



STOCKHOLM 1972 REVISITED

**The United Nations Conference
on the Human Environment**

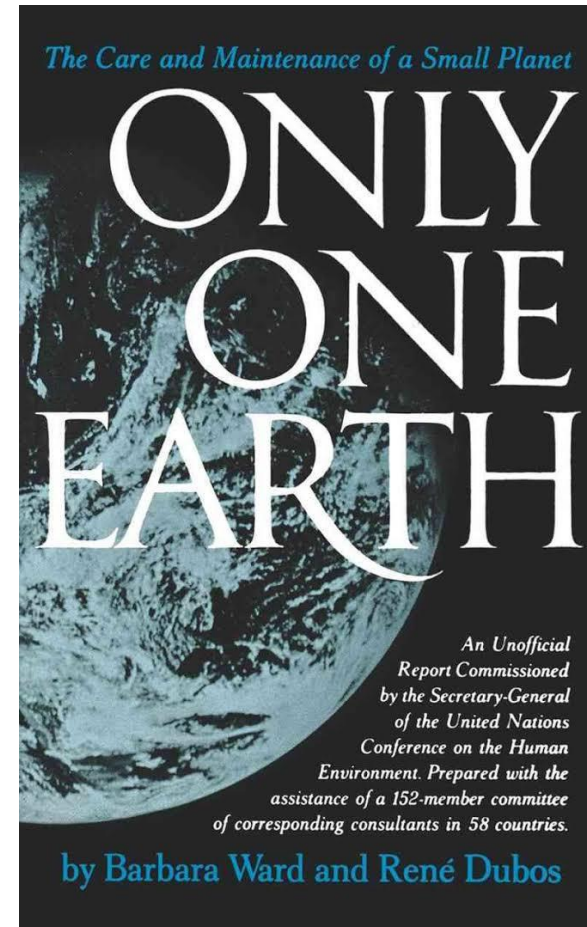
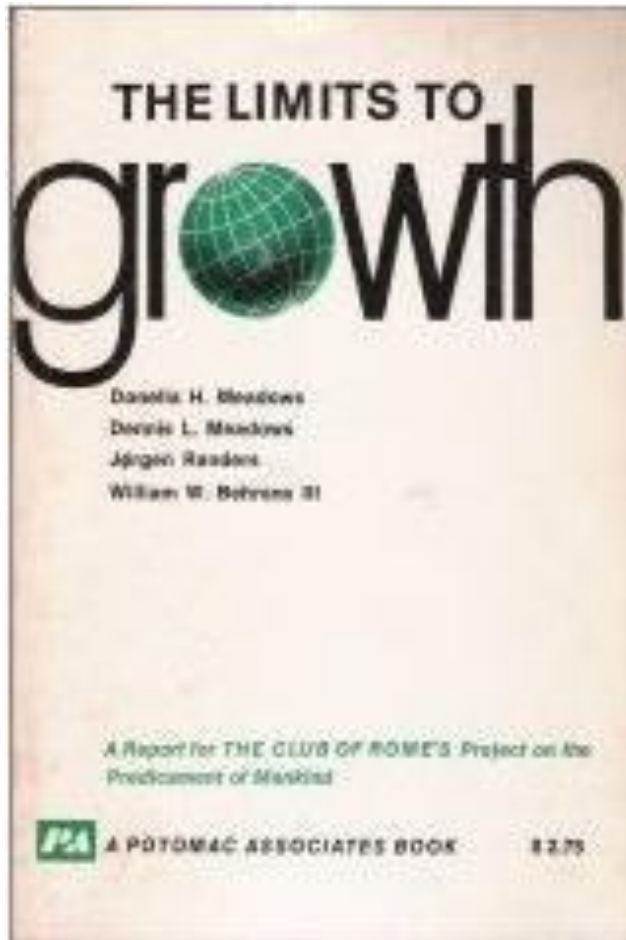
Only One Earth

“An Alarm Clock for the World”

BACKGROUND TO THE CONFERENCE

- **1962 - Rachel Carson – Silent Spring** – about the indiscriminate use of pesticides.
- **1968 - UN General Assembly calls for the UN Conference on the Human Environment** with the aim of producing an International consensus on ways of preserving and improving the earth’s environment **“for this and future generations”**.
- **1968 - Led by Dr. Aurelio Peccei**, 30 individuals from 10 countries met to discuss a subject of staggering scope - the present and future predicament of man. Led to the **formation of the Club of Rome and the publication in 1972 of “The Limits to Growth”**.
- **1968-1972 - Maurice Strong** guides preparatory work for conference with 27 nation preparatory committee & develops: **The Draft Declaration on the Human Environment** and **An Action Plan for the Human Environment**

The Predicament of Mankind & The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet



What was the Stockholm Conference?



- ❑ This meeting is also commonly referred to as *The Stockholm Conference*
- ❑ The meeting took place in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5th to June 16th 1972.
- ❑ The conference addressed the following issues which were intended for the enhancement and preservation of the natural environment:
 - ❑ A plan for environmental action
 - ❑ Recommendations for international actions
 - ❑ Educational, Informational, Social, and Cultural ties to the environmental issue

My Road to Stockholm

- 1959-63 – Waterloo Engineering Co-op Work terms at P&G in Hamilton - **developed environmental awareness and concern!**
- 1964 - Joined P&G in R&D Division and **also began long term association with the YMCA** – President of Burlington Y, Member of Metro Hamilton Y Board, and Regional VP for National Council of YMCAs of Canada
- 1968 - Resigned from P&G & **joined IBM** in Hamilton
- Early 1972 - **Maurice Strong** who was Past-President of the Canadian YMCA and **Secretary General of the Conference** wanted a YMCA delegation in Stockholm
- **IBM**, at the request of National YMCA President , **sponsored me to the Stockholm Conference!**

Why a YMCA Delegation in Stockholm?

- **UN Charter** details ways and means of **cooperation** between UN system and NGOs,
- Resulted in encouragement of NGOs to send delegations to Stockholm to contribute to the discussions,
- **Centre for International Management Studies (CIMS)** of the YMCA together with the network of YMCA's in 86 countries around the world and the encouragement of Mr. Strong decided to respond with an International Delegation that would **meet at Scanticon in Denmark** for 4 days to prepare.

Scanticon – The Preparation for Stockholm

- **25 YMCA staff member and industrial representatives from Canada, USA, and Switzerland met for 4 days with the following objectives:**
 1. To **review the planned program** for Stockholm and the material available in order to **better understand the environmental problem,**
 2. To **get acquainted** with the backgrounds and interests of each other,
 3. To **identify resources** within our delegation that could be helpful to our participation as an NGO in Stockholm.

Six Major Areas Addressed in Stockholm

- 1. Planning and management of human settlements for environmental quality,**
- 2. Environmental aspects of natural resource management,**
- 3. Identification and control of pollutants and nuisances of broad international significance,**
- 4. Educational, informational, social and cultural aspects of environmental problems,**
- 5. Development and the environment,**
- 6. Institutional arrangements and the Declaration on the Human Environment.**

Conference Opened with Ecumenical Service at the beautiful Stockholm Cathedral

- **Mrs Maurice Strong on behalf of her husband:**

“We are now producing more changes in one generation in the natural systems on which our life and well-being – our humanity – depend than in the whole of our previous history – creating risks which we still cannot assess. We know, too, there is literal truth to the words of the poet that to touch a flower is to stir a star. And knowing it, demands a new view of the cause and effect relationships of human action – and reaction – in every sphere. Modern technological society is forcing us to come to grips with ancient religious truths. We can now lay to rest forever the fallacy that unrestrained pursuit of private greed will serve the larger interests of society as a whole.”

THE ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

The “**brain child**” of **Maurice Strong** to allow grassroots input to the Conference

- **Objectives:**

1. To stimulate discussions on environmental problems in order to promote a deeper and wider understanding of these problems,
2. To uncover the causes behind the environmental crisis, with priority given to socio-economic factors,
3. To mobilized as broad as possible a front against environmental degradation as well as to make a concerted effort to restore already ruined or threatened environments.

Indira Gandhi of India Addresses the Conference



YMCA Delegation Evening Debriefings

- At 9 each evening we met in our Grand Hotel office to share experiences, listen to invited visitors and plan for the next day:
 - **Dr. Margaret Mead, Anthropologist**
 - **Lady Barbara Ward Jackson, Economist**
 - **Christian Herter, Jr., U.S. Delegation**
 - **Mr. Taylor Ostrander & Mr. Walter Hill, US Chamber of Commerce**
 - **Mr. John Lambert, Editor “Forum”**
 - **Mr. Paolo Soleri – Italy – Internationally known Town Planner**

What Did NGO Activities Accomplish?

- **4,000 people** from over **155 organizations** discussed problems the world is facing,
- **People** from **industrialized nations** and **developing countries** began to understand each other and think in trans-national terms,
- **Recognition** that a **single act by a single nation** will have **repercussions around the world**,
- **Formal & informal communications networks established.**

Role of the Canadian Government in Stockholm

In addition to **participation of Maurice Strong as Secretary General**, the **Canadian Government played a significant part** and held daily press briefings regarding what was happening within the U.N. Conference itself:

- Canada promoted the concepts that **“all natural resources which are renewable should be maintained for optimum sustainable yield”**,
- Canada proposed an **International Register of Clean Rivers** that was adopted by the Conference,
- Canada **mediated the differences between the Chinese and the United States** in order for the Conference to approve the **“Declaration on the Human Environment”**.

Post Stockholm Developments

- **1972** - Founding of **United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)** in Nairobi, with Maurice Strong as first Executive Director,
- **1987** – Publication of **“Our Common Future”** by **World Commission on Environment and Development – “Sustainable Development”** defined as “ensuring that development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”,
- **1992 – UN Conference on Environment & Development “Earth Summit”** in Rio: produced Agreement on Convention on Climate Change and a process to produce Convention on Desertification as well as Agenda 21,
- **1992-2020** – UNEP Continues to operate from its base in Nairobi.

Personal Impact of Stockholm Experience

- It changed my life! – Zero population growth was an overriding message from Stockholm. **We had 2 children instead of 4!**
- From 1972 to 1980, in **Hamilton, Sarnia, and Toronto**, volunteered with the YMCA including environmental initiatives. In 1980 we moved to Ottawa.
- Took early retirement in 1992 from IBM to pursue environmental interests: **attended Globe '92 in Vancouver** but did not get to Rio,
- 1992 - Established small environmental consulting practice **“Sustainable Strategies”** – variety of projects for Industry Canada, Environment Canada, City of Ottawa
- 1992- 2020 - **Volunteer leadership of, and participation in, a variety of environmental initiatives in Ottawa, Cambridge and Waterloo.**

THE EARTHBOUND REPORT

Jeremy Williams

State of the World

