

The Environment and Human Rights – Links and Conflicts

March 2001

Elisabeth Abiri



Sida

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION AGENCY

Department for Natural Resources
and the Environment

Foreword

Human rights are in danger if we do not find viable solutions to environmental problems.

The way in which environmental problems – the use of natural resources and the emissions and discharges that affect the environment – are solved will determine how people live in the future. Social welfare and economic growth are dependent on environmentally sustainable development. Rules for cooperation between people tend to give way in times when resources are scarce.

And vice-versa. When democracy and human rights are no longer in place, our prospects of finding wise solutions to long-term environmental problems diminish drastically.

That is the theme of this paper. Here the links – as well as some conflicts – between the environment and human rights are discussed. The subject is not completely uncontroversial. Views on what human rights actually are vary from “a moral, philosophical and political field” to something that has been established and defined in a number of international legal documents.

In this paper the discussion is based on the wider concept. Environmental issues have entered into the “human rights picture” at the same time as environmental degradation and its effects on social and economic conditions have become increasingly obvious.

What can be stated in any case is that human rights, even in the limited sense of the term, will be in danger if environmental degradation and the depletion of natural resources are permitted to continue.

Sida’s Environmental Policy Division has asked Elisabeth Abiri at the Peace and Development Research Institute, PADRIGU, at Gothenburg University to give her views on the links between the environment and human rights.

It is clear that the links between the subject areas have not been discussed to any great extent. Perspectives and points of departures have been different, the parties concerned in the two areas have usually moved in different circles, and the issues have mainly been dealt with in different international fora. Definitions, concepts and traditions have stood in the way of an exchange of opinions on the subject areas and insight into their mutual dependence.

This paper can hopefully contribute to extending the understanding of the importance of environmental issues for social development, and to stimulating further thoughts and discussions on human rights.

Mats Segnestam

Head of Sida’s Environmental Policy Division

Contents

Summary	1
The environment and human rights	1
Human rights – How is the environment involved?	2
Three “generations” of risks	6
Human rights and the environment: different points of departure	7
The environmental issue – gradual insight	9
Human rights and the environment – the clearest links	16
Incompatibilities and potential conflicts	20
Final comments	24

Summary

We meet the links between the human rights and the environment continuously in the news. Every time the environment is exploited in a non-sustainable manner, human rights are violated. There are many examples where the exploitation of natural resources has also led to violations of the right to life and security. Violations of human rights can also have serious environmental consequences.

However, it is important to remember that there are also many positive links between the environment and human rights. The strengthening of human rights – economic and social rights, as well as civil and political rights – gives people the opportunity to protect and take care of their environment.

This report takes up the links between the environment and human rights. In a world characterised by increasing population growth, considerable differences in living standards and an increasingly vulnerable environment, the links between environmental issues and human rights are all the more important. The right to live in a sound environment has been included in the human rights debate at the same time as the destruction of the environment is being increasingly regarded as a violation of human rights. However, the two areas are still treated separately at national and international level, even if a change can be discerned.

Despite the fact that the promotion of human rights and the protection of the environment are mutually dependent on each other, there are a number of inconsistencies which make the formulation of policy potentially full of conflicts. However, a stronger link between human rights and the environment can strengthen both fields. A more specific human rights dimension would result in a greater human-oriented focus on environment issues which is essential, not least to show their immediate importance. Civil and political rights can be strengthened in non-democratic nations if they are presented as a means to achieve better environment. The promotion of these rights is then regarded as less of a problem than it would have been had it been a goal in itself.

There are many mutual links between human rights and the environment. This underscores the needs of discerning and well-informed policy decisions in an area which, in all probability, will be the great challenge of this millennium.

The environment and human rights

When the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drawn up in 1948, concepts such as “environmental degradation” and “sustainable development” had scarcely been devised. The overall goal was to preserve peace and to prevent the oppression of individuals and ethnic groups by their states. As part of the creation of a new world order, all persons would be members, by nationality, of a specific

state. The state would, in turn, have the ultimate responsibility for promoting and upholding the human rights of its citizens. Awareness of the environment was totally lacking in the Universal Declaration of 1948. At this time the environment was mainly thought of in terms of raw materials and energy which every state could use as it wished. Much has happened since then.

It is clear today that a functioning environment is a prerequisite for the fulfilment of human rights. Likewise, the need to deal with different environmental issues has stimulated a greater focus on the importance of human rights, both globally and locally. In other words it has become all the more obvious that there are clear links between the promotion of human rights on the one hand and protection of the environment on the other.

This paper focuses on these links. An obvious first statement is that there are many mutual links, but they are different in character depending upon the environmental problems and/or the human rights in focus. The ambition of this paper is to try to establish the ways in which environmental problems and human right issues affect each other at different levels. What negative and positive points of contact can be identified?

Human rights – How is the environment involved?

Even if it is customary to refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other documents when human rights are discussed, it is important to emphasise that human rights are much more than a number of international documents of varying legal status. In order to obtain some order in the discussion one can try to differentiate between:

- a discussion with a purely legal basis (What legal documents exist and what legal force do they have?)
- a continuous political debate (What can be demanded and tolerated as a human right?)
- moral and philosophical contributions (Can there really be something called human rights?)

The environmental issue and the right to a sound environment can be taken up from all three points of departure.

The legal point of departure

Much of the national legislation of states takes up the spectrum of human rights, from freedom of speech to the right to education, even if the concept “human rights” is rarely used explicitly in these legal texts. However, human rights have been an international legal issue only for a relatively short period of time. Up to the end of the Second World War, human rights were exclusively a moral and/or

political issue at the international level. However, the issue of international legislation on human rights was given prominence as a reaction to the horrors of the Second World War. Human rights would no longer merely be a question for states. They should also form the foundation of practicable international cooperation. The idea was to achieve international minimum requirements for relations between the state and the individual. The state would no longer be able to treat its people as it wished. Since then an international legal dimension has been developed and has grown increasingly stronger.

Today human rights are an important part of international law. There are a number of international documents which take up human rights. It is these documents that constitute the basis for human rights as a legal issue. However, only four of these documents are of such general character that they apply to all people's rights, without exception:

- The United Nation's constitution (1945)
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- The International Covenant on Economical, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)¹

None of these documents explicitly take up the right of the individual to a clean environment. However, a number of the different human rights mentioned in the documents can easily be interpreted in environmental terms. The right to life and personal security (article 3 of the Universal Declaration) can, for example, be reformulated to the right to live in a sound environment where one's life and security is not threatened. Likewise, in an environmental context, the right to food which is sufficient for health and well-being (article 25 of the Universal Declaration) can be regarded as the right to safe and healthy food and water. The right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (article 20 of the Universal Declaration) is, in environmental terms, the right to participate in peaceful meetings with the aim of protecting the environment or the rights of persons affected by environmental degradation. Furthermore the right to share in scientific advances and its benefits (article 27 of the Universal Declaration) can be reinterpreted into the right to be informed of new findings in the field of environmental research. The right to education (article 26 of the Universal Declaration) can be seen as the right to education in environmental and human rights issues.

Of the four international documents, it is only the two international covenants that are legally binding. The Universal Declaration is merely a declaration and thus does not have legal status. In all probability, this is one of the reasons why it

¹ Apart from these there are many other international covenants and conventions. However, they are not as general in character since they either focus on a particularly vulnerable group, or on a specific violation of human rights (for example the Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment).

has been possible to develop this document into a point of reference for different types of work on human rights. A declaration of intention has considerably fewer implications for a state or a regime than subjection to the mildest form of legal control.

The transition of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into legally binding documents was strongly influenced by the East-West conflict. The Western bloc gave prominence to civil and political rights which, it considered, were of greater fundamental importance than economic and social rights, as opposed to the Eastern bloc which had the reverse order of priorities. It was therefore impossible to transfer the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights into one document only. Instead the rights contained in the Universal Declaration were divided into the two international covenants mentioned above. The underlying ideological conflict made it impossible to have closer links between political and economic rights and, at the same time, created an artificial difference between them. Even if the right to education is defined as a social right, the organisation of schools and the content of education can constitute important political tools. Likewise, the right to a correct court procedure, which is regarded as a political right, necessitates the existence of adequate resources to maintain a working legal system².

The explosion of international conventions, covenants and declarations after the end of the Second World War has led, in turn, to the “legalisation” of human rights – now they are beginning to be regarded as an exclusively legal phenomenon. It is the case that the existence of an international dimension affects the political and moral debate as well as national human rights work. Today it is difficult, for example, to imagine a political struggle or a moral and philosophical discussion which did not have its starting point in the rights that exist in the legal sphere, since it is in these legal documents in which human rights have been given a real point of departure. After 1948 discussions on human rights have focused on the documented rights, either in order to give further legitimacy to the international documents, or to take exception to the way human rights have been formulated in the legal field. However, it is important to point out that human rights are not merely a legal issue, they are also, to a very great extent, an ethical and political issue.

The political point of departure

Since the human rights documents do not contain any articles which directly describe the right to a sound environment, the link between the environment and human rights is most often taken up from the political perspective.

² The right to form and join a trade union is the only human right that is defined as both a political and economic right and is found in both covenants (article 8 in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and article 22 in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

The political struggle for the right to a dignified life is the basis of the emergence of human rights. To make the progress achieved permanent, the rights have often been transformed into legislation. The existence of the international legal documents has changed the political work somewhat since it is possible to refer to existing international laws. Likewise it is also possible perhaps to reflect on the extent to which the definition and formulation of a certain number of human rights have “put the lid” on further political influence on the content of human rights.

In other words, the rights mentioned in the international documents have become the focus of political debate and discussion on the right to a life in dignity. At the same time human rights have also become more generally accepted as an important political issue. Today no person who wields economic or political power is officially against human rights. On the contrary, human rights are emphasised as an important political principle. However, when human rights are nonetheless violated, the violations are often justified by saying that certain rights are less important, that specific individuals and/or groups cannot be given priority, or that it is impossible to provide for human rights at a given point in time.

Since the discussion no longer revolves around whether there are any human rights or not, a number of political issues have been brought to life.

- What human rights are the “most important”?
- For whom shall human rights apply?
- Who has the responsibility to meet human rights?
- When shall human rights be met?
- How shall human rights be met?
- How much of each human right is an individual entitled to?

If an analysis is made of political disputes on the conceptions of different human rights, it can be seen that they almost always revolve around one of the above-mentioned questions. It is interesting to note that cooperation between human rights and the environment also focuses on these questions.

The moral philosophy point of departure

Even if the moral philosophy discussion is still taking place, its focus has changed since the arrival of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration, together with the other international human rights documents, has given human rights a real existence which is not possible to ignore. Regardless of the moral-philosophical approach one has to the question, one must keep to the international documents which exist. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights has therefore been developed into a point of reference around which the ethical and philosophical discussion on human rights revolves. This has the effect that the discussion gives somewhat less attention to the issue of whether each individual can be said to have certain rights simply because he or she is a person.

Instead the issue of the so-called “new” human rights comes into focus. Is it possible, for example, to describe – in philosophical and/or ethical terms – the right to peace and a sound environment as *human* rights?

Three “generations” of rights

It is only during the last twenty years that the environment and peace have been linked to the human rights area. This gradual extension of human rights is usually described in terms of different “generations” of rights. In this context, issues such as peace and the environment are usually described as “third generation rights”, based on solidarity. One common denominator of these rights is that they necessitate new forms of international cooperation. They have come into existence from a desire to overcome the lack of international equality which so clearly influenced the implementation of the earlier rights, principally in the so-called Third World³. In this spirit, the UN General Assembly’s declaration on development of 1986 was codified as a human right⁴. The right to peace⁵, humanitarian assistance, and our common heritage are other rights which are usually referred to as so-called third generation rights, as well as the right to a sound environment.

The common denominator of the third generation rights is therefore that they focus on a number of broader issues which strongly affect the life of people and thereby, by extension, the promotion of other human rights. This fact has the effect that there are shared opinions on whether these third generation rights can be regarded as *human* rights since they are not based, as civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, on the idea of each person’s inherent personal dignity. Perhaps the third generation rights tend rather to take up a number of necessary conditions which must be in place to enable all people to enjoy their human rights.

³ In this context the civil and political rights are usually described as first generation rights, based on ideas of freedom and protection from the abuse of powers by states. The economic and social rights are regarded as second generation rights, based on ideas of equality and the safeguarding of fundamental social and economic assets, services and opportunities.

⁴ This declaration, the Declaration on the Right to Development, G.A. res 41/128, annex, 41 U.N. GAOR Supp (No. 53) at 186, U.N. Doc. A/41/53 (1986) defines development as “... a comprehensive, economic, social, cultural and political process, which aims at the constant improvement of the well-being of the entire population and of all individuals on the basis of their active, free and meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits resulting therefrom...”

⁵ See Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace, G.A. res. 39/11, annex, 39 U.N. GAOR Supp (No. 51) at 22, U.N. Doc. A/39/151 (1984).

Group rights

In other words, one reason for the hesitation of the human rights movement to speak about the right to peace, humanitarian assistance and the environment as human rights is that, by definition, they cannot be enjoyed individually. They are not primarily individual rights but collective rights. This is against the traditional view of human rights as rights that the individual human being possesses in relation to the state, which, incidentally, is the predominant approach in the international human rights documents. Even the legal human rights debate was opened up for collective rights through the international human rights covenants, both of which include an article which recognises all people's rights to self-determination⁶. To demand, as an individual, a cleaner environment or peace in a war zone does not merely appear impossible to implement, it also seems somewhat absurd. It so obvious that, in such cases, comprehensive solutions must be found to the problems. On the other hand, it is obvious that those who are affected most severely by environmental disasters are often members of a vulnerable class or an ethnic minority. This indicates that there should be a clear "individual" dimension for group rights. The same can be said of many of the rights we are accustomed to see as "individual" rights. It is just as futile to demand education and respect from the legal system at the individual level when both the education system and the legal apparatus are issues that must be handled at the overall level. At the same time it is, of course, a well-known fact that different individuals and different groups have varying access to both institutions – which speaks in favour of the need for a focus on the individual. In other words there is always a group dimension in the individual rights and an individual dimension in the group rights.

However, since every person individually can enjoy, long for and/or demand a life in peace and in a sound environment, there are good reasons to see these rights also as the human rights they are, even from a traditional rights perspective.

Human rights and the environment: different points of departure

The work on environmental issues and human rights can sometimes be based on quite different points of departure. These differences can make cooperation between environmental organisations and human rights groups unnecessarily difficult, and it is important therefore that there is a clear understanding of these differences when action is taken in the field of human rights and the environment.

Where human rights focus, above all, on the responsibility of the state to ensure that everyone enjoys his or her human rights, environmental issues often need

⁶ See Article 1 in both international covenants. However, the definition of a "people" or a "collective" is such a complex issue that it has never been taken up in the human rights documents.

collective intergovernmental solutions to common, environmental problems. This issue is especially interesting in relation to global environmental changes such as the greenhouse effect. For those people living in states which will be affected dramatically by a rise in sea level, it is almost impossible for their states to assume, individually, responsibility for ensuring that this will not have any great effects on the citizens.

Furthermore the human rights tradition emphasises everyone's *rights* as opposed to everyone's *responsibilities*⁷. This is natural in the traditional human rights context where any violations of a person's basic human rights are performed by the state. People shall be treated in all respects in accordance with the human rights documents, regardless of whether they have lived up to their responsibilities as a member of society or not. This approach is most clearly seen in the legal system where everyone has the right to equal treatment, regardless of the degree of the crime or the amount of evidence. In the human rights documents the responsibility rests, above all, with the individual state, while in the environmental field the responsibility of the individual is given prominence. The focus of environmental work on the personal responsibility of individuals can be based on the understanding that those who permit degradation of the environment can also be affected by it. The reason why this is seldom the case is due to the fact that the different effects of environmental degradation have proved to affect people differently depending upon the ethnic group or class they are members of.

This difference is especially interesting when environmental violations are interpreted as violations of human rights. Here the human right perspective focuses totally on the state and on the intention to cause damage, which makes it difficult to pass judgement on economic bodies for violations of human rights, even in open-and-shut cases such as the Union Carbide case in Bhopal in 1984 where factory emissions led to the deaths of over 2,000 people and made some 200,000 blind. In a traditional human rights perspective it was the responsibility of the state of India to deal with the crime committed by the company.

In the environmental field there is also a forward-looking perspective in which the future and the rights of future generations are an important factor. This perspective is largely lacking in the human rights field. Instead human rights focus on the present – here and now. This difference is problematical when important raw materials are depleted in order to safeguard the human rights of people living today, but in a way which means that future generations will not have access to them. It is increasingly clear that human rights work must also expand its time perspective to include future generations.

Finally the ethical points of departure can differ. In the human rights field an individual-oriented approach is obvious – development shall be for the good of

⁷ Only one paragraph in one of the Universal Declaration's thirty articles takes up the responsibilities of individuals (article 29.1).

people. However, parts of the environmental work are based on a biocentric point of departure – development shall be for the good of nature. Human beings are just one species among many. Some environmental lobbyists are therefore of the opinion that it is unfortunate to speak about environmental issues in human rights terms, since the implication is that the environment is the possession of people which people have the right to. Others are of the opinion that it is only when people see that their behaviour has a negative effect on themselves that change will be possible. Therefore it is of the greatest importance to demonstrate that upholding human rights and protecting the environment are intimately linked to each other.

The environmental issue – gradual insight

The traditional western view is permeated by a division between human beings and nature. Human beings are regarded as the master of nature and nature is seen as a resource that shall be used to promote the development of human beings. The effect of the environment, or rather the large-scale destruction of the environment, on the life situation of people has led to an increase, internationally, in environmental awareness and in the understanding that human beings and the environment are mutually dependent on each other.

In line with the increase in environmental awareness, the issue has been taken up in both national legislation and international law. The clear transnational character of environmental issues underscored the need to deal with them in different intergovernmental fora rather than in national fora. In the wider sense of the term, the environment was the subject of a number of international agreements as early as the 1950s, for example on the oceans, outer space and the Antarctic. However, these agreements mainly had the focus that environments shared by all should not be exploited by individual states for their own gain or to threaten other states.

In line with the increase in environmental awareness and in the number of transnational environmental disasters, the number of multilateral agreements also increased. Agreements against oil discharges, the dumping of aircraft fuel and emissions of other chemical substances into the air and water increased in the 1960s and the 1970s. Even if individual states worked to produce international agreements to protect their populations and their environment from the effects of environmental degradation, the focus was not on human beings and their human rights linked to the environment. There may have been several reasons for this. The types of environmental degradation concentrated on (emissions of different types) were, it is true, violations of the human rights of people, but often not of the direct type associated with violations of human rights. If oil discharges make it impossible for fishermen to earn a living, or the dumping of different toxic substances dramatically increases the risk of cancer for those people living in the

vicinity, this naturally means that these persons' human rights are threatened. In other words, this form of environmental degradation is linked to the human rights field to a very great extent. However, since the perpetrator has not had the explicit purpose of violating these people's rights, it has been difficult to regard these environmental violations as violations of human rights. In addition the effects of pollution are first seen after a long period of time, which further confuses the connection between the people whose human rights have been violated and the environmental degradation itself. Even if the issue of human rights violations has been in question, it has nevertheless proved difficult to make an explicit link between environmental degradation and the violation of human rights since, in general, the human rights documents lack the international dimension possessed by the environmental problems. The people who are affected have their rights violated, regardless of this violation is planned or not. However, even in cases where the consequences of environmental degradation on human rights have not been planned, it can be argued that this should nevertheless be regarded as a violation of human rights. Had the human rights been taken sufficiently seriously, the environment would not have been treated in such a careless way so that serious violations of human rights were the consequence.

Links between the environment and people in international work

Internationally, the United Nation's Conference on the Human Environment, which took place in Stockholm in 1972, is usually described as a turning point in the work on people and the environment. During this conference international environmental awareness was summed up into a common point of departure for further and stronger cooperation. What makes the Stockholm conference particularly interesting in this context is that its main document "the Stockholm Declaration" has its starting point in the human rights tradition⁸. In the first principle the signatories declare that "man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations". In other words, here the human rights language has been supplemented with a strong focus on the responsibility of people, not merely for the present but also for the future.

Sustainable development

In the so-called Brundtland report, "Our common future", the concept of "sustainable development" was established⁹. Even if this concept does not directly take up the relationship between human rights and the environment, the report nonetheless linked together a number of improvements in the human rights field with

⁸ The Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment was adopted on 16 June 1972. (U.N. Doc. A/Conf.48/14/rev.1)

⁹ World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our common future*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

non-sustainable economic development. It was pointed out that infant mortality had decreased, life expectancy had increased, the proportion of adults who could read and write had increased, and that global food production had continued to increase more rapidly than population growth. The development processes that had made this progress possible also had a number of effects which the planet and its population could no longer endure. Examples given here included the greenhouse effect, desertification, the destruction of forests, the death of forests, the depletion of the ozone layer, and the permanent poisoning of the earth and ground water.

During the period of just under three years (October 1984–April 1986) when work on the Brundtland report took place, a number of serious disasters occurred, which the Commission drew attention to when presenting the report. These are still interesting inasmuch as they show how different links between environmental degradation and violations of basic human rights can be manifested.

- The drought in Africa threatened the lives of 35 million people and about one million died.
- Leakage in a weed-killer factory in Bhopal in India was responsible for the deaths of more than 2,000 people while a further 200,000 were made blind or injured.
- Tanks containing liquid gas exploded in Mexico City, killing 1,000 people and making thousands homeless.
- The explosion in the nuclear power reactor in Chernobyl spread radioactive fall-out over Europe, and thereby increasing the risk of cases of cancer in the future.
- Agricultural chemicals, solvents and mercury ran out into the Rhine during a fire in a store in Switzerland, resulting in the death of millions of fish and a serious threat to drinking water in West Germany and the Netherlands.
- Some 60 million people died of diseases related to unsafe drinking water and malnutrition; most were children.

In other words, the Brundtland report was not explicitly based on the human rights field. Instead the relationship between economic development and environmental issues was in focus. However, economic development was regarded as essential to improve the living conditions of people, particularly in poor countries. The report's conclusion was that it was futile to try to remedy the world's environmental problems without establishing a wider perspective that included the factors causing poverty and international injustice, in other words a perspective focusing on economic, social and cultural human rights.

The major conferences

Even if environmental issues have increased in importance throughout the period since the Second World War, they were overshadowed during the cold war by the military rearmament programmes and the nuclear arms threat. With the end of the cold war the international community was exposed to new ideas and a redefinition of the major issues for the future¹⁰. With this change, human rights and environmental issues became increasingly perceived as two of the most important issues for the future. This change in focus also provided the gateway for the UN conferences of the 1990s on a number of mutually related global problems in the search for an integrated approach.

All UN conferences were based on a basic standpoint in which equality, peace, justice, democracy, economic and social development, environmental protection and sustainable development were regarded as indivisible and mutually dependent processes. Each one of these processes was linked to the human rights field.

The first, and perhaps the best known of the United Nations conferences, took place in Rio de Janeiro in 1992¹¹. The Rio-conference introduced Agenda 21 which was described as a global plan for sustainable development. Agenda 21 emphasises the importance of meeting the basic needs of people; of strengthening the capacity of states to deal with environmental issues, and the importance of disseminating data, information and scientific findings. Above all, however, Agenda 21 emphasises the necessity of the active participation of different groups of people in the political and economical decision-making process in respect of the environment. Despite the fact that the report underlines that governments, non-governmental organisations, companies and industries are still important participants, prominence is given to women, children and young people, farmers and indigenous peoples as key groups in the environmental work. These groups are often outside the official decision-making processes, which makes it difficult for them to contribute their knowledge and to participate in decisions that affect them. Agenda 21 is unique in the sense that it takes up environmental problems at the local, regional and global level while pointing out the importance of all the human rights.

This broad approach has the effect that the rights to life and personal security, protection before the law, democratic governance, freedom of speech and opinion are regarded as equally intimately associated with environmental work as the rights to food, health, a reasonable standard of living, satisfactory working conditions and

¹⁰ Initially the fall of the Berlin Wall seemed to be a victory for civil and political rights and thereby also the democratic form of government as defined in the human rights covenants (Article 25 b in the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights lays down that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity to vote and to be elected at genuine, periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot). However, the links between political and economic rights became increasingly clearer when the strong ideological tensions had disappeared from the international arena.

¹¹ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), June 1992, Rio de Janeiro.

education. It also means that the proposed activities focus on both unsustainable consumption patterns and poverty issues, which is not always the case.

The next UN conference took place in Vienna in 1993. This time the subject was in fact human rights¹². The objective of the Vienna conference was to give prominence to human rights on the international agenda in general and in the UN's work in particular. A large part of the conference focused on confirming the international commitment to human rights issues. Among other things the first UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was appointed. The conference report emphasised the clear links between democracy, development and human rights¹³.

The International Conference on Population and Development, which took place in June in 1993 in Cairo, adopted a wider approach to the population issue than had previously been the case. It was generally accepted that the most effective way of reducing population growth and promoting sustainable development was to give women the opportunity to education and to strengthen their role in society, in other words to promote the human rights of women. On this occasion family planning was also presented as a basic human right for all couples and individuals and that all forms of coercion were unacceptable. This meant that the population issue, which had previously mainly been regarded as a matter for governments, became a question of human rights and the right of all people to decide over themselves and their bodies was upheld.

After the environment, human rights and population, the World Summit for Social Development, which took place in March 1995 in Copenhagen, focused on poverty and social development. Now decisions made at previous conferences were integrated into an overall plan with the objective of meeting all the basic needs of people, reducing economic and social inequalities, and creating the opportunity for people to earn their living in a sustainable way. The elimination of poverty was declared to be an ethical, social, political and economic necessity¹⁴.

1995 was also the year in which the Women's conference took place in Beijing¹⁵. This conference focused on strengthening the role of women in society, not as a

¹² World Conference on Human Rights, June 1993, Vienna.

¹³ In actual fact this does not need to be emphasised since democracy is a part of the human rights field and the objective of development is often the same as the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights. In all probability this is due to the fact that, in international discussions, human rights have been associated with the freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, and less, for example, with the right to health care or the right to participate in general elections.

¹⁴ From a human rights perspective this explanation can appear a little unnecessary since it is actually the right of everyone to enjoy a "...a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services" (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25.1). The fact that this does not provide reason enough to combat poverty says a great deal about the international status of human rights.

¹⁵ Fourth World Conference on Women, September 1995, Beijing.

means to achieve something else, for example a reduction in population growth or a better environment, but to enable women to exert control over their life situation, since this is a women's right. However it was emphasised in the argumentation that the empowerment of women would also achieve these effects.

A conference on human settlements was held in Istanbul in 1996¹⁶. This conference took up the importance of acceptable housing conditions for the people of the world. A new approach adopted at this conference was its focus on dissemination of information on policy initiatives and models that worked well, so-called best practices. This is interesting since it shows the number of different ways through which the same goal can be achieved. It was pointed out that the right to reasonable housing conditions is a human right which must be implemented.

Conventions and declarations linked to human rights and the environment

The right to a healthy environment has been confirmed in several international documents as well as in the constitutions of a number of states (for example Pakistan's constitution has been interpreted as including the right to a clean environment¹⁷). In the 1990s an attempt was also made to elaborate this right through an international declaration on the principles for dealing with the links between the environment and human rights. The United Nation's Sub-commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities produced the so-called *Draft Declaration of Principles on Human Rights and the Environment*. It is still open for comments and amendments.

This declaration had the explicit purpose of formulating the environmental dimension of a number of human rights. The articles in this draft declaration are also mainly based on different articles in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and have been worded from an environmental perspective, but there are also a number of new rights which cannot be directly traced to the articles of the Universal Declaration. These new rights are of particular interest since they indicate gaps in the human rights declaration which must be filled if the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is to function as a point of departure for environmental work. Here, in particular, the right to protection of air, earth, water, flora and fauna can be noted. Furthermore there is the right to an environment which can meet the needs of the present generation without diminishing the possibilities available to future generations to meet their needs. There is also the right to the preservation to unique places. The life-giving systems, future generations and special places in nature were not included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights but are regarded as a necessary focus today, even in the discussion on human rights.

¹⁶ Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), June 1996, Istanbul.

¹⁷ In connection with a human rights' case concerning environmental degradation in Baluchistan, the Supreme Court of Pakistan interpreted the right to life in Pakistan's constitution as including the right to a clean environment.

Two international agreements on environmental cooperation also have clear consequences for human rights work. The *Convention on Biological Diversity* of 1992 has a clear justice perspective. Local populations and indigenous peoples in the South can, for example, obtain support from the Convention on Biological Diversity since this Convention states that national genetic resources are to be regarded as the sovereign rights of each state. However, the knowledge and traditional lifestyles of local communities and indigenous peoples, which are relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, shall be respected and maintained. If their knowledge is used, these groups shall participate in the process, and an equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of knowledge of this type shall be promoted. The Convention on the Biological Diversity also states that developing countries shall be entitled to profits from products made with their genetic material. The private sector should also facilitate access to, and the transfer of, technology protected by patents and other intellectual property rights. Under the WTO (World Trade Organisation), the TRIPs (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) agreement has been produced. The countries which have signed the agreement agree to introduce private intellectual ownership in one form or another, patent or “sui generis” systems (alternative systems) to protect the right to, among other things, plant species at the national level. Some 130 countries have signed both the TRIPs agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity, despite the fact that there are conflicts between the documents. Where indigenous peoples all over the world are concerned, there are also problems with patents since knowledge about, for example, medicinal plants is often collective knowledge which has been passed down over the generations.

The United Nation’s Economic Commission for Europe drew up in 1998 the so-called Århus Convention (Convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making and access to justice in environmental matters). This Convention develops and defines the rights a state must give to each person to enable him/her to exert an active influence on his/her environment. The fact that there was a clear need for the Århus Convention can be seen as an indication that human rights are not always observed. The states that have signed the Convention are not giving their citizens any fundamentally new rights. The right to a fair trial, to necessary information, and to popular participation in decision-making processes can all be traced to existing human rights documents, regardless of whether the focus was on the environment or other social issues. However, the Århus Convention was drawn up in the knowledge that states often withhold information or try to avoid broad popular participation which, in the environmental context, is doubly bad. Apart from the fact that people are prevented from practising their human rights, this violation of human rights also leads to the risk to the environment being used in a non-sustainable way.

Human rights and the environment – the clearest links

The close relationship between the environment and human rights is accepted internationally today. This understanding of the relationship between the environment and human rights can function as both a source of cooperation and as a source of conflict. Work on human rights is increasingly focusing on environmentally-oriented violations. Today people are usually aware of the fact that environmental problems exist and therefore make demands for protection of the environment. However, this can be seen from at least two different points of view:

- Is clean nature and the environment something that people are entitled to enjoy, i.e. one of the human rights?
- Are clean nature and a clean environment necessary for all life and therefore requires restrictions of personal freedom for its preservation?

Human rights are often violated as a result of negative action in respect of the environment, such as deforestation and the construction of dams. Sometimes this assumes particularly crude expression, such as the murder of indigenous peoples. Likewise human rights today provide a strong argument for combating environmental problems, since the consequences of, for example, the greenhouse effect and the pollution of watercourses affect individuals and their prospects of enjoying their basic rights.

Even if the UN conferences of the 1990s took up the environment and human rights in various ways, they often failed to make the relationships between the environment and human rights explicit. They seem to be so obvious that they do not require detailed definition. Some of the relationships between human rights and the environment are extremely clear, for example when human rights are violated in connection with the exploitation of the environment.

It is in these cases of “double violations” in which similarities and differences between international environmental organisations and human rights organisations emerge most clearly, since they tend to approach the same cases from their different perspectives. Their selection of strategies can be different depending on how the problem is defined. From a purely environmental perspective the main problem is that the earth is being destroyed. From a traditional human rights perspective the focus lies in the fact that the right of humans to a living is being violated. Most major organisations still have a need of a clear profile, either as a human rights organisation or an environmental organisation, even if they understand that respect for people and the environment are two sides of the same coin.

¹⁸ Ashish Kothari, lecturer in environmental studies at the Indian Institute of Public Administration expresses this fact as follows: “Most mass movements at the grass roots level are not just human rights, nor just environmental, but inevitably both. They have to be, if they are conscious of the role of natural resources in their lives, and of the dominant forces exploiting resources.”

At grassroots level most movements concentrate either on violations of human rights or on the environment. They have been obliged to take up both aspects since they are well aware of the role that nature plays in their daily life and how strong economical and political interests affect both them and the nature they live in¹⁸.

Violations of economic, social and cultural rights as an effect of environmental degradation

The most obvious links between human rights and the environment are to be found between poverty-related environmental problems and economic and social human rights. It appears fairly obvious that the right of people to reasonable living conditions, for example food, water and housing, are made difficult by phenomena such as deforestation, desertification, depletion of renewable raw materials and water and food shortages. In the same way the struggle of individuals or groups for food and suchlike can further exacerbate an already problematical environmental situation. The environment is also affected in situations when large numbers of humans move/take to flight. Today there is an awareness of the environmental dimension of flows of refugees. This can be seen, for example, in the programme supported by UNDP and Sida for the reintegration of the people who once fled from Guatemala. The returning refugees are being educated and work with farming and forestry in an environment-friendly way in resettlement areas which are often located on highly sensitive land.

The links between violations of economic human rights and environmental degradation are also obvious. Often violations of these types go hand in hand. Economic human rights and poverty-related environmental problems are unfortunately often taken out of discussions on human rights and taken up separately under headings such as “poverty and the environment”, which is also the case at Sida even if an improvement is underway. From a human rights perspective it is important not to fall for the temptation to take up just one part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The strong mutual dependence which exists between civil and political rights on the one side and economic, social and cultural rights on the other makes it necessary that they are taken up in one context.

Each time the environment is exploited in a non-sustainable way, violations of human rights are the result. Clear examples of this are for example the extraction of oil in countries such as Chad and Nigeria, where the people whose land is being tapped for oil for many billions of dollars, rarely have running water, electricity or basic health care. The devastation of the rain forest in Borneo and the construction of dams in, for example, China and India are other examples where exploitation of natural resources has also led to violations of the human right to life and security.

Violations of civil and political rights lead to environmental degradation

Violations of human rights can often have an environmental dimension. The compulsory movement of people always has serious environmental consequences. The South African apartheid regime's homelands policy was not just a violation of human rights, the system also created a number of environment-related health problems such as water-borne diseases, a lack of sanitation, and pollution. Likewise, in all probability, the forced movement of hundreds of thousands of Burmese villagers in 2000 will have severe effects on the environment since these people have been forced to leave their land and cattle without supervision while they themselves now have to find ways to survive in already vulnerable areas.

There are many cases all over the world where the possibilities available to people for their survival is being threatened since their local environment is being exploited. However, in order that a case shall be given attention internationally, it is necessary that the situation and its exploitation of humans and nature is criticised, over and over again. Most people who act as spokesmen for resistance against local violations of people and/or the environment, rarely describe themselves as "champions of the environment" or "representatives of human rights". Neither are they a special group of people who are distinguished by certain types of working methods. They are teachers, trade union workers, priests, scientists, members of different indigenous groups etc, who have been forced to take political action due to an unacceptable situation.

These spokesmen for different environmental and human rights movements can be said to function as alarm clocks since they draw national and international attention to different violations of the environment and human rights. By their actions they expose themselves to personal danger. In most case studies that have focused on the relationships between the environment and human rights, there are reports of the harassment or murder of the leading figures of the different movements. Physical attacks are a common way of silencing troublesome resistance, even in the environmental context.

When people's economic, social and cultural rights are threatened or violated, they need to be able to exercise their civil and political rights in order to protest. Many states have shortcomings in their respect for human rights, even to the extent that the right to life and personal security of the citizens is continually threatened. In these states opposition is regarded as a crime against the state and therefore it is combated with all means available. A very well-known case is that of the Nigerian academic and journalist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was persecuted for more than 20 years for his struggle for the Ogoni people's right to live in a healthy, non-polluted environment instead of the environmentally polluted area which was the result of Shell's extraction of oil in the area. Due to his environmental engagement he lost his job at the university in 1973. During the years that followed he was arrested on a number of occasions and was finally executed by the Nigerian regime in 1995.

In societies with a higher degree of respect for human rights it is nevertheless sometimes the case that the civil and political rights of the citizens are threatened in order to “put the lid” on an unwanted opposition. Apart from physical threats, environmental activists are subjected to prison, harassment and public condemnation, as well as dismissal from public positions. A tactic used in both non-democratic and democratic states is to involve people who exert an influence on public opinion in costly and protracted court proceedings. Individuals who have criticised real violations of people and the environment are often accused of libel. Here a parallel can be found with the methods for meeting their critics used by the populist Freedom Party in Austria. Restrictions on the right to association and the right to free assembly, together with censorship and other restrictions on the media, also make the work of the organisations in question difficult.

Serious restrictions on access to important information on new scientific findings, development projects and other social changes, as well as their effects on people and the environment, prevent people from taking action prior to the start of harmful projects and environmental degradation is a reality.

This can easily become a vicious circle. A situation that starts as a violation of the environment leads to the violation of people’s economic, social and cultural rights. This leads, in turn, to more or less organised protests which are combated with the aid of deliberate restrictions on the exercise, by these people, of their political and civic rights. Inversely it can be claimed that, in societies where the citizens can freely exercise their civil and political rights to a great extent, planned environmental violations are much more easily prevented.

Here the Århus Convention can provide an important instrument. It underlines the obligations of the state to make public and spread available information. Active support to the “central target groups” of Agenda 21 is also of great importance. There is a wide range of examples where the strengthening human rights has also led to environmental improvements. Sida supports, for example, the special prosecutor for the environment in Honduras. This has led, in turn, to better prospects of taking legal action in cases of environmental violations. The issuing of certificates for land (ownership rights) to so-called squatters in Djakarta and Surabaya in Indonesia has led to investments in measures to improve the environment, for example sewage disposal, refuse collection, investments in water supplies, efficient permanent ovens and so on¹⁹.

¹⁹ See Hoy, M & Jiminez, E. 1996, *The Impact on the Environment of Incomplete Property Rights*, Working Paper No. 14, Policy Research Department, World Bank, Washington D.C. (And thanks to Anders Ekblom, School of Economics, Gothenburg University.)

Incompatibilities and potential conflicts

Even if the environment is now an equally self-evident item on the international agenda as human rights, the two problem areas continue to be treated in different social sectors, both internationally and nationally, which naturally makes the identification of common problem areas difficult. At the same time safeguarding human rights and protecting the environment often stand out as two compatible, indisputable values. However, both fields are full of inherent conflicts, which makes policy-making a balancing act between different rights and environmental aspects. The fact that upholding human rights has been shown to have clear links to protecting the environment and vice versa has presented a further challenge to policy-makers.

Even if the preservation of human rights and protection of the environment can be seen as two mutually dependent processes, there are a number of possible incompatibilities, which makes all policy-making potentially full of conflicts. It is important to shed light on these conflicts since all policies which focus on promoting human rights and protecting the environment must be prepared for the risk of conflicts.

Political rights in conflict with economic rights

A perpetual discussion in the human rights field concerns the issue of the “limits” of the rights. Even if advocates of human rights continually emphasise the indivisibility of human rights, individuals are often placed in situations where priorities must be made between the rights of different groups or between different rights. This can be particularly clear in cases where the result of the right to participate in general elections can be that a majority chooses to ignore specific needs which a minority of people can have. This has a clear environmental dimension since, for example, the right to freedom of residence is often in conflict with large-scale economic projects. In the building of industries, dams or urban areas it can be claimed, on the one side, that each state has the duty to promote the country’s economic development in order to safeguard its people’s economic, social and cultural rights. On the other hand, this means that farming land is destroyed and the rights of the people who have lived on this land are violated. To enable a human rights policy to develop into broad workable practice, it is important that these dilemmas are clarified. The state tends to want to redefine human rights to avoid making the confiscation of land and the movement of people a violation of their rights, by pointing out that payment has been made or that decisions have been democratic and legally correct. This is naturally an absolute condition for a respectable policy, but it nonetheless has the effect that the people concerned may not live where their homes are. Their right to choose their own place of residence is thereby violated. In other words, promoting human rights can, in practice, mean that some people have a number of their rights violated. Here it is a question of recognising this and making it clear – in human rights language – why the policy pursued has been selected.

Different environmental problems in conflict with each other

In the same way as there is sometimes a temporary clash of interests in the promotion of different rights, it is clear that different environmental projects are not always compatible. Projects that focus on remedying poverty-related environmental problems are sometimes in conflict with projects aimed at solving development-related environmental problems. It is generally known that an already problematic environmental situation can be exacerbated by the struggle for reasonable living conditions and that the depletion of renewable raw materials is often the case when more people than before shall reach agreement on a relatively vulnerable environment. It would therefore appear clear that the best for both people and the environment would be if the survival of these people could be guaranteed without having to press the environment to extremes.

Once again we end up in the issue of economic development, which is often required to finance the guarantee of this right to survival. Even if much of the environmental discussion of the 1990s focused on the transfer of so-called sustainable technology to poor countries, the techniques available to industry and transport are still not adapted to environmental requirements. This means that economic development that has the aim of preventing the over-exploitation of renewable resources will mostly be implemented with technology, which has a further negative effect on the development-related environmental problems. The question is not whether this will take place, but the extent to which it will take place. Since the conflict between the different types of environmental problems to the greatest extent is regarded as a North-South-question in which poor countries (South) feel that their interests are in direct conflict with those of the rich countries (North), it is also a politically sensitive issue.

Once again it is important not to ignore the conflict but to find a reasonable and discerning level of interaction, compensation and technological development. The example from Guatemala given above shows a discerning recognition of the need to meet economic human rights. Here it is the project idea itself, that each person shall have right to economic development, which does not put the environment at risk.

Economic rights in conflict with the conservation of the environment

The assertion that every person should be entitled to a reasonable standard of living is not, in itself, a very controversial assertion. However, on the other hand, a definition of the term “reasonable standard of living” is much more problematical. No one has wanted to define the type of living, food and/or health care that can be regarded as a fundamental human right. A possible definition of a type of minimum requirement is made difficult in the first place by purely geographical differences. How is it possible to find a common definition when climate, growth zones and risks of disease vary between different areas. In addition there is a fear that a definition of this type could be interpreted as a ceiling instead of a floor. Can the aspirations of the state be considered adequate if the people have a roof

over their heads, do not starve and have basic health care? At the same time there is a feeling that the lifestyles of the modern, well-to-do societies are far from what can be considered internationally as a human right. It is interesting to note that differences in living standards in each country are often discussed in terms of human rights while international comparisons are usually only made between so-called “comparable countries”. In a human rights perspective, however, all countries must be regarded as comparable.

It is first when environmental issues started to be linked to choice of lifestyle and living standard that the right to a certain standard of living became controversial. Differences in living standards were, in themselves, a problem from the human rights perspective, but there was no need to set an upper limit on lifestyles as long as economic growth of the Western type was not conceived as a problem in the poor countries. Awareness of the fact that the earth cannot cope environmentally if all the people in the world live with a western standard of living has led to change in attitude. If the modern western lifestyle is, in general, environmentally unsustainable, this means that the development of a similar lifestyle by the majority of people in the poor countries must be seen as a zero-sum game. This question was brought forcefully to the fore in connection with the Rio Conference when the American President, George Bush, asserted that “the American lifestyle is not negotiable”. This was a clear message that the road to economic development in the poor countries would not take place on the same premises as economic development in America. It also meant also that it was considered legitimate for the rich countries to continue to take up the environmental scope for economic development.

The reason for the American President’s statement was mainly to be found in the need to show influential domestic groupings, such as the oil and motor industries, that the Rio Conference would not affect their interests. Conflicts of interests and a general aversion to changes to lifestyle make it reasonable to assume that a change of the lifestyle in the rich countries would be a long and protracted process. Likewise, development in the poor countries will only be slowly adapted to environmental requirements, with the aid of new technology and new sources of energy. Given this sluggishness, economic growth will continue to have a negative effect on the environment which is already vulnerable. Conversely the environmental question can prevent further development in the poor countries.

Even in this issue there is a tendency that representatives of the governments of poor countries see the environmental issue as an attempt by the rich world to save its environment at the cost of their people’s economic growth. It is therefore a sensitive issue. Since it is not realistic to believe that lifestyle patterns, development strategies and technologies will change overnight, a continual negotiation must be held on this problem. In other words it is not possible here to adopt a standpoint of principle. It is rather through a number of policy decisions that a reasonable balance must be achieved between necessary changes to lifestyles, economic growth and protection of the environment.

Political rights in conflict with environmental work

The issue of changes in lifestyle also points to the conflict between the need of immediate action on environmental issues and the political sluggishness of democratic systems. Even if the civil and political rights are invaluable for the active promotion of functioning environmental work and the protection of a threatened environment, these rights can also be exploited to approve reductions in environmental requirements, reductions in controls of transports of chemicals, and reductions in petroleum taxes. Even if these decisions can be regarded as negative from the environmental point of view, they are made democratically by people exercising their human rights. It is a well-known fact that, in times of economic decline, people worry more about their jobs than the environmental effects of the industries they work in. Therefore it is also probable that many proposals for stricter environmental legislation will be voted down since they would result in an uncertain working situation for the electors. In the interpretation of human rights, one cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that the rights also include the right to misuse the environment. When all is said and done, George Bush was addressing the national electorate when he used the term “non-negotiable lifestyle”. The issue of the degree to which supranational decision-making is acceptable in national society is, in other words, of great importance for the environmental field.

What does the increase in focus on human rights mean for environmental work?

More cooperation between human rights organisations and environmental organisations can strengthen both fields. A more specific human rights dimension would mean an increase in the human-oriented focus of environmental issues. When, for example, a mangrove swamp is destroyed, the result is not only a reduction in the stock of fish. The lack of easily available sources of protein means that the health of the local population will suffer which, in turn, means that their human right to food and health cannot be met. In other words, the destruction of the Mangrove swamp is a violation of human rights. This link can provide a feeling for the consequences of environmental degradation which for some can be easier to accept than the fact that the Mangrove swamp is destroyed.

What does the increase in environmental awareness mean for the human right work?

Apart from the synergy effects which cooperation between human rights organisations and environmental organisations can lead to, different environmental problems can also constitute a neutral platform for international cooperation on issues such as co-determination and participation. It is clear that there are no people who are more suitable to draw attention to violations of the environment than those affected. However, these people need to enjoy the right to freedom of information and to the freedom of assembly and organisation, to enable them to criticise effectively the violations that are being committed against the environment and to prevent the planned violations. By focusing on the objective, protec-

tion of the environment, the means, increased civil and political rights, can be experienced as less problematic than when these rights are promoted as objectives in themselves. In other words, cooperation on Agenda 21 offers an excellent way of strengthening civil and political rights in countries which otherwise adopt a much more hesitant attitude to these matters.

At the same time it is completely clear that an investment in economic, social and cultural right is also necessary to create functioning work on the environment. Education is a necessity, partly to permit understanding of more abstract environmental relationships, such as the relationship between driving a car and the greenhouse effect, and partly to permit the use of the possibilities available for making a living. In addition, upholding the human rights to food and reasonable living standards are necessary in order to prevent the increasingly desperate, non-sustainable utilisation of already vulnerable areas.

Final comments

Regardless of how well conceived and well formulated it is, every policy designed to uphold and promote fundamental human rights will affect the environment in one way or another. Likewise, every policy designed to protect or improve the environment will touch upon issues concerning fundamental human rights. The mutual dependence of the two areas underscores the importance of designing a discerning and well-informed policy on these issues. With more people on earth, further increases in consumption in both South and North, diminishing environmental scope and an awareness of differences in living standards, the issue of what every human being is entitled to will be found high up on the international agenda. In all probability, the link between human rights and the environment will be the major issue of this millennium.

Further reading:

Human Rights Watch, 1992, *Defending the Earth: Abuses of Human Rights and the Environment*, Washington D.C.: Human Rights Watch.

Sachs, A. 1995, *Eco-Justice: Linking Human Rights and the Environment*, Washington D.C.: World Watch Papers.

Kane, M. J., 1993, "Promoting Political Rights to Protect the Environment" *Journal of International Law*, Vol.18:389.

Boyle, A. & M. Anderson (red.), 1996, *Human Rights Approaches to Environmental Protection*, Oxford: Clarendon Press.



SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
S-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden
Tel: +46 (0)8-698 50 00. Fax: +46 (0)8-20 88 64
Homepage: <http://www.sida.se>

ISBN: 91-586-2100-8