

International Environmental Negotiation: The Case for a South Secretariat

by

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*There is nothing more difficult to carry out,
nor more doubtful of success,
nor more dangerous to handle,
than to initiate a new order of things.*

— NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI (1469-1527)

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Glossary

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CARICOM	Caribbean Community and Common Market
CIEC	Conference on International Economic Cooperation
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CSD	[UN] Commission on Sustainable Development
ECLA	[UN] Economic Commission for Latin America
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
Euratom	European Atomic Energy Community
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
G77	Group of 77
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NAM	Nonaligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
NICs	Newly Industrialized Countries
NIEO	New International Economic Order
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OEEC	Organization of European Economic Cooperation
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
RAMSAR	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance <i>(it is called the Ramsar Convention because it was signed in Ramsar, Iran)</i>
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SELA	Latin American Economic System
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCHE	United Nations Conference on the Human Environment
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

Introduction

Towards A New North-South Dialogue

*When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold
Colder thy kiss ...
Lord Byron (1788-1824)*

Ours is a time of redefinition of the established world order. On the one hand, the 'end of history' is being proclaimed (Fukuyama, 1989, 1992).¹ On the other, a 'clash of civilizations' is being predicted (Huntington, 1993).² In the midst, the issues, the alliances, the coalitions, and the institutions that had dominated international dialogue in the last half-century are undergoing fundamental change. The collapse of cold war tensions has allowed other issues to take center-stage; issues such as international trade, economic development, and environmental quality.

The upheaval in the geo-strategic landscape has rendered alliances from another era defunct; all across Africa, Latin America, and Asia regimes that never had real support at home find themselves deserted by the superpowers that had long sponsored and perpetuated their rule. Coalitions whose very rationale had been the ideological divide between East and West, toil to adjust to a world whose fault-lines have shifted; some like the Warsaw Pact have crumbled, others like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) struggle to seek a new mandate and even new partners, while yet others like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) turn their attention inwards as the battles move from being ideological to economic and the tensions are not as much with foes outside as between friends within. International institutions—no longer required to serve as sparring grounds for cold war politics—seek an expanded mandate, demand new powers; the World Bank with its gospel of structural adjustment, the United Nations in its role as global policeman.

It is within the context of this changing world order that the re-emergence of the South as an “alliance of the powerless” needs to be understood (Williams, 1993: 9). Many have been tempted to write premature obituaries for the South. “The ‘Third World’ Is Dead” proclaims the *New York Times* (Crossette, 1994: s.4, p.1). If the North was merely another name for the West, and now there is no East, then how can there still be a South? Better still, if there is no longer a ‘Second’ world, how can there be a ‘Third’? For those who remain fixated on notions that define the ‘Third World’ or the ‘South’ only in the narrow terms of cold war polarizations, the perplexity is profound and the conclusion is obvious: the emergence of Southern unity was an artifact of cold war politics, and with the cold war being dead, the alliance should also be buried.

The Second Coming

The evidence from the South, however, tells a different story. The rise of what has been called ‘ecopolitics’ (Pirages, 1978; Alker and Haas, 1993) has given the South a new banner to rally under and with the international agenda no longer clouded by cold war distractions it is reasserting its voice in international affairs. The South of the 1990s is *not* the South of the 1970s—it is more diverse, less idealistic; more disillusioned, less impatient. But it remains—or rather, has reemerged—as a not inconsequential player in international relations, especially in international environmental politics. For the South, the end of the cold war and the rise of ecopolitics have ushered in the hopes of reviving, what may be called, the second generation of North-South dialogue.

The very thought of suggesting a revival of North-South dialogue—in fact, the very use of the term ‘South’—is considered by some to be an invitation to confrontation. Given the acrimonious history of such dialogue, this reaction is understandable. The thesis of this paper, however, is that just because the North-South dialogue stagnated in the 1980s does not mean that North-South differences have disappeared. For the

developing world, the North-South agenda of yore remains unfinished business. The North-South differences now seen to be emerging along the environmental dimension must, therefore, be seen as lying on the same continuum as earlier North-South conflicts; the South seeks a rearticulation of the underlying concerns that had prompted its call for a 'New International *Economic Order*' (NIEO) in North's desire for a 'New International *Environmental Order*.'

The vast bulk of Northern environmental scholarship has refused to acknowledge the importance of this continuum in international relations. A notable exception, however, is Alker and Haas (1993: 166) who point out that "although it is not adequately describable as a return to the imperial/colonial world, contemporary global ecopolitics reflects somewhat analogous North-South geopolitical differences." However, even the scholars who do not invest much faith in seeking historical parallel in the South's current concerns would agree with Alker and Haas's (1993: 164) forecast of "a new era in which global ecopolitics will define many of the terms, if not the practices, of world politics" and that "North-South tensions are likely to be a salient conservative feature of this new era."

This paper is an attempt to analyze how the South, as a coalition, can better organize for this new era of ecopolitics. It builds on earlier work (Najam, 1993a) and attempts to suggest a strategy that the South might employ in this second generation of (environmental) North-South negotiations. The proposed strategy for the South argues that the negotiating power of the South, which is essentially the power of coalition, can be enhanced and made more effective through pre-negotiation consensus building, possibly under the umbrella of a 'South Secretariat.' It is argued that this generation of North-South negotiation on the environment is fundamentally different from earlier negotiations on economic structures in that the North is no longer a 'blocking coalition.' Moreover, the environment provides at least the potential for joint-gain, win-win solutions. The implication is that a South organized and prepared for serious negotiation is in the interest of both the developing and industrialized countries.

Organization of this Paper

This introduction is followed by three chapters, each of which seeks to make separate but related arguments, culminating in a detailed proposal for setting up a 'South Secretariat' to assist the South in international negotiations in the era of ecopolitics.

Chapter 2 focuses on the *past* and argues that there has been, for at least forty years now, an entity called the South; that this group is more than a simple fraternity of the poor; that it has institutionalized itself in the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G77); and that it has used these fora to advocate, and occasionally win concessions—albeit, small ones—towards a defined agenda.

Chapter 3 focuses on the *present* and contends that the South has survived both its own dynamic heterogeneity and the demise of the cold war; that neither the diversity which has been endemic to it nor the bipolarity of the world into which it was born have been its defining features; that it will remain an active coalition in international politics for as long as it believes the prevailing international system to be unsympathetic to its interests; that even if the avenues in which it seeks to fulfill its goals might change, the goal itself (i.e. structural change of the prevailing international order) remains constant; that the Southern coalition has been reinvigorated by the new international environmental dialogue; and that unlike previous North-South dialogue, global environmental negotiations may have the potential of being more meaningful and less confrontational than their predecessors.

Chapter 4 focuses on the *future* and is, therefore, prescriptive in nature; it proposes that the single most important investment that the South can make towards ensuring that this second generation of North-South dialogue is more meaningful in its results and less frustrating in its dynamics is to organize itself for international negotiations by establishing a South Secretariat; in building upon previous such proposals the chapter suggests that the time may finally be ripe for realizing such an organizational entity and goes

on to define a detailed framework for its establishment and operation; it finally argues that a Secretariat that might help prepare the South for ensuing international negotiations, particularly environmental negotiations, would also serve the interests of the North.

The Past: Defining 'The South'

*Before I built a wall
I'd ask to know*

What I was walling in

Or walling out ...

Robert Frost (1875-1963)

Despite their pervasive use, the terms 'North' and 'South' are seldom defined. The Brandt Commission acknowledged that neither is a "uniform or permanent grouping," and described them as generally synonymous with 'developed' and 'developing' countries (Brandt 1980: 31).^{3,4} The South Commission uses the term 'South' in lieu of 'Third World' (South Commission, 1990: 1).⁵ As Emile Van Lennep (1983: 15)—then secretary-general of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—put it, the North-South concept, "like all powerful ideas...has the virtue of grand simplicity."⁶ He adds:

The force of the North-South concept derives from major historical and political realities manifested in the post-World War II era. It is true that over time, the distinction between North and South has become less clear in an objective sense. But the fact remains that there are two sets of countries which are widely comprehended to consist of the developed and the developing, each set sharing certain broad characteristics and psychological affinities. We have the countries of the North, with advanced or relatively advanced income levels and social conditions and a more or less completed process of national integration. The South comprises countries where the development process is still very much in train, where dual economies and dual societies are characteristic, and where, in

many cases, hunger and poverty remain the dominant way of life for millions of people.

Although Jones (1983: 1) considers “North-South Dialogue” to be “very much a phrase of the 1970s,” neither the terminology nor the concept of the North-South divide is new.⁷ By the late 1950s the term was already in usage within the ‘development community’ (Ward, 1965: 3) and gained wider public recognition in the 1970s during the New International Economic Order (NIEO) movement.⁸ During NIEO debates, it gained legitimacy through its usage in United Nations documents and international policy fora (see UNITAR, 1976). During the 1980s, as the NIEO movement faded from international attention, the term was also confined largely to specialized academic discourse. However, the publication of the South Commission Report in 1990 and the term’s wide application by governments, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), the media, and U.N. officials during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) process revitalized it in a popular environmental context (Najam, 1993a: 190).

Why Not ‘Third World’?

The terms ‘South’ and ‘Third World’ came into usage around the same time, were originally used to convey the same meaning, and still refer to roughly the same set of countries. However, in the context of popular, journalistic and even academic usage their intent has substantially and substantively diverged. While ‘South’ retains its intent of being a political entity, ‘Third World’ has become an entirely economic concept referring to poor countries, and more generally to the poor. In fact, it is no longer used exclusively for states; ‘Third World conditions’ has become a synonym for economic deprivation and is also used for describing poor communities in the North.

This is a serious deviation from the sense in which the concept originated. Alfred Sauvy, French demographer and economic historian, is generally credited with having coined the term ‘Third World’ (Angelopoulos, 1972: 9; Wolf-Phillips, 1979: 105; Love, 1980: 315; Keyfitz, 1993: 3).⁹ He introduced the term in an

influential article in *l'Observateur* (14 August 1952; No. 118, pg. 5), titled *Trois mondes, Une planète*. Writing at a time when the cold war was at its coldest, he stressed:

Nous parlons volontiers des deux mondes en présence, de leur guerre possible, de leur coexistence, etc. oubliant trop souvent qu'il en existe un troisième, le plus important... C'est l'ensemble de ceux que l'on appelle... les pays sous-développés... ignoré, exploité, méprisé... veut, lui aussi, être quelque chose.

[We gladly speak of two worlds facing each other, of their possible war, of their coexistence, etc., forgetting too often that there is a third one, *the most important...* That is the group of those that are called... the underdeveloped countries... ignored, exploited, scorned... *that want, they too, to be recognized*].¹⁰

The term *tiers monde* as it first became popular in French and then got translated into English as 'Third World' brought with it a certain history: its antecedent being French political concepts including 'Third Force', 'Third Estate', 'Third Way' and 'Third Camp' (see Wolf-Phillips, 1979; Worsley, 1979; Love, 1980; Otter, 1981).¹¹ Each of these carried a distinct, nuanced meaning but the commonality was that 'Third' represented a sense of neutrality and independence from the dominant poles rather than a descending numerical order. 'Thirdness,' therefore, indicated a specific meaning of independence, neutrality, exclusion, alienation, powerlessness, and a desire to change the order of things.¹² These connotations and the historical context of earlier French use of 'Thirdness' made *tiers monde* an apt phrase for the newly independent, formerly colonized, poor states that were changing the international scene in the 1950s.¹³ Love (1980: 316) explains:

When Alfred Sauvy coined Tiers Monde in his 1952 article, 'Trois mondes, une planète' his analogy was to the Tiers État. He wrote, "...this Third World [is] unknown, exploited, despised

like the Third Estate; it, too, wants something.” Here, of course, he was alluding to the Abbé Sieyès’ ringing phrases of 1789: “What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been till now in the Political Order? Nothing. What does it want to be? Something.” Thus, in addition to the idea of nonalignment (discussed by Sauvy in the same article), in this use of the term we find neglect, exploitation, and revolutionary potential.

The essence of the original ‘Third World’ is that poverty is seen as *a* symptom, rather than *the* cause of the commonalty. What binds them, despite their internal differences is not that they are, for most part, economically impoverished but that they all feel politically disempowered. They have only recently become part of an international system that they had no part in shaping, over which they have limited influence and no power, and which they consider unsympathetic to their interests. It is this system they wish to change.¹⁴ Or to use Sauvy’s conception, the ‘ignored, exploited, scorned’ countries of the world seek ‘something’—they want ‘to be recognized.’

The above discussion may seem archaic, but its purpose is merely to underscore the important point that the term ‘Third World’ evolved as a political concept.¹⁵ It was as a political concept that it originally became popular amongst scholars and amongst leaders of the emerging South. However, over the years, the meaning of the term has dramatically changed: from a political to an economic connotation (Muni, 1979: 121-3; Mountjoy, 1980: 753). As a political concept, the expression “neither [denoted] an inferior value structure, nor a descending numerical order” (Muni, 1979: 128). As an economic concept it has come to imply exactly that.

This is not to suggest that ‘Third World’ as a concept of simple economic gradation is without validity or authenticity. Indeed, poverty is a major commonalty of the nations we are concerned with here, it is also the major banner used by these nations in

attempting to articulate their demands.¹⁶ As an economic term ‘Third World’ has become an important, and useful, concept. But it no longer does justice to the political essence of what it originally implied. That essence is best captured by the term ‘South’.¹⁷ Since this study focuses on the political essence of the coalition, it will use the later term. In some cases quotations from earlier authors use the term ‘Third World,’ it is important in these cases, to remember that the term is used in its original political sense.

For its proponents, the term ‘South’ implies not just a commonalty, but a bond. The South Commission’s report, *The Challenge to the South* (1990), essentially echoes the views of the earlier Brandt Report (1980: 32) which had pointed out that the South’s “solidarity in global negotiations stems from the awareness of being dependent on the North, and unequal with it.” In many ways, the term ‘South’ denotes what ‘Third World’ implied in its original, early form. It is, therefore, erroneous to consider ‘South’ as another alternative term used to refer to what are essentially economic concepts: ‘developing countries’, ‘less developed countries’, or simply ‘poor countries’.¹⁸ As Roger Hansen (1980: 1105-6), a leading scholar of the North-South conflict, points out:

It is increasingly misleading to equate North and South with rich and poor countries, industrialized and nonindustrialized countries, developed and underdeveloped countries. Each group contains states of enormous diversity by all economic measures.... [W]hile economic issues remain a central ingredient, they are only one of several fundamental elements in the North-South conflict. Like “the North,” “the South” is a label given meaning not by the degree to which those countries share economic characteristics but by the decision of those countries to act as a diplomatic unit coordinating a large measure of their international activity. Properly used, the label

“South” applies to a readily observable process in today’s international politics, and not to an analytical categorization of countries based on relative levels of economic development.

Williams (1993: 9) argues that, even today, the South is still “essentially a political coalition”:

Efforts to depict the Third World as an economic or cultural concept mistakenly attempts to reduce political behavior to a non-political explanation.... The unity of these countries arises, in the first place, from the inability of these states to exert significant influence on world events.... [M]aterial weakness and an inability to influence policy making provides a powerful stimulus of an alliance of the powerless.... [The] international division between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’, did not by itself create the coalition although it established necessary conditions for bringing it into existence.

It is critical, therefore, to remember that the Southern coalition is bonded together not just in a common desire for economic justice, but in a shared demand for fundamental restructuring of international institutions and regimes.¹⁹ In *The Poverty Curtain*, Mahbub-ul-Haq (1976: 167) stresses that the struggle of the Southern coalition is against “systemic discrimination”; as such “the basic struggle is for equality of opportunity, not equality of income.”²⁰ On a similar note, though in making a different argument, Stephen Krasner (1985: 27) argues that Southern solidarity is motivated by political power and control as much as by economic wealth and development; that “vulnerability, not simple poverty” is the motivating force for the Southern coalition.²¹

The Institutional Face of the South

Institutionally, the Southern coalition at the global level consists of two distinct organizations, the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G77). While distinct in their objectives, organizational structures, and membership, the two organizations demonstrate a degree of convergence in their membership and concerns, and may be considered “separate parts of a single coalition” (Williams, 1993: 11; *see also*, Hansen, 1980). Even though the memberships of the two organizations do not mirror each other, the overlap between the 108 members of NAM and over 130 members of G77 translates into informal as well as formal coordination. A recent example of the later is the Joint Coordinating Committee established at the 10th NAM Summit in 1992.²²

The roles played by the two in furthering the agenda of the South have been distinct, though complimentary. According to Sauvart (1981a: 5), “while the Non-Aligned Countries [have] played a key role in making the development issue a priority item of the international agenda, the Group of 77 has become the principal organ of the Third World through which the concrete actions... are negotiated within the framework of the United Nations system.

As a generalization, NAM’s rationale is primarily political while G77 is more focused on economic issues.²³ This is obviously a very rough generalization. However, the distinction is important in that NAM’s mandate has been to seek a ‘new international political order,’ while that of G77 has been to work towards a ‘new international economic order.’ NAM, therefore, has been defined as the “political voice” of the South, and G77 as its “economic voice” (Hansen, 1979: 20; *also see* Sauvart, 1981a: 13). These mandates are themselves historical constructs and need to be understood in that context. The following sections will review the evolution, development and achievements of the two organizations which collectively represent the institutional face of the South.

The Nonaligned Movement (NAM)

Although its roots can be traced to earlier anti-colonial movements,²⁴ the 1955 Afro-Asian Conference held at Bandung, Indonesia, is generally recognized as the defining event for NAM, and for the South as a coalition. Twenty-nine countries from Africa and Asia participated officially, as did representatives from many liberation and nationalist movements.²⁵ The principle of “abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any big powers,”²⁶ which was to become the defining feature of NAM, was first articulated at Bandung. The ensuing heated debate on the concept of ‘nonalignment’ remains the most enduring legacy of the conference and was to convert what, till then, was a regional grouping into a cross-regional one. (See Jansen, 1966; Sharma, 1969; Rajamoorthy, 1992; Berger, 1994).²⁷

This was an era characterized by new states gaining political independence from colonial rule, a scramble amongst the superpowers for establishing ‘spheres of influence’ within these new states, and a growing concern amongst these states that a world divided by the ideological animosities of the cold war would only subvert their own hard-won independence. The debate on nonalignment was, therefore, both important and divisive. What it achieved was to convert a regional grouping of African and Asian states into a political alliance of self-avowedly ‘nonaligned’ nations. In the process, some who were present at Bandung decided not to join the ranks of what later became NAM (most notably China and Japan). However, the transformation from an Afro-Asian coalition into a nonaligned coalition did mean that new allies from Latin America and Europe could now be inducted. Prime Minister Nehru of India and President Soekarno of Indonesia, who had advocated nonalignment at Bandung, were joined in the following years by President Nasser of Egypt, Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, and President Nkrumah of Ghana in championing the concept.

It was under the leadership of these five that a Summit Conference was convened at Belgrade, Yugoslavia in September 1961.²⁸ With leaders of 27 countries—including Cuba and Yugoslavia—in attendance, the founders of NAM sought to

maintain their own independence and at the same time provide a principled response to the prevailing international order. The defining motivation remained a rejection of domination and dependence, one summed up by former Zambian President, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda: “we wish to be free to make our own assessment in matters which affect us and having done so, to be able to make our decisions without pandering to the ideologies of any nation or bloc” (*quoted in Rajamoorthy, 1992: 22*). Since those heady days, ten Summit meetings of Heads of State and Government have been held and NAM membership has risen to over one hundred.²⁹

NAM has never really achieved its stated goal of substantively influencing the path of global politics either by ensuring its own functional independence or by contributing to world peace through influencing the weakening of the bipolar system. While it is tempting to write off NAM as irrelevant, it would be erroneous to do so (*see Williams, 1993*). NAM’s agenda has always been broader than its nomenclature. It has been a forum for developing nations to stress their common concerns for independence and sovereign equality, de-colonization and anti-racism, economic and social development, sovereignty over natural resources, cultural equality, universalism and multilateralism, and the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-use of force or the threat of force.

NAM’s efficacy needs to be gauged not as much in the achievement of these goals, as in its ability to raise these issues at the international level. Hansen (1979: 123) points out that the solidarity of Southern nation’s emerges from the “fear that unity is their only assurance of a seat at the present international diplomatic table.” NAM has provided them a platform for articulating their agenda. Furthermore, it has provided the weaker Southern states an opportunity to increase their participation in the international political economy beyond what the prevailing order would have otherwise permitted, while permitting the relatively stronger/larger states to use the coalition’s strength of numbers to enhance their own role in global politics.

The durability of NAM through the turbulent 1980s, internal differences between member states, and the demise of the cold war highlights the continuing value Southern leaders derive from the institution. This was demonstrated strikingly at the 1992 NAM Summit. What some had predicted to be a swan song for the organization turned into a rejuvenation.³⁰ Although the assembled Heads of State and government acknowledged the need for “a realistic reordering of priorities” in light of the changed global setting, the Summit was one of the most comprehensive in the organization’s history—both in terms of attendance and the scope and depth of issues covered. According to conference chairman, President Suharto of Indonesia, NAM was now “more than the voice of a collective conscience, and has evolved into a moral as well as political force that is capable of contributing substantially to the building of a new international order of stable peace, social justice, common prosperity and sustainable development.” (see Raghavan, 1993; Jansen, 1993).

The resilience of NAM is, in large measure, a factor of its being an evolving institution; one that has successfully redefined itself in response to changing times. Born in the 1950s as the anti-colonial voice of newly independent states, NAM began shifting its focus more towards economic issues in the 1970s. The fourth NAM Summit held in Algeria in September 1973 laid political foundation of the South’s demand for a New International Economic Order. Similarly, the 1992 Summit saw the movement focusing more on issues of environment and sustainable development. Equally, the relationship between NAM and superpower politics has evolved through time. The 1992 Jakarta Summit was especially important for articulating a rationale for the organization’s continued existence in a unipolar world. The South’s view that “the desire to be independent is not dependent on the number of military blocs in existence at any given time,” was most forcefully championed by Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr. Mahatir Mohammed (1992: 26):

How can we remain nonaligned when the two ideological adversaries have disappeared? Where before we had the

option to defect to the other side, now we have none. Our new option is to submit or resist. Both involve a loss of leverage, and weak nations with no leverage can only become weaker.... The unipolar world is fraught with threats and challenges. To deal with them we need to cling even more closely to one another. Without the option to defect to the other side, we can expect less wooing but more threats. Alone we have to submit one by one. Together we may yet be able to sustain our independence and integrity.

If survival and redefinition have been the most outstanding successes of NAM, it may be because it has lacked any formal structure that might have imperiled its survival by resisting redefinition. An instrument of political summitry, NAM meets every three years to renew its vows. Operating through ministerial committees the movement has no institutional infrastructure (except for the good offices of the Chairperson) to manage its activities through the interval between summits. In part, the reluctance to “institutionalize” itself formally has stemmed from the fear that rather than being an ‘anti-bloc’ movement, it would become a bloc in itself; or that it might be ‘taken over’ by particular states or groups of states from its own ranks (Ramphal, 1980: 18). The lack of continuity in domestic political systems of its member states, the unwieldy size of the coalition, and an absence of any institutional management structure has often led to the translation of genuine enthusiasm on the part of individual NAM leaders into inaction on the part of the movement as a whole.

The Group of 77 (G77)

The Group of 77 (G77) has been defined by Julius Nyerere (1980: 7), former President of Tanzania, as the “trade union of the poor” and as “the most dynamic of the developing-country institutions” by Hansen (1979: 90).³¹ Although it emerged around the same time as NAM, G77 has its own distinctive origins and unlike NAM, was born within—and primarily as a result of—the changing composition of the United Nations in the 1960s. The 1955 Bandung conference was a protest over the failure to

achieve much de-colonization since 1947-8 and the reduction of the U.N. into an arena for cold war sparring. By the turn of the decade, however, the flavor of the U.N. had changed:³²

From January 1950 to November 1955 there was a deadlock within the United Nations system on the question of new members, and none secured admission. Then in December 1955 a tactic Soviet-American bargain enabled sixteen new members to join simultaneously and the doors of the United Nations were henceforth in principle open for further new members, so much so that in 1960 alone seventeen newly independent states were admitted—sixteen of them from Africa. Thus between 1955 and the early 1960s the basic political composition and character of plenary United Nations gatherings changed from being predominantly NATO-like to become more markedly Afro-Asian, even Third World, in character. (Geldart and Lyon, 1980: 82).

The new U.N. composition meant that newly independent, developing, and nonaligned nations (the three terms almost identified the same countries) had a majority in the General Assembly. While this group of nations was fraught with ideological and political differences, the commonality in aspirations outweighed the differences. Although impeded by their unwieldy size and lack of experience in (or resources for) coalition politics, this unlikely group surprised—and annoyed—the major Western powers by incessantly demanding, and sometimes obtaining, more U.N. focus on issues of concern to them (*see* Sharma, 1969; Sauvart, 1981a; McDonald, 1982; Kaufmann, 1989).

The most important such issue was that of trade and development. In revitalizing the call for an International Trade Organization in the early 1960s, the developing countries were demanding structural change that could accommodate their strength of votes as well as their concerns; Western industrialized countries, on the

other hand, preferred to rely on existing instruments such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).³³ The result of this tussle was the 1964 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which was convened as a “second-best compromise” for everyone, and has since become an institutionalized series of conferences.³⁴ It was there that G77 was officially born. Geldart and Lyon (1980: 85) recount:

The first manifesto of the proto-G77 was released on October 18, 1963 in the UN General Assembly... when 75 member-states jointly sponsored a resolution entitled ‘Joint Declaration of the Developing Countries’. The 75 endorsed with enthusiasm the opportunity offered by the forthcoming Geneva conference [UNCTAD-I] as, ‘conducive to the development of their economies and to the integrated growth of the world economy as a whole’.... Twenty-one of these sponsoring states were from Latin America and the Caribbean, thirty-one from Africa, and twenty from Asia and the Middle East; the remaining three of the seventy-five were Cyprus, New Zealand and Yugoslavia.... During the three-month-long proceedings of UNCTAD-I in Geneva, from March to June 1964, this informal group of 75 became the Group of 77 when Kenya, South Korea and South Vietnam added their signatures to the Group’s Joint Declaration... and New Zealand withdrew from the Group.

UNCTAD-I came at a time of rising optimism and expectations in the South.³⁵ A large number of countries had just gained independence, especially in Africa; developing countries were beginning to make their presence felt in international fora; and the industrialized world finally seemed to be responding.³⁶ This enthusiasm and the commonality of their aspirations allowed the new nations to overlook and circumvent their internal differences. In a remarkable show of solidarity they arrived at Geneva as a single bloc, which by its sheer strength of numbers could no

longer be ignored. This coalition of 77, otherwise disparate, nations was remarkable not only because it actually did speak with one voice, but also because it effectively changed (albeit temporarily) the direction of international polity (*see* Sauvant, 1981a). As Marc Williams (1993: 13) records, UNCTAD-I “was the first conference at which the North-South divide took precedence over the East-West division”

Emanating from a shared powerlessness in the face of deteriorating economic conditions of the 1950s, G77 was designed as a pressure group to demand changes in the structure of the international economy, particularly with respect to primary commodities which were the mainstay of many Southern countries.³⁷ Created as a Southern caucus for UNCTAD, the coalition’s substantive business was principally directed to UNCTAD until 1971. Through the late 1960’s, UNCTAD allowed the G77 to become “the most comprehensively authentic voice of the Third World” and the UNCTAD Secretariat in Geneva came to be seen as a principal voice and *de facto* secretariat for the G77. (*See* Geldart and Lyon, 1980; Sauvant, 1981a; Weiss, 1986; Megzari, 1989).

The period 1971-74 has been described as the “watershed years” for G77 (Geldart and Lyon, 1980: 91). The raging world monetary crisis, rising global inflation, further expansions in G77 membership, OPEC’s decision to quadruple oil price,³⁸ the disastrous U.S. performance in Vietnam, and the onset of détente diplomacy set the stage for the G77’s thrust for, what became known as, the New International Economic Order (NIEO).³⁹ These were the heydays of Southern unity: NAM and G77 were in sync; OPEC demonstrated that unity could bestow power to the powerless;⁴⁰ the “Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States” was accepted at the U.N. General Assembly where the numerical strength of the G77 allowed it to win many victories over the industrialized countries in a number of resolutions; efforts to split the coalition over the oil issue were forcefully repelled; and, finally, the North was forced into negotiations which it had so stridently resisted. The euphoria, however, was short-lived. The changed economic and political climate of the

1980s left the NIEO movement, the hopes it had generated, and the solidarity it had fostered, much bruised.

Yet, the shared views on international redistributive economic justice and the belief that unity might bestow power to the powerless that had first crystallized the coalition has sustained it through the turbulent 1980s and beyond. Over the years, the principal demands of the South have remained practically unchanged—and unmet. This reflects both a failure in having these goals met and a constancy of purpose in wanting to address them. Despite the failure to negotiate desired change, the ranks of G77 have swelled to a current membership of over 130. In large part, this is because “the initial reasons for the formation of the coalition, i.e. individual weakness to pursue national goals, Western indifference or negativism to suggested reform, the existence of an institutional channel of communication which augmented the trend to mass aggregation and the persistence of economic weakness, has helped to maintain the coalition and increase its attractiveness.” (Williams, 1993: 13).

The G77 evolved out of the U.N. group system which, as institutionalized for UNCTAD-I, lumped Africa and Asia (plus Yugoslavia) in Group A, West alliance in Group B, Latin America in Group C, and East Europe in Group D. Essentially, Groups A and C formed an alliance that grew up to become G77. Sauvart (1981a: 10) maintains that the group system in the U.N., and particularly in UNCTAD, “was one of the most important factors in the consolidation of the Group of 77 as an effective interest group because it introduced institutional pressures for coordination and co-operation”.⁴¹ In its own operational structuring, the G77 has taken this regional system and built an organizational template around it. G77 functions through three constituent regional fora—Africa, Asia, and Latin America.⁴² This is a strategy for diversity management which allows each region within the alliance the ‘voice’ and the opportunity to have its views heard.⁴³ Each group arrives at a regional consensus which is then aggregated into the general G77 position by full consensus.⁴⁴

Although G77 does have a skeletal staff at New York and Geneva to assist the chairperson, it is effectively makeshift. This, despite the fact that passionate calls for a more permanent servicing structure have been made for many years (*see*, TWQ, 1979; Ramphal, 1980; Hall, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980a, 1983; Commonwealth, 1982; Sewell and Zartman, 1984; South Commission, 1990). Mission staff and delegations of member countries, and particularly of the G77 chair nation, serve as a temporary service agency which leads to a sporadic quality of work and very limited continuity. The lack of a formal institutional structure, however, does not imply a lack of procedural structure; which is, in fact, highly developed especially in terms of regional balancing of responsibilities. Sauvart (1981a: 29) considers the G77's flexible procedural structure to be a source of its strength:

Although the procedures of the Group of 77 are essentially based on precedent, the Group has maintained a high degree of organizational flexibility... [which is] not rigid but subject to evolution. This flexibility, the informality of many of the Group's arrangements, the careful observance of equal regional representation, the openness of all non-plenary organs to all members of the Group, and the rule that decisions are to be taken by consensus are the principal sources of strength of the Group of 77 and have been the basis of its great capacity to grow and to absorb new developments.

Through the mid-1970s, as G77's size, visibility, and scope of issues covered increased, so did the arenas in which it operated.⁴⁵ From being restricted only to the UNCTAD, it duplicated itself in all major international organizations and negotiations.⁴⁶ Functioning as informal caucuses for diplomats from member countries, G77 'hubs' have sprung up at New York, Geneva, Rome, Vienna, Paris, and Washington where international bodies such as the U.N. General Assembly, the UNCTAD Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), U.N. Educational,

Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), U.N. Development Programme (UNDP), International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are based (see Geldart and Lyon, 1980; Sauvant, 1981a). Williams (1993: 13) underscores an important organizational feature:

These different Groups of 77 are not subsidiaries of one central organization but rather autonomous bodies with certain key features in common. These include membership, the use of the group system, regional infrastructure and the ministerial meeting as the highest decision making body. The separate Groups of 77 also subscribe to common views on the reform of the international economic order.

In addition, G77 caucuses are active in various international negotiations where they adopt joint bargaining positions and strategies, and the group's chairperson serves as the spokesperson and chief negotiator for the entire caucus.⁴⁷ Born as a temporary caucus group for the first UNCTAD conference, the G77 has today become an authentic voice for the developing countries in the U.N. system. While G77 may not have achieved the radical systemic change that it envisioned, it has won valuable concessions and small victories on a number of issues at these and such fora. Not least of these is its own survival and acceptance as an enduring player in international politics.

Gauging Achievement

Has the South been an effective coalition? Weintraub (1980: 459-63) puts its most bluntly: "The fundamentals of the international economic order have not been changed as a result of the North-South dialogue... No principles or rules have been substantially altered to accommodate the demands of the South... Stated broadly, the North has not agreed that systemic change is needed." At about the same time, Sauvant (1981: 27) proclaimed that the "concerns of the G77 now influence nearly all

considerations of international economic issues in the United Nations.” Both statements are essentially correct. The systemic change the South sought has not been achieved; yet, the South continues to remain an important actor in international affairs despite internal diversity and external threats. How, then, should one gauge the achievements of the South?

As a coalition that derives its strength—and its very identity—from its shared weakness, the South is designed to minimize the vulnerability of its members to the prevalent international regime, rather than maximize their domination over it.⁴⁸ It is with this yardstick that the achievements of the South need to be gauged. The motivation behind the creation and continuance of the coalition is the member’s realization of their own weakness. Although the rhetoric of the South is, understandably, laden with the hope of systemically changing the international order, the principal motivation is the fear that in not banding together, the vulnerability of each individual member state would be compounded. According to Williams (1993: 10), “[t]he Third World coalition is not necessarily a winning coalition but it minimizes the risk of defeat.” In addressing a 1979 Ministerial conference of the G77, Julius Nyerere (1980: 5-6), then President of Tanzania, candidly acknowledged that:

[W]hat we [G77] have in common is that we are all, in relation to the developed world, dependent (not interdependent) nations.... We are ashamed to admit it; but economically we are dependencies—semi-colonies at best—not sovereign states.... [T]he reality is that the unity of even the most powerful of the subgroups within the Third World is not sufficient to allow its members to become full actors, rather than reactors, in the world economic system. The unity of the entire Third World is necessary for the achievement of fundamental change in the present world economic arrangement.

The importance of this realization of their own weakness is critical in understanding the tenacity of the Southern coalition. First, admitting their own weakness has meant that even where the ideal aspirations are high, the realistic expectation of reaching them is low. Second, starting from an admitted position of weakness allows for a redefinition of *success*: success becomes broader than achieving that which is *better*, and encompasses averting that which might be *worse*. After defining ideal goals and aspirations, Southern negotiators have most often focused on averting the damage that existing or proposed systems imply. Success, therefore, is measured not in maximizing gains but in minimizing the losses. This flows directly from the South being, what Nyerere (1980: 4) has called, “a unity of opposition.”

For example, in analyzing the South’s performance at the 1992 Earth Summit, Anil Agarwal (1992: 35) notes that the fear of giving up their development aspirations to Northern environmentalism compelled the South to search for ‘negative gains’ (i.e., not losing too much) rather than ‘positive gains.’ On a similar note, it has been argued that at UNCED as well as the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment the South largely succeeded in ensuring that the issues and options that it liked least were kept *out* of the final texts but failed to bring the concerns and solutions that it did support *into* the texts of the agreements; as such, it exercised a ‘negative’ power; the power to stop, rather than the power to shape (Najam 1993a: 207-8).

Another point to remember is that as a coalition—and a very large one—the South has no separate identity, or authority, except that which is derived from its constituents. As such, it “essentially moves, or remains immobile, because of individual and concerted national policies.... [It] must be classified as illustrating the diplomacy of influence rather than of power” (Geldart and Lyon, 1980: 98). Furthermore, the South is essentially a creature of the United Nations system, and it is there that it has tried to exert its influence. Even NAM, which operates outside the U.N. system, is laden with references to the U.N. charter and has sought (from its earliest days) its influence via the world body.

Krasner (1985: 8) has argued that “[i]f the United Nations had not existed, it would have been impossible for the Third World to articulate a general program for altering international regimes.” Literally born and bred within the U.N., the South realizes that it is there and not in the economic domain of the Bretton Woods sisters,⁴⁹ that it enjoys a comparative advantage. This is important, in that the South has sought, and continues to seek, change in economic regimes in a body that is principally political (see Jaramillo, 1994). While that change has transpired, the U.N. is much more of an economic animal today than it was thirty years ago; this is a testimony to the South’s influence.

Finally, as has been mentioned earlier, the very fact that both NAM and G77 have survived—despite internal heterogeneity and a status quo in the international order that has been unfavorable to their existence—should be seen as a major achievement. In addition, there have indeed been occasional triumphs. The passage in the U.N. of the declaration for the creation of a New International Economic Order, the Charter of the Economic Rights and Duties of States, the emphasis on development within international discourse, the acceptance of “special needs” for developing countries, and occasional spurts of North-South dialogue are such achievements. In comparison to the original aspirations of the South, this is not much. However, it has been enough to keep the coalition intact; the South realizes that “whilst coalition politics does not guarantee victory on any issues, it does produce the possibility of increased influence. It turns the certainty of permanent defeat on all issues into the likelihood of occasional triumph” (Williams, 1993: 9-10).

The Present: Responding to Changing Times

*The old order changeth, yielding place to new
And God fulfills himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the
world*

Lord Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

The emergence of the South on the international negotiation map was very much a response to the polarizations and antagonisms of East-West politics. Unenthusiastic about the prospect of becoming pawns in superpower games of global domination, the newly independent, developing countries of the South saw solidarity as a strategy for forcing their own agenda of economic justice and social development onto the world stage. However, with the Second World having now surrendered to the economic ideology of the First, and with the South having become ever more heterogeneous, it is tempting to proclaim the Third World as a “mere historical curiosity,” and the coalition of the South as “at best little more than an irrelevance and at worst an absurdity.” In course of time, it may well turn out to be so. However, to write the South’s obituary now would be, in the very least, premature. (Williams, 1993: 7-8; *also see* Chubin, 1993; Berger, 1994).

It is important to remember that even though the South emerged as a direct response to the new patterns of dependence that were manifest in cold war polarizations, it is historically rooted in five centuries of shared colonial experience whose economic, social, and political scars are far from healed. More importantly, for many in the South, the desire for unity in the face of an international economic order that places these states at a systemic disadvantage still outweighs the internal diversity—which, in fact, has been a feature of the coalition’s definition from its very outset. Even if the NIEO agenda seems “discredited” to some Northern observers (Sebenius, 1991: 87), it remains a goal worth pursuing for many in the South (South 1990; Raghavan, 1991; Peng, 1992; Mohammed, 1992).⁵⁰ If the recent stirrings in the

G77 and NAM are anything to go by, the South is not about to become a casualty of cold war cessation; if anything, a changing world may present the South with new opportunities to influence world politics and demand a new international order.

The validity of the South as an effective, or even a 'real' negotiating coalition has long been questioned on structural grounds. More recently, the collapse of cold war tensions have revived such criticism on historical grounds. Not surprisingly, then, the South's self-definition—or rather lack of any concreteness therein—has been vulnerable on at least two fronts: the lack of homogeneity within the coalition, and the affects of the demise of the cold war (*see* Williams, 1993: 7-8; Najam 1993b: 47-8; Berger, 1994: 257-8). After discussing these two streams of criticism, this chapter goes on to suggest that the growing global interest in environmental issues has the potential to not only revitalize the Southern coalition but to also provide a fertile ground for rejuvenating the North-South dialogue.

Is the South Defunct?

The criticism about the South's heterogeneity and differentiation, which is a structural criticism on the very nature of the Third World attempts at solidarity, has in fact dogged the South from its very earliest days.⁵¹ The criticism has intensified in recent years. For example, Sagasti and Colby (1993: 175) speak of a "fractured global order" and contend that "whereas ten or twenty years ago we could speak of developing countries as a whole, this is no longer possible, for differences between and within these countries have been continuously growing."

Indeed, the South is a remarkably diverse group. The G77, for example, comprises of nearly 130 states of all sizes ranging from gigantic India and Brazil to tiny St. Lucia and Bhutan. It represents not just the geographical, cultural and religious diversity of every continent, but is equally diverse in politics and ideology—ranging from the still communist Cuba, to the stoutly capitalist Singapore, to royalist Saudi Arabia, to all the possible shades that define the varied political ideologies of countries such

as Jamaica, Iran, Tanzania, Argentina, and Indonesia. Even in terms of economic prosperity its members are spread across the world's economic map—from South Korea to Somalia, Malaysia to Mozambique, and Chile to Chad.⁵² Diversity, however, is not new to the South. As early as 1955, President Soekarno admitted to his colleagues at Bandung (quoted in Sharma, 1969: 6):

Yes, there is diversity among us, who denies it? Small and great nations are represented here, with people professing almost every religion under the sun..., almost every political faith we encounter here... and practically every economic doctrine has its representative... [However,] all of us, I am certain, are united by more important things than those which superficially divide us. We are united, for instance, by a common detestation of colonialism in whatever form it appears. We are united by a common detestation of racism. And we are united by a common determination to preserve and establish peace in the world.

Writing in 1978,⁵³ Ismail Sabri-Abdalla (1980: 22) reported that [as today] “the Third World as a concept is being challenged intellectually, and its usefulness as a tool of analysis and action is increasingly being questioned.” However, he reminds the reader that “nobody has ever pretended that the Third World as a group of nations is perfectly homogeneous” (p. 41). He concludes that “dependence, with all its corollaries, is the basic common denominator” which unites these countries despite whatever economic, geographic, ideological, or physical resource differences these nations might have (p. 40). Writing more than a decade later in *The Poverty of Nations*, Michael Manley (1991: 9), former Prime Minister of Jamaica, points out that the Western mind is constantly confounded by the fact the over one hundred different states representing the full range of the ideological, social, geographic, and economic spectrum find common ground in fora such as G77 and the NAM. He, too, explains this as being possible because “there is an underlying and binding cement to be

found in their common experience of imperialism and colonialism together with the common disadvantage they suffer under the present world economic order.”

According to Williams (1993: 10) a “crucial feature” of the Southern coalition is “the members’ recognition of the essential heterogeneity of the group.” The South Commission (1990: 14), acknowledges that the South is non-homogeneous and includes nations of widely varying economic, colonial, historical, political, geographic, and demographic characteristics. However, it proclaims that “in this diversity is a basic unity,” and “what the countries of the South have in common transcends their differences; it gives them a shared identity and a reason to work together for common objectives” (1990: 1). The Report identifies this commonality as the shared desire for a fairer world order and sees it being manifest in the growing membership of institutions such as G77 and NAM.

While the South’s defenders have not contested the inherent heterogeneity of the South, they have consistently contested the assertion that this heterogeneity is a ‘defining variable’ which makes the coalition defunct (*see* Muni, 1979; Brandt, 1980; Nyerere, 1980; Sabri-Abdalla, 1980; Thomas, 1987; South, 1990; Manley, 1991; Mohammed, 1992; Najam, 1993b; Williams, 1993). It is argued that since the solidarity of the South “has never been based on some supposed general identity of economic interests by all developing countries” (Geldart and Lyon, 1980: 101), economic heterogeneity alone is insufficient (though not unimportant) for challenging the viability of the coalition. Hence, the coalition has refused to die even as the economic fortunes of its members have diverged drastically. Williams (1993: 10) argues that such heterogeneity may create a “problem of management” but is not a “sign of irrelevance or disintegration”:

Those who argue that the coalition is irrational since it is based on an unsustainable diversity of interests would conclude that increased economic divergence would lead to the eventual collapse of the coalition. Following the logic of

this view, the Third World coalition should have collapsed a long time ago. If, on the other hand, we accept that diversity was present from the inception of the coalition, increased economic divergence between coalition partners is viewed in a different light.... The economic perspective makes a clear causal connection between increased divergence and the unsustainability of the coalition. The political or bargaining perspective... investigates the strategies devised by members, either to counter increased economic divergence and maintain unity, or to foreground such diversity and unravel the coalition.

A related issue concerns the magnitude of the diversity. In a fascinating analysis of the South's heterogeneity, Sabri-Abdalla (1980) argued that the economic differentiation within the South was in fact not as great as its critics suggested, even when one considered the "supposedly privileged" economies of OPEC and the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs), and that heterogeneity within the South was no greater than that between the North (as represented, for example, by the OECD).⁵⁴ He further concluded that even if differentiation increased it would not threaten the continuity of the coalition since it was based on the commonality of "dependence," rather than mere similarities in GDP levels. Writing at about the same time, Roger D. Hansen (1979: 87-123) argued otherwise, predicting rapid fragmentation in the wake of "extraordinarily rapid [economic] differentiation."⁵⁵

In retrospect, the "extraordinarily rapid differentiation" never really materialized. While some East Asian NICs have recorded sterling economic growth, other would-be stars (especially in Latin America) have fallen short of their earlier promise. The glitter of the oil producing economies has also faded from those heady days of the late 1970s. At the same time South Asian economies have largely stagnated while many African economies are poorer today than they were 25 years ago. While a focus on the giant strides made by the East Asian economies might suggest

a dramatically more heterogeneous South, a more holistic look across the entire Southern bloc suggests that the increase in the South's economic diversity is far less dramatic than it is sometimes assumed to be. "Arguably, the economic differences between Singapore and Mozambique today are only marginally more than those between Kuwait and Mali in the 1970s" (Najam, 1993b: 47). By similar token, the South was far more ideologically divided in the 1970s, at the height of cold war polarizations, than it is today when superpower games of 'spheres of influence' have ceded.

In summation, heterogeneity has been an enduring feature of the South. While it does make the management of the coalition that much more difficult, a) it is not a new threat but an endemic burden to which the alliance has internally adjusted (for example, through the regional format of the G77 and decision making through 'consensus' in both G77 and NAM); b) the economic diversity within the South is only a little more, and the ideological heterogeneity a lot less, stark today than it has been in the past; and c) the diversity does not exist across the 'defining' variable, which is the shared view amongst Southern states that the prevailing world order is not sensitive to Southern interests. This study agrees with Caroline Thomas (1987: 3-4) that "the changes which have taken place in the last forty years have not sufficiently eroded the political, psychological or economic underpinnings of the grouping to warrant a reclassification. As a category in international relations, the Third World has not yet been rendered invalid." If anything, diversity is a case for improved management structures for the South rather than for its disbandment.

End of the Cold War: Opportunities and Challenges

A second stream of critique that questions the continued viability of the South as a negotiating bloc in international politics concerns the end of the cold war (*see* Berger, 1994). The argument here is simply that since the East and the West are no more, therefore the South must also be declared deceased. This line of reasoning has been characterized as maintaining that "the

demise of the Second World [entails] the disappearance of the Third World.... [And] if the Third World is now a mere historical curiosity, the existence of a self-defined Third World coalition is at best little more than an irrelevance and at worst an absurdity” (see Williams, 1993: 7).

This criticism rests on the assumptions that a unipolar world implies an undivided world, and that the South was merely an artifact of cold war politics. The first of these assumptions can be credited to nothing but a flawed euphoria in the North. As Malaysian Prime Minister Mahatir Mohammed (1992: 26) made plain to the 1992 NAM Summit, for the South “a unipolar world is every bit as threatening as a bipolar world.” The sense of subordination, alienation, and injustice that had initially brought the South together, still persists. In a 1994 statement, the outgoing chairman of G77, Colombian Ambassador Luis Jaramillo (1994), articulated the lingering sense of division:

In contrast to the euphoria created by the end of the Cold War, the changes in Eastern Europe, the reforms of economic liberalization, the new concepts of sustainable development and the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of GATT, the developing nations continue to face, at the dawn of the 21st century, a hostile international environment and a loss of economic and political standing in the so-called New World Order. While it is true that some progress has been observed in some developing countries, the list of adversities remains and in many cases has grown.... Developing countries continue to be subjected to constant pressures to weaken or abandon our collective interest for constructing a truly free and just world. In the new balance of power, the relative situation of the developing world has worsened ostensibly. (Emphasis added).

The above is fair rebuttal for the worthy, but misplaced, hopes of those like Jan Pronk (1992: 21), the Dutch Minister for development cooperation, who believe that “the outlook which separated the different worlds—North from South, East from West and one nation from another—has fundamentally changed,” and that “dividing lines, once sharp, are fading away.” In time, that might well happen; but that time is not yet.

As to arguments about the South being an artifact of cold war politics, it is true that the emergence of the South was (in the case of NAM) a retaliation to cold war polarizations and (in the case of G77) an effort to chart an agenda unblemished by cold war distractions. However, in both cases, the South sought for itself an identity different from either bloc. It did so, not only because its own members included allies of both the East and the West, but also because it sought an agenda that neither superpower was ever seriously interested in. Given the political diversity of the South, the essence of its nonalignment was not merely a retaliation to *bi*-polarity, as to the very notion of *polarity*.

Even where the South, or its component countries, ‘played’ cold war politics, the predominance of East-West polarizations remained a hindrance rather than a help to the South’s larger goals. Arguably, then, the cooling of cold war tensions provides an opportunity rather than a threat to the Southern cause; the de-escalation of superpower confrontation provides the potential for a subtle shifting of the world’s geopolitical axis moving from an era of East-West conflict to one of North-South tensions (Lerner, 1992: 18; Peng, 1992: 5). Even if we were to agree with Chaubin (1993: 91) that nonalignment (in the conventional sense) “died with the Cold War,” the South did not.

Having said the above, the end of the cold war opens a potential window of opportunity for the South for reasserting its international agenda. The opportunity, however, is not without its dangers. The danger entails not as much in the South ‘disappearing’ in the post-cold war world, as in being ‘ignored’ in the wake of its diminishing geostrategic utility (*see* David, 1992; Chubin, 1993).⁵⁶ A world without superpower antagonisms is

also a world with very different perspectives on ‘development assistance’ for developing states. Already a net exporter of capital to the North, the South is likely to be marginalized further as attention and resources are diverted from development in the South to economic reconstruction in the East (Peng, 1992: 31; Singh, 1992: 170-171).

The end of the cold war—coming at a time of global recession, massive debt accumulations, trade imbalances, and a net negative flow of resources—gives three signals to the nations of the South: a) the size of the ‘aid’ pie is getting smaller, not bigger; b) there are more claimants [former Soviet bloc nations] to the pie; and c) in a unipolar world, major donors have rapidly diminishing political/strategic use for their support (Najam 1993a: 194). This in itself is reason enough for the South to revive its sagging coalition and seek strength in unity. The case for doing so is all the more compelling in the light of the additional facts that a) the international agenda is no longer clouded by East-West conflicts which gives the South an opportunity to make new calls for resuming the long-stalled North-South dialogue, and b) increasing threats to the global environment have provided the North with not just the inclination but the necessity to engage the South in a new dialogue.

Towards A New Dialogue

The importance of the North-South dimension in international environmental policy is widely accepted in the literature (*see* Young, 1989; Caldwell, 1990; de la Court, 1990; Agarwal and Narain, 1991; Matthews 1991; Porter and Brown, 1991; French, 1992; Gardner, 1992; Peng, 1992; Petesch, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Choucri, 1993; Susskind, 1994). However, even in accepting the importance of the North-South split in international environmental negotiations, there is a hesitancy amongst many scholars to accept the ‘new’ North-South dialogue as an extension of the NIEO debate of the 1970s.

In large part, this is because of the *fear*—articulated by Sebenius (1991: 86-7)—that entertaining the South’s economic agenda

within the environmental dialogue might rekindle the confrontations and polarizations of yore. This hesitancy has also been propped up by the *hope* that the growing public perception of a collective threat to the global environment may translate into political momentum for collective international action (Porter and Brown, 1991: 156-9; Petesch, 1992: 92-7), or that the demise of East-West tensions might ease North-South misapprehensions (MacDonald, 1991: 42).

Polarizations across North-South lines, however, are unlikely to disappear either by ignoring them or by wishing them away. The resilience that the South has shown over the last quarter century in pursuing, what it considers, its legitimate agenda of economic justice and international systemic change demonstrates that all North-South negotiations, and particularly international environmental negotiations, will be dogged by this agenda. Although the South has seen its concerns being consistently ignored by a North that was not interested in them, the concerns themselves have not disappeared.⁵⁷ They have persisted, in many cases compounded, in the face of the worsening economic woes and political alienation, and are now reappearing in the South's articulation of its environmental agenda. This should not come as a surprise to scholars of the subject. As Hansen (1980: 1120) has pointed out, "in an era of linkage politics and strong Southern bloc institutionalization, the [South] will often attempt to accomplish in one setting what it is unable to accomplish in another." (see Najam, 1993a: 198-203).

Consider, for example, Porter and Brown's (1991: 124) description of how North-South relations have influenced environmental politics:⁵⁸

The tone and substance of North-South bargaining on environmental issues are influenced by the structure of the global economic system, which exerts indirect pressures on the policies of developing countries towards their natural resources and thus constrains the quest for global cooperation to save those

resources.... Developing states' perceptions of the global economic structure as inequitable has long been a factor in their policy responses to global environmental issues. Those perceptions are based on the reality of the industrialized countries' dominance of world trade and financial systems and the continued evolution of those systems to the disadvantage of developing countries.

They go on to point out that, “many developing countries, particularly the more radical members of the Group of 77, have viewed global environmental negotiations as the best, if not the only, opportunity to advance a broader agenda of change in the structure of North-South economic relationships” (Porter and Brown, 1991: 129). Rajan (1992: 135-6) provides examples of this view by quoting a Caribbean official as saying that “for the first time in more than a decade, the developing countries have an issue [i.e. the environment] where they have some real leverage,” and India’s environment minister going yet further to proclaim that “the begging bowl is really in the hands of the Western world”.⁵⁹ Taking the point further, Marc Williams (1993: 25) asserts that, “it is not...a question of environment being co-opted into the North-South debate. It already exists in this debate and is conceived in North-South terms.” In essence, the South’s perceives that its environmental interests lie on the same continuum as its economic interests; the ‘New International *Environmental Order*’ it now seeks, is an outgrowth of the ‘New International *Economic Order*’ it sought 20 years ago (Najam, 1993a: 198-203).

The persisting North-South divisions on environmental issues were most strikingly apparent at the 1992 Earth Summit.⁶⁰ UNCED gave the South a forum, an issue, and an audience that it had been denied since the late 1970s.⁶¹ Although it achieved little in way of substantive gains, the South—represented by an active and influential G77—was not only successful in reopening the North-South dialogue, but effectively made it *the* focus of the Summit (*see* Najam, 1993a; Williams, 1994).

Jubilation in the South, however, has been restrained. For many analysts, the revival of the North-South dialogue at Rio came too late and accomplished too little (Agarwal, 1992; Banuri, 1992; Khor, 1992). Yet, for a South that had gone to Rio fearful that the 1980s had left the North-South dialogue “in tatters,” that the clock on international economic cooperation had been “turned backwards,” and that the prospects for North-South cooperation were “bleak,” the very fact that the dialogue was resuscitated at Rio was probably UNCED’s biggest achievement (quotes from Peng, 1992; 27-29).

This was no mean achievement. From its inception, a stated objective of both NAM and G77 has been the establishment of North-South dialogue. Repeated resolutions of the NAM, meetings of the G77, and statements of Southern leaders have called for such a dialogue, as have reports from the Brandt Commission (1980) and the South Commission (1990).⁶² During the late 1970s the North reluctantly ceded to this demand. However, it did so out of necessity, rather than conviction (*see* Gordon, 1978; McDonald, 1982). The South Commission (1990: 216) explains:

The North-South dialogue acquired some momentum between 1974 and 1979. It was undoubtedly spurred by the fear of the developed countries that the newly found assertiveness of the South after the rise in oil prices in 1973 could lead to a damaging confrontation. For as long as that threat was perceived as possible, the North kept the dialogue going; when it subsided, the North withdrew.

This view is shared by scholars from the North. Renninger (1989: 250) points out that the North viewed the South’s stand as rigid, inflexible, unbusinesslike, confrontational, and unrealistic and “never accepted the need for radical change and has certainly resisted any attempts to alter the bases of its power over international economic life. Essentially the strategy followed by

the North [was] one of ‘damage limitation’... ranging from extreme hostility to acceptance in principle of certain kinds of changes to efforts to split apart the [South].” Hansen (1980: 1105) tells the same story:

Notwithstanding all the talk of a shift in the North from a policy of ‘confrontation’ to one of ‘negotiation’, Northern responses to Southern initiatives in the dialogue of the late 1970s remained fundamentally negative. Led by the United States, the North continued to reject almost all Southern proposals without engaging in serious negotiation and seldom, if ever, presented alternatives on its own.

The [North-South] Cancun Summit of 1981 made a last-ditch—unsuccessful—effort to revive the dialogue, which then remained all but dead through the 1980s.⁶³ In 1990, the South Commission (1990: 226) was still calling upon the developing countries to “strive for a revival of the North-South dialogue on a more meaningful and realistic basis.” By the end of the Earth Summit, the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, was echoing the call, proclaiming that the “rebirth of the North-South dialogue is absolutely urgent” (quoted in *Terra Viva*, 15 June 1992).

The fears of those who feel that a new dialogue will be no less acrimonious and no more fruitful than the old one, are not without foundation. However, some critical differences exist. With NIEO, it was the South calling for a dialogue and the North resisting (Hansen, 1980); in many ways the tables have now been reversed. It is the North that wants to engage the South in a dialogue out of the realization that global action on the environment cannot be successful without the active participation of the developing nations (Strong, 1992: vii; Petesch, 1992: 92). For the first time, both North and South wish to engage in a dialogue. Furthermore, there is a sense of urgency on both sides, since the effects of both environmental devastation and abject poverty compound over time (*see* Ramphal, 1992).⁶⁴

Most importantly, it is the nature of the environmental issue that could potentially make the new dialogue more fruitful than its predecessor (Rajan, 1992; Najam, 1993a; Williams, 1993). There isn't a serious lack of consensus between North and South on the desire to tackle environmental problems, the concern is about how to do it (*see* Ramphal, 1992).⁶⁵ The issue is one of 'who foots the bill,' both in terms of costs incurred and of benefits foregone. NIEO was seen, especially by the North, as a zero-sum game where it alone was would have to bear the costs (Gordon, 1978: 20; Hansen, 1980: 1123; Weintraub, 1980: 456; Sewell and Zartman, 1984: 375; Renninger, 1989: 253). In and of themselves, international (especially global) environmental issues are often non-zero-sum games. Delayed sea-level rise, or averted ozone depletion may help some nations more than others, but in general they help all nations. However, the costs to be borne by different parties, the ability to bear these costs, and the responsibility for causing the problem in the first place, are differentiated. The question, then, is not as much of the goals, as the means—who pays and why, by how much, and for what? These boil down to contentions about *past responsibility*, *present ability*, and *future priorities*. Serious differences exist between North and South, on all three.

From a negotiation point of view, one could 'trade across the differences' to arrive at mutual-gain solutions (*see*, Fisher and Ury, 1981; Raiffa, 1982; Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987). However, to do so we need to understand the nature of these differences. In popular, diplomatic, and even academic discourse, there exists a tendency to reduce the differences along only one axis: money. In a stylized view of the North-South conflict, the South is depicted as wanting to grab as much additional foreign aid as possible in the name of the environment, and the North as resisting to pay up. For example John W. McDonald (1982: 1), a senior U.S. negotiator at the U.N., suggests that "the term 'North-South dialogue' is shorthand for describing the pleas of the poor, often newly-emerging countries of the southern hemisphere to the rich countries of the 'North' to share the wealth." However, as Susskind (1994: 20) points out, "the issue is not how much more

money the North will provide to the South, but whether the underlying North-South relationship can be shifted from one of dependence and confrontation to one of fruitful interdependence.”

From a Southern perspective, its strategy is not one of ‘extortion’ but one that demands ‘just compensation’ from the North for its past responsibility in despoiling the global environment; it also seeks a change in Northern consumptive lifestyles so that its own development aspirations are not held hostage to Northern consumption; and finally it calls for a change in the international environmental agenda to reflect issues such as clean water, soil erosion, and desertification, which are of immediate concern to its populations (*see* Agarwal, 1992; Banuri, 1992; Khor, 1992). From the North’s standpoint these demands may seem unreasonable (Susskind, 1994: 21).

On the face of it, the differences in perceptions may seem like the recipe for a deadlock. However, the different importance that North and South attach to different issues can also be used towards issue-linkage. While issue-linkage is fraught with both dangers and opportunities, it can be “crucial to the success of negotiation[s]” that involve complex, multi-party, multi-issue bargaining (Susskind, 1994: 82).⁶⁶ While there is the danger of issue-linkage turning into blackmail—either by the North making its political and economic support conditional on the South following its environmental dictates, or by the South making its acceptance of global environmental treaties dependent on increased aid flows—there is a strong case for both to seek issue-linkages in their pursuit of meaningful environmental dialogue. For example, Williams (1993: 19) sees “the possibility of linking negotiations on global environmental change with demands for change in other areas of North-South relations [as] one crucial reason for the continued participation of developing countries in negotiations on environmental problems.” Porter and Brown (1991: 148, 152) suggest using linkages to create a “holistic... global bargain strategy” based on “a recognition of mutual dependence and self-interest amongst countries, both North and South.”

While issue-linkage that might incorporate the various interests is a potential strategy for breaking the impasse in North-South dialogue, it is by no means an easy strategy to operationalize. It would require a “level of political will... that [does] not appear to exist” (Porter and Brown, 1991: 152). From the North it would demand “a spirit of compromise” so that the South sees itself engaging in a “genuine dialogue” (Williams, 1993: 25). From the South it calls for setting “its [own] house in order,” because “unless [the South] is able to get greater honesty, efficiency, and self-reliance into its own economic systems, it will be consistently portrayed as a beggar” (Agarwal, 1992: 36). More generally, issue-linkage will only succeed where it is seen as being “legitimate,” if not seen as such by all parties, it would amount to nothing more than “blackmail” (Susskind, 1994: 98).

In addition to the above, expanding the agenda so that issue-linkage can be facilitated and mutual-gain solutions found, would also mean that international environmental negotiations will become increasingly complex. For the South as a coalition, this would mean organizing its very limited resources to manage both an extremely diverse (and sometimes divergent) constituency, and an equally diverse (and sometimes divergent) set of multilevel negotiations. For a coalition whose management style has been *ad hoc* at best and chaotic at worst, organization—rather than unity—may be the biggest challenge for the future (*see* Ramphal, 1980) . It is on this challenge that the final chapter will focus.

The Future: Framework For a South Secretariat

*We shall not cease from exploration,
And the end of all our exploring,
Will be to arrive where we started,
And know the place for the first
time.*

T.S. ELIOT (1888-1965)

According to Ramphal (1980: 13) it was not until the mid-1970s that North-South relations “moved from the level of petition to that of negotiation” ushering in, what he calls, “the era of negotiations.” Although the dialogue languished in stalemate during the 1980s, Ramphal’s description seems eminently apt for the 1990s.

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the formation of the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and the talks leading to the conclusion of the Uruguay Round of GATT all became *de facto* fora for North-South negotiations. By all indications, 1995 will again see such dialogue taking center-stage at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Second World Conference on Human Settlements, the World Social Summit on Development, and discussions concerning the 50 years of the U.N. and the Bretton Woods systems. Ongoing negotiations on issues such as biodiversity, climate change, deforestation and desertification are equally, if not more, being defined in the North-South context. The important point here is not simply the great surge in the sheer number and import of global negotiations, but the central role within them of North-South relations. The second generation of North-South dialogue has arrived.⁶⁷

The first generation of such dialogue roughly covered the span of the 1970s and fizzled out in the wake of Northern uninterest and Southern frustration in the very early 1980s. It left a decidedly

bad taste in the mouth for all concerned. Northern uninterest emanated from the belief that the developed countries had nothing to gain from North-South negotiations, a view articulated by Weintraub, 1980) who saw NIEO as “analogous to affirmative action” (p. 458) and opined that “[North-South] negotiation has no end as long as some countries are poor and others are rich. A concession to the South is merely the prelude for the next demand” (p. 456).⁶⁸ Southern frustration was voiced by Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980b: 270): “the North-South negotiations have deteriorated to a ritual and a skillful exercise in *non-dialogue*” (*original emphasis*).

Like most other analysts of the time, both Weintraub (1980) and Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980b) believed that North-South dialogue would not simply die out, but that there was little prospect of its triggering any significant structural change in international affairs (*see*, Gordon, 1978; Hansen, 1979; Ramphal, 1980; McDonald, 1982; Osio, 1983). “In order to negotiate effectively,” Weintraub (1980: 456) argued, “the weak must find some lever to give them strength.” Mahbub-ul-Haq’s (1980b: 276) analysis was more sobering: “It is possible that only a real international economic or political crisis will convince all sides to rush to the negotiating table.” Today, many in the South believe that the environment is that leverage; many in the North insist that the environment is that crisis.

Irrespective of whether environment is the crisis or the leverage that might facilitate a ‘global bargain,’ the fact remains that we are bound to see an increasing number of international negotiation on environmental issues; much of this will be increasingly North-South in flavor.⁶⁹ Moreover, environment will be a major, though by no means the only, area where we are likely to see increasing North-South dialogue.⁷⁰ However, the broad rubric or arena where much of this dialogue will take place may be best described as that of ‘sustainable development’—which incorporates not just environment but related issues of development assistance, poverty, women’s status, human settlements, population, social/human development, and if defined broadly enough, those of human rights, trade and even

disarmament.⁷¹ 'Sustainable development' is a fortuitous term in that it allows efficient packaging of issues of concern to both the North and the South; issues which they might otherwise have been hesitant to deal with individually.⁷² The second generation of North-South negotiations is, therefore, already better placed than its predecessor in that there exists the mutually acceptable rubric of 'sustainable development' to frame the negotiations in.⁷³

If, indeed, what we are seeing is the second generation of North-South dialogue—and if one assumes that both sides would prefer for this thrust of negotiations to conclude, unlike its predecessor, with win-win, joint gains—then each side would do well to learn from the lessons of the first generation of such dialogue.⁷⁴ Much analysis exists of why the initial effort at North-South dialogue ended in stalemate and what each side might do individually and collectively to change the outcome of future dialogue (*see* Gordon, 1978; Hansen 1979, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980a, 1980b, 1983; Ramphal, 1980; McDonald, 1982; Sewell and Zartman, 1984; Thomas, 1987); more recently, analysts have been focusing on how international environmental dialogue may accommodate North-South issues (*see* Porter and Brown, 1991; French, 1992; Petesch, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Najam, 1993a; Williams, 1993; Young, 1993; Susskind, 1994). This present paper focuses on what the South can do to better position itself for this second generation of North-South negotiation. In doing so, it shall converge its attention on what has been identified as the single most important negotiation prescription offered to the South from a variety of scholars—the need to seek 'strength in organization.'⁷⁵

The following sections synopsise the arguments made by earlier commentators on the need to have a formal organization to assist the South in negotiations, and then presents a framework proposal for what such a 'South Secretariat' might entail, what problems it might confront, and why such an institution would serve the interests not only of the South but also of the North.

Restating The Case For A South Secretariat

Sir Shridath S. Ramphal, former foreign minister of Guyana and Secretary-General of the British Commonwealth, has been amongst the earliest, most persistent, and most articulate advocates of setting up a formal organization to assist the South (specifically the G77) in global negotiations.⁷⁶ The case he makes is based on the following argument (Ramphal, 1980: 14-21):

The North [is] highly organized for negotiation... The South is almost wholly unorganized in terms of negotiations with the North, and even in terms of relations within the South... Neither in the nonaligned movement nor in the Group of 77 is there... [a] permanent Third World machinery for exploring the collective policy options of the developing countries... Decision making must rest with governments, and negotiation must be conducted by their collective instrumentalities like the Group of 77 negotiators; but both processes would be greatly assisted if informed by the most searching work of analysis and policy exploration, and by advice on strategy and tactics that takes account of the balanced interests of the South as a whole... [A South Secretariat] is the missing link between Third World unity and Southern strength... Its character must be essentially technocratic. It should have no negotiating role of its own... it must come from and belong to the Third World, for from its roots will it derive its authenticity... it must be an organization controlled by the South... it must, above all, be financed by the South...

Other prominent leaders of the South have been making a similar call. Principal amongst them is Mahbub-ul-Haq, Pakistan's

former minister for economic planning and finance, and originator of the World Bank's annual *World Development Report* as well as UNDP's annual *Human Development Report*. In 1976 (*The Poverty Curtain*, pgs. 182-3) he proposed setting up a central Third World Secretariat to serve the needs of various Southern fora (including G77 and NAM) and to "develop negotiating positions... [and] well-documented, specific proposals which harmonize the political and economic interests of the Third World." Four years later, he was still trying to win support for a Third World Secretariat by stressing that "little change will occur... unless the South begins to organize its countervailing power on a political, economic, and intellectual front" (1980a: 141) and that such an organization was "badly needed" to "shape a package of negotiations which would satisfy the different interests of [the South's] various constituencies" (1980b: 274). Finding many nations in the South still not ready for the idea in 1983 (pgs. 5-6), he passionately argued:

Must all countries of the Third World come together before they can set up a substantive Secretariat of the Third World? If we mean business, such a Secretariat can be started by a handful of countries, with others coming along later... I believe that for too long now we have waited for global negotiations to start. We have become willing victims of a non-event, settling for a non-dialogue since we have not developed sufficient confidence in the South in ourselves to start the dialogue anywhere, in any forum, on any subject holding some promise of progress. Indeed, I suspect that there has been a bureaucratic conspiracy of inaction.

Scholars of North-South dialogue have come to similar conclusions. Hall (1980) has called for "greater technical and organizational preparedness" (p. 47) in the G77 where he found "policy formulation occurs mostly through a haphazard, uncertain, and largely undirected process" (p. 51). In responding to the concerns of those opposing the idea of a permanent

organization, he proposes an 'Intergovernmental Advisory Group of Experts' having "no policymaking functions" and "operationally adapted to the present structure of the Group of 77 characterized by informality, rotating chairmanship, regional groupings, and tolerance of political, social, and economic diversity" (p. 56). He considered this especially important in light of the increasing range, volume and complexity of North-South dialogue (p. 47-9). Based in Geneva (p. 59), the group would be expected to provide technical advice to G77 negotiators; liaise with members governments, international organizations and nongovernmental and private research institutions; assist in establishing priorities for research and implementation therein; and serve as a training facility (p. 57).

Based on a negotiation theory analysis of North-South dialogue and the assumption that "North-South negotiations do not have to be a zero-sum game,"⁷⁷ Sewell and Zartman (1984: 375-88) conclude that "the South needs its own institution, analogous to the OECD" which should "not only provide analytical support but should strive to identify priorities and to develop and propose strategies and tactics for the negotiations." They believe that "a relatively small organization with a highly competent and qualified staff could provide the critical support system."

Such recommendations have not only come from individuals but also from representative Southern groups. For example, an informal meeting of leading Southern intellectuals held at Arusha, Tanzania in 1978 supported the idea (TWQ, 1989).⁷⁸ The group felt that "the South often faced the North without clearly defined objectives and agreed priorities, without a complete range of technical options, without a full consciousness of its leverage and without effective pre-negotiation to reconcile the diverse national and regional needs of its members" (p. 117-8). It stressed that "priority must also be given to developing long-term negotiating proposals for the 1980s and 1990s" (p. 120).

More formal deliberations have reached similar conclusion.⁷⁹ Sauvart (1981a: 44-54) details the efforts within the G77 to set up such a permanent structure.⁸⁰ Initially suggested at the very

first ministerial meeting of the group, and at subsequent meeting since then, the idea has, in each case, been referred back to various committees for ‘further review.’ Proponents of the idea have included such influential leaders as President Nyerere of Tanzania and Prime Minister Bandranaike of Sri Lanka. However, while the need for strengthening the organizational infrastructure of the South is accepted by all concerned, those opposed to setting up any form of a permanent organizational entity have remained unconvinced that the benefits would outweigh the attached risks.

Why have proposals for such an organization—having been made repeatedly by eminent scholars and leaders—been so consistently ignored? Some of the reasons identified include:

- Control will be taken over by bureaucrats and the secretariat will become a supranational agency constraining the power of governments (Ramphal, 1980: 18; Sauvant, 1981a: 53).
- Inordinate control will be taken over by coordinating governments “behind the veil of bureaucracy” (Ramphal, 1980: 18), or by those providing major financial support to the secretariat (Hall, 1980: 55; Sauvant, 1981a: 53).
- Centralization of decisionmaking will not only dilute the power of individual states but also of the regional clusters which have been an important feature, and source of strength, for the South, and particularly for the G77 (Hall, 1980: 51).
- Financing such an organization would be an added burden on already poor states (Hall, 1980, 56; Ramphal, 1980: 20; Sauvant, 1981a: 90ff66).
- The fear, especially in NAM, that the South may itself turn into a *bloc* (Ramphal, 1980: 18).
- A secretariat, primarily servicing G77, might disturb the balance between G77 and NAM, pitting one against the other *vis à vis* prominence and influence (Sauvant, 1981a: 53).

- UNCTAD, which is better equipped in resources and expertise than anything the South might itself create, is already serving as a *de facto* South Secretariat (Weiss, 1986: 93).⁸¹
- Such organization by the South might be viewed in the North as confrontational (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980a: 151; Ramphal, 1980: 20).
- Conversely, a secretariat would tend to take a “mediating role” and might draw the South towards compromises that may not be in its interest (Sauvant, 1981a: 51).
- An intrinsic resistance to institutionalizing the processes of informal consultation by which the South (especially the G77) has traditionally worked: “A resistance formed... out of the vast differences between members of the [G77]... and out of fears that too formal a Group structure might foreclose options better left open” (Ramphal, 1980: 18).
- The desire not to proceed with such an organization until all members within the larger Southern alliance are ready for it (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1983: 5).
- Divisive questions regarding location and financing (Sauvant, 1981a: 53; Weiss, 1986: 93).

In reviewing the debate, it seems that the very diversity of the South, which is a major rationale for setting up a South Secretariat, has been the biggest hurdle in its establishment. Over the years, NAM, G77, and the South in general, have used informal structures of decision-making as a method for managing diversity. The fear that more formal structures might accentuate the differences within the coalition has led to a hesitancy to create such structures. This is not to belittle the importance of other factors, including vested interests within the South and their fear that such a secretariat might trespass their turfs and reduce their power. However, given the persistent doubts about the validity of the coalition, conservative forces have argued “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it” to suppress the calls for a South Secretariat. Even where it is accepted that a South Secretariat may in fact

strengthen the coalition, the risk that it just might, instead, highlight the internal differences has been used by those who find the current system of *ad hocism* and informality to have worked well enough for the South.

To the question why an idea that wasn't accepted ten years ago, might be accepted today, the answer is simply one of timing.⁸² For the South, the end-1970s and the beginning-1980s—when the calls for a South Secretariat were the strongest—were marked by two somewhat contradictory sentiments. On the one hand, the euphoria of the memories of the Southern unity in the face of OPEC's price hike still lingered (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1976, Nyerere, 1980); on the other, the writing on the wall was spelling the demise of North-South dialogue in the face of Northern uninterest (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1983; Renninger, 1989).⁸³ The first gave the optimists the hope that the South's militant "trade unionism" was still the way to go; the later gave the pessimists the excuse that it was already too late to salvage the dialogue. Writing about the mid-1970s, Mahbub-ul-Haq (1976; 145) observed that "these were the early days of [the South's] new trade unionism. The first task was to shout, to raise slogans, to smash a few windows. More serious dialogue could only have come later." As the time for more serious dialogue approached, the South was still shouting, raising slogans and smashing windows. Too many amongst its ranks were still not ready for preparing for serious negotiation.

What may be different in the South of the 1990s is a new sense of sobriety. If the dominant memory in the early 1980s was that of forcing the North to the negotiating table because the South had its strength in unity, the dominant memory in the early 1990s was that of the North walking away from the table because the South had its weakness in organization. This new sobriety is best expressed in the 1990 report of the South Commission, *The Challenge to the South*. Sensing that new issues on the global agenda required even more technical expertise than before, hoping that the South may finally be ready to accept a South Secretariat, and responding to many of the concerns that had

challenged its formation in the past, the South Commission presents its case (1990: 200-5):⁸⁴

[Today] the South has more at stake in the global arena, as the agenda of issues becomes wider and more complex and as the North, much better equipped for international negotiations, becomes more disposed to using its weight in dealing with the South... [The] range and technical complexity [of the issues being negotiated]—and the multiplicity of forums in which negotiations take place—impose a negotiating burden far beyond the capacity of most developing countries... [Also,] the increasing diversity within the South demands careful attention to ways of accommodating different and sometimes even conflicting interests... [T]he developing countries should establish a well-staffed secretariat of the South that would provide continuing institutional support for analysis, interaction, negotiations, and follow-up action—the technical foundation for their collective action... [I]ts executive head should be a person of high international standing, and its senior professional officers should be chosen for their technical excellence as well as for their commitment to the cause of the South... [A] minimum staff of twenty to twenty-five professionals will be required... We have no doubt that the necessary resources can be found within the South to finance its work... [W]e do not believe that the establishment of the South Secretariat should depend on unanimity among the countries of the South. So long as there is substantial enough support to make its setting-up feasible, a start should be made.

The proposal in this paper builds upon the recommendations of the South Commission and of preceding advocates of a South

Secretariat. It attempts to lay out a more detailed framework for what such a Secretariat may look like and achieve. In addition to the many arguments made by earlier commentators, this proposal rests on the argument that the new phase of global environmental negotiations amplifies the utility of a South Secretariat, not only for the South but also for the North.

Designing a Secretariat

Secretariats have been defined as “executive support systems” (Sandford, 1992: 27). For the purpose of this paper we can divide the literature on international secretariats into three relevant streams.⁸⁵ By far the major stream is that of secretariats of the U.N. family. More recently an interest has been emerging in what may be called ‘treaty secretariats’ or ‘regime secretariats.’ A less studied category of international secretariats, but even more pertinent from our point of view, is what is referred to here as coalition secretariats.⁸⁶

Much of the discussion on international secretariats has focused on the working of the League of Nations (*e.g.*, RIIA, 1944; Jenks, 1945; Purves, 1945; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, 1945) or of its successor, the United Nations and its affiliates (*e.g.*, Young, 1967; Cox, 1969; Weiss, 1975, 1986; Meron, 1977; Bahttacharya, 1976; Pitt, 1986; Rasmusson, 1986; Streeten, 1986; Wells, 1986; UNA-USA, 1988; Kaufmann, 1988, 1989; Mango, 1988; Ali, 1990; Beigbeder, 1990). More recent interest in the management of environmental regimes and implementation of environmental accords has begun to spurt a growing literature on environmental secretariats (*e.g.*, Tucker-Scully, 1987; Messer and Berth, 1991; Sandford, 1992, 1994); also available in the literature, albeit to a limited extent, is discussion about other regime secretariats (*e.g.*, Hoole, 1976; Jackson, 1989). A third rich reservoir of information on the impact and management of international secretariats is found in the literature on the institutional structures servicing various coalitions such as the (British) Commonwealth of Nations (*e.g.*, Leach, 1971; Walker, 1978; Smith, 1981; Doxey,

1984; Groom, 1984, 1988), the European Union (*e.g.*, Mayne, 1968; Michelmann, 1978; Willis, 1983; Noël, 1993),⁸⁷ and NATO (*e.g.*, Jordan, 1967).⁸⁸ A sub category within coalition secretariats would be the secretariats of various regional organizations such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) (*e.g.*, Meyers, 1976).

Between them, these three types of international secretariats exhibit wide variations in structures of governance, mandates and organization—the three design features this proposal focuses on. It is not the intent, or scope, of this paper to review these variations. However, there is much that can be learnt from the experience of earlier experiments,. The following discussion will build upon the experience of existing international secretariats in outlining a design for the proposed South Secretariat.

The typology introduced here differentiates between secretariats on the basis of who they provide executive support to. International secretariats may provide such support to large international organizations (*e.g.*, the United Nations, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNCTAD, etc.), to specific treaty regimes (*e.g.*, RAMSAR, GATT, the Antarctic treaty system, etc.), or to particular coalitions (*e.g.*, the British Commonwealth, OECD, OPEC, NATO, etc.). Within this framework, the South Secretariat would best be described as a coalition secretariat. While other forms of international secretariats also provide useful insights, the most relevant experiments for our purpose, therefore, are those related to secretariats servicing coalitions such as OECD or the Commonwealth of Nations.

Governance: Who Will Call the Shots?

The question of governance—especially as it pertains to the level of autonomy that the secretariat and its staff enjoy, and the amount of control retained by those it is supposed to serve—has been the principal stumbling block in the realization of a South

Secretariat. Most proposals have envisaged a minimalist, non-autonomous, passive secretariat and have even stated explicitly that it should have no “policymaking functions” (Hall, 1980: 56) or “negotiating role” (Ramphal, 1980: 20) whatsoever. However, the fear that a formalized structure might attain a life of its own and become ‘un-tamable,’ has overridden all assurances by would-be architects of the South Secretariat.

The Role of States

The unease of state agents on the issue of secretariat autonomy and control is not restricted to the South. The level of autonomy enjoyed by, and activism allowed to, the U.N. Secretariat and its executive head, for example, has remained a major source of contention and conflict.⁸⁹ Similarly, the recent controversy over the election of the new president of the European Commission demonstrates the desire, even of strong states, to retain control over international bodies. Since developing states are weak states by definition, the question of autonomy and control becomes all the more sensitive. Hence the hesitancy of the South on the issue of setting up its own secretariat.

An international secretariat is necessarily a creature of the state parties it serves. As such, it can never be truly autonomous or entirely out of the control of those states. However, the level of autonomy and control can vary. For example, the secretarial arms of the NATO, and UNCTAD have generally tended to lie toward the assertive and activist end of the scale while those of OECD and RAMSAR have acted as more passive actors, concentrating on providing technical support rather than pushing agendas. The importance of whether a secretariat adopts an activist or passive role is illustrated by the fact that in reviewing the literature on international secretariats, Sandford (1994: 17) finds this variable being identified as the most important differentiating characteristic of such organizations. Young (1967: 263-71) describes the role of the secretariat and its staff as being

minimalist when the emphasis is on administrative tasks. As such, in the context of the passive role it makes more sense “to speak of the efficiency... [than] power.” The maximalist approach is characterized as laying the emphasis on “general executive authority and powers” and “on the position of the executive... as an important and, more or less, coequal element in the intrasystem power processes.”

While not disputing, and in fact highlighting, the importance of secretariat autonomy and activism, it is argued here that it is both understandable and reasonable for member states to seek to curb, rather than encourage, secretariat autonomy and activism. Given the criticality of sovereignty for all states (and especially for Southern states), the fear of supranational structures, and the element of the unknown in designing anything new, it is only to be expected that states would design new secretariats conservatively. However, as, and if, state parties gain more confidence in the performance of particular secretariats, and their executive heads, the level of autonomy and activism allowed may be enhanced. The important, and maybe obvious, point is that states need to, and rightfully so, retain control over secretariats. While they may, and often do, choose to relinquish some of this control to allow greater secretariat efficacy the choice to do so, or not, must always be, and seen to be, theirs to make: In essence, autonomy and activism are not qualities that secretariats *create* for themselves, rather they are *granted* by state parties and *claimed* by secretariat leadership.⁹⁰

Although many commentators have argued that activist secretariats would be more efficacious and effective (*e.g.*, RIIA, 1944; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, 1945; UNA-USA, 1988; Sandford, 1992, 1994), states have tended to create international secretariats with limited allowances for autonomy and activism. While particular states, motivated by political concerns, have often advocated—and sometimes won small concessions towards—comparatively more activist models, more conservative forces have nearly always prevailed.⁹¹ In the U.N., for example, the founders certainly envisaged a minimalist role for the secretary-general and secretariat, much like that in the League of Nations.

Jakobson (1993: 155) details how, at the 1945 San Francisco conference, “the Big Five still believed they would jointly run the world organization; they needed an office manager, not a policymaker.”⁹² In the case of the Commonwealth, Britain and Australia were disposed to a more limited role for the secretariat and largely prevailed over Canada and the African states who sought a more activist institution; the final rules explicitly state that the secretariat would not ‘arrogate to itself executive functions’ (Smith, 1981: 1-18; Doxey, 1984: 19). Even in the case of the European Community (now European Union), which has developed into the nearest structure we have to a supranational entity, member states have ceded their sovereignty over particular issues very reluctantly and through prolonged and complex processes of trust-building (Mayne, 1968). Even though the secretarial arms of the European experiment now tends to be activist, this is by no means a case of states setting it up as such; the very elaborate structures of the Council and the Commission are themselves designed to guarantee that member states retain control of the institution and the directions in which it heads.

Another important point about the levels of secretariat autonomy and activism is that it is largely a function of the individuals entrusted with leading it rather than the provisions in its enabling documents (*see* Meyers, 1976). The most illustrative example is that of the U.N. and its predecessor, the League of Nations. The secretariat was the most passive under Sir Eric Drummond, the first secretary-general of the League of Nations (*see* Ranshofen-Wertheimer, 1945, Young, 1967; Cox, 1969),⁹³ it became progressively more activist with subsequent appointments becoming most activist under Dag Hammarskjöld, and since then the level of secretariat activism has again receded (*see* Urquhart and Childers, 1990; Jakobson, 1993).⁹⁴ The implication is that since member states control the appointment of secretariat leaders, they retain *de facto* control over the level of activism and have *de jure* power to check it when they so desire. Also, state parties may sometimes themselves sanction an activist role for the secretariat as they seem to have done with the Commonwealth (*see* Leach, 1971; Smith, 1981; Doxey, 1984; Groom, 1984), and the NATO secretariat (Jordan, 1967).

The intent of the above discussion is to highlight the importance, prevalence and extent of state control over secretariat activities. Much of the writing on the subject, even where it accepts state control as a given, tends to gloss over its importance or imply that it is a dubious quality that needs to be somehow checked. The purpose here is to stress that state control over international secretariats is both legitimate and desirable. Autonomy and activism become positive qualities only where they serve to make the secretariat more efficacious in reaching the collective interests of the states that it serves. Moreover, this discussion should serve as a reassurance to skeptics in the South that even where secretariats have adopted more activist roles they have done so with the sanction of their state members, and done so to further their common goals.

Indeed, international secretariats—and particularly activist secretariats—can, and do, advocate particular courses of action on particular issues. But even in the most activist models, this is no more than recommendatory since final power vests with the state parties. Also, a recommendatory role is nearly always a mandated function of secretariats and decision-making mechanisms (to be discussed later) are used to ensure that such a role is not abused either by secretariat staff or by particular state parties. The thesis of this section has been that Southern states have little to worry about regarding a South Secretariat co-opting power and becoming overly assertive and autonomous. The experience of international secretariats suggests that it is the secretariat and its staff, rather than the state parties, that needs to be concerned on this count since the power of states to clip the wings of international secretariats is far more real than that of secretariats to grow wings on their own.

The Secretary-General

We now come to the question of the specific governance structure within the proposed South Secretariat, and especially how such a structure could straddle between the different memberships of NAM and G77. As executive support systems, secretariat may be

seen as the administrative arms of the principal executive organ of the international organization, regime or coalition that they service. The complication is that neither NAM nor G77 have a formalized executive organ *per se*; moreover, although the memberships of the two are functionally similar, they are not identical. This is one reason why most earlier proposals have advocated a secretariat to only serve the G77 (TWQ, 1979; Ramphal, 1980; Hall, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1983). However, like the more recent proposal from the South Commission (1990), this paper recommends a secretariat that would serve both NAM and G77.

The simplest, and most common, governance structure entails secretariats headed by a secretary-general who is appointed directly by the executive organ.⁹⁵ Most international secretariats follow some formulation of this system.⁹⁶ The role of the secretary-general in most secretariats affiliated to the U.N. family tends to be in the minimalist, caretaker mode. However, more proactive conceptions are seen in coalition secretariats such as NATO, where the secretary-general is the *ex-officio* vice-chairman of the Council and a participant in its deliberations (Jordan, 1967: 30-1), and in the Commonwealth where the secretary-general is “treated as an equal at Heads of Government Meetings and takes precedence at ministerial meetings” (Doxey, 1984: 21; *also see* Leach, 1971; Smith, 1981).

Informed by the experience of existing international secretariats, and the current constraints of NAM and G77, this paper suggests the following governance structure for the proposed South Secretariat:

- The existing practice of the head of state or government of the host nation for the NAM Summit serving as the chairperson for the group until the next Summit be maintained.
- The existing practice of the G77 chairpersonship rotating on an annual, regional basis, with the UN ambassador of the chair nation assuming that office for the year, be

maintained. As per current practice, the responsibility to actually negotiate on behalf of the Southern coalition should be retained by the G77 chairperson.

- A new post of the secretary-general of the South Secretariat be created to serve in an advisory capacity to both the G77 and NAM. The secretary-general should have a three-year term corresponding to the NAM summit meetings and no individual may serve more than two terms in office.

This schema affords a number of advantages. The most obvious is that of continuity of existing structures which is likely to make the proposal less threatening to conservative forces.⁹⁷ That NAM and G77 chairpersons are both state representatives provides state parties with substantive control over the secretariat. Moreover, the regional system of G77 leadership, whereby the chair rotates between the African, Asian and Latin American groups allows for enhanced regional balance. Finally, the secretariat, and particularly the person of the secretary-general, provides the missing formal link between the two institutions of the South without either having to be subsumed into the other.

However, two important procedural problems present themselves. The first relates to the how the secretary-general is to be appointed given the differing membership of NAM and G77. The second concerns the rank of the secretary-general and how that would relate to the chairperson of NAM (who is a head of state or government) and the chairperson of G77 (who is an ambassador).

In response to the first problem, it is proposed that the G77 Chairperson, with the approval of G77 ambassadors, should present to each NAM Summit a short-list of up to six names for the post of secretary-general, from which the final appointment should be made by the NAM Heads of Government. Citizens of either a NAM or G77 member state should be eligible for appointment. The rationale for this proposal is that national ambassadors to the U.N. are most often engaged in international negotiation and are therefore best placed to identify the tasks, skills and qualities required in the South secretary-general.

Moreover, the regionalized structure of G77 would ensure adequate regional focus. At the same time, leaving the final selection to the NAM Summit meeting would mean that a) the appointment is endorsed by both NAM and G77, and b) that it is endorsed at the very highest level of authority. Since representation at both NAM and G77 is composed of state officials, since both operate by consensus, and since the membership of the two is largely similar (though not identical) one can expect a high level of convergence of views between the two.

In responding to the second problem, the case of the Commonwealth secretariat may be instructive. At the time it was set up in the mid-1960s, various Commonwealth institutions were already working at various levels (i.e. Head of Government, Ministerial, etc.). After much debate, it was decided to designate the secretary-general as a 'senior ambassador' who would be treated as a 'near-equal' by Heads of Government and would take precedence at ministerial meetings. This has been facilitated at the Commonwealth through the choice of secretary-general's whose earlier accomplishments and personality affords them the respect of heads of state, ministers and ambassadors (*see* Leach, 1971; Smith, 1981; Doxey, 1984). A similar strategy is suggested for the South Secretariat.

It is proposed that the secretary-general of the South Secretariat hold the rank of a senior ambassador, function as the *ex officio* secretary of triennial NAM Summits, take precedence at ambassadorial or ministerial meetings, and generally serve as an ambassador-at-large, lobbyist and spokesperson for the South as a whole. As such, individuals selected for the job should be of high international standing, chosen for their achievement, experience, and international stature rather than narrowly defined 'technical skills.' The qualities sought in a prospective secretary-general should not only be restricted to those of good administrative skills, but should include diplomatic and negotiation experience. Someone who would be comfortable with, and welcomed by, Heads of Government in both South and North and executive heads of other international bodies. In short, the choice of the

secretary-general can be the difference between success and failure of the entire secretariat (*see* Hoole, 1976; Meyers, 1976; Cox, 1969).

Mandate: What Will It Do?

The role defined above for the secretary-general of the South Secretariat concentrates on 'external' functions: how, and at what level, would the secretary-general interact with other international leaders as the South's ambassador-at-large. Being an 'ambassador' implies that the secretary-general is a *carrier* and *disseminator* of the views of Southern leaders, rather than a challenge to their authority. As such, the role of the secretary-general is envisaged to be active, without being threateningly activist. For a coalition secretariat, this external function is important. However, the vast bulk of the South Secretariat's mandate has to be internal, focusing on providing state parties, and their policymakers and negotiators with the necessary support.

Externally, the secretary-general may be seen as the South's 'shadow' for the U.N. secretary-general; internally, (s)he should be seen as the 'chief facilitator'—as opposed to the 'chief executive'—of the Southern coalition. Someone who has the necessary stature and respect of other Southern leaders to provide frameworks and contexts in which issues can be discussed, intra-South bargaining can occur, coalition positions can develop, priorities be set, and the various interests of the component countries can be organized into negotiable packages. This facilitative role entails that the secretariat would seek to prevent major coalition cracks as much as to cement new alliances; to provide advice, not decisions; suggest options, not positions. The job of the secretariat and its secretary-general, then, is *not* to 'lead' the South in its negotiations with the North; rather, it is a) to facilitate a South-South dialogue that has to be the prologue to meaningful North-South deliberations, b) to provide Southern states, and subgroups thereof, with the necessary technical preparation for such dialogue, and c) enable the coalition as a

whole to articulate their collective interests into negotiation strategies.

Building on the experience of other secretariats⁹⁸ and earlier proposals for a South Secretariat,⁹⁹ this proposal suggests a three-pronged mandate for the South Secretariat: a) the provision of coalition management, b) technical support, and c) strategy development.¹⁰⁰

Coalition Management

The principal task of the South Secretariat should be the management of the Southern coalition. At the most basic level this would entail servicing the triennial NAM Summit conferences and periodical G77/NAM Ministerial meetings. This alone would allow the two institutions to work closer together and produce synergies by building on the work of each other. Although each is already committed to doing so, the absence of a coordinating body has seriously hampered the realization of this goal. By taking over the responsibility for the organization, agenda setting, and implementation of decisions taken at NAM Summits (currently the responsibility of the host nation), the South Secretariat would provide both continuity and accountability to what have been *ad hoc* and piecemeal arrangements.

The South Secretariat should also assume the responsibility of organizing periodic—at least one each year—thematic ministerial meetings. In the past such meetings were sporadically organized by either NAM or G77. It is proposed that the South Secretariat organize them in a systematic and regular manner and that they be called ‘South Ministerial Meetings’ with participation from members of both NAM and G77. In many cases these would become preparatory meetings for upcoming international negotiations, in others they would be exploratory meetings for outlining intra-South priorities and for advocating new issues on the international agenda. In particular cases, regional Ministerial meetings should be organized. Such meetings would foster important South-South dialogue on agenda-building, priority-

setting, and identification of practical avenues for South-South cooperation in technological, informational, economic and other areas of activities.

Facilitating South-South dialogue should be a major area of activity for the South Secretariat, and should not be confined only to the Head of Governments and Ministerial levels. Mahbub-ul-Haq (1980a: 143) stresses that “the South badly needs a framework within which frequent and informal *South-South dialogues* can be organized... [which will be] an essential prelude to any meaningful North-South negotiations” (original emphasis). The South Commission (1990: 203-4) reaffirms the call for such dialogue at all levels including those of scholars, industry and business leaders, NGOs, and community organizations. Furthermore, participation of regional Southern alliances such as OAU, ASEAN, SAARC, etc., should be encouraged in all secretariat activities, and particularly in activities related to South-South dialogue. A model of international secretariats facilitating non-state dialogue is already available in the working of the Commonwealth (*see* Walker, 1978).

Technical Support

Writing in 1980, Kenneth O. Hall (p. 47) cited the “complexity and multiplicity of negotiating forums” as a principal reason for setting up a technical support system of some sort for Southern negotiators. Both the complexity and the multiplicity of negotiating forums have multiplied in this era of international environmental negotiations.

Environmental issues, which are a major focus of North-South negotiations today, are increasingly complex, inter-related to each other and to a whole spectrum of other social and economic concerns, and display high degrees of scientific uncertainty. Very few developing countries have either the technical expertise or the resource to devote the required level of attention to these issues at a continual basis and the increasing number of international environmental negotiations are forcing Southern countries to spread their resources thin. Sewell and Zartman’s

1984 (p. 385) description remains essentially current—if anything the situation has worsened:

Even if they are technically qualified, Southern negotiators are often too busy to undertake the time-consuming work to assemble the necessary statistical and technical information. The negotiators of the South are invariably outnumbered by their counterparts from the North and overwhelmed by routine work. They are burdened by the paper-work produced in the course of the negotiations alone. They frequently lack the time and energy to cope up with new developments and to adjust their negotiation positions.

The Report of the South Commission (1990: 21) tells the same story:

Most countries of the South do not individually have the capacity to deal with the detailed, technical negotiation in the many forums and on the multitude of subjects involved in present-day North-South economic relations. Each of these countries tends eventually to spread its very limited resources of skilled negotiators so thin that it is not fully effective in any area.

Provision of technical support has been the single most cited, and least controversial, reason to set up an institution akin to the proposed South Secretariat (*see* TWQ, 1979; Ramphal, 1980; Hall, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980a, 1983; Commonwealth, 1982; Sewell and Zartman, 1984; South Commission, 1990). Also, the provision of some form of technical support is, in fact, a standard feature of all models of international secretariats studied (RIIA, 1944; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, 1945; Jordan, 1967; Mayne, 1968; Leach, 1971; Doxey, 1984; Mango, 1988; Sandford, 1994).

It is proposed that in relation to providing technical support to the South in general, and Southern negotiators in particular, the South Secretariat should follow a two-pronged strategy. The first is to follow the pattern of the OECD secretariat in preparing—both in-house and through commissioned studies—technical analyses and updates on a wide variety of relevant issues pertaining to current and forthcoming areas of North-South interest. At the same time the secretariat should be in a position to provide—either from in-house experts or through contracted consultants—experts to advise G77 negotiators on technical issues pertaining to particular issues during particular negotiations.

A major thrust of the South Secretariat's technical support activities is likely to be in assisting nations and regions with regime- and treaty-related reporting requirements. An increasing number of treaties (*e.g.*, biodiversity convention) and organizations (*e.g.*, the Commission on Sustainable Development) require signatory nations to produce regular, often annual, reports. Most developing countries are finding the increasing scope of such work to be burdensome on already stretched resources. In some cases such reporting is already contracted out to international agencies and NGOs, especially where some form of donor money is available. It is proposed that wherever feasible the South Secretariat should take on such responsibility as a commissioned exercise. In some cases, particularly with many environmental issues, it may even make more sense to do such reports on a regional, rather than national, basis which the secretariat would be better placed to do than individual countries.

More generally, the South Secretariat should also maintain databases of various types of relevant information on developing countries, and prepare reports and studies on particular issues, regions and countries that may assist Southern governments in arriving at better informed policies both internationally and domestically. This proposal also endorses the recommendation of the South Commission (1990: 203) that the South Secretariat should “publish an annual review of South-South co-operation, which should eventually become an authoritative work of reference and source of information.” In short the South

Secretariat should work towards becoming a clearinghouse of policy-related information and analysis on all issues pertaining to the countries of the South.

Strategy Development

In relation to international negotiations, the bulk of the work of the South Secretariat is in the pre-negotiation phase. The negotiation power of the South is the power of coalition. However, the coalition itself has become increasingly unwieldy—efforts to please all interests often lead to pleasing no one at all; group positions succumb to the lowest common denominator syndrome.¹⁰¹ The South puts a high premium on obtaining common positions and goes to considerable lengths to achieve them. As Sauvant (1981a: 18) points out, “for the developing countries... a united stand is often an important bargaining asset in itself and, in any event, protects them from being played off against each other.” However, given the size of the coalition and the absence of any formal management support, Southern negotiators are constrained on their ability to return to their constituency during negotiations to develop or consider new innovative options. The result is—what often seems like—inflexible, entrenched, uninspiring, and ‘stubborn’ positions, that make the negotiations seem zero-sum even when they need not be so.

Maintaining Southern unity requires a great deal of intra-South negotiation (Weintraub, 1980: 455):

Unity is only possible among countries which are disparate in needs if something is included for everyone. All can demand more concessional aid, for while the poorer developing countries would be the beneficiaries, the richer would not be hurt. The richer developing countries benefit more from trade concessions from the North, but the poorer are not hurt. Demands are more complicated to formulate when some countries' interests are damaged. This explains the

conflicts over demands for debt rescheduling. At times 'log-rolling' (A will accede to including B's demand if B reciprocates) is not possible and unity is attained by omission—as with oil prices.

However, as Ramphal (1980: 16) points out, the “total absence of organized support exposes intrinsic weakness and conceals intrinsic strength.” While the weakness comes from individual country interests having to be diluted to accommodate interests of other coalition partners, the strength emanates from the coalition as a whole being taken more seriously by other parties than individuals countries might have been. The realization that the strength is, or at least can be, greater than the weakness has kept the coalition intact; however, the failure to systematically cultivate this strength has made the power of coalition less effective than it might have been. The South Commission (1990: 21), for example, believes that “well-organized collective action could benefit all countries, with little, if any, significant sacrifice of national advantage.” This strength of the coalition can, for example, be harnessed through carefully articulating negotiation ‘packages’ that exploit the potential for joint-gains through issue-linkage and allow multiple North-South win-win deals on issues of mutual interest.¹⁰² Ramphal (1980: 19) explains:

Foremost among the needs which a Southern support system must serve in the era of negotiations is the coordination of the interests of all developing countries in the negotiating process. Because these interests are so varied, it is essential to Third World unity that the negotiating basket contains ‘packages’ of importance to each of the principal constituencies of the South. This requires the most sensitive and exacting work of preparation. It is easy enough to put into the basket every package at hand; but it avails nothing if in the end it is a load the South cannot carry.

This would require the South Secretariat orchestrating a process of South-South consultation during pre-negotiation, negotiation, and post-negotiation phases that allows the development and refinement of negotiation packages which cultivate issue-linkages. There is little that the experience of other secretariats tells us about how this may be done in a coalition as large and heterogeneous as the South. However, one approach that negotiation theory suggests is to allow the formulation of multiple sub-coalitions within the supra-coalition (Sewell and Zartman, 1984: 402-3; Susskind, 1994: 124-6).¹⁰³ For example, oil-producing countries have always acted as a sub-coalition within G77. On environmental issues, small island states, or countries with large areas of tropical forests, or nations severely threatened by desertification could form sub-coalitions within the larger Southern coalition on the basis of issues of the highest priority to them.

The South, as a whole, should come to its common position as a result of negotiations between these sub-groups, and the relevant sub-coalition should be entrusted with lead negotiation responsibilities in matters concerning their particular interests because they are likely to be best informed about its intricacies. The secretariat's responsibility should be to facilitate South-South negotiations between these various sub-coalitions which would inform the larger packages that the South as a whole adopts. Furthermore, regional, issue-oriented, and interest-oriented working groups at multiple levels of representation—statal, regional, nongovernmental, academic, etc.—should be encouraged in facilitating South-South dialogue towards formulating larger common positions.

Organizational Structure: How Will It Work?

There is much discussion in the literature, at a level of great detail, on the various aspects of the organizational structures for international secretariats and on the efficacy of particular models; much of it in the context of reforming existing structures (*see*, RIIA, 1944; Jenks, 1945; Purves, 1945; Ranshofen-Wertheimer, 1945; Mayne, 1968; Leach, 1971; Weiss, 1975; Meron, 1977;

Michelmann, 1978; Willis, 1983; Doxey, 1984; Pitt, 1986; Wells, 1986; Mango, 1988; UNA-USA, 1988; Ali, 1990; Beigbeder, 1990). It is not the purpose of this section to review this discussion and it is yet premature to analyze the micro-issues of organizational management of the proposed South Secretariat. However, the lesson of these, and such, studies is that many aspects of what may seem like ‘petty’ administrative issues can be highly political in the context of international institutions. Decisions taken at the design stage on such issues can have profound impact on the future development of the structure. A few such salient issues will be touched upon in this section.

The Role Of Consensus

The proposed South Secretariat, like most existing secretariats, is *not* supposed to be a decisionmaking body. As such, a discussion of decisionmaking processes (i.e. voting mechanisms, etc.) is technically moot. Having said that, however, a brief review of the decisionmaking process in NAM and G77—whose decisions will affect the activities of the South Secretariat—is of relevance, especially since part of the secretariat’s mandate is to assist in smooth functioning of that process. It is also relevant because the process of decisionmaking in both NAM and G77 is not majority voting, but the more nebulous concept of ‘consensus.’

As is the case with some other international institutions (*e.g.*, the Commonwealth of Nations), both NAM and G77 take decisions by the rule of consensus—however, consensus does not imply unanimity. As Geldart and Lyon (1980: 87ff14) point out, “to take decisions by consensus rather than formal vote is reminiscent of Rousseau’s distinction between the ‘general will’ and the merely aggregated ‘will of all’.” Sauvant (1981a: 17) testifies that the South appreciates this distinction:

Consensus does not require that, if a roll-call were taken, all countries would vote in the same manner. Rather, to quote from a passage on “Decision-Making by Consensus” adopted by the Non-Aligned Countries at their 1979 Havana

summit conference, “consensus has a certain indefinable quality” which “presupposes understanding of and respect for different points of view including disagreement and implies mutual accommodation on the basis of which agreement can emerge by a sincere process of adjustment among member nations...” Or, to quote the definition of consensus used by the Paris Conference on International Economic Co-operation, “decisions and recommendations are adopted when the Chair has established that no member delegation has made any objections.” In other words, consensus exists when no state has taken formal exception to the course of action that is being proposed.

Important from the perspective of the South Secretariat’s envisaged facilitative role are the obvious but oft-forgotten insights that “a consensual approach is achieved when everyone agrees to live with a particular formulation of a problem and its solution because everyone knows the settlement is the best available under the circumstances, and because it attends to each party’s most important concerns” (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987: 77); that “the consensus-formulation process is one of negotiation” (Sauvant, 1981a: 16); and that negotiation is itself a form of decisionmaking “in which unilateral positions in conflict are turned into multilateral decisions that are deemed preferable by the parties on the combined basis on cost, goals, and effectiveness” (Sewell and Zartman, 1984: 381).

The South Secretariat’s own style of internal management and external relations must reflect the same focus on negotiation and consensus as decisionmaking processes that characterize NAM and G77. This is particularly true in terms of following the regional approach which has been the principal feature of G77 decisionmaking and an important factor in NAM decisionmaking. The secretariat works must not be seen as threatening the fine regional balance that the South has always strived to maintain. A regional focus and consensus should be incorporated into

secretariat decisions pertaining to staffing, meeting locations, research foci, and all other activities. Given the envisaged emphasis on environmental issues, a similar balance and consensus would have to be maintained in the choice of issues that the secretariat chooses to focus upon and the priorities therein.

Staffing And The Organizational Tree

It has been argued that “recruitment is the most difficult, as it is the most important, of the functions falling to the internal administration of an international authority” (Purves, 1945: 13). There are two models on the staffing of international secretariats. The first, and dominant, model entails an independent international civil service, while the second is based on staff seconded from the bureaucracies of the member states. The development of the notion of an independent international civil service is credited to Sir Eric Drummond (Jordan, 1967: 6; Kaufmann, 1988: 106) and has been the norm in most secretariats. However, nowhere has it been applied in its purest form and the principle of the neutrality of the international civil servant is scarcely accepted, leading to systems of complex, sometimes unstated, regional and national quotas in such appointments (*see* Hoole, 1976; Meron, 1977; Kaufmann, 1980; Willis, 1983; Wells, 1986; Ali, 1990; Beigbeder, 1990). The less popular model of secondment from state parties is applied at the Commonwealth secretariat (Leach, 1971; Doxey, 1984).¹⁰⁴ It is suggested that the Commonwealth model would be more appropriate for the South Secretariat.

A secondment procedure is useful for the South secretariat for a number of reasons. First, the small size and budget of the secretariat may not attract the best available talent in open recruitment, but governments may be willing to allocate some of their top talent for short periods, especially when the expertise of these individuals are used for particular negotiations also of interest to the governments in question. Second, this provides added reassurance to governments that the secretariat would not become too independent. Third, secondees would bring insights

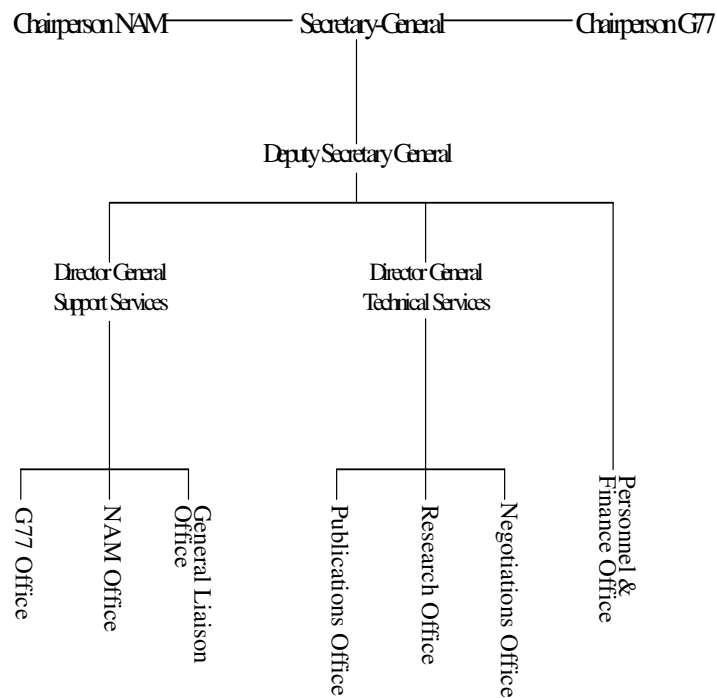
into government thinking and priorities which would make the secretariat's activities all the more relevant to national governments.

This is not to suggest that the secretariat should foreclose the possibility of direct recruitment. As already mentioned, a lot of the work, especially in the provision of technical support, would have to be contracted through short-term, consultancy-like appointments. Direct recruitment may also be used at the secretary-general's discretion wherever appropriate. The general objective for all appointments should be efficiency, integrity, and maintaining a regional balance. The importance of maintaining a regional balance is well-established in the literature (*see* RIIA, Purves, 1945; 1944; Weiss, 1975; Willis, 1983; Doxey, 1984; Ali, 1990; Sandford, 1992, 1994). Although the best talent should be sought for each position, every effort should be made to maintain a regional balance in the overall composition of the secretariat so that it better reflects the overall interests of the South.

Coming now to the specifics, it is proposed that the secretary-general should be supported by a deputy secretary-general who should act as a virtual chief-of-staff for all matters administrative. While the secretary-general's role has been conceived as that of an ambassador-at-large and elder statesman of the South, the role of the deputy secretary-general should be that of the chief administrator of the secretariat. A Personnel and Finance Office should assist, and directly report to, the deputy secretary-general in fulfilling these administrative responsibility.

Functionally, the activities of the secretariat should be divided between two directorates responsible for 'support services' and 'technical services' respectively. Each should be headed by a director general. The director general for support services should be responsible for the offices dealing with G77, NAM, and general liaison. Between them, these should be the key players in organizing the NAM summits, the Ministerial meetings, other South-South dialogue and preparatory meetings related to various international negotiations. The director general for technical services should be responsible for the offices of negotiation,

research and publication. The tasks of technical support, discussed earlier, should be the principal responsibility of these offices, with the negotiation office focusing principally on preparing strategies for specific international negotiations. By necessity, coordination would be required, and should be encouraged, between the various offices for support and technical services.

Figure 1: South Secretarial: Organizational Schema

It is proposed that amongst the top four positions—i.e. secretary-general, deputy secretary-general and two directors general—at least one person from each of the three regions of the G77 (Africa, Asia, Latin America) be represented. While the process for selecting the secretary-general has already been explained, the selection for the other three positions should be made by the secretary-general with member states encouraged to nominate candidates but the secretary-general retaining the authority to also consider candidates not nominated by any government. The secretary-general should make appointments to these three positions in consultation with NAM and G77 leadership. Other positions should be filled through seconded or direct recruitment

with contracts typically lasting for three years with the possibility of reappointment.

The South Secretariat is not envisaged to be a large organization. However, to be functional and to fulfill the mandate defined above, it needs to be staffed with a reasonable number of high-quality professionals. Each of the seven 'offices' defined in the organizational schema should be headed by a director with the requisite qualifications. The specific staffing requirements of each office would vary, although a minimum of three professionals in each office (including the director) is likely to be necessary. A number of contract consultants and staff would also need to be employed on a case-by-case basis. Given the above estimates, and allowances for certain offices (e.g., the Research Office) requiring larger staffs, it is estimated that a professional staff of around 30 people should suffice. This is in line with the estimate made by the South Commission (1990: 205) and is many factors of magnitude less than other comparable secretariats, including that of the Commonwealth.

Location

The location of international secretariats have important administrative and political implications. Interesting debate on the subject was conducted in the mid-1940s before setting up new United Nations structures. One innovative, but impractical, idea was to designate statehood to an "internationalized" area belonging "to all nations and to none" which would have the headquarters of all international organizations (Jenks, 1945). Others identified more pragmatic, administrative criteria such as the size, politics, and language of the host country and the technical facilities, weather, and living conditions in the host city (Purves, 1945). However, the view that "the site for the organization will probably be chosen on grounds of high policy rather than of administrative needs" (RIIA, 1944: 47) proved to be largely correct. In the case of the South Secretariat, however, the location should be dictated by pragmatic administrative concerns rather than high politics.

It is tempting to suggest that the South Secretariat should be based in the South. However, given the budgetary constraints that the secretariat is bound to face; the fact that the bulk of North-South negotiation happens in U.N. fora in New York and Geneva; and that part of the reason for setting up this secretariat is that many Southern government find themselves far removed from the arenas of such negotiation, it is much more pragmatic to station the secretariat at either New York or Geneva.

In the late 1970s, Geneva was the undoubted capital of North-South dialogue, especially because of the preeminence of UNCTAD in such negotiations. Then, it was the obvious choice for such a secretariat (Hall, 1980: 59). Since then, however, the role of UNCTAD has diminished and the importance of U.N. general assembly-based North-South negotiations and of the G77 group at New York has increased. Additionally, Southern countries are far better represented with permanent U.N. missions in New York than at Geneva. It is, therefore, argued that the main office of the South Secretariat should be based in New York.¹⁰⁵

This, however, does not imply that the secretariat should focus its activities on New York. Given the regional emphasis of the South and of the proposed South Secretariat, this proposal finds Rosemary Sandford's (1994: 27) notion of regionalizing secretariat activities extremely useful. Eventually, the South Secretariat should aim at having at least one 'regional center' each in Africa, Asia and Latin America. But even on a more immediate basis, advances in the means of communication afford the secretariat the liberty to house various 'offices' in various relevant locations. It is suggested, therefore, that while the headquarters of the South Secretariat should be based in New York particular offices of the secretariat may be dispersed to other locations, preferably on a rotational basis.

The NAM office of the South Secretariat, for example, should rotate on a three-yearly basis. Operationally, this would mean that the NAM office should move to the capital of the host country of the forthcoming NAM Summit a year before the

summit itself and remain there for the two years following the summit. Since this office would be principally responsible for organizing the summit meeting, this arrangement would give it the opportunity to spend the first year in that location in organizing for the meeting and the following two in overseeing the implementation of its decisions. Ideally, the director of this office should also change every three years and be appointed from the host country itself. Such an arrangement would make the NAM office more effective, would allow the host country to retain the importance that it now has, and would facilitate better interaction with the NAM Chairperson (the Head of Government of the host country). In return for this arrangement the host country should be asked to bear the cost of the NAM office for that three-year period, thereby reducing the financial burden of the South Secretariat.

A somewhat similar rotational location should be adopted for the South Secretariat's Research Office. In this case, however, the rotation should be made between cities in Africa, Asia and Latin America on a five-yearly basis. The rationale for this proposal is that it would better facilitate the incorporation of regional perspectives which may be lost, or diluted, in New York. Additionally, this system would cultivate and encourage the development of local expertise and serve as a fillip for local research institutions. Ideally, in five years enough momentum would be gathered in local institution building for the work to be continued even after the Research Office moves to the next region.

Financing

Problems of financing are endemic to all international organizations and are considered to be "perhaps the most significant constraint faced by secretariats" (Sandford, 1994: 22). This, despite the fact the budgets of all, without exception, international organizations are relatively small.¹⁰⁶ The issues with financing often boil down to questions of finding mechanisms whereby member nations would willingly make financial contributions while also ensuring that those making the

most contributions are not seen as exerting inordinate control over the organization. Often, finding a solution the later means reducing the options for the first.

The most important points to be made about the issue of financing as it pertains to the proposed South Secretariat are: a) to the maximum extent possible, the South Secretariat should be financed by the South itself, and b) control over the activities of the South Secretariat should not be, nor seen to be, in any way related to the financial contribution of particular actor, nation, or region. A third, not unimportant, point is that given the size and scope of the proposed secretariat, its budget is likely to be extremely small and as the South Commission (1990: 205) puts it, one can be confident that “the necessary resources can be found within the South to finance its work.”

It is proposed that each year a minimum necessary amount be assessed for the smooth running of the organization, approved by the G77, and collected from all members of G77 and NAM on the basis of some variation of the U.N. financial contribution formula. Given the budgetary requirements of the secretariat and the total number of countries making contributions, this formula (based on the population and economic well-being of the country) is likely, in most cases, require very small contributions from individual countries. However, the mandatory nature of this contribution would firstly ensure a pool of regular finances for the secretariat, and secondly give every member country a sense of ‘ownership’ rather than dividing them into groups of ‘donors’ and ‘recipients’.

In addition, the secretariat should be encouraged to tap voluntary contributions from individual countries, international organizations, and foundations. Some of these sources may be in the North but their contribution should be accepted only where the secretary-general provides assurance that they are in no way influencing the decisions of the secretariat or the findings of its research and analysis. Innovative options, to be explored by the secretary-general, might include setting up a ‘South Fund’ from larger, one-time contributions, to provide fiscal independence to

the secretariat in the future. Another option may be to tap into United Nations resources which, although themselves scarce, could provide the secretariat with a relatively less controversial outside source of finances. One possibility might be to ask the U.N. to credit national contributions to the South Secretariat towards fulfillment of national contributions to the U.N. Most such contribution would be insignificant in comparison to the U.N. budget, but important in terms of South Secretariat financing. Various funds currently allocated to assisting developing countries in pre-negotiation, negotiation or post-negotiation activities may also be diverted towards the South Secretariat which would now be providing such help directly.

Even though the modest scale of the proposed enterprise means that the amounts required would be small—even trivial by some comparisons—the problems of financing should not be taken lightly. As Sandford (1994: 22) points out, secretariat staff sometimes have to spend inordinate effort and energy chasing governments for non-payment or late payment of contributions. This can be a costly distraction for organizations that are already short on human and financial resources.

Although neither of these proposals has generated much enthusiasm elsewhere, it is proposed that the South Secretariat consider some modest penalty (*e.g.*, a simple accumulation of interest) on late payments and some mechanism whereby projected contributions are collected at least two years in advance rather than the current system of annual assessment and collection which often means that the secretariats have to spend first and collect later, but are never sure how much they are likely to collect.

Why The North Should Welcome a South Secretariat?

As has been argued in earlier sections, the rebirth of North-South dialogue in this era of ecopolitics signifies an important structural difference over its earlier incarnation in the era of cartel-politics. The call for a 'New International *Environmental* Order,' unlike the earlier call for a 'New International *Economic* Order,' comes

from the North as well as the South. For its part, the South sees in this an opportunity to rearticulate the still lingering concerns that had underpinned its original NIEO demands. However, irrespective of the fact that the North and South's conceptions of what a New International Environmental Order would entail is fundamentally different, the environment has provided the two sides an opportunity to renew a dialogue that remained mired in acrimony and stagnation during the entirety of the 1980s. While the South has long desired such dialogue, the fact that this time the North actually wants to indulge the South marks a new and important structural difference from the North-South relations of the 1970s. Equally significant as a sea change is the sense, even if it is a very cautious and hesitant sense, in both North and South that environmental issues are non zero-sum and have the potential for facilitating joint gain, win-win bargains.

A principal cause of the failure of earlier North-South dialogue was the perception, especially in the North, that any such negotiation was essentially a zero-sum game (Gordon, 1978; Hansen, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980b; Weintraub, 1980; Sewell and Zartman, 1984; Renninger, 1989). Weintraub (1980: 455) had voiced this view in asking "What does the South offer in return?" With global environmental issues, the South has a potential answer. In reviewing an earlier era of North-South negotiations, Sewell and Zartman (1984: 389) had felt that "an invitation to find a common solution to a common problem is the beginning of a search for a jointly satisfactory formula." For many in both the North and the South, the environment seems to be that common problem. To the South, it provides an opportunity to rearticulate its concerns about global systemic change; to the North, it provides a rationale for taking the South and its concerns a little more seriously than it has in the past.

Young (1993: 447), for example, believes that the South has "substantial bargaining leverage when it comes to the issue of climate change" and that "northerners will ignore the demands of the South regarding climate change at their peril." While others have slightly less charitable views on the extent of the South's bargaining leverage (*e.g.*, Agarwal, 1992; Rajan, 1992; Williams,

1993; Susskind, 1994), the importance of North-South negotiations is now generally accepted by the majority of scholars as a continuing element in international environmental politics (*see* Young, 1989; Caldwell, 1990; de la Court, 1990; Agarwal and Narain, 1991; Matthews 1991; Porter and Brown, 1991; French, 1992; Gardner, 1992; Peng, 1992; Petesch, 1992; Thomas, 1992; Choucri, 1993; Williams, 1993; Susskind, 1994).

The implication of this sea change is that the North is no longer a 'blocking coalition' in North-South negotiations. The environmental agenda has provided it with an important interest in wanting such dialogue to arrive at meaningful resolution. For the North, therefore, a South that is better organized for negotiation means a South that it is easier to negotiate with. The North should welcome a South Secretariat because it has the potential to depoliticize the dialogue and raise it from the level of rhetoric to that specific policy proposals.

Although any attempt by the South to organize its strengths and reaffirm its unity is likely to be seen by some in the North as an act of confrontation, an alternative interpretation of such organization is to view it as the graduation from the era of 'street politics' to that of 'conference diplomacy'—to use the imagery of Mahbub-ul-Haq (1976: 145), the setting up of a South Secretariat would signify the conclusion of the era of shouting, raising slogans, and smashing windows and the ushering in of more serious dialogue.

Finally, the North should welcome the setting up of a South Secretariat for totally pragmatic reasons. In streamlining Southern interests and position in international negotiation, the secretariat would also do a service to Northern negotiators by better informing them of Southern concerns. This, alone, would be an important win-win contribution of the South Secretariat. The task of trying to negotiate with 130 disparate countries, and attempting to make any sense of 130 disparate interests on the multitude of issues, cannot be an easy prospect. By attempting to articulate the collective interests of these various countries, and sub-coalitions thereof, the South Secretariat would make life that

much easier for both Southern and Northern negotiators. In fact, the South Secretariat has the potential for making the entire international negotiating system that much more efficient by organizing various Southern interests into more coherent negotiation packages, by encouraging economies of scale and time in the pre-negotiation, negotiation and post-negotiation phases, and by generally enabling Southern delegates at international negotiations to be better prepared, and therefore more likely to arrive at joint-gain, win-win solutions to international environmental problems.

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Endnotes

1. In a much debated 1990 essay, and later in his 1992 book, Francis Fukuyama argued that the century's ideological wars are over, and liberal democracy has won. In the past, the two challenges to liberalism were fascism and communism. Fascism was destroyed by World War II and communism is currently undergoing drastic changes. He contends that liberal democracy is the final form of government and, therefore, we have reached the "end of history."
2. In a much debated 1990 essay, and later in his 1992 book, Francis Fukuyama argued that the century's ideological wars are over, and liberal democracy has won. In the past, the two challenges to liberalism were fascism and communism. Fascism was destroyed by World War II and communism is currently undergoing drastic changes. He contends that liberal democracy is the final form of government and, therefore, we have reached the "end of history."
3. Although the demise of the Soviet bloc has made this a less important point, it is still worth noting that, as a general rule, the South has considered East European countries of the Soviet bloc as part of the North (see Brandt, 1980; South, 1990). However, in the past negotiations the East's attitude towards the South has remained ambivalent, ranging from strong alliance in questions of redesigning international economic institutions to opposition on issues such as the Law of the Sea negotiations. This would suggest a triangular schema with the North equaling West, and South and East being distinct actors. On this line, Hansen (1979, 3-4), for example, uses the term North as "a shorthand description for the world's rich, industrialized noncommunist states" and South for "the world's less developed or developing states" which "range from the suddenly rich but yet-to industrialize oil states of the Middle East to the so-called Fourth World states, the poorest countries of the world." Academic debate on whether there is a Fourth World, whether dividing the world into such spheres has any utility and where the socialist bloc countries fits in the schema was in rage in the 1970s. For an fascinating exposition of this debate see Wolf-Phillips (1979), Worsley (1979), Muni (1979), Love (1980), McCall (1980) and Mountjoy (1980).
4. Officially called the "Independent Commission on International Development Issues," the Brandt Commission is popularly recognized by the name of its Chairman, Willy

Brandt, former chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. The commission included eminent scholars and leaders from both the North and the South including Edward Heath (U.K.), Olof Palme (Sweden), and Shridath Ramphal (Guyana). The commission's original report, *North-South: A Program for Survival* (Brandt, 1980), was followed three years later by an update, *Common Crisis: North-South cooperation for World Recovery* (Brandt, 1983).

5. The South Commission was established in 1987 in response to the idea floated by Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahatir Mohammed, at the 1986 Summit meeting of the Nonaligned Movement (NAM) at Harare. Chaired by Julius K. Nyerere, former president of Tanzania, with Dr. Manmohan Singh of India as its secretary general, the 28 person commission had representatives from all continents of the South, including Gamani Corea (Sri Lanka) former secretary general of UNCTAD; Michael Manley, former Prime Minister of Jamaica; Carlos Andres Perez, former President of Venezuela; Shridath Ramphal (Guyana), former secretary general of the British Commonwealth; and Dr. Abdus Salam (Pakistan), Nobel Prize winner in physics. The report of the Commission, *The Challenge for the South*, was published in 1990.
6. It needs to be added that according to Van Lennep (1983: 16) this grand simplicity is a source of both strength and weakness. Most importantly because "the phenomenon of North and South is by no means the only important political and historical reality of our times" and viewing problems too exclusively through this global lens may lead to ignoring the role of domestic policies.
7. Lincoln Gordon (1978: 5-6) credits former British Ambassador to Washington, Sir Oliver Franks, with having coined the expression "North-South relations" and having suggested that a world-wide cleavage along that axis might come to rival East-West relations as a central concern of world politics, in the late 1950s. However, Gordon does not provide a specific citation for where this reference was made.
8. In *The North-South Dialogue: A Brief History*, Jones (1983: 1) explains the emergence and rationale of the New International Economic Order (NIEO) movement for both the North and the South: "Arab oil-power and American humiliation in South-East Asian combined to direct the

attention of western politicians, journalists, and publics increasingly towards the interminable succession of technically complex international negotiations on trade, money, and a host of lesser issues, in which it appeared that a new balance of power was to be struck between the industrialized West and the successor states of the old European empires in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Satisfactory outcomes in these negotiations were regarded by the third-world states as essential to healthy economic and political development because it was widely assumed that the prevailing structure of international institutions served the narrow interests of powerful industrialized states at the expense of the poorer countries of the South.” In general understanding, for the South, NIEO was a movement aimed at restructuring the iniquitous global economic relations; and for the North it became an effort to bring into the folds of the ‘global free market’ the two-thirds of humanity that lived in the so-called ‘third-world.’

The oil-crisis of 1973, new strategic South-South alliances that emerged therein [especially those motivated by OPEC’s desire to exert its leadership role], and a growing resentment in the South against an unjust world economic system, precipitated into what has been called “one of the most important modern global conflict” (Murphy, 1984: 1). Rallying its new found unity, the South gained a major victory in the special session of the United Nations in June 1974 which legitimized its call for the creation of a “New International Economic Order” by passing the resolution and a “Plan of Action.” The U.N. followed its call for establishing the NIEO with the adoption, in December 1974, of a *Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States*. In essence, the new order demanded for the developing countries “full and complete economic emancipation” and the way to achieve it, they agreed (at a Conference of Developing Countries in Dakar in early 1975), was “to recover and control their natural resources and wealth, and the means of economic development.” The South decided to “change their traditional approach to negotiations with developed countries, hitherto consisting in presentation of a list of requests to developed countries and an appeal to their political goodwill.” The new approach to negotiations would involve common action to strengthen their bargaining position, more economic activity among themselves and a strategy based on “the principle of

relying first and foremost on themselves.” (Menon, 1977: 2-3).

In its earliest days, the movement lived up to its hopes. Even the U.S. ambassador to the seventh special session of the U.N. General Assembly left saying that, “perhaps never in the history of the United Nations has there been so intensive and so genuine a negotiation among so many nations on so profoundly important a range of issues. We have shown that we can negotiate in good faith and, in doing so, reach genuine accord” (quoted in Menon, 1977: 12-13). Soon, however, the conflict escalated with the North accusing the South of adopting a confrontational approach and the South blaming the North for stalling tactics. As geo-political events in the 1980s shaped new alliances, the South’s unity as a bloc weakened, the control of the Bretton Woods twins over an increasingly indebted South became even stronger, and the North’s perception of the economic importance of natural resources in the South (particularly mineral and agricultural products) diminished, the NIEO agenda began slowly receding from world attention, only to re-emerge in importance as the 1990s eroded the East-West polarizations and as environmental negotiations emerged as a new rich ground for this dialogue.

9. Worsley (1979: 101) questions the view that the term was ‘coined’ by Sauvy: Citing John T. Marcus’ *Neutralism and Nationalism in France* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1958) he asserts that Claude Bordet used the term at least as early as April 1949. This assertion is, however, challenged by Love (1980: 315).
10. *Emphasis added.* Keyfitz (1993: 3) points out that the word “important” in French means both numerically preponderant, as well as important in the English sense, and Sauvy is using it here in both contexts. He adds that “Sauvy wanted to form our minds to the idea that the poor countries were a problem, perhaps the chief problem, of the rich countries, whether the latter realized it or not.”
11. Love (1980: 315) adds the phrase ‘Third Position’ to the list of antecedents for Third World. This is of special significance since the ‘Third Position’ doctrine was forwarded by Argentina’s Juan Perón as early as 1949 as a notion related to neutrality in the emerging cold war; a notion that was strikingly similar to the nonalignment doctrine of many later Third World leaders.

12. Wolf-Phillips (1979: 105) points out that “it may be that in the 1950s the phrase *tiers monde* was used more in the sense of ‘Third Force’ rather than ‘Third World’, indicating ‘non-alignment’ rather than ‘underdevelopment’.” He points out that *tiers monde* was originally popularized in France during the period 1947-9 to describe the political parties that took their stance between the opposing poles of Gaullist and Fourth Republic policies. Interestingly, as late as 1958 de Gaulle was to use *tiers monde* to describe the role of France independent of US foreign policy alliances. Also indicative of the use of ‘third’ in this term was the ‘Third Way’ movement in France of the mid-1950s which saw itself as the alternative “third way” to NATO and Stalinist militarism (see Worsley, 1979; Otter, 1981).
13. The same sense of alienation and exclusion is depicted in the term “periphery” (i.e. that which is outside the mainstream) popularized in the literature on *dependencia* theory developed out of the ‘historico-structuralism’ of Raúl Prebisch and the United Nations’ Economic Commission for Latin America. (See Prebisch, 1950; Packenham, 1992).
14. Hedley Bull (1984: 217) in reviewing the development of international relations in this century points out that “the dominance of the European or Western powers at the turn of the century was expressed in their superior economic and military power and in their commanding intellectual and cultural authority but also *in the rules and institutions of international society*” (*emphasis added*); he adds that “the rules of international law which then prevailed had been made, for the most part, by these European or Western states... they were also in substantial measure made *for them*” (*original emphasis*). Bull (pgs. 220-3) goes on to argue that after the Second World War a “revolt against Western dominance” became strong enough to shake this system, and this revolt was based on five themes: a) struggle for equal sovereignty; b) anti-colonial revolution; c) struggle for racial equality; d) struggle for economic justice; and e) struggle for cultural liberation.
15. What Keith Buchanan (1963) described as a “fellowship of the dispossessed” (*quoted in* Worsley, 1979: 104).
16. But note that the poverty aspect is also evoked in a political context. An excellent example is Julius Nyerere’s (1980: 7) description of the G77 as “the trade union of the poor”. The fact that he uses the decidedly political context of a trade

- union implies the intrinsically political nature the coalition, as opposed to, say, the group of the 77 *poorest* countries, which the group is not and was never meant to be.
17. Even in advocating this term, it is recognized that Rothstein (1977: 48) is correct in suggesting that “on the broadest level there are so many underdeveloped countries, and there are so many differences between them, that any single label is bound to be misleading.” The argument here is merely that of all the available labels ‘South’ describes our intent, of the political unity of the developing countries, the best.
 18. In fact, Sabri-Abdalla (1980: 42) considers the term ‘developing nations’ as “nothing but a myth” and sees the South as “a fact of history and [of] the present World Order.” Berger (1994: 260) cites Arturo Escobar as arguing that “to represent the Third World as ‘underdeveloped’ is less a statement about ‘facts’ than the setting up of a regime of truth through which the Third World is inevitably known, intervened on, and managed.”
 19. The word ‘regime’ is used here in the sense defined by Krasner (1985: 4), as “principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge.” He goes on to explain (p. 5) that “changes in regimes can alter the control and allocation of resources among actors in the international system.”
 20. That the South is, in fact, calling for systemic change has been obvious to the North all along. Writing in his 1979 book *Contemporary International Law: A Concise Introduction*, Werner Levi (pg. 274) lamented that “the division between developed and developing states has already disadvantageously affected the international legal system, and it is likely to do so in the near future. The reasons are, first, that the developing states are changing their tactics from making demands in international forums to assuming active roles in international institutions; they are trying to use international law to obtain a greater share in the world’s wealth; and above all and affecting everything else, the developed and the developing states take two totally different approaches to the regulation of their relationship.”
 21. Krasner’s (1985) study starts with the question: “What do Third World countries want?” (p. 3). His assumption that “Third World states, like all states in the international system, are concerned about vulnerability and threat” (p. 3), leads him to the conclusion that “Third World states want power and

- control as much as wealth” (p. 3). He argues that “North-South conflict is endemic” because the power gap is already so great that vulnerability will persist (p. 294). His prescription, then, is that “the international system would be more stable and less conflictual if the North and the South had less to do with each other” (p. 30). Interestingly, the very last sentence of the book simply states that, “[T]here are some problems for which there are no solutions” (p. 314).
22. Point 17 of the “Jakarta Message” adopted at the 10th NAM Summit—held at Jakarta, Indonesia, in September 1992—states in part: “We see South-South cooperation as vital for promoting our own development and reducing undue dependence on the North...we consider the coordination of our [i.e. NAM’s] efforts and strategies with the Group of 77 of crucial importance through the establishment of a Joint Coordinating Committee.”
 23. It is important not to confuse the distinction between *economic* and *political* here with that made earlier while discussing the term Third World. Both NAM and G77 are inherently political institutions, seeking the inherently political goal of structural change in the international system. It is merely that NAM focuses more on power (or ‘high’) politics, while G77 concentrates on the (‘low’) politics of economics and development.
 24. Jansen (1966) and Rajamoorthy (1992) consider the 1947 Asian Relations Conference held in New Delhi, India, as the first landmark in the evolution of NAM. With most of the South still under colonial rule, the conference was held as a nongovernmental meeting attended by 230 delegates from 28 countries. Many were leaders of independence movements in their own lands and were to become the future leaders of Asia.
 25. Countries in attendance included: Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Ceylon, Peoples’ Republic of China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gold Coast, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, State of Vietnam, and Yemen.
 26. This was Principle 6 in what became known as “the 10 principles of Bandung.”
 27. For a comprehensive record of the activities of NAM see *The Third World Without Superpowers: The Collected Documents*

- of the Non-Aligned Countries* (4 volumes) edited by Odette Jankowitsch and Karl P. Sauvant (1978).
28. The Belgrade Summit is generally considered to mark the official birth of NAM (see Rajamoorthy, 1993; Williams, 1993; Jansen, 1966). However, Geldart and Lyon (1980: 80 ff2) point out, "the term non-aligned movement... with its implication of continuity and forward looking purposefulness, was first used and only became appropriate from the early 1970s" (original emphasis).
 29. NAM Summits have been held at Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1961); Cairo, Egypt (1964); Lusaka, Zambia (1970); Algiers, Algeria (1973); Colombo, Sri Lanka (1976); Havana, Cuba (1979); New Delhi, India (1983); Harare, Zimbabwe (1986); Belgrade, Yugoslavia (1989); and Jakarta, Indonesia (1992).
 30. In fact, at a preparatory meeting for the Jakarta Summit, Egypt had proposed that with the cold war having ended NAM should wind itself up and merge with G77. Instead, the leaders assembled at the conference came with a vociferous vindication of the utility of the movement even in a unipolar world.
 31. For a comprehensive record of the documents of the G77 see *The Third World without Superpowers, 2nd Ser.: The Collected Documents of the Group of 77*, (6 volumes) edited by Karl P. Sauvant (1981b).
 32. Arguably with some positive impact from the still nascent nonaligned movement (Sharma, 1969).
 33. Ironically, the recently concluded Uruguay Round of GATT provides for the creation of a World Trade Organization, this time at the behest of the Industrialized countries. However, despite the similarity in nomenclature, original proponents of the International Trade Organization would arguably find the now proposed structure lacking for reasons not dissimilar to their original concerns about GATT. It is equally ironic that GATT, designed as a provisional structure, has flourished where more permanent organizational structures have not. As Geldart and Lyon (1980) remark, this "confirm(s) once again the truth of that French saying that nothing endures so much as the provisional." (See Jackson, 1989).
 34. Rather than just being a 'conference', UNCTAD became an institution. The recurrent UNCTAD conferences were, in fact, the meetings of this institution. UNCTAD was especially active and influential during the 1970s at the height of the NIEO movement. The first Secretary General of UNCTAD,

Raúl Prebisch was a major intellectual leader of the NIEO movement, as were his successors Manuel Pérez Guerrero and Gamani Corea. Jones (1983: 28) writes: "It has long been conventional wisdom in the United States and Western Europe to deplore UNCTAD as unwieldy, unnecessary, and ineffective, yet it has undoubtedly been the central institution of the North-South dialogue over the past twenty years."

35. Sauviant (1981a: 2) emphasizes the importance of UNCTAD-I to the South: For the first time, the Third World *as a whole* had participated in the elaboration of a comprehensive set of measures. Accordingly, 'new' was the theme of the 'Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven': UNCTAD-I was recognized as a significant step towards 'creating a new and just world economic order'; the basic premises of the 'new order' were seen to involve 'a new international division of labor' and the adoption of 'a new and dynamic international policy for trade and development' was expected to facilitate the formulation of 'new policies by the Governments of both developed and developing countries in the context of a new awareness of the needs of the developing countries'. Finally, a 'new machinery' was considered necessary to serve as an institutional focal point for the continuation of the work initiated by the conference." The institutionalization of UNCTAD as an organ of the U.N. General Assembly became that machinery.
36. The spirit of enthusiasm and coalition building was not restricted to the South alone. In 1960 the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was formed; in 1961 the OECD came into being with the formal ending of Marshall Aid and the disbandment of the Organization of European Economic Cooperation (EEC); and the first Yaoundé conventions were held in 1962-63.
37. For many countries, particularly in Africa, this is still so. For example, according to U.N. estimates, in 1988 coffee constituted 94.8% of Uganda's exports; crude petroleum was 94.6% of Nigeria's; ores and concentrates were 90.6% of Guinea's; copper was 90% of Zambia's; coffee was 81.5% and 80.% for Burundi and Rwanda respectively. Similarly, diamonds were 77.7% of Botswana's exports, live animals 76.5 of Somalia's; and sugar and honey 64.9% of Mauritius's. (Bello, 1989)
38. What has been called the first "OPECalyapse" by some journalists.

39. A brief review of the NIEO movement is provided in an earlier footnote. For a comprehensive record of the development of the NIEO/North-South debate within international fora see *A New International Economic Order: Selected Documents 1945-1975* (UNITAR, 1976). Also see *The North-South Dialogue: A Brief History* (Jones, 1983), *The Emergence of the NIEO Ideology* (Murphy, 1984) and *Global Dialogue: The New International Order* (Menon, 1977). Bhagwati (1977) and Doran et al. (1983) provide a good sampling of the dependencia debate; the story of the oil crisis of 1973 and its affects on the North-South dialogue are discussed in Allen (1979), and Askari and Cummings (1978). The implications of the NIEO movement for the South are discussed in detail in Agarwala (1983) and Haq (1980). A more Northern perspective is provided by Hansen (1979)—the author argues in his introduction that his analysis is likely to be perceived as Northern but is not intended to be so, nevertheless he acknowledges that his policy prescriptions have a decided Northern bias. Krasner (1985) provides a useful discussion on the South's insistence on changing international economic regimes, while Williams (1993) provides a more recent analysis highlighting the significance of the Southern coalition in current environmental debates. For a review of the history of the G77 see Geldart and Lyon (1980) and for an authoritative sampling of the views that shaped the NIEO see *The Poverty Curtain* (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1976).
40. Although the rise in oil prices spelled pain that was as excruciating, if not more, as that inflicted on the industrialized countries the developing countries saw in the event the hope that if united they could also band together in cartels of primary products and jack up the prices of these commodities to their 'true' and 'deserved' levels. Thomas (1987: 3) points out that "those state in the Third World which suffered as a result of the [oil price rise], championed OPEC; the price rise were seen as a victory for the Third World." Not surprisingly, the 1970s saw a hectic spree of commodity cartel formation; the 1980s, however, saw the carcasses of these cartels rotting in neglect and failure.
41. The regional group system in the UN was introduced in 1957 to ensure "a balanced geographical distribution among its members." Five groups were then introduced: Asian and African States (later separated into two groups), Eastern European States, Latin American States, Western European

and Other States, and permanent members of the Security Council. The current group system, which varies in its specific composition, but not in its general outline has developed from this early conception. UNCTAD's group system is somewhat different with the permanent members of the Security Council being subsumed within the Western or Eastern Europe group instead of having a separate group of their own; also European members of the G77 are subsumed within the Afro-Asian or Latin American group even if they do not belong their geographically. For a detailed discussion on how the group system works within the U.N. system and how the G77 has used it for its own structuring see Sauvant (1981a).

42. This has caused some problems for the few European members in the coalition. For example, founding member Yugoslavia was placed in the Asian group, as were Malta and Cyprus. However, Romania joined the Latin America group.
43. These regional groups are often assisted in formulating their regional positions by other regional institutions. For example, the African Group was often assisted by the Organization for African Unity (OAU) and the Latin American group by the U.N.'s Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) and the Latin American Economic System (SELA). The Asian group has had the weakest common institutional infrastructure to assist. Just as the G77 (Groups A and C in UNCTAD) used their regional organizations and the UNCTAD secretariat as their unofficial secretariats, Group B, which consists nearly in entirety of the OECD states, used the OECD secretariat as its *de facto* secretariat and the East European countries used the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) for the same purpose. (See Sauvant, 1981a).
44. In discussing decision making procedures of the G77 for UNCTAD related activities, Sauvant (1981a: 44-5) describes this process of consensus building at the regional level to be "well structured" and following "a firmly established sequence." He highlights the fact that "regions play a key role," that "virtually all matters are first examined by them," and that "the region's positions, in turn, are harmonized in ad hoc plenary meetings of the Group of 77."
45. Although China is not a member of the G77 it has remained an important ally. Most resolutions, proposals and statements are officially made on behalf of "G77 and China."

- For example, this was the common practice during UNCED and the 1972 environmental conference at Stockholm (see Najam, 1993a).
46. For examples of G77 influence and role at various organizations and negotiations, see Johan Kaufmann's (1989) edited volume *Effective Negotiation: Case Studies in Conference Diplomacy*.
 47. For example, G77 was active and influential in the negotiations pertaining to the Law of the Sea negotiations, the U.N. Code of Conduct on Transnational Corporations, and the U.N. conferences on the environment (1972 and 1992) and population (1974, 1984 and 1994).
 48. For a discussion of the term 'vulnerability' as used here, see Krasner (1983 and 1985). Building on that work Thomas (1987: 4-5) argues that "Third World states suffer from an acute lack of control over the international environment in which they must function, and of all the world's states they are the ones for whom the economic alternatives of survive or perish are the most pressing.... In these circumstances of insecurity, Third World states have attempted where possible to increase their room for maneuver, to increase their ability to stabilize the environment in which they must function, and to minimize their vulnerability."
 49. The 'Bretton Woods sisters' refer to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). These were set up by the post-War Western powers after a meeting in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA in 1944. Unlike the U.N., which is ostensibly a 'global', or 'world' body these have effectively been 'Western' instruments and despite their ever-increasing activities and influence in the South are seen as 'Northern' instruments.
 50. In making her case for why the Third World (i.e. South) remains an important actor in international relations Thomas (1987: 3) argues that "the most convincing evidence is simply that the Third World is a self-defining grouping of states."
 51. Predictions of the South's eminent demise have been equally persistent. Commenting on the same Hansen (1980: 1106, ff2) writes: "It is the shared perception of global inequity that can link over 120 'developing countries' with per capita incomes ranging from \$200 t \$10,000. Built on the historical evolution of North-South relations in both pre- and post-colonial periods, this perception provides the cement that

binds the otherwise disparate and potentially discordant membership of the Southern bloc. It has been the most significant driving force behind the activities of both the Group of 77 and the Nonaligned movement since the inception of these groups.... Failure to comprehend the depth of this widely shared Southern perception was primarily responsible for endless, inaccurate Northern predictions throughout the 1970s that an inevitable appreciation of divergent national interests would quickly dissolve any developing country effort to institutionalize 'Southern unity.'" Writing elsewhere, Hansen (1979) himself questions the viability of continuing Southern unity. However, it is important to point out that he suggests its weakening, as opposed to its demise.

52. A description of the South presented by Weintraub (1980: 454-5) is strikingly similar, signifying how little has actually changed: "The South is made up of tiny countries, like those in Central America and many in Africa, and of immense countries, like India. Some are relatively affluent, like Argentina; and some are desperately poor, like Bangladesh. Some have an industrial structure, like Brazil; and some are exceedingly primitive, like Zaire. Some are wealthy in natural resources, like Saudi Arabia, others are devoid of them, like Haiti. Some, like Paraguay, are dictatorships and others, Costa Rica or Sri Lanka, are democracies."
53. The essay "Heterogeneity and Differentiation—The End of the Third World?" was originally published in *Development Dialogue* in 1978 and later reproduced in the 1980 collection, *Dialogue for a New Order*, edited by Khadija Haq.
54. Sabri-Abdalla (1980: 40) argued that "the average per capita GNP of the higher income group [within the Third World] in 1975 was \$1,270.3 against \$142.7 for the lower-income group—that is, 8.9 times higher. To compare with OECD countries, let us recall that the per capita GNP of Switzerland is 9.3 times that of Turkey.... As for size, the difference between Senegal and Brazil is not much greater than that between Belgium and Canada. The same applies in the case of population: Ireland and the United States on the one hand, Somalia and Indonesia on the other. Finally, considering differences in natural endowment, we can ask how important are the natural resources of Netherlands or even Japan?" Comparable examples can be found in the North and South today.

55. Hansen (1979: 123) adds that “if the South is viewed by some as an artificial unit today, it will seem far more artificial in the 1980s.” However, he predicted (rightly) that the South “is very likely to be found operating as a unit at the rhetorical, international norm-setting level nevertheless.”
56. A Southern view of this sense of being ignored in the post-cold war world is captured by Shahram Chubin (1993) in *The South and World Order*. He articulates the view that “the South is under siege—from an international community impatient to meddle in its affairs. States of the South are losing their sovereignty, which in many cases was only recently or tentatively acquired” (p. 88). He adds that while the end of the cold war has robbed the South of a bargaining leverage, it has “freed the North to indulge its basic antipathy toward the poorer South, to dictate to it without delicacy or dialogue, and to dispense with the appearance of soliciting its views or the pretense of equality... the South is often depicted as the ‘new threat,’ and some of its members as ‘rogue’ states” (p. 91-2). All this is compounded by the fact that “the South struggles not only with its own problems of political and economic development, domestic stability, and regional antagonisms, but also with a changing international system that promises it little in the way of assistance or relief” (p. 93).

A Northern view, confirming some of Chubin’s analysis, is provided by Steven R. David (1992) who senses the same Northern antipathy and uninterest in the South and argues *Why the Third World Still Matters*. Like Chubin, David also focuses on security issues and is particularly concerned that “with the Cold War over, a new set of arguments has emerged reemphasizing the irrelevance of the Third World to American interests” (p. 128). His argument, however, is very different in that he stresses that “because war will not become obsolete in the Third World, and because many Third World states are becoming increasingly powerful, the threat that Third World states pose to themselves and non-Third World countries will persist. Preparing to address these threats must be a central component of American foreign policy in the post-Cold War world” (p. 127). He builds on his earlier work (David, 1991) where he stressed that it is important for the North to understand the nature of and rationale for Third World alignments because “war has become a virtual Third World monopoly” and many issues

that are likely to dominate international relations (e.g. trade and international economics, environment, population, drug trafficking, etc.) cannot be resolved without active participation of the South; as such, he argues, "far from being marginal actors, the Third World is central to the course of international relations, and it will become even more so" (p. 254-5).

57. The South's agenda has remained largely unchanged. Consider Julius K. Nyerere's 1974 definition on the South's concerns (as quoted in Murphy, 1984: 1), by merely changing the word "economic" with "environmental" this could be read as a definition of the South's position today: "The complaint of the poor nations against the present state is not only that we are both poor in absolute and relative terms and in comparison with the rich nations. It is also that within the existing structures of economic [/environmental] interaction we must remain poor, and get relatively poorer, whatever we do... The demand for a New International Economic [/Environmental] Order is a way of saying that the poor nations must be enabled to develop themselves according to their own interests, and to benefit from the efforts they make."
58. Porter and Brown (1991: 125) go on to add that North-South economic arrangements influence global environmental politics in three interrelated ways: "They are a constraint on the ability and willingness of developing countries to participate in global environmental arrangements, a source of ideological conflict between North and South, and the potential object of linkage politics by developing countries."
59. Rajan (1992) cites an *International Herald Tribune* (18 March 1992: 23) report "Environmental War Heats Up" as the source for the statement from the Caribbean official, and a report in *India Today* (15 June 1992: 26), "The Earth Wars," as the source for the statement by Indian Environmental Minister Kaman Nath.
60. The following news headlines aptly testify to the North-South polarizations that framed the debates at UNCED: "Poor vs. Rich in Rio" (*New York Times*, 3 June 1992); "Planning Talks Split on North-South Lines" (*The Boston Globe*, 5 April 1992); "North-South Divide Is Marring Environment Talks" (*New York Times*, 17 March 1992); "One Summit, Differing Goals" (*International Herald Tribune*, 2 June 1992); and "North-

- South Battles Dominate Run-up to Earth Summit" (*Third World Resurgence*, May 1992).
61. For a more detailed articulation of this argument, and a discussion of the South's roles, positions, goals, and strategies at UNCED, see Najam (1993a).
 62. The 1992 Summit Conference of the nonaligned movement held at Jakarta, for example, called for "the reactivation of a constructive dialogue between the developed and developing countries, based on genuine interdependence, mutuality of interests and benefits and shared responsibility."
 63. Twenty-two Heads of State and Government met at Cancun in 1981 under the joint chairmanship of the President of Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada to find political support for continuing the process of North-South negotiations. However, by this time the South was itself in disarray and the North preoccupied with internal economic woes, and the effort collapsed. Other efforts, such as the one made at UNCTAD VI at Belgrade in 1983 (which attempted to revive the dialogue on the rationale that development in the South would stimulate the global economy and reinforce economic recovery in the North) suffered a similar fate.
 64. This view is considered by some to be idealistic. For example, Williams (1994: 26-7) examines the view that "the North's new found concern for the protection of the environment provides the Third World with increased bargaining power because on many issues the North has to consider Southern interests." He concludes, however, that "the evidence to date suggests that Third World bargaining power has not increased and the North is no more ready to listen in the 1990s than it was in the 1970s." Yet, there are others like Porter and Brown (1991: 148-52) invest much more faith in, what they call, "the Global partnership approach." Ramphal (1992: 249) is in the later camp, arguing that "a mixture of altruism, fear (of mass migration from developing countries and of global consequences of environmental neglect), and commercial self-interest puts the question of poverty and development higher up the global agenda."
 65. For example, in the run-up to Rio the June 1991 Beijing Conference on Environment and Development which was attended by 41 developing countries and the November 1991 Caracas summit of the Group of 15 developing countries

- both strongly voiced the South's commitment to the protection of the environment (Ramphal, 1992: 256-7).
66. For more on the advantages and disadvantages of issue-linkage see Susskind (1994: 82-98), Sebenius (1984: 182-217), and Raiffa (1982: 275-287).
 67. Many believe that the 1972 U.N. Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE) held at Stockholm was the first of many international negotiations outside the UNCTAD framework where North-South dialogue took center-stage (see Rowland, 1973; McDonald; 1982; Najam, 1993a). Interestingly, UNCED, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, has marked the beginning of the second generation of such dialogue (see Agarwal, 1992; Banuri, 1992; Gardner, 1992; Lerner, 1992; Najam, 1993a; Peng, 1992; Raghavan, 1991).
 68. In analyzing the performance of UNCTAD Paul Streeten (1986: 191) commented that "UNCTAD suffers from being all give and no take, all *quid* and no *quo*, as far as the rich member countries are concerned, and from consisting of appeals, not backed by power, on the part of the poor. Its aims are noble but its achievements negligible." In essence, this summed up the North's view of all North-South dialogue.
 69. The prevalent view both in the North and the South remains that such a 'global bargain', while possible, is unlikely (for *representative examples* see, Susskind, 1994 and Agarwal, 1992).
 70. Much of this dialogue, for example, will happen around the issue of trade within GATT's successor, the World Trade Organization (WTO).
 71. Sustainable Development is being increasingly used to link a number of these issues with concerns about the environment. See, for example, *Trade and Sustainable Development* by Robert Repetto (1994); "Linking Human Rights and Environmental Quality" by Kristi Rea (1994); and *Making Development Sustainable: The World Bank Group and the Environment, Fiscal 1994* (World Bank, 1994).
 72. For example, it is unlikely that the North would have been interested in opening dialogue with the South solely on the issue of development assistance or that the South would have accepted to negotiate environment without linking it to development.
 73. This argument does not wish to belittle the fact that there is no consensus—either between or within the North and the South—as to what 'sustainable development' implies. The

argument merely is that even if there is no agreement on what sustainable development is, there is a general acceptance that whatever it is, is worth pursuing. In that, the ambiguity about what precisely it entails may even be a useful factor in that sustainability becomes the pot into which all parties can throw their interests in the hope that the resulting stew would be acceptable to them all. From a negotiation point of view, it allows various parties to place differentially valued concerns on the table and trade across the differences. From a purely environmental policy perspective, it may well be more important to know what 'sustainable development' is *not*, than to define what it is. For a useful review of the debate on defining sustainable development, see Lélé (1991).

74. This paper recognizes that the history of North-South negotiations lies along a continuum spanning at least 40 years since the developing countries first started making their presence felt at U.N. fora. The imagery of first and second generation, although construed and constructed, is used for explanatory clarity to distinguish the current thrust of such serious negotiations for the earlier thrust which was discernible in the 1970s and led to Ramphal's (1980) characterization cited above.
75. Specifically, this discussion builds upon the proposals presented in *"International Environmental Negotiation: A Strategy for the South"* (Najam, 1993a). Establishing a South Secretariat was one of the recommendations of this study and an important prerequisite to the achievement of its other recommendations. The negotiation strategy proposed for the South was essentially based on the message: "Stop feeling angry at the North and sorry for yourself." Specifically, the eight-point strategy called upon the South to a) focus on interests, not positions; b) redefine the power balance; c) be hard on the issues, not the people; d) redefine the international environmental agenda; e) organize itself; f) develop its constituency; g) clean up its own act; and h) remember that 'winning' is not important, but good agreements are.
76. Nearly all commentators agree that since the principal role of NAM is in relation to its triennial summit meetings, and because of its structural mandate, it would serve little purpose to set up any elaborate secretariat for NAM beyond something that might assist host countries in organizing the

- summits. As such, the debate on a Southern secretariat has been conducted almost entirely in the context of the Group of 77.
77. Sewell and Zartman's (1984) analysis came before the current interest in global environmental negotiation but is important in that they see the presence of a non-zero-sum mindset to be a critical ingredient for successful North-South negotiation. The current environmental agenda has the potential to facilitate such a mindset.
 78. The meeting was attended by such luminaries as Ismail-Sabri Abdalla, Jagdish Bhagwati, Mahbub-ul-Haq, Enrique Iglesias, Amir Jamal, Raúl Prebisch, Shridath Ramphal, Soedjatmoko, and Cesar Virata. Although the report of the meeting (TWQ, 1978) specifies no names, it is apparent that Mahbub-ul-Haq and Shridath Ramphal had great impact on the final proposals, particularly those related to setting up a permanent secretariat.
 79. See, especially, *The North-South Dialogue: Making it Work* (1982), report of a Commonwealth group of experts.
 80. Initially it was proposed that a standing committee be created simply by institutionalizing the Co-ordinating Committee that had worked on organizational issues for the 1967 (First) Ministerial Meeting of the G77. By the Second Ministerial Meeting in 1971 the idea of setting up a small "Service Bureau" to assist the G77 was voiced and discussed. While the Ministers remained divided on the idea, there was enough support for it to warrant setting up a working group to study the idea further. This story—of the G77 accepting the general utility of the idea, but not feeling ready to operationalize it just yet—essentially repeated itself in subsequent years. See Sauvart (1981a:).
 81. The UNCTAD secretariat at Geneva has been the nearest thing the South has had to a secretariat assisting it in global negotiations. As the "informal servicing agency" (Geldart and Lyon, 1980: 89), the "*de facto* Secretariat" (Megzari, 1989: 216) of the G77, and the "single most important component of [G77's] support system" (Sauvart, 1981a: 51), UNCTAD has provided important support to the developing countries not only for UNCTAD plenaries but also for other North-South negotiations. However, being a world organization—whose membership and mandate are broader than the composition and interests, respectively, of the South—the efficacy and appropriateness of such an arrangement has been

questioned . For example, Hall (1980: 53) believes that although UNCTAD's support has been "invaluable," it is neither "adequate to meet the negotiating needs" of the South nor "an appropriate source" of such support (*also see* Sewell and Zartman, 1984). Much more scathing is the criticism from Weiss (1986: 96) who argues that the UNCTAD Secretariat become "subservient" to G77 and has tried to vacillate between two incompatible roles, that of being an international secretariat and a Third World secretariat; in the process, he believes, it has failed on both counts (*also see* Michalak, 1983; Rasmussen, 1986).

However, Megzari (1989: 216) argues otherwise, believing that UNCTAD was "established to contribute to promoting a better international environment for the economic development of Third World countries [and] was generally expected to play a militant role in favor of developing countries." UNCTAD's first secretary-general, Raúl Prebisch has been cited to have implied the same in saying that the UNCTAD secretariat could be no more neutral on development problems than the World Health Organization's secretariat could be on eradicating malaria (*cited in* Weiss, 1986: 88-9). An interesting perspective is provided by Thomas G. Weiss (1986: 88) who, although criticizing UNCTAD's non-neutral role, stresses that it is not the only one to have done so: "In fact, UNCTAD could well be a mirror image of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The former has a natural liaison with the G77 and the later two with western donors. UNCTAD's secretary-general has been and always will be from the South, just as it would be unthinkable that the World bank's president would not be a US citizen or the IMF's managing director not a European national."

Having said the above, even if we were to ignore the strong arguments against UNCTAD acting as a South Secretariat, the fact remains that the diminished international influence of UNCTAD and the content of contemporary North-South dialogue (which is often outside the UNCTAD's competence) means that the this option is no longer viable, even if it were appropriate (see Sauvnt, 1981a: 84--5).

82. Related to the issue of timing is that of location. As the discussion by Sauvnt (1981a: 44-54) makes clear, the debate on a G77 secretariat in the 1970s was firmly between those at the G77 center at New York favoring the idea and

those at Geneva opposing it. This was largely because of the different nature of concerns that the G77 representatives at New York and Geneva had to contend with. More importantly, since UNCTAD was then the focal point of G77 activities and since UNCTAD was based in Geneva and, further, since the UNCTAD secretariat at Geneva was doing such a good job of providing the Geneva G77 with *de facto* secretariat services, the Geneva G77 saw little in the idea of a G77 Secretariat to feel enthusiastic about. However, since then UNCTAD (and in many respects, Geneva) has lost its primacy in the North-South dialogue and the focus has shifted more and more to New York where (while there are more G77 permanent representatives to the UN) there is no single U.N. body (such as UNCTAD) that might serve as a *de facto* secretariat to the South. Hence, the case for a South Secretariat is strengthened.

83. The failure of the Conference on International Economic Cooperation (CIEC) in 1977 may be marked as the beginning of the end of what we have termed the first generation of the North-South dialogue, the failure on the Cancun Summit as the end, and the failure to launch Global Negotiations at the 11th Special Session of the General Assembly as the end of the end.
84. The South Commission (1990) proposes the following functions for the Secretariat (p. 203-4): technical, intellectual, and organizational support; nucleus of a global South network; place of contact; observer post; and lobby for the South.
85. In the strictest sense we refer here to inter-state secretariats. Secretariats servicing multi-national NGOs (e.g. the World Conservation Union) while international in nature are beyond the purview of this discussion.
86. Important overlaps exist between these three types. For example, regime secretariats are very often members of the U.N. system especially when they service treaties sired by the U.N. system. The secretariats servicing the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the 1973 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) are examples of regime secretariats housed within the U.N. family of secretariats. However, since not all regime secretariats need necessarily be part of the U.N. family—for example the secretariat of the 1971

- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (RAMSAR)—and since their purpose and mandate differs in important respects to organizational secretariats, they are being considered here as a separate category.
87. Formerly the European Community.
 88. Although the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is self-defined as a treaty but it has traditionally acted more as a coalition and is therefore is treated here as such.
 89. The two extremes in secretarial assertiveness in the United Nations are marked by the tenures of secretary-generals Dag Hammarskjold (1953-61) and Kurt Waldheim (1972-81). During the tenure of the first the U.N. Secretariat operated in its most activist mode, while during the office of the later it operated at its most passive. It is instructive that the major powers felt uncomfortable with Hammarskjold's style of management and in some ways Waldheim's appointment was an effort to ensure a passive U.N. secretariat. See Urquhart and Childers (1990), Jakobson (1993).
 90. The distinction between *creating* and *claiming* powers needs elaboration. Organizational charters and mandates are necessarily written in broad and general terms allowing the specifics to be interpreted according to particular situations. *Creating* new authority for autonomy or activism would entail redefining the charters, while *claiming* would imply convincing member states to allow for the most expansive and liberal interpretation of existing provisions. *Creating* and *claiming* are both done by secretariat leadership, often the secretary-general. An illustrative example of the distinction is found in the careers of Dag Hammarskjold and Kurt Waldheim as U.N. secretary-generals. The first pushed the powers of his office to the limits of what was prescribed in the U.N. charter while the later restricted his activities to well less than what he was allowed to do. To use the terms introduced in USA-UNA's 1980 report *A Successor Vision*, under the first the secretariat was an 'initiative-taker' while under the later it was a 'caretaker.'
 91. The one exception may be the NATO secretariat which was given both 'operational' and 'secretariat' duties. The secretary-general of NATO, unlike that of the U.N., was also made a constituent participant in the chief organ (in this case, the Council). In this case the U.S. had proposed a strong and centralized secretariat with Britain advocating a less activist secretariat. Jordan (1967: 31) believes that "the

United States recommendations [were followed] more closely than the British ones.” However, the final structure was much less activist than the U.S. proposal and allowed states enough control over the activities of the secretariat and the secretary-general. (See Jordan, 1967: 19-32).

92. In fact, U.S. President Roosevelt wanted the title of the secretary-general's office to be 'moderator,' which is in fact what the big powers saw the job as being.
93. To say that Sir Eric Drummond was a 'passive' secretary-general is not to say that he was a 'weak' secretary-general. Far from it, he was an extremely effective and influential functionary. He, more than any other single person, was responsible for the creation of the concept and practice of what we today call the 'international civil service.' Jordan (1967: 6) quotes Trygve Lie, the first secretary-general of the U.N. as commenting that Sir Eric Drummond's "decision to create the first truly international secretariat was a decision of profound significance—surely one of the most important and promising political developments of the twentieth century. His place in history is secure." However, as Jordan (1967: 7) points out Drummond was "an organizer and administrator; at most, a negotiator and mediator," but never an independent innovator of political workings. Ranshofen-Wertheimer's (1945: 49) verdict is more harsh: "All things considered, it can be stated that it was a mistake on the part of the statesmen responsible for establishing the League to choose an administrator... Experience proves that it is a statesman who must be chosen as head of a political agency."
94. The most passive of the post-Hammarskjold secretary-generals was Kurt Waldheim whose tenure was defined by his very first public statement in office: "In this position one has to know the limits."
95. In certain cases all other appointments are then made by the secretary-general, while in others the executive organ also retains the power to decide other high appointments.
96. An instructive structure is that of the European Union, which has also developed from multiple institutions—i.e., the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). There is a six-monthly rotation of the Council presidency on a national basis while the president of the Commission serves a four-year term and is appointed by agreement of all member states. Although

both the Council and the Commission have their own functional secretariats, the office of the President of the Commission, by virtue of its longer tenure, selection process, and job description is more akin to that of a secretary-general—albeit an uncharacteristically activist one. (See Mayne, 1968; Noël, 1993).

97. More elaborate, and elegant, proposals are easily conceivable but would require significant changes in the existing structures of NAM and G77. As, and if, the memberships of the two organizations become more harmonized, some such proposals may even become practical. However, for the time being, tampering unduly with existing structures is likely to ignite opposition for the secretariat which would be too high a price for a little added elegance.
98. Especial emphasis has been placed here on the experience of other coalition secretariats such as those of NATO, the Commonwealth, and OECD (*e.g.*, Jordan, 1967; Leach, 1971; Walker, 1978; Smith, 1981; Doxey, 1984; Groom, 1984, 1988).
99. In particular, guidance has been derived from the following proposals for a Southern secretariat: TWQ, 1979; Ramphal, 1980; Hall, 1980; Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1980a, 1983; Commonwealth, 1982; South Commission, 1990.
100. Interestingly, this set of responsibilities is not functionally different from the responsibilities envisaged by early scholars for the U.N. secretariat. For example, a 1944 report of the Royal Institute of International Affairs titled *The International Secretariat of the Future* states: "The international secretariat may be said to have four main aspects: 9a) secretarial assistance for international meetings... (b) the accumulation and use of technical and special knowledge for these and other purposes; (c) negotiation, or the smoothing away of difficulties with a view to promoting agreement; and (d) administration of the internal economy."
101. Sewell and Zartman (1984: 408) point out that this tendency is not restricted to the South: "Unfortunately the process[of North-South dialogue] tends to be driven by the lowest common denominator; the most recalcitrant countries (the United States for the North and the radicals for the South) tend to set the agenda."
102. For more discussion on issues related to issue-linkage see Raiffa (1982), Sebenius (1984), and Susskind (1994).

103. It should be pointed out that both Sewell and Zartman (1984) and Susskind (1994) are proposing smaller coalitions that cut across North-South lines as opposed to the proposal here which is to desegregate the larger Southern coalition into smaller sub-coalitions based on regional, environmental, economic or other interests. However, the proposition that smaller coalitions working together may hammer out workable deals where larger coalitions might not, remains the same in all three proposals.
104. In explaining the personnel policy of the Commonwealth secretariat Doxey (1984: 21-2) points out that "there is no career service, but reappointment is possible. The objective for all appointments are efficiency, integrity and a balance of representation from different parts of the Commonwealth. Staff are expected... to be 'strictly impartial in the discharge of their functions and to place loyalty to the Commonwealth as a whole above all other considerations.'... There is no question of making a lifetime career of the Secretariat. The secondment principle has enabled very able staff to be recruited for short periods of service at the end of which they return to their own countries and their own careers."
105. Alternatively, it could have been argued that since the G77 already has a vibrant presence in New York and since Geneva still remains the venue of a lot of North-South interaction, therefore the South Secretariat should have its principal office in Geneva.
106. For example, a Ford Foundation (1993) report titled *Financing and Effective United Nations* points out: "It is surely not beyond the capacity of member states to repair [the financial situation of the U.N.]. The size of the U.N.'s budget, about \$5.2 billion in 1992, pales by comparison with national defense costs or transactions in the private sector. The startling fact is that the sum of U.N. regular budget and peace-keeping costs for 1992, an especially active year, was less than the cost of operating New York City's Fire and police departments for one year. Unlike most of the world's armies, the U.N. blue helmets are now engaged in nearly all of the world's most dangerous places. Yet, on average, the nations of the world invest only \$1.40 in peacekeeping for every \$1,000 they devote to their own armed forces."