

Full Statement on Sustainable Bioenergy for People and Planet

Invest in sustainable bioenergy, 12 February 2009



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worldconnectors

Input for this Statement was provided by the members of the Worldconnectors Working Group (WG) on New Scarcities (see below). As part of the drafting process of this statement, they conducted a round of interviews with experts from different sectors with specific knowledge of the issues at hand: André Faaij, Martijn van Gemert, Willem Jan Laan, Vijay Paranjpye, Rudy Rabbinge, Mirjam de Rijk and Herman Wijffels. This Worldconnectors statement does not necessarily reflect the position of these experts.

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I Preamble: New Scarcities

'THERE IS ENOUGH FOR EVERYBODY'S NEED, BUT NOT ENOUGH FOR ANYBODY'S GREED'

Societies and individuals worldwide are increasingly confronted with the threat of scarcity. The recent spikes in the price of food – caused by multiple factors - and the high volatility of oil prices are the most telling illustration of this. Mounting food prices will slow down the process of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The commitment to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1) is at risk, because many poor people can no longer afford to buy basic food. At the same time, energy scarcity jeopardizes the international community's commitment towards environmental sustainability and reversing the loss of biodiversity (MDG 7). Again, the impact of this will be felt hardest in developing countries. Clean drinking water and fertile land are other scarcities that increasingly endanger the livelihoods of many people in the South.

We as Worldconnectors are deeply concerned about these severe new global challenges and their impact on women, men and children in developing countries and the loss of nature. The current worldwide financial crisis, that has taken many people by surprise, reinforces once more the necessity to confront issues of scarcity head-on. It is high time to change our behaviour towards other people's wants and towards this planet that we share. As for energy and food, let us be clear: there is enough for everybody's need, but not for everybody's greed.

We are pleased that the twin issues of energy security and food security currently feature high on the international political agendas. We strongly support stepping up the use of renewable energy sources – including water, wind and solar energy – both in developing and developed countries, in order to tackle problems of both energy scarcity and climate change.² In this statement, we limit ourselves to discussing bioenergy as one of the prime cross-cutting issues in the ongoing debate on new scarcities.

II BIOENERGY

We as Worldconnectors believe that a sustainable future for today's global world can profit from the use of bioenergy. To realise the much-needed transition to energy-efficient economies, sustainable bioenergy can play an important role. However, we are deeply concerned about the serious challenges for people and planet that this implies. Bioenergy *can* be produced in sustainable ways, creating win-win solutions for small farmers, the majority of whom are women, who can increase their income and food security, while at the same time gaining access to a new source of energy. However, bioenergy production can also violate human rights of local and indigenous people and be a threat to the environment and biodiversity. Therefore, we declare that the use of bioenergy in the European Union can only be supported if there are sound and rigorous criteria and policies in place for its sustainable production (wherever in the world) and use. Bioenergy may under no circumstances threaten the food security of people in developing countries nor damage the environment and our planet's biodiversity.

In public debate and the media, radical standpoints on the pros and cons of bioenergy are readily articulated. In general, staunch proponents of bioenergy – as *the* answer to both rising oil prices and the negative climatic consequences of fossil fuels – find themselves opposed to those who warn for the threat that bioenergy poses to food security as well as biodiversity. Moreover, its positive impact on CO₂ reduction is also questioned. In our capacity of Worldconnectors, we want to make a positive contribution to the de-

- 1 These are the words of Mahatma Gandhi, quoted by the IPCC-chair, Rajendra Pachauri, when he received the Nobel Peace prize in 2007.
- 2 With regard to nuclear energy we follow the line of the SER, which recommends the Dutch government should research all energy options, including nuclear energy, on the basis of the criteria reliability, environmental impact, security and finances. See: http://www.ser.nl/-/media/DB_Advieszen/2000_2009/2008/b26650.ashx

bate. Choices to be made on the most favourable - for people and planet - means of production of sustainable bioenergy must be based on research, not rhetoric. Other than those who stick to non-negotiable, extreme-end positions, we consciously tread the middle ground: a 'yes, provided that...' approach to bioenergy. After all, creative but at the same time realistic solutions are necessary and possible in order to achieve an equitable and sustainable world for all. In our search for such solutions we base ourselves on the Earth Charter and the UN Millennium Declaration.

III CONSIDERATIONS

1. Fossil fuels, climate change and the loss of biodiversity

Without the use of fossil fuels, current economic development levels, both here and in developing countries, would not have been possible. But the disadvantages of their unrestricted use have become painfully apparent. Fossil fuels are not renewable and the time will undoubtedly come that our world's supplies of oil and coal have been exhausted. What is more, fossil fuels are a driver of climate change. While western countries leave the largest carbon footprints, developing countries bear the brunt of this climatic impact in their struggle against floods and ongoing desertification. To make matters worse, the growing scarcity of fossil fuels makes more and more voices heard in favour of exploring oil fields on the North Pole or off the American coast, with possible dramatic consequences for nature and biodiversity. The Worldconnectors' position on climate change is laid down in our previous statement 'Sustainable Development and Climate Change'.³

2. Energy scarcity as source of (geopolitical) conflict

Oil is a strategic commodity, directly tied up with global geopolitical power relations. Today's energy scarcities are likely to further divide and polarize the world. In the past two to three years, the world has turned into an arena in which the commodity energy has become a strategic or even military asset in power struggles. This affects the levels of trust between and within countries that are operating in an increasingly multi-polar world, with possible detrimental effects for the resolution of global challenges. The vulnerability of countries without domestic oil reserves starkly contrasts with the self-confidence that oil-rich countries display, especially when prices are rising. We currently witness high tension and uncertainty about energy security on the part of many countries' leadership. The high volatility of oil prices – and especially the price spikes in 2008 – are a pivotal reason why the EU and the US are actively exploring the use of alternative energy sources. Bioenergy is one of them. High prices of fossil fuels have thus made the search for other, less polluting energy sources economically and politically viable. However, not everybody is in a position to search for alternatives. Energy (and water and land) scarcity will be the likely causes for new conflicts between countries and between groups of people within the developing world, with possible disastrous consequences for human lives and livelihoods. Women and children are known to suffer disproportionately from such violent conflicts.

3. Food security: threats and opportunities

The recent price spikes in food – the World Bank indicates an 82% rise over the last three years – threaten the livelihoods of millions of people in developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin-America. They are a blow to progress on the MDGs and to the international community's pledge to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. The number of undernourished people is estimated to have risen by 75 million people in 2007, bringing the world total to 923 million. More people are likely to have fallen below the hunger threshold in 2008⁴ and the financial crisis will continue to affect informal economies in 2009.

Like energy, food is no longer just a commodity, but also an item of speculation. Ultimately, food shortages are symptoms of unequal power relations.

Given this alarming reality, we cannot overstate the importance of urgent attention to the situation of small farmers. The majority of them are net consumers of agricultural products, not net producers. As things stand, the probability is that hundreds of millions of subsistence farmers will suffer instead of benefit from the rising food prices, while large agricultural businesses reap the profits.⁵ In fact, small farmers and their communities, along with the indigenous knowledge they possess, are increasingly threatened by big companies involved in monoculture agriculture for export.

In theory, rising food prices are a promising prospect for *all* those earning their living in the agricultural sector. However, poor farmers will only benefit if future investments in agriculture and rural development are first and foremost aimed at improving the livelihoods of smallholders. It is with this precondition in mind that we as Worldconnectors wholeheartedly support the calls that are currently made for renewed attention to the long-neglected agricultural sector in developing countries.⁶ High food prices provide an important boost for serious agricultural and technological investment in these countries, where it may moreover become worthwhile to start using less fertile land, thus bringing about an upgrade of waste lands and semi-deserts. Clearly, such changes in land use require an ever close watch over possible negative ecological consequences, while the illegal expropriation of land must at all times be avoided. The renaissance of organic farming should be encouraged, especially since many smallholders are organic farmers 'by default'. And because the majority of small farmers are women, gender issues must be at the forefront of any future interventions in the agricultural sector in the South.⁷

³ See: <http://www.worldconnectors.nl/pdf/192.pdf>

⁴ Food Outlook, November 2008: (<http://www.fao.org/docrep/011/ai474e/ai474e00.HTM>)

⁵ The urban poor will without doubt be hit hard by the rising prices of prime commodities.

⁶ See for instance the World Development Report 2008, 'Agriculture for Development' and the joint policy paper by the Dutch ministers for Development Cooperation (Koenders) and Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (Verburg): 'Landbouw, rurale bedrijvigheid en voedsel zekerheid', 8 May 2008.

⁷ Experience with women as central actors in large scale collective agricultural micro-credit schemes (for instance in Bangladesh) shows that this, combined with education and health services, has an enormous effect on economic and political participation and empowerment of women and girls, within one generation.

4. Bioenergy and food security

The production of biofuels is increasingly cited as one of the main causes of today's staggering food prices. The American government speaks of 3%; the International Food Policy Research Institute holds biofuels responsible for 30% of food price increases; while the World Bank initially came with even higher figures. The wide variations in this politically charged discussion underscore the need for honest and objective analysis on the impact of bioenergy production. Such analysis must take into account other responsible factors such as changing consumption patterns (among others more meat consumption) in China and India, speculation, crop failure due to climate change, and expensive oil that has pushed up the price of fertilizers.

First generation bioenergy, it is true, lays a claim on food crops such as corn, palm oil and rapeseed.⁸ We warn that even if today's production of bioenergy does not exceed 2% of the world's agricultural acreage, if the sharp trend of increasing production persists while the market for primary products remains tense, this may have disastrous effects for people in the South. It must be noted that statistics only reflect global market prices, and that local fluctuations and price shocks can show considerably different patterns. Moreover, even though from a macro perspective the worldwide area of land used for biofuel feedstock is still small, the impact on people who happen to live in one of these areas can certainly be far-reaching (e.g. people forced into becoming landless labourers or moving to growing city slums). We are also concerned that premature bioenergy targets set by governments and the EU create an artificial increase in demand for biofuel. This will cause disproportionate food price increases and will serve as a dangerous economic incentive to use high biodiversity value areas for the pro-

8 The current proportion of worldwide palm oil production used for generating energy is 1.5%. In the US 30% of corn production currently goes towards bioethanol, but nonetheless export of corn has kept on growing. However, the corn acreage in the US has increased at the cost of other crops, especially soya and wheat, which has affected the prices of both. Moreover, the fact that the American 'storehouse' of corn and wheat is no longer what it used to be causes a higher price volatility. Two thirds of the European production of rapeseed goes towards biodiesel. Part of this crop is grown on land that had been laid waste due to previous European policy to prevent overproduction.

duction of biofuel feedstock.

At the same time, the introduction of bioenergy provides another perfect opportunity to reverse the decades-long trend of neglect of rural and agricultural development in the developing world discussed above. Along with seriously rescaled investments in subsistence farming, investments in 2nd and 3rd generation bioenergy feedstock can add to a positive development in farming. Involving small and medium sized farmers in this process, means that families can experience the production of bioenergy feedstock as a solution to their own food security and social and economic development, whilst at the same time this may help solve the problem of global energy scarcity.

5. Bioenergy, climate change, and biodiversity

Biofuels were widely promoted for their positive impact on climate change as supposedly 'carbon neutral' fuels. We now know that, taking into account the full life cycle of biofuel production, transport and consumption, only certain biofuels prove to have a favourable greenhouse gas (GHG) balance. Bioethanol produced from corn in America – especially when coal is used as the energy source for distillation – scores badly, while ethanol produced from sugar cane in Brazil performs much better. For all potential feedstock for biofuel, life cycle calculations of their GHG balance must be made available. The impact of indirect land use change should always be taken into account in the calculations.

The use of biofuel should only be promoted if within an acceptable time frame its GHG balance is shown to be evidently better than that of fossil fuels and if its production is not at the cost of biodiversity in any region of the world. Tropical forests and wetlands must at all times be protected against exploitation for bioenergy. Production of bioenergy feedstock in resource-poor regions such as the Sahel (think of the large-scale cultivation of jatropha) may have grave ecological consequences not least due to its claim on scarce water resources. It appears that protecting ecosystems is often equivalent to protecting local and indigenous populations.

6. Typologies of bioenergy

In this statement we purposefully use the term bioenergy instead of the more frequently cited 'biofuel'. Biofuels are the liquid fuels produced from biomass (biodiesel and bioethanol). Bioenergy is the wider term, which also includes the use of biomass for producing electricity and heat. Current research clearly shows the comparative advantages of so-called 2nd generation bioenergy over 1st generation biodiesel and bioethanol. 1st generation biofuels are made from sugar, starch, vegetable oil or animal fats. The basic feedstock used for its production – wheat, corn, sugar cane, palm oil, sunflower oil, etc – are agricultural products that are also used as food for people and animals.

2nd generation bioenergy production processes can use a variety of non food crops, such as waste biomass, the stalks of wheat and corn, wood and grass. Through advanced technologies, low-value agricultural crops, residues, grasses and woody mass can be converted into energy, with much better over-all CO₂ performance and triple the production volumes per hectare of land. Feedstock for such 2nd generation bioenergy can be grown on degraded lands, thus not laying a claim on fertile land for food production. This, however, necessitates a clear definition of what 'degraded land' is, as well as having a clear eye for potential local competition over these lands (e.g. pastoralists versus agriculturalists). That said, no efforts should be spared financially and politically to speed up the process of making 2nd generation bioenergy commercially viable. This 2nd generation bioenergy should especially be geared towards producing electricity, which holds great opportunities for its use in transport. More research capacity should be directed at the potential merits of 3rd generation bioenergy (e.g. from algae, or butanol through photosynthesis).

7. Bioenergy production in poor countries

The growing demand for bioenergy leads to large new markets for agricultural producers, also in developing countries. The production of bioenergy can thus generate employment and increase rural incomes in these countries. Europe should support developing countries to capitalize on these opportunities, provided that they are set up in a sustainable way and do not harm biodiversity. Again, all efforts should be geared towards maximizing opportunities for small farmers and ensuring the profitable participation of these women and men in this new agricultural business.

Local bioenergy production can moreover reduce the external energy-dependency of poor countries and communities. Currently 1.6 billion people lack access to electricity and 2.4 billion people mostly in rural areas in developing countries lack access to modern fuels for cooking and heating. In sub-Saharan Africa, more than 92% of the rural population is without electricity. It is therefore crucial that bioenergy production first benefits local poor communities, and financially rewards the smallholders who produce it. Unfortunately this is not self-evident, given that the production of bioenergy (especially the technology in ethanol distilleries) requires fairly large economies of scale. However, small-scale production of biodiesel could meet local energy demand (for instance for use in electricity generators). Supplying wider (export) markets requires meeting consistent quality standards, which are presumed to be hard to achieve for individual small producers. There are examples though of co-operations that have successfully organised common standards whilst stimulating small producers (e.g. in coffee, cotton, flowers and vegetables). Therefore, projects for social innovation, exploring viable new forms of cooperative organisation among these farmers, are essential.⁹

9 The G77 and China have issued several statements setting forth developing countries' viewpoints on the need for increased energy access for sustainable development. They plead for additional resources and technology transfer in areas of renewable energy, bioenergy and changes towards cleaner and more efficient energy use.

With its programme ‘Biomassa Mondiaal’, the Dutch government may well become an international forerunner in supporting initiatives and pilot projects for sustainable and profitable bioenergy production in developing countries.¹⁰

8. Certification for sustainability and people’s rights

For bioenergy to be sustainably produced and used throughout its entire value chain a comprehensive and mandatory certification scheme is a *sine qua non*. For the development of such a certification scheme, lessons learned from FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and the RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil) must be put to use. The criteria for sustainable bioenergy production formulated by the ‘Cramer committee’ can serve as a useful guide.¹¹ The new directions for the use of bioenergy that are currently under discussion within the EU take into account only two sustainability criteria: GHG balance and the impact on high biodiversity value areas. However, crucial issues like the use of scarce water, soil degradation, food security for the poor, land rights and labour rights must be included in any future certification scheme. The production of bioenergy should not cause the displacement or marginalisation of indigenous and local communities. People’s rights to land should in no case be violated by the encroachment of large-scale commercial initiatives. While the aim is to come to one comprehensive global certifying scheme, the complex procedures and high costs of certification should not put small producers at a disadvantage. It is also unacceptable for certification to be used as ‘import barrier in disguise’. The effectiveness of certification schemes requires participation from all major producers (small scale as well as large scale) and buyers as well as strong monitoring systems to be put in place.

9. Business initiatives

The international business world has latched onto the promise of bioenergy to become a se-

cure, economical, and environmentally sound alternative to fossil fuel. Oil and energy companies as well as car manufacturers and pharmaceutical concerns are investing in the production of bioenergy and in R&D. Some are even acquiring millions of hectares of land in Africa and Asia for large-scale cultivation of biofuel feedstock, especially jatropha. Food and personal care companies, which have to put up with mounting prices for their raw products, are very critical of the eagerness with which the big oil and energy companies embrace biofuels. Unbridled money-motivated investments in biofuel production will indeed have detrimental effects on people and planet, especially in developing countries. But the corporate sector can, on the other hand, also play a crucial role. Companies can – as socially responsible companies – start now with implementing sustainability criteria for their bioenergy production and purchase practices. Waiting for legislation does not affirm leadership. In addition, they can invest generously in R&D focussed on the development of sustainable (2nd and 3rd generation) bioenergy. An encouraging multi-stakeholder initiative for the development of public-private partnerships for the import of certified sustainable biomass (BIOPEC) is taking shape in the Netherlands. It is crucial that (cooperatives of) local producers are involved in such initiatives.

IV ACTION

With hindsight we know that it was premature to herald bioenergy as the panacea to solve both energy scarcity and climate change. At the same time, bioenergy is not the villain that some groups today want to make us believe. It all depends on how bioenergy is produced and used, and whether this is done with the consent and participation of local actors and not by dispossession or exploitation of people or planet.

The need for alternative energy sources will become the more pressing as we proceed into this 21st century. For the long term, the road forward is to build our economies on renewable energy (solar, wind and water), reduce greediness, and make our energy use more ethical and more efficient. In the meantime, in order to realize the transition to such energy-efficient economies, we believe that sustainable bioenergy has to be one in the package of possible solutions. Developing countries should be supported in availing themselves of the great opportunities to leapfrog to the right techniques for sustainable bioenergy use, skipping intermediate stages.¹² Small farmers – who more than anyone else are presented with both the threats and the opportunities of this process – deserve our foremost investment and support.

We as Worldconnectors call for innovative, scientific and realistic approaches towards the production and use of bioenergy, at the same time stressing our unfailing commitment to an equitable and sustainable world in which every person has the right not only to the basic amount of food necessary to survive, but also to food of quality and quantity good enough to live in dignity. We stand for a global use of energy that does not damage the natural environment and biodiversity of our Earth.

Therefore, we call for expedient and committed action on the part of all stakeholders in society, both nationally and internationally, and we urge them to take up their responsibility towards people and planet with due enthusiasm and wisdom. Our recommendations address specific actors, yet start with action points that should be taken up by all actors in society:

We call on all actors in society...

1. ... to substantially reduce their energy consumption. Governments, businesses and citizens alike need to take responsibility to decrease their ‘carbon footprint’. This includes eating less meat, driving our cars less often, flying less often, saving energy in our houses, and shifting to environmentally friendly products.

The Dutch government as well as the EU should put in place effective policies to enhance energy efficiency, and at the same time provide incentives for the development and increased use of renewable energy such as wind, water and solar energy.

2. ... to reduce the wastage of food. Staggering amounts of food are thrown away and wasted in Europe and the US every year, while millions of people go hungry every day in other parts of the world. The food price crisis – which makes for growing numbers of hungry people – can be seized as an incentive to create awareness about this perverse situation, which moreover has adverse impacts on the environment and the use of scarce water.

¹⁰ See <http://www.mvo.nl/biobrandstoffEN/download/plan%20van%20aanpak%20biomassa%20mondiaal.pdf> and <http://www.minbuza.nl/nl/actueel/brievenparlement.2008/09/kamerbrief-inzake-beleidsnotitie-milieu-en-hernieu.html>.

¹¹ For the full text of the ‘Cramer criteria’ see: http://www.snm.nl/pdf/1000_060714biomassarapportciocramerjuli2006.pdf.

¹² See for instance www.biopact.com.

We call on the international community...

3. ... to generously invest in sustainable agricultural productivity in developing countries as well as to tackle the underlying causes of food insecurity by ending harmful trade policies. The importance of water for future food security cannot be overstated. Water efficiency in agriculture must be improved – a challenge that both government and business should urgently embrace.¹³

Promising initiatives, such as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) and the ‘Purchase 4 Progress’ (P4P) program of the World Food Programme, should be supported.¹⁴ The recent appeal by COMESA delegates to include sustainable agriculture and forestry in the carbon trade – currently, the EU’s Emission Trading Scheme allows European companies to buy carbon credits only from industrial sources – should also be supported. Africa can use this trade to invest in food security while encouraging farmers to invest in climate-friendly practices for sustainable agriculture.

4. ... to generously invest in programmes for sustainable energy production and use in developing countries, always in dialogue with governments and other partners there, aiming to help them benefit from ‘the dialectics of progress’ in terms of innovative and sustainable energy policies. Developing countries should be allowed to take temporary measures to protect their infant bioenergy industries, assuming that this does not amount to their sacrificing the sustainability criteria as promoted in this statement.

5. ... to design and implement an international certification scheme for bioenergy as well as devise a sound tracking, tracing and monitoring system for its implementation. Care must be taken to ensure that the complex procedures and high costs involved in a global certifying scheme do not put small producers at a comparative disadvantage. One way to solve this is through investments in collective agricultural organising. It should also be avoided that certification is used as ‘import barrier in disguise’.

We call on the Dutch government and the European Union...

6. ... to urgently translate the Cramer criteria for sustainable biomass production into binding national and European legislation to the extent possible within the confines of the EU law framework. We are very concerned that at the moment there are no shared binding rules as to the production, import, or use of biomass for fuel or energy. We strongly support the Cramer criteria, which are the outcome of comprehensive expert consultation by different stakeholders from university, government and business.¹⁵ However, these criteria still need to be made concrete to prevent them from becoming a mere formality. We urge national and local governments in the Netherlands to start using the Cramer criteria for sustainable government purchases. Furthermore, the EU should formulate a joint sustainable energy policy which takes into account the impact of the EU’s response to energy insecurity on developing countries in terms of their economies, environment and biodiversity, and the livelihoods and rights of individuals.

7. ... to proactively use their diplomatic power towards countries that currently do not take the necessity of only buying sustainably produced bioenergy to heart in order to encourage them to implement binding policies to this effect. Environmental diplomacy is indispensable today. Needless to say, such diplomacy is only credible if the Dutch government and EU themselves practice what they preach.

We call on the Dutch government...

8. ... to seize opportunities for cooperation with Indonesia and Surinam on the issue of the preservation and responsible management of the countries’ rainforests, and biodiversity. Both countries, with which the Netherlands has a unique historical bond, could potentially profit from sustainable bioenergy production, but only if the imminent threat that such production poses to these countries’ rainforests can be averted by the introduction of sound policy, involving small farmers (including women) and indigenous communities. Wherever possible and desirable the Netherlands should be open to cooperation in this area, including compensatory assistance.

We call on the private sector...

9. ... especially Dutch companies and businesses in the energy and food sector, to set the example and to become international forerunners by complying with the Cramer criteria when producing, purchasing and using bioenergy, even if these criteria are not yet embedded in (inter)national legislation. Government should create the necessary conditions. It is inexplicable that certain business initiatives, like making greenhouses energy producing, are not put to use.

We call on governments and business...

10. ... to significantly improve their disclosure-discipline with respect to usage (and waste) of scarce natural resources. The indicators developed by GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) can be used as guidance.

We call on the research community...

11. ... to generously invest in innovative research on sustainable 2nd and 3rd generation bioenergy production, involving local and indigenous knowledge sources in developing countries. Improvements in the efficiency of water use must rank high on these research agendas. Knowledge and technology development are indispensable if we want to improve the sustainability of bioenergy production, decrease its competition with food production, minimise its impact on the environment, and lower its costs. Given the multitude of reports and statements that appear on the politically charged issue of biofuel and bioenergy, sound and independent academic research is indispensable in order to distinguish ideology from fact. European universities should cooperate with southern researchers and research institutes and enthusiastically embrace this opportunity for mutual learning on the basis of equality and a shared intellectual and political agenda. Students should be imbued with a passion for research in this socially significant field and with the joy of being able to contribute to the betterment of people and planet through intellectual endeavour.

12. ... to actively engage together with governments and business in creating a methodology and toolkit on ‘The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity’ in order to redefine valuation and performance criteria, as well as reporting standards. In other words, the value or price of biodiversity and other environmental factors must become integrated into the normal economic and financial systems. A study on this subject recently commissioned by the European Commission and the German Government should be actively supported.¹⁶

¹³ The urgent issue of water scarcity merits a separate paper. See for instance the SID report on water: <http://sideurope.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/report-water1.pdf>.

¹⁴ See <http://www.agra-alliance.org/>

¹⁵ For the full text of the ‘Cramer criteria’ see http://www.snm.nl/pdf/1000_060714biomassarapportciecramerjuli2006.pdf

¹⁶ See: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/index_en.htm

RADIO-INTERVIEW 12 DECEMBER 2008 MET HANS EENHOORN BIJ GOEDEMORGEN NEDERLAND, RADIO 1, KRO

Ruud Lubbers, Wim Kok, Jan Pronk, Naama Tahir, Hans Eenhoorn en Sylvia Borren; Zij noemen zich Worldconnectors, politici, wetenschappers en top bestuurders. Zij slaan de handen samen in één om de energie schaarste in de wereld aan te pakken.

Hans Eenhoorn, oud topman van Unilever

Hoe gaat u dat doen?

“De Worldconnectors is een breed samengestelde groep met mensen die allemaal veel internationale contacten en internationale ervaring hebben. Ook jonge mensen zitten erbij, mensen die net afgestudeerd zijn. En wij richten ons op grote internationale vraagstukken waar Nederland en Europa naar onze mening een rol in zouden moeten spelen. Daar geven wij policy statements over uit, die na zorgvuldig onderzoek gepubliceerd worden. Met een oproep aan de maatschappij, dat kan de overheid zijn, het bedrijfsleven zijn, maar ook internationale organisaties.”

En wat staat er dan bijvoorbeeld in zo'n policy statement?

“Ik heb hier de laatste, in het Engels, voor me. Daar staat op, ik zal het even in het Engels zeggen: We call on all actors in society to reduce the wastage of food. We call on the international community to generously invest in sustainable agriculture productivity in developing countries.”

Dat gaat dus dan over voedselproductie?

“Ja, het gaat inderdaad deels over voedselproductie en deels over energie. Door de voedselprijzen crisis die in het begin van dit jaar zo ontzettend duidelijk was voordat ze overschaduwde werd door de financiële crisis, is gebleken dat de voedselvoorziening in de wereld en de energievoorziening in de wereld met elkaar in conflict zijn. Dit is het gevolg van de mix die ze nu krijgen in bio-energie. Er is schaarste aan schone energie en er is schaarste aan voedsel. En dat concurreert met elkaar door bio-energie waardoor dus in ontwikkelingslanden heel veel mensen, heel veel meer honger krijgen.”

Maar betekent dat ook dat u bijvoorbeeld de regering oproept om meer geld en energie te steken bijvoorbeeld in de productie van algen, want van algen kun je tegenwoordig ook brandstof maken? Windmolenparken, zonnecollectoren in de woestijn?

“Ja, dat is in ieder geval een oproep. Maar de oproep is nog specifiekere als we praten over bio-energie en dat is de eerste generatie bio-energie waarbij goed voedsel in motoren verbrand wordt, maïs bijvoorbeeld, of raap en suiker. Het is zaak om zo snel mogelijk met de zogenaamde eerste generatie bio-fuels op te houden. De productie hiervan gebeurt op grote schaal en heeft een ontzettend negatieve invloed op de voedselvoorziening in ontwikkelingslanden. Arme mensen moeten plotseling meer geld voor hun eten gaan betalen doordat voedselgewassen gebruikt worden voor bio-energie. Maar als je tachtig procent van je geld aan voeding moet betalen en de prijzen gaan met tien, twintig, dertig soms wel met vijftig procent omhoog dan heb je op een gegeven moment niks meer te eten. Dat moet ophouden.”

Dat begrijp ik, en dan gaat u zo een policy statement uit doen. Dus zo'n beleidsoproep uitdoen en dat komt dan bijvoorbeeld in Den Haag terecht, of in Brussel of weet ik het waar, en verdwijnt dat dan in een la of luisteren ze naar u?

“Nou, omdat wij natuurlijk toch een hoop mensen in onze Worldconnectors hebben die erg goed aangeschreven staan, die grote netwerken hebben, kan je dus best invloed uitoefenen. Ook via de pers zoals vandaag door die oproep nog een keer is heel hard te doen: “Weg met eerste generatie biobrandstof, dat mag absoluut niet”. En heel hard werken aan de tweede generatie, en bijvoorbeeld heel snel heel hard en duidelijk de zogenaamde Cramer criteria van minister Cramer voor duurzame bio-energie op de internationale agenda zetten en te komen tot fatsoenlijke certificering van duurzame bio-energie in plaats van goed voedsel te verbranden.”

Het doet een beetje denken wat u doet met de Worldconnectors aan het Clinton Global Initiative?

“Ja, er is een parallel, wij zijn echter meer een club, die zich ook minder bindt aan één man. Onze voorzitters zijn Ruud Lubbers en Sylvia Borren, dus niet één persoon. Ook hun namen worden niet aan dit initiatief verbonden. Het lijkt misschien iets op de Club van Rome; een grote groep van redelijk invloedrijke mensen die proberen geheel vrijwillig in hun vrije tijd een bijdrage te leveren aan een duurzame maatschappij, zowel hier in Nederland als in Europa maar vooral ook internationaal met het oog op de ontwikkelingslanden. In dit geval gericht op de arme mensen die in die landen toch door dit soort bio-energie ontwikkelingen enigszins bedreigd worden en dat is niet goed.”

Nou kwam de Club van Rome toevallig begin jaren zeventig ook met waarschuwingen dat wij de wereld aan het uitputten waren en dat was aan de vooravond van een nieuwe toenmalige olie crisis en nu staan we weer aan de vooravond van een nieuwe oliecrisis, is dat toevallig eigenlijk?

“Nee, dat is helemaal niet zo toevallig, ik ben zoals je ook weet in de jaren zeventig zeer betrokken geweest met het bekendmaken van de ideeën van de club van Rome dat we de wereld slecht beheren. We maken er een rotzooitje van, dat wisten we al in 1970 dan krijgen we even een waarschuwing van oliecrisis en dan doen we er zo weinig mee. Nou moeten we gewoon nog harder werken en nog duidelijker zijn, om al die crises; de voedselcrisis, de klimaatcrisis, de energiecrisis om die nou eens een keer voor te zijn omdat we anders uiteindelijk terecht komen in een cultuurcrisis. We kunnen deze wereld niet zo blijven gebruiken als we hem nu gebruiken.”

En als wij met z'n allen ideeën hebben als gewone burgers, zal ik maar zeggen, ook als we geen wereldleider of politicus of topbestuurder zijn, kunnen we meepraten heb ik begrepen, mee discussiëren heb ik begrepen via een website, welke is dat?

“Dat is de website www.worldconnectors.nl”

Nou dat lijkt mij tamelijk overzichtelijk. Ik moet u trouwens nog feliciteren uit beleefdheid en met veel enthousiasme ook overigens met uw ridderorde, want u heeft deze week de ridderorde ontvangen. U bent geridderd vanwege uw werk voor een schoolvoedsel project in Ghana.

“Ja, en SOS kinderdorpen, waar ik een jaar lang voorzitter van geweest ben.”

Bij dezen van harte gefeliciteerd, succes vandaag in het Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen want daar komt u bijeen om plannen bekend te maken. En mensen kunnen dus via die website worldconnectors.nl mee discussiëren met de leiders van de wereld. Nou maar hopen dat de bestuurders die aan de knoppen zitten zich er ook iets van aantrekken, toch?

“Ja, maar daar gaan we ook achteraan. We porren, we stoken op en we schrijven een leuk artikel, zoals in Trouw geschreven op 23 oktober ‘De gelegenheid om te kiezen voor duurzaamheid’. Juist deze crisis biedt de kans om met zijn allen een nieuwe richting in te slaan. Gebruik de kredietcrisis om ferme stappen te zetten in de richting van duurzaamheid.”

Het interview is na te luisteren op: www.worldconnectors.nl