluting the land or the people. God's word said, "Do not pollute the land." Look in the Book of Numbers. God's word said, "Turn your face to the Lord and he'll make the justice of your cause to shine like the noon-day sun." He said, "Turn to me and I will heal you, and I will heal your land." And let no mistake pass us here tonight. And when we leave this room tonight, and when we leave this city tomorrow, examine our hearts. So that which you speak will come out of your heart. And let it be those things that God instructed us to do: "Make community; love your neighbor as yourself." He didn't say, "Love your black neighbor; love your white neighbor; love your brown neighbor." He said, "Love your neighbor." Because all of God's children are the same color to him. And all of God's children speak one language. And he understands all of us completely. You don't have to worry about that. You are all heirs to that kingdom. You are the citizens of that new world and that new earth and that new Heaven, that is coming about. You are the citizens of that, and you're the heirs to all the riches that is in that kingdom.

BLUEPRINT TO ORGANIZE

My brothers and sisters, as we go to our next battle. I will be going to Mexico soon. They have those three states in Mexico where these companies grow pickles. The company gave us the blueprint to organize. Because, wherever they grow it, that's where I'm going to go. I've been raised as a migrant organizer. They gave us the blueprint. We are going to be asking them in a couple of years from now for an international agreement -- one agreement to cover all those workers, whether

they're in the United States or in Mexico. These companies grow pickles in Wisconsin, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Texas, Florida and elsewhere. They've given us the blueprint for organizing! I heard that they were experimenting with growing pickles in Guatemala. And we're sending some farm workers down to Guatemala. And I hear that they were bringing some little pickles from Israel. We need to go there, too. Wherever they are.

TRUE DEMOCRACY

So, I leave you with one parting word. The Lord said, "That Spirit which is in you is greater than he that is in the world." Don't forget that, because that is what gives you the authority and the power. Because all that you conquer and are victorious in the Spirit shall manifest itself in the material world. When I went to Heinz and I told them that we were going to negotiate an agreement, they said, "Fine, we will negotiate an agreement after we have an election." And I leave you with these words of what I told them. I said, "You know, the farm-workers that work in your fields in Ohio and Michigan, have the worst statistics for infant mortality, for miscarriages, for the level of education, for diseases. You name it -- they are at the bottom of the barrel." Learning from Moses, I told them that these were not negotiable issues. These are not democratic issues to be voted on. Moses didn't go to Pharaoh and say, "Let's have an election to see if people want to go." He said simply, "You let the people go."

I told them that democracy starts at the negotiating table so that people can participate in making decisions about those very specific things that impact and affect their lives. Everything from housing to wages, to job security, to the environment, to pesticides belongs on the negotiating table. And we have a right to say how we want to conduct our lives.

Getting to the negotiating table is not a democratic question. Democracy starts only when you are there and you are participating. Democracy is not voting for some fool that might vote to ban a particular pesticide. Because even if they ban that one, they come up with another one to kill us with. We have to be the frontline troop of inspectors out there, day in and day out. No politician is going to do that. No politician is going to create and enforce a law to do that. We have to have the authority at the bargaining table to negotiate those issues. I don't

care whether you're in Mexico or in the United States, you belong at that negotiating table. And they were giving me this garbage about, "Well, we don't know if we can replace that chemical." Well, those chemical companies are your partners and maybe we need to have them sign this agreement,

too. Anything should be negotiable when it comes to our lives and the future of those who are going to be working in those fields in the future. Because how many generations have we lost, because we have delegated them to a life of peonage? It is time to stop!

BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.
Executive Director
United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice
Cleveland, Ohio

We haven't really told you why the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ first got involved in environmental justice. To be honest with you, God did not whisper it in our ears. But God spoke to us through an African woman. We would, from our perspective, betray our own history if we didn't give an opportunity for you to at least hear from the woman who stood up to PCB's (polychlorinated biphenyl) in North Carolina. North Carolina has 100 counties, and the county that has the most African Americans is called Warren County. And that was the county that the Governor of North Carolina decided that it was going to dump

its PCB's. She led herself, her children and her community to jail. Please hear from the woman who caused, in a real way, this conference. If it hadn't been for her, the Commission for Racial Justice would never have got involved in this. I want you to understand why you're hearing from her. A lot of accolades have gone toward our organization. And I want to give credit where credit is due. It was Dollie Burwell and other African American sisters like her, along with the Reverend Leon White, that caused us to take seriously the life and death consequences of this struggle.

REMINISCENCES FROM WARREN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

DOLLIE BURWELL
Warren County Concerned Citizens
Warrenton, North Carolina

In 1982, I had no idea that I would be standing here. This is a very emotional moment in my life. I am very proud to have this moment to bring to you greetings on behalf of the people in Warren County, North Carolina. I bring greetings on behalf of the African American women who in the same spirit and in the same tradition of thousands of other strong black women cooked, fed their families, wash the clothes, went to their jobs and still had the time and the commitment to go to jail, fighting for environmental justice.

I bring you greetings on behalf of my daughter Kim, who at seven years old on the very first day of the protest told me that she intended to go to jail as well. She was on television that night because people saw courage and commitment in that seven-year-old. The tears ran down her eyes when she said, "I'm not afraid to go to jail, but I'm afraid of what this PCB is going to do to my people in Warren County." So I recognize her and the many other youths in Warren County who are not here tonight. I know that they are also proud of this moment, and that they are here with us in spirit.

I bring you greetings on behalf of my Pastor, Reverend Leon White, the Moses that God sent to

Warren County many years before Governor Jim Hunt decided that he was going to send PCB. When Jean Sapp sang the song tonight about "there being a bright side somewhere," it brought back a lot of memories. We met in that little church many nights, and if it had not been for the church, I don't know what would have happened to that struggle. We sat in the church with white folks who were afraid and, of course, really didn't know how to march and how to go to jail. Reverend White said to them, "There is a bright side somewhere. God is going to be with you." So because of his spiritual guidance and leadership, we all joined hands and went to jail.

I bring you greetings on behalf of one of my white brothers in Warren County. He was so committed to the struggle that he fasted in jail for 41 days and nights. He was so weak that they had to bring him to court on a stretcher because he was too weak to walk. And the state told him that if he didn't stop his protesting, he was going to lose his job teaching at the community college. Not only was he fired, he was blackballed in the state of North Carolina.

And I bring you greetings on behalf of the more than five hundred brothers and sisters that went to

jail in Warren County. We want to say thank you to all the people who put so much work into this cause. Because even in 1982 we knew that where we lived, where we worked and where we played was really our environment. When the state of North Carolina decided that it was going to put PCB into a community of 65% African American (proud African American people who had nothing but the land that was left to them by the families), we said "No." We said we will put our lives on the line.

And we did that by laying our bodies in front of the trucks, but as we lay there we knew that we were neither politically or economically empowered enough to stop those trucks. As we lay our bodies in front of the trucks and were hauled off to jail by the bus load, we didn't know that the media was going to publicize what we were doing in Warren County. We didn't know that hundreds of people were going to come and demonstrate with us. We only knew in our hearts that we were doing the right thing. We knew in our hearts that God required of us to do justice. We hoped and prayed that our going to jail would not be in vain. And we feel that it was not because many good things happened as a result of our going to jail. For the first time blacks and whites in Warren County united. African Americans determined that henceforth and forever we will have some say in the government that was controlling our destiny.

So we elected for the first time an African American to the State House of Representatives, an African American to the State Senate, and an African American Sheriff. We gained African American control on our school board. Our county commissioners appointed an African American County Manager. And because we knew that if we had someone managing the property in Warren County we would have been suspicious of that man that bought up about four hundred acres of land that sold the state several hundred acres of land. So we knew that we had to have somebody looking out for the land. So I now am the Commissioner of Deeds of Warren County.

Out of that struggle, a national and international awareness of the disposal of hazardous and toxic waste took place. As a result of that struggle, many communities around this country have been able to successfully organize and stop the disposal of hazardous and toxic waste in their communities. Out of that struggle in Warren County, we inspired the Commission for Racial Justice to do the first comprehensive study that resulted in the landmark report, *Toxic Waste and Race*, that many of us use as an organizing tool in our communities. Many good things came out of that struggle in Warren County and we are just so proud that we are part of that history.

CLOSING SESSION
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1991
9:00 A.M.

SYNGMAN RHEE
President, National Council of Churches
Moderator

REPORTS FROM WORKSHOPS

Charles Lee, UCC Commission for Racial Justice, New York, N.Y.: This is a session for reporting of recommendations from workshops. The workshop facilitators met this morning and worked out a procedure for how this will be accomplished. Not every workshop was able to be represented in the meeting this morning. Those present itemized the major recommendations from their workshops in terms of actions and next steps. These will be read to you by Ellie Goodwin.

Ellie Goodwin, Race Poverty and Environment Newsletter, San Francisco, California:

REGIONS

Northeast/Canada/Puerto Rico

1. Active network for exchanging of comments.
2. Specific attention to urban environment.
3. Regional networks in U.S.

Southeast

1. Hold the government accountable to local communities.

Midwest

1. Train the trainer programs.
2. Clearinghouse activity.
3. Cultural connections made with Native Americans.
4. Reclaim definition of environmental issues.
5. Regional meeting.
6. A march on Washington of all environmental advocates.
7. A focus on Columbus Day.
8. Educate our communities.
9. Economic self-sustainability.

10. Stance on incineration.
11. Regional diversity.

Pacific Northwest

1. Design a specific resolution to address struggles of indigenous people.
2. Conduct a regional conference.
3. Address the breadth of the region and the redefinition of what the Pacific Northwest region encompasses.

STRATEGY AND POLICY GROUPS

Legal

1. Fourteen people volunteered to serve as planning committee to develop and implement legal strategies for combatting environmental racism in keeping with the Principles of Environmental Justice.
2. Develop training sessions for lawyers/activists on legal options.
3. Promote availability and delivery of services to poor, low income and under-served communities.

Health Strategy

1. National health program that includes focus on right to a job, occupational health and safety, and environmental health.
2. Needs to be a directory of health resources.
3. Education of health professionals, particularly health workers of color and youth.
4. Research should be controlled by communities of color.
5. Build coalitions between health and labor.
6. Regional conferences should be held throughout the U.S.

Environmental Health Policy

1. To provide scientific and technical resources, both human and organizational, to communities of color to improve their health and environment.
2. To change the health delivery system model from one which inappropriately focuses on individual solutions to one which permits people of color to formulate community based solutions to improving their health and environment.
3. To establish meaningful equitable linkages between government agencies, the individuals working within these agencies and communities of color, so that these communities can participate fully in the planning, design and implementation of programs which impact upon their health and environment.
4. That communities of color establish and/or control health surveillance systems so that they will have information on the incidence and prevalence of environmental disease and its impact on communities of colors to effectively address the underlying causes.

Labor

1. Challenge AFL-CIO to reflect in its leadership women and people of color.
2. Challenge AFL-CIO to intensify organizing efforts in the South.
3. Endorse Levi Strauss and grape boycotts
4. OSHA reform bill support for the right to refuse hazardous work.
5. Solidarity for Hamlet, N.C. workers by donating \$1.00 to be sent by the conveners of this conference to the Hamlet Relief Fund c/o Black Workers for Justice.

Education/Youth

1. Get schools to have environmental science pre-K to college.
2. Youth organizations to include environmental justice agenda.
3. All organizations to have a youth component that has environmental justice agenda.
4. Use of zoos, aquariums, etc. to educate youth
5. Support Youth '92, UNCED conference in Brazil.

Religion

1. Develop a process of distribution of Call to Action and Principles of Environmental justice to church leaders.
2. Contact black church liaisons to commit to environmental justice work.

3. Establish legislative information network on environmental justice issues.
4. Ensure environmental justice on agenda for Brazil conference.

International

1. To demand that the corporations of northern governments that operate in the Third World must have standards at least as high as those in the industrialized countries.
2. To demand that labor, environmental, and human rights organizations actively participate in the trade negotiations.
3. That trade is not an end but a means to sustainable development to meet peoples needs.
4. To demand the cancellation of Third World debt and the end of the economic blackmail of our communities both nationally and internationally.

Occupational Health and Safety

1. Reform labor laws to empower workers.
2. Change culture of unions. Unions must be run by people of color.
3. OSHA reform, that is effective, includes protection of farmworkers.
4. Diversity of groups to reflect people of color, such as OSHA, occupational health care groups, etc.
5. Develop center and network of people in workplace environment made up of people of color.

Impact Environmental Decision-Making

1. Demand fair share policy in facility siting.
2. Equity in clean-up, relocating, and buy-out of contaminated communities.
3. Comprehensive health assessment.
4. EPA reevaluate acceptable risk.
5. Slow free trade initiative.
6. Incorporate cultural impact.

Land Rights and Sovereignty

1. The earth has a sovereign right to exist without human disruption of her natural systems.
2. Earth has sovereign right to the free expression of her natural laws.
3. Earth has sovereign right to share her bounties with humankind pursuant to fundamental principles of reciprocity and respect.
4. Earth has right to maintain its purity and sacred pristine character free from human degradation.
5. Sovereignty of humankind is promulgated through a spiritual relationship with the earth and is maintained through religious ceremony.

Military and the Environment

1. That the U.S. military is the biggest polluter in the country, if not the world.
2. That military spending should be immediately reduced by 50%. A new organizing effort, the common agenda, is a vehicle for this.
3. The U.S. government should be responsible for testing and detoxifying life-threatening toxics and contaminants, as bases and operations are closed down.
4. That Federal Government bomb factories such as Hanford, Savannah River, Los Alamos, and Sandia are irresponsible, violating public health, tribal sovereignty and the lives of people.
5. We expand the definition of what we call the environment to include housing, safe streets, unemployment and other issues.
6. That the path for overcoming military assaults on the environment and land based people was to form a network and build solidarity. The exchange of technical information supports this network.

Urban Environmental Policy

1. Create a way to discuss urban environment.
2. Cities have unique history due to age, complexity, infrastructure and population density.
3. Clear about environmental conditions and community strategy.
4. Urban policy includes struggles over control of production/distribution, profits versus health.
5. Economic "whitemail" must stop.
6. Recycling is an opportunity for community economic development.

Sustainable Development

1. Working group formed to document case studies of sustainable development projects relevant to our communities and this conference should endorse that group.
2. This conference should call on all major environmental groups to divest financial holdings from companies doing business in South Africa.

Henry Holmes, Urban Habitat Program, San Francisco, California, (Reporting for Culture Workshop): We talked about how culture is in some ways more important than the agenda-setting and policy and strategy discussions that we have had. We interpret the world and our experiences through our cultures, and when we come together in a gathering like this, it's important that we spend

time connecting with each other on a cultural basis to understand our diversity and to find the common ground of our visions and experiences. We also talked about how in our struggles everyone has something valuable and precious to bring to that, whether they be a great leader, an artist, a poet or a cook preparing food in the kitchen, and we need to recognize and celebrate that. The more we understand, respect and love each other, and recognize our cultural differences, that we are different but one people, the stronger we will be.

Antonio Diaz, Texas Center for Policy Studies, Austin, Texas, (Reporting for the Southwest Regional Workshop): I would reiterate some of the points already covered. I also would like to say that much of the discussion within our workshop was within the context of the fact that within the Southwest we have already established a region-wide network, the SouthWest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. As such, we propose that the Leadership Summit endorse one of the actions which came out of the Network conference last year, which is a nationwide day of action against the EPA. Secondly, we proposed that a national organizing committee or council be established with representatives from the various regions. Thirdly, that out of the Leadership Summit a list of priorities for this Summit body be established to address issues of sustainable development. And, lastly, that the Second National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit be held in the Southwest on October 12, 1992, with the theme of 500 years of resistance.

Gwen Patton, Southern Rainbow Voter Education Project, Montgomery, Alabama, (Reporting for Southeast Regional Workshop): Political accountability was the crux of a lot of our discussion. We emphasized the need for each of us, in our states and on the region, to do some research to take "private money" out of the political process and replace it with the vote as really the equalizer for the power of the people. "Private money," in terms of big-time corporations who own our politicians, are the ones making policies which are responsive to the corporations and not to the people. And we need to call those politicians out, be they black, Latino, indigenous, or white. The other announcement is the Baton Rouge Conference in September 1992 on Labor, Community and the Environment.

Michel Gelobter, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, New York, N.Y.

(Reporting on Urban Environment Caucus): The Urban Environmental Caucus prepared the following statement: While we are grateful for the opportunity to discuss people of color and the environment provided conference, we believe that urban environmental issues deserve further and more intense investigative discussion and analysis. For example, urban people of color represent the majority in over 50 of our 200 largest cities. Eighty four percent of the 30 million African Americans live in the cities of this country and Native American people are more present in cities than on tribal reservations. Our health and well-being must be a crucial focus. Our environmental issues include ecologically balanced approaches to air pollution, land use and the prevention and cure of environmentally related diseases. For those of us who call cities our home, we also believe that a discussion of these environmental issues must involve a vision of a city in which we can all live and which we can be proud of as our home. We would, therefore, call on all who have attended this conference and on the environmental community to discuss, incorporate, and to engage in action on behalf of the people of color in our inner-city communities.

Jose Morales, Toxic Avengers, New York, N.Y. *(Reporting on Latino Caucus):* Latinos met throughout the conference, and although we don't have final agreement, we have some tentative agenda. Among the things we discussed was the possibility of a meeting, perhaps in Puerto Rico, of the Southwest and Puerto Rico on common issues around labor, health and safety, the environment, environmental justice, and others. We also began establishing an exchange of information and scientific advising to people coming from Mexico and Texas.

Chris Peters, Seventh Generation Fund, Hoopa, California *(Reporting on Native American Caucuses):* We had several caucuses, and we call on all people of color to stand in solidarity and resistance to the 500 years of colonization and oppression. Furthermore, we invite all people of color to join with us in building an active alliance in common struggle for liberation for the next 500 years.

Male/Unidentified *(Reporting on Intergroup Cooperation):* Specific items included accountability of the funders to the local groups, in terms of checking whether or not a national environmental group has information, a history and the commitment to the kinds of goals that local groups have. There has to be a commitment on the part of the national environmental groups to invest resources, time, personnel, etc., to learn about the local groups and communities. Principles of just collaboration were proposed that would allow for self-determination of the community, the community's empowerment and the just allocation and use of resources from national environmental groups and funders with local groups.

PROPOSAL OF SOLIDARITY WITH WORKERS IN HAMLET, NORTH CAROLINA

Jaribu Hill, New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health, New York, N.Y.: We wanted to put forward formally the recommendation from the labor workshop regarding the Hamlet, North Carolina workers. On September 3rd, 1991, twenty five workers were murdered by the Imperial Foods Corporation when they were locked in their poultry plant during a fire. They were not able to escape, they were trapped. Twenty-five workers were murdered and fifty workers injured. Therefore, we are asking that, as a body in solidarity with the Hamlet, North Carolina workers, that we donate \$1 each to a special collection which would be sent by the conveners of this gathering to the Imperial Foods Victim Relief Fund. We think this will be a way of showing solidarity with workers across this country who are victimized, but also specifically showing solidarity with the murder of those twenty-five workers and that something has to be done to not only avenge those deaths but to support the families who have been left without their mothers, their sisters, or their brothers and fathers.

Proposed action endorsed by Summit body, a total of \$414 was collected and sent to Ms. Gracie Jackson, Administrator, Imperial Food Products Victims Relief Fund, P.O. Box 151, Hamlet, NC 28345.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Syngman Rhee (Moderator): There may be some of you who had planned to leave soon after the Summit and who may want to say just brief words that we may keep here in our own process. Please do.

Mary Lou Mares, People for Clean Air & Water, Kettleman City, California: I would first of all like to thank the people who organized this. It has given us such a beautiful experience. I would like to tell everybody here with so many of their own problems, that it is so easy to go back home and sometimes forget about our brothers and sisters. But please don't forget us. Small towns, big towns, we all need the support of everybody here, and I urge everybody to keep in touch with the newsletters about everybody's fights and struggles, and don't forget each other.

Marjorie Moore, Hunter College, New York, N.Y.: I just am grateful for all the good things that have taken place in this gathering, meeting my other brothers and sisters from around the country. I would like us to not leave with a planning committee that still does not have any Northeastern representation. I would like us to make sure that the next time we come together with an action plan that we've included all of our brothers and sisters, those in the inner cities and those who are not.

Roberto Mendoza, Greens USA, Portland, Maine: I am working on a project next summer in Detroit called "Detroit Summer." This project will try to bring people, especially young people, to help the communities in Detroit to rebuild, and especially to deal with issues of their own young people. *(Solicits participation in this project to take place in the Summer of 1992 on behalf of Greens and the Student Environmental Action Coalition, especially people with special skills, including housing, dealing with drugs, sustainable small-scale industries, urban agriculture, etc.)*

Elena Avila, New Mexico Alliance, Rio Rancho, New Mexico: The Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) is about to take effect in New Mexico, our beautiful "land of enchantment." As soon as next month, the first nuclear waste could be delivered to our land. There are no regulations, no EPA-approved regulations for this site near Carlsbad. The site has been proven unsafe many, many times. Right now, because of a temporary legal injunction, the trucks have been stopped. The roads are not

ready. This site has been approved as a national nuclear waste dump. We ask, please, for your prayers. This conference has given us a lot of beautiful spiritual energy that we can take to New Mexico, but we need your energy to go with us. Please pray for us so that the WIPP project can be stopped.

Mary Hollins, Labor Notes, Detroit, Michigan: We [*Labor Notes Magazine*] have a new column that is called "Speaking for Ourselves." It is written by people of color. *(Solicits interested persons to contact her.)*

Carol Zippert, West Alabama Community College, Eutaw, Alabama: We have been working with our youth in Alabama for the past six or seven years. We have a statewide youth organization, and we are designing our own curriculum of leadership training for our youth in nontraditional approaches. We call it "The 21st Century Youth Leadership Training Project." We are Afro-centric based, and we are evolving into a national network, of Afro-centric based youth leadership training organizations. In addition, we are helping to facilitate a cross-cultural youth leadership network, and we've had an initial meeting of that effort already.

We have to link through our cultures, because that is our point of origin and our point of focus. Wherever we go, we go from our culture, because that is what we know and that is what we have learned. [This brochure] has a synopsis and a guideline of our approaches to helping our young folk get ready to take over the leadership of the 21st century.

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dana Alston, Panos Institute, Washington, D.C.: Many delegates have come to me with a concern about what will be our next step. I do not mean to disrespect any of the issues that are raised but the Planning Committee never had the intention of imposing on the body any preset plan or agenda. I will only speak for myself and other members of the Planning Committee are going to speak for themselves. For me, the primary thing for us is to go back regionally and network in our local communities with a commitment to the spirit that was here, to organize cross racially with mutual respect for each other, to strengthen ourselves over the next year, and to work on our principles. To me, we must strengthen ourselves from our base. The next time all of us meet, we should bring the

additional power of that base into a national process. I am only speaking for myself, and I don't want to disrespect the issues that you have worked so hard on. But time is short and we are going to have a closing ceremony. I am concerned we carry on spiritually the unity that we have built here together.

Richard Moore, SouthWest Organizing Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico: On the part of our organization, in a very sincere way, we would like to thank the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice for the role that it has played in assisting us by bringing this Summit together. As a representative from grassroots organizations, one specific concern would be that any discussion of a possible national organization or network should come from our communities. It should come from the bottom up, not from the top down.

It is our opinion that a national organization at the moment should not take place. We should go back home and work on building regional organizations. We should work on strengthening our local organizations. When and if it is decided that we convene in 1992, that a decision is made at that moment in history to whether we want a national organization. I just wanted to say that it makes not much difference to us. We have had several days of very good dialogue. However, when we came into this process, we have made it clear that we do not want white folks brokering for us. But I have to be honest with you, we don't want **any** folks brokering for us. We need to be real clear that most national organizations which, from our perspective, have come from the top down are either nonexistent or almost nonexistent today.

I also want to offer to you August 6th as a national day of solidarity. Because the kind of conditions being imposed on us in our communities, to a large extent, is also being imposed by elected officials. There are some elected officials, who are persons of color, that are bringing polluting industry, whether it's high-tech industry or others, into our communities, under the guise of unemployment. We have very high levels of unemployment in our communities. But we should not be forced to take poisoning industry into our communities because of the need for jobs. So we would hope that you would consider a national day of solidarity and accountability on the part of elected officials on August 6th. If we go through this year kind of doing things together, working together, we will build trust with each other. Trust is the real crucial element in moving forward.

Pat Bryant, Gulf Coast Tenants Organization, New Orleans, Louisiana: I want to put another yes to what the two previous speakers have said, and, at the same time, thank the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice for its work since Warren County; for the work of Dr. Chavis and Dr. Cobb to help us when we couldn't kind of pull it together ourselves, to come together as a planning committee, and for those who have been struggling around different places around the country to come here for the first time to meet each other, to share our cultures, and to share our agendas.

I agree that we are at a point where what is needed is national cohesion. Everybody sees the need for national cohesion, and it is something that the Planning Committee and those of us who have been struggling out there and working to pull you together, wanted more than anybody in this room. It is key that this struggle be led by those of us from the grassroots. And the process of building a truly grassroots movement in this country, which can change the relationships between the forces of production and ourselves, has to be taken very seriously. We cannot, for the sake of convenience, build it from the top down. We have got to build it from the bottom up, and we are talking about cross-cultural building from the bottom up.

Let me be real honest, from what I see around the country, and with the Southeast and the Southwest taking on the majority of the poisons in this country, there has certainly got to be a lot of trust-building and cooperation between us, and particularly in those regions. We have not gotten there yet. This has been a very good, important first step.

I endorse the August 6th call for a day of local actions. I think we should go further than that. We should make every black and Hispanic, Asian, Native American and local elected official accountable to these Principles of Environmental Justice that we have just adopted. If they don't deal with it, we should put some shoe leather with them. That should be local, and the furor created is going to help build this movement.

We should have the audacity to rename and reclaim something that has been taken from us. Dennis Hayes and all his colleagues, in good faith, took on and built Earth Day. Let's take it back. Let's take August 6th and rename it Earth Day -- all over this country, in every parish and hamlet. We can then gain the experience of working together around one

thing from the different regions and parishes and counties across this country. Some of you will go to be going to jail, and we're going to get you out. Some of us won't be back together like this again. Some of us will lose our lives in the process. But in the process, we will build a movement that will turn this country around, and in the process, we will be able to build the national cohesion that can do it.

Donna Chavis, Center for Community Action, Pembroke, North Carolina: To add to what my brothers and sisters on the Planning Committee have said regarding some of the recommendations around actions and organizing, I want to remind us of the cultural piece. We have spoken of that in our Native caucus. We feel that it is important that we not only come together through actions but also to share our cultures, and to learn more from each other. We must do that in order to be truly in unison. The word "unity" also can be divisive as well, but we can come to more of one mind through learning more about each other. Through the next year we should also make efforts to come together through cultural actions and sharing with each other intentionally and learning more about each other.

I have been responsible for coordinating the closing ceremonial, and I do believe that we must leave here with a spirit. And it is our peoples' event, it is the earth's event, and the Creator's event. So, please, let us come back to one mind in some way, to some focus, to bring our energy into a space that we can leave here knowing that through the next year we are taking that energy with us. And I say that not because I am responsible for the ceremony, but I do believe, from my spirit, that we must leave here with that to guide and protect us.

Unidentified: Before we went into the issue of the closing ceremony, members of the Planning Committee spoke of something. That is an issue separate and above people making their statements of how they feel. You left some people feeling as if there is no closure on the issues of process. How do we go about the issue of national communication? How do we go about the issue of bringing ourselves back together again? I mean, we left the issue of whether or not there be a Northeast person on the Planning Committee. There are some things that have been left undone. I am willing, as I said before, to leave it to our representatives, but I am not willing to go away from here not knowing whether or not there is going to be a coordinating function that is ongoing. I am not willing to wait until next year, and I am not willing to abdicate the

responsibility that I bring from a group of people in the New England area that are concerned about whether there will be continuity in this process. I do not necessarily have to have it addressed now, but I do need to hear from someone from your planning group as to whether or not we, as a people, are going to have some continuity in this process.

Richard Moore, SouthWest Organizing Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico: If there is a proposal, then you need to realize that there has only been some discussion on the part of the Planning Committee on your concerns. We were real serious when we came here. There was a real major push or kind of feeling towards the building of a national organization. And there has been a consistent hesitancy of that by the Planning Committee, because of things that were spoke to earlier such as the need for regions to select their own representatives to put into place a democratic process.

We also need to understand that money is a big issue. We do not have the money to fly people across the country for meetings. If funds are raised, then accountability for those funds must take place in a structured manner, designated by those that are chosen by yourselves to represent our self-interest. So, that's where it is. If yours is a proposal, then I would propose that regional groups get together somehow and that we represent those that will participate in the beginning of some dialogue, some discussions, possibly of a conference call or something, and from there then we begin to discuss that. Unfortunately, that is the only thing that I think I can bring to this floor at this moment.

CALL TO ACTION

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.: The Drafting Committee has just completed the Call to Action. In your pre-Summit mailings you were told that the Summit would do two things: adopt a set of Principles of Environmental Justice, which you have, and issue a communiqué. The communiqué is in the form of a Call to Action. We came here to share with one another, to redefine environmentalism, to be able to take back to our communities, at the grassroots level, so that we can strengthen what already exists.

We are not here to form a new organization. We have more organizations today than we have ever had before. But our peoples are less organized; our peoples are less mobilized; the consciousness of our

peoples needs to be raised, from the bottom up; and our peoples need to be called into action.

I really think that this body owes a world of gratitude to the Drafting Committee, who are the sisters and brothers that you elected from the regions, joined by the Co-Chairs and members of the Planning Committee from time to time, from time to time by one or two of the Co-Chairs.

We went through an elaborate process of ratifying a document entitled Principles of Environmental Justice. Our Call to Action is not a document that needs to be ratified. This is a document that seeks, to the best of our human ability, in the time that we have left, to capture the spirit that has run through this Summit over the last four days. It is not presented as a document that is to be legislated in the same way that we did the Principles of Environmental Justice. So I want to make sure that we do not begin a process that was not intended.

What is intended with this Call to Action is to give us something in hand that we can take back to our peoples in our communities that will help call us

into some unity of action around certain areas of struggle, given the organizations we already have in our communities. Hopefully, after the Summit, we will begin to work in greater unison around these and other actions, many not even on this paper. This is not the end but a moving forward in which preexisting organizations and networks are converging to struggle together in a way in which we have not done before at the levels of struggle that we are trying to project.

Text of Call to Action is printed on Page xvii.

(A post-Summit retreat of approximately 30 persons of color members of the National Advisory Committee was held in Dallas, Texas on June 26-28, 1992. The group reached consensus around building a national people of color environmental justice network. A interim coordinating committee was established to plan a larger meeting for the development of this national network. Lance Hughes (Native Americans for a Clean Environment) and Miya Yoshitani (Students Environmental Action Coalition) agreed to serve as coordinators.)

CLOSING CEREMONY

Syngman Rhee (Moderator): Let us all applaud our commitments and the Call for Action. We will have a closing ceremony. We have representation from our multiracial group, which includes all of the colors. We will begin the celebration with prayers and statements from our African American, Asian American, Latino American, and European American representatives. Then we will finish with the blessing, which will be explained by our spiritual leaders.

Prayers and statements given by African American, Asian American, Latino American, and European American representatives.

Tom Goldtooth, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, Bemidji, Minnesota (Spiritual Leader): This morning, I was thinking that we have gone through a growing experience these past four days. We came here in birth, started that first day not knowing who we are. We were infants. We didn't know how to move our arms and our legs. The second day, we went further and grew a little bit more. We became young people, but still kind of awkward. The third day, if you noticed, some things started coming together. We became adults yesterday, and we know how it is to be an adult. We have to be responsible. And there is anger and laughter -- there are all those aspects of life. And today a lot of good things came together. We are leaving here as elders with the message. We are seeing wisdom -- not here, but within yourself. We all have wisdom. And those are some things that we have. We are talking about principles.

The mother of this young man helping out represents one of our great nations, the Lakota people of South Dakota, from the Black Hills. She said there was not much that she has, but she

wanted to help out. She brought a tobacco pouch, which we want to give to the group here.

It is not just from us, it will be from all of you, because we all are human beings. We are all part of this circle of life. So we are going to make something here and give this to the representative of this group to take and keep until the next time we all meet.

So we are going to make a bundle here. I am going to ask that each of you to pray with us, in your own way, your own language, to God, to Jesus Christ, to the Creator of all things. We respect all peoples' worship -- it's all the same, with only one Creator in the universe. And with this bundle we want you to have good life and be happy. Be thankful for everything we have each day. We have to be thankful for every day the sun comes up, for the food on our table, to have the good health we have. Think about and help those who have lost loved ones. 1992 will be a hard year for our people, because we are remembering the millions of people that are no longer here.

So I would like to ask at this time that we start. We have the elements of creation here. I would like to ask representatives of the four corners of our world to step forward and put some tobacco here and represent your people. When we are done making this pouch, I ask that it be handed to our grandmother. Grandmother Rose [Auger] is going to pray with this bundle. And we are going to hand this to the representative of this body. Our traditional holy people want to meet with him in the future. They want to meet with the supporters of this group, the people of the United Church of Christ, and the people.... *(Respecting the wishes of the spiritual leaders, the ceremony is completed without electronic recording.)*

REGIONAL GROUP WORKSHOP: NORTHEAST, PUERTO RICO AND EASTERN CANADA
Facilitator: Vernice D. Miller, West Harlem Environmental Action, New York, N.Y.

INTRODUCTION

This paper will serve as the opening for discussion about environmental issues that impact communities of color in the Northeast, Puerto Rico and eastern Canada. Native American, Latin American, African and Caribbean American, as well as Asian American peoples who live in these regions are living in the midst of environmental disaster areas.

Documentation abounds regarding the environmental hazards that exists in these areas. Due to the thorough research by the Commission for Racial Justice and Professor Robert Bullard, we also know that people of color are particularly susceptible to environmental dangers because of the color of their skin. This paper will seek to highlight a few of the major environmental issues facing communities of color in these areas.

The Northeast, Puerto Rico, and eastern Canada are home to significant populations of people of color. They also contain some of the poorest communities of color in the northern hemisphere. Many of these communities are replete with several different environmental hazards.

THE NORTHEAST

This region is known for some of the most famous tourist attractions in the world. While millions of tourist each year flock to see these attractions, hidden away from the main thoroughfares are destitutely poor communities of color whose daily battles with the evils of poverty and racism are all encompassing.

Within the last five years many of these communities have become aware of added threats to their quality of life. Some of these threats have existed for decades unbeknownst to the area residents, while others have been recently constructed.

In many of these communities the housing stock is very old and poorly maintained (if it is maintained at all). The walls are usually covered with layers of lead based paint which is the major source of lead poisoning in children. The northeastern region of the United States can be characterized as a lead

poisoning corridor (a "Lead Belt") for exactly these reasons.

Children who are lead poisoned grow up developmentally disabled and are learning impaired for life. Lead screening in children under seven years of age should be universal. Nonetheless, in many major cities in the Northeast recent fiscal cut-backs have reduced or eliminated lead screening as a service offered by local health departments and municipal hospitals. Lead abatement of city owned apartment buildings and houses is also a rarity, and thousands of children of color continue to live in conditions where they are exposed to lead on a daily basis.

Perhaps the most threatening environmental hazard facing communities of color in the Northeast is the continuous siting and construction of hazardous facilities within these same communities. The dumping ground phenomenon that has been prevalent in the Southeast and Southwest is now common place in the Northeast as well.

For example, in West Harlem, an African American neighborhood in New York City, the following facilities exist and/or are under construction: a malfunctioning sewage treatment plant which treats one hundred and eighty million gallons of raw sewage a day, two municipal bus depots, a marine transfer station where garbage is collected onto barges for dumping, a crematorium, a six lane highway, a commuter rail line which recently killed a four year old boy, and a major route for the transportation of hazardous wastes. The one positive construction project currently going on in this community is the building of a multi-acre state park - on top of the sewage treatment plant.

This community is not unique in terms of the plethora of hazardous facilities which has been placed within the boundaries of these communities. The most heinous aspect of this phenomena is that these facilities are built next to densely populated areas, not in detached distant areas, but across the street from public schools and multi-unit apartment houses, next to hospitals and senior centers. The potential threat to the quality of life and overall health of the people who live in these communities is very real and very tangible.

PUERTO RICO

This island nation/commonwealth of the United States is known the world over for its pristine beauty and vibrant culture. Many of you have probably seen the beautiful tourist commercials touting "Puerto Rico, the shining star." What you have not seen is incredible poverty and a depressed local economy.

You may also be unaware that Puerto Rico is one of the most polluted areas in the world. It is home to hundreds of pharmaceutical and petrochemical companies, oil refineries, and manufacturing companies. Why are so many major industries attracted to Puerto Rico? Is it their tropical climate and beautiful surroundings, or their charming people and incredible cuisine? No, it is none of the above. Because Puerto Rico is only a commonwealth of the United States, none of the laws passed by Congress to protect the environment apply to Puerto Rico. Industrial producers are unrestricted in the production methods that they use, regardless of the harm they may cause to the local environment.

Puerto Rico's underground aquifers have been polluted and contaminated by massive discharges from pharmaceutical companies, oil refineries, and petrochemical plants. La Ciudad Cristiana, a small rural community near Humacao, is the only community in North America that was relocated due to mercury poisoning.

EASTERN CANADA

This area of Canada has a great deal in common with the eastern United States. Transportation between these two areas is fairly routine and many Canadians and Americans travel across the borders frequently. What we have most in common though are similar types of pollution and interdependence on non-renewable energy sources.

The entire nation of Canada is home to many Native Indian nations. Recently the Cree Indians have been engaged in a massive struggle with the national power authority of Quebec. Hydro-Quebec Power Authority has been negotiating with the New York

State Power Authority to provide millions of kilowatt hours of hydro-power to the state of New York, specifically to New York City.

In order to provide this additional source of hydro-power to New York City, the Government of Quebec has designed the James Bay Project. This project calls for the flooding and deforestation of millions of acres of land (a land mass the size of the states of Vermont and Massachusetts combined) to provide this hydro-power to New York state. James Bay is also the ancestral home of several thousand Cree Indians.

Issues of land rights and Native American sovereignty are paramount in this struggle. Recently, due to protracted pressure applied by Native American activists in Canada and the United States, Governor Mario Cuomo of New York State has decided to delay signing the contract with Hydro-Quebec. Cuomo is now saying that perhaps additional methods of energy conservation have not been fully explored.

CONCLUSION

People of color who live in the northeastern United States, Puerto Rico, and eastern Canada have begun to expand our definitions of racism and oppression to include environmental racism. We have done so out of necessity and realism. This new realization has also brought with it a renewed sense of political awareness and the willingness to fight back.

For the most part our communities have been the targets for the placement of environmentally hazardous facilities for three reasons: 1) the residents were non-white, 2) the people were poor, and 3) we were perceived to be politically powerless.

What we have learned is that the first two reasons will probably never change, but the third reason is within our power to alter. Whether our communities will continue to grow and thrive, and whether or not there will be future generations to continue the struggle for survival of our peoples depends on what we do here and now as we fight the battles against environmental racism.

REGIONAL GROUP WORKSHOP: SOUTHEAST

Facilitator: Gwendolyn Patton, Southern Rainbow Voter Education Project, Montgomery, Alabama

A SOUTHERN OVERVIEW

The United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, in *Toxic Wastes and Race*, signaled the alarming reality that the top ten cities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites have African American populations that exceed the national 11.7 percent. Of the ten cities with 1,090 sites, 419 are located in the South, viz., Memphis with 43.3% African American population, Houston with 23.6%, and Atlanta with 46.1%.

A similar pattern can be found in other southern communities that have uncontrolled toxic waste sites: Chattanooga with 99.5%, Ft. Lauderdale with 97%, Charlotte (NC) with 94.9%, Winston-Salem (NC) with 92.9%, Greensboro (NC) with 92.9% and Louisville (KY) with 92.7%. Out of 50 nationwide metropolitan areas with the greatest number of African-Americans living in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites, 24 sites are located in the South, 13 states in this region out of 50 states in the nation.

Poisonous plants/factories in or near people of color communities are also disproportionately located in the South, where tax write-offs for corporations are criminal. Of 208 plants which emit pollutants arsenic (pesticide), butadiene gas (rubber), carbon tetrachloride gas (cleansers), methylene chloride gas (degreaser, paint removers) and vinylidene chloride gas (paints, carpet backing), 88 are located in the South, in all 13 states.

In those 39 plants which pose the high risk of cancer for one out of every 100 citizens, 32 are located in the South with Louisiana having seven plants and Texas with 14 plants. Frighteningly fatal is the known EPA fact that the emissions in Port Neches on the Texas Gulf are the leading causes of cancer for one out of every ten citizens!

Forty-eight states export their hazardous and toxic waste of 100,000 pounds or more. Forty-six states import hazardous and toxic waste of 100,000 pounds or more because of lax regulations as a lucrative history.

Below is the southern subset of this enterprise:

State	Exports	Imports	Net
Alabama	8.0	35.3	-27.3
Arkansas	13.1	9.8	+3.3
Florida	4.2	1.6	+2.6
Georgia	13.7	2.6	+11.1
Kentucky	32.8	31.7	+1.1
Louisiana	21.2	67.4	-46.2
Mississippi	50.7	.5	+50.2
North Carolina	12.0	2.2	+9.8
South Carolina	6.2	12.6	-6.4
Tennessee	10.5	25.6	-14.6
Texas	20.5	14.5	+6.0
Virginia	12.0	4.2	+7.8
West Virginia	16.8	13.1	+3.7

(In Millions of Pounds)

PRIVATE MONEY POLLUTES THE POLITICAL PROCESS

It is ludicrous for environmentalists to think that decent environmental laws and enforcement can be promulgated by politicians whose campaign war chests are overflowing with "poisonous money."

In 1990, Energy/Natural Resources PACs contributed (nearly all to incumbents) \$11,332,1146, a 9% increase over 1988. These PACs consist of electric utilities, mining companies, oil and gas producers. Senator J. Bennett Johnson of Louisiana was the top PAC recipient. Incumbent Johnson is chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Other southern politicians who ranked in the top ten "gift list" are Senators Phil Gramm (TX) and Howell Heflin (AL) and Representatives W.J. "Billy" Tauzin (LA), Joe L. Barton (TX), Greg Laughlin (TX), Pete Green (TX), and Thomas J. Bliley, Jr. (VA).

Environmentalists who function in the political arena as lobbyists or testifiers need to be self-critical of lauding themselves as agents who usher in what appears to be progressive policies. A union organizer said at a recent Southern Organizing Committee

meeting, "Those policies deal more at the marketplace where environmentalists are consumers than at the workplace where people in order to survive

paradoxically contract work-related illnesses and death, and they can't even afford to buy the produce/product that they made possible!" This double-standard is perpetrated especially on people of color farmworkers who come in daily contact with poisonous pesticides on produce they pick.

THE PEOPLE'S FIGHTBACK

For nearly a decade, communities of color throughout the Southeast have been waging significant struggles around the environmental issues. These different communities reflect the diversity of the Southeast, both in terms of its racial and social composition as well as its many environmental problems:

Warren County, North Carolina

In 1982, over five hundred persons were arrested in non-violent civil disobedience protests to oppose the siting of a polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) landfill in this predominantly African American county. Often referred to as a milestone in the involvement of people of color around environmental issues, these protests were significant in 1) preventing the county from being a target for future hazardous waste activity, 2) getting Governor Jim Hunt to order a two-year moratorium on the permitting of hazardous waste sites in the state, 3) empowering the local African American community to become more active in the county's political life, and 4) promoting national awareness nationally about the issue.

Institute, West Virginia

Local fears were heightened in this predominantly African American community after the 1984 poisonous methyl isocyanate gas leak at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal, India. Approximately 3,400 persons died from the gas. The Union Carbide plant at Institute also manufactured methyl isocyanate; the Bhopal plant was built using its designs. Among the concerns of a local group named People Concerned About MIC was Union Carbide's lack of emergency response procedures for the community. The local community receives little economic benefit from the plant; fewer than 10 percent of its workers are local residents.

Sumter County, Alabama

The nation's largest hazardous waste landfill is located in this overwhelmingly African American county on the western end of the Alabama

Blackbelt. The Chemical Waste Management, Inc. facility at Emelle, Alabama receives hazardous wastes from 45 states and several foreign countries. Local opposition to the landfill mainly has come from the Minority People's Council on the Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway and Alabamians for a Clean Environment. They contend that the Emelle facility is turning "Sumter County into the pay toilet of America and local residents into hazardous waste junkies." This area is a prime example of the use of economic and other incentives to quell local opposition to a hazardous site. During the past several years, there have been attempts by other large waste disposal companies to locate facilities in neighboring counties.

Robeson County, North Carolina

Located in an area of southeastern North Carolina where two major attempts to site hazardous waste facilities have taken place during recent years, Robeson County has a predominantly Native American and African American population. The proposed facilities were the nation's first commercial low-level radiative waste incinerator and a regional chemical waste treatment facility. With the assistance of the locally based Center for Community Action, the community was able to successfully defeat both attempts. The campaigns to defeat these siting attempts involved research, legal action, involvement by locally based public officials, national media attention, and community mobilization. Attendance at many demonstration or public hearing often reached 4,000 persons.

Cancer Alley, Louisiana

The corridor along the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge has been labeled "Cancer Alley." One-quarter of the nation's petrochemicals is produced in this 85 mile corridor. The area has been called a "massive human experiment" and a "national sacrifice area," due to the massive amounts of pollutants being emitted each day. The Gulf Coast Tenants Organization has been organizing different communities in the area to fight these environmental injustices. For example, the residents of Sunrise, Louisiana recently won a legal settlement with Placid Oil Company. In 1989, the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization organized the Great Louisiana Toxics March. It is organizing to resist the proposed building of the Formosa Plastics plant. One major issue in the area is African American land loss due to attempts by petrochemical companies to purchase land for expansion.

Work Place Issues

The Southeast is an agricultural area and therefore has a large farmworker population. Starting in Florida, the migrant farmworker travels through the South and ultimately ends in New England and the Midwest. In addition to the predominantly Latino migratory work force, there are significant numbers of African American farmworkers in the Southeast. In addition to farmworker issues, occupational health issues are paramount in a region with "Right to Work" laws. These include poultry workers, whose working conditions were brought to light by a recent accident in North Carolina.

CONCLUSION

The above are merely a few examples of growing activism among people of color in the Southeast

around environmental issues. They only begin to describe the many groups and communities addressing environmental concerns in the region. Not be overlooked are efforts now underway to develop networks and coalitions around environmental justice. Groups involved in this include the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization, the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice, and the Center for Community Action. Given the legacy of civil rights activism begin in the 1960's, the Southeast has both a tradition and a large number of organizations around which such a network can be built.

Most importantly, however, is the fact that nearly a decade since over 500 persons were arrested in Warren County, North Carolina in 1982, we can begin to report significant victories.

REGIONAL GROUP WORKSHOP: MIDWEST

Facilitator: Andrea Kidd-Taylor, United Auto Workers Union, Detroit, Michigan

OVERVIEW

The Midwest region is identified as the major industrial center of the United States. It is also highly rich with labor history. However, due to the current economic crises, unemployment and underemployment is at an all time high among people of color in this region; and overall union participation and membership is declining. As a result, occupational and environmental health issues present a double-edged sword. Often, people are forced to choose between having a job or working and living in a toxic environment.

For people of color, many feel that complaining of overexposure to hazards on the job alone, without the additional burden of trying to stop a company from polluting the environment, jeopardizes the possibility of being gainfully employed. Threats of job cut backs and plant shutdowns have been very effective in preventing poor communities from joining together to confront occupational and environmental issues. In spite of these threats, the grassroots organizing efforts of various organizations in the region are impressive.

EXAMPLES

In several states in the Midwest and Southwest, disposal companies are knocking on the doors of Native American Indians to use their land for dump sites. Through the efforts of community based organizations such as the Native Americans for a Cleaner Environment (NACE), attempts in the past three years by waste disposal companies around the country to set up dump sites have failed.

More than fifty Native American tribes have been approached with plans for garbage dumps, hazardous waste incinerators and nuclear waste facilities. Legislative colleagues from North Dakota, Oklahoma, and Kansas have also formed a coalition to prevent states such as New York and New Jersey from using their states as dumping grounds for their municipal garbage.

The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC), a consortium of 11 recognized Indian tribes in Wisconsin, has contracted with the Environmental Protection Agency to conduct radon gas testing on

Indian reservations in Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. In the past, radon gas in these areas have reached levels as high as 77 picoCuries per liter. Of approximately 1600 homes that were tested by GLITC during the winter of 1990 and early 1991, four hundred homes tested above the national standard set by EPA for unsafe levels of radon in the home, which is 4.0 picoCuries. A new phase of radon testing will begin in September of this year.

The White Earth Land Recovery Project (WELRP), a non-profit organization operating on the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota, focuses on developing alternatives for rebuilding the land base of the White Earth Reservation, encouraging a more diverse economic base for the reservation, and educating people about the history of the reservation.

The project is directed by members of the Minnesota based Chippewa Tribe. One of their current projects include a wood products feasibility study for developing a company that would manufacture oars and paddles. If feasible, this could create jobs for people on the reservation by utilizing local resources.

Through the courageous efforts of one woman, Ms. Hazel Johnson, a grassroots environmental organization named People for Community Recovery (PCR) was established in a public housing project on the far southeast side of Chicago, Illinois, six years ago. Altgeld Gardens, one of the oldest developments in Chicago, was built atop a former landfill, whose fetid odors still rise from the basements more than 60 years later. As a result of actions taken by PCR, efforts to establish another landfill in the same community have successfully been defeated.

Taking on waste managers, using the media, government officials and the law as their weapons, PCR also has been successful in getting asbestos removed from the residents' homes. A neighboring community also received city water and sewer hookup for the first time in 1986 as the result of PCR's efforts, when it was found that residents in the community were using highly contaminated well water. A free health clinic was also opened to serve the residents of this area.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL LINKAGES

In the occupational health arena, the Southeast Michigan Coalition on Occupational Safety and Health (SEMCOSH) has organized the Minority Occupational Health Project to assist workers of color in gaining access to health and safety protection on the job. The mission of the project is to provide education, direction, resources, and support to all workers of color and others who seek it. The first educational conference on health and safety for people of color in the state of Michigan was organized by the project and held in September, 1991. In Michigan, efforts are being made to bring together labor and environmentalists in an organization called the Michigan Right to Act Task Force. Individuals from the labor community and environmental movement have formed committees around Michigan. Recognizing the lack of representation of people of color, the task force actively recruits people of color on an ongoing basis.

In general, the "traditional" environmental and occupational health movements have paid little attention to the toxic hazards confronting people of color in their workplaces and communities. Across the board, only token involvement can be seen in their operations and policy-making bodies. The uniting of people of color at the Environmental Leadership Summit will be an opportunity for individuals in both the environmental and occupational health movements to join together and mutually address the struggles of both groups and to seek ways of removing the barriers that currently exist between them.

On a broader scale, the potential at the Leadership Summit exists for redefining how occupational and environmental health issues fit within a racial, social and economic justice framework. The link between issues of employment, unemployment and underemployment, affordable housing, education, and access to health care to issues of the environment will be a major topic for discussion.

REGIONAL GROUP WORKSHOP: SOUTHWEST

Facilitator: Antonio Díaz, Texas Center for Policies Studies, Austin, Texas

HISTORY

The environmental degradation, poverty and poor health conditions of many communities of color in the Southwest can be attributed to the colonization and resource exploitation which marks much of the region's history. The sources of pollution in Native American, Latino, African American and Asian American communities are as varied as the communities themselves. These sources include government, agribusiness, industry and the military. Furthermore, as more transnational corporations move South in search of greater profits and more lax environmental regulations, the struggles of people of color for environmental and social justice in the Southwest are also linked with international concerns, especially with Mexico.

The region now known as the Southwest has been explored and colonized by Spain, Mexico and the U.S. Since the sixteenth century, prior to the English expansion on the continent, various nomadic and sedentary Native American tribes clashed with the Spanish conquerors looking for riches in the "New World." The exploitation of the people and resources of this region was accelerated by the westward capitalist expansion of Anglo Americans into the area. The land, which comprised half of Mexico's territory, was taken from the indigenous population for mining and agricultural purposes while the inhabitants were either massacred, forcefully removed, or used as cheap labor to work the land.

This legacy of cultural genocide and imperial encroachment has impacted the way in which various racial and ethnic groups which inhabit the Southwest have been treated. The Native American population, the original inhabitants, is concentrated in New Mexico, Arizona and California. The region is also the area of the largest concentration of Latinos, primarily Mexicans and Mexican Americans, in the U.S. The African American population is prevalent primarily in urban areas such as Houston, Dallas - Fort Worth, Los Angeles and Oakland. In recent years, the Asian American population has increased significantly, especially in California.

TRENDS AND CASES

These communities in both rural and urban areas have been exposed to pollution from corporate, government and military facilities throughout the region. For example, in the U.S. government's efforts to build its nuclear stockpile during the height of the Cold War hysteria, Navajo and Laguna Pueblo land in Arizona and New Mexico was extensively mined for uranium for nuclear weapons. Consequently, radioactive uranium waste tailings have polluted the land, soil and water in these Native American communities and throughout the Southwest. According to a 1981 study by the Navajo Health Advisory, Navajo teenagers have reproductive organ cancer 17 times the national rate, and the rate of bone cancers on Navajo reservations is five times the national average. Currently, the Havasupai people of the Grand Canyon are struggling to defend their sacred sites from mining that the U.S. Forest Service has permitted.

Further, farmworker communities, which are concentrated in the border states, have the highest rate of exposure to pesticides and toxic hazards at the workplace. According to the World Resources Institute, approximately 300,000 farmworkers are poisoned with pesticides each year. These appalling working conditions are exacerbated by the deplorable housing conditions and low wages. Farmworkers rank second only to domestic household workers at the bottom of the national income scale. Nationwide, eighty to eighty-five percent of farmworkers are Latino, followed by African Americans, Haitians, Filipinos and Vietnamese.

Similarly, low income communities of color bear the overwhelming burden of toxic waste sites and polluting industries in urban areas throughout the Southwest. As the often cited report by the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice, *Toxic Wastes and Race*, indicates, Los Angeles, Oakland, Dallas and Houston are among the metropolitan areas with the largest number of African Americans and Latinos living in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites. These communities are often promised economic develop-

ment and jobs but instead receive hazardous work sites and contaminated neighborhoods. Due to the pervasiveness of this sort of job blackmail, these facilities continue to be located in poor, disadvantaged areas. The result is poisoned communities and workers, Superfund sites from Texarkana to Silicon Valley.

Finally, the booming maquiladora industry has adversely affected the environment and public health of the 2,000 mile U.S.-Mexico border region. San Diego-Tijuana, Calexico-Mexicali, Nogales-Nogales, El Paso-Ciudad Juarez, Laredo-Nuevo Laredo, Brownsville-Matamoros are among the border sister cities which face infrastructure problems due to the increased population and rapid industrialization. Over 2,000 maquilas are currently sited along the border. A primarily female labor force is preferred for these assembly jobs because of the lower wages that can be paid to them and the belief that they are more docile and better skilled in doing intricate garment or circuitry work. The proposed North American Free Trade Agreement would accelerate this development with its accompanying environmental damage and social dislocation.

Third world health conditions exist for much of the predominately Latino population along the border area. According to a recent General Accounting Office report, over 200,000 residents live in colonias, unincorporated housing subdivisions with few streets, virtually no sewage systems and little access to drinking water. Furthermore, the Council of Scientific Affairs of the American Medical Association has cited water and air pollution as the major factors affecting environmental health in the area.

CHALLENGES

Increasingly, communities have organized to halt the onslaught of polluting industries in their backyards, i.e, high tech facilities, petrochemical plants, toxic landfills, incinerators, and others. In California, the Mothers of East Los Angeles have successfully defeated the construction of a state prison and an oil pipeline through their neighborhood, and are currently fighting the siting of a hazardous waste incinerator. In Albuquerque, New Mexico, the SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP) forced a local particle board plant to clean-up groundwater

contamination and install improved equipment to lessen emissions. Significantly, in Kettleman City, California, El Pueblo para el Aire y Agua Limpio has filed the first environmental civil rights suit in the nation to stop the location of a Chemical Waste Management, Inc. incinerator in their community.

The Southwest region is unique in the organizing efforts that have developed to address environmental racism. Besides the plethora of local efforts, the newly initiated Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice is an example of this organizing. Formed in April 1990, at a conference sponsored by the SouthWest Organizing Project in Albuquerque, the network links activists of color throughout the Southwest and in various Indian nations. Since its inception, the Network Coordinating Council has met to address: the establishment of a technical assistance and training institute for Southwest activists, a tour of the Southwest by youth affected by environmental poisoning, and the consolidation of communication between the various groups in the network, among other issues and actions. A statewide network is also developing in Texas with various environmental and social justice organizations working in communities of color.

Increasingly, as negligent corporations and government policies continue to pollute the land, air and water, communities of color are organizing in the Southwest and across the country to address these problems. In doing so, communities of color are redefining "environmentalism" within the context of social, racial and economic justice. A multi-racial and broad based movement is needed to confront the "New World Order" of neocolonialism and the further exploitation of the earth and its resources. Moreover, international efforts are increasingly needed to address the unscrupulous practices of corporations that pollute developing countries, exploit their work force and displace U.S. workers. The ease with which capital can move south, whether the Southwest or the Third World, increases the chances of economic blackmail and impedes the ability of communities and workers to organize. For this reason, broad based coalitions across different sectors, at home and abroad, are crucial to our survival.

REGIONAL GROUP WORKSHOP: PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Facilitators: Ellie Goodwin, Race, Poverty, & the Environment Newsletter, San Francisco, California and Peggy Saika, Asian Law Caucus, San Francisco, California

THE REGION

The Pacific Northwest Region often leads the way in activism regarding environmental and social justice issues. Many of the programs and policies that are implemented in this region set the tone for the rest of the nation, and serve as models for the world. The demographics of the region include every ethnic and racial group.

California is projected to be a state populated entirely by "minorities" by the year 2000. Many of these people are indigenous to specific states and therefore have a history within the region that spans ages. Policies and programs now being developed in terms of political representation, social programs, housing, transportation, and other urban and rural infrastructures may well serve as blueprints for others.

The following examples of local activism take place in rural as well as urban settings. They range from legal action to community meetings. These are just a few cases; they in no way indicate a ranking of importance or effort. Rather, in each instance, people of color are rediscovering their power and voice, and are making progress in terms of overall environmental and social equity.

HAWAII

Native Hawaiians, with the assistance of the Rainforest Action Network, the Sierra Club, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, are organizing to oppose a proposed geothermal development by the True Geothermal Energy Company and Mid-Pacific Geothermal Company on the big island of Hawai'i. This development is seeking to drill into an active volcano in the big island's Kilauea Rift for geothermal power. The power thus generated would be transferred via underwater cable to the island of Oahu.

Test drilling currently is underway in the Wao O Kele rainforest, an area once used exclusively by Native Hawaiians for gathering of food, medicine, and herbs. Among the key issues in this struggle

are the cultural and religious repercussions such as geothermal exploration and development would have on the people. Native Hawaiians believe that such drilling will violate the volcano Goddess Pele.

The Pele Defense Fund has brought the concerns of Native Hawaiians into Integrated Resource Planning proceedings, which is the first time many of the consultants on the project have ever dealt directly with cultural issues in terms of energy development.

In her testimony before the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Hawai'i, Dr. Davianna Pomalika'i McGregor, a representative of the Pele Defense Fund, detailed the socioeconomic status of Native Hawaiians, and the importance of their traditional cultural values. Dr. McGregor outlined the negative impacts upon rural communities of development by outside agencies. Traditional hunting and fishing areas have diminished, access to forest and mountain areas for gathering native medicinal plants are being cut off. This is leading to a severe disruption of the mutual sharing and exchange between extended families networks in the rural communities.

ALASKA

The Gwich'in people in Alaska are the northernmost tribe of the Indian Nation. Their struggle involves the current attempt by the Bush Administration outlined in his February 1991 National Energy Strategy to further oil exploration in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). This could seriously jeopardize the habitat of the porcupine caribou, upon which the Gwich'in depend, not only for food, but for clothing, tools and cultural identity. The proposed drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would also destroy the fragile ecosystem in the region.

At present, besides grassroots efforts to halt the drilling, the main method of combatting the proposed drilling is through legislation. Two bills, S 39 in the Senate and HR 39 in the House, are aimed at protecting the coastal plain of ANWR as a wilderness area.

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CALIFORNIA

In 1985, the first large scale commercial toxic waste incinerator in California was proposed by California Thermal Treatment Services (CTTS). The incinerator was to be built on land the company owned in the city of Vernon, which is predominantly low-income. The applications, with government approval, began to move through the regulatory process without an environmental impact report.

The Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA) and the Concerned Citizens of South Central Los Angeles (CCSCLA) learned of the project two years after it was initially proposed and quickly began to mobilize. MELA and CCSCLA began an education program in the community, made appearances at public hearings, and sought legal representation and has attracted national media attention.

In February 1991, a California Court of Appeals panel ruled unanimously that the Vernon incinerator project could not proceed without a full EIR being completed. Also, the court ordered the Health Risk Assessment for the project be redone, since the potential emissions of dioxins and other noxious agents was approximately 100 to 1000 times the original estimates.

The California Communities at Risk Project of the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation is working on empowering low-income people in a number of areas. One of the current efforts is focused on a toxic waste incinerator being proposed by Chemical Waste Management, Inc. The proposed site is Kettleman City, a small farmworker town in Central California. Government agencies have conducted most of the hearings regarding this incinerator only in English, even though the population of the communities is almost ninety-five percent Latino and forty percent mono-English speaking.

Moving up the coast to Northern California, the West County Toxics Coalition based in the predominantly African American community of Richmond has taken on Chevron Corporation for its pollutants in the air, water, and land surrounding its refinery located in the community. PUEBLO, a community project in Oakland, is addressing the risk of lead poisoning in the East Bay county of Alameda, which is largely populated by people of color.

Also in Oakland, the Clean Air Alternative Coalition is taking a stand for alternatives to freeway construction through West Oakland. This effort is in response to the plan by transportation officials to rebuild a section of the Interstate freeway that collapsed during the October 1989 earthquake. This freeway runs through the neighborhood of West Oakland, predominantly African American, and has been viewed by local activists as a major conduit of pollutants from the vehicles which use the artery.

DISCUSSION

These situations exemplify how the definition of an environmental problem has been and can be expanded to mean more than just protecting a specific piece of wilderness or an exotic type of flora or fauna.

In the case of the Gwich'in and the Native Hawaiians, the "wilderness" in question is an integral part of the lifestyle and culture of a people. The urban communities in California see their immediate localities being threatened by major development, with possible severe health and safety consequences.

The common thread is that disenfranchised people are rediscovering their collective voice and power, and are creating change. Groups that traditionally have not worked together are joining forces, often with beneficial results.

One of the key challenges that all of us face in this movement is making the government accountable to this large sector of the population. Often, our own elected officials and the agencies they empower are the ones on the opposing side. This indicates a lack of sensitivity and awareness by government officials to their constituency, as well as a fundamentally different social agenda from this constituency.

In a multicultural society, it is important to take into consideration cultural costs and variables. The assessment of costs and benefits has to take into account that a gain to one side will mean a loss to the other. Who or what will be the determinants of who "wins" or "loses" is central to this process.

Another challenge for multicultural activists is to develop an ability to present a collective and cohesive image to policy makers. Presenting a

fragmented image, or introducing issues that on the surface appear at odds, is self-defeating. Further, it nullifies any progress that we make by pitting one group against another for what may be perceived as limited time and resources.

We must also develop a new lexicon for addressing environmental and social justice issues. It is becoming apparent that there often is no clear line of demarcation defining when an issue stops being "environmental" and starts being "social equity". If one group feels an issue is health-related or is

tied to the social needs of the urban core, it may not make the psychic connection that an environmental advocacy group may have resources to share that could further their effort.

As we draw strength from each other during this Summit, it is important to realize that we are all here for one reason. By identifying the commonalities that underlie our issues, we are in a position to institutionalize policies and mechanisms that enable us to create a viable environment for all people based on their input.

STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP: GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT

Facilitator: Michael Guerrero, SouthWest Organizing Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico

The tradition of working for social justice that has been carried on for centuries in this country is emerging in a new and vibrant form. Like the strong backbeat of an uplifting song, a powerful new foundation is emerging for a national and international movement rooted in the issue of environmental justice.

Communities of color in the United States are sprouting, thriving, and winning significant victories on environmental issues almost on a daily basis. Through these new and dynamic organizations we are empowering ourselves, challenging existing local, state, and federal institutions to demand safe communities and workplaces. We are also reaching out, forming alliances, coalitions, and networks to further our knowledge and experience - with newly formed organizations and with more experienced leaders and organizers who have played and continue to play key roles in the struggle for social justice.

One fundamental question for us all at this Leadership Summit is: "How shall we define, bolster, sustain, and advance this movement as a significant force for social change?"

This workshop, a strategy workshop, will focus on the most fundamental element of this effort: *grassroots empowerment*. How will we come together and continue to build upon this new foundation?

GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT: SPEAKING FOR OURSELVES

It is the grassroots efforts of communities of color nationwide that have shaped the early stages of this movement and the past struggles for justice in our communities. Grassroots organizing is what distinguishes our struggle from the mainstream environmentalists who for years have claimed to advocate on our behalf. Many of us have seen very clearly that these groups do not necessarily represent our interests. Several of our organizations have challenged conservation and preservation groups on their lack of accountability to communities of color. These environmental corporations are becoming increasingly aware that our communities and organizations can and will speak for ourselves on issues of environmental justice.

Empowerment means taking control of our communities so that we the people determine our future growth and well-being. This means that, as a movement, we must continuously develop new leadership and educate our communities to encourage collective action, decision-making and ownership. We need to assure that public officials and leaders are accountable to our communities, and we must continue to establish the agendas of our communities in local, state, and federal policies and regulations.

The obstacles which prevent us from realizing this empowerment, however, are many. The lack of resources: *money, training, technical and legal assistance*, is primary among these. The repression that we are subjected to by companies and often by our own governments discourages our people from demanding their rights. Economic and job blackmail is a common tactic that is used by industry and government, who threaten economic sanctions (layoffs, plant shutdowns, etc.) against our communities if we demand accountability for their crimes.

Another insidious and powerful dynamic that is becoming a major barrier to our empowerment is the health impacts caused by these polluters. *It is hard to train and develop new leaders who at the same time are struggling to survive the effects of being poisoned.*

STRATEGY ISSUES

It is with these realities in mind that we came together for this workshop, to begin to collectively and creatively develop the responses to deal with the obstacles to our empowerment, and to enhance those existing mechanisms that are winning victories. The following questions will be critical in the development of short and long-term strategies for how we further our grassroots empowerment work.

- What are the needs for furthering grassroots empowerment and leadership development in communities of color?
- What are the obstacles?
- What are the tools and the vehicles that are available now or that need to be created to

reinforce grassroots empowerment in the movement for environmental justice (and beyond)?

The workshop identified the following questions for further discussion: What existing regional and national resources are available that could further our work at the local level? What resources do not exist at the regional and national level and must be created? And what resources exist locally that people in our struggle should be aware of?

Some outstanding examples of our current success include networking models such as the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice

and the Indigenous Environmental Network, training programs such as the Minority Activist Apprenticeship Program of the Center for Third World Organizing, youth empowerment projects such as the Toxic Avengers in New York City, and grassroots organizing models such as the Gulf Coast Tenants Leadership Development Project, to name but a few.

By sharing these victories, experiences, and resources we can build a viable movement for social change based on environmental justice. The measure to which we strengthen our grassroots empowerment efforts will determine the effectiveness and longevity of our movement, and the survival of our communities.

STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP: LAW

Facilitator: Wendy R. Brown, National Conference of Black Lawyers, New Orleans, Louisiana

INTRODUCTION

It is significant that the First People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit has been convened under the auspices of the United Church of Christ. The gospel of Christ calls for us to serve God by serving each other. In order to do so effectively, one of the things we must do is respect the natural resources given to us by the Creator. By adopting the creed of social responsibility, the United Church of Christ, through the work of the Commission for Racial Justice, recognizes and accepts the challenge to protect our environment.

Our purpose then is to develop legal strategies for challenging environmental racism and achieving environmental justice consistent with a mission of service. This strategy should:

- 1) acknowledge and reaffirm the integral relationship between nature and humanity;
- 2) protect the finite resources made available to us;
- 3) assure equity in the distribution of resources without regard to race, nationality, color, creed, economic or social status; and
- 4) assure equity in the placement of facilities necessary to produce consumer products, treat and dispose of hazardous waste.

To accomplish this purpose, the UCC Commission on Racial Justice has charged the Legal Strategy Group to identify key issues; develop long and short term strategy and action plans to resolve these issues; and continue to build a network of laypersons, activists and experts to develop and implement these strategies.

This discussion paper will give a brief overview of the significance of race and economic status, define the term "environment" and "environmental racism" as they should be used in legal analysis, summarize the major issues which arise in cases and suggest approaches for resolving them. This paper is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to facilitate a dialogue among people who have been active in the legal arena for a decade and those entering the field.

RACE, ECONOMICS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The perspectives represented at this summit are influenced by our experience as people of color: African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans and Asian Americans. In the United States, we are racial minorities. Internationally, people of color constitute the majority in population and cultural diversity. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the different world views in western and non-western cultures, and determine how they influence our relationships with the environment.

From the perspective of the West, economic development has historically required underdevelopment, not equal development, in countries from which natural resources come in abundance: Africa, Latin America, Central America, Native American lands, Middle East, Pacific and Asian nations. What fosters this approach is the traditional dichotomy between man and humanity found in Western philosophy and interpretations of Christianity. As a result, the insatiable patterns of production and consumption in western nations, especially the United States, is the major cause of global deterioration.

On the other hand, cultures in countries of color have traditionally viewed humanity as synonymous to, or in harmony with, the environment. However, as a result of unequal development, many non-western nations lack the political and economic power to limit the continuing exploitation of their natural resources for the sake of western development. This is equally true in the "abused communities" of color in the United States.

Thus, the most abused nations have neither the political or economic power to cause or end the deterioration of the global commons. Therefore, we must lift our voices to redirect the debate and focus on the achievement of self-determination and parity. This requires us to mobilize collectively the resources available to combat environmental abuse by equating it with social injustice.

ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

In the words of Barry Commoner, "There is a functional link between racism, poverty, and powerlessness, and the chemical industry's assault on the environment." "Environmental racism," says Dr. Benjamin Chavis, "is racial discrimination in environmental policy making." Because it has been repeatedly demonstrated that the racial composition of a community is the single variable to explain the presence of commercial hazardous waste in the area, legal issues must be framed to prove that racial discrimination has motivated, or was a factor, in the decision to place a facility in the challenging community.

Lawyers must therefore adopt the expansive definition of "environment" which people of color who are involved in the movement for social and political justice have developed. This definition stresses the relationship between damage to the physical environment and the human condition. "Environment" includes the totality of the surroundings and circumstances in communities of color. For example, the impact of the physical environment on health; the unavailability of total health care services, inadequate housing and educational opportunity; racially motivated violence; the genocidal use of the criminal justice system against people of color; the infringement on the free practice of religion in Native American communities; and the overall socio-economic status of a community.

LEGAL BASIS FOR CLAIMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Between 1978 and 1990, several lawsuits were filed challenging the placement of hazardous waste sites in communities of color. Generally speaking, these suits have attempted to prove environmental racism in a court of law using what has been made obvious through extensive research - the direct correlation between race and the location of hazardous waste sites.

[Bean v. Southwestern Waste Management Corporation, 482 F. Supp. 673 (S.D. Tex. 1979) (court found statistical evidence insufficient to establish intentional race discrimination in the selection of hazardous waste site); East-Bibb Twiggs Neighborhood Association v. Macon Bibb Planning Zoning Commission, 896 F.2d 1264 (11th Cir. 1990) (court found no proof of discriminatory intent behind

placement of non-putrescible landfill in black community); Residents Involved in Saving the Environment ("RISE") v. Kay et al. 3:90CV00680 (Federal District Court in Richmond, Va. 1990) (pending); El Pueblo el Aire Limpio v. Court of Kings, 366045 (Super. Ct. Sacramento Co. 1991) (pending).]

Plaintiffs have challenged corporate and governmental disregard for the adverse impact of environmental abuses that fall disproportionately on people of color; the failure of local, state and federal agencies to involve community representatives in the decision making process; failure to inform residents of the potential harms which would befall them if hazardous waste came into their community.

These challenges have been based on both constitutional and statutory challenges. Four constitutional theories have been used. First, it has been argued that corporate entities with government approval have denied procedural due process to parties challenging the siting of hazardous waste by failing to follow the hearing requirements which are usually prescribed by Government statutes or regulations. *[In order to hold a private corporation liable under the United States Constitution, it must be established that they were acting on behalf of, or with the condonation of the government. This concept is known as "state action." A series of recent Supreme Court cases have made it more difficult to establish state action making it more difficult to prove constitutional violations against private entities.]*

Second, plaintiffs have argued that their substantive due process rights have been violated when sites have been approved without regard to public health, safety, morality, or general welfare. Third, plaintiffs have argued that their property was taken without just compensation.

Finally, it has been argued that the choice of a landfill or other hazardous waste site denied community residents equal protection of the law because it has a disproportionate adverse impact on communities of color. While the courts have accepted these as legitimate legal theories, they have yet to uphold a challenge based on these constitutional claims.

LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE STRATEGIES

The most difficult hurdle to overcome in proving a violation of equal protection has been satisfying the

requisite proof of intent to discriminate which is required under the fourteenth amendment to the United States Constitution. The courts have recently rejected the statistical proof offered to establish racially motivated decision-making. Thus, lawyers should explore with community activists and residents, historians, sociologists, psychologists and persons from other disciplines ways in which to use the expansive definition of "environment" to prove intent on the part of corporate and government decision-makers. This means creating cumulative evidence of racial animus in health care delivery, housing, education and voting to demonstrate how policy-makers historically disregard communities of color.

A good model is found in voting rights case law where proof of discrimination and social injustice in housing, education and health care is relevant to proving that a redistricting plan has the effect of diluting minority voting strength. [*Gingles v. Thornburg*, 478 U.S. 30 (1986)] This type of evidence of effect has also been held to suffice as proof of intent. [See *Dillard v. Crenshaw County, Alabama*, 679 F. Supp. 1546 (M.D. Ala 1988); *O.Peyton, Taking History to Court: Expert Witness Tells How to Collect Historical Evidence of Discriminatory Intent in Voting Rights Cases*, 16 FOCUS 4]

Another approach would be legislative. Environmental law is primarily statutory. On the federal, state and local levels, the government has the authority to legislate environmental protection in order to protect public health, safety and welfare. The development of legal strategies, therefore, should also include drafting and lobbying for legislation to ensure the fair and equitable distribution of hazardous waste sites and to prohibit the disproportionate placement of sites in poor communities and communities of color. There is current legislation that can be interpreted to prohibit the adoption of corporate or government policies, including the siting of hazardous waste if they result in disproportionate adverse effects on communities of color.

CONCLUSION

The key to proving environmental racism lies in making clear the relationship between discriminatory policy and decision-making on environmental questions and other social injustices that have resulted from similar discrimination. This evidence, coupled with proof of intent to discriminate in the siting of the particular landfill or dumpsite, is crucial to overcoming the obstacles created by the courts in equal protection and due process litigation. Legislative lobbying and community activism are indispensable to the success of these efforts.

STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP: HEALTH

Facilitator: Linda Rae Murray, Cook County Hospital, Chicago, Illinois

BASIC DEFINITION

The first basic question is what is meant by environmental health. The oldest definition simply referred to all aspects of health and disease that was affected by factors outside of the individual (i.e. extrinsic factors); as opposed to intrinsic genetically determined factors. By this definition a great deal of what we normally think of as health issues, (e.g. measles, premature babies) are in large measure determined by "environmental" that is extrinsic factors.

These are ancient concepts, and many people understood that your health status is a result of a complicated interplay of individually determined genetic factors and extrinsic environmental factors. Many ancient cultures spoke of the importance of proper diet, relationship with air, water and land in order to maintain good health.

Today, the media definition of "environmental issues" and therefore environmental health has narrowed considerably. Now most frequently people refer to those health effects produced by specific chemical wastes and pollutants. If we concentrate on the impact of human activity on the planet, the industrial revolution particularly since the end of World War II we have a reasonable definition. One-fourth of the planet's people live in industrialized societies, this means that at least 1.25 billion people may be exposure to significant environmental contaminants. The United States produces more than one ton of hazardous waste per each person.

The media considers the fouling of our drinking water with organo-solvents an appropriate environmental health issue, but the fouling of our neighborhoods with rats and garbage has suddenly stopped being an environmental health problem. The increase in oxides of nitrogen in our atmosphere has an urgency that threatens the world, the loss of the rain forest endanger climatic conditions. However, the inability of billions of the world's people to obtain enough food to live, and to have sufficient shelter are just as catastrophic to the world as the loss of animal species, our rain forests, or atmospheric pollution.

EARLY WARNING SIGNALS: BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CANARY?

One of the basic tenets in preservation of the environment is an understanding of the inter-relatedness of all systems. The spotted owl is important not simply because of its worth as one species; but as a signal for all life (including humans). If we destroy nature to the degree that a whole species is endangered, there is little question that far reaching consequences are likely, even if we cannot fully trace them. Our life as human beings is tied to the well-being of the entire planet.

Similarly, certain groups of humans serve, whether they wish it or not, as an early warning system for the rest of society. These groups are very much like the canaries in the old coal mines. Miners used to take bird cages down into the mines. If they hit a pocket of methane gas the canary would drop dead. When the miners saw the canary fall off its perch, they would run out of the mine. If they were lucky the miners escaped before they too died. In the United States those with the least power (poor people, specific groups of workers, and people of color) serve as human "canaries" for the rest of society.

OCCUPATIONAL FACTORS

The substances that now contaminate the environment are the same substances that affect workers. However, the levels of exposure in the work place are usually many orders of magnitude greater than levels of pollution seen in the general environment. We have, like it or not, turned our workplaces into giant experimental laboratories. It is in the workplace, among workers, that the impact of toxic substances and poor conditions on human health appear in their starkest form.

Conservative estimates are that at least twenty-five workers die each working day from accidents on the job, and at least one hundred thousand American workers die each year from diseases caused by occupational exposures. Many experts feel that people of color are disproportionately impacted by occupational injury and illness. Some tragedies, like

CATEGORIES OF RISK FACTORS WITH ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS	
CATEGORY	EXAMPLES
Occupation	Unemployment, underemployment, dusts, chemicals, physical hazards (radiation, heat, noise)
Political, Economic and Social Factors	Poverty, homelessness, stressful living conditions, violence, racism, sexism, substance abuse (cigarettes, alcohol, other drugs), social and economic justice
Food	Starvation, inadequate diet, unhealthy diet, food additives
Water	Pollution by microorganisms, lack of water, contamination by-products of industrialization (metals, pesticides, solvents)
Land	Lack of arable land, contamination with chemicals, biological infestations (mosquitos, rat, etc.)
Air	Products of combustion, particulates, heavy metals, dusts, cigarette smoke
Toxic Wastes	Massive assault of tens of thousands of chemicals with unknown affects on the environment and human health

the recent fire in the poultry plant killing 25 people, mostly African American, make the front pages. Most remain silent and personal tragedies are ignored. Some early estimates were that black workers faced a 37% greater chance of suffering from an occupational injury or illness, and a 24% greater chance of dying from an occupationally related injury or illness compared to their white counterpart.

More recent work agrees with this conclusion. Robinson points out that "the average black worker is in an occupation 37% to 52% more likely to produce a serious accident or illness than the occupation of the average white worker... The findings suggest that black workers with the same levels of education and experience as whites, will on average, find themselves in substantially more dangerous occupations." Robinson's study of California workers found that Latino men faced a 33% greater chance, and Latino women a 19% greater chance of suffering from an occupational injury or illness, than their white counterparts. Workers of color often have the least desirable, lowest paying and often most dangerous jobs. Workers are exposed to toxic chemicals and substances in their most concentrated forms. When we see workers falling ill and dropping dead, it

ought to be a warning to everyone that something is wrong. We all have a vital interest in occupational health and safety, this is not an issue about which only labor unions must be concerned. Chemicals are an equal opportunity danger; they can appear in a factory or in our drinking water. Efforts to clean up the workplace are the front line trenches in the battle for social and environmental justice.

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS

The single most prevalent occupational disease in the United States is unemployment and underemployment. This affects more Americans, particularly people of color, than any other single occupational disease. In the United States, unemployment levels are allowed to rise as a method of economic readjustment. Many U.S. economist accept high permanent unemployment as preferable to inflation and necessary of economic stability. This is not the case in other parts of the industrialized world. We know workers threatened with, or actually unemployed suffer from a number of health problems. Studies have documented greater prevalence of gastro-intestinal symptoms, (abdominal cramping and pain, bloating, diarrhea, ulcers), high blood pressure, headaches, insomnia, cardiovascular

and stress related symptoms among the unemployed. Brenner and other researchers argue that unemployment has measurable adverse health effects on whole communities and society. Increases in disease, violence, prison populations are some of the symptoms of the our economic policies.

Underemployment is a growing problem in the United States. Increasingly employers are using "part-time workers" as a method of controlling costs. Part-time workers are generally paid less, and often enjoy little or no fringe benefits. It is instructive to note that in a number of surveys among the nation's homeless between 5-10% are employed full time and another 10-20% are employed part-time or episodically. The struggles against poverty, racism, drugs, violence and war and other injustices are not separate from the struggle to end environmental pollution. Decent jobs with dignity, good education, adequate housing, peace and justice are not bargaining chips that we use to negotiate with the "mainstream" environmental movement; they are an integral part of environmental health. Without guaranteeing these fundamental human rights for all peoples, the health of the planet is doomed.

FOOD

Starvation and malnutrition are still the leading causes of death in the world. In the United States, issues of a healthy diet, the role of food additives, and contamination of the food chain from environmental pollution all present risks to human health.

LAND

Deforestation, seepage of toxic wastes from landfills, contamination of the soil from agricultural chemicals, deposition of chemicals from air pollution, and acid rain all pose problems in land use. The overcrowding of humans without adequate housing, arable land to support life, rats and other vectors of disease remain significant causes of morbidity and mortality.

WATER POLLUTION

In much of the world the contamination of drinking water with micro-organisms is a leading cause of illness and death especially among children. In the United States, surface and ground water is a valuable resource. However, these resources are contaminated by our agricultural processes. The

chemicals, fertilizers, and pesticides used in modern agriculture contaminates both surface and ground water with run off. Landfills represent a risk to ground water, as toxic chemicals seep through the soil. The deposition of particulate from air pollution on surface water is also a significant source of water contamination.

It is not surprising, therefore, that of 16.8 % of water systems serving less than 10,000 people, and 28% of those serving a population greater than 10,000 people are contaminated with at least one volatile organic compound.

AIR

Air pollution is one of the most obvious examples of environmental contamination. There are many examples of widespread illness and death from atmospheric inversions. In the United States in 1989, one hundred and nineteen urban areas violated air pollution limits; 50% of our population live in these areas.

TOXIC WASTES

There are at least 500,000 dump sites and contaminated pits, ponds and lagoons, and at least 60-70,000 commonly used chemicals that contaminate them.

The landmark studies showing that the location of toxic waste dumps is determined by economic power and class; and most importantly ethnicity and race are well known. The finding in the United Church of Christ study that, " Race proved to be the most significant among the variables tested in association with the location of commercial hazardous waste facilities" has been replicated in a number of regional and local studies.

The industrial policies of the "first world" have benefitted only a tiny fraction and of people and have had a devastating impact on the health of the "third world". Environmental racism thrives as a domestic and international policy.

WHY IS ENVIRONMENTAL DISEASE SO DIFFICULT TO DOCUMENT

A. Environmental and occupational diseases look like other diseases.

The human body has a limited number of ways to react to insults, injuries and stress. For this reason there is rarely a unique clinical or pathological

presentation of environmental and occupational diseases. A headache caused by fatigue is not fundamentally different than a headache caused by high levels of atmospheric ozone.

B. There is often a long latency period between exposure and manifestations of disease.

For some diseases (e.g. chronic lung diseases), most cancers it simply takes decades for disease to develop. This makes it difficult to link a specific exposure with a specific disease.

C. Many diseases have multifactorial etiologies.

Many different factors can cause the same disease. For example, lung cancer can be caused by cigarette smoking, asbestos, radon gas and a host of other substances. It is inappropriate to ignore hazardous substance in the environment simply because a life-style risk factor is present. One recent study estimates that one-third of the gap in health status between minorities and the majority population can be attributed to life-style factors, one third to poverty and economic issues, and one-third to "unknown" factors. Some of those "unknown" factors must be environmental and occupational exposures.

D. We know little about the effects of chronic low doses of toxins, or how different exposures may interact to impact on human health.

Hazardous substances in the environment usually occur in very low doses compared to occupational exposures. This makes the study of the health effects of such substances even more difficult.

E. Most health professionals receive little training in environmental and occupational health.

Health professionals are not trained to consider or investigate environmental factors as a cause of human disease. The under-representation of people of color in the health and environmental professional ranks makes it likely that environmental issues affecting our communities will continue to be ignored.

KEY QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FOR COMMUNITIES OF COLOR:

What programs are needed to increase the level of knowledge about environmental health among people of color especially;

- community organizations,
- religious and church groups,
- workers and their unions,
- students and their organizations,
- women of color,
- health & environmental workers, and
- elected officials and other leaders.

What programs should be established to guarantee that larger numbers of people of color are able to receive the training necessary to fully participate in technical careers dedicated to environmental health?

What measures are needed to guarantee that potentially dangerous environmental conditions in communities of color are inventoried and potential health effects addressed?

How do we correct the current lack of data on environmental health issues among people of color?

What proportion of the gaps between the health status of whites and people of color can be attributed to differential exposure to environmental and occupational hazards?

What policies and practices must be put in place to guarantee income protection and job retraining for workers displaced because of efforts to protect the environment?

What strategies are needed to implement economic development programs that create well paying, decent jobs with dignity at home and abroad that are in harmony with the rest of the environment?

STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP: LABOR

Baldemar Velasquez, President, Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), Toledo, Ohio

OVERVIEW

I would like to initiate this discussion by saying that, for many people of color organizations such as FLOC, no single issue can become the orientation. Given the multitude of symptoms of class and race inequalities, to restrict the victims to one single issue, be it the environment or any other, would be misguided. A call needs to be issued to revitalize old grassroots organizing efforts in poverty-ridden communities across the nation, and to encourage new efforts.

The foot soldiers that fed the civil rights movement, the early trade union movements, and the struggle for women's rights are a specimen of dreamers which no movement can do without. The good ones that I know are guided by the powerful force of love for their families, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Many of them are selfless beings that would take on any Goliath and seemingly unsurmountable odds to defend the oppressed against any predator, whether they be employers, polluters, racists or any others from the oppressing class.

To limit ourselves to single issues would be an irreverent cruelty, since that is generally the orientation of individuals of privilege. The major environmental organizations reflect the luxury of seeing potential or imminent danger of toxics in the environment for their posterity; yet, in the meantime, the children of farmworkers and other poor communities languish in a powerless statistical basement that serves as a barometer and provides data to warn the more affluent communities of the pending dangers of particular chemicals, toxic wastes or other deadly substances.

Recently formed environmental groups want to train and educate communities of people of color to resist and fight toxic waste dumps and incinerators. This is good in and of itself, but what we do not need is another single-issue intervention movement that infuses large amounts of money and activity to win a partial victory in particular communities -- and then leaves us standing alone against an alerted and activated opposition to weather the other issues that are the causes of poverty and powerlessness.

When the Alar scare on apples not too long ago mobilized the nation to a frenzy, apple growers had

to drop the use of that chemical to successfully market any of their crop. This shallow victory had no impact on empowering the farmworkers who continue to work in the pesticide-laden fields of the Northwest, Michigan and other apple-growing states. Neither did the Malathion scare in California during former Governor Jerry Brown's administration. Environmentalists developed an effective campaign that produced a national concern. However, for years Malathion has been one of the least toxic chemicals used in agricultural crops in practically every state in the country where migrant farmworkers work.

The empowerment of these communities has to be the single most important subject to be analyzed and acted upon. The struggle to be able to position oneself to feed, clothe, educate and protect one's health includes environmental rights.

Thus, it is not surprising to me that lower-income people of color suffer a disproportionate risk in the locations of hazardous waste landfills, facilities and incinerators. One only needs to look at documents such as that reported by Hawley Truax on the 1984 report by Cerell Associates to the California Waste Management Board and later cited by Dana Alston in *Taking Back Our Lives* for the Panos Institute, which said in part that "the state is less likely to meet resistance in a community of low-income blue-collar workers with a high school education or less." It goes on to say, "but the middle and upper socioeconomic strata possess better resources to effectuate their opposition." These paid consultants are essentially voicing the unwritten policy of capitalist predators of poor communities.

LESSONS OF FARMWORKER ORGANIZING

The struggle that farmworkers have waged over the years is no different than that waged by workers in other industries. Many of the environmental and workplace hazards have been grouped with other demands such as wages, job security, benefits and other aspects of work conditions. Farmworkers, for example, have called for a halt to the use of Maneb and Bravo, two carcinogens used as fungicides in the tomato harvest. Any residue from either of these chemicals increases in toxicity when tomatoes reach the cooking stage of food processing. The concern that farmworkers have in protecting

themselves from exposure to these chemicals on the foliage of the plants that they handle is consistent with the protection of the unsuspecting consumer. Issues such as drift of aerial spraying of chemicals are contained in union contract agreement clauses calling for notification, warning and posting requirements that exceed federal standards.

The call for a halt to the use of damaging chemicals on crops is also a call for a halt to the polluting of soil and water supplies in rural work areas. This is one of the reasons why I believe that the labor movement is in a unique position to offer a vehicle that might help empower poor communities. Its presence is significant because of its multi-issue focus and its significant involvement in civil rights.

The labor movement is in the best position to affect a profound impact in the toxic wars and be able to cause a fundamental change in the policy-making of corporate polluters. The main reason for this is that these are men and women who are always in direct contact with the polluters and who are in the position to serve as the front line troops of inspectors within the industries that cause pollution. Labor's effectiveness will depend on its success in organizing local workers and its ability and desire to provide leadership of the workers around other community issues.

The activism of such grassroots efforts should be networked to the point that its success could stand by itself. This is important so that local and activist trade unionists can solicit involvement and support without conditions of the labor hierarchy all the way to the national leadership. Qualitative support, however, is not always there, and national policy may conflict with local efforts. The labor movement as a whole is still far from escaping the clutches of cold war sentiment and provincial nationalism. Its adoption of the State Department's misguided foreign policy, embarrassing conflicts such as P-9 and PATCO, and its cornered defensiveness in the Free Trade talks with Mexico underscore lost vision and a shutdown of the once well-oiled machine whose foot soldiers forged the mainstream of middle-class America and obligated the upper class to accommodate them.

The case of FLOC involves all of these issues and even other serious complications because of the migratory nature of the work force. Although FLOC's national headquarters are located in Ohio, the members migrate mainly from Texas and Florida, with a small number from Mexico, Central

America and the Caribbean. While in Ohio and Michigan, most of the workers are categorized as sharecroppers, and, therefore, independent contractors with no basic employee rights to unemployment compensation or worker's compensation, and are taxed 15 1/2% of their meager wages for Social Security. The agricultural industry is left few of the restraints of the Fair Labor Standards Act; and for the little legislation that exists to protect farmworkers, there is no way to ensure meaningful enforcement. The players in Ohio and Michigan are some of the world's largest food processors: Campbell Soup Company; Vlasic Foods; Heinz USA; Dean Foods and its subsidiaries; Cates Pickles; Aunt Jane's and Green Bay Foods.

The companies' growers number about 110 independent family farmers who grow cucumbers for pickling under an exclusive growing contract that in effect sells the crop before it is even planted. On these farms over 5,000 migrant farmworkers come to work. They live in private labor camps, some of which rival concentration camps, at the total mercy of growers and labor contractors. Although it is a fact that migrant farmworkers have continued working while a field was being sprayed with toxic chemicals, the community's inability to act, its powerlessness on this particular issue, is not separate from its state of peonage.

We must respond with a call to organize and a call to make radical changes in the structure of how the agricultural industry does its business. Empowering this worker community has been an elusive struggle for 24 years. Finally, FLOC hit on a cornerstone strategy that culminated in this nation's first multi-party collective bargaining agreements. While many liberal supporters backed the small family farmers' movement, many danced around the fact that these farmers actually exploited the farmworkers who work on their farms. In fact, it was the profits from labor-intensive crops such as cucumbers and tomatoes that offset the low and marginal returns from corn, wheat and soybeans, thereby providing a key asset in saving the family farm. What FLOC did, however, was to bring the food processors to the negotiating table; negotiate a master agreement that applied to their contracted farms; and insist that they bring their growers to the negotiating table and sign one agreement as a third party in a collective manner.

Campbell Soup Company and Vlasic Foods were forced to organize associations of their growers to accommodate this demand. After five years of col-

lective bargaining, these associations have learned from FLOC the significance of collective action. In fact, some growers now support FLOC's organizing campaigns. The reason is simple: the small family farmers used to think they were of the upper class, compared to the farmworkers. It was a counterfeit status that was as much emotional as fact, gained by marginalizing an impoverished community of color. They have learned at the bargaining table to look upward at the real decision-makers that dictate industry prices and, therefore, their livelihood, as well as that of the farmworkers. Now, thanks to FLOC, those growers associations function more and more like a union at the bargaining table with the companies. All of the six master agreements covering 5,000 workers on 110 different farms include clauses concerning pesticides, committees on clean-up of labor camps, etc. Let us make no mistake about what it took to get here: twenty-four years, hundreds of rallies, marches, picket lines, demonstrations, boycott campaigns, arrests, jails, shootings, beatings and death threats. All for little or no pay.

The dominating class will constantly seek to outflank, to take away the gains of any movement. The issue of free trade with Mexico is a case in point. Just about every environmental group in the country jockeyed to create "progressive" coalitions with labor organizations which launched a major effort to stop fast-track approval of those talks. Farmworkers will be affected no less than workers in other industries.

For example, Vlasic cut its Ohio acreage by some 30% this year because of a cool market and oversupply. This has not been good for the growers' income, nor the workers' earnings because of less work. Additionally, other states are competing to attract pickle growing and could seemingly be seen as jeopardizing our jobs in this region as, understandably, companies are constantly looking for a more efficient and less costly product. There is also the larger question of how much product is grown where. The companies for whom we work grow pickle and tomato crops all over the country, including Wisconsin, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, California and at least four states in Mexico: Queretaro, Guanajuato, Michoacan and Sinaloa.

The initiative of free trade negotiations between the U.S. and Mexico underscores the international economic integration that has existed for some time, and it is not that we will go unaffected by

unbridling restraints through free trade. It is as obvious to us as it is to the environmental organizations that these food companies do not intend to provide appropriate facilities to meet even the currently modest standards for field sanitation, pesticide protection and environmental pollution, called for in our collective bargaining agreements. The difference is that the environmental groups have responded with a political strategy and believe they can salvage the attachment of some environmental conditions to any potential agreement. Labor, of course, stripped of its economic and political will on this issue, welcomed this support. The problem here is that America does not, at this time, possess an administrative bureaucracy that aggressively enforces pro-labor laws. Whatever makes these environmental groups believe that pro-worker sections of an international agreement would be radically enforced is nothing short of illusory thinking. Worst of all is the enormous amount of resources, time and spurious enthusiasm for the dubious achievements.

CONCLUSION

We cannot react with myopic and provincial responses, particularly since there is no way that we are going to stop an ever-expanding economy or close our borders. What is needed here is not a political response, but rather an organizing response. We must fashion a union with workers in alliance, state by state, country by country. We must create such alliances as would secure unions nationally and internationally in companies for whom we work. We in FLOC, for example, should not have a contract with Dean Foods only in Ohio, but also in Wisconsin, Michigan, North and South Carolina, California, Mexico and everywhere else they grow their pickles. We must insist that workers' rights to wages and benefits such as health, education, environmental safety, etc., be protected everywhere. It does not matter if Dean Foods grows pickles from Ohio to Michoacan, Mexico. As Americans and Mexicans alike, we are now less citizens of the nation in which we are born, and more citizens of the company for whom we work. This makes us common and equal. We must insist that this equality be reflected in our pay checks, our work conditions, our living conditions, our environmental conditions -- for which the common company is responsible. This should impact the security of our jobs here and in Mexico.

FLOC has signed a cooperative agreement with Mexico's largest agricultural worker's union. This

agreement calls for -- and already has been utilized to secure -- joint action in negotiating new agreements with a common multi-national food processor.

It has become increasingly clear to me that, unless citizens are empowered around and within the economic institutions that affect their lives, no significant changes of any lasting value will occur. Let there be a call to enlist and create, then, to

activate a new generation of shock troops in poor communities throughout this country and neighboring countries; troops that will act like Joshua's foot soldiers, who, by the sheer act of faith, will be able to crumble the walls of oppression. He who is victimized and who also labors with brain, sweat and muscle is justified; and is in an enviable position to lead the charge and become the needed imperative voice.

STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP: RELIGION

Facilitator: Jean Sindab, Prophetic Justice Unit, National Council of Churches, New York, N.Y.

THE CHURCHES' COMMITMENT

"We want to say as forcefully as we can that social justice for all people and eco-justice for all creation must go together. Social justice cannot happen apart from a healthy environment and a sustainable and sustaining environment will not come about without greater social justice."

This statement was issued in the Final Report of the Section One, "Giver of life, sustain your creation" at the World Council of Churches (WCC), Seventh General Assembly convened in Canberra, Australia, February, 1991. This strong wording commits the global Christian community to the task of integrating environmental concerns with justice issues, in its mission, interpretation of the gospel and its social activists work. It is important to understand that at Canberra, the section on environment and creation posited justice at the center of its analysis. Caring for creation was addressed in a holistic sense, and could not be divided from caring for humanity.

The statement also represented the culmination of a process started by the WCC in 1983 at its last assembly in Vancouver, Canada. At that time the churches launched a programmatic thrust geared around Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) as a response to the crisis of injustice, war and a deteriorating planet. This harsh reality dictated that the churches take some action. The most critically important point about the JPIC process was that it marked the churches' declaration to the world that there could not be separation between the struggle for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. That, in fact, they were "one single global struggle, interconnected and must be welded into one coherent struggle for life."

JPIC was intended to end debate and programmatic competition between those working on its different aspects. The churches were to come together to devise programs which sought to address these issues in an integrated manner. In addition, the churches were to reach out to social movements involved in these struggles to form a dynamic partnership with them and build a unified, holistic movement for JPIC. The emphasis was to be on seeking similarities and common ground and eliminating differences and debates. In 1983, many

churches began to understand that in order to get into the environmental movement, they had to address justice issues. For the proponents of JPIC, injustice was the basis of environmental degradation.

JPIC's basic premise is that the clean-up of the environment, the restoration of a partnership with creation and an end to wars can only come through a more just ordering of the society. The most casual examination of the major environmental problems will reveal that they are the result of the sins of overproduction and overconsumption: global warming, ozone depletion, air pollution, and toxic waste. These problems are rooted in an economic system which produces an inequitable distribution of wealth and resources (classism), and in a thorough disrespect and disregard for human beings (racism and sexism). It is only when a right relationship with the earth is established that justice and peace can be restored. In the emphasis on production and consumption, the earth has been used as merely a factor of production to be used and abused for profit and comfort.

The final report on environment at Canberra reflected the churches awareness on this linkage stating: "This (environmental) crisis has deep roots in human greed, exploitation and economic systems which deny the elemental truth that any and every economic and social system is always a subsystem on the eco-system and is totally dependent on it."

The churches are in the best position to be in the vanguard of calling for a new partnership with the earth; to remind society of the precious gift of stewardship that we have been given by God to care for and nurture the earth; to be in partnership with creation and to care for the earth as we do ourselves. But the churches are of the world, they bear the sin of being part and parcel of overproduction and overconsumption, of the sin of injustice, racism and sexism. At the same time, this historic Summit convened by the United Church of Christ has coined a new phrase in our activist vocabulary "environmental racism". This issue begins to give form and substance to the abstraction of JPIC. It is a concrete demonstration of justice and environmental issues coming together and providing a programmatic thrust for the churches who are declaring their strongest intentions and commitment

to integrate these issues.

At Canberra, the section report on environment identified two major problems confronting the world today: social injustice and environmental crisis - in that order. The report declared: "A new vision will integrate our interdependent ecological, social, economic, political and spiritual needs." The struggle against environmental racism is the concretization of that new vision. Its victims are the constituency which was identified in the Canberra report and cited as the starting point for our concern for the environment: "The poor teach all of us things we must know for an adequate theology of creation. They invariably suffer first and most from a degraded environment. In a world intricately interconnected, their struggles are a critical practical starting point for restoration and well-being of the earth."

At Canberra the churches also identified another entry point for environmental issues: indigenous peoples and land rights issues. The churches have, since 1983, made the connection between land rights struggles and environmental issues. Canberra called for the churches to "move beyond words to action" especially to negotiate with indigenous people to determine how lands taken unjustly by the church from indigenous people can be returned. This resolution reflects the churches' understanding that one cause of the destruction of the land is that it has been unjustly taken away from those who hold it in careful stewardship. This statement went on to commit the churches to "oppose continuing and now increasing exploitation of indigenous peoples' land and mineral resources."

We have focused on the resolutions and positions of the World Council of Churches because they are endorsed by over 300 member churches around the globe and represent an international commitment to these issues. These resolutions become the basis for programmatic activities on the part of many different churches. The U.S. churches, for example, as members of the WCC are part of the JPIC commitment. The Eco-Justice Working Group, which was established soon after the JPIC process was initiated, works jointly on the issues of environment and justice. The working group is based in the Prophetic Justice Unit of the NCC. William Gibson, a member and the editor of its newsletter *The Egg* writes: "Theologies of creation must not neglect the liberation of people. Creation includes humanity. Nature and the poor are both victims of oppression. They will be liberated

together or not at all." The group defines its objectives as "looking at economic issues through the lens of environmental sustainability and to look at environmental issues through the lens of economic justice."

The working group having committed itself to the integration of these issues has now reorganized itself to ensure that people of color are more involved in all its activities. It can potentially be one of the primary vehicles for the articulation of environmental racism to churches throughout the nation. Its current activities involve: 1) conducting hearings on environmental racism and toxic waste in various cities throughout the country; 2) publishing a newsletter containing articles on environmental racism; and 3) ensuring that opportunities are provided for people of color to articulate their concerns on eco-justice.

IMPLEMENTING THE COMMITMENT

The foregoing is an effort to provide a short overview of what the churches commitment is in the area of environment racism. It makes clear that in terms of resolutions, declarations and its programmatic thrust, the integration of justice and environment issues is one of its clear priorities. However, it is also clear that in terms of action, actual programming and support, the churches have yet a way to go. The task before us at this Summit and in this workshop is to discuss and strategize ways in which we, the participants can develop an action plan which will concretize these resolutions and enable the churches to fulfill the critically important role they have established for themselves.

The workshop will begin with a brief oral overview of the important role that the churches can play in helping to raise the visibility of environmental racism both in the churches and in society at large. We will have a short discussion and questions and answers and then go directly into devising an ACTION PLAN. There will be no full discussion of the substantive issues. The three areas we must address in our Summit strategy workshop are how to: EDUCATE, MOTIVATE, AND ADVOCATE.

1. STRATEGIES TO EDUCATE:

How do we ensure that publications on environmental racism, such as *Toxic Wastes and Race*, the United Church of Christ study, and *We Speak for Ourselves*, the Panos Institute study, are made available to congregations and church leaders?

How do we exchange information on a regular basis with churches? How do we have our articles, stories, and other materials inserted into church publications, newsletters, bulletins, etc. on a regular basis? How do we ensure that the news of this Summit is distributed widely among church congregations? How will the publications and audio-visual materials be used in the churches?

2. STRATEGIES TO MOTIVATE:

How do we design a plan to ensure that all church assemblies, conferences and other gatherings place environmental racism on their agendas for a full discussion among their constituents? How can we generate joint meetings between persons in the church for the development of unified strategies for confronting environmental racism? How do we develop programs that will increase visits to oppressed communities where toxic waste sites are located? How can we guarantee that the denominations have adopted the final reports and resolutions passed by the WCC and NCC integrating justice and environmental issues and are devising programs to implement them?

3. STRATEGIES TO ADVOCATE:

How do we lobby the churches to become advocates against environmental racism in local, national and international political and church settings? How can the churches ensure that key issues continue to be raised in the aftermath of the United Nations Conference on Environment? How can the churches use the Summit as an opportunity to raise the issue of environmental racism and begin a process of assessing church lands in their possession which should be returned to indigenous people? How can we work with churches to advocate for increasing the number of persons of color employed in church departments dealing with environmental and economic justice issues? How do we lobby the churches to make available the financial resources necessary for congregations and social activists to become fully involved in the struggle against environmental racism?

All these strategies emerge from resolutions already passed by churches and committed to by the global church leadership. Churches must develop an action plan to facilitate their implementation.

STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP: EDUCATION AND YOUTH

Facilitators: Bunyan Bryant, University of Michigan School of Natural Resources, Ann Arbor, Michigan and Laurie Weahkie, Tonantzin Land Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Often we hear the catch-phrases sustainable future, sustainable development, global management, and global change, but we seldom ask the question: for whom? Are these concepts smoke screens to gloss over more deeply-seated problems of poverty and race relations? Do these concepts serve to protect and ensure the resources for elite groups? Should people of color continue to be exposed to a disproportionate amount of environmental pollutants so that our more affluent counterparts can breathe cleaner air? Should our communities continue to be receptacles for hazardous waste products that decrease the quality of our life? How can we make informed decisions that involve intangible commodities like bio-diversity and tangible commodities such as expensive fur coats? How can educational programs be designed to empower people to become environmentally effective citizens? How can educational programs be designed to address environmental issues as well as issues of social, economic, and political equity? How can educational programs incorporate scientific information and analyses into policy-making decisions?

Environmental science (or natural resources) curricula must include these inquiries. When curricula fail to address these concerns they become part of the problem, not the solution. General goals and objectives for such programs should be as follows:

To identify, and understand the interconnectedness of all human and nonhuman life and how such connectedness relates to our survival on earth.

To identify and understand the effect of both cultural forces and the political economy of natural resources on all life-forms.

To demonstrate self-mastery of knowledge of the biophysical environment (including both aquatic and terrestrial systems), and social sciences (including political science, political economy, psychology, sociology, and education), and to problem solve effectively using an interdisciplinary approach.

To develop group and organizational skills in order to work interdisciplinary to solve social and

economic inequity within the context of an environmentally sustainable future for all people, regardless of race, color, creed or sexual preference.

Below are ten crucial educational issues, accompanied by examples of educational programs and/or questions that should be of interest to people of color as we prepare ourselves for the 21st century. Strategies suggested in this document are intended as starting points for more substantive discussion. Environmental equity is implicit in our discussion, although it is not directly addressed. Some issues raised in this document are more appropriate for public schools while others are more appropriate for college and university level institutions. Some are applicable across all levels of study. As this dialogue progresses, it is hoped that there will be mutual understanding, respect, and openness on the part of participants. Note that my own biases are reflected throughout this document; We are not detached or separated from pedagogical issues raised herein, as many of them are encountered in my daily teaching. The issues listed below are not in order of importance.

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES, EXAMPLES, AND QUESTIONS

Educational Issue 1: Education for Oppression vs. Education for Liberation

Oppressive/dependent relations should be discouraged as much as possible in order to enhance independent thought, personal autonomy, critical thinking, and quality interaction with peers. The classroom should be student centered, emphasizing student participation and symmetrical relations among students. This creates an atmosphere that empowers and liberates students to take charge of their own learning towards self-mastery and liberation. Active participation in learning requires students to make perceptual shifts from being the object of knowledge to being the source of knowledge, from being dependent to being self-empowered, from being passive participants to being active learners and teachers. By becoming actors, not spectators, students discover that collectively they can make a difference in the environment in which they live.

Example: A Detroit high school science teacher takes her class to the local river to collect water samples and tests them for evidence of domestic and industrial effluent. Computers are used to analyze the data. This information in turn becomes the basis for a computer conference with other schools within and outside the city of Detroit. Through computer conferencing, students shared their diagnostic findings. Students that participated in this project not only engaged in environmental problem solving activities and learned about the workings of local government and business, but they felt empowered by the process. Students have been known to present their findings to appropriate agencies for a redress of grievances. This program, The Rouge River Project, is coordinated by Dr. William Stapp from the University of Michigan. Over 50 schools in the Detroit area are currently participating. He is also involved in setting up water monitoring projects in schools throughout the world that will be linked to one another via computer. Dr. Stapp is presently developing a curriculum unit for high school students to test air quality.

Educational Issue II: Deep Ecology vs. Shallow Ecology

Achieving a sustainable future on earth involves working through four levels of concerned consciousness: 1) pollution, 2) environmental degradation, 3) consumption, and 4) overpopulation. While the former two relate directly to symptoms, the later relates more to causes. While the spaceship earth or shallow ecological advocates believe that the solution to environmental problems is through the use of technology, convention economies, and politics in order to prevent environmental overload, sustainable earth or deep ecological advocates believe that the solution to environmental problems is to work with nature. Deep ecologists believe that only through working with nature can environmental problems be solved. This could only be achieved by selectively modifying small parts of the biosphere within the context of ecological understanding, humility, love and caring for the earth and its species. By doing more with less, one's lifestyle would become more harmonious with natural cycles. It requires making a distinction between an individual's wants and true needs. There are, however, some deep ecologists who take this philosophy to the extreme. They go so deep to protect life-forms that they resist any cures for the AIDS virus; they resist giving aid to starving countries; they resist opening our borders

to immigration; they just want nature to take its course, without human interference.

Questions: What are the implications for people of color if shallow ecology is taken to the extreme? What are the implications for people of color if deep ecology is taken to the extreme? How deep should we go to protect life-forms? Are there some life-forms more important than others? Are there some life-forms that we can do without? How do we know which life-forms we need and which ones we do not need?

Educational Issue III: Growth vs. No Growth

Growth refers not only to the exponential use of our highly cherished resources, but it also refers to affluence for the few and poverty for the many. Where there is growth and development there is poverty, the exploited and environmental degradation. Policy-makers have found minority and low-income communities to be ideal places for the location of polluting industries and commercial hazardous waste facilities. These communities are often politically weak and offer little if any resistance to corporate or governmental policies regarding their daily lives. Although some critics quickly indicate that the problem is overpopulation, it should be noted that the West uses more than a lion's share of the world's resources. The United States, for instance, constitutes 6 percent of the world's population, utilizes 30 percent of the world's resources, and is responsible for 30 to 40 percent of its pollution, much of it going to Third World communities within the United States and Third World communities abroad. In addition, although there are more people per square mile in western Europe than in most developing countries, population control has been a major focus by the West for the developing nations. Recycling, reduction, reuse, and recovery create jobs that are environmentally benign, but this is only a partial solution to the exponential use of natural resources and attendant pollution in light of the skewed distribution of income and wealth in this country. The question is not growth vs. no growth, but how much can we grow, in what direction, and who benefits.

Questions: What do we mean by equitable and sustainable development? Should people pay more for products to ensure their safe disposal to avoid possible long-term illness and debilitating environmental effects? Who should bear the cost for environmental clean-ups? What is the role of

our culture in growth and development? What is the role of our economic system? Given the state of our environment and all its potential negative effects, is our culture (way of life) and economic system adaptive or maladaptive?

Educational Issue IV: All Children Can Learn vs. Middle and Upper Class Children Can Learn

Within the last two decades, public schools have basically given up on teaching black, Hispanic, and Native American children. The United States has the lowest literacy rate compared to most industrialized countries and even some non-industrialized countries. Thousands of students are passing through public schools with little command of the English language; many are graduating with reading comprehension skills several years below grade level. We already know enough to teach students without developing new educational techniques. The question is: are we committed to teaching them? An environmentally effective population requires a literate one and one that is also politically and economically aware.

Questions: Why can't more students of color achieve? Why is it that some schools dominated by students of color achieve academically and others do not? Why is it that students of color can memorize "raps", names, and dates of top ten songs in any given year or learn knowledge outside the confines of school, yet fail to achieve academically? Why do large percentages of students of color shy away from science and math? Is achievement in life related more to social class than to success in school?

Educational Issue V: Integrated Courses vs. Specialized Courses

Courses have become so specialized that various professionals have difficulty communicating with each other across disciplinary lines. Although mastery of specialized aquatic, terrestrial and social science knowledge is important, it should not be an end within itself. Real world problems do not confine themselves to disciplines nor do they confine themselves to scientific laboratories. Environmental problems we face today will not only demand the attention from a number of disciplines and professional people, but they will have to be solved in the village square, because many solutions to our environmental problems are political in character. It is important that students learn to work effectively in groups and across interdisciplinary lines in order

to help solve our most pressing environmental problems; it is crucial that students learn to work effectively with community people across racial and intergenerational lines to help solve critical environmental equity problems.

Examples: 1) Case studies (high school or college) should be used in a beginning course to show how various disciplines are used to solve a variety of environmental problems. Students may take on roles of key players involved in case studies; 2) Students should also take a series of specialized courses for greater depth. This would include such courses as Biology, Chemistry, Resource Ecology, Sociology, Political Science, Resource Policy, and Economics; and 3) Students should also take interdisciplinary courses such as Global Development, Global Change, Biodiversity, Environmental Equity, and Futurism; and 4) During their senior year, students should pick a community problem and work in small interdisciplinary groups in order to pool their knowledge to solve a local environmental problem. This capstone experience should be written up and presented as a group paper or video tape. Feedback should be given to those who generated the data to help empower them to make informed decisions about the biophysical environment.

Educational Issue VI: Internships vs. Traditional Course Work

While some academicians feel that experiential learning or internships fail to provide the academic rigor of traditional courses and therefore are less important, others feel that they are indeed important. We feel that internships are an important education tool, in spite the tension between learning goals of students and instrumental goals of environmental organizations. These two goals will always have to be kept in balance if we are to maximize the learning experience of students. Internships are another way for students to be active participants in the learning process and to empower and liberate themselves. They provide real world experiences and opportunities to actively participate in organizations committed to environmental protection and social justice.

Example: The Northern Rockies Action Group (NRAG) has a summer internship program where they work with several other environmental, low income, and peace groups to provide money and experiences for internships. NRAG provides a week-long training session for interns before they

begin work with their host organization. During the middle of the summer internship experience, students canoed one of the most scenic parts of the Missouri River. Each morning, students participated in seminars where they shared information about their experiences in various environmental, low income, peace organizations. The professional guide used some of this time for nature interpretation. At the conclusion of the summer experience, each intern was evaluated by his or her host agency supervisor. The NRAG coordinator also interviews both the supervisor and students to solicit ideas on how the internship program can be improved.

Educational Issue VII: School Bound vs. Non-School Bound Environmental Education and Youth

Both public schools and institutions of higher learning are losing their monopoly over knowledge as modern technology, such as, computers and television provides an instant flow of information. When social, economic, political, environmental, and other global conflicts take place they are computerized and televised as if they were happening just down the street. This instantaneous electronic linkage is transforming the world into a small village. Electronic media has done more to democratize knowledge than any other historical event. An increase in alternative presses and the number of people using computer conferences will further this process. Additionally, environmental knowledge can be obtained from a variety of traditional organizations such as camps and urban environmental programs. Schools and universities do not, and should not, have a monopoly over environmental knowledge.

Example: The Youth Challenge Program teaches organizing skills to Chicano and Native Americans 16-21 years old within the Arizona, New Mexico region. During a week long encounter, 30-40 individuals from a variety of backgrounds learn the distinction between organizers, leaders, and activists. They discuss power and learn to recognize their own. They not only discuss traditional respect for the earth, but they have guest speakers to facilitate discussions on the clash between traditional beliefs regarding resource use and Western thought. They also exchange ideas about how to resolve differences between themselves and mainstream environmental groups, potentially their greatest allies. The students also participate in a number of role playing exercises. At the conclusion of the

encounter, each youth chooses an issue to work on for his or her sponsor group, and leaves with a strategy to achieve his or her objectives. Tonantzin, the program sponsor, and the sponsoring organization monitor the progress of each youth. They are planning to have student representatives from each of the sponsor organizations meet four times a year to discuss their progress and future program improvements.

Educational Issue VIII: Teaching Values vs. Teaching Values Clarification

Over the years there have been educators who have advocated the teaching of values clarification rather than the teaching of specific values. Yet, subtle values are taught in school when educators choose one textbook over another or when teachers make certain interpretations of the subject matter. Because there are no generally agreed upon community-based values, educators have resorted to teaching values clarification as a way of improving self-images and making students "better" citizens. Taking students through values clarification processes to gain clarity on their own values may be insufficient. A process of values clarification may reaffirm a student's racist or prejudiced attitudes toward people who are different from them or it may reaffirm their outlook upon nature as being merely instrumental.

Questions: Should values be taught in school? Is it possible not to teach values in school? If so, how do we get at and change subtle values that are taught in school? How do we decide upon which values should be taught? Is values clarification enough? Does the teacher have a responsibility to go beyond values clarification with students who demonstrate racist and prejudice attitudes toward those of a different race? Should teachers be overt in their teaching of environmental values for a just and sustainable future?

Educational Issue IX: Four Year Colleges Should be Supported by the State vs. the Individual

Over the last twenty years increasing costs of education have put it beyond the reach of many well-qualified students of color, making such institutions more readily available to the affluent. This not only threatens multiculturalism that is beginning to take shape on campuses throughout the country, and denies an equal access to education for some, but it will reinforce social and economic

inequity between people of color and whites. The best protection against racial and economic injustices is the education of the populace for both a democratically functioning society and for a greater appreciation of environmentally sustainable communities.

A college education should not only be seen as a right, but as a worthwhile investment in the future of our society and the world at large. What makes an environmentally effective citizen is literacy -- not illiteracy.

Questions: Are we a nation at risk? Should the government ensure equal protection by providing opportunities for a college education free of charge? In what ways would the planet earth be better served if institutions of higher learning were free? Who should bear the costs for a free college education? How would you make this happen?

Educational Issue X: War as an Environmental Issue vs. War as an Environmental Exemption

Undoubtedly nation-states will be forced into war to protect themselves from outside aggression. War should be a last resort. Today we have war technology that can heap unprecedented destruction upon people and the biophysical environment. We feel that: 1) War should not be exempt from environmental debates. Peace offers the best alternative for working toward environmentally sustainable communities. Even though there has been arms reduction agreements between the Soviet Union and the United States, each side still has enough nuclear capability to destroy the world several times over within a matter of a few minutes. Such destruction would be the first time in history where there would be no past, present or future; 2) Brief wars such as in the Gulf can reap tremendous environmental destruction. Although the fire from the burning oil wells will probably take years to extinguish, thus causing the depletion of the ozone layer and global warming, there are other less talked about environmental effects, such as, the destruction of fragile ecosystems resulting from military exercises; and 3) Concern should be raised in light of the disproportionate numbers of soldiers of color who were the more vulnerable in this struggle than their white counterparts.

Example: A subgroup of students in the course on Social Change and Natural Resources undertook a project to illustrate the connection between

environmental issues and war with special references to the conflict in the Persian Gulf. Students not only reported their results to the rest of the class but they also used their information to organize a workshop within the broader context of a university-wide teach-in on the Persian Gulf. This teach-in was sponsored by a number of University of Michigan and community groups. In both presentations the impact of burning oil fields, global warming, bombs, and the movement of heavy equipment over the fragile ecosystem of the desert was discussed. Destruction of such fragile ecosystems could lead to decertification and long-term social and economic impacts.

PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR SUMMIT: COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL ACTION

Empowering ourselves to take control of our schools will help ensure that environmental education is included in the curriculum.

PUBLIC EDUCATION:

Running for local school boards to influence curriculum decisions. Even if one fails to be successfully elected to the board the election process itself provides a platform from which one can raise environmental issues and community awareness.

Monitoring schools to see if they are engaged in sound environmental practices. A group of mothers found that public schools were exempt from rules governing incineration. They are getting their schools to organize a recycling program as an alternative to incineration and an environmental education program as a part of the school's curriculum. Working with local colleges, universities, national environmental organizations, and local ecology centers to provide information and workshops to interested teachers and school systems on environmental equity topics.

Persuading the North Central Association or other accreditation associations to include a comprehensive environmental education program that includes environmental equity as one of the criteria for school accreditation.

Working with local ecology groups and colleges to put together a check list for parents to effectively evaluate environmental equity curriculums in their local schools.

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

For over a hundred years schools of natural resources and forestry have been the bastions of white and predominate male faculty and students.

This Summit should form an accreditation body to make site visits and give or deny accreditation to those schools based upon progress toward affirmative action goals and curriculum based upon principles adopted by the Summit. Press conferences and names of schools denied accreditation should be highlighted in the current media as well as in professional journals. Accreditation report should be sent to Congressional and State Black Caucuses.

Persuading foundations and government to use their allocation of research funds as a leverage to encourage institutions of higher education to recruit students of color to participate in environmental research.

Acquiring funds from foundations and government for scholarships and internship stipends to encourage students of color to enroll in natural resources or environmental science programs.

Encouraging foundations and the government to provide substantial resources to support environment education curriculums in predominantly Native American, black, and Hispanic institutions.

Advocating opportunities for free four year colleges and universities for those who want to enroll. To this end we must lobby state and federal governments to show them the long-term economic and social advantages of free four-year institutions of higher learning.

NON-SCHOOL BOUND STRATEGIES:

The Summit should form a group to see that scouting camps and more traditional environmental organizations recruit youth of color, include environmental education in their curriculum, and show the interconnectedness between social equity and environmental issues.

Assemble directors of organizations like the YM-YWCA, church, camping, scout groups, and environmental organizations to discuss and to fund extensive environmental and social justice programs involving youths of color.

INDIVIDUAL ACTION:

Speak out for the protection of the environment, and for the protection of basic social, economic, and political rights. We have to consistently raise the consciousness of our friends and policy-makers by making the connection between social injustice and environmental degradation.

Set a personal example for your children and others by eating lower on the food chain. It is not only cheaper and healthier, but politically feasible given that hundreds of thousands of people are starving throughout the world. Find ways to reuse, reduce, recover, and recycle goods and commodities.

Become environmentally informed by reading and keeping abreast of environmental issues and problems in your local neighborhood. Get involved in solving them. Check out your local school system to evaluate or to help start an environmental education and social justice curriculum.

STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP: MEDIA

Ray Cook, Vice President, Indigenous Communications Association, Roosevelttown, New York

The Media Strategy Group has the job to find a way to effectively and positively impact the way we as media people, and those media people and institutions outside of our view, can work to change the most fundamental aspects of perception and realization in the daily life of the general public in regard to the environment.

It is fitting that this Summit take place close to the 500th Anniversary of Columbus' arrival to this continent. During his time all Christendom believed that the end of the world was near and they acted upon that belief. In the book *Conquest of Paradise* a contemporary Spanish historian of the 15th Century named Lucio Marineo Siculo wrote:

"Many Cities and towns of Spain cruelly worn out by many and most cruel thieves, murderers, adulterers, by infinite insults and sacrilege and all kind of delinquents...Some of them, scorning laws both human and divine, took all justice into their own hands..."

The fight to conquer all the tribes of Europe and the forests of Europe succeeded. They then transplanted that same psychosis to this continent. This mentality is still with us today and it is that mentality that brings us here to this Summit.

The urbanization of America is a very real theory put into practice since the building of the first seaports in the Americas. The economic development theories that support and motivate this course of development are just as real and threatening to the environment as the acts of urbanization. The socialization theories that support economic development and urbanization is argued to be the keystone to these developments. The media is a common thread between these theories, the media sends the messages and lessons of these theories to the general and specialized publics. It is very possible that if we change the way the media operates and if we strategize to influence the messages it carries relative to the above theories we could influence those who use the media. After all, that's what the straight media does for Corporate America, right?

The issue of environmental justice as presented in most media today, is currently in a stage of

pacification. Shallow ecology issues such as the debate of a hole in the Ozone layer still rages, and recycling theories, toxic site clean ups, pollution regulation, dump site location, all fill the pages of major newspapers and environmental magazines. Shallow ecology issues do not reach to the core of the problem, they simply cover those things already defined. And more often than not they are defined by the culprits of toxic contamination. The media is not ultimately addressing the real problem, there is no depth to these issues that ask what is it in the American mind that allows the production of toxins, or allows the strip mining destruction of virgin forests. The covering of shallow ecology issues is simply putting a band-aide on something that is hemorrhaging. For all practical purposes there is no deep thinking going on in the pages of *The New York Times* regarding ecology. No examination of the philosophy that allows this kind of behavior. Super analyzing EPA clean-up policies, or common sense actions like recycling do not get to the root of the problem, it wastes valuable time. It pacifies.

The real problem is found in the issues of deep ecology. It is most unfortunate that the issues of deep ecology are the very things that mainstream media shy away from, discussions of concepts, ethics, morals that influences corporate America, and average America's actions and levels of acceptance.

We are being asked to the Summit to develop media strategy that will ultimately shift the environmental paradigm that America currently lives and works under. Those of you who understand that the environment needs our active participation will understand that this is no small task. The real task is to affect the underlying psychology of how the so-called alternative and main stream media works, to take media beyond simply reporting and analyzing into the area affecting a social shift from being accepting of regulated destruction to accepting the idea that there is no acceptable level of destruction.

Do we really know the underlying psychology of how media works? Do we understand the power we have, if we use it correctly, in helping to change a way of thinking that puts little if any value on nature to a way of thinking that places a high value on nature? Although it is often a monumental task simply to understand the mind that sees nature

merely as a producer of goods to be used to improve lifestyles and benefit the economic development of an industrialized society - we must go even further, understanding what it takes to bring about a change in the values and ethics of this man, helping him see the holistic relationship between humans and nature. He must somehow be made aware that he is part of the nature that he is attempt-

ing to dominate, and he must have his eyes open to the massive destruction this attitude has brought about.

To accomplish this, we need to understand where we are now, the dominant social paradigm we tend to follow, and what we want to see as a result of the new environmental paradigm we are fostering.

STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP: CULTURE

Facilitator: Jane Sapp, Center for Cultural and Community Development, Springfield, Massachusetts

Why are we making a connection between the environment and culture? What is the connection?

Culture is more than singing and dancing. Culture is the way one looks at life and interprets life.

In the culture of many people of color, there is more of a nurturing and respect for natural resources and the earth. To a certain extent, we have been forced to live in ways that have made us more exploitative rather than more giving. Times when we have tried to cry out about the abuse of the land, we have not had enough support. In fact, no one has really heard our cry about the abuse of the land, because within the power structure of the country there has not even been enough respect for us as peoples and as nations. That is what has made it difficult for us to live with the land as we have wished.

First, culture is not only a definition of who we are, but a way in which we interpret our lives. It includes interpretations of how we want to be in the world, culturally, socially and politically, and how we want to share this space with others. It also includes our interpretation of the natural resources around us. Depending on how one thinks about the world, we either see natural resources as a source of profit and something to exploit, or see the earth as a part of a natural cycle of life. The lakes, streams, plants and flowers are the treasures that the earth shares with us. The idea is not to exploit and abuse the relationship, but to continue to give back as much as the earth gives to us.

When I was at Highlander, I heard many Appalachian songs about the human attachment to the land. I was asked to sing African American songs about the land. We had respect for the land, we could work it, but we could not own it. Since there is a connection between ownership and power, and as people without ownership we feel powerless and voiceless in relation to the land. Not everyone feels this powerlessness, for some do not make the same connection. In the African American tradition there is a respect for the land.

How do we turn this attitude of ours around? How do we voice our views about the land, confronting

power structures, and helping sensitize our communities to a sense of connection to the land that has existed historically within people of color communities.

One way would be to tell the stories of the land. Where are the land stories in African American tradition? We have to tell stories of baptisms in the river; we have to tell stories of picnics on open lands and family reunions; we have to tell stories of long walks in the woods with grandpa; we have to tell stories of our grandmothers who searched for healing and health-giving resources; and we have to tell stories of digging worms. I loved the smell of the earth when we went fishing. And we have to tell fishing stories too. How else will people know how land is connected in a healthy and life-giving way to them if we never tell the stories? Maybe people will think that what people did was chop down the trees and build condominiums. We have to tell about Easter egg hunts in the big open spaces. Land is not necessarily to build more condos and malls and parking lots. Land is a place that builds more humanity and more of a sense of community. If we do not tell this our young will never know and our adults will forget. Telling all of our stories about the land is important. We have to tell the stories, we have to write the stories, we have to share them, again and again.

And out of these stories we should write songs. We should not only look at the songs about land, but out of our stories we should find a way to develop new songs. We should have our kids draw pictures from the stories that they hear and that they see in their minds as you talk about the land.

The strongest thing that we can do to continue our respect for the land is to continue to build our community and see this as a top priority. Working towards community, we will understand all of the connections we have among ourselves and with our lands. We will not want to see our land abused, because we will see the connections between us, and all the things that connect us to our land and to our community. As we tell stories and sing songs and draw pictures -- we must do them together, and do them with a mission of building a better community.

Secondly, why is it important for people who organize themselves to understand the role of culture in the organizing process, not just in organizing about the environment? To understand the role of culture is to understand how to build, strengthen and empower other people's interpretations of life and ways they want to be in the world. To do that in your organizing is to cause a real transformation. To incorporate culture into your organizing is to ensure that no one's voice will be unheard.

This might sound more easily said than done, but it is important to keep in mind. When you bring people together to discuss issues, where the last toxic dump site was placed, or talk about issues of environmental racism; in each of these gatherings, you have to seek to empower the voices that are there. Every meeting should include the sharing of stories from each other. We do not hear them enough. Culture isn't something that should just be "included" or added on; culture is a part of our daily life.

People automatically weave stories into their conversations as they talk about problems of the world. People weave in stories, songs and dances. The challenge of organizers is to see every gathering as a time to remind people of how they live every day. This will empower the way people live their lives. Yes, there is a story; yes, there is a song; yes, there is a ritual; yes, there is dance. So the meetings and the rallies must be framed in such a way that it empowers people to be in those meetings in the way they are in their lives. This means respecting their voices and allowing those voices to come through.

African American people have been made to feel that we have no claim to the land. We were told that it was the white folks who settled the west and who conquered the "frontier." You would think that they were the ones who did all the work. Even though we have Black History Month, and more recognition of Native American people, there is the sense that this is not our land and that the white man owns and defines the use of the land. I often wonder how things would be different if we all said and felt that this was our land too? We fought in wars, we worked in fields, we cleared the fields, we built railroads: It was the cheap labor of immigrants and slaves. We have a piece of this. But still, we do not feel like it is ours. We still feel that we have to negotiate with somebody to have a sense of control over it. Our voices have not been heard on

this issue because no one including ourselves, takes ownership seriously. No one feels that we have a right to claim ownership. We must tell the stories of how we shaped this land. Who cut roads through the mountains? Who built railroads? Who plowed the fields? Let's get real about who did most of the work. We have to tell the stories of our labor. We might not have stories to tell about owning the land, but we have stories about work. And there are lot of African American work songs. In many cases in the South, they still use the labor of prisoners to work the land. People were entrapped to provide cheap labor. This cheap and exploited labor has made this country rich, and has given people rightful ownership of the land. If we were to go back and count up so many hours and so much blood sweat and tears, the tally would tip in favor of the people who have been oppressed in this country.

When I think of land, I think of ability to create. I think of people who make baskets from white oak; people who knew how to go out to a tree and make stuff from it; people who could use the natural resources of the land to create. It all represents creative relationship with the land....What made me think about that is thinking about old people sitting on the porch and doing nothing. It used to be that old people sat on the porch and made things: baskets, herbs, teas, and corn shucks. I think of old women, and how much the land provided an active life for them, i.e., people planting gardens and growing flowers. And I think here of women who are active and creative, using their hands and minds.

The land gave people something to do, a means to be expressive. We worked in the yard a lot. People were always planting something on the land, they were going fishing. It gave people something to do and a sense of accomplishment, also a sense of satisfaction. I think of my father going fishing, and how satisfying it was for him to bring the fish home. We all would clean and cook it. The land was a source of learning and doing. There was a lot to learn.

The land was a source of information; it was a source for you to grow and develop skills. Now our kids sit around and do nothing, whereas in the past the land provided many activities. There is always something to do when you have land. There is always something to do in your house. There is always another book, another recipe, another dish to be washed. The land is like that.

When older and younger people interact around the land and participate in activities on the land, spiritual and cultural activities are passed on. When you start talking about who has the right to the land, we are constantly bombarded through the media by images of pioneers; their hardship, suffering and their courage. But we do not hear about the courage of the people who worked on the land; we do not hear about women who had their babies and had to go back into the fields. We are bombarded by stories leading us to believe that those folks have the right to that land. That is not true.

We have to go back and find chain-gang songs, and find other songs of work. They exist and people are doing them as folksongs. We have allowed folksingers to own those songs and those of us who are cultural workers have to bring those songs back to our communities.

Whenever I go to the Sea Islands, I remember the way it was before. What is most painful is that my impression when I first worked there was my sense of independence; it was a sense of independence that comes with ownership. It did not mean taking and exploiting, and turning land into development. It meant you had an opportunity to interpret for yourself how you wanted to live on the land. People chose to build relationships and sustain themselves by shrimping, oystering and growing food. There were coops: an oyster coop and a farmer's coop on the different islands. People's lives were woven into the ways in which they owned the land. There was a poetic relationship.

It was hard to live off the land. But people lived with a sense of respect for what they could take and give to the land. To see the land snatched away from folks, that is cruel; if this is where you had your picnic, if this is where you went swimming with your buddies in the late afternoon, if this is where you make your shrimpnets. There was a flow

from one to the other; "they" came and broke the connection between people and the land. And thus a way of life was destroyed. The culture and the environment were both assaulted at the same time.

And I see this everywhere. There is a connection between the economy, and the abuse the land. When you have a system based on profit, and when you have so many people who have very little, you have left those folks in a very desperate situation. They need to find money and economic resources from wherever they can. They have been forced to take money and dump toxic waste in their neighbor's yard. The man who works at the toxic waste site does not want to work there. Most working people do have respect for the land. The economic system has forced people, especially people of color, to go against their nature and their traditions. People say they have to have a job.

The destructive nature of the economy not only destroys the land, but it forces people who love the land to share in this destruction. People say, "I have a family to support, what am I supposed to do?" But at some point people have to say, "I have to live the life I see in my dreams. I want to live the life I knew from my grandparents. I want to live the life I see in my soul. I want to put this life out here on the screen of reality." Can we just say, "NO! This is the way I want to live my life, so I will not work for you."

And that is why it is important to develop that sense of community in our organizing, so that people will not take that stand alone. If we can create the reality of people understanding that they are not alone we shall be overcoming the isolation, one of the most damaging aspects of our culture. The sense of community and connectedness is a part of the tradition of people of color, and using this sense is an important part of the our cultural work.

STRATEGY GROUP WORKSHOP: INTERGROUP COOPERATION

Facilitator: Donna Chavis, Center for Community Change, Pembroke, North Carolina

INTRODUCTION

In the United States we find a multitude of organizations which have an interest in working on issues related to the environment. These organizations range from the local base community groups which work on shoestring budgets with a few individuals to the national/international groups with large memberships and multi-million dollar budgets.

Each organization has its own history, structure, styles of leadership, values, etc. which brings to its work. With the depth and breadth of resources, both human and financial, which are present for environmental organizing one would think that those who favor positive environmental policies should carry much influence. This, however, is not the case. As one reviews the wide range of organization, a history of intergroup cooperation is not present. Instead one finds deep-seated conflict with few steps made toward mediating the conflicts.

Why do we find ourselves in this current situation and how can we move to more intergroup cooperation that serves to further the cause of environmental justice? Through this paper some ideas will be laid out for the beginnings of this discussion. Through the strategy group session on Intergroup Cooperation, we will move further in defining the problem and developing strategies for addressing solutions.

RESPECTING ORGANIZATIONAL INTEGRITY

If we begin by recognizing the fact that all organizations possess their own histories, structures, styles of leadership, values, etc., we will begin to see some of the barriers to intergroup cooperation. As a group develops its agenda for action, much energy is exerted to establish itself within its own defined community. A significant aspect of establishing itself requires belief in the goals which it puts forth. It is not easy to have those goals challenged and possibly viewed as being not legitimate by others who may work on related issues. It is easier to establish oneself as an "authority" and in doing so put distance between your group and others.

One step in lessening the risk factor for intergroup relationships is a clear recognition of the differences

which exist between groups. Acknowledgement and recognition of these differences can help to move groups along the path toward the similarities which most assuredly also exist. Recognition of these differences does not mean weighing one attribute as better than or less than, only different. How that difference exhibits itself in the relationship will depend on how the groups themselves decide it will function. For example, a local base community group which is struggling to obtain clean water after the local river has been polluted may not have the same resources as a regional or national group, but the resources which it does have are legitimate. A regional or national group may have access to more finances or scientific information but the local base community has access to information about the total impact of the problem on the community.

Such impact will show itself in social, cultural, economic, political, physical and many other ways. This information would be very difficult for any non-local person to gain access to without the involvement of the local base community group. The resources that are available through regional and national groups are also important for what they can bring to the overall discourse. Both of these are even more powerful when the resources are coordinated in a cooperative and respectful manner.

ISSUES OF AUTHORITY AND POWER

As we move toward intergroup cooperation, issues of authority and power must be dealt with up front. These are also issues which are not easy to discuss because we all bring our own definitions to the table. Again we must deal honestly and openly with these differences and the tensions they bring. Imagine for a moment that you live in a community where for most of your adult life you have struggled with efforts to bring good, clean industry to your community. You have also worked for equitable health care and a variety of other community issues. One day you read in the paper that an outside organization has been brought in to evaluate the location of a new industry in your community. This group announces that it is there because there are no "experts" in the community to do this evaluation. Who is the authority in this situation? How could it have been handled differently? Can it still be remedied even though feelings have been hurt?

In evaluating this situation, questions of authority and power must be evaluated. Is the local person less of an authority because she/he may not have a series of degrees behind their name? Doesn't the local person have an intimate understanding of the community needs based on his/her life experience? Is the outside person illegitimate because they are not from the local community? Could they bring some other level of understanding because of the technical knowledge they may have? Are the people illegitimate in this process or is it the process that is illegitimate? How could the process be changed and what issues of power and authority will need to be addressed in that change. The answer to these questions will in no way be simple, but if we are to reach any form of cooperation they must be answered.

A large part of the answer will be based on how much effort is put in defining the roles which each group will play in the problem solving. Local base community groups need to be very clear about their agendas and needs when they enlist the aid of any group foreign to the community. The clearer we are about these things, the less likely we are to develop divisive conflicts. Groups that come into communities must be willing to listen to the local base groups and give serious consideration to their authority. If this is not done the legitimacy of the outside group is called into question.

CONCLUSION

I would like to close with a well-known quote from Frederick Douglass which I believe is relevant to this discussion. Mr. Douglass said in a letter to an abolitionist associate in 1849:

"Let me give you a word on the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all absorbing, and for the time being putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENERGY

Facilitator: Carl Anthony, Earth Island Institute, San Francisco, California

The purpose of this workshop is to clarify issues facing United States communities of color in the context of global efforts to shift away from wasteful industrial practices of production and consumption toward more sustainable patterns of development. The concept of sustainable development has been defined by the World Commission on Environment, chaired by Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway. The Commission's report, *Our Common Future*, proposed a change in the way we think about poverty, environmental degradation, and industrialization. It called for a new approach to development, called sustainable development, which integrates production processes with resource conservation and environmental enhancement. A key to this new approach depends upon the long-term availability of energy sources that are dependable, safe and environmentally benign.

LIMITS TO GROWTH

A central concern in the debate over sustainable development is the ideology and practice of economic growth. Advocates of sustainable development argue that the global ecosystem can no longer support patterns of economic growth which have become the dominant force for social change since the industrial revolution. These observers suggest that the population of the world is likely to double within 40 years, and that the world economy will expand five to tenfold during the same period, placing an unacceptable burden on the world's ecosystems. Under these circumstances, it is hard to predict what the lives of our children will be like. But, unless changes are made, they project that within the developed world, as in the underdeveloped world, the poor will be more impoverished than they are now.

These momentous changes are likely to have a major impact on communities of color in the United States. Because development within the United States, in uncoordinated at local and regional levels, advocates of sustainable development argue that growth causes significant problems of pollution, traffic, congestion, unstable prices, housing shortages, structural unemployment and worker impoverishment, in addition to depletion of land, air, water, and biological resources on which our future survival depends. The negative consequences of growth are felt much more acutely in poor

communities and communities of color. Therefore, on a global as well as domestic scale, advocates of sustainable development say we have to make the transition away from the old growth economy to a steady state economy. Liberals and progressives, on the other hand, argue that without economic growth, the poor both within the United States and in underdeveloped countries, will have severely restricted opportunities for achieving a better way of life or even meeting basic human needs. From this perspective, the politics of sustainability is incompatible with the politics of social justice.

Given their position in the socio-economic scheme, members of communities of color, particularly those who live in cities, rarely think about the consequences of natural resource depletion as a limit to achievement of their economic well-being. Yet if the people of the United States, who make up 6% of the world's population, consume 50% of its resources, social justice as well as elementary logic suggests that the United States population -- rich as well as poor -- ought to consume less. How can we reconcile this constraint with legitimate aspirations of communities of color, to increase their economic well-being in a land that has denied them the product of their own labor?

Communities of color in the United States have been traditionally concerned about cuts in social programs; worsening poverty in urban and rural communities; the lack of vigorous affirmative action; growing patterns of racism in society; and the increasing underclass. All of these concerns will be seriously affected by major shifts in availability of resources at the national and international levels. Participation in the debate over sustainable development offers an opportunity for people of color to broaden the horizons of their domestic policy debate taking into consideration these emerging trends.

ENERGY ISSUES

Efforts to move toward sustainable patterns of development will likely add a whole new dimension to the struggle for social justice. Consider energy. The supply of energy in modern communities is linked to economic and social development. Since the Industrial Revolution, steam and electric power actually changed the patterns of production and consumption. The availability of cheap petroleum

in developed countries has led to wasteful and inequitable patterns of transportation, space heating, and appliance usage among different population groups. In the late 20th century, this way of life is dependent upon dwindling supplies of oil and gas in the world. Emerging trends are leading to the search for alternative sources of energy, new patterns of distribution and utilization of energy, and strategies for energy conservation. What changes should be made? Who should benefit from the changes? Who should pay for them?

The national, regional and local patterns of energy extraction, distribution, consumption, and pollution illustrate the complexity of challenges to communities of color. For example, from the time oil is taken out of the ground in Alaska in the land of Gwich'in, to the refining process in North Richmond, California, to the final combustion of oil on the freeways cutting through the inner-cities, poor people and people of color pay a high cost, in health and safety, in the destruction of communities for society's over-reliance on automobiles.

Yet, poor people are likely to own fewer cars, to drive them less, and to use public transportation more often than the average citizen. Indigenous people pay, through destruction of their sacred lands, for production of electrical energy, for far-away cities, yet their own homes frequently lack electricity. Poor people in urban areas often pay more for energy services than their suburban counterparts, yet well-to-do suburbanites consume several times more energy than residents living in older areas.

New analyses linking energy and social justice concerns are needed. Strategies for energy conservation based upon realistic appraisals of community capabilities are essential. How do we exert influence in a political and economic context where decisions about energy and other natural resources are made by the corporate, financial, academic, military and industrial elite far removed from our communities? Put another way, how can we define and carry out policies which build on the strengths of our own positions within the social order: i.e., our concentrations in land based rural communities and in older core cities?

Communities of color have yet to engage in the policy debate about sustainability. In the absence of their participation, policies for achieving sustainable development are likely to have an unfavorable impact on communities of color. Yet this debate at global and national levels offers an important forum to raise questions about the meaning of development, and to suggest new models which place a higher priority on the protection of communities, and restoration of natural resources, than on the generation of private profit.

Future discussions need to focus on the following: 1) What is sustainable development? 2) Why should communities of color in the United States care about sustainable development? 3) What sectors of the economy such as energy, transportation, agriculture, or manufacturing are most likely to be affected by efforts to achieve sustainability? 4) What are the bases of power through which people of color can influence the sustainability debate and its outcome?

POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP: CAPACITY BUILDING

Facilitator: Jeane Gauna, SouthWest Organizing Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico

The movement for justice in the United States is at a critical stage. The National Summit will play a major role in bringing the movement to its next level. The challenges are more pronounced in the context of Bush's new world order; clearly a battle of "the haves and have nots." People of color inside and outside of the U.S. boundaries have a common interest, the "new majority," will play a fundamental role in defining for ourselves what kind of environment in our communities, on our jobs and in our leisure time, we need for our survival.

Clearly, the development and sustainability of sound public policy at all levels must be based on the strength of local grassroots organizing. Peoples' organizations are at the forefront of the movement for social change. The dramatic increase of local community based organizations fighting for environmental and economic justice is the impetus for this leadership summit. The opportunity to assess and build upon the current level of organization of a peoples' movement for justice is the purpose of the summit.

One fundamental question for us all at this leadership summit is "How shall we develop and sustain the kind of organization needed to ensure that our agenda for environmental and economic justice is front and center of the nation debate?"

This workshop, a capacity building workshop, will focus on maximizing output of our organizations at local, regional, national and international levels in order to impact public policy. Specifically, the workshop will address the building of an ongoing capacity base for organizations of color, particularly around questions such as funding, technical enhancement and organizational development and will include a panel of speakers and workshop participants who will develop long and short-term strategies to influence public policy.

FUNDING: DEVELOPING OUR RESOURCE BASE

The "Hostile Environment" in which we operate, i.e., the economic recession and the corresponding "economic warfare" a reality where community groups now compete with the mainstream environmental groups for "diversity" funds, and diminishing church and other institutional sources, demand

careful consideration of short and long-term strategies for developing our resource base.

Many community based organizations, as well as regional or national organizations, are initiating plans to "diversify their funding base." Some questions to consider in our plans for fundraising include:

1. What role do foundations play in shaping the political direction of our organizational development? How do we maintain our independence and principles in the battle for diminishing institutional funds? What institutional fundraising strategies should we consider? What mechanism(s) will ensure integrity and accountability by institutions and their representatives to local groups requesting funding?
2. How do we recoup "diversity funds" without falling into the "whom (we have one 'minority') plan" trap? How to strategize to bring back resources into our communities where they should have gone in the first place?
3. What other fundraising strategies have been successful for individual organizations? A donor base strategy, direct mail, door to door canvassing, successful economic development ventures and other examples of successful models will be discussed.
4. What steps are necessary to formulate an appropriate, equitable and unified fundraising strategy at local, regional and national levels?

TECHNICAL ENHANCEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: DEVELOPING OUR HUMAN RESOURCE BASE

The most productive use of existing technical assistance resources and access to technology are crucial to the success of any organization, regardless of its size or level of development. Organizations at the local level are winning and the demands grow each day. Local groups find themselves in need of "experts," scientists, lawyers, and trainers. How to identify and get access to appropriate technical assistance is central to influencing public policy at all levels. A few questions to consider include:

1. What are our technical assistance needs?
2. What is appropriate technical assistance and technology?
3. What should the role be for technical assistance providers?
4. What options are available? How do we gain access to existing TA? What do we need to develop?
5. How can we build on our existing technical capacity?

A viable, healthy community organization reflects the community it serves. It is made up of individuals coming from affected communities, organized to gain self-determination. People of color organi-

zations through struggle have learned to rely on our traditions, our values, and our vision for the future to form strong and sustainable organization. Identifying and utilizing appropriate and successful organization development models is central to capacity building. What we need, what is available, and how we can obtain resource needs are basic questions.

Participants are encouraged to consider the questions in lights of your own experience, to analyze the current state of your organizing efforts and to stretch your creativity. Collectively we have the vision, the talent and commitment for positive social change. The fact that we are here together speaks to the level of organization that exist in our communities. How we organize ourselves in this national context, how we build upon and stretch our capacity to ensure that we live, work and play in a healthy environment is the challenge.

POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP: ENVIRONMENT AND THE MILITARY

Facilitator: Michelle Tingling-Clemmons, Alice Hamilton Occupational Health Center, Washington, D.C.

The environment is any place where people live, work or play. In understanding this concept, one can clearly see that people of color have struggled to live in harmony with their environments since humankind began in Africa. We have recycled, conserved, demonstrated respect for the land that sustained us, and for the life with which we share this planet. We developed math, science, writing, medicine, culture, education, art, and shared it freely with the rest of the world. Later, our descendants welcomed the European boat people (also our descendants but with a different perspective and relationship to their environment) to the shores of this hemisphere, taught them how to live in this land, ensured their survival, and lived to regret it.

The Europeans substituted military might and duplicity for diplomacy. They warred with the native peoples of color who had befriended them, lying, cheating and murdering; then creating treaties which they refuse to honor. In need of a larger workforce, these same Europeans subsequently bartered and warred with Africans to capture workers to build the newly-claimed land to their specifications, killing hundreds of millions in the process. Then, to deny their barbarism toward and common ancestry with those they had beaten militarily, they created a history that justified their actions, a history that continues to be taught to this day. The recounting of this history sets the stage for this Summit, and the discussion of "Environment and the Military", for it is this history that sowed the seeds of environmental injustice.

The economy of the United States is based on capitalism, an economic system wherein, according to Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition "all or most of the means of production and distribution, as land, factories, railroads, etc., are privately owned and operated *for profit*... characterized by a tendency toward concentration of wealth... by the growth of great corporations, increased governmental control, etc." The military, although an extension of government, is the single largest industry in the country. As industry has grown in size, it has sought to shape and warp the environment (and its workers) to its own ends, rather than nurturing that which sustains it, moving always in the direction of greater profits.

A recent report released by the National Toxics Campaign reveals that the military is the chief polluter in the United States. The military is also an effective vehicle for spreading exploitation and imposing environmental injustice on people of color and other poor people in the U.S. and abroad. The military has the least accountability and the greatest access to the wealth and resources.

There are inadequate resources to address domestic environmental concerns because the lion's share of our national resources go into the military. Pressing and untenable conditions -- unchecked Superfund sites and other forms of pollution; massive unemployment and underemployment; inadequate affordable quality housing stock; fostering of racism, sexism and other forms of intolerance designed to divide and conquer our efforts to organize; limited access to quality health care and education; intolerable levels of poverty, homelessness and hunger -- create a poverty draft that accounts for disproportionate numbers of African Americans in the armed services as they were on the frontlines in the Gulf. (Anyone who doubts the focus of the poverty draft need only recall the wrath incurred by Muhammad Ali when he refused both induction and to fight in Vietnam.)

These same conditions account for the fact that one-third of homeless men are African and Latino American Vietnam-era veterans, and that Agent Orange victims had to wage a protracted fight to obtain any compensation from the government that provided orders and contamination without instruction or protection! This history has disturbing implications for the agreement signed by the military to clean up contamination on its bases before closing them. Soldiers are trained to follow orders -- without question, challenge or thought -- and certainly without environmental training.

One of the most recent and abominable abuses of United States military power was the recent war in the Middle East, which has imposed untold suffering and environmental damage on yet another group of people of color. It is disturbing -- yet not unexpected -- that few mainstream environmental organizations saw fit to challenge the war action or the environmental destruction that accompanied it, until the oil fields of Kuwait were burning en masse. This exercise of abusive military might managed to

divert both attention and resources from pressing domestic concerns.

At a time when money cannot be found to clean up existing environmental contamination, provide nutritional supplements to pregnant women and children, to feed and house the millions of homeless, to educate **all** of our children, to extend unemployment benefits to the millions of unemployed -- or better yet to employ them -- the threat of further U.S. military action in the Middle East still hangs over us. The need to destroy all Iraqi nuclear capability is being couched in terms of concern for world security by the U.S., the only nation in history to have ever deliberately dropped a nuclear bomb on human beings -- on a nation populated by people of color!

The record of this nation's military and its relationship to nuclear power is a history of yet another assault on people of color. Besides being an extremely expensive and wasteful way to heat water, nuclear power -- in every phase of its development, from mining to the bomb -- kills. It is generally Native Americans who are the victims at every stage. When Navaho uranium miners were found to be dying of lung cancer, a result of exposure to radiation in the uranium tailings they had been given to build homes from, the judge disallowed their claims for compensation, asserting that "Indians have high rates of lung cancer anyway, don't they?"

The building and destruction of weaponry, the transport through and siting of contaminated military wastes in poor communities and communities of

color, military land transfers and overflights, fuel dumping from planes and ships, contaminated military wastes on and off military bases, are all focal points of struggle in various communities around the country. Yet the mainstream environmental organizations generally fail to address these issues or to respect our leadership and history of struggle. The government cannot be counted on for support because none of the agencies charged with environmental protection have any jurisdiction over the military, and the government has relinquished whatever role it has played in looking out for the interests of "We, the people" -- serving instead the interests of the wealthy. The Congress has shown itself to be unwilling to hold the military accountable for its actions or abuses. The media has shown itself to be far less than a bastion of truth and information. The National Toxics Campaign report did not get much attention because it was released during the Gulf conflict and there was little interest in drawing attention to anything that criticized the military ("unpopular" or "unpatriotic"), regardless of its importance.

As people of color, as victims of military aggression at home and abroad, we have an important leadership role to play in protecting our environment from our nation's military. Our government has shown itself capable to leveraging its military might against those who express opposition to its policies. How we proceed in this area has major implications for our environment. Our history of persevering against all odds, our understanding of the roots of this struggle, our organizing and our unity will gird us as we persevere and continue the struggle.

POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP: LAND RIGHTS AND SOVEREIGNTY

Facilitator: Christopher Peters, Seventh Generation Fund, Hoopa, California

(The following paper is the opening and concluding portions of a monogram by Vine Deloria, Jr. entitled, "Sacred Lands and Religious Freedom," Association on American Indian Affairs, New York, N.Y., May 1991. It was printed with permission from the author for use at this workshop at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. The complete monogram was distributed at the Summit.)

OPENING

Since time immemorial, Indian tribal Holy Men have gone into the high places, lakes, and isolated sanctuaries to pray, receive guidance from the Spirits, and train younger people in the ceremonies that constitute the spiritual life of the tribal community. In these ceremonies, medicine men represented the whole web of cosmic life in the continuing search for balance and harmony, and through various rituals in which birds, animals, and plants were participants, harmony of life was achieved and maintained.

When the tribes were forcibly removed from their aboriginal homelands and forced to live on restricted smaller reservations, many of the ceremonies were prohibited by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the people were forced to adopt various subterfuges so that ceremonial life could continue. Some tribes conducted their most important ceremonies on national holidays and Christian feast days, explaining to curious whites that they were simply honoring George Washington and celebrating Christmas and Easter. Since many shrines and Holy Places were isolated and rural parts of the continent were not being exploited or settled, it was not difficult for small parties of people to go into the mountains or to remote lakes and buttes and conduct ceremonies without interference from non-Indians. Most Indians did not see any conflict between their old beliefs and the new religions of the white man and consequently a surprising number of people participated in these ancient rituals while maintaining membership in a Christian denomination.

During this century, the expanding national population and the introduction of corporate farming and more extensive mining and timber industry activities reduced the isolation of rural America. Development pressures on public and reservation lands made it increasingly more difficult for traditional religious people to conduct their

ceremonies and rituals. Since many of the sacred sites were on public lands, traditional religious leaders were often able to work out informal arrangements with federal agencies to allow them access to these places for religious purposes. But as personnel changed in state and federal agencies, a new generation of bureaucrats, fearful of setting precedents, began to restrict Indian access to sacred sites by establishing increasingly narrow rules and regulations for managing public lands.

In 1978, in an effort to clarify the status of traditional religious practices and practitioners, Congress passed a Joint Resolution entitled the American Indian Religious Freedom Act which declared that it was the policy of Congress to protect and preserve the inherent right of American Indians to believe, express, and practice their traditional religions. The Resolution identifies the problem as one of a "lack of knowledge or the insensitive and inflexible enforcement of Federal policies and regulations." Section 2 of the Resolution directed the President to have the various federal departments evaluate their policies and procedures and report back to Congress on the results of this investigation and any recommendations for legislative action.

Most people assumed that the Resolution marked a clarification of federal attitudes toward traditional religions and it began to be cited in litigation involving the construction of dams, roads, and the management of federal lands. Almost unanimously, however, the federal courts ruled that the Resolution contained nothing in it that would protect or preserve the right of Indians to practice their religion and conduct ceremonies at sacred sites on public lands. Some courts even hinted darkly that any recognition of the tribal practices would be tantamount to establishing a state religion, an interpretation which, upon analysis, was a dreadful misreading of American history and the Constitution and may have been an effort to inflame anti-Indian feelings

CONCLUSION

Today a major crisis exists in Indian country because of the Lyng decision. *[In 1988, the Supreme Court decided the Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association case which involved access to sacred sites high up in the Chimney Rock area of the Six Rivers National Forest in northern California. The Forest Service proposed to build a six mile paved logging road that would have opened up the high country to commercial logging, destroying the ceremonial sites of three tribes and introducing new processes of environmental degradation. After the lower courts prohibited construction on the grounds that it would have made religious ceremonial use of the area impossible and Congress passed the California Wilderness Act making the issue almost moot, the Supreme Court insisted on deciding on the religious issues. It ruled that the Free Exercise clause did not prevent the government from using its property in any way it saw fit.]* As the dissent noted, there is no real protection for the practice of traditional religions within the framework of American constitutional or statutory law. Courts usually automatically dismiss Indian petitions without evidentiary hearings and at the same time insist that traditional people identify the "central belief" of the tribal religion. Presumably this demand is benign and made with the hope that by showing centrality for the site or ceremony, courts will be able to uphold some form of constitutional protection on some future occasion.

As human beings, we live in time and space and receive most of our signals about proper behavior primarily from each other. Under these circumstances, both the individual and the group must have some kind of sanctity if we are to have a social order at all. By recognizing the sacredness of lands in the many aspects we have described, we place ourselves in a realistic context in which the individual and the group can cultivate and enhance the experience of the sacred. Recognizing the sacredness of lands on which previous generations have lived and died is the foundation of all other sentiments. Instead of denying this aspect of our lives, we should be setting aside additional places which have transcendent meaning.

Sacred sites which higher powers have chosen for manifestation enable us to focus our concerns on the specific form of our lives. These places remind us of our unique relationship with spiritual forces and call us to fulfill our religious vocations. These kinds of experiences have shown us something of

the nature of the universe by an affirmative manifestation of themselves and this knowledge illuminates everything else that we know.

The struggle by American Indians to protect their sacred sites and to have access to them for traditional ceremonies is a movement in which all peoples should become involved. The federal agencies charged with managing public lands who argue that to give recognition to any form of traditional tribal religion is to establish that religion have raised a false issue. No other religion in this country speaks to the issue of the human relationship with the rest of the universe in this manner. The alternative use of land proposed by the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the National Park Service is the rapid exploitation of natural resources by a few favored private clients - a wholly secular and destructive use of the lands.

The truly ironic aspect of modern land use is that during the past three decades, Congress has passed many laws which purport to protect certain kinds of lands and resources from the very developers who now seek to exclude Indian religious people from using public lands. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Wilderness Act, the National Environmental Protection Act, the Clean Air Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and several other statutes all take definite steps to protect and preserve the environment in a manner more reminiscent of traditional Native America religion than that of uncontrolled capitalism or the domination of land expounded by the world religions. No real progress can be made in environmental law unless some of the insights into the sacredness of land derived from traditional tribal religions become basic attitudes of the larger society.

At present, legal remedies for Indian religious practitioners are limited to those procedures provided by various environmental and historic preservation laws which, in some circumstances, may provide an indirect means for protection of sites. The only existing law directly addressing this issue, the American Religious Freedom Act of 1978, is simply a policy statement with "no teeth." While it has led to some administrative regulations and policies providing for limited additional opportunities for input, it provides no legal cause of action to aggrieved practitioners.

Examples of sacred sites currently threatened are (1) the Medicine Wheel in Wyoming, where the Forest Service proposed (and is now reconsidering

after protest) construction of a parking lot and observation platform at the site of the ancient Wheel which is sacred to many tribes in Montana, Wyoming, Oklahoma and South Dakota; (2) Badger Two Medicine in Montana, where oil drilling is proposed in a pristine area sacred to the Blackfeet and other tribes; and (3) Mt. Graham in Arizona where telescopes are proposed which would not only destroy an Apache sacred site but also cause the extinction of an endangered species of squirrel. As a result, the Religious Freedom Coalition (Association on American Indian Affairs, Native

American Rights Fund, and National Congress of American Indians), as well as tribes and other Indian organizations, are seeking legislation which will provide for a legal cause of action when sacred sites may be impacted by governmental action. Proposed legislation would also provide for more extensive notice to and consultation with tribes and affected parties in such circumstances. The legislation would ensure that the principle of religious freedom (rightfully urged upon the rest of the world by the United States) truly incorporates and applies to the unique needs of Indian religions.

POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP: URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Facilitator: Michel Gelobter, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, New York, N.Y.
(The views expressed in this paper do not reflect the views of the City of New York or the Department of Environmental Protection, or any other governmental entity with which Mr. Gelobter is affiliated.)

INTRODUCTION

Cities are the unspoken targets of much of environmental policy. National environmental organizations often use wilderness areas, endangered species, pictures of wide open spaces, lakes, streams, oceans, to promote and to foster their political viewpoints. But most environmental legislation affects those areas that are both most polluted and that generate the most concentrated forms of pollution, i.e., urban areas. The rhetoric and the national strategy of the environmental movement often hides the fact that its true targets are cities.

This contradiction is one of the major issues that has to be faced by an environmental agenda that seeks to address the concerns of the inner-city. Promoting an urban environmental agenda, making it understood, securing the resources necessary to address environmental concerns of the inner city, all require confronting the disparity between mainstream environmental ideology and the urban environmental reality for people of color.

DEFINITIONS

One of the first issues that arises when discussing urban environmental policy is how to define environment with the absence of those readily identifiable symbols of the environmental movement, e.g., trees, mountains, open spaces. But even within an urban definition of environment there is a conflict between mainstream, pollution oriented definitions of environment and more broad-based definitions used in people of color communities. Rather than issues such as air quality, groundwater contamination and hazardous waste, African American, Latino, Asian, Native American, and other people of color city dwellers often define the problems more in terms of quality of life.

When we leave our traditionally under-served neighborhoods we ask, "Why does everyone else's neighborhoods seem to look better? Why are the streets cleaner? Why is the traffic quieter? Why is the garbage picked up more frequently? Why do

the police serve those communities better?" To our communities, environment is a question of the quality of life. Rich communities and white communities are seen as having a better environment because their quality of life is better -- because their streets are smoother, cleaner, and safer. One of the major issues that we must address as city residents is: "How do we make sure that an environmental agenda that we set accounts for and balances between 'traditional' environmental concerns over pollution and toxics and those quality of life issues that affect our communities more directly?"

For the rest of this paper I'd like to briefly address three further broad areas of concern. In the next section, I'd like to touch on those questions of "pollution" that have traditionally been the focus of the environmental movement in cities. In the third section, I'd like to address the issue of access to open space and the politics of land use that affects the environment in urban areas. Finally, I'd like to address the rarely discussed question of how suburbanization and white flight from the central city affects not only the urban environment, but the costs to the nation of environmental protection in general.

POLLUTION IN THE INNER-CITY

Given that people in cities are exposed to almost every form of pollution known to humankind, what pollutants are appropriate targets of environmental concern for urban people of color? There are two answers to this: One, that we don't know; and two, lead and air pollution.

The first answer stems from the fact that despite over twenty years of a thriving environmental movement, many cities still find themselves with virtually no environmental monitoring data describing conditions in the inner city. So, although the following sections describe two areas of concern, air pollution and lead, we have little hard data on which to base our emphasis on these two forms of pollution. This scientific neglect is a clear part of the phenomenon we call environmental racism.

Air Pollution

People of color adolescents aged 16 - 24 in urban areas had a 32% asthma rate in 1988. That rate has shown no signs of abating and, in fact, has increased steadily in the last 5 years. Particulate and sulfur based air pollution clearly contributes to childhood and adolescent asthma. A further air pollutant of concern for inner-city dwellers is carbon monoxide because of its significant contribution to heart disease. Unfortunately carbon monoxide is one of those pollutants that have been under-monitored. High concentrations of carbon monoxide ("hot spots") are heavily correlated with the presence of traffic, freeways, and heavily travelled commercial roads that are so often zoned into people of color areas. Local industries, power plants, and other municipal and industrial facilities are also significant sources of air pollution.

More recently, questions have been raised as to the hazards of air toxics in cities. Because of a lack of monitoring for all but the simple pollutants listed above, we have very few clues as to exposures to air toxics and their contribution to cancer in people of color communities.

Lead

Another major pollutant that has been identified by even mainstream environmental groups as a concern for people of color communities is lead. There has been an on going debate for the last four years in the scientific and medical disciplines as to what is an acceptable blood-lead concentration. It appears now that the Centers for Disease Control are going to promulgate an extremely conservative lead standard of 10 micrograms per deciliter. This is lowering the previous standard of 25 micrograms/deciliter by over 60% and will have a wide ranging impact on lead policy throughout the country.

A predominant source of lead up until the late 70's were freeways and heavily traveled roads because, until that time, leaded gasoline was widely used. To this day cities are permeated with lead belts as a result of the huge quantities of lead that was used in gasoline as an additive.

At the same time as leaded gasoline was still being used, the public health community focused on lead paint as a major source of lead poisoning. Although the most egregious causes of this have been eliminated, paint continues to be the major source of lead in blood to this day.

Lead shares environmental characteristics with asbestos. The two problems are similar because both lead and asbestos require remediation and removal that can aggravate the problem before making it better. Yet the health risks associated with lead are far better documented than those associated with asbestos.

Why has the question of asbestos received so much attention when lead abatement has received virtually none. The environmental movement has never seen fit to put its head together to resolve the political and bureaucratic snafus between housing authorities, public health authorities, and environmental authorities so that the problem of lead can be resolved.

After the impending lowering of blood lead standards, it is likely that 90% of all inner-city people of color youth will have to be put in the "at risk" category for blood lead poisoning. In New York City alone, at a standard of 15 micrograms per deciliter, 600,000 children under the age of 6 would have been at risk with an estimated 200,000 of those to be found to be exceeding the standard. At a level of 10 micro grams per deciliter, the numbers increase tremendously. It is likely in NYC that at least 300,000 -- nearly half of the children under six years old have blood lead levels in excess of 10 micrograms per deciliter and are therefore in need of remedial action.

The mandate to test those children yearly is clearly there, but the resources are not. Cities are going to have a hard time facing this new crisis. The expertise and the equipment with which to conduct testing of millions of children to such a low level of detecting lead in blood will be very expensive - almost impossible to provide given the budgetary crisis facing most large cities today.

Siting and Land Use Issues

A battle less often characterized as environmental that takes place every day in people of color communities is the battle over land use... the control of urban space. It is a battle that people of color, time and again, lose to urban renewal, to the crime waves that are sweeping their neighborhoods, to gentrification, and to the development, or abandonment, of property in people of color and low-income inner-city neighborhoods. Yet, to many of us living in inner-cities, these issues are at the core of our definition of the environmental problem.

This conference must clearly address how the control of space can be achieved -- how people of color control community land and the kinds of development that are acceptable and beneficial to heavily impacted and disenfranchised people of color communities.

Along with land use issues come the issues of siting and the accessibility of open space. Bob Bullard's work on the siting of landfills in Houston, the Commission for Racial Justice's work on the siting of hazardous waste sites in inner-cities, and my experience as an environmental bureaucrat all point to the often futile struggle conducted in people of color communities to ensure that we receive no more than our fair share of environmentally harmful facilities such as incinerators, landfills, sewage treatment plants, and hazardous waste disposal sites.

A challenge facing the people of color community is mobilizing our environmental perspective to have our voices heard in the battle over citing facilities that serve entire cities, but that are often placed in our communities to pollute our very local environments. Indirect impacts that need to be examined in our communities are the impacts that those facilities have on traffic, whether it be trucks carrying garbage to a transfer station or cars traveling to a mall.

A final land use issue that we face in the inner-city is that of access to open space and the quality of the open space that is available to our communities. Playgrounds, green areas, urban gardens, all are sorely lacking in most people of color communities. When they are available there are serious questions as to the safety of those sites in light of historical contamination of lead paint and its residues, asbestos, and fly by night dumpers, who use vacant lots in our communities as illegal hazardous waste dumping sites.

SUBURBAN VS. URBAN REGIONAL ISSUES

A final area of concern that is not being addressed frequently is white flight to the suburbs and the general phenomenon of suburbanization has impacted not only the distribution of wealth but the distribution of environmental wealth to people of color communities. More often than not, an inner-city's air pollution is caused by suburban commuters who come to the inner-city for their livelihood during the day, only to leave their pollution behind at night. The control of traffic and the availability

of mass transit is disrupted and often made impossible by strong commuter constituencies whose firms threaten to relocate to suburbs or other cities when confronted with the harsh necessities of controlling their traffic and contributing to the overall environmental well-being of the inner-city.

Another form of this suburban-urban struggle takes place in protecting the natural resources that serve the city itself. Many of the following examples are drawn from New York City but are shared by many other cities.

The watersheds that provide the water supply of many cities today are threatened by increasing suburban development. Many pristine surface and ground water supplies are being destroyed by suburban gas stations with leaking underground storage tanks and tract development that creates a poison suburban run-off into streams and reservoirs that serve the inner-city. The wanton development of areas surrounding the cities decreases the availability of environmental infrastructures to support the viability and healthiness of those cities. So the suburban sprawl we see destroys the natural resources of the areas to which the sprawl has spread. But it also erodes the resource base on which the cities were built to begin with.

Another form of this has to do with the control of the pollution from suburban v. urban areas. More often than not, urban areas have an old infrastructure that nevertheless was built to deal with the environmental impacts that the city was contributing to the surrounding environment. Today, in the face of such legislation such as the Clean Water Act and the Resources Conservation Recovery Act, that well developed infrastructures are increasingly targeted for tightened environmental control. So although suburban areas contribute to coastal and ground-water pollution with poorly regulated septic tanks and existent local sewage treatment, the central city serving those suburbs are targeted for expensive infrastructure improvements necessary to control its urban runoff and its sewage. This is another form of urban subsidy to suburbia. Attention to the large amount of pollution caused by nonpoint sources in suburban areas aggravates the stress on the urban tax base. Yet more often than not the pollution contributed by suburbs outweigh that contributed by cities. This form of subsidy is one of the major contributors to the economic viability of the suburbs versus the inner-city, and thus one of the major drains on the tax base of the inner-cities.

POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP: IMPACTING ENVIRONMENTAL DECISION-MAKING

Facilitator: Robert D. Bullard, University of California at Riverside, Riverside, California

BACKGROUND

A growing body of evidence reveals that people of color are subjected to a disproportionately large amount of health and environmental risks in their neighborhoods and on their jobs. Various levels of government have done little to correct the environmental imbalances that exist in this country. Moreover, government action has in fact exacerbated many of the environmental threats to communities of color. Some institutional arrangements between government and industry have placed communities of color at greater risk than the general population. For example, one unanticipated result of more stringent federal environmental regulations has increased communities of color vulnerability to siting of unpopular industries. Exclusionary zoning, unregulated growth, differential enforcement of environmental laws, ineffective pollution prevention strategies, and discriminatory public policy outcomes and siting practices have provided benefits for whites at the expense of people of color.

Environmental inequities cannot be reduced solely to class factors or the economic ability of people to "vote with their feet" and escape polluted environments. Race and class are intricately linked in our society. However, race is a more potent predictor of which communities get dumped on and which ones are spared. Given the political and economic climate of the time, unpopular facilities such as hazardous waste landfills and incinerators, garbage dumps, lead smelter, paper mills, and other polluting industries were likely to end up in somebody's backyard. But whose backyard? More often than not polluting industries ended up in poor, powerless, communities of color, rather than in the affluent white suburbs.

Racial bias operates in creating and perpetuating disparate environmental quality between communities of color and white communities. The practice of targeting communities of color for the siting of unpopular industrial facilities such as municipal and hazardous waste landfills, incinerators, smelters, and other polluting industries is environmental racism. Government has been slow to address environmental injustice in this country.

ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS TO COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Environmental and health costs are localized (risks increase with proximity to the source and are borne by those nearby), while the benefits are dispersed throughout the larger society. For example, communities that host hazardous waste disposal facilities (importers) receive fewer economic benefits (jobs) than the communities that generate the waste (exporters).

Persons of color who live in waste site areas are often victims of a "double whammy" in that they are exposed to elevated risks associated with living in polluted environments at the same time they have problems getting access to health and medical facilities.

The nation is now faced with a garbage and hazardous waste crisis. States are grappling with the question of what to do with their mounting waste. The federal government is also faced with mounting nuclear and toxic wastes from its weapons and military installations. Tougher environmental regulations and increased public opposition have made it difficult to site any type of waste facility.

How is disproportionate impact being addressed in arriving at equitable siting policies? Some of the waste importing states (i.e., Alabama, South Carolina, and Louisiana) have attempted to address interstate equity by charging waste exporting states differential fees. Some states have attempted bans on out-of-state waste. The waste importing states have taken the position that no state should be burdened with another state's waste. However, few states (importers or exporters) have adequately addressed intrastate equity. That is, states have yet to come to grips with siting disparities that place communities of color within the states at greater risk than the general population.

It is not enough to talk about "fair share" plans between states, while siting disparities continue to exist within states. No one segment of a community, city, county, or state should have to bear a disproportionate burden of other people's waste.

Similarly, we must address the internationalization of this environmental crisis. What are some alternatives to industry initiated job blackmail at home and abroad? This country's domestic environmental policies and problems are extended abroad through the export of wastes (household garbage and hazardous waste) and banned pesticides from the United States to Third World nations and the relocation of polluting industries (and accompanying health and environmental risks) along the Mexico-U.S. border in the Maquiladoras. The challenge becomes one of how to develop models of sustainable development at home and abroad. All double standards must be challenged.

POLICY GRIDLOCK

Currently, our government is gridlocked on the facility siting issue. A number of schemes have been proposed to resolve this crisis. For example, compensation, economic incentives, and monetary inducements have been proposed to equalize or redress the imbalances of benefits in having a noxious facility nearby. However, paying a community to accept risks that others are unwilling to accept creates an ethical dilemma. Such practices pose the following questions: Should risks be borne by a smaller group to spare the larger groups? Should those who benefit the least from industrial production pay the highest price in terms of risks from pollution? Elimination of unnecessary risks (the goal of "zero tolerance") should be a top priority in decision-making.

The Cancer Alleys of the country have been turned into "human sacrifice zones." How do we address areas already saturated with polluting industries? Past discriminatory waste siting practices should not guide future public policy decisions. Any saturation policy derived from past siting practices will perpetuate environmental inequities.

Communities saturated with polluting industries may have less impact sensitivity to a proposed facility than might an area having few facilities. On the other hand, public policy-makers seldom weigh cumulative and synergistic effect in granting industrial facility permits. Siting hazardous waste incinerators in the same community where there is an operating hazardous waste landfill may make economic sense, but may create an environmental nightmare for impacted residents.

High unemployment, poverty, and lack of a sound economic infrastructure, are all factors that place

communities of color at risk from polluting industries. Industries often exploit this economic vulnerability. For example, African American communities in Louisiana's "Cancer Alley" (i.e., the towns and incorporated communities found along the 85-mile stretch of the Mississippi River from Baton Rouge to New Orleans) have been long-suffering victims of economic blackmail, environmental racism, eco-genocide.

The plantation and slave economy in the rural parishes was replaced with the petrochemical industry as the new "master" and "overseer." The petrochemical colonialism established in the region mirrored the system of domination typical of the Old South. In addition to poisoning the people, this new master is well on its way to robbing many of the local residents (many of whom are descendants of slaves) of their ancestral homes. Eco-genocide is now turning African American communities into ghost towns. One need only visit Sunrise and Reveilltown (Louisiana) to understand the ultimate price of petrochemical colonialism.

In recent years, Native lands from New York to California have become prime targets for siting waste disposal facilities, a form of toxic waste and garbage imperialism. More than three dozen reservations have been targeted for proposals to site municipal solid waste landfills, hazardous waste landfills and incinerators, and nuclear waste dumps. Because of the special sovereign status of Native lands, disposal companies have attempted to get around state and federal environmental regulations.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

How do we address this problem? Some groups have called for a moratorium on siting waste facilities on Native lands. Other groups have challenged the destruction that accompany uranium mining and disposal of radioactive wastes on Native lands. Any resolution strategy or public policy will need to take into account the interconnection between the exploitation of land and exploitation of Native peoples, sovereignty, cultural heritage, and the right of economic self-determination of Native Americans.

The quality of our physical environment is impacted by the forces and relationships of production. The spatial layout of urban, suburban, and rural areas are dominated and subsidized by state actors. Where a person lives can influence the quality of education one receives, access to employment, income, mobility, and health. People of color are

disproportionately affected by dirty air and drinking water, exposure to lead, pesticides, and the location of municipal landfills, incinerators, and hazardous waste facilities in their neighborhoods. Environmental inequities are deeply imbedded in our laws, customs, and governmental policies and practices.

Examples abound where state actors (i.e., the federal Environmental Protection Agency) have done a miserable job in protecting communities from the ravages of industrial encroachment. The government has a dismal track record in pollution prevention. The nation's urban ghettos, barrios, rural "poverty pockets," and Native lands have become the dumping grounds for all kinds of toxins.

The federal government has made only minimal attempts to level the playing field. Communities of color are still confronted with governing rules, regulations, and policies that are not applied uniformly across the board. All communities and all peoples are simply not treated as equals when it comes to resolving environmental and health problems. Thousands of Latino and African American farmworkers and their children are poisoned by pesticides sprayed on crops. Millions of inner-city children (many of whom are African American and Latino) are poisoned by lead-based paint from old houses, drinking water from lead-soldered pipes and old water mains, soil contaminated by industry, and air pollutants from smelters.

Lead is a classic case where the problem of disproportionate impact needs to be attacked as a national priority. An integrated policy needs to be developed to end childhood lead poisoning. The lead problem overlaps into a (1) public health problem, (2) housing problem, (3) education problem, and (4) environmental problem. Thus, the various federal

agencies (Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Department of Education, and Environmental Protection Agency) need to take affirmative steps to rid this nation of this preventable disease.

Exposure to pesticides is another case where the race of the victims appears to influence government response (or nonresponse) and rule making. There is no uniform set of standards of "acceptable" levels of pesticide exposure for plant workers who manufacture the pesticides, nearby community residents who are exposed to plant emissions, farmworkers who apply the pesticides, and consumers who eat the food on which pesticide residue may be found. Clearly, health and safety of farmworkers and their families receive the least amount of consideration and protection. No segment of our society should be expendable.

Will inclusion of persons of color to decision-making boards make a difference? Many of the decision-making boards and commissions do not reflect the racial and cultural diversity of this nation. The exclusion of a significant segment of the population has biased the decision-making process in favor of white middle-class communities. It is recognized that inclusion of persons of color on boards and commissions does not necessarily mean that their voices will be heard or their cultures respected.

Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of any inclusion strategy should be to democratize the decision-making process. This is the ultimate goal of the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, and the most effective way to impact environmental decision-making.

POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Facilitator: Janet Phoenix, National Alliance to End Childhood Lead Poisoning, Washington, D.C.

QUESTIONS

How does the environmental health crisis impact differently on people of color? Are minorities in general and minority communities in general the object of a conspiracy to poison their communities with toxic substances. Or is the presence of a multitude of known environmental contaminants in minority communities purely accidental, a result of political inaction or factors of poverty interacting with race? These are the questions which we need to address in the workshop on the Environmental Health Issues.

Increasingly the environment has been an issue which the traditional minority community is forced to embrace. Once considered an issue only of concern to white liberals, the environment has come home to roost in communities that are composed of people of color. Community and advocacy groups in these communities are waking up to the disproportionately hazardous environment which adversely affects the health of people of color in America.

The National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit was designed to address key issues and to train people of color to assume roles of leadership in addressing the environmental problems which are affecting our communities. Whether it be the siting of a toxic waste dump, the soil residues left from a smelter in a community or lead based paint poisoning caused by deteriorating older homes, the impact is greater for people of color.

There has been a gap created in addressing these problems. There are the traditional organizations which have been addressing environmental health issues. Some of those working in these organizations are people of color. They are sometimes hampered as they attempt to affect policy decisions which are made by these organizations which are not known for their sensitivity to the minority community. There are organizations which have traditionally dealt with problems affecting people of color, who have lacked a clear mandate with regard to environmental health but who are now developing that mandate and an agenda to accompany it. Then there are the grassroots organizations which have arisen to respond to a variety of community

concerns ranging from poor schools, to crime, to teenage pregnancy to drugs and violence. Many of these organizations are church based. They tend to be small, serve specific communities and to be out of touch with groups in other communities who are facing similar problems.

If the Summit accomplishes nothing other than to allow members of these grassroots organizations to form alliances it will have accomplished a great deal. But in addition to coalition building and networking, the Summit needs to establish a more formal relationship between the larger environmental organizations and the members of the community groups who will be participating and grooming themselves for leadership. The agenda of the larger organizations needs to reflect the concerns of the representatives of the communities of color.

The Summit in general and this workshop in particular will provide an opportunity to explore the common ground and formulate common objectives. It will provide an opportunity for dialogue and trust building to occur. The frustrations of the representatives of the smaller organizations can be vented and the underpinnings of that frustration explored. In addition, those representatives of the traditional environmental movement who are themselves individuals of color can discuss their own frustrations with trying to effect changes in policy when you may be the lone voice expressing a particular point of view within an insensitive bureaucracy.

One or two case studies will be explored to illuminate the issues presented above and serve as the basis for discussion. The following case histories are illustrations of such cases:

CASE STUDY

In 1981, EPA Region 6 initiated studies near smelters in several cities of the Region to determine the levels of lead and cadmium in soil, indoor dust and tap water. Studies were conducted around secondary lead smelters and processors in Dallas, Houston, Corpus Christi and Frisco, Texas; Baton Rouge and Shreveport, Louisiana; and Bartlesville and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Samples of soil, indoor dust and tap water were obtained from

neighborhoods within two miles of the selected emission sources. The samples were analyzed to determine levels of lead and cadmium. Subsequent paint and ambient air samples were also analyzed. Dallas, Texas and Bartlesville, Oklahoma were the only sites found to have a significant elevation of lead in the soil and dust.

In Dallas, twenty percent of the soil samples taken near two secondary lead smelters showed significantly high levels of lead (1000 to 25,000 ppm). A blood lead screening program was conducted by the City of Dallas Health Department, with assistance from the Centers for Disease Control

(CDC) and EPA, to identify any elevated blood lead levels (25 ug/ml) in residents who live close to the lead smelters. A significant number of children downwind from the smelters showed blood levels of 25 ug/ml and above. Subsequently, due to protracted negotiations, a Congressional Hearing and Civil Court suits, the contaminated soil in selected areas around the smelters in Dallas was removed.

The results from the study in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, also showed significantly high soil lead and cadmium levels at several sites. Follow up studies in this city were handled by the State/County Health Departments.

POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP: OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Facilitator: Pamela Tau Lee, Labor Occupational Health Program, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, California

INTRODUCTION

Next year marks the sixtieth anniversary of the completion of the Gauley Bridge hydroelectric plant, built by a Union Carbide subsidiary in West Virginia in the early 1930's. Often called the "Hawk's Nest" project, this construction site was the scene of the worst industrial disaster in U.S. history. Through interviews and studies of old records, Martin Cherniack reports that of the 764 workers who died within five years after the completion of the project, 75% were African Americans. The cause of most of these deaths was silicosis, a disease due to the silica dust the workers breathed while tunneling through the solid mountain rock. Details are described in Cherniack's book *The Hawk's Nest Incident*.

Union Carbide was aware of the hazards involved in this project and provided company engineers with respirators when they entered the tunnel. The tunnel workers received no such protection. Workers who became too ill to work were driven from the labor camps by the sheriff. Many of these workers were found dead on the road leading out of town. When the tunnel workers refused to dig any longer, only the African American workers were physically forced back into the tunnel. Cherniack shows that Union Carbide, the media and the local power structure reported these deaths and illnesses as resulting from the "poor habits of nutrition" among African Americans. Lawsuits filed on behalf of the dead workers' families eventually resulted in a maximum amount of only \$400 each for single black men compared to \$800 for single white men.

It would be somewhat comforting to think that this type of carnage and disregard for human life, especially the lives of people of color, could not take place in today's world. Yet in 1989 the very same company, Union Carbide, was responsible when its factory in Bhopal, India released deadly fumes into the air, killing two thousand people including children.

Today, workers of color throughout the world, and workers of color in the U.S. are consistently employed in the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs. As a result, they suffer a disproportionately high rate of illness, injury and death.

PEOPLE OF COLOR IN INDUSTRY

Inequality in hiring and employment practices in the United States is a major factor in the tracking of people of color into the most hazardous jobs. One study found that the average black worker is 37% to 52% more likely to sustain a serious job-related accident or illness than the average white worker. According to a famous 1984 study, African American workers with the same levels of education and experience as whites will, on average, find themselves in substantially more dangerous occupations. Davis and Rowland in their 1980 studies say statistics for Latino, Asian, and Native American workers are incomplete, but the same can probably be said for their experiences as well. Examples include the following:

Steel: In steel mills, an overwhelming number of African American workers have overwhelmingly been placed in the most hazardous areas of the plant. Some of these hazardous areas, particularly the tops of coke ovens, expose the workers to dangerous cancer-causing emissions.

Semiconductor: Semiconductor workers, predominantly Asian and Latina immigrant women, experience occupational illness at three times the rate of workers in general manufacturing. Illness includes damage to the central nervous system and possibly the reproductive system as a result of using dangerous solvents to clean electronic components, as well as exposure to other chemicals.

Agriculture: Farmworkers and their families are exposed to dangerous pesticides from working in and living near the fields where chemicals are sprayed. Farmworkers are injured from falls and the use of faulty equipment. Most U.S. farmworkers are Latinos and Asians.

Garment: Garment workers still work in 19th-century sweatshop conditions in U.S. cities today. Most are workers of color. In fact, conditions in many garment shops are essentially identical to those in New York's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, where in 1911, a tragic fire killed 146 immigrant women. These shops continue to be inadequately ventilated, poorly lit and overcrowded. Exposure to fiber particles, dyes, formaldehyde and arsenic used to

treat the fabric cause high rates of byssinosis and respiratory illness among garment workers.

Construction: Construction is one of the most dangerous industries. Workers are exposed to asbestos, solvents, and gases which can cause respiratory problems and possibly cancer. Falls and injuries are also a common occurrence. In California, 62% of all construction workers are African American and Latino.

FROM INDUSTRIAL TO SERVICE ECONOMY

As industrial jobs are being lost in the U.S., and we continue our transformation to an "information and service" based economy, there are new types of hazards facing workers of color. These include the health hazards caused by unemployment and underemployment, lower wages and lack of medical insurance and access to health care.

U.S. corporations are taking many "blue collar" jobs out of the U.S. This has had a severe impact upon workers in this country, especially in manufacturing and garment industries where there are high concentrations of workers of color. There is now a widening gap in the labor market between professional/technical jobs requiring higher education and training, and unskilled jobs with poverty wages primarily in the service sector. Jobs in between these two extremes are disappearing as a result of advanced technology and international competition. Due to a lack of educational opportunities in communities of color, people of color are pushed into low-end, service sector jobs. The end result is poverty - the greatest health hazard known.

Workers in these new poverty wage jobs also suffer frequent lay offs. The U.S. Labor Department released a report in August 1991 which found that "the costs of permanent job loss - as measured in terms of lower reemployment rates and longer durations of joblessness - were higher for Blacks." This has definite health effects. The Center for Working Life reports that for every 1% increase in the nation's unemployment rate:

- * 36,887 people die prematurely
- * 20,240 suffer fatal heart attacks
- * 920 people commit suicide
- * 648 of those who have lost their job will murder a spouse, child, or neighbor
- * 3,340 people are sent to prison
- * 4,227 people are committed to mental institutions.

EMPOWERMENT AS THE SOLUTION

The best way to tackle the occupational health crisis faced by workers of color is to empower workers in the workplace and in their communities. Across the country, a grassroots environmental justice movement is growing within these communities. Communities of color are waking up to the dangers of toxic dumping in their neighborhoods. The study *Toxic Wastes and Race In the United States*, by the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ found that "Three out of every five Black and Hispanic Americans lived in communities with uncontrolled waste sites." New leadership is emerging to direct the fight.

In contrast, the crisis in the workplace is not receiving the same attention. Unemployment and the threat of unemployment, lack of skills and education, and an inability to speak English are decisive factors in keeping workers of color tied to hazardous working conditions.

At a health and safety class, held at a day laborers' center in the San Francisco Bay Area, a worker stood up and questioned his ability to use the training. "How can I tell a boss to give me a respirator when I haven't even worked in over a month and a half? I have to feed my family, I want to work!" To him, hazardous work is better than no work at all. A related fear common among many workers is a reluctance to push for health and safety improvements because the employer may call in the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

REFORMING UNIONS

Organizing is vital for workers if they are to achieve justice and dignity on the job. Grassroots environmental organizations have taken the lead in protecting their communities. Similarly, strong aggressive unions can make the "number one" difference in the workplace for their members. But union membership has been declining. To revitalize themselves, unions must recognize the importance of organizing workers of color and organizing the occupations and industries where workers of color predominate. To be successful, unions need to make appropriate changes to incorporate workers of color into all levels of leadership and decision-making.

In the past, U.S. unions gave little consideration to the language and cultural differences of workers from diverse backgrounds. Effective leadership development which incorporates the workers' own

languages and cultural backgrounds is sometimes wrongly viewed as a long-term threat by the union leadership. But both union organizing and internal union activities are more effective when organizers share the same language and background as the workers and their communities. Non-English speaking people learn better and faster in their first languages. Unions thus need to develop new leadership - new organizers among workers of color.

HEALTH CARE AND REHABILITATION

To meet the challenge of the occupational health crisis in the workplace, other institutions in our society need to change as well. In the U.S., most workers and communities of color are either denied access to adequate health care or denied health care altogether. Another shortcoming exists when workers get ill or injured on the job, and the health care system is incapable of diagnosing and pinpointing the source of the problem. Health care workers rarely receive more than ten hours of occupational health training during their entire formal education. We need to revamp the health care system to incorporate universal coverage as well as an effective occupational and environmental health care component in both the training of practitioners and the delivery of services.

The Worker's Compensation system, as it exists in most states, also needs to be reevaluated. The vocational rehabilitation component of the system is meant to get injured and permanently disabled workers back into the workforce. In theory, vocational rehabilitation retrain these workers for an occupation which is equivalent to their prior job in both skill level and wages. A shortcoming of this program becomes evident when counselors attempt to retrain workers with minimum skills and perhaps limited English. How can these workers be retrained when they can only qualify for manual labor jobs that require them to be physically fit?

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The prevention of workplace injuries and deaths calls for stronger regulations and legislation. Compared to the penalties levied by the Environmental Protection Agency, Federal OSHA and state counterpart agencies deliver only a slap on the wrist, a very weak incentive for the employer to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Another factor which limits the usefulness of OSHA for workers of color is that many work in small shops

and seldom see an OSHA inspector. In addition, workers in agriculture are not protected by most OSHA standards and regulations. The severe implications for farmworkers have been well documented.

The California legislature recently passed a Corporate Liability Act that holds employers criminally responsible for knowingly exposing workers to major health and safety hazards. Under certain circumstances a convicted employer might go to jail. In addition, California has made progress towards the establishment of safer workplace conditions by adopting new legislation which requires **every** employer to identify workplace hazards and establish an injury and illness prevention program. By law, training sessions and safety meetings must be conducted in a manner that workers can understand, including translation into other languages when necessary.

NEW COALITIONS, NEW DIRECTIONS

Over the next decade, one of the keys to protecting the health of workers and the people living in surrounding communities will be the reduction of the use of toxics in the workplace. Labor and environmentalists are seeking ways to unite their movements on the issue of removing toxics from the workplace. Many jobs are related to the production of toxic chemicals or involve the use of toxics in the work processes. If toxics are banned, a question arises as to what will become of these jobs. The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union (OCAW) has proposed a new federal "superfund" for workers displaced by the removal of toxics from the workplace.

These workers would receive displacement benefits while attending school to acquire new skills to reenter the workforce. This proposal seeks to address the complex issue of "job blackmail" that has made it difficult for labor and the environmentalists to unite. Such a proposal must also include safeguards to ensure that workers of color are not disregarded because they are unorganized, work seasonally or part-time, or work for small companies. Government policies like this type of "superfund" might also apply to workers displaced by plant closures unrelated to toxics.

Race is primarily responsible for the tracking of workers of color into the dirtiest, most dangerous, lowest paying and unstable jobs in our society. It

will take a mammoth effort to overcome these practices, requiring reform of many institutions and policies. This can come about only if the labor movement successfully organizes workers of color

and incorporates them into the leadership, makes these issues a priority, and enters into effective nationwide coalitions with civil rights and environmental activists.

POLICY GROUP WORKSHOP: INTERNATIONAL ISSUES - THE GLOBAL CONNECTION

Facilitators: Marta Benavides, Medepaz, Mexico City, Mexico and Dana Alston, Panos Institute, Washington, D.C.

INTRODUCTION

People of color in the United States have long recognized that the social, economic, environmental and racial problems facing their communities are global in nature. Mainstream environmental and conservation organizations also have identified the global links and constantly use slogans like "We are all in this together," "The Circle of Poison," and "Everyone's Backyard." This approach may make it appear that problems of environmental degradation are faced equally by all people. However, when examining environmental issues internationally, a pattern of disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards and degradation exists among those who are non-white, poor, less educated, and politically less powerful. Many in the environmental justice movement believe that this phenomenon parallels the environmental inequities and environmental racism confronting people of color in the United States.

The international linkage and the role of poverty and race can be more clearly defined by exploring specific global issues such as the environmental impact of war and underground nuclear testing, U.S. aid and trade policies, and the exportation of hazardous industries and waste. This examination will lead to a critique of U.S. industrial, governmental, and military policies. Moreover, the policies and activities of Northern hemisphere environmental and conservation organizations are coming under a closer scrutiny.

The war in the Middle East has demonstrated once again how international events are affected by domestic issues and vice versa. It is also recognized that in order to find lasting solutions to the environmental degradation at home, global issues must be addressed simultaneously.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT OF WAR

Ecological deterioration and warfare are inextricably linked. As warfare occurs, natural resources are destroyed and become more scarce. As these resources diminish, competition over their use becomes increasingly tense and often violent.

Since World War II, all major conflicts in the world have been played out in developing countries. The

roots of many of these conflicts are both historical and contemporary. They can be found in the colonial creation of artificial nation-states and boundaries of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. They can be found in the politics and rivalry of the Cold War era, which led the United States and the Soviet Union to fight a series of proxy wars on Southern soils. They can also be found in the extractive and exploitative economic policies promoted by countries of the North, as they attempt, by all means, to retain control over and access to valuable natural resources in the South.

The ecological impact of war cannot be considered in a vacuum. War intensifies the ecological crisis and increases the poverty and inequity that are often behind the conflict. Therefore, the solution is not to merely end the fighting. The social and economic structures which created the conditions for war and armed conflict must be replaced by a more equitable and just system of distribution of power, wealth, and resources. This equity must be achieved both between and within nations. U.S. trade, economic assistance, and military policies that reinforce these inequities and foster underdevelopment in the name of U.S. national interests, must also be dismantled and replaced by more fair and just policies and practices. U.S. military intervention in other regions -- whether direct as in the case of Vietnam, or indirect as in the case of El Salvador where some 75% of U.S. aid finances the war -- are not solutions. They do not address the underlying problems. Instead they often exacerbate them.

UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TESTING

The militarism of the post-World War II era has promoted the development and use of nuclear weapons and technology. The production of nuclear weapons -- from the mining of uranium to the manufacture and testing of weapons -- has had far-reaching and deleterious health and environmental effects. Moreover, the shroud of secrecy around testing makes it difficult to assess the present and future impact of nuclear testing. What is clear, however, is that testing has endangered the lives and livelihoods of thousands of indigenous peoples around the world. From the Aborigines in Australia to the Western Shoshone Indians in Nevada, the

inhabitants of the Central Asian Republic of Kazakhstan in the USSR, and the natives of the French Pacific, indigenous peoples have witnessed the destruction of their lands by nuclear testing.

According to the Center for Defense Information, since 1945, when the United States exploded the first atomic bomb at Alamogordo, New Mexico, six nations -- the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, China and India -- have detonated a combined total of at least 1,910 nuclear explosives at some 35 sites around the world, which is an average of one explosion every nine days. Despite numerous treaties and accords calling for the restriction on nuclear testing and committing the signatories to working towards its discontinuance, the world has yet to have a treaty to ban nuclear testing.

The two categories of nuclear tests, atmospheric and underground spread radiation. The 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty prohibited all but underground nuclear testing. This, however, does not eliminate the risk to the environment. Radiation continues to leak into the atmosphere and groundwater. Moreover, it is possible that serious geological effects could result from the shock waves of a nuclear explosion.

There are many public health problems associated with nuclear testing and radiation. The victims are not only test-site workers and/or soldiers directly involved in the production and testing. Civilians are also exposed to and affected by airborne and waterborne contamination. High levels of radiation result in severe injury and death in a short period of time. Lower levels of radiation over a prolonged period have delayed effects, the best known of which is cancer.

NORTHERN NGO's AND THE SOUTH

Tensions have been growing between Northern non-governmental environmental and conservation organizations (NGOs) and developing countries. Many Southern NGOs and governments feel that Northern organizations are dictating economic and cultural policies to them, and imposing their political views. Some have labeled this behavior as imperialistic, racist, and an extension of the colonial attitude of the past. Issues of contention include diversification of the decision-making process regarding agenda and priority setting; self-determination of indigenous people and national sovereignty; and distribution of financial resources.

Raising issues similar to those of communities of color in the United States, Southern NGOs have challenged the international conservation and environmental movements to build non-paternalistic partnerships based on mutual respect and equity. If Northern NGOs are unwilling or unable to accept this kind of partnership, many suggest that they should stay at home.

DEBT-FOR-NATURE SWAPS

To date, debt-for-nature swaps have been arranged or explored in a host of countries, including Ecuador, Argentina, the Philippines, Zambia, Poland, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Guatemala, Venezuela, Honduras and Brazil. These swaps were promoted by the Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, World Wildlife Fund and other conservation NGOs with support from private and public financial institutions, the UN and the governments of Norway, Sweden and the United States. Kathryn Fuller, president of the World Wildlife Fund, U.S., says, "These arrangements have allowed conservationists to develop unprecedented relations with the international financial community. Now that these relations are in place, other novel ways of supporting conservation efforts may emerge."

Despite the benefits which might arise from protecting critical parts of the biosphere, the debt-for-nature strategy has undermined the efforts of indigenous peoples to acquire self-determination and ownership of lands where they have lived for centuries. The Coordinating Body for Indigenous People's Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA), representing 1.2 million Indian people in Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil, addressed these issues in an open letter to the environmental and conservation community in 1990.

"We are concerned about the 'debt-for-nature' swaps that put your organizations in a position of negotiating with our governments the future of our homelands. We know of specific examples of such swaps, which have shown brazen disregard for the rights of the indigenous inhabitants..."

We want to make it clear that we never delegated any power of representation to the environmentalist community nor to any individual or organization within the community.

We propose joining hands with those members of the worldwide environmentalist community who recognize our historical role as caretakers of the Amazon Basin; support our efforts to reclaim and defend our traditional territories; accept our organizations as legitimate and equal partners."

BIODIVERSITY

The term "biodiversity" has often been used to describe the diversity of biological life on the planet. However, the most recent working definition, proposed by a consortium of international organizations, is that biodiversity comprises the vast global collection of genes, species, habitats and ecosystems, and the cultural diversity that is its human expression. Together, the biological and cultural elements constitute a rich natural endowment that can meet human needs today while assuring that they are met in the future as they have been in the past.

Many Northern-based pharmaceutical and agricultural companies, as well as many conservation NGOs, have promoted various schemes to preserve biological diversity, often at the expense of cultural diversity. Perhaps the most controversial issue has been the recent activity of Northern biologists, who have been harvesting the rich diversity of plants from developing countries and studying them for possible medicinal, industrial or agricultural use.

However, testing each individual plant species for its potential is time consuming. As a result, the latest trend has been to send experts to the jungle to "harvest" native peoples' knowledge about the various uses of the plants. Whether the North has acquired the plants themselves or garnered knowledge about their uses, such activities in the South are other forms of cultural domination and neo-colonialism.

THE 1992 UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

In June of 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) took place in Rio de Janeiro. A number of forces led to the call for the UNCED in 1989, including an interest by the international community for developing a "report card" on global progress in the area of the environment since the first Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972.

As Northern governments and environmental organizations define their agendas, political positions, and priorities related to UNCED, Southern NGOs have become increasingly vocal with their concerns. The Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Status with the UN (CONGO) brought together organizations that collectively cover all regions of the world and all domains of human endeavor. Like communities of color in the U.S., CONGO integrates environmental concerns into a broader agenda that emphasizes social and economic justice. These organizations address issues of poverty, peace, human rights, status of women, health, education, youth, among others.

THE INTERNATIONAL WASTE TRADE

With the increased restrictions on toxic waste disposal in the United States and Western Europe, as well as public opposition to this practice, waste management companies and illegal waste traders are seeking alternative dump sites overseas. The targets are the politically and economically less powerful nations of the world, who have gained least from the benefits of industrialization.

The governments of developing countries are often lured by large sums of money offered by waste trading firms and the prospect of creating additional employment and development opportunities within their borders. This practice represents an extension of the pattern of targeted dumping on communities of color in the United States.

However, governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America are becoming more resistant to being dumped on and have labeled the practice of international dumping as "toxic terrorism" and "economic extortion." In 1988, the Organization of African Unity issued a resolution calling the dumping of nuclear wastes in Africa "a crime against Africa and African people." After a strong campaign by African countries to impose strict bans against importation of toxic wastes, involving stiff fines and prison sentences for violators, South Africa remains the only country in Africa that still accepts the importation of toxic wastes. Evidence exists that the homelands have been used as dumping sites for toxic waste imported from the United States.

With Africa no longer a viable option, international waste traders are shifting their targets to countries

in Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean. Over the past few years, traders have learned the value of presenting their proposals as development plans, promising employment, electricity, social and technological development, and other attractions. In addition, many activists who focus on international waste trade issues feel strongly that Asia and the Middle East will now become targets. Cyprus, Lebanon, Turkey, China, the Philippines have already suffered contamination problems due to waste trade ventures.

CONCLUSION

As we define and address the environmental issues that affect people of color globally, it is important to recognize that they can neither be discussed nor dealt with effectively in isolation. Many of these issues are outgrowths of the political, economic, and social imbalances inherent to the market system. These imbalances are manifested in policies and

structures that work to the advantage of the industrialized countries of the North. Moreover, many of these same structures and policies are at the root of the inequities and injustices that face people of color in the United States today.

Rectifying this situation requires more than just the political and economic will. It requires the wholehearted and earnest commitment of the countries and institutions of the North to listen to, respect and accept the perspective and recommendations of the South. A more complete and comprehensive analysis of the political and economic situation facing countries of the South is needed. This analysis should acknowledge the role that race and poverty play in the international system. The debate around these issues has to be led by voices from the South and should lead to the development of alternative policies that eliminate the injustices and imbalances of the present system.

APPENDIX I
PRESS CONFERENCE
Questions and Answers
October 24, 1991

Present: Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr., UCC Commission for Racial Justice, Cleveland, Ohio (Moderating); Dana Alston, Panos Institute, Washington, D.C.; Toney Anaya, Former Governor - New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico; Rose Marie Augustine, Tucsonians for a Clean Environment, Tucson, Arizona; Pat Bryant, Gulf Coast Tenants Organization, New Orleans, Louisiana; Robert Bullard, University of California at Riverside, Riverside, California; Donna Chavis, Center of Community Action, Pembroke, North Carolina; Richard Moore, South West Organizing Project, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Gail Small, Native Action, Lame Deer, Montana.

Press Conference and media outreach was coordinated by Gwen McKinney and Leila McDowell (McKinney/McDowell Associates, 1325 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005, 202-737-6225).

Question about the use by the Federal Government of an equation based upon the value of human life in terms of dollars and cents to determine the location of toxic dumps and hazardous industries:

Robert Bullard: I think when we talk about facility siting, we talk about risk assessment, risk analysis and risk management, we have to talk about the uncertainties. The science of risk analysis is not really a science. There are so many unknowns. When we talk about human values and the human process by which decisions are made, we're not talking about totally objective criteria. The value of life and health for one community is not given the same weight as for another community. If this were the case, we would not find communities inundated with landfills, toxic waste sites, incinerators, etc.

If a permit to be sited in a community is looked at by EPA, all the other things that are in that community are not taken into consideration. We are saying that the total picture must be looked at. If a community already has a hazardous waste landfill, an incinerator, a garbage dump, one more added risk, cumulative risk -- that should be considered as part of that decision-making process.

What I am saying is that all human life and value is not considered the same. There are some people given more value than others. The people in Bhopal, [where the Union Carbide plant blew up] for example, the value of Indian life is not considered the same as the value of an incinerator or a chemical plant located in a white suburb.

That process itself creates further inequity; it piles inequity on top of inequity. You are looking at institutional factors. Where you live can dictate and determine how much money you are likely to earn, because of the kinds of schools you attend, the education you receive. All of these things are compounded. When you use a criterion that is based on a faulty assumption and a faulty criterion itself, and use that to apply rules across the board, all you're doing is piling on one injustice after the other. So we are saying that we challenge the notion that you can put a value on human life. That is an ethical issue that has to be raised. I am a scientist, but I am also a humanist. I am concerned about human life, I am concerned about the sacredness of the earth and all those factors, and we just can't put it into a formula, into a computer and crank it out and make a decision. That is where the problem lies.

Question regarding the lack of attendance of big environmental groups, such as Greenpeace, Sierra Club, etc.:

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.: We expect them on Friday. They were not invited to be here today. This is the opening of the Summit, and what you have on the first day and a half are people of color delegates meeting among ourselves. And then, on Friday afternoon, we have issued invitations to the leaders of the larger environmental movements, and most of them will be here and will be participating in the Summit. So what we are trying to do is to bring everybody to the table. We also expect some persons that work in some of the different federal

agencies to be joining us. So there is no attempt on our part to exclude the leaders of the larger environmental movement. In fact, we want them to come to the table because we believe that the environmental movement, as long as it remains racially exclusive, is going to be an ineffective movement.

The question is, "How can we leave this Summit with a more inclusive and a more effective environmental movement that will address everybody's environmental concerns, but from a position of justice and from a position of equity?"

Question related to EPA Administrator William Reilly's participation:

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.: Mr. Reilly is in the process of doing some damage control, since a lot of you have called over to the EPA and asked him why he is not coming. Late last night I received a hand delivered note from the chief of staff of the Environmental Protection Agency, basically repeating the obvious. It basically began, "Rev. Chavis, we are aware that you are concerned that Mr. Reilly will not be present at the Leadership Summit..." That is not a reply from Mr. Reilly to our invitation; it is a way of being able to tell you, "Oh, we sent some note to Rev. Chavis..." That is not an answer, it does not satisfy the people of color delegates. It is a further insult.

And, to add injury to insult, that note from the Chief of Staff was only sent because Michael Fisher of the Sierra Club was with Toney Anaya on an interview yesterday, said, "I can't believe the EPA hasn't responded to you." So Mr. Fischer (a white male leader of the environmental movement) calls, gets through, and automatically we get a note. That is part of the problem -- a federal agency's utter disregard and utter disrespect for what is happening in our communities. Whose tax dollars do they think they're spending? Those are our tax dollars.

Richard Moore: As many of you are aware, on July 31st a letter was sent by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, challenging the Environmental Protection Agency on environmental racism and institutional racism. One of the major requests was that a meeting take place between leaders of our choice and the chief administrative officer of the Environmental Protection Agency. On October 15th Mr. Reilly did respond, but in his letter he failed to note very specific things. He said, "I encourage you to meet

with our regional administrators in San Francisco and Dallas. It is at the regional level that this agency makes many site-specific and operational decisions."

We should just remind you that several weeks ago there was an attempt of a meeting in Dallas, at the EPA Regional Office, and the delegation that attempted to get into the regional office was locked out. The week before that, there was a demonstration that took place at the San Francisco Regional EPA Office. The response of the Environmental Protection Agency plays hand in hand with the incredible injustices and the incredible genocide that is taking places in our communities. What I'll say is that if the Environmental Protection Agency has not protected us over the last 12 years in terms of farmworker legislation, then we have not seen any recent movement on the part of the Environmental Protection Agency. So this letter is unacceptable. We have stated very clearly that we will continue actions throughout the Southwest and throughout this country until justice comes to our communities. And, at the present time, Mr. Reilly has not, as far as we're concerned, responded to our letter or to our demands.

Question regarding legislation on how to prevent dumping of toxic or nuclear wastes in people of color communities:

Toney Anaya: Those discussions will continue throughout the Summit. There have already been some entrées made to members of Congress, particularly by some Native Americans, and maybe someone here may wish to further amplify on that. We have already scheduled some additional discussions, including this afternoon and throughout the Summit, with key members of Congress. I am particularly concerned about that issue, because New Mexico has been targeted for the last 15 years to complete the nuclear cycle, if you wish. As most of you probably know, New Mexico started the nuclear cycle by being the state that mined the uranium. We were then the state that wound up with the uranium mill tailings. We were the state that then did the research and development, primarily through Los Alamos Laboratory and the Sandia Laboratory.

Now we are being asked to complete the cycle by becoming the disposal site. The Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) in southeastern New Mexico is something that many of us have been fighting for 15 years. The Federal Government has now spent

a billion dollars in developing a nuclear disposal site, and that legislation right now is pending in Congress. The Senate Energy Committee -- with Senators Domenici and Bingaman (from New Mexico) at the lead -- are trying to get legislation through that many of us find unacceptable. Nonetheless, they feel it would give New Mexico some protection. I find it unacceptable not only because of environmental issues that we can get into more detail, but because it basically concedes defeat (acceptance that this particular project is coming in).

I might add a footnote -- as a result of this battle, others are looking around for other disposal sites, and Native American lands are areas that they are looking at, including, in fact, a Native American reservation in New Mexico, the Muscalaro Apaches. I suspect that they're dangling -- as industry and government always do -- the prospects of more jobs and more economic development, but not talking about the risks that come with it.

Gail Small: It is important that we recognize that the Indian Religious Freedom Act is currently in the process of being amended, that it is before Senator Inouye's Select Committee on Indian Affairs. It is very important, I think, that when we talk about the environment, that we also realize the spiritual, religious qualities that are in the environment. So the Indian Religious Freedom Act is a mechanism which Indian tribes throughout the country are trying to strengthen to protect the environment, at the same time protecting the religion of our tribes.

There also is legislation which we are working on to protect the Alaska Native people's lands from oil and gas development. We are also looking at some legislation that is being introduced in the Senate Select Committee on Indian affairs to open Indian reservations for toxic dumping grounds. What many of you may not realize is that many of these state laws that govern garbage and toxic dumping do not apply to Indian reservations because of our tribe sovereignty. Therefore, those federal laws that apply in some limited extent on Indian reservations leave a significant regulatory gap.

Many major garbage companies are targeting Indian reservations, trying to exploit those regulatory gaps by coming into Indian reservations and promising millions of dollars to an impoverished community. There is a very major regulatory loophole there that Indian nations need to recognize and deal with. However, the legislation that has been proposed in Congress, which is before Senator Inouye, is to

open Indian lands, to allow them to use our reservations as their dumping grounds. These are the type of laws that we, as people of color communities, must focus on. Otherwise, what we are going to see is more and more of our reservations becoming the dumping grounds for America.

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.: You probably know that the Senate has passed a bill to give the Environmental Protection Agency Cabinet-level status. During this Summit, we plan to meet with some of the key members of Congress concerning that legislation. At this point our position, if the EPA does not change its ways, we are going to oppose the bill. We don't feel that the Environmental Protection Agency, under the present leadership, in this present Administration, has exhibited any regard to what has been described here as environmental racism. And we will be having some meetings, even later this afternoon, with some members of Congress about this particular piece of legislation.

Question raising the possibility that disproportionate siting of hazardous facilities is not due just to racism but to poverty:

Robert Bullard: We have to understand the problem of environmental injustice and look at the whole issue of race versus class. All kinds of studies have been conducted, using the most advanced scientific analysis, and race has been found to be the most potent variable. The United Church of Christ study in 1987 documented that race was the most important variable to explain where operating hazardous waste sites are located. And I documented in a book, *Dumping in Dixie*, that race is the most potent variable which explains where lead smelters, chemical plants, and garbage dumps are located.

All communities that we looked at in terms of where these facilities are located are not poor. We have documented the fact that in 1979, a disposal company decided to locate a municipal landfill in the middle of a black **middle-class** neighborhood (with 83 percent homeowners) in Houston, Texas. Right now, in Texarkana, Texas, a black, middle-class community of homeowners is now sitting on top of a Superfund site. We have to understand the nature of racism; it is not just a poverty thing and not just an economic thing.

Racism permeates this society. Where you live, as I said before, can dictate your quality of life because of housing discrimination and residential segregation. African Americans are the most segregated group in this country. The average African American making \$50,000 is as residentially segregated as a Latino that makes \$5,000. We have to understand that money, in many cases, cannot buy you out of this environmental wasteland. So it's not just a class thing. To look at this whole phenomenon as just an economic argument and as a class argument distorts the whole picture. It is not by accident that lead disproportionately impacts Latino and African American kids in urban areas. But this problem is now being looked because white families are moving back into the inner-city areas, buying older houses and finding out that the lead in the houses is hurting their kids -- that's racism.

Question about the issue of environment versus economy, and local communities encouraging waste companies to come to their community because of possibilities for more jobs and an increase in taxes:

Pat Bryant: Many of the communities in which our organization has affiliates and leaders are the kind of communities that you describe: very poor communities where there is very high unemployment. That has been a problem for generations. For the last 50 years, our elected officials have been trying to attract corporations to come South and to bring jobs that would employ people. And we still are looking for corporations, but we are looking for corporations that will come in and employ people but who will not destroy us and the environment.

People are becoming more conscious about this distinction. But there is still the problem in job-starved communities when a dumper comes and says, "We're going to bring you 500 jobs." Or let's take a case of Formosa Plastics, which is trying to locate in Wallace, Louisiana (in Cancer Alley). Formosa Plastics has been run out of Taiwan. It has been given big fines in New Jersey and Texas. The people know that bringing Formosa Plastics in to build a rayon plant is bad news, but people say, "We're going to get some new houses because people are going to work." The problem is the environment. The environment is an economic problem. These companies are coming in, they are borrowing from the wealth of our environment in Louisiana and other places, and we are giving them a blank check to draw from our water and from our air. We are trying to build a new approach, where we go into communities and look at economic

development as a part of the whole problem, inclusive of environmental concerns.

Question regarding relationships with the mainstream environmental movement:

Dana Alston: The relationship between people of color and the environmental movement is not a simple issue. The media and the environmental organizations have responded only to one piece of the challenge that people of color have brought to them, and that is the issue of diversity or desegregation. That issue is among a long litany of issues, and was not the top priority of what we were advancing. But it was what people focused on. We believe, just like in any employment situation, that there needs to be equity in hiring, in leadership, in policy development. But more critical to this in the relationship is that environmental organizations have consistently advanced policies and engaged in actions that have had a detrimental effect on the social, economic and political development of our communities. This has been at the forefront of our critique of them. When the Nature Conservancy goes and buys huge tracts of land and sets it aside, with no development, no human participation, without the conversation, without any relationship building or consultation with the people who have historically lived there for centuries, this is the basis of the problem.

Now, they can say, "Well, we don't have people on our board, we don't have people on our staff to let us know about these things, but there's no way you can tell me that whether it's here in the Southwest, in New Mexico, or whether Nature Conservancy, doing debt-for-nature swaps in South America, where they're taking rain forests and setting them aside, with total disregard for the indigenous people who live there, without their participation, without their consent. They're told -- all their rights and abilities for self-determination totally violated. This is what we call another aspect of environmental racism.

After all of these years of raising the issue of diversity, we must ask people, like the Sierra Club, why their board of directors is still all-white. There are a number of organizations who have stepped forward to try to create some change within their institutions. We have openly invited them to become part of the Summit process, and some have stepped forward to do that. It has been very difficult for them to look internally at their own decision-making process. But this challenge,

whether we look at The National Wildlife Federation, we say, "You have one of the supreme environmental racists on your board: Waste Management, Inc." They have facilities in Emelle, Alabama, takes a quarter of this country's hazardous wastes and hazardous wastes from around the world. They're trying to site a facility in a Latino community in Kettleman City. They have totally had their hands in the destruction of the South Side of Chicago. And yet this company is on the board of directors of National Wildlife Federation.

And so, when we come to the table, we are asking for a working relationship and a partnership, but we are doing that under the context of certain principles based on equity and nonpaternalism. We do not want a parent-child relationship; we seek a relationship of equals, based on justice.

Donna Chavis: Your question reminds me of something that has come up often as we planned the Summit. That is the notion that the Summit was planned in reaction to the policies of the "Big Ten" or in reaction to other people. I want to clarify that this is a proactive conference, not a reactive one. We have been working on environmental issues for generations, if not centuries, as people of color from a variety of indigenous cultures that are still on these shores today. We are here not merely to react to what is out there. We are here to make the statement for ourselves, "**We are speaking for ourselves.**" This is what we are doing, where we are, and where we will be going irregardless of what happens with the National Wildlife Fund or the EPA.

However, we are here as a body now and making a joint statement in response to the notion that, "Well, people of color are not interested in the environment." We are documenting for this moment and for posterity's sake that we are interested, we are involved, and that we are making our positions clear. We will be listing the things that we find difficult in dealing with EPA and in dealing with the large environmental groups. But that is just one part of the conference; this is a conference wherein by we will be setting our agendas and making our statements for our communities and from our particular perspectives.

In that line, one of the questions that I want to speak to is that of genocide. Genocide means the intentional efforts to kill out; so is this really a genocidal question? And I'd like to speak to that, because there's many forms of genocide: there is

cultural genocide, there is spiritual genocide, and there is physical genocide. And as we look, especially in the arena of native peoples on these shores, the efforts of killing our cultures, our religions is directly related to our physical well-being. I would ask the question, Why do we have to have special laws to protect our religious rites? Aren't we protected by the Constitution? You know, I mean, there are reasons why our religious freedoms are challenged, because it is so much related to our lifestyle, and that would also be related to our use of the land and the protection of our lands. So that, for me, that is the position of why we are not merely reacting. We have been responding to these issues virtually forever, and we will be making clear our positions throughout the entire course of the Summit.

Yes, you will hear criticisms, you will hear responses, we will be having dialogue. You won't only hear criticisms, you'll also hear some good things. But mostly you'll be hearing what we plan to be doing for our communities and for this earth and its survival.

Question following up on issue of dumping nuclear waste in the Southwest, specifically reports of Wendell Chino, Chair of the Muscalero Apaches, applying for a federal grant to study the feasibility of building a dumpsite on his reservation:

Gail Small: I think that in terms of what Wendell Chino is doing, those questions need to be addressed to the Chairman of that tribe. Wendell Chino is a very respected and recognized leader in the Indian movement in this country. As far as what their specific needs are on that reservation, I don't know. I think that in terms of trying to determine where these nuclear wastes are going to be dumped, that the people on that reservation need to be aware of the pros and cons of any type of dumping on that reservation. But as far as specific questions addressed to that tribe, I think it is very critical that people realize that there is a nation-to-nation relationship between Indian tribes, so I am not here to criticize what Wendell Chino and his tribe are attempting to do. In order to do that, you must address those questions to him and his tribal government.

Question regarding budget and policy priorities at EPA to meet needs of people of color:

Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.: The present budget structure of the U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency and the present regional deployment of its staff and officers does not work for our communities. To tell the truth, we believe it does not work for all Americans that the EPA has a symbiotic relationship with industry. You need to know that a lot of the regulators who leave EPA wind up either going to the waste management industry or to the petrochemical industry, or to one of the other industries that is responsible polluting the environment.

Particularly during the Reagan years and now the Bush years, the Environmental Protection Agency has protected the industry; it has not protected the environment. All Americans are going to be exposed to this. Our contention here is that there is a disproportionate exposure in people of color communities, because there is a concentration of these facilities. And so what we want to do is to say that the millions of dollars, taxpayers' dollars, that have been expended now by the Environmental Protection Agency, the whole budget needs to be redone, from the top to the bottom. Because, in our communities, we don't see the EPA, we do not have access to the EPA. When some of our delegates go to visit, we are locked out. Or there is a nonresponsiveness. When Governor Anaya and I met two days ago with the staff of Congressman Torres (from California), they said that he hasn't been able to get a response out of Bill Reilly for 18 months. This is a member of Congress, a Latino member of Congress.

So there is something fundamentally wrong not only in the administration of EPA, in terms of its responsiveness, but also in terms of the misdirected priorities. The United Church of Christ did a study on social and racial demographics of environmental policy in 1987. Why hasn't the Federal Government followed up that study? Why has there been utter silence in the federal research community?

Why hasn't some dollars been directed to either refute or confirm our study? In addition, the upper-level management policy positions are still very exclusive, and we do not have the kind of access. Really, we think any citizen ought to have access to an agency like the EPA, but in particular, citizens whose communities are disproportionately affected.

Toney Anaya: It is easy enough to talk about reordering priorities, shifting budgets and so on, but the most difficult aspect is a question of changing of attitudes at the EPA. That is going to take direction from the White House. It is also going to take pressure from Congress. The participants in the Summit can be very helpful, to not only highlight what needs to be done, but to apply the political pressure to make sure that it does get done. It is not just a question of how do we help our minority communities; I think the answer to the last question was really, "How do we, through the minority community, impact the system to help everybody?"

For example, stopping the use of the toxic pesticides that are used in the predominantly Mexican American farmworker areas is ultimately going to help the health of the surrounding communities and the health of everybody who eats products produced in the fields. A question was raised earlier about the formula that puts an economic value on a life. The formula itself is immoral; we shouldn't be using a formula. We must change these kinds of attitudes. Another question related to the conflict between environment and jobs. I believe that there are more jobs in providing a clean environment than in polluting the environment. There will be many jobs created if we look for ways of working with people, including Third World countries, to clean up the environment for everybody. These are the attitudes which need to be changed.

APPENDIX II

PEOPLE OF COLOR AND THE STRUGGLE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

*Position Paper by Robert Bullard and Dana Alston
on behalf the National Planning Committee
for the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit*

It is our firm belief that everyone has a right to live, work, and play in a healthy environment. No one segment of society should have a monopoly on a clean environment. Nevertheless, some individuals, neighborhoods, and communities are forced to bear the brunt of the nation's pollution problem. People of color, working class people, and the poor are disproportionately impacted by industrial toxins, dirty air and drinking water, and the location of noxious facilities such as municipal landfills, incinerators, and hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities.

Environmental inequities cannot be reduced solely to class -- the economic ability of people to "vote with their feet" and escape polluted environments. Race interpenetrates class in the United States and is often a more potent predictor of which communities get dumped on and which ones are spared. There is clear evidence that institutional barriers severely limit access to clean environments. Despite the many attempts made by government to level the playing field, all communities are still not created equal. This is true even when social class is held constant. Environmental inequities are created and maintained by institutional arrangements -- policies that favor one group over another. Studies of disproportionate impact are studies of equity. We see environmental equity falling into three major categories:

Procedural Equity: This area deals with the "fairness" question, and extent that governing rules, regulations, and evaluation criteria are applied uniformly across the board. It also involves "past-in-present" discrimination (e.g., residuals from past discriminatory practices). Example: The effect of past exclusion of persons of color from decision-making boards, commissions, and committees; holding hearings in remote locations and times designed to minimize public participation, limit information dissemination, and quell debate; using English-only material as the language to communicate risks, post notices, and conduct

hearings and other public meetings in non-English speaking communities.

Geographic Equity: This deals with the idea that some neighborhoods, communities, and regions are disproportionately burdened (costs are localized while benefits are more dispersed) by hazardous waste. Environmental risks to human health generally increase with proximity to the source. Saturation of noxious facilities or polluting industries in one sector typifies geographic equity. The process of targeting an area to become a "sacrifice zone" also fall under this category. The key question revolves around how the cost and the benefits are distributed geographically. Example: Communities that host waste disposal facilities (importers) receive fewer economic benefits (jobs) than the communities that generate the waste (exporters). Equity issues are raised when industrial jobs are concentrated in one area while the waste is shipped to another area; interstate transport of municipal and hazardous waste from states such as New York and New Jersey to Ohio and Indiana; transport of wastes and facility siting involving cities vs. suburbs, urban vs. rural, etc. Some states are proposing using the "fair share" argument to limit the shipment of out-of-state wastes (municipal and hazardous wastes) from entering their borders. The feeling is that no state should be burdened with another state's waste.

Social Equity: This deals with the role of race, class, and other cultural factors in environmental decision making. Some segments of society are vulnerable to environmental decision-making that often mirrors the power arrangements of the larger society. A form of illegal "exaction" forces the less fortunate to pay the costs of environmental benefits for the public at large. Because of residential segregation and housing discrimination, people of color at all class levels are "targets" for toxic dumping. Noxious facilities and polluting industries have a long history of locating in or near low-income, minority, politically powerless communities.

The Commission for Racial Justice's 1987 *Toxic Wastes and Race* study provided irrefutable evidence that race is the most potent variable (more important than class) in predicting the location of toxic waste facilities in the United States.

In recent years, Native lands have become prime targets for siting waste disposal facilities. More than three dozen reservations have been targeted for siting waste disposal facilities. Because of the special sovereignty rights on Native lands, disposal companies attempt to get around state environmental regulations which in many cases are more stringent than the federal regulations. Recent victories of the Choctaw in Mississippi and Sioux on the Rosebud in South Dakota are clear signs that "garbage imperialism" is vulnerable.

We challenge the ethics of individuals, workers, and communities being forced to accept environmental risks others can avoid by "voting with their feet." We demand that the problems of pesticides and farmworkers, women in "sweat shops" (garment industry, poultry and catfish processing plants, and computer assembly operations), and lead and inner-city children be elevated to the national environmental action agenda.

Environmental justice does not stop at the United States borders. Environmental destruction by industry and the military apparatus is a threat to world peace. With peace breaking out in the world, we recommend a "Marshall Plan" for rebuilding this nation's infrastructure.

We question the equity and ethical implications of dumping military weapons of destruction, toxic wastes, and hazardous industries offshore, mainly to Third World countries. For example, the poisoning of workers and nearby residents by the maquiladoras is unacceptable.

Just where are we in our quest for environmental justice? How has society responded to this problem? The concept "environmental racism" emerged out of the struggle by people of color to dismantle exclusionary zoning, discriminatory land-uses practices, industrial facility siting that target racial and ethnic communities, differential enforcement of regulations, and paternalism by national environmental groups.

From Native lands to urban ghettos, environmental problems are taking a heavy toll on people of color.

This is a life and death matter. Environmental racism is deeply imbedded in our laws, customs, and governmental practices. These practices systematically produce disparate environmental quality for people of color communities and white communities.

The environmental problems we have described did not just appear overnight. They have been around for a long time. These problems have been severely ignored. Contrary to popular belief, the struggle for environmental equity was not invented in the 1990's. People of color are not new arrivals to the movement that links environment with social justice. This struggle grew out of early conflicts, some of which predate the first Earth Day:

- Inadequate garbage and sanitation services were major problems that contributed to the urban riots of the 1960's. The Kerner Commission documented the systematic neglect of garbage services in black urban neighborhoods as contributing to residents' feelings of deprivation.
- The 1967 riot at predominately black Texas Southern University in Houston was precipitated by two separate demonstrations against social injustice. One group was protesting the death of an eight year old black girl who drowned at a city-owned garbage dump. The second protest was sparked by individuals who were challenging the way black and white students were disciplined in the Houston Independent School District. The two groups combined forces against what they saw as manifestations of institutional racism and social injustice.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. was brought to Memphis in 1968 to resolve a social injustice, worker safety, and environmental equity issues involving mostly black sanitation workers. He gave his life for that cause.
- The first lawsuit that alleged environmental discrimination was filed by African American residents in 1979 (Bean v. Southwestern Waste) in Houston, Texas. A mostly black middle-class suburban neighborhood was selected as the site for a municipal landfill. Although African

Americans were a little over one-fourth of Houston's total population, more than 80 percent of the city's landfills and incinerators had been located in black neighborhoods from the early 1920's through the late 1970's. In a city that prides itself as the only major U.S. city without zoning, policy makers evaluated African American communities as compatible land use for garbage dumps, landfills, and incinerators.

- The first national protest against environmental racism occurred in 1982 over the siting of a PCB landfill. The facility was sited in the mostly African American Warren County, North Carolina. African Americans organized and led the protest. Social activists, national leaders, and environmentalists joined in the protest. The demonstrations marked the first time individuals were jailed protesting a hazardous waste facility.
- The nationally-based environmental and conservation organizations remain largely white, middle class, and male-dominated institutions. These organizations are a microcosm of the larger society and generally mirror the underrepresentation of people of color as staff, board members, and issues addressed.
- A series of letters were sent to national environmental organizations challenging the "whiteness of the green movement." These letters were signed by over one hundred people of color organizations like the SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP), the Gulf Coast Tenants Organization, and the Commission for Racial Justice. The letters brought instant national media attention.

There is little doubt that the letters had a part in increasing the number of people of color individuals as staff and board members of the national environmental and conservation groups. However, staffing of these groups was only one aspect of the challenge to diversify the environmental movement.

- Diversification also entails inclusion of environmental problems that disproportionately impact people of color and redirecting resources in a just and equitable manner to address these problems.
- People of color groups were the ones who have endured the hardship and struggle to bring the diversity, equity, and environmental justice issues to the forefront. These groups have paid their "dues" in this struggle and deserve to be supported.

Who can best serve the needs of people of color communities as they attempt to address problems of sustainable development, economic blackmail, industrial policy, land rights and sovereignty, occupational health and safety, grassroots empowerment, urban land use, law and politics, and environmental decision-making? A dilemma has emerged on how to prioritize grantmaking needed by people of color organizations serving communities of color and the needs of the national groups foundations have a long track record of funding. Clearly, strengthening the capacity of people of color organizations and indigenous institutions is the preferred strategy for empowering people of color communities.

The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit is a forum to discuss an array of problems, issues, and policies and map out an agenda and strategy for the future. We will be moving beyond the narrow definition and limited focus of traditional environmentalism to incorporate an action plan that emphasizes prevention, distributive justice, and lifestyles shifts.

People of color bring valuable perspectives to the study of environment and technology and strategies used to resolve societal problems in a just and equitable way. Inclusion of the rich multicultural backgrounds of the Summit leaders into the scientific inquiry and public policy analysis will greatly strengthen both enterprises and move the entire nation forward.

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST COMMISSION FOR RACIAL JUSTICE

The Commission for Racial Justice (CRJ) is the national civil rights agency of the 1.7 million-member United Church of Christ. The Commission has long been actively involved in the struggles for racial justice and social equality of African Americans and other people of color communities in the United States. The Commission's Executive Director is the Rev. Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Established in 1963 by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ in response to the assassination of Medgar Evers, the Birmingham church bombings, and the heightened racial tension then gripping the nation, CRJ has been at the forefront of the civil rights movement as a church-based agency of a major U.S. Protestant denomination. The agency has been actively involved in the civil rights movement of the 1960's; in such racial injustice cases as the Wilmington 10 in the 1970's; and in issues related to racially motivated violence and in the anti-apartheid movement of the 1980's.

CRJ programs have focused on a diverse range of issues, including: African American family life, capital punishment and penal reform, voter registration, racially motivated violence, child abuse, displaced homemakers, battered wives, teenage pregnancy, welfare hotels and homelessness, persons with disabilities, computer literacy, the empowerment of African American, Latino American, Asian Pacific American and Native American communities, and increasing the percentage of students of color in colleges through its scholarship program.

CRJ initiated a project to challenge the dumping of toxic wastes and other forms of environmental contamination in African American, Hispanic American, Native American and Asian Pacific American communities. The project generated the landmark report, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States*. This was the first national study to document the disproportionate impact of hazardous wastes on communities of color throughout the United States.

CRJ also publishes *Civil Rights Journal*, a weekly commentary written by Dr. Chavis, which focuses on national issues impacting African American and other persons of color. The *Journal* is carried by over 300 newspapers and by six national radio networks, as well as by numerous other stations around the country.

CRJ maintains a national office in Cleveland, and offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Enfield, North Carolina. The Commission also operates a major program and conference center at the historic Franklinton Center in Enfield, North Carolina.

CONTRIBUTORS

On behalf of the National Planning Committee and the National Advisory Committee of The First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit, the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice gratefully acknowledges the financial contributions of the following foundations and organizations:

*Beldon Fund
The CEIP Fund, Inc.
The Nathan Cummings Foundation
Environmental Defense Fund
The Ford Foundation
Funding Exchange
Glen Eagles Foundation
Greenpeace, USA
The George Gund Foundation
Charles Steward Mott Foundation
Ruth Mott Fund
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
The Needmor Fund
Natural Resource Defense Council
The New World Foundation
North Shore Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Rockefeller Family & Associates
Seventh Generation, Inc.
Sierra Club
The Surdna Foundation, Inc.
The Winslow Foundation*

In addition, the United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice wishes to thank the many foundations and organizations which have provide financial assistance for individuals and organizations to participate in the Leadership Summit process and to attend the Leadership Summit.

United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice
475 Riverside Drive • Suite 1950 • New York N.Y. 10115



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