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The Bellagio Declaration on the Environment

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THE BELLAGIO DECLARATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

As environmental policymakers, lawyers, economists, educators, and elected and appointed officials from the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, meeting in Bellagio, Italy from August 5 to August 9, 1991,

Reaffirming the fundamental right of people to live in a safe and healthful environment;

Recognizing that enduring prosperity requires the protection of health and safety as well as the integrity of natural systems;

Convinced that present threats to the environment require concerted actions of different governments throughout the world;

Persuaded that informal meetings of environmental experts can contribute to the attainment of the goals of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,

We reached a consensus on the following principles:

1. Governments should identify and implement ways in which economic development goals can be achieved consistent with a safe and healthful environment and with sound use of natural resources.
2. Environmental protection deserves distinct representation at the highest ministerial or cabinet level of government.
3. Each level of government should perform those tasks to which it is best suited for the protection of the environment, and should formulate and implement appropriate programs to accomplish those tasks.
4. Environmental policy should be integrated with land use and natural resource planning, regulation, and implementation, as well as with the policies of other government agencies whose actions affect the environment.
5. A free market, together with government measures that address its failures through prevention, correction, and consideration of environmental problems, is well-suited to provide the resources for achieving a safe and healthful environment.

6. Environmental goals should be achieved by an optimal combination of administrative controls and market mechanisms to comply with environmental standards in the most cost-effective manner and to encourage the development of environmentally superior technologies.
7. Public and private decisionmakers should recognize environmental management as among the highest priorities and establish policies for conducting operations in an environmentally sound manner.
8. Decisions over where to locate environmentally undesirable land uses should consider their impact on surrounding areas and strive for an equitable distribution of such uses throughout the region.
9. Governments should require periodic public reporting on the nature and quantities of pollutants released into the environment.
10. Governments should collect and maintain full and accurate environmental information necessary for the formulation and implementation of environmental policy, and citizens and public officials should have appropriate access to such information.
11. Citizens should have the right to participate in the government's environmental decisionmaking process.
12. Individual citizens and groups affected by an environmental decision and responsible government officials should be able to petition a court to interpret and enforce the environmental laws and to overturn actions taken in violation of such laws.
13. Public and private institutions should undertake educational programs designed to increase public understanding of environmental problems and to encourage public responsibility for their solution.
14. International standards should be developed and adopted for measuring and monitoring environmental quality, in order to facilitate coordination of national environmental activities.
15. To protect the environment and promote settlement of international disputes, countries should agree to resort to arbitration and, if appropriate, to an international environmental tribunal.

To advance the foregoing principles, we have agreed to meet from time to time and review progress in achieving their implementation.

August 8, 1991
Bellagio, Italy