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## **The New Diplomacy of Sustainable Development – reflections of a practitioner.**

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### Background comments

It is interesting to be given the opportunity to give a practitioner's view in an academic setting. The Rio process made me understand that we were faced with a new kind of diplomacy that had some characteristics which were different from traditional relations between states. I felt the need to try to develop a theoretical framework which materialized in a book, "A New Diplomacy for Sustainable Development", published by Routledge in 2008. One of the characteristics of this new diplomacy is that it is not just about environment, but about the broader notion of sustainable development, encompassing also social and economic components in a complex pattern. This means that the negotiators deal with an extremely profound reality, which is one of the reasons for the rather slow progress of negotiations.

### Central components of the New Diplomacy

*A new perception of threats:* In traditional security policy, the enemy is another nation, or a coalition of nations. In the global perception of the Anthropocene Era, the enemy is within ourselves, in our own lifestyles and our own exploitation of resources.

*The essence of the long term:* Our view of the future has to be extended far beyond the perspective of the next election, or our own expected lifetime. We are the first generation with the capacity to influence living conditions of all following generations, because of our impact on immensely large natural systems.

*The need for a broad societal view:* These new perspectives require a better, and more critical, understanding of the extremely rapid transformations of our societies, and of new realities for politics and policy options. We are facing existential problems of a new kind.

*The concept of national Enabling Conditions:* Since the New Diplomacy is global, international negotiations are needed to solve the problems we are facing. But in a world still dependent on national governments, national enabling conditions are instrumental in formulating instructions for negotiations, thus influencing the prospects for success or failure.

## The practice of the New Diplomacy: personal experiences

*The normative role of the United Nations:* The Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment 1972 and the Rio Conference on Environment and Development 1992.

*New Departures in international law:* The global Conventions, with focus on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change 1992, and the Convention to Combat Desertification 1994.

### *Case studies:*

- The Rio Conference process 1990-1994: the Preparatory Committee, the Conference, the outcome, the follow-up.
- The negotiation of the Convention to Combat Desertification 1993-97.
- Climate change: The preparation, negotiation, implementation measures, and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol 1995-2004.

## The Rio Conference on Environment and Development

*Personal experience:* Chairman of plenary Working Group I, Preparatory Committee (Chapters 9-16, Agenda 21); Coordinator for Chapter 9 (Atmosphere) in Agenda 21 during the Conference; Member of small steering group during the process; leader of the Swedish delegation.

### *Lessons learned:*

1. Importance of a well designed negotiating structure.
2. Need for a background fund of ideas and intellectual capacity: the Brundtland Commission.
3. Good leadership, an extraordinary Chairman of the negotiation: Tommy Koh of Singapore: firm management of the process; skilful leadership of meetings; capacity to represent the negotiation to the outside world.
4. Excellent Secretariat, led by Maurice Strong of Canada.
5. Perception of fairness in relation to all parties of the negotiation: the Chair as mediator, blending knowledge, toughness, and charm.
6. Respect for the complexity of the subjects negotiated.

## The UN Convention to combat Desertification (UNCCD)

*Personal experience:* Chairman of the International Negotiating Committee (INC) 1993-97.

### *Lessons learned:*

1. The particular sensitivity of a subject of decisive importance for a number of poor developing countries, particularly in Africa.
2. The need for a good and confident cooperation with the Head of the Secretariat of the negotiation, in this case Arba Diallo of Burkina Faso.
3. Importance of financial and funding issues, particularly in a negotiation dealing both with development and environment.

4. Understanding of the working of the G 77 and the internal tensions in a group of 135 countries from all continents.
5. The sometimes disappointing performance of the OECD countries.
6. Sense of the extreme pressures on the Chairman and the need for a critical assessment of own performance.
7. Benefiting of the capacity and experience of many representatives of small developing countries.
8. The satisfaction of learning more about regions outside the mainstream of world politics.

### Framework Convention on Climate Change: the saga of the Kyoto Protocol

*Personal experience:* Leader of Swedish Delegation 1995-2001; Chairman of the negotiation for the Berlin Mandate in 1995, creating the conditions for the negotiation of the Kyoto Protocol; coordinator for consultations on art. 10 of the KP 1997; leader of the EU negotiating team during the Swedish Presidency 2001; adviser to the Moroccan Chairman of the Marrakech COP in 2001.

#### *Lessons learned:*

1. Importance of exploring the prospects for agreement on a firm mandate for a difficult and complicated negotiation.
2. Benefits of a good articulation between the official level and the Ministerial level during a negotiation process.
3. The importance of having a coherent leadership during preparatory negotiations in a working group and in the negotiating Conference itself; the central role of Raúl Estrada of Argentina.
4. The crucial and leading position of EU in the New Diplomacy.
5. The need for a transparent and well organized EU Presidency.
6. Importance of clear and tough line in the face of unexpected situations, like the US decision not to ratify the Kyoto Protocol.
7. On the other hand, the capacity to apply flexible diplomacy as a necessary complement to toughness: “agree to disagree”.
8. The need for careful consideration of the rules for entry into force of multilateral instruments.
9. The role of science and research, in the climate case well represented by the IPCC. Natural science has been a driving force for the negotiations; and the social sciences, humanities, and law are essential to understand and guide the societal transformations that are necessary.

### Where do we stand to-day?

This concluding session will be in the format of a general discussion, with questions and answers, comments and queries, around the following themes:

- The situation in the climate negotiations after Copenhagen, Cancún and Durban: evaluation of a de facto transitional period 2012-2020, and the prospects for the future.
- The prospects for the Rio+20 Conference in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.
- An evaluation: twenty years after Rio we know much more about the global sustainability, but in many ways action has been slow and there is a sense of disappointment among many actors and analysts. In my own view, we were probably

over-optimistic in 1992, with limited understanding of all the political, economic, and social complexities involved in a great global societal transition. To-day, the economic crisis conditions and the moving geopolitical realities seem to limit the scope of the New Diplomacy. But the increasing human impact on natural systems has to be addressed in cooperation: and we cannot negotiate with these systems.