

The original documents are located in Box 2, folder “5/18/76 - Habitat Delegation” of the Carla A. Hills Speeches at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

Copyright Notice

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Gerald Ford donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

HABITAT DELEGATION

MAY 18, 1976

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE.

I THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR US TO MEET AS A DELEGATION, HERE, BEFORE WE ASSEMBLE IN VANCOUVER. WE'LL HAVE A LOT OF HARD WORK TO DO UP THERE AND THE BETTER COORDINATED WE ARE -- BOTH AS A TEAM AND IN OUR SENSE OF MISSION -- THE BETTER EQUIPPED WE WILL BE TO REPRESENT THE INTERESTS AND THE IDEALS OF THE UNITED STATES.

THIS CONFERENCE IS A FIRST IN THE PROGRESS OF HUMAN HISTORY. WE GO TO VANCOUVER TO CONTRIBUTE OUR KNOWLEDGE AND OUR POSITIONS ON THE CENTRAL ISSUES AS WE PERCEIVE THEM. BUT WE ALSO GO TO LEARN FROM THE ROUGHLY 145 OTHER NATIONAL DELEGATIONS ASSEMBLED - TO ABSORB THE KNOWLEDGE THEY BRING TO THE CONFERENCE; TO STUDY THEIR POSITIONS ON THE ISSUES AS PERCEIVED FROM THEIR OWN VANTAGE POINTS.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT WE GO TO VANCOUVER WITH A DELEGATION WORTHY OF THE INESCAPABLE SPOTLIGHT THE UNITED STATES WILL BE UNDER AS A LEADING WORLD POWER. A DELEGATION TOTALLY COMMITTED TO CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTION - WITH NO WISH TO DOMINATE THE PROCEEDINGS NOR TO OFFER PAT PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE REST OF THE WORLD. A DELEGATION WHICH WILL BE JUDGED BY THE WORLD, NOT ON ITS POWER OR NUMBERS, BUT ON THE QUALITY OF ITS THINKING.

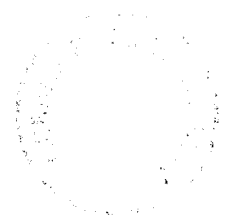


BECAUSE THE CONFERENCE IS AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL, INCLUDING THE ATTENDANCE OF SOME HEADS OF STATE, HABITAT HAS WORLDWIDE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE. IN ITS WORLDWIDE TERMS WE SEE THIS CONFERENCE AS A CONTINUATION OF THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED AND THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IN PAST YEARS THIS DIALOGUE HAD BEEN QUITE STRIDENT AND ANTAGONISTIC.

BUT, BEGINNING WITH THE 7TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS LAST FALL, THE UNITED STATES HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN TRYING TO CREATE A RELATIONSHIP OF COOPERATION BASED ON MUTUAL RESPECT RATHER THAN CONFRONTATION. THAT EFFORT IS CONTINUING IN THE MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT WHICH JUST GOT UNDERWAY IN NAIROBI. WE WILL STRIVE TO CONTINUE THAT EFFORT AT HABITAT.

IN ADDITION TO THE INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE, HABITAT HAS A FOREMOST NATIONAL DIMENSION. IT IS VITAL THAT OUR DELEGATION TRULY REPRESENT ALL OF THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE IDEAL OF INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM UNDER WHICH THEY LIVE.

I BELIEVE THAT, ASSEMBLED HERE, WE HAVE SUCH A DELEGATION, AND I AM GRATEFUL TO EACH OF YOU FOR AGREEING TO SERVE.



AS YOU KNOW, VANCOUVER WILL BE THE SCENE OF TWO CONFERENCES. IN ADDITION TO THE OFFICIAL UNITED NATIONS MEETING TO WHICH YOU WILL BE DELEGATES, THERE WILL BE A CONCOMITANT CONCLAVE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS -- A LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE IMPORTANCE ALL GROUPS OF ALL PARTICIPATING NATIONS ATTACH TO THE WORLDWIDE NATURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ITSELF.

THE PRECEDING CONFERENCES ON FOOD, THE ENVIRONMENT AND WOMEN WERE SIMILARLY CONSTRUCTED AND ATTENDED.

TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE WHICH IS CALLED THE HABITAT FORUM -- WHICH BEGINS ON MAY 27TH, FOUR DAYS AHEAD OF THE U.N. CONFERENCE, AND RUNS THROUGH JUNE 11TH.

MANY OF THOSE ATTENDING WILL BE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, AND IT WILL BE OUR JOB TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY ARE FULLY INFORMED OF THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS.

AND WE MUST BE SURE THAT THEY HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO COUNSEL US ON THEIR VIEWS AS WE GO ALONG. WE MUST KEEP IN MIND, AT ALL TIMES, THAT THESE EXEMPLARY PRIVATE GROUPS WILL BE INTIMATELY INVOLVED WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFERENCE GENERALLY -- AND WITH THE POSITIONS TAKEN BY THE UNITED STATES PARTICULARLY.

THEREFORE, I WILL CALL A SPECIAL, OPEN MEETING IN VANCOUVER FOR ALL ATTENDING NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS -- TO DETAIL FOR THEM OUR DELEGATION AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES AND TO INTRODUCE YOU, INDIVIDUALLY, AS WORKING PARTNERS.

THEREAFTER, RUSS PETERSON, WILL CHAIR REGULARLY POSTED MEETINGS WITH THE AMERICAN CONTINGENT.

IT IS A BIG ORDER, BECAUSE THESE MEETINGS WILL INVOLVE MANY GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH MANY QUESTIONS, AND, PREDICTABLY, MANY RESULTANT SMALLER CONFERENCES ON SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF SPECIAL GROUPS. OUR DELEGATION IS RELATIVELY SMALL. WE HAVE DELIBERATELY KEPT IT THAT WAY IN KEEPING WITH OUR RESOLVE NOT TO DOMINATE THE SCENE. BUT THAT ALSO PUTS A HEAVIER WEIGHT OF RESPONSIBILITY ON EACH MEMBER. SO, YOU'LL BE ASKED AGAIN AND AGAIN TO TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN HELPING US MEET OUR OBLIGATIONS TO THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS FROM THE UNITED STATES.

AS AN OFFICIAL DELEGATION OF OUR COUNTRY, WE ARE REPRESENTING THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES. WE RECEIVE OUR INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE. THE VIEWS WE EXPRESS ARE THE OFFICIAL VIEWS OF OUR GOVERNMENT.

WE ARE BOUND TO THAT OBLIGATION. WE CANNOT VOICE OUR INDIVIDUAL FEELINGS OR THE POSITIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AGENCIES. THAT, PERHAPS, IS ONE OF THE HARDEST TESTS OF ANY U.S. DELEGATE TO ANY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE -- SINCE FREE SPEECH IS INHERENT TO OUR WAY OF LIFE. IT WILL BE A TEST AT VANCOUVER BECAUSE, BY NATURE OF THE WORLDWIDE ASSEMBLAGE, THE THRUST OF THE CONFERENCE WILL BE POLITICAL -- AND A GREAT DEAL MORE POLITICAL THAN THE PREPARATORY PROCESS.

THE CONFERENCE WILL HAVE GREAT FLUIDITY. FOR, ALTHOUGH THE 56 MEMBER NATIONS WHO MADE UP THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE ARE BROADLY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS MEMBERSHIP -- THERE WILL BE ANOTHER 70-OR-SO ADDITIONAL NATIONS IN VANCOUVER WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE EARLY DELIBERATIONS.

AND THAT WILL ADD GREATLY TO OUR NEED FOR DISCUSSING AND NEGOTIATING WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF OTHER NATIONAL DELEGATIONS.

YOU WILL BE CALLED ON TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE WORK OF THE PLENARY AND COMMITTEES.

THAT WILL INCLUDE THE PREPARATION OF STATEMENTS AND POSITIONS IN ADDITION TO UNITED STATES REPRESENTATION IN PLENARY DURING GENERAL DEBATE.

YOU WILL BE ASKED TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH OTHER NATIONAL DELEGATIONS -- BOTH TO CONVEY THE VIEWS OF THE UNITED STATES AND TO REPORT BACK TO OUR DELEGATION ON THEIRS.

AND YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONTINUING LIAISON WITH THE AMERICAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS APART FROM THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED BRIEFING SESSIONS.

SINCE THE CONFERENCE OFFICIALLY BEGINS IN VANCOUVER AT 11 A.M. ON MONDAY, MAY 31ST -- MEMORIAL DAY -- I HAVE SCHEDULED A DELEGATION MEETING FOR 8:30 THAT MORNING. WE WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH ALL NECESSARY SCHEDULING INFORMATION THIS MORNING.

THEREAFTER, WE PLAN A DAILY DELEGATION MEETING AT 8:45 A.M. IN PREPARATION FOR EACH DAY'S ACTIVITIES.

I EXPECT TO BE IN VANCOUVER ON MAY 31ST THROUGH JUNE 2ND. I WILL HAVE TO BE AWAY FROM VANCOUVER JUNE 3RD THROUGH JUNE 5TH. I EXPECT TO BE BACK IN VANCOUVER JUNE 6TH THROUGH THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONFERENCE.

IN MY ABSENCE, RUSS PETERSON WILL BE IN CHARGE AND WILL HEAD THE DELEGATION.

STARTING WITH RUSS PETERSON, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, WHO WILL SERVE AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF OUR DELEGATION, I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE OUR SENIOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DELEGATES:

DAVID MEEKER -- ASSISTANT SECRETARY, HUD.

CHRISTIAN HERTER -- ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR, AID.

CHARLES ORLEBEKE -- ASSISTANT SECRETARY, HUD.

WILLIAM MORRILL -- ASSISTANT SECRETARY, HEW.

IRWIN (PETE) HALPERN -- DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, DOT.

STANLEY SCHIFF -- STATE DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR FOR HABITAT,

WHO WILL NOW BRIEF YOU ON THE CONFERENCE AGENDA, OUR SCHEDULES AND OUR CONFERENCE DOCUMENTS.