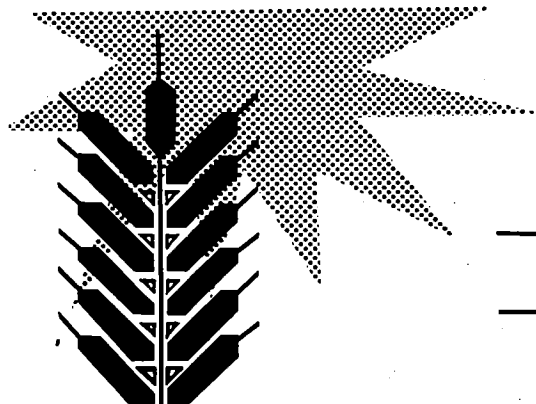




Hunger Notes

a newsletter of World Hunger Education Service

VOL.5 NO.7

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TAKING STOCK-1979

LOOKING BACK OVER 1979, to say that it has been a tough year for the hungry, and for bread and justice advocates in general, is to put it mildly. Poverty and hunger issues at home have become desperately hostage to energy and inflation. The costs of food, fuel, housing and medical care are rising about twice as fast as the overall consumer price index. Inflation means grumbling and inconvenience to most of us; but to the poor among us it means facing a no-win winter's choice between heating or eating, since few can do both adequately. The politically popular tide against government spending is used as an excuse to push income transfer programs for the poor to the wall. Defense spending, however, somehow remains sacrosanct. In contests over federal spending for guns or butter the guns win hands down. Meanwhile, the brutal tragedy of Cambodian starvation has put hunger back on the front pages and television screens. After much prodding from humanitarian agencies, Congress and the White House have finally transcended the politics of that incredibly bleak situation to let American food flow to whomever can still be reached.

AMID THE LOSSES OF THE YEAR which so readily fill our range of vision, however, we admit to finding a few reasons for faith in the evolution of our collective human consciousness and conscience. The Third World lost at UNCTAD but babies won at WHO. The situation darkened in 1979 for world food security, says the World Food Council; but 900 scientists and theologians from all over the world struggled for two weeks at M.I.T. with the issues of a "Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society." The U.S. food industry hears from consumers how they can better serve the poor and still make a profit. The rural poor on energy rich land fight back. And the poor in Nicaragua have hope for the first time in generations. Maybe the song is right: "the times, they are a-changing." God bless us all. ... Editor

UN CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

The Fifth UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD V) met for four weeks in Manila during May and early June. Unlike UNCTAD IV, where general agreement was reached to establish a Common Fund for the Integrated Program for Commodities, UNCTAD V produced little progress or agreement on major issues on the international economic agenda.

One major difficulty as UNCTAD commenced was that the agenda was too wide-ranging and diffuse for effective negotiations. Prior to the conference, the developing nations, organized as The Group of 77, had prepared the "Arusha Programme for Collective Self-Reliance and Framework for Negotiations." However, this itself was a compromise document because the Group of 77 represents African, Asian, and Latin American countries differing widely in size, levels of economic development, and resource endowment. Yet despite their diversity, the developing nations are bound together by a common dependence on the industrialized world. At Manila they maintained political unity—but it took them several days to agree on specific resolutions for negotiations.

The more fundamental reason for the failure of UNCTAD lies elsewhere. The Conference agenda and the Arusha program raised the central issues of the present world economic order. They pressed for serious negotiations on appropriate measures to facilitate structural changes in the global economy. And on these basic questions the developed countries and the developing nations are simply not in general agreement.

The developed market economies generally interpret the present economic problems—inflation, slow rates of economic growth, and unemployment—to be cyclical and temporary. According to them, the best hope of poor countries for economic growth and development lies in the return of the rich countries to the high economic growth rate of the 1960s. Moreover, economic problems are best solved by the free play of market forces.

The developing countries, on the other hand, view these problems as essentially structural in nature. The financial and monetary institutions that support the present world economic system—the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, for examples—were set up to serve the needs of industrial reconstruction in the post-World War II period. However well they may have served their initial purpose, they are inadequate to meet the development needs of the present. Moreover, they perpetuate the dependent relationship between rich and poor countries. According to the poor nations, far reaching structural changes are called for.

UNCTAD V foundered over these two different perceptions of the world economy and the nature of the changes required to meet the development needs of the Third World. The rich nations at UNCTAD V were prepared to discuss modifications in the global financial and monetary institutions they control, but they were unwilling to accept the legitimacy of an agenda that questioned the system itself and the institutions that maintain it. Thus, consensus was reached on relatively few items.

Two resolutions adopted may be of some significance to the developing nations. One proposes a crash program of action to assist the least developing countries in developing their infrastructure (e.g., roads) and in meeting their pressing social needs. It also invites the UN General Assembly to convene a UN Conference on the Least Developing Countries to adopt this new program.

The other directs the UNCTAD Secretariat to encourage increased economic cooperation among developing countries at subregional, regional, and inter-regional levels, particularly by assisting in the formation of state trading organizations and multinational marketing enterprises.

A proposal by the developing nations to seek new financial pledges for the "Second Window" of the Common Fund, which would help nations diversify their exports to relieve dependency on one or two commodities for foreign exchange earnings, was rejected by the developing nations, led by the US. UNCTAD agreed to "study" another developing nation proposal that a compensatory financing facility be established to provide loans to developing nations when their income is disrupted by low prices and fewer sales of their commodities, but the US issued a strong reservation.

Other proposals—such as the establishment of an international group of experts to look at the present international monetary system and a call for the rich nations to renew their commitment to increase their financial assistance to developing countries toward the goal of .7 percent of GNP—were agreed to, but no procedure or target date was set.

In sum, many issues on the global agenda were not even discussed, much less agreed to, at Manila. Yet the agenda—and the problems of human misery and global inequities it seeks to address—will not go away.

Michael Schultheis, SJ (Taskforce Consultant), Official Observer.

INFANTS WIN

"In my opinion, the campaign against bottle feed advertising is unbelievably more important than the fight against smoking advertisements...there is no way the infant food industry can get away with what they have been doing in the past and say they have our stamp of approval." In these words Dr. Halfdan Mahler, Director-General of the World Health Organization, summarized the results of the WHO/UNICEF meeting on Infant and Young Child Feeding which ended October 12. Industry representatives have pledged cooperation with the meeting's recommendations. Non-governmental groups at the meeting from developing and developed nations formed an "International Baby Foods Coalition" to work with international agencies and national governments in elaborating codes of conduct and in monitoring promotional activities.



MEETING ON INFANT AND YOUNG CHILD FEEDING

REUNION SUR L'ALIMENTATION DU NOURRISSON ET DU JEUNE ENFANT



(organized by WHO and UNICEF)

(organisée par l'OMS et l'UNICEF)

Geneva, 9-12 October 1979

Genève, 9-12 octobre 1979

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROPRIATE MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION OF INFANT FORMULA AND WEANING FOODS

The government of each country has the responsibility to promote coherent food and nutrition policies which should give special attention to mothers, infants and children. These policies should emphasize the preservation of breastfeeding and the implementation of appropriate nutritional guidance (calendrier nutritionnel). Governments have a duty to ensure the supply and availability of adequate infant food products to those who need them, in ways that will not discourage breastfeeding. Informed advice should be given at the appropriate time and place to mothers and families about best infant and young child feeding practices.

Breastfeeding is the only natural method of feeding babies and it should be actively protected and encouraged in all countries. Therefore, marketing of breastmilk substitutes and weaning foods should be designed not to discourage breastfeeding.

There should be no sales promotion, including promotional advertising* to the public of products to be used as breastmilk substitutes or bottle-fed supplements and feeding bottles. Promotion to health personnel should be restricted to factual and ethical information.

There should be an international code of marketing of infant formula and other products used as breastmilk substitutes. This should be supported by both exporting and importing countries and observed by all manufacturers. WHO/UNICEF are requested to organize the process for its preparation, with the involvement of all concerned parties, in order to reach a conclusion as soon as possible.

Monitoring of marketing practices is recommended. Usually this will be done under government auspices. Advertising councils and industry, consumer and professional groups can make an important contribution.

There should be no marketing or availability of infant formula or weaning foods in a country unless marketing practices is in accord with the national code or legislation if these exist, or, in their absence, with the spirit of the meeting and the recommendations contained in this report or with any agreed international code.

Facilities of the health care system should never be used for the promotion of artificial feeding. Therefore, advertising or promotional distribution of samples of breastmilk substitutes through health service channels should not be allowed. Artificial feeding should not be openly demonstrated in health facilities.

No personnel paid by companies producing or selling breastmilk substitutes should be allowed to work in the health care system, even if they are assigned more general responsibilities that do not directly include the promotion of formulas, in order to avoid the risk of conflict of interest.

Production and distribution of foods for infants and young children should be governed by strict legal standards. They should be labelled to indicate proper and safe home preparation. Governments should adopt the recommended international standards covering foods for infants and young children developed by the Codex Alimentarius Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses and should support the elaboration of standards by this Committee to ensure nutritional value and safety. Governments that have not yet adopted such codes or regulations are urged to do so.

Products that are not suitable alone as weaning foods, such as sweetened condensed milk, cornstarch, cassava flour and cereal flours, should be required by proper regulations not to be packaged, labelled, advertised or otherwise promoted in ways that suggest they should be used as a complement or substitute for breastmilk. Vigorous educational efforts should be made against their misuse for the purpose by mothers.

* This includes the use of mass media and other forms of advertising directly to the mother or general public, designed to increase sales of breastmilk substitutes, to the detriment of breastfeeding.



International Year
of the Child 1979

Meeting on 'Science & Faith' Debates 'Ethics & Technology'

ARTHUR J. MOORE, a veteran ecumenical observer, is editor of *New World Outlook* and a Contributing Editor of *C&C*.

Arthur J. Moore

WHEN NEARLY 900 PERSONS gathered for two weeks in the heat of Boston last July to take part in the World Council of Churches (WCC) study conference on "Faith, Science and the Future" held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a couple of things were immediately apparent. This was undoubtedly the largest gathering of scientists and representatives of organized religion gotten together in memory, and it was certainly the most representative of a broad spectrum of interests and nationalities.

Of the 313 delegates who showed up (out of 450 invited), half were physical scientists, one-quarter theologians and the remaining one-quarter scattered among social scientists and other categories. (The roster also included 210 accredited visitors, 199 staff and 145 press.) Geographically, the participants came from 59 countries with one-third from North America, one-third from the Third World. Students were well represented with 20 percent of the total; women underrepresented with eight percent—a fact called to the conference's attention on more than one occasion. In religious terms, there were persons there from some 40 Christian churches (including Roman Catholics), Buddhists, Jews, Muslims and some with no religious affiliation.

What this mix of people expected from such a gathering, it was hard to say. Veteran followers of WCC gatherings probably had some notion. They knew that this meeting was under the auspices of the council's Church and Society Department, that this meeting had grown out of the 1966 Geneva Conference of Church and Society, and that the conference's full, jaw-breaking title was "On the Contribution of Faith, Science and Technology in the Struggle for a Just, Participatory and Sustainable Society." From this configuration, such observers could probably have figured out that the emphasis would be on social applications of both science and religion rather than on theoretical underpinnings, and that its title might more accurately have been "Ethics, Technology and the Present."

Editor's Note: This report on the WCC study conference, together with the paper by Jonathan King that follows, constitutes the first half of C&C's coverage. A reflection on the conference by Roger Shinn and a well-received paper by Charles Birch will appear in a later issue.

And so it proved to be. Even the opening addresses, on the nature of science and the churches' concern for it, struck this note. Australian astronomer Robert Hanbury Brown noted that "in the past few decades science has been industrialized and has allied itself with power." He estimated that less than five percent of world expenditures

on science is now devoted to "Fundamental Science" and that "the vast majority of scientists are busy applying science to reach material and social goals, and their work is largely controlled by governmental agencies serving national, military and civil interests and by large industrial firms serving the market." WCC general secretary Philip Potter, for his part, defined the central issue of the conference by asking: "How can science and technology become the vehicles, not for legitimizing and perpetuating the structures of injustice, but for opening up the possibilities for structures of social control which include all the people?"

Professor Brown did try to argue for science as an "ethical paradigm" with four imperatives of universalism, communalism, disinterestedness and organized skepticism, and asserted that science is an "essential part of learning to be at home in this mysterious universe." This approach was supplemented by that of Metropolitan Paulos Gregorios, the conference moderator, who sought to overcome what he saw as a Western split between subjectivity and objectivity paralleling and partially causing the science-faith dichotomy.

But these more elevated approaches were not to prevail. Although Professor Brown could not be accused of being "triumphalistic" in his claims for science, his description was immediately attacked from a Third World perspective by Brazilian Rubem Alves as like "describing a wolf without reference to his eating habits." Rosemary Ruether, while noting that she agreed in great part with Metropolitan Gregorios, thought it more important to point out how the conference itself perpetuated the traditional masculine, patriarchal domination.

Australian biologist Charles Birch gave perhaps the most overarching attempt at a new worldview combining religion and science, stressing humankind's connection with nature; he was joined by German theologian and pastor Gerhard Liedke and Russian Orthodox Protopresbyter Vitaly Borovoy. They would be supplemented later by descriptions of Buddhist and Muslim views of life.

Technology As Mirage

From then on, the emphasis was heavily on the perfidy of present-day technology and its owners and managers. Science historian Jerome Ravetz of England underlined and sharpened Professor Brown's view by insisting that "for the 'scientist,' we bid farewell to the lone researcher, and consider one sort or another of white-collar worker," and by warning that "the scientific style, having got us into these straits, cannot get us out again." The Third World weighed in heavily, expressing its disillusionment with the concept of "development" and the import of

technology as solutions to its problems. Egyptian O.A. El-Kholy pointed out that importing technology frequently meant "acquisition at very high cost of inappropriate products that deteriorate rapidly, and plants that work inefficiently, delivered as packages in which indigenous participation is almost non-existent." Thomas R. Odhiambo of Kenya described the transfer of technology as "a mirage, an impossible dream, on which we have already spent too much time and vast effort", and called for the "establishment and vigorous development of the national scientific and technological development of the Less Developed Countries." Venezuelan Manuel Sadosky, on the other hand, insisted that only a new international order could basically change the situation.

Here ended, perhaps appropriately, the first week. At the Sunday morning worship service that marked the break, the Anglican Bishop of Durham, England, J.S. Habgood, voiced what was perhaps on the mind of many. "The trouble about conferences is the multitude of words: fine words, moving words, intelligent words, words designed to change the world. But the reality I suspect we are most conscious of is ignorance and confusion."

There were certainly more words to come. (There were thirty-nine speeches in all.) But the focus began to shift to concrete issues.

First, however, there were two penetrating analyses and a vivid reminder of the world's political realities. The analyses came from Britain's John Francis and Switzerland's Theodor Leuenberger. Both spoke from the perspective of industrialized nations. Francis, a nuclear physicist and town planner, used a phrase of René Dubos as his rubric: "We can do it, we can afford to do it, but we should not do it." Practically, this translates into an argument for choice and a turning away from the inevitability of centralization, consumerism and mass technology.

If Francis was mildly optimistic, Professor Leuenberger was the reverse. In a trenchant address that may have received less attention from the conference than it deserved, he contended that technological-economic processes have continuously gained strength, and that they increasingly escape political control: "Politics has become permanent crisis management." While not pessimistic enough to suggest that this development is irreversible, Leuenberger did say that political control is a long-term process—"There is no simplifying formula. There are no easy achievements."

As if to underline current political dilemmas, the next scheduled session had to be scrapped altogether. After long negotiation, the WCC thought it had a commitment from the Soviet Government for a number of Soviet scientists to participate in the meeting. At the last minute, permission was denied by the Soviet Academy of Sciences. As is usual with the Russians, no explanation was given for this reversal. There was speculation in some quarters that, following the Pope's triumphal visit to Poland, the Soviets did not think this a propitious time to cozy up to religion, but that was only speculation. (It may even have been the kind of bureaucratic ineptitude that allowed the confer-

ence to open without any official greeting from the US Government and to be half over before the slip was half-corrected by a written message from Vice President Mondale.)

New Mood on Nuclear Energy

On this somewhat sour note, the gathering turned to more specific issues. Of these, the most passionately argued was nuclear energy. In the past, the WCC has refused to issue a flat condemnation of nuclear energy. Following the Three Mile Island incident and the US National Council of Churches' policy statement, the anti-nuclear forces came prepared for a showdown. The alignment of forces in the debate was an interesting one—the Russians were probably the most solidly united pro-nuclear group, with significant allies among the Americans, the British and some Europeans. The anti-nuclear forces included many Europeans, many Americans and most of the students. The Third World delegates were split, with an Egyptian being largely responsible for the resolution calling for an absolute moratorium on nuclear energy, but with many Third World delegates refusing to support this. (In a group so large and diverse as "Third World," this split would not be worth remarking except that both sides in this debate claim to be acting *for* the "Third World.") The end result was a compromise proposed by John Francis, calling for a five-year moratorium on new nuclear power plants while the issue is thoroughly debated. This seems a perfect reflection of the current state of the debate but clearly not a resolution of the issue.

One of the themes of the nuclear power debate was the well-known "realist-idealist" tension, with the "realists" claiming that a call for a flat moratorium would simply undermine the churches' credibility with governments. This same tension appeared in diminished form in the one unscheduled topic to force itself on the agenda—disarmament.

Probably for the simple bureaucratic reason that disarmament belongs to another department of the WCC, the most awesomely problematic contemporary example of science and technology was not included in the conference's scope. Thanks to an imaginative "discussion center" called Plowshare, set up by the MIT chaplains and the Fellowship of Reconciliation—which centered on issues ignored by the meeting and which managed in some instances to get better-known speakers than the conference itself—this oversight was corrected. Thanks were due also to such conference-speakers as MIT's Jonathan King who introduced the topic into otherwise unrelated speeches. In King's case, since his speech dealt largely with the perils of recombinant DNA research, this provoked the retort from a member of the audience that "now that you biologists have your bomb, you want the physicists to give up theirs."



A special plenary was held on disarmament, and a resolution was passed calling for an end to the development of nuclear weapons and conversion from military technology to socially useful purposes. Here it must be said that the pressure for a sweeping declaration came primarily from the scientists, whereas calls for greater precision in wording came from churchpeople. (Roger Shinn managed to get himself roundly booed when he said that he was not for unilateral disarmament.) Whether this reflects more concern by the scientists or is simply another illustration of the charge that scientists are notoriously imprecise outside their own disciplines depends on one's own view.

The list of problems presented was fascinating. It included Jonathan King on bioethics, and a challenge by Karen Lebacqz questioning the whole field of bioethics from a feminist perspective (a challenge some found valid and others saw as simply replacing one set of simplisms with another); a presentation by three MIT scientists on the promises and perils (mostly the latter) of communications technologies such as satellites and computers; a plea by US economist Herman Daly for a stable state economy on ecological grounds, and an attack on this concept by Indian development planner C.T. Kurien as a device of the rich nations to protect themselves ("Even if all the petroleum were to be exhausted, all the copper and coal were to be used up, and produced energy supplies were to run dry, the poor would survive"); and a final session addressing the whole question of citizen control of science and technology. This last featured interesting speeches by Swedish Government minister Kirsten Aner, Canadian Judge Thomas R. Berger and Japanese ecologist Jun Ui, but the solutions seemed oddly disproportionate to the problems that had been posed previously.

After this prodigious amount of input, the conference split up into sections to discuss the various aspects of the subject and to produce reports. It would be nice to say that the discussions matched the high quality of the speeches, but by most reports that was not true. Neither are the reports particularly impressive as providing answers to many of the problems. These reports are now in Geneva for editing (and, dare we say, rewriting) and should probably not be evaluated until they appear in final form.

This is perhaps true of the conference itself. The mere fact that the meeting took place is itself an important fact. It was by definition a study conference intended to raise questions rather than to provide answers. That these enormous issues are now part of the agenda of the ecumenical movement (and by extension part of the churches' agendas) can be of great significance. For that alone we should all be grateful for what took place at MIT. □



un conference on science and technology

The United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD) drew about 2000 delegates from 141 nations to Vienna for August 20 to September 1. Preparations for the event, costing almost \$50 million, drew up the initial working document at five UN Preparatory Committee sessions and more than 160 special seminars and meetings. This document essentially supported the claims of the Group of 77 (Third and Fourth World nations) and their proposals for reducing the current disparity in national capacities for science and technology. This disparity is reflected in statistics that show only 2% of the \$100 billion now invested around the world in science and technology is spent in developing countries. Some sources feel the real figure may be closer to one quarter of 1%.

Issues before the Conference were how to correct the disparity, who will share what kind of technology, and for whose benefit. UNCSTD also served as a forum for countries to expound and debate their theories on science and technology for development. Much of this debate had the now familiar ring of a call for a "New International Economic Order."

Two committees did the majority of the work, and there were daily plenary sessions where more general discussion took place. A third committee focused on general financial goals for the future.

Committee I dealt with the problems of strengthening the science and technology capacities of underdeveloped countries and with restructuring the existing pattern of international science and technology relations. The latter included the

role of multinational corporations, production and marketing of goods in poor countries, and financial support for development. Deadlocks developed over many aspects of these issues. The final report was passed only in general form at the closing plenary, with the debated paragraphs to be resolved at the fall session of the General Assembly of the U. N.

The final resolutions of the Second Committee passed by consensus were vigorously debated as well. This group considered recommendations for strengthening the role of the UN and for providing increased financial resources for its work in science and technology.



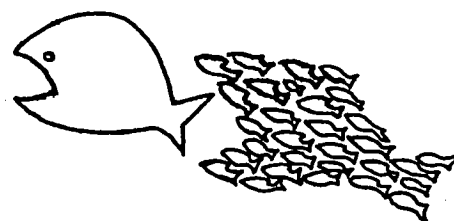
The process of compromise was a classic example of the developed (North) versus the underdeveloped nations of the South for control of the funds to be administered through the UN.

Basically, the North wanted future funding to be administered by the Economic and Social Council, where a fixed but rotating membership gives the North more control. The North also wanted contributions to the fund to be voluntary, with no more than \$300 million through 1981. The South generally favored control of funding to be vested in a committee with membership open to any nation, with contributions automatically assessed, and a higher level of funding over a longer period, namely, \$4 billion by 1990.

In summary, UNCSTD recommended that the UN General Assembly establish a high level Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development to replace the present ECOSOC committee. The new committee, open

to all nations, would meet once a year and would report directly to the General Assembly (where underdeveloped nations are in the majority). It also recommended that the General Assembly establish financial means to strengthen the "endogenous S&T capacities of developing countries, and, in particular, to assist in implementing the "Programme of Action" of UNCSTD.

This Programme of Action aims at "bringing the benefits of science and technology more fully to the poor nations and peoples of the world." A voluntary Interim Fund of \$250 million will be established to serve through 1981 and will be administered through the UN Development Program. Methods of long-term financial assistance will be explored and will begin in 1982. The goal is that by the year 2000, 20 to 25% of global research and development expenditures in science and technology will be spent for the benefit of the Third World.

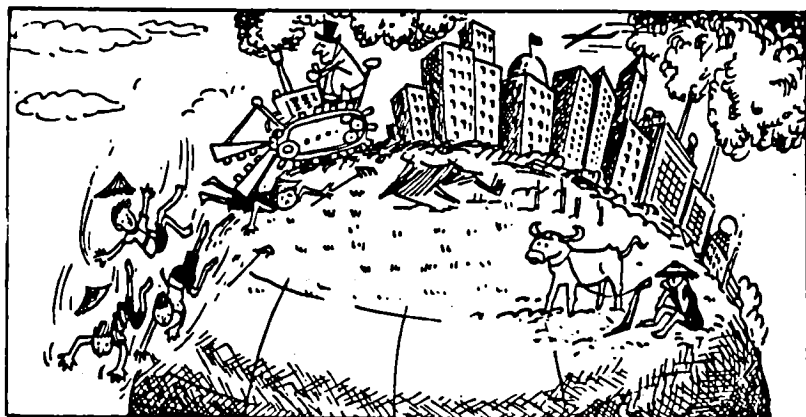


Two independent meetings were held in conjunction with UNCSTD. The first, during the week prior to the Conference, was attended by a cross-section of the world's science and technology community. It met under the auspices of the Advisory Committee to UNCSTD. With an agenda similar to the one proposed for the UN Conference, little that was new or controversial was discussed. The positive result of this meeting is summarized by the journal of the UN Division of Economic and Social Information, Development Forum:

for the first time scientists and technologists from coun-

tries at every level of development (over half of the 300 participants were from under-developed countries), from a wide range of institutions, non-governmental, governmental and UN agencies, met on equal terms and in open debate, rather than as delegates supporting pre-ordained policies.

The other forum, sponsored by various NGO's for NGO's, met concurrently with UNCSTD. Although its substance was discussion and dialogue rather than resolutions for action, the Development Forum observer noted that this NGO meeting could claim "to have achieved more, at least in exchange of views and addresses, than did the conference proper."



Initial reactions to UNCSTD were generally favorable, although there was some criticism. Observers from Washington's Center of Concern (a non-governmental organization) called it "a qualified success." They concluded that the dialogue between rich and poor countries was advanced, the U.S. delegation was more constructive than at other UN conferences, and that although UNCSTD "had its limitations and wasn't all we had hoped... a strong, new impetus has been given to the role of science and technology in promoting human development and a more just world."

A delegate from the NGO Coalition for Women In International Development,

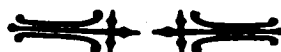
Leah Janus, believes that "predictions of failure for UNCSTD have proved premature." Her report points out that Mahmoud Mestiri, current leader of the Group of 77, called it "the most successful conference in a long time."

The UN's Development Forum is more critical:

UNCSTD never really got away from being a mini North-South confrontation, which ended in a rout of the South....it did not consider alternatives to the so-called Western course of science and technology for development; it did not take up technical cooperation among developing countries; nor alternative science, nor alternative technology; and certainly not alternative political and economic patterns and structures.

Ultimate judgment must be reserved until it can be seen whether the fruits of science and technology have enhanced the quality of life in the Third World or have continued to be the nearly exclusive resource of the developed world. Much will be determined, as Leah Janus point out, by what the poor countries decide to do for themselves and by how much, concomitantly, the rich countries commit themselves to help.

(The above survey by Arthur Julich is based on the following sources: Center Focus, September 1979, Center of Concern, 3700 13th St., NE, Wash. DC 20017; Development Forum, Aug-Sept. 1979, UN Division of Economic and Social Information, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; and "Report to the Coalition for Women in International Development", by Leah Janus, c/o Overseas Education Fund, 2101 L St., NW, Suite 916, Wash. DC 20037.



a "conversation" on u.s. rural poverty

Rural people and rural areas have long been step-children in the U.S. economy and federal program budgets. People in the mineral-rich region of Colorado, Montana, North and South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming were invited to fight back by two Community Action Agency Associations at a "National Conversation on Rural Poverty" in Rapid City, S.D., September 23-26. A report is available from the Energy Advocacy Project, P.O. Box 721, Helena, MT 59601. The opening statement is reprinted below. ☆☆☆☆☆

Ladies and Gentlemen of Rural America: take a good, long look around, and see what you can see. Do you see your neighbors living in adequate houses; houses that are cool in the summer and warm in the winter? Do you see your children receiving proper nutrition? Do you see your young men and women finding employment, following graduation from high school or college, in the town of their birth or raising? Do you see your parents, the elderly, being able to find transportation to their doctor? To the grocery store? To their daily, out-of-house activities? Do you see your city or town provided with decent preventative health systems? Is your locality equipped with water and sewage systems? Do you see the resources which lie beneath the ground you have walked over and worked on all your life being harvested and used for the benefit of your community? Do you see gondolas full of coal rolling non-stop past your railroad station? Do you see newcomers integrating themselves into the life and existing pace of your town? Do you witness your government reaching out into Rural America with programs designed to better the living and working conditions of the poor in your county? Do you see your neighbors, your family, your self participating in the decision making process which is the foundation and keystone of political life in America?

Well over a year ago, the Region VIII CAA Association took a long, hard look at the territory: Colorado, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, North and South Dakota. They witnessed trainloads of coal, bound for eastern cities, rumbling out of town, out of state. All the while local CAPs were engaged in assisting low income families pay fuel bills which exceeded one third the monthly family income. They perceived this flow of resources as a tragic irony, as a gross inequity. They saw resources extracted with no regard for the people who live on top of them. They saw working people who could not afford to pay for a life sustaining amount of fuel; they saw elderly people who could not find a way to the doctor's office, or to the local grocery store for want of taxis, buses or vans. They saw school children receiving less than adequate nutrition in the lunch programs; they saw small towns with no sewage disposal system, no running water, no sidewalks or street lights. They saw somewhat larger towns in which these services were available only to the central business district and to one or two elite neighborhoods. They saw poorly designed, poorly built, and poorly maintained houses in towns and small cities. They reflected on the fact that they

have for years been administering programs and delivering services under the most exasperating conditions and with monies woefully inadequate to serve the intended recipients. They realized that the rural areas of the country are being underfunded in every area because of regulation and formula.

Most importantly, they spoke to large numbers of the poor and elderly and discovered a curious mixture of apathy and rage. They discovered concerned individuals who were angry, discontented and confused; uninformed people who were abject, resigned and apathetic; and people whose knowledge and experience convinced them that their government was consciously setting out to disenfranchise, dislocate and discourage the poor in Rural America. They found great reservoirs of cynicism, doubt and frustration out in the territory.

They doubted what they saw. They questioned what they heard. They resolved to ask and to look and to listen once again. They determined to undertake the task of getting their people beyond the confines of anger, confusion and rage and into the arena of issues, priorities and solutions. They undertook the task of bring together a group of people from the rural areas of the county in order to seek their participation in formulating a response to the malaise afflicting the poor of Rural America. They were concerned that they might mistake the mood in their own territory for that of the country as a whole, and determined to offer a National perspective of poverty in America's rural and non-urban areas. They decided; to convene "A National Conversation on Rural Poverty."

The location in time was September of 1979. The location in space was Rapid City, South Dakota (one of those cities, unique to Region VIII, with a population of over 15,000). From its conception, the "Conversation" was intended to be just that: a "conversation." The lecturers threw away their notes; the trainers agreed to be trained; the leaders, to be led. The fundamental purpose was to converse with a wide spectrum of citizens, to listen to their opinions of programs and policies, and thereby improve them.

Somewhere in the neighborhood of 450 people attended "A National Conversation on Rural Poverty". They came from every region of the country. They came at great expense to themselves, at a critical moment in this country's development, to offer their views on how the relationship between the federal government and Rural America, might be improved. They had a lot to say.

The recommendations and resolutions formulated in Rapid City follow. These are being transmitted to agencies and organizations concerned with Rural Poverty: The Congressional Rural Caucus, the National Association of Community Action Agencies Executive Directors, the Rural Coalition, Rural America, the National Rural Center, the Transportation Research Board and to the National and Regional offices of the Community Services Administration.

It is the hope and belief of the Region VIII CAA Association that these resolutions will fall on listening ears, will be read by curious eyes, will be considered by sensitive policy makers, will be implemented to the fullest extent possible and will be part of the movement toward a true Rural Policy.

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# nutrition and the american food system

The Third Annual Conference on Nutrition and the American Food System met in Washington, D. C. on October 3 - 4, 1979. Sponsors of this unique event are the Community Nutrition Institute (consumer advocates), the Food Marketing Institute (industry), and Family Circle Magazine. Fifty anti-hunger advocates caucused the night before the conference began to develop the following recommendations to present to the industry representatives attending. Their statement and the CNI food system survey are reprinted with permission of the Community Nutrition Institute. They appeared in the CFNP Supplement (Community Food and Nutrition Program of the federal Community Services Administration) to the CNI Weekly Report on October 25, 1979.

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## Industry's Role in An Equitable Food System

(Presented to the Third Conference on Nutrition and the American Food System, October 3, 1979.)

As a group of anti-hunger advocates, low-income persons, consumers and representatives of community-based groups, we have come to the Third Conference on Nutrition and the American Food System to interact with the industry executives and government officials who have historically dominated this nation's food policymaking. We are here because we view this occasion as a unique opportunity not only to hear your views on the direction this country must take to achieve an optimum and equitable food system for all Americans, but also to share with you our own perspective.

Ours are concerns that affect each of us here today--you in the food industry and federal government as well as each of us at the cash registers.

Out of this shared concern, over 50 of us met last evening to develop not guidelines, but a set of actions involving industry leaders and all consumers, particularly the most disadvantaged. We strongly urge you to join us--but more importantly, to take the lead--in implementing each of these recommendations in the coming year.

1. A hard winter and skyrocketing energy costs will leave the poor and elderly as well as middle-income persons with a Hobson's choice between eating or heating. This will be exacerbated by inflated food costs and a continuing and deepening recession. Industry must join with consumers in demanding full funding for federal food and fuel assistance and in working actively with Congress and the Administration to win swift action.

2. Experience has shown that full funding alone will not put large numbers of the poor and other disadvantaged within reach of assistance. Industry can constructively use their resources and influence to publicize programs such as WIC, food stamps and child nutrition programs.

3. Industry should encourage retailers to more broadly participate in WIC and other food programs.

4. To reduce intimidation and inconveniencing of food stamp shoppers, training programs should be developed and implemented to sensitize food store employees to the problems and needs of these customers. In this regard industry must continue strong affirmative action hiring practices at all levels of the corporate structure.

5. Food bank and gleaning efforts offer an important supplement to the nutritional needs of low-income families. Industry can greatly boost these efforts by working for passage of broader federal legislation encouraging the donation and distribution of the billions of dollars in usable but unmarketable foods. Such donations already offer a substantial economic windfall for producers.

6. The flight of food retailers from inner city areas has left the poor with few shopping choices. This void is being filled by the creation of a growing number of community-based food cooperatives. But these groups need the expertise and assistance of food companies in long-range planning, financial and personnel management, and other areas. The corporate system can contribute its talent and resources.

7. Food retailers can join with city governments and community-based groups to bring supermarkets back to the inner city by linking up in mutual development ventures and encouraging special tax and other municipal incentives that have proven successful in several areas.

8. Low-income consumers have often found the most nutritious foods to be the highest-priced items. In order to promote optimum nutrition, industry should help make available a variety of inexpensive, quality foods which contribute to the sound nutrition principles being discussed at this meeting.

9. Food industry leaders can go on record as opposed to the regressive sales tax on food, which erodes the food-buying budgets of all consumers in nearly half of all the states.

10. The market should provide opportunities for smaller families like the elderly, single and single-parent households to purchase food in smaller quantities at more reasonable prices.

11. Industry should encourage local retailers to adopt innovative approaches to marketing to improve access to food through mobile markets, transportation to existing outlets for those who need it, stocking locally-produced foods, and support of local groups providing shopping services for seniors and others.

12. Industry should work toward more responsible packaging and advertising practices to help limit the unnecessary costs to consumers.

13. Retailers should encourage and institute consumer monitoring and advisory panels in all communities that accurately and effectively reflect the needs and opinions of all sectors of the community served. This could include checks and balances on unwarranted pricing practices, among other things.

14. 1979 is the International Year of the Child. The food industry has a responsibility to assess and appropriately modify their production and marketing of products aimed at children. Nutrition education must reach beyond consideration for increased sales to concern about the health and welfare of this very vulnerable segment of the population.

We ask you to respond here today to these recommendations and also to establish a mechanism for a continuing, responsive and effective effort in each of our communities. We believe our--and your--commitment to achieving these very crucial objectives will be measured next year, when we return to the Fourth Conference on Nutrition and the American Food System and recount our progress.

(Senate Nutrition Subcommittee Chairman George McGovern, D-S.D., inserted this statement in the October 11, 1979, Congressional Record.)

## Food System Issues Survey

The statement and recommendations prepared by over 50 low-income, consumer and other community interests from around the country appears to be a promising first step toward identifying and putting into effect an action agenda for making the food system more responsive to the poor.

Although those 50 persons represented a good cross-section, they--and we--don't pretend to hold the document as testament. Your suggestions and other input are needed. We hope that you will take the time to answer the following questions. Send responses to CFNP Report, CNI, 1146 19th St, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

● Do you feel that the statement presents recommendations which are positive, practical and attainable?

● Do you agree with the recommendations? Why?

● Which, if any, do you oppose? Why?

● Which, in your opinion, are the most important of these issues for anti-hunger advocates?

● Which issue or issues would you like to see CNI follow up on? In what way?

● Do you or does your group work on any of the issues? Which ones and how?

● Would you be willing to work with CNI and other anti-hunger advocates on organizing around these issues?

● Would you like to be kept informed of developments in these issues? Be part of a nationwide information and education network?

● Would you be willing to work in your community to organize low-income people and others around these food issues?

● CNI can provide support to your organization in addressing these and possibly other issues. Would you sponsor a workshop or meeting around these issues? Would you be willing to share information, ideas, or organizing techniques? Would you be willing to meet and work with food industry officials around these issues?

● Are you aware of any other groups or organizations that are working on these issues or would like to? Who?

● What other issues would you add to this list that you and other anti-hunger advocates could address to help low-income people obtain an adequate, nutritious and affordable diet?

● What type of anti-hunger work do you and your organization now conduct?

● Would your staffing and funding enable you to expand your activities?

Your name, address and telephone number are not required but would be helpful. Thanks.

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