

Forcing Change



Anticipating Agenda 21: Framework for Global Governance

By Carl Teichrib (www.forcingchange.org)

“Agenda 21, the action plan to implement the principles and agreements of Rio, is a blueprint for constructing the new world order called for at Rio. It is vital that people grasp this new vision of our future and understand how they can contribute to its realization.”

- Maurice Strong, Forward, *The Earth Summit's Agenda for Change*.¹

“With the end of the ideological conflict that dominated a generation of international affairs, a new world order, shaped by a new agenda, will emerge. If the physical degradation of the planet becomes the principal preoccupation of the global community, then environmental sustainability will become the organizing principle of this new order... For the first time since the emergence of the nation-state, all countries can unite around a common theme.”

- Lester R. Brown, speaking on the Rio Earth Summit.²



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Carl Teichrib, Editor.

“What’s old is new again.”

To some extent *Agenda 21* fits this mold. Emanating from the 1992 United Nations Rio Earth Summit, officially known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), concerns were raised by political researchers during the mid-to-late 1990s about the dangers posed by federal agencies looking to implement *Agenda 21* management principles, particularly as it related to property rights, energy and industry, and agriculture. Research articles were published, hearings took place, education campaigns were launched, and the topic was a talking point on some radio shows. Arguably, it wasn’t a mainstream issue - not in the sense of being a nationally recognized news story. Nevertheless, an energized effort to inform the public did make headway during that time.

Then came the “war on terror,” instantly becoming *the* international talking point. Paralleling this was the intensified battle over climate change. *Agenda 21*, it appeared to many, had faded into the background. Ironically, and not unknown to the research community, the Kyoto convention on climate change was launched through the Earth Summit process and was an extension of the *Agenda 21* concept. All of this said, researchers and environmental lobbyists understood the long term relevance of *Agenda 21*, and a back story political struggle continued between advocates of private property versus those pushing socialized management. In this sense *Agenda 21* never went “out of style,” although the general public was largely ignorant of the controversy.

Now, approximately 20 years after UNCED and the release of *Agenda 21*, it has once again become a political focal point, especially in the United States. Consider the following.

In 2012 the Republican Party passed a resolution opposing *Agenda 21*, and in January 2013 a Missouri House committee found itself with an *Agenda 21* ban proposal. In Oklahoma, two *Agenda 21* ban resolutions are on the table, and anti-*Agenda 21* legislation is before the Virginia House of Delegates. Educational meetings are springing up across the country as political researchers seek to inform the public about this critical issue.

On the other side of the coin is the fact that the Obama administration has put forward environmental and economic platforms that are reminiscent of *Agenda 21*, and has enhanced the

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federal funding of Local Governments for Sustainability, also known as ICLEI - a global *Agenda 21* support organization working with more than 600 jurisdictions in the United States. On another front, agri-industry giant Monsanto joined the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) on January 22, 2013. The WBCSD, established to draw global businesses into the Earth Summit framework, partners with more than 200 major corporations in the pursuit of *Agenda 21* sustainability concepts.

And last year's Rio+20 conference, meant to bolster the original 1992 UNCED package, helped reawaken the topic.

Today, right or wrong, *Agenda 21* is being dragged into an assortment of arguments, fueled in large part by the heated rhetoric of left-right pundits. This doesn't mean it's unimportant; *it is*, as it has already impacted national, state/provincial, and local management policies. But like so much else that can become emotionally charged, we tend to lose something in the noise.

That said, the purpose of this essay isn't to explore the text of *Agenda 21*. Many other researchers and writers have done this. Rather, we need to focus on what *Agenda 21* is, and what it was hoped to be. This second part represents an underlying story, revealing the heartbeat of Rio.

Revisiting Agenda 21

Agenda 21 is not a binding treaty. It does not have a legal and contractual mechanism in the same manner as multilateral treaties or conventions. However, this doesn't mean its benign. Far from it.

Instead of being a treaty with enforcement mechanisms, this cornerstone UNCED document places the emphasis on voluntary implementation. Each country that signed *Agenda 21* agreed to it as a *framework*, a structural instrument used by nations to shape their own domestic policies for a common "global good." In this sense it is a visioning blueprint meant to guide the planet's citizens into "a new co operative global partnership."³ *Agenda 21*, along with the other Rio agreements, act as a skeletal structure for global governance.

For those unfamiliar with global governance, it is a doctrine of pooled international cooperation based on governments *voluntarily* acting for the "general good" through an agreed framework.

This *governance* theme floated throughout the Earth Summit, and was reflected in the post-Rio environmental literature. Consider a 1994 document from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), a highly influential and government-founded policy organization based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (Technical note: Maurice Strong, the Secretary-General of UNCED, was an IISD board member during the 1990s).

"UNCED also holds a broader significance. The environmental issue was set up as a global issue in need for global action. There were demands to strengthen international law, which could make nations toe the line. Non governmental organizations (NGOs) had been forming global networks and were working on global campaigns.

These efforts at the global level directly contributed to building a sense of global identity, or global citizenship which would be the first step towards global governance."⁴



The global governance approach goes something like this:

- 1) Through the work of special interest groups (NGOs or “civil society actors”) largely funded by “social change” foundations, governments and the public become “educated” to an impending “global crisis.” Regardless if the crisis is real or perceived, it becomes a politically charged issue and a tool for *global transformation*. Maurice Strong, the godfather of *Agenda 21*, tells us; “Fundamental change almost always occurs in response to crisis or the perception of crisis.”⁵
- 2) The international community (UN agencies, regional bodies, etc), *already networked with these same foundations and special interest groups*, calls upon the world to “commit to action.” A global facilitator, usually the United Nations, brings “stakeholders” to the negotiating table; national governments, accredited non-governmental organizations, representatives from regional and global agencies, and significant business and financial players.
- 3) Brought together in a Global Summit, these stakeholders deliberate, make pronouncements, and engage in facilitated consensus building. The result: A “social contract” emerges in the form of a treaty, accord, convention, or framework document. Now, depending on how it was penned and the legal structures invoked, this new code may be a binding contract or a voluntarily accepted strategy document - an official reference point, which fits the description of *Agenda 21*.
- 4) With the Summit wrapped up and armed with this treaty or action plan, federal administrators then add their own “national flavor” to the “global change” mandate, and begin pressuring civic departments to implement the agenda; Regulations are written and enforced, new offices are birthed, endless rounds of policies are drafted, funding is unleashed for “support projects,” private government-to-government and government-to-industry associations pop up, lobbying and lawsuits sharpen the focus, information campaigns take place, and political leaders shamelessly engage in self-congratulation.
- 5) As the federal government swings toward “departmental implementation,” something similar takes place with state/provincial and local administrations. These jurisdictional entities, at times without understanding the backstory, are pushed on board through federal “sustainable development” funding grants, technical assistance, and regulatory mandates. Soon local governments mirror and shadow the federal directive. “Think globally, act locally” becomes realized. This is how broad economic, social, and environmental creeds birthed at a United Nations event in New York or Montreal or Rio - in the spirit of global cooperation - become the unseen driver for “local management practices,” in turn reflecting the global change agenda.

Mark Edward Vande Pol, a former *Agenda 21* planner for Santa Cruz Country, understands this global-to-local regulatory reality.

“You will never see it. You will never vote on it. No matter which path they use, the agencies can pen new regulations under threat of lawsuit and down the pipe it comes: enforceable administrative rules without legislation.”⁶

- 6) One more layer is needed, however, to complete the cycle of global governance. Each national government that agreed to the treaty or framework document will, on a prescribed basis, report back to a permanent UN body on the successes and challenges they have had in implementing it. High level reviews will be held, reports will be issued, and more promises made by national leaders to “pull the load” and “pay our fair share.” And behind the country reporting mechanism is a gaggle of incessantly nagging special interest groups, lawyers, and their own media spin-doctors.

This is “global governance” - the sovereignty we supposedly have as an independent nation, that is, our liberty to determine what works best for our own citizenry, is “voluntarily hijacked” as part of a planetary partnership for the global “general good.”

And this brings us back to *Agenda 21*. As a blueprint for what the world *should be*, it offered management guidance for practically every facet of life; consumption patterns and health care, calls on poverty reduction, energy and resource development, land use, air quality, biological diversity, human population levels, the role of women and youth, hazardous waste, mountain environments, desert environments, urban environments, science and technology, trade unions, agriculture and transportation, education and citizenship, capacity building and financial mechanisms, north-south technology transfers... the list goes on.

By signing *Agenda 21*, governments in the developed world committed to following a road map that would align domestic priorities with global aspirations. Funding too was a central part of this package, and the Western world was expected to bleed heavily in order to reach *Agenda* goals.

Speaking on this aspect, the International Development Research Centre wrote in their 1993 review of *Agenda 21*,

“...the huge sustainable development programs of *Agenda 21* will require... substantial new and additional financial resources... The UNCED Secretariat estimated that all of the listed *Agenda 21* programs needed US \$600 billion per year from 1993 to 2000 if they were properly implemented. That included US \$125 billion per year in technical and economic assistance on grant or concessional terms from developed countries...

...Ultimately, all delegations agreed to the concept of building a global partnership for sustainable development, for which funds would be provided, and that a package approach of combining existing resource flows with new and additional funds would be fundamental to the agreement.”⁷



Maurice Strong

But there was more. *Agenda 21* was certainly the keystone text, but four other documents were opened, and of these, two were binding agreements:

- 1) *The Convention on Biological Diversity*, which was used to justify the creation of limited human-use and no human-use biosphere reserves.
- 2) *The Framework Convention on Climate Change*, which formed the backdrop for the *Kyoto Protocol* and set in motion twenty-plus years of “climate change” programs and the spending of vast swaths of money.

These Earth Summit documents formed the backbone of the global sustainability agenda. And even if nations didn’t ratify a particular text - such as the case of the United States and the *Convention on Biological Diversity* - the spirit of the *Convention* was still applied domestically through partnerships between federal agencies and international environmental organizations. If you bought one part of the Earth Summit package, you worked to implement it all.

It was no surprise, therefore, that after the Rio conference a host of government sponsored “sustainable development” campaigns came into existence. Every federal and state/provincial department lathered themselves in the “holy waters” of “sustainability.” It became a mantra, a creed, a guiding light. It became a policy industry unto itself. Governments had turned green, and forests of reports were generated to prove this fact. In Canada, even the military jumped on the bandwagon, producing a series of “sustainable development” assessment documents titled *Environmentally Sustainable Defence Activities: A Sustainable Development Strategy for National Defence*. I’m sure a star was given for how many times the word “sustainable” could be used.

I had a *small taste* of this industry in the mid-1990s when I was asked to co-chair a pilot Economic Roundtable for my community. This Roundtable was an extension of the Manitoba Rural Development agency and was linked to a provincial government program known as the Manitoba Round Table on Environment and Economy, itself heavily connected to *Agenda 21* implementation goals. The idea was simple: Establish local committees of handpicked people who could brainstorm on projects reflective of sustainable development, and then seek to implement these ideas by presenting a united front to municipal governments. However, in a town of 800 people, where everyone knows each other - and most are respective of jurisdictional boundaries - our unelected committee chose to be “small-time,” limiting ourselves to a few low level “community beautification” projects. In a couple of years we closed shop.

But the push for adopting the *Agenda 21* blueprint was palpable in other locations. For example, Santa Cruz County was the first place in the US to adopt the United Nations Local Agenda 21 program. Thus, it became a proving ground of sorts for the creation of a locally administered and enforceable eco-bureaucracy. Here, the new green reality was expressed in a myriad of regulatory measures; prohibitive zoning requirements, set-asides and green spaces, extra fees and permitting stipulations, pre-determined public hearings, policies upon policies, inspections, fines and lawsuits.

As one who swam in this current, saw the dangers and began speaking out against the bureaucratic nonsense - which, by the way, guarantees economic and *environmental* failure - Mark Edward Vande Pol gives us a taste of how “sustainability” is plied against property owners.

“Local regulatory actions are usually funded by and under the direction of superceding regulatory authority. The policies are invoked one precedent at a time; the takings are accomplished one landowner at a time to be replicated elsewhere. Their technical premises are nearly always based upon how local conditions serve an agenda that is set at a higher level. Thus, all environmental politics ARE local.”⁸

Other cities and counties followed the lead of Santa Cruz. Today, hundreds of jurisdictions have adopted sustainable development action plans, many linked with the governmental association known as ICLEI. As local administrators tailor the agenda to fit their own community, residents and businesses often find themselves faced with the uneasy feeling of being *managed*.

Ultimately local authorities are tasked with implementing sustainable development mandates, but we need to remember that the initiative first emerged through federal commitments.

In the United States, *Agenda 21* was expanded through the President’s Council on Sustainable Development (PCSD), established under Bill Clinton “to begin translating the vision of *Agenda 21* into U.S. action.”⁹ The PCSD, which operated until 1999, worked to frame national priorities in this light, including population stabilization “in the United States and the world,”¹⁰ transportation and energy planning, “sustainable agriculture,” and “education for sustainability.” *Agenda 21* was further

advanced by the US Environmental Protection Agency, State Department, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, Department of Housing, and the Department of the Interior.

In my country, Canada, *Agenda 21* and the other Rio commitments were quickly attached to our own federal departments and branches; Environment Canada, External Affairs/Foreign Affairs, Canadian Parks Service/Parks Canada, Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Department of Natural Resources. The Government of Canada used the UNCED as a place marker for sustainability targets.

Remember I was telling you a reporting mechanism existed to bring global governance full circle? Canada's 1996 report to the UN on its work in implementing sustainable development was revealing. Here, Canada admitted to fostering "population levels consistent with sustainable development," including "direct support for population programming through... the International Planned Parenthood Federation."¹¹ Canada also expressed interest in the "establishment of an international financial and economic system that is conducive to sustainable development," and that this reformed global financial regime would "be a cornerstone" in the effort "to implement Agenda 21."¹² Domestic reform was necessary too.

"Environmental citizenship means changing personal decisions and broadening understanding of sustainable development issues... This clearly means reducing consumption by Canadians, which will require attitudinal and behavioural change..."¹³

How would this happen? Education was on top of the list. But more than that, the report admitted to financial experiments in the effort to re-orient personal behavior.

"Reducing personal and household consumption is a greater challenge, particularly in the area of personal transportation. A variety of programs now exist to help consumers understand the environmental impacts of their consumption decisions and to make choices that are better for the environment. *Experiments in the pricing of goods and services are part of this process.*" (italics added)¹⁴

Regional and multinational environmental programs were also explored, carrying the *Agenda 21* framework across North American boundaries. Here are two brief, historical examples.

- The US-Mexico Border XXI Program was a binational project that sought to address environmental and social concerns along the US-Mexico border. Border XXI was openly tied to *Agenda 21*, using it as the setting to entrench its mandate.¹⁵
- The Great Plains Partnership (GPP) was an experimental program that linked 13 Great Plains states, three Canadian prairie provinces, and a sliver of northern Mexico into a cooperative system of economic and environmental planning for a "sustainable future." It was launched with the support of many federal, state/provincial, and local agencies - and had the backing of the Western Governors' Association. GPP symposium papers and research documents connected the project to *Agenda 21*. As one background document noted, "it has become clear that the implementation of *Agenda 21*, the 'blueprint' of sustainable development at the Rio Earth Summit, must be actively pursued on the local level."¹⁶

From local to national to regional: Each level of jurisdiction was to play its part in what Maurice Strong dubbed, "the new world order called for at Rio."

What Could Have Been

Like all major UN conferences, the 1992 Rio Earth Summit was preceded by a host of preparatory meetings and “stakeholder” forums. In the years leading up to UNCED, dozens of such events filled the global calendar - each spitting out reams of reports and declarations.

One event, however, deserves special note: the 1990 World Environment Energy and Economic Conference (WEEEC). This gathering is now almost entirely forgotten, yet we need to examine what transpired, for the WEEEC demonstrated “what could have been,” and what was *hoped for* by so many; ratcheting global governance up to the level of world government.

The WEEEC, also known as World '90, was sponsored by the Government of Manitoba, UNESCO,¹⁷ and the International Council of Associations for Science Education. Maurice Strong was the patron of WEEEC. Colin N. Power, Assistant Director of UNESCO, attended the event and wrote the Preface to its final report. Gary Filmon, then Premier of Manitoba (equivalent to a US state governor) gave his public endorsement, as did Glen Cummings, then Minister of Environment for Manitoba. Numerous professors and experts from Canada, the US, and Europe participated. In fact, more than 3000 delegates from around the world attended, including representatives from government and special interest groups.

In other words, this event wasn't small time.

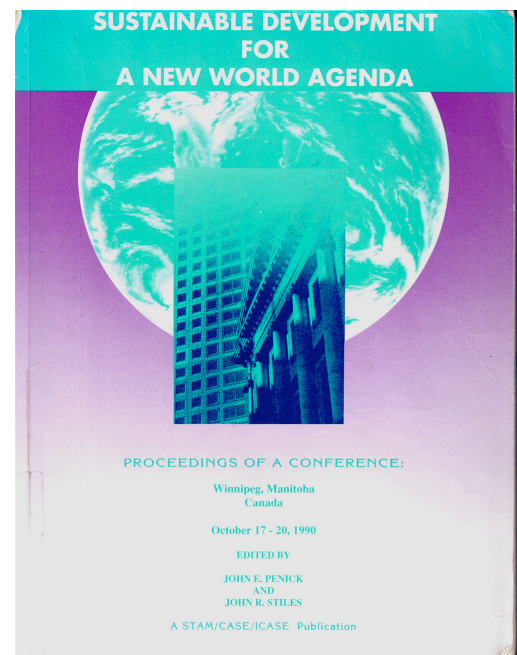
Years later I talked with Glen Cummings, who was my provincial representative to the Manitoba Legislature, and asked him about World '90. He explained that while the event was successful, it didn't translate into workable actions.

I'm so thankful, I thought to myself.

The purpose of WEEEC was clear: Influence the upcoming Earth Summit. And World 90's theme was telling; “Sustainable Development Strategies and the New World Order.”¹⁸ The title of its final report mirrored this theme: *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda*.

Chapter two chilled me: “Towards A Global Green Constitution.”

“The issues are not about *if* a global politics is necessary. The question is *how* do we achieve binding agreements in Law complete with effective programs for applying sanctions against non-compliance that would oblige each nation, regardless of size, to abide by a set of principles that are required to guarantee the survival of life on this earth. Perhaps we will find that there is no other alternative to a system of rigid controls that some would equate to a police state. Unfortunately, in order to save the planet from biocide, there have to be very powerful constraints from doing the ‘wrong’ things. The constraints must transcend national boundaries, be world-around and enforceable. There would be a need for an agency for preventing eco-vandals from acting unilaterally.”¹⁹



This regime, the report laid out, would be equipped with a global environmental enforcement arm. The chapter explained; “Enforcement agencies would need the power to act without being invited by the offending nation.” Non-compliance would invite sanctions, but “if sanctions do not work, then physical occupation and the installation of a World Trusteeship would be imposed upon the offending nations.”

The heart of Chapter 2 was the idea of a “Global Green Constitution,” an ethical and legal contract for global citizenship.

“The Constitution would need to be the world-around political expression of a radical new value system; values that ensure a sustainable society... governments would come to power that could most effectively formulate national policy implications of a Global Green Constitution.

The United Nations would be a signator and take responsibility for the global commons...

...Nation states would each be signators and take responsibility for the impacts of industrial and commercial activities that occur within territorial boundaries. A Global Environmental Congress having Constitutional authority and responsibility would inspect and determine the degree of compliance of each signator nation.”²⁰

Under the subheading of “Social Justice,” it was explained that the new ethic would enshrine the “principle of global economic equality” through a system of “Energy Accounting” with engineered, pre-determined amounts of energy allocated to each human being. Resources such as oil have peaked, it was said, and an innovative green accounting system was needed for the planet – roughly paralleling what the Technocracy movement from the 1930s advocated.²¹ Moreover, if we want to make this architecture of “Social Justice” efficient and feasible, then a “global policy of one child per family” would have to be implemented.²² Protecting the planet was paramount; de-humanized wilderness zones would have to be established, after all, “it is the human population that needs management, not wildlife.”²³ And tolerance would be imposed as a “Human Right,”

“Popular or not, green governments will oppose any culture if it proves to be prejudicial by reasons of gender, age, colour, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, mental or physical condition, marital status, family composition, source of income, political belief, nationality, language preference, or place of origin.”²⁴

Chapter 2 also placed a heavy emphasis on educating children: “A massive and persuasive educational effort is required to develop a global perspective among the people of each nation state. Each nation’s degree of dedication to educating the people would be the first indication of green government.”²⁵

Other parts of the report echoed the importance of education; “Curriculum needs to emphasize values education, incorporating – on a need to know basis – knowledge, conceptual learning and skills.”

The task of educators would thus have to be re-configured; “The role of the teacher will inevitably have to change. They will become more involved in facilitating changes of attitudes and guiding students to gain values...”²⁶

Here was an introduction to the concept of One World, fashioned as a coercive-styled global government operating under the pretext of stemming a planetary environmental breakdown, complete with a Technocracy-oriented green-energy economic order, wealth redistribution piggy backed on Social Justice,²⁷ enforced political correctness under the guise of “human rights,” and the modification of beliefs and values to fit this new age.

But as noted previously, the far reaching world government dream of the WEEEC - as laid out in chapter 2 - didn’t take shape at the Rio Earth Summit. Granted, we can discern elements of this “global green” regime lurking in the subtext of UNCED - after all, the Forward to the World ’90 document puts the connection into perspective; “We must learn to accept the fact that environmental considerations are part of a unified management of our planet.”²⁸

Not only did the WEEEC “world government” goal not come to fruition, I doubt that World ’90 participants expected something this dangerous to even be considered at the Rio event. Sure, some special interest groups and influential figureheads would have been hopeful, but experienced politicians take a more pragmatic perspective.

So what was the point of introducing such a far-reaching plan? Simple: It embedded the progressive cause of global governance by providing a wall upon which to bounce ideas. A green “world government” of this proportion wasn’t going to emerge from Rio, but now *global governance* - the voluntary relinquishment of a proportional amount of national sovereignty and a change in domestic priorities for a “greater good” - seemed reasonable and responsible in comparison. In other words, it gave a backdrop upon which to hang more realistic concepts.

It was also a psychological driver meant to advance the bigger vision of “world government.”

By opening the idea of supra-national management, it allowed participants to “consider futures,” reflecting the aspiration of *what could be* as shapers of society. It was a “visioneering” exercise that allowed participants to “feel” their future and become comfortable with it.²⁹

For those attendees of the WEEEC who were oriented to “world government,” and Maurice Strong himself has flirted in this camp,³⁰ the prospect of an “international authority” would have been exciting to hear at such a prestigious venue. Yet, even to men like Strong, the UNCED Secretary-General, who is both a visionary and pragmatist, the realization of an authoritative and enforceable “global green constitution” was impracticable for Rio.

The very fact that World ’90, as an important prequel to the Earth Summit, was willing to contemplate such an idea is troubling. Furthermore, World ’90 wasn’t the only event that witnessed elevated “new world order” language. Similar talk, albeit less blatant in its pronouncements, permeated the run-up to Rio. Special interest groups from every corner screamed for “international law,” global “environmental courts,” and a redrawn world financial system.

Not surprisingly, after the Earth Summit ended, many special interest groups were upset by the fact that sweeping institutional changes didn’t happen - at least not to the measure they were anticipating. Instead of the United Nations emerging as the final global enforcement regime for sustainable development, nations committed to implement *Agenda 21* the way they saw fit. Of course, this national angle doesn’t negate *Agenda 21* - it just puts it into the context of already existing powers and administrations, each equipped with an indwelling battery or regulatory regimes and enforcement agencies.

National, state/provincial, and local governments would do the bidding of global strategists.

Conclusion

The Rio Earth Summit and *Agenda 21* did provide the framework for global governance, and it re-set domestic and international priorities for the post-Cold War era. This is the legacy of *Agenda 21*: It provided the justification for governments to manage resources and populations in the name of sustainable development.

This puts *Agenda 21* into perspective. It also implies that federal law makers, especially in the Western world, will handle sustainable development goals in a similar fashion. This indeed is the case. At the same time, its “on-the-ground” implementation still boils down to action at the local level. Here things can become murky, for county/municipal administrators *might* or *may not* understand how local policies fit with *Agenda 21*. And often they don’t grasp this connection, as the lineage can become blurred in a myriad of paperwork shuffles and administrative changes. Moreover, just because a local county/municipality uses the words “sustainable development,” doesn’t mean the county is directly pursuing *Agenda 21* goals. It might be, but this is not necessarily the case: Keep in mind that since this term was introduced by *higher jurisdictions* during the 1990s, it has since become a *general trend*.

The bottom line: Don’t toss around unproven accusations of *Agenda 21* or engage in knee-jerk reactions to what might, or may not be, *Agenda 21* related issues. The reason I’m voicing this is because, as the political rhetoric heats up, people tend to say or do things that lower the effectiveness of their message - especially when operating with less than established facts. In other words, do some serious homework first and be tactful in your approach.

Moreover, if you’re concerned about this issue in your jurisdiction, particularly over land planning, take the time to inform yourself about the Rio process - especially in how it was pushed by your federal and state/provincial authorities. Then, armed with this background data, you can begin to piece together how this ties-in or *doesn’t* within your particular situation. This may require multiple trips to a law library or state/provincial archives. But do your homework! If there is a direct and documentable lineage, then you know where your local planning measures spin from, and you can start formulating a meaningful response.

But as I caution against overemphasizing *Agenda 21*, making it into a catch-all boogiemán, a reverse mistake can be made; *to not take it seriously*. Remember, the Rio Earth Summit and *Agenda 21* were purposely designed as catalysts for global governance and total transformation. This is not a “conspiracy theory,” political fantasy, or urban legend. It was the stated goal of the UNCED Secretary-General and almost the entire entourage of government delegates. It was also the desire of thousands of representatives from the NGO community, who, organized by Maurice Strong’s wife, Hanna, envisioned a far more radical outcome.

In this respect one more point needs to be made. The Rio Earth Summit entrenched a new cultural model whereby earth-loyalties takes precedence, and this meme rapidly spread into schools, churches, the media industry, and other institutions. Today we



see the result of this across the board, for Rio set in motion the largest green propaganda industry the world has ever seen. It re-energized Earth Day, it placed the green agenda in the minds of countless youth, it invigorated a sense of global citizenship.

During the final hours of the 1992 Earth Summit, then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali closed with these words,

“I should like to conclude by saying that the spirit of Rio must create a new form of good citizenship. After loving his neighbour as the Bible required him to, post-Rio man must also love the world, including the flowers, birds and trees – every part of that natural environment that we are constantly destroying.

Over and above the moral contract with God, over and above the social contract concluded with men, we must now conclude an ethical and political contract with nature, with this Earth to which we owe our very existence and which gives us life.

To the ancients, the Nile was a god to be venerated, as was the Rhine, an infinite source of European myths, or the Amazonian forest, the mother of forests. Throughout the world, nature was the abode of the divinities that gave the forest, the desert or the mountains a personality which commanded worship and respect. The Earth had a soul. To find that soul again, to give it new life, that is the essence of Rio.”³¹



Boutros Boutros-Ghali

At the risk of a small rabbit trail, it must be noted that this post-Rio “reality” was understood by Maurice Strong. Together with Mikhail Gorbachev and Steven Rockefeller, they took the UNCED experience - which included an *Earth Charter* component - and used this as a midwife to birth the *Earth Charter*, a green *ethical* constitution for the planet.

Speaking to the Rio-linked *Earth Charter*, Strong wrote that, “Collective behavior tends to change private behaviour.”³² Steven Rockefeller recognized it as “one way of promoting an ecological and social transformation of society.”³³ Gorbachev called it “a kind of Ten Commandments”³⁴ and proclaimed,

“In its essence the *Earth Charter* shifts the focus to people on the Earth, their responsibilities, their morals and spirituality, their ways of consumption. To save humankind and all future generations, we must save the Earth. By saving the Earth, humankind saves himself; It is that easy to understand!”³⁵

This is identical to the base-flavor of *Agenda 21*, because it was built on that foundation.

Others too picked up on the new ethics of the post-Rio environment. As the International Institute for Sustainable Development reminds us,

“We have to completely revise our western understanding of what it is to be an

inhabitant of the planet Earth, our human story and the western story...

...We must pass from a human-centred to an earth-centred sense of reality and value. We must now recognize the larger earth community, and not the human community, as normative as regards [to] reality and value."³⁶

In closing, consider the following from the United Nations Environmental Programme publication, *Ethics and Agenda 21*,

"Let us by all means think globally and act locally. But let us also think locally as well as globally, and try to tune our global and local thinking as the several notes of a single and common chord."³⁷

That's *Agenda 21* - you will assimilate in service to the Earth.

Heaven help us. **FC**

Carl Teichrib is editor of *Forcing Change* (www.forcingchange.org) and a frequent radio talk show guest.

Endnotes

¹ Maurice Strong, Forward, *The Earth Summit's Agenda For Change* - as reprinted by the International Institute for Sustainable Development website; www.iisd.org/rio+5/agenda/foreword.htm.

² Lester R. Brown, "The New World Order" - also titled, "A New Agenda for International Relations?" *Earth Summit: Setting the Global Agenda for the 21st Century*, EDIT File 18, document 32. Originally printed as "The New World Order" by WorldWatch Institute.

³ *Guide to Agenda 21* (Ottawa, ON: International Development Research Centre, 1993), p.7.

⁴ *Youth Sourcebook on Sustainable Development* (Winnipeg, MB: International Institute on Sustainable Development, 1994), p.63. Earth Council, a post-Rio organization started by Maurice Strong, partnered in this publication.

⁵ Maurice Strong, *Where on Earth are We Going?* (Toronto, ON: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), p.28.

⁶ Mark Edward Vande Pol, *Natural Process: That Environmental Laws May Serve the Laws of Nature* (Redwood Estates, CA: Wildergarten Press, 2001), p.317.

⁷ *Guide to Agenda 21* (Ottawa, ON: International Development Research Centre, 1993), pp.96-97.

⁸ Mark Edward Vande Pol, *Natural Process: That Environmental Laws May Serve the Laws of Nature* (Redwood Estates, CA: Wildergarten Press, 2001), p.44. Capitals in original.

⁹ President's Council on Sustainable Development, *Population and Consumption: Task Force Report* (Washington, DC. 1996), p.1.

¹⁰ President's Council on Sustainable Development, *Sustainable America: A New Consensus* (February 1996), p.21. Also see the PCSD report, *Population and Consumption: Task Force Report*.

¹¹ *Report of Canada to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development* (Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada, 1996), p.38.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p.16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁵ *US-Mexico Border XXI Program: Framework Document* (Washington DC: United States Environmental Protection Agency, 1996), p.1.2.

¹⁶ Tammy Hays and Sandy Wolfe, "Community-based Decision Making and Collaborative Policy Development Strategies," *Planning for a Sustainable Future: The Case of the North American Great Plains - Proceedings of a Symposium* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska, Department of Agricultural Meteorology, 1995), Part IV, Showcase Abstracts.

¹⁷ UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

¹⁸ The conference took place October 17-20, 1990. The final report was titled *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda*, a statement slightly toned-down from the official theme.

¹⁹ Jim Bohlen, "Towards A Global Green Constitution," *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda* (ICASE/STAM/CASE/ Government of Manitoba, 1990), p.15.

²⁰ For "world trusteeship," see page 15, for "radical new value system" see page 16.

²¹ Technocracy wanted to replace the price/money system with a form of energy accounting.

²² Jim Bohlen, "Towards A Global Green Constitution," *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda*, see pages 11- 13.

²³ Ibid., p.14 – under the section, "Environmental Protection."

²⁴ Ibid., p.11 – under the section "Social Justice" and sub-title, "Human Rights."

²⁵ Ibid., p.16.

²⁶ Dennis Chisman and Jack Holbrook, "The Future Direction of Sustainable Development in the Curriculum," *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda*, see pages 235 and 237.

²⁷ See *Forcing Change*, Vol. 4, Iss. 9, for an historic review of Social Justice, (www.forcingchange.org).

²⁸ Evhan Uzwysyn, "Forward," *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda*, p.vi.

²⁹ "Visioneering" allows the participant to take ownership of the idea, and feel like he/she is actually guiding the process of human development. For an interesting fictional book on the role and importance of imagination in the quest for a New Age, see Desmond E. Berghofer, *The Visioneers: A Courage Story About Belief in the Future* (Vancouver, BC: Creative Learning International Press, 1992). Berghofer was the Assistant Deputy Minister of Advanced Education in the Government of Alberta, and a long-time participant in UNESCO events.

³⁰ Maurice Strong was the 1973 recipient of the World Federalist Movement of Canada "World Peace Award." I also met Mr. Strong in 1999 at a World Federalist Association meeting in Dallas, TX. Here, he gave a presentation on global governance and United Nations reform.

³¹ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, closing remarks at UNCED, *Report on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development*, see Annex III: Closing Statements. A/CONF.151.26 (Volume IV).

³² Maurice Strong, *Where on Earth Are We Going?* (Toronto, ON: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), p.333.

³³ Steven Rockefeller, "The Earth Charter and Human Rights," *Human Rights, Environmental Law and the Earth Charter* (Cambridge, MA: Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, 1998), p.23.

³⁴ Mikhail Gorbachev, "Interview," Los Angeles Times, posted on Green Cross International (www.gci.ch/GreenCrossFamily/gorby/newspeeches/interviews/laTimes.html), accessed March 20, 1998.

³⁵ Mikhail Gorbachev, "The Earth Charter," Speech at Rio+5 Forum, March 18, 1997, Green Cross International (www.gci.ch/GreenCrossFamily/gorby/newspeeches/speeches/speech18.3.97.html), accessed March 20, 1998.

³⁶ Budd Hall and Edmund Sullivan, "Transformative Education and Environmental Action in the Ecozoic Era," *Empowerment for Sustainable Development* (Winnipeg, MB: International Institute for Sustainable Development, 1995), pp.102-103.

³⁷ J. Baird Callicott, "Toward a Global Environmental Ethic," *Ethics and Agenda 21: Moral Implications of a Global Consensus* (New York, NY: UNEP, 1994), p.12.

Teichrib Life

From the Editor: Many readers of *Forcing Change* don't know myself outside of the context of these pages. Recognizing this, I thought it would be fun to let you into our lives a little more. So I thought, "post some pictures!" Here are four shots showing another side to our life.

Wouldn't trade living in the country for all the concrete in Manhattan!

1. We currently rent a small farm house in a very rural part of Manitoba. The picture is two years old, but it looks no different today. Winters are long and can be brutally cold!
2. Occasionally I'll hire myself out to local farmers. My wife took this photo when she brought lunch to the field (no, it's not my tractor - I'm hired as an operator).
3. My daughter, who was nine or ten in the picture (4 or 5 years ago), was driving the truck. We're dumping bales used as a wind break around the house during winter.
4. Tearing down the old barn on my Dad's farm, 2009. Yes, I fell off and got banged up, but we got the barn tore down!



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