

Welcome and Opening of the Symposium

by

Wouter J. Veening

Chairman/Director Institute for Environmental Security

Symposium on the Worldwatch Institute report
"State of the World 2005: Redefining Global Security"
Peace Palace, The Hague, 28 February 2005

Madam Minister for Development Cooperation,

Mr. State Secretary for Environment and Sustainability,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and Representatives of the Corps Diplomatique in The Hague,

Mr. Vice Mayor of the City of The Hague,

Mr. Counsel of the Permanent Court of Arbitration,

Mr. Chairman of the Hague Academic Coalition,

Dear Panel Members,

Dear friends from academia – both professors and students – the private sector, the non-governmental organisations and the media,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this symposium on the report *State of the World 2005*, prepared and published by the World Watch Institute in Washington, under the title *Redefining Global Security*.

The programme of this afternoon is structured as follows:

1. an introduction to the report by the WWI
2. the minister and the state secretary will give their positions on the content of the report
3. after the coffee break, we will have a panel of 4 eminent experts commenting on various chapters of the report
4. first comments by the WWI and discussion and answers with the audience
5. together with WWI we will try to give a summary of the discussions of the afternoon, also with a view on the plans for the future
6. As you know, the word symposium means "drinking together". The old Greek philosophers thought that by doing so, it would stimulate the conversation and raise the insights in, well, basically everything, especially when it was getting late...Apart from the coffee break, the drinking will be virtual until 17.30, when we have the reception here at the Palace.

Before I introduce the speakers of the WWI to you, I would like to say to how happy we are to be able to hold this meeting in the Great Hall of Justice in the Peace Palace.

This is the room where the International Court of Justice sits and where it gives its rulings and interpretations of international law as the highest legal body of the United Nations.

This was also the room where in 2000 the Earth Charter was launched. Mikhail Gorbachev was closely involved in writing the Charter and he has also written a very important Foreword to the report we are discussing this afternoon. It is a pleasure to announce here that in November this year the 5th anniversary of the Earth Charter will be celebrated in Amsterdam, with the attendance of Queen Beatrix.

We are very grateful to the director of the Palace, Mr. Steven van Hoogstraten, who is also here with us as member of the panel, to have made this possible, as he did last year when as Institute for Environmental Security we could organize our first international conference on environment, security and sustainable development.

Now, while there is much to say about peace and justice and their complicated inter-linkages – the Hague Academic Coalition had an excellent conference on these, almost one year ago – one thing is certain: security as "redefined" by the *State of the World 2005* is an essential condition for justice and lasting peace.

Let, however, our friends from the World Watch Institute speak to that!

We are very fortunate to have here with us Chris Flavin and Michael Renner. Chris is President of the Institute and as such the successor to Lester Brown, the founding Father of World Watch and a well-known name to many of us.

Michael is the Senior Researcher and participated in our conference last year.

We are also happy that Izaak van Melle, the Dutch Board Member of the WWI is here. The name Van Melle is well-known to consumers here in The Netherlands and in other parts of the world, but Izaak is also a champion of sustainable entrepreneurship. He has been very instrumental in organizing the symposium of today.

Chris and Michael, the floor is yours!

Minister, Agnes, can I say, also on behalf of WWI, how privileged we are that with your hectic and truly global schedule, you made the time to be here and to speak to us.

Let me, before you say it, acknowledge that there is a lack of gender balance on the speaker list this afternoon.

First of all, however, there is you as a formidable person to redress the unbalance.

Further, in spirit there is very much with us Wangari Maathai, who as a long-time environmental activist was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize last year, personifying how environmental co-operation helps to build and maintain peace.

Wouter J. Veening

Chairman/Director

Institute for Environmental Security

The Hague, The Netherlands

Internet: www.envirosecurity.org