

# The Tensions that Nearly Broke the Stockholm Process

The Role of the Netherlands during the 1972 United Nations  
Conference on the Human Environment

by  
Peer Greve



Thesis  
6547273  
Utrecht University  
p.w.greve@students.uu.nl  
MA International Relations in Historical Perspective  
Dr. Joep Schenk  
15 June 2023  
14814 words  
52 pages

**Image 1:** Louis Stuyt, Minister of Health and Environment of the Netherlands, making a statement at the plenary of the 1972 Stockholm Conference.  
**Source:** UN Photo Digital Asset Management System, Yutaka Nagata, UN7698889.

# Contents

Abstract.....	2
Introduction: The Human Environment .....	3
Out of the scientific and into the political .....	8
Chapter 1: Turf Wars and Science Diplomacy .....	12
The Swedish initiative .....	13
Maurice Strong and Louis Mostertman .....	17
Disputes within the Dutch government .....	21
Conclusion of chapter one .....	23
Chapter 2: North and South.....	24
Economy above ecology.....	24
A Dutch initiative?.....	28
Conclusion of chapter two .....	31
Chapter 3: East and West.....	32
The issue of East German participation.....	32
The Brussels Group .....	37
The Institutionalisation of an Endeavour.....	39
Conclusion of chapter three .....	43
Conclusion: Influence Within the Margins .....	45
Bibliography.....	49
Primary Sources.....	49
Literature .....	50

## **Abstract**

This thesis lays out how the Netherlands contributed to the early development of Global Environmental Governance during the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. At this conference the Netherlands employed scientists as diplomats, advocated for the coupling of environment and development, and bolstered the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme. The actions of the Netherlands were fundamentally shaped by its domestic environmental movement, tensions within the Dutch government, and the global political dynamics of the time.

The Netherlands strived for the success of the Stockholm Conference, but did not play a leading role in it. Most often, the Dutch looked toward other actors for leadership, such as Sweden, the United States, and the Secretary-General of the Conference, Maurice Strong. Still, the country was one of the central Western actors of the Stockholm Conference and that conference's preparatory period. The Dutch case shows how crucial that preparatory phase can be for small countries to contribute to the success of United Nations environmental conferences. This thesis therefore does not regard the Stockholm Conference as an singular event, but as a larger process taking place between 1968 and 1972.

Keywords: 1972 Stockholm Conference, Global Environmental Governance, Dutch foreign policy.

## Introduction: The Human Environment

‘Don’t trust the UN Conference!’, was the title of a 1972 pamphlet by the Swedish youth group powwow.<sup>1</sup> Their message was that the leaders of the world could not be trusted to solve environmental problems on their own, but needed to be put under constant pressure by the general public. The pamphlet was written in the lead up to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE), which was set to take place in Stockholm, Sweden, from June fifth to June sixteenth 1972.<sup>2</sup> Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, environmental issues have become increasingly prevalent in international relations. UN conferences can cause a surge in global public discourse and political action on those issues. The 1972 Stockholm Conference has often been described as a significant moment within the early development of Global Environmental Governance (GEG), during the 1960s and the 1970s. It gathered one hundred and fourteen countries, with the goal of establishing a system of GEG for the foreseeable future.<sup>3</sup> Due to its significance, Sverker Sörlin and Eric Paglia describe the Stockholm Conference as both a point of reference and focus of memory in the history of international environmental politics.<sup>4</sup>

In the Netherlands, the state of the environment generated acute public concern at the time. Particularly the effects of highway construction and the pollution of drinking water from the river Rhine sparked a national debate.<sup>5</sup> According to Lynton Keith Caldwell, the Netherlands is a classic example of an industrialised country where domestic politics lead to international environmental action.<sup>6</sup> Due to the universal nature of UN conferences, they serve as platforms where small states, like the Netherlands, can play a relatively large role.<sup>7</sup> This combination of factors makes the Netherlands an interesting case study to research the influence

---

<sup>1</sup> National Archive, The Hague (hereafter: NL-HaNA), 2.21.340, Archief van L.B.J. Stuyt (1914-2000) over de jaren 1951-2000, inventory number (hereafter: nr) 175, ‘Don’t trust the UN Conference!’, pamphlet by the powwow-group, Uppsala, no date.

<sup>2</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.21.340, ‘Don’t trust the UN Conference!’, pamphlet by the powwow-group.

<sup>3</sup> Kate O’Neill, *The environment and international relations* (Cambridge 2009) 4-5.

Loren Cass, ‘The discipline of global environmental politics. A short history’, in: Paul G. Harris (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics* (London 2022) 19-32, 20.

<sup>4</sup> Sverker Sörlin and Eric Paglia, ‘Stockholm and 1972 -- Capital of Environmental Memory’ *Kungl. Skogs- och Lantbruksakademiens Tidskrift*, 161 (2022) 1, 89-95, 89-90.

<sup>5</sup> W.J. van Noort, ‘De Fluctuerende Milieupolitiek’, *Beleid en Maatschappij* 17 (1990) 3, 132-156, 133-135.

<sup>6</sup> Lynton Keith Caldwell and Paul Weiland, *International environmental policy: from the twentieth to the twenty-first century* (Durham 1996) 55.

<sup>7</sup> Peter Haas, ‘UN Conferences and Constructivist Governance of the Environment’, *Global Governance* 8 (2002) 1, 73-91, 77.

of small states on early GEG construction. Furthermore, the Netherlands was the only small Western European country to have a seat on the Preparatory Committee of the UNCHE, besides the initiator of the conference, Sweden.<sup>8</sup> When Swedish diplomat Lars-Goran Engfeldt wrote a retrospective of the Stockholm



**Image 2:** A general view of the opening meeting of the Stockholm Conference on June fifth 1972.

**Source:** UN Photo Digital Asset Management System, Yutaka Nagata, UN7698888.

Conference in 1973 he identified four western protagonists of the environmental cause; Sweden, the Netherlands, Canada, and the United States.<sup>9</sup> There is therefore ample reason to expect that the Dutch played a relatively large role during the conference, particularly its preparatory phase.

However, no historical research has yet been undertaken to back up this expectation. The existing academic literature does describe the Netherlands as a pioneer in GEG, but without using historical sources to confirm this. Instead, these authors focus on Dutch foreign environmental and climate policy since the 1980s.<sup>10</sup> Works on Dutch ventures at international conferences from the 1960s and 1970s certainly exists, but those fixate on Cold War security policies and European integration.<sup>11</sup> Several scholars have delved into the roles of Engfeldt's other three Western protagonists, Sweden, Canada, and the United States. For example, Paglia has explained why Sweden proposed the idea of a UN conference to popularise environmental issues across the globe in 1968.<sup>12</sup> Still, despite their similar perspectives the Netherlands cannot simply be expected to have played the same role as those other three countries.

---

<sup>8</sup> Willy J.C. Melgert and G. Philip Mok, *Het Relaa van het Begin. De Stockholm Conferentie over het Leefmilieu* (Amsterdam 1974) 17.

<sup>9</sup> Lars-Goran Engfeldt, 'The United Nations and the Human Environment- Some Experiences', *International Organization* 27 (1973) 3, 393-412, 402.

<sup>10</sup> Duncan Liefferink, Daan Boezeman and Heleen de Coninck, 'The Netherlands: a case of fading leadership', in: Rudiger Wurzel, James Connelly and Duncan Liefferink (eds.), *The European Union in International Climate Change Politics. Still Taking a Lead?* (London 2016), 131-144, 131.

<sup>11</sup> For example: Bert Bomert, *Nederland en Oost-Europa: meer woorden dan daden: het Nederlands Oost-Europa beleid, geanalyseerd binnen het kader van het CVSE-proces (1971-1985)* (Nijmegen 1990).

<sup>12</sup> Eric Paglia, 'The Swedish initiative and the 1972 Stockholm Conference: the decisive role of science diplomacy in the emergence of global environmental governance', *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8 (2021) 1, 1-10, 7-8.

This thesis aims to uncover the particularities of the Dutch case, in order to add to the assessment of small state contributions to GEG construction. It will determine whether the Netherlands indeed played a leading role at the Stockholm Conference. Four questions make up the throughline of this thesis. The main research question is:

***How did the Netherlands play a role in the construction of Global Environmental Governance during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and that conference's preparatory period?***

Here, the preparatory period refers to the time between the Swedish proposal in 1968 and the start of the conference in 1972. The preparatory period and the conference combined are referred to in this thesis as the "Stockholm process". In order to answer the research question, the following three sub-questions have been formulated; *How did the perception of the Dutch government of international environmental issues develop during the Stockholm process?; To what extent did the Netherlands contribute to raising global awareness of environmental issues during the Stockholm process?;* and *To what extent did the Netherlands contribute to creating international political and technical capacity to address environmental issues during the Stockholm process?* Answering these questions will allow for a clear demarcation of the Dutch role. The reasons for which will be discussed shortly.

Before these larger questions can be addressed it is important to ask a smaller one. What is Global Environmental Governance? Anne Marie Slaughter, Andrew Tulumello and Stepan Wood define international governance as 'the formal and informal bundles of rules, roles and relationships that define and regulate the social practices of states and nonstate actors in international affairs.'<sup>13</sup> This definition points to the idea that processes of governing are influenced by a constellation of actors, made up of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), companies, activists, or states, both large and small. In recent decades the construction, practices and functioning of international governance has become an important part of International Relations (IR) theory, as part of a more social and relational approach to global politics.<sup>14</sup> This approach can be described as Constructivist. Within the discipline of IR, Constructivists seek to understand how identities and interests shape the international affairs. It

---

<sup>13</sup> Anne-Marie Slaughter, Andrew S. Tulumello and Stepan Wood, 'International Law and International Relations Theory: A New Generation of Interdisciplinary Scholarship' *The American Journal of International Law* 92 (1998) 3, 367–397, 371.

<sup>14</sup> Haas, 'UN Conferences and Constructivist Governance of the Environment', 73-74.

constitutes a less formulaic approach than other IR theories and focuses on the ideas and discourses of the actors involved.<sup>15</sup> This is why the first sub-question of this thesis asks how ideas about environmental cooperation developed within the Dutch government.

According to constructivist scholar Peter Haas, ‘UN environmental conferences have helped contribute to a broader shift in international environmental governance’.<sup>16</sup> They can do this in two ways. Firstly, by increasing the concern for environmental issues, which mostly relates to the normative function of GEG. Secondly, by increasing government capacity to address these issues, which mostly relates to the activities and rules of GEG.<sup>17</sup> For example, the final declaration of the Stockholm Conference brought environmental concerns to the forefront of geopolitics, and could be considered as the first step towards a legal framework of GEG.<sup>18</sup> Haas argues that the two types of contributions are expressed through ‘*Agenda setting*’<sup>19</sup>, ‘*Popularizing issues and raising consciousness*’<sup>20</sup>, ‘*Generating new information and identifying new challenges for governments*’<sup>21</sup>, and ‘*Providing general alerts and early warning of new threats*.’<sup>22</sup> As well as ‘*Galvanizing administrative reform*’,<sup>23</sup> ‘*Promoting mass involvement of new actors*’,<sup>24</sup> and ‘*Adopting new norms, certifying new doctrinal consensus, and setting global standards*.’<sup>25</sup> A country’s delegation at a UN conference can therefore contribute to GEG construction by introducing resolutions, voicing concerns, proposing institutional reforms, inviting previously unheard actors to participate, putting items on the agenda, etc.

If the Netherlands successfully employed such tactics during the Stockholm process to work towards the key outcomes of UN environmental conferences, as defined by Haas, it becomes feasible to argue that the country was indeed a protagonist of the early development of GEG. This is why the second and third sub-questions ask to what extent the Netherlands contributed to increasing global interest and governmental capacity for environmental issues. It is still possible that the Netherlands played an entirely different, less environmentalist, role

---

<sup>15</sup> O’Neill, *The environment and international relations*, 72.

<sup>16</sup> Haas, ‘UN Conferences and Constructivist Governance of the Environment’, 88.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, 83.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, 79.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, 83. Italics from source.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, 84. Italics from source.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, 84. Italics from source.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, 85. Italics from source.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, 85. Italics from source.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, 85. Italics from source.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, 85. Italics from source.

during the Stockholm process, but this can only be revealed through an in depth investigation of relevant historical documents.

This thesis is therefore mainly occupied with the qualitative analysis of primary sources. The selection of sources focuses exclusively on government records from the Dutch National Archive. These are the documents most useful for researching Dutch foreign policy positions and their implementation.<sup>26</sup> A number of Dutch ministries played a role in the preparations for the UNCHE, but most documents will be from the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, since they coordinated the Dutch presence at the UN. Some sources from other ministries, as well as the personal archive of Dutch Minister of Health and Environment, Louis Stuyt, will be used to balance out the perspective of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Dutch position presented is therefore limited in its scope and does not reflect the views of the Dutch public, but is still capable of displaying the country's external position. Furthermore, identifying the particular perspective of each source and how it fits into the historical context is vital for determining its relevance. A source is only used if it assists in laying out Dutch actions aimed at increasing governmental capacity, as well as their reasons for taking those actions. Relevant documents include, but are not limited to, speeches, minutes of preparatory meetings, ministry reports, draft proposals, and internal communications. Articles from contemporary news outlets or records of civil society organisations will not be used, since the public perception of the conference is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Its structure is based on the three most important themes present in the literature on the Stockholm Conference, with each theme having its own chapter. This thematic framework allows for a delineated exploration of the actions the Netherlands took throughout the Stockholm process. Each chapter addresses all three sub-questions, instead of attempting to answer them separately from one another. The contents of these themes and chapters is described in the following section.

---

<sup>26</sup> Laurien Crump, 'Nederland en het Warschaupact', in: Jacco Pekelder, Remco Raben and Mathieu Segers (eds.), *De Wereld Volgens Nederland. Nederlandse Buitenlandse Politiek in Historisch Perspectief* (Amsterdam 2015) 107-127, 124-125.



## Out of the scientific and into the political

In their book *The Environment. A History of the Idea*, Paul Warde, Libby Robin and Sverker Sörlin describe “the environment” as ‘a key concept: it drives conversations about what it means to be human in the world on many scales.’<sup>27</sup> The significance of the Stockholm Conference within the history of that conversation is a poignant debate between scholars. Broader works on the topic all devote time to the conference, but opinions differ on how momentous it was.<sup>28</sup> Caldwell classifies it as a watershed moment within a wider paradigm shift during the 1960s and 1970s that brought environmental issues to the forefront of global politics.<sup>29</sup> According to him, it institutionalised the environment as part of the UN system.<sup>30</sup> Some scholars even view the Stockholm Conference as the ultimate culmination of nearly three decades of humanity’s shifting relationship with the environment.<sup>31</sup> In the recently published *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics*, on the other hand, the authors only reference the conference in passing. They point to the fact that it was by far not the only initiative, event, or conference on the environment from that time.<sup>32</sup> I argue that any analysis of the UN Conference on the Human Environment should not be confined to the events in Stockholm in June 1972, but take into account the wider preparatory period that transpired before it, as well as the period of action that took place afterward. Even according to Caldwell, a post-Stockholm assessment cannot simply be a balance sheet of results, but has to regard the conference as part of a broader development.<sup>33</sup> The Stockholm Conference is therefore not analysed as a solitary moment in history, but within the context of the developments taking place between 1968 and 1972, which is the reason for conceiving the term “Stockholm process”.

According to Warde, Robin and Sörlin, the contemporary conception of the environment has been in usage since 1948.<sup>34</sup> However, in the 1940s and 1950s conversations focussed on ideas of conservationism, rather than the environmentalism known today.<sup>35</sup> Warde, Robin and Sörlin describe how ‘in the East as well as in the West, mainstream thinking was directed

---

<sup>27</sup> Paul Warde, Libby Robin and Sverker Sörlin, *The environment: a history of the idea* (Baltimore 2018) 5.

<sup>28</sup> Sörlin, Sverker, and Eric Paglia, ‘Stockholm and 1972 -- Capital of Environmental Memory’, *Kungl. Skogs- och Lantbruksakademiens Tidskrift*, 161 (2022) 1, 89-95, 92.

<sup>29</sup> Caldwell and Weiland, *International environmental policy*, 48-49.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, 79.

<sup>31</sup> Yannick Mahrane ea., ‘From Nature to Biosphere. The Political Invention of the Global Environment, 1945-1972’, *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d’histoire* 113 (2012) 1, 127-141, 141.

<sup>32</sup> Jon Marco Church ea., ‘Sustainability. From ideas to action in international relations’, in: Paul Harris (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics* (London 2022) 217-227, 218-219.

<sup>33</sup> Caldwell and Weiland, *International environmental policy*, 91.

<sup>34</sup> Warde, Robin and Sörlin, *The environment*, 9-11.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, 26.

towards constructing a nature to be set to work to benefit humans rather than protecting and managing a nature under threat.’<sup>36</sup> That second conception of environmental issues gathered significant interest during the 1960s, specifically after the publication of the book *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in 1962.<sup>37</sup>

It is in this context that the Swedish permanent mission to the UN first proposed the idea of a world conference on the human environment in the fall of 1968. Paglia, who has been briefly mentioned already, has used the lens of “science diplomacy” to explain why Sweden decided to popularise environmental issues through a world conference, and why the UNCHE was the first time scientists became truly involved in such a conference.<sup>38</sup> Peter Willetts similarly argues that the meaningful participation of scientific and technical NGOs in GEG originates with the Stockholm Conference.<sup>39</sup> As the sources will show, these tensions between politics and science form an excellent lens through which to view the development of the Dutch viewpoint, as well as the animosity within the Dutch government, which is why they are the theme of the first chapter.

One of the explicit goals of the Stockholm Conference was to involve the Global South in international environmental politics.<sup>40</sup> In fact, it were the tensions between the industrialised and developing countries that dominated the debate in Stockholm, which will be the theme of chapter two. A speech given before the conference by Indira Gandhi, the prime minister of India, has served as the most striking depiction of the perspective of developing countries.<sup>41</sup> In it she argued that the development of the rich countries was built through the exploitation of both people and the environment. It was therefore the responsibility of those countries to solve both global economic inequality and environmental degradation.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, the UNCHE was one of the first global conferences in which the People’s Republic of China participated, since it only became a UN member state in 1971. China sought to prove its diplomatic worth by profiling itself in opposition to the US.<sup>43</sup> For example, by proposing the inclusion of a

---

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem, 35.

<sup>37</sup> Ibidem, 6-8.

<sup>38</sup> Eric Paglia, ‘The Swedish initiative and the 1972 Stockholm Conference’, 7-8.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Willetts, ‘From Stockholm to Rio and Beyond: The Impact of the Environmental Movement on the United Nations Consultative Arrangements for NGOs’, *Review of International Studies* 22 (1996) 1, 57-80, 68-70.

<sup>40</sup> Engfeldt, ‘The United Nations and the Human Environment’, 394.

<sup>41</sup> Ivanova, ‘Designing the United Nations Environment Programme’, 344.

<sup>42</sup> Caldwell and Weiland, *International environmental policy*, 65.

<sup>43</sup> Carl Death, ‘Disrupting Global Governance: Protest at Environmental Conferences from 1972 to 2012’, *Global Governance* 21 (2015) 4, 579-598, 583.

statement against imperialism in the preamble of the final declaration of the conference.<sup>44</sup> According to Caldwell, it was mostly due to the efforts of the Secretary-General of the Conference, Maurice Strong, and a few developed countries that the tensions between the Global North and Global South were overcome.<sup>45</sup> Whoever we contribute the results to though, it is clear, according to Maria Ivanova, that ‘The level of cooperation that emerged between developed and developing countries was striking given the initial mistrust and suspicion.’<sup>46</sup> Chapter two delves into the part the Netherlands played in this cooperation, especially with regard to the correlation between environmental protection and development cooperation.

The thesis is limited to discussing these subjects from a Western perspective, but it remains important that such a history is written, since the Netherlands is the only country out of the aforementioned four western protagonists of environmentalism of which its involvement in the Stockholm Conference has only been sparingly referenced in the literature. Besides the research by Sörlin and Paglia into the Swedish role, Michael Manulak has written that Canada used the multilateral platform of the conference to solve a bilateral dispute it had with the US over pollution of the Arctic, showing how small states can use multilateralism as a means to an end.<sup>47</sup> Due to its position as one of the great powers of the Cold War the role of the US is mentioned throughout the literature, most notably by Caldwell. His book, *International environmental policy: from the twentieth to the twenty-first century*, contains three chapters on the Stockholm Conference in which the involvement of the US is discussed at length. This can be expected since Caldwell was a US official who took part in forming those positions himself.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Maria Ivanova has described how it was the American proposal for an environment fund that kickstarted the formation of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).<sup>49</sup> Ivanova argues that these institutional results, most importantly UNEP, were the result of the Cold War political context of the Stockholm process.<sup>50</sup> The third chapter therefore delves into this context and the tensions it created, both within the Western bloc, and between

---

<sup>44</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.10.26, Inventaris van het digitaal duplicaat van het archief van de Gouverneur van Suriname: Kabinet, (1934) 1951-1975 (1982), nr 696, telex message 14 June 1972, from the embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Stockholm (hereafter: stockholm), to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (hereafter: min bz), ‘haersolte 83519’, 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> Caldwell and Weiland, *International environmental policy*, 65.

<sup>46</sup> Maria Ivanova, ‘Designing the United Nations Environment Programme: a story of compromise and confrontation’, *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 7 (2007) 4, 337-361, 344-345.

<sup>47</sup> Michael Manulak, ‘Multilateral solutions to bilateral problems: The 1972 Stockholm conference and Canadian foreign environmental policy’, *International Journal* 70 (2015) 1, 4-22, 21-22.

<sup>48</sup> Caldwell and Weiland, *International environmental policy*, v.

<sup>49</sup> Ivanova, ‘Designing the United Nations Environment Programme’, 348-349.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, 340.

the Eastern bloc and the Western bloc. The tensions between East and West are shown by the fact that Western countries did not allow East Germany to participate in Stockholm on equal ground with other countries, because the West did not formally recognise East Germany. This led the Soviet Union and most of the countries of Eastern Europe to boycott the conference. Their absence was not a complete disaster though, thanks to the constructive participation of the Russians in the preparatory phase. Even during the conference itself the Soviet embassy in Stockholm was briefed daily by Strong, the Secretary-General of the Conference, on its proceedings. Still, the absence of the Eastern bloc made the successful participation of the nonaligned countries even more important.<sup>51</sup> The third chapter aims to add to the literature by delving into how a small Western country like the Netherlands dealt with the influence of the Cold War on international environmental politics.

These three themes, science diplomacy, the relations between the Global North and the Global South, and the Cold War political context, guide the narrative of this thesis. However, occasionally it will be necessary to divert from this narrative somewhat, in order to remain open to the particularities of the Dutch role. The purpose of the themes is to provide insight into the development of the Dutch perspective, and their contributions to raising global awareness about environmental issues and establishing international political and technical capacity for GEG. This section has sought to explain the historical significance of the UNCHE, as well as lay out which actors are known to have played a leading role in it, making it possible to start solving the Dutch case.

---

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem, 344.

## Chapter 1: Turf Wars and Science Diplomacy

### The early development of Dutch foreign environmental policy

In order to construct effective and legitimate methods of governing, the actors in this process need to be well informed about the issues at hand.<sup>52</sup> The role of scientists in Global Environmental Governance has historically been to provide information and expertise. They have made sure that the knowledge on which the governing processes are based is solid enough to be effective and authoritative enough to be legitimate. According to Kate O'Neill, this gives experts considerable power over how environmental issues are framed.<sup>53</sup> The Stockholm Conference was one of the first times experts got the chance to wield such power. Paglia therefore describes the conference as an 'integrated effort of diplomats and scientists'.<sup>54</sup> In this chapter it will become clear why this was also the case for the Netherlands. Primary sources show that a small group of experts became an integral part of the Dutch preparations for the UN Conference on the Human Environment. This was in mostly due to the fact that the ministers of Foreign Affairs of that period, Joseph Luns and Norbert Schmelzer, did not view environmental issues as a priority for their diplomats. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was tasked with coordinating international environmental cooperation, but, between 1968 and 1972, the ministry was still working out how to effectively involve all the different ministries and departments that had a say on the all-encompassing subject of the environment. Those other ministries were rather displeased by the uncooperative, or even secretive, coordination by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The interdepartmental tensions that resulted from the Stockholm process proved the necessity of the effective coordination of foreign environmental policy to the Dutch government.

The aim of this chapter is to show how using scientists as diplomats and the dynamics within the government influenced the perception of the Dutch government towards global environmental issues. Examples of Dutch contributions to the Stockholm process will be used in order to make those processes concrete. It will also be necessary to establish some basic information about the events that transpired between 1968 and 1972.

---

<sup>52</sup> Frank Biermann, 'Institutions for scientific advice: Global environmental assessments and their influence in developing countries', *Global Governance* 8 (2002) 2, 195-220, 195.

<sup>53</sup> Kate O'Neill, *The environment and international relations* (Cambridge 2009) 63-66.

<sup>54</sup> Paglia, 'The Swedish initiative and the 1972 Stockholm Conference', 2.

## The Swedish initiative

In the autumn of 1968 the Swedish permanent representative at the UN in New York, Sverker Åström, first proposed the idea of a world conference on the environment. According to Paglia, this initiative was the result of a Swedish wave of environmental concern in 1967. Åström hoped that a world conference would be capable of creating a similar wave of interest within the international community.<sup>55</sup> As was briefly mentioned in the introduction environmental problems were also gathering attention in Dutch politics around that time. According to W.J. van Noort, a Dutch environmental movement was already established in the 1960s, but grew massively in the early 1970s.<sup>56</sup> A particular watershed moment for the Netherlands was the publication of the *Limits to Growth* report by the Club of Rome in March of 1972.<sup>57</sup> Public interest in environmental issues therefore certainly existed in the Netherlands in 1968, but had not reached the same momentum as in Sweden.

The initial reaction of the Dutch government to the Swedish initiative was one of doubtful appreciation. In principle, they were in favour of raising international awareness for environmental issues, but were unsure if a global conference, which would only be able to give a generalist view of the problems, was the best way of putting them on the agenda of the UN.<sup>58</sup> In their view there were alternatives that could achieve similar results, such as regional conferences on more specific issues.<sup>59</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs, Luns, decided that the Netherlands would support the Swedish initiative, as long as the conference was to be prepared sufficiently and could be reasonably assumed to yield tangible results.<sup>60</sup> On the third of December 1968, Resolution 2398, on holding a Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in June 1972, was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly.<sup>61</sup>

Despite their original reservations, once the decision to hold a conference had been made the Dutch wanted to make sure it would indeed be well prepared and produce concrete results.<sup>62</sup> Throughout 1969, the government therefore developed clearer ideas about what the conference

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibidem, 3-4.

<sup>56</sup> Van Noort, 'De Fluctuerende Milieupolitiek', 132-133.

<sup>57</sup> Melgert and Mok, *Het Relas van het Begin*, 20.

<sup>58</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, Archief van de Nederlandse Permanente Vertegenwoordiging bij de Verenigde Naties te New York, 1955 – 1974, nr 1464, telex message 14 October 1968, from min bz, to the permanent representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the United Nations in New York (hereafter: pv new york).

<sup>59</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1464, telex message 4 November 1968, from pv new york, to min bz.

<sup>60</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1464, telex message 11 November 1968, from min bz, to pv new york.

<sup>61</sup> Paglia, 'The Swedish initiative and the 1972 Stockholm Conference', 2.

<sup>62</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, Code-archief van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1965 – 1974, nr 23800, 'Enige gegevens ter beantwoording van brief Quarles d.d. 15 mei'.

should look like. The Dutch views on the conference at this time were most clearly stipulated in a speech in front of the Economic and Financial Committee (Second Committee) of the General Assembly in November. This speech was given by Jo Schouwenaar-Franssen, a member of the senate for the Dutch liberal party and former minister of Social Work.<sup>63</sup> She stated that:

This conference should continue to build upon the work which already has been done, aiming at and concentrating upon the need for action by political authorities in the first place. The delegations therefore should primarily be of policy-making level. [...] We hope and look forward to the results and the outcome of this conference to be:

1. to delineate areas for international agreement
2. to point out to governments what can be done at international as well as regional and local level
3. to stimulate coordination of legislation already in existence
4. to make the public at large aware of their responsibility, individual as well as collective, for their share in preserving the balance in the biosphere – that is: mankind's [sic] house on earth.<sup>64</sup>

If we compare these objectives to Haas' types of contributions by UN conferences it is clear that, from 1969 onward, Netherlands aimed for the Stockholm process to result in agenda setting, raising consciousness, and identifying new challenges for governments.<sup>65</sup> If the Netherlands wanted to make those hopeful objectives a reality they would have to participate in the conference's Preparatory Committee (PREPCOM). This committee functioned as an advisory body to the conference's secretariat. It was composed of twenty-seven members, but any UN member state could fully participate in its activities.<sup>66</sup> The Dutch permanent mission first expressed its interest in committee membership in October 1969, though it is not precisely clear why this decision was made.<sup>67</sup> At any rate, the Netherlands was elected to take a seat on the PREPCOM at the end of the year.

---

<sup>63</sup> Fernie Maas, 'Franssen, Johanna Frederika' (version 23 July 2015),

<https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/franssen> (31 May 2023).

<sup>64</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, 'Verklaring afgelegd door Mevrouw Drs. J.F. Schouwenaar-Franssen in Commissie II op 10 november 1969', 6. Underlinings from source.

<sup>65</sup> Peter Haas, 'UN Conferences and Constructivist Governance of the Environment', *Global Governance* 8 (2002) 1, 73-91, 83-85.

<sup>66</sup> Engfeldt, 'The United Nations and the Human Environment', 396.

<sup>67</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1464, code message 7 November 1969, from pv new york, to min bz.

The PREPCOM was set to meet only a few times, so its proceedings had to be carefully planned. Sweden proposed that the delegations to the PREPCOM would need to include experts with specific technical knowledge.<sup>68</sup> Paglia argues that permanent representative Åström pushed for the involvement of scientists because they would be able to educate their own diplomats on environmental issues, just as Åström had gotten advice from scientist and activist Hans Palmstierna when first initiating the idea for the conference.<sup>69</sup> In the Netherlands, the head of the Department of International Organisations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan Vixseboxse, doubted whether expert participation would be possible at such an early stage.<sup>70</sup> His department was tasked with coordinating the Dutch position at the UN, which extended to environmental cooperation.<sup>71</sup> Vixseboxse considered it more logical to only involve scientists in the national preparations for the conference.<sup>72</sup>

Once again, despite their reservations, the Dutch enacted the Swedish proposal. In early 1970 the cabinet decided to appoint Professor Louis Mostertman as coordinator of the national preparations and leader of the Dutch delegation to the PREPCOM. Several ministries had independently suggested Professor Mostertman for the role, though he would work most directly with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Mostertman was the director of the International Courses in Hydraulic and Sanitary Engineering at the Technological University of Delft. He also had experience with international organisations, having worked for the UN, Council of Europe, World Health Organisation (WHO) and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), so he would have little trouble leading the Dutch PREPCOM delegation.<sup>73</sup>

It was clear to Minister Luns from the beginning that Mostertman was set to play a significant role in the conference.<sup>74</sup> Aside from his technical expertise in water management Mostertman also had his own ideas on how international environmental cooperation should be designed. He argued that it would be in the national interest to establish independent

---

<sup>68</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1464, code message 31 October 1969, from pv new york, to min bz.

<sup>69</sup> Paglia, 'The Swedish initiative and the 1972 Stockholm Conference', 4-6.

<sup>70</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1464, letter 8 Januari 1970, from the Head of the Department of International Organisations, The Hague, to the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the United Nations in New York, New York.

<sup>71</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, 'Verslag van de eerste vergadering van de Coördinatiecommissie voor Internationale Milieuvraagstukken op 11 november 1971', 2.

<sup>72</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1464, letter 8 Januari 1970, from the Head of the Department of International Organisations, The Hague, to the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the United Nations in New York, New York.

<sup>73</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, copy-memorandum, 20 January 1970.

<sup>74</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1464, telex message 13 February 1970, from min bz, to pv new york.



supranational institutions for overseeing the human environment. If international action was left up to bilateral agreements, then smaller states, like the Netherlands, would find themselves on the short end of these agreements.<sup>75</sup> For example, new ruling principles on the pollution of international rivers could potentially strengthen the Dutch position towards the other countries along the Rhine, like Germany.<sup>76</sup> As was mentioned in the introduction, this was a subject of considerable interest to the Dutch public, since the Rhine was an important source of drinking water.<sup>77</sup> Mostertman also argued that uniform international environmental standards would be better for Dutch businesses, and that the donations of the Netherlands to developing countries



**Image 3:** The leader of the Dutch PREPCOM delegation Professor Louis Mostertman pictured in 1983.

**Source:** Leo van Velzen, ‘Prof. ir. L. J. Mostertman’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 3 February 1983, 14, Delpher (12 June 2023), <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=KBNR:C01:000027803:mpeg21:a0149>.

could cause great damage if their environmental impact was not taken into account.<sup>78</sup> As will become evident, Mostertman’s ideas would have a significant impact on the Dutch position.

Professor Mostertman and the other scientists on the PREPCOM delegation were also meant to lighten the workload of the Permanent Mission in New York. This was important for permanent representative Duco Middelburg, since his understaffed mission was already struggling to represent the Netherlands on all other UN related matters. Middelburg was even instructed by Minister Luns not to spend too much time and effort on preparing for the Stockholm Conference. Luns thought that the focus of the Permanent Mission should be on so-called “political issues”.<sup>79</sup> Within the vocabulary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs “political issues” referred to the

<sup>75</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, ‘Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het Leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970’, 26.

<sup>76</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, ‘Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de informele vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het Leefklimaat New York 9 – 10 november 1970’, 7.

<sup>77</sup> Van Noort, ‘De Fluctuerende Milieupolitiek’, 133-135.

<sup>78</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, ‘Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de informele vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het Leefklimaat New York 9 – 10 november 1970’, 25-26.

<sup>79</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1464, telex message 13 February 1970, from min bz, to pv new york.

security issues and power politics of classic diplomacy. These were evidently considered to be more important than environmental issues. As a result of this lack of priority, departments chronically lacked staff with expertise on environmental issues.<sup>80</sup> It can therefore be argued that scientists, like Mostertman, became involved in the Dutch national preparations for the Stockholm Conference not because international environmental cooperation was a priority for the Dutch government, like it was in Sweden, but because it wasn't. This is indicative of the position of the Netherlands at the beginning of the Stockholm process. The Netherlands was not a frontrunner in advocating for a world conference on the environment or the involvement of experts, due to doubts about whether these actions would prove effective. Still, Dutch officials were already convinced of the need for Global Environmental Governance and wanted to make Stockholm Conference a triumph. At the first meeting of the PREPCOM Mostertman stated that the conference: 'must be brought to a successful realisation of its aims. Its impact on development in all countries of the world may be very great. Let us all contribute to its success to the best of our abilities.'<sup>81</sup>

### **Maurice Strong and Louis Mostertman**

Over the next few years, the Preparatory Committee of the UN Conference on the Human Environment met four times in New York and Geneva, in March 1970, February 1972, September 1971 and March 1972.<sup>82</sup> According to the Dutch PREPCOM delegation, the members of the committee were divided in four groups. First, those that saw little necessity for environmental policy, mainly developing countries led by Brazil. Second, countries that agreed that cooperation was necessary, but wanted to make no financial contributions of their own, namely the United Kingdom. Third, those that wanted a more national approach to environmental policy, mainly the Soviet Union. And fourth, countries that advocated for the Stockholm Conference to comprehensively address environmental problems, namely the US, Canada, and the Netherlands, a very similar list to the one made by Engfeldt.<sup>83</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23805, memorandum 23 June 1971, 3-6.

<sup>81</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, 'Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het Leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970', 23.

<sup>82</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972 (New York 1973) 37-38.

<sup>83</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23806, code message 21 September 1971, from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Washington D.C. (hereafter: washington), to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 2.

In order to facilitate a comprehensive approach to the environment, Mostertman suggested that the Dutch PREPCOM delegation should be composed of experts with supplementary professional backgrounds.<sup>84</sup> The delegation ended up including a professor in environmental microbiology, the chairman of a Dutch public health organisation called TNO, an engineer in water purification, and an environmental advisor from Royal Dutch Shell. From a contemporary perspective this final addition to the delegation is rather noteworthy, but at the time Shell was simply regarded as an important source of expertise from the private sector.<sup>85</sup> This point is also reflected in the choice for Canadian fossil-fuel magnate Maurice Strong as the Secretary-General of the Conference.

In December 1969, the UN established a small secretariat to organise the Stockholm Conference, but they quickly fell behind on the proposed timeline. At the onset of an informal meeting of the PREPCOM in November 1970, Mostertman was even having conversations with other delegates about postponing the conference entirely. However, doubts were swiftly taken away by the newly appointed Secretary-General of the Conference.<sup>86</sup> Maurice Strong, who had previously directed Canada's International Development Agency, had been approached by the UN and the Swedish government to insert new energy into the preparations.<sup>87</sup> Strong had his own vision of the conference and proposed to organise it along three levels. Level one would be an intellectual-conceptual level, at which the conference would compose 'a comprehensive reading on the present stage of knowledge and opinion on the relationship between man and his environment.'<sup>88</sup> Level two would be the Action Plan, aimed at making policy recommendations for countries. And level three the governmental actions taken by the conference itself.<sup>89</sup>

The Netherlands would come to regard Strong as a considerable source of leadership. Dutch diplomats argued that at every phase his clear sense of vision had stimulated the work of

---

<sup>84</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, letter 20 February 1970, to the Director-General of International Cooperation, The Hague, from the International Courses in Hydraulic and Sanitary Engineering, Delft.

<sup>85</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, 'Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het Leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970', 5.

<sup>86</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23802, 'verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de informele vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het Leefklimaat New York 9 – 10 november 1970', 5.

<sup>87</sup> Ehsan Masood, 'Maurice Strong (1929–2015)', *Nature* 528 (2015) 24, 480, 480.

<sup>88</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23802, 'verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de informele vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het Leefklimaat New York 9 – 10 november 1970', 19.

<sup>89</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23802, 'verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de informele vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het Leefklimaat New York 9 – 10 november 1970', 19.

the conference.<sup>90</sup> Dutch diplomat Johan Kaufmann retrospectively argued that the Stockholm Conference was exceptional with regard to the leading role taken by the secretariat. Usually at ad hoc conferences their role is rather limited and delegates look towards individual countries, or groups of countries, as sources of leadership, but with Strong the case was different.<sup>91</sup> The Dutch were not the only ones that felt this way. According to Engfeldt, Strong's 'firm and dynamic leadership' proved instrumental to making the conference's preparations a success.<sup>92</sup>

One of the experts Strong relied on most for advice was Mostertman, which allowed for the development of a close connection between the Secretary-General of the Conference and the leader of the Dutch PREPCOM delegation over the next two years.<sup>93</sup> This was significant since most of Strong's advisors were from North America.<sup>94</sup> The Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs was quick to recognise this significance and stimulated Mostertman's continued involvement.<sup>95</sup> That involvement would prove necessary since Strong and his secretariat were growing increasingly assertive. At the third meeting of the PREPCOM in September 1971, Strong told Mostertman in confidence that the secretariat was nearly done with a series of conference documents. Some of them were already finished, but Strong was concerned that if he gave them to governments now they could be significantly watered down. By surprising countries with a large number of documents later Strong hoped they could make far fewer alterations. Mostertman on the other hand was asked to attend meetings of consultants to help finish these very documents.<sup>96</sup> Confidentially, he sent some of those documents to several Dutch ministries in order to receive suggestions, which allowed the Netherlands to review and influence their contents before most other countries could.<sup>97</sup> In fact, people within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were so impressed with Mostertman's work that they wanted to nominate

---

<sup>90</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23813, 'Verslag van de Koninkrijksdelegatie naar de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties inzake het Leefmilieu (Stockholm, 5 – 16 juni 1972)', 24.

<sup>91</sup> Johan Kaufmann, *Conference diplomacy: an introductory analysis* (Dordrecht 1988) 100.

<sup>92</sup> Engfeldt, 'The United Nations and the Human Environment', 397.

<sup>93</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.17.06, Archief van het Directoraat-Generaal voor de Milieuhygiëne van het Ministerie van Volksgezondheid en Milieuhygiëne, 1971 – 1982, nr 105, 'Verslag informeel overleg voorbereiding VN-conferentie leefklimaat 1971', 12.

<sup>94</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.17.06, 1971 – 1982, nr 105, 'Verslag informeel overleg voorbereiding VN-conferentie leefklimaat 1971', 12-13.

<sup>95</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, copy-memorandum 1 November 1971, 3.

<sup>96</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23806, code message 21 September 1971, from pv new york, to min bz, 1-2.

<sup>97</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, letter 29 November 1971, from L.J. Mostertman, Delft, to the Head of the Department of International Organisations, The Hague, 1-2.

him as the head of the proposed UN environmental secretariat, which would later be named UNEP.<sup>98</sup> However, Strong himself would end up getting elected to this office.<sup>99</sup>

Because of his significance, Mostertman was able to put a personal stamp on the work of the Dutch PREPCOM delegation. At the first PREPCOM meeting he argued that national youth representatives should be allowed to voice their perspective at the conference. The Netherlands, the United States and Iran were the only three countries that argued in favour of youth participation, so this was an issue through which the Netherlands set itself apart within the PREPCOM.<sup>100</sup> This uncommon attitude can be attributed to the success of Dutch youth activists in influencing Dutch foreign policy, specifically development cooperation. According to Peter van Dam, they had a particularly strong foothold within the Dutch fairtrade movement.<sup>101</sup> Mostertman was therefore unsurprisingly not the only person in the Netherlands who argued in favour of involving youth in the Stockholm process. The Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work lobbied with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to appoint a youth delegate as part of the Dutch delegation to the conference.<sup>102</sup> However, this proposal was rejected by the PREPCOM in February 1971, because, according to the Swedes, there was simply not enough hotel space in Stockholm for large delegations.<sup>103</sup> However, officials within the Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work felt that Foreign Affairs had not put in enough effort. In fact, they thought Foreign Affairs was quite negative towards involving such civil society actors.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, youth participation was not the only issue on which there was disagreement within Dutch government.

---

<sup>98</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23811, memorandum 30 May 1972.

<sup>99</sup> Ehsan Masood, 'Maurice Strong (1929–2015)', *Nature* 528 (2015) 24, 480, 480.

<sup>100</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, 'Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het Leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970', 16.

<sup>101</sup> Peter van Dam, 'Attracted and repelled. Transnational relations between civil society and the state in the history of the fair trade movement since the 1960s', in: Ruud van Dijk ea. (ed.), *Shaping the international relations of the Netherlands, 1815-2000: a small country on the global scene* (London 2018) 183-200, 186-187.

<sup>102</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.27.19, Archief van het Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk, Beleidssterrein Recreatie, 1949 – 1982, nr 2082, 'Verslag van de vergadering van de departementale werkgroep "menselijk leefmilieu" d.d. 28 april 1971 om 10.00 uur'.

<sup>103</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23804, memorandum 25 March 1971, 2.

<sup>104</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.27.19, Archief van het Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk, Beleidssterrein Recreatie, 1949 – 1982, nr 2082, 'Verslag van de vergadering van de Departementale Werkgroep Menselijk Leefmilieu d.d. 30 september 1971 om 14.00 uur', 3.

## Disputes within the Dutch government

At the beginning of the Stockholm process the UN requested all interested countries to write a national report on the environmental problems they were facing, in order to paint a picture of the state of the human environment across the globe. In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs tasked one scientist, D.W. Scholte Ubing to write it.<sup>105</sup> In February 1971 he submitted a draft of the national report. In it Scholte Ubing put an emphasis on water-related issues, namely flooding, salinification, pollution and freshwater supplies. Other major problems discussed were space limitations, air pollution, noise pollution, and the deterioration of nature.<sup>106</sup> Opinions on the draft report varied greatly. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs thought it adequately reflected the main environmental problems within the Netherlands. Obscuring Dutch shortcomings on the handling these issues would, in their view, only be detrimental to international negotiations.<sup>107</sup> The Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences (KNAW) critiqued the report for being far too optimistic, whereas the Ministry of Transport and Water Management thought it was far too negative.<sup>108</sup> However, most departments agreed that they had not been adequately included with writing the report. In fact, the Ministry of Social Affairs was so displeased with their lack of influence on the document's content that in March of 1971 they sent a completely new draft national report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who were quick to reject it, arguing that the draft by Scholte Ubing was based on far broader consultations.<sup>109</sup> This episode clearly shows that most ministries were not particularly content with the coordination by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Still, the Netherlands was not the only country struggling with questions of jurisdiction. Dutch diplomats observed that the distribution of tasks within Belgium and Luxembourg was even murkier.<sup>110</sup> Paglia also mentions in passing that in Sweden the Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Agriculture clashed over leadership of the conference preparations.<sup>111</sup> However, such conflicts are not an extensive part of the literature. In the case of the Netherlands, the fact that the Ministry of Social Affairs was so discontented that they drafted an entirely new national report shows that internal tensions were not just a

---

<sup>105</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23802, memorandum 26 June 1970.

<sup>106</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.10.26, nr 696, 'Problems of the Human Environment in the Netherlands: a National Report'.

<sup>107</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23803, memorandum 18 January 1971, 3.

<sup>108</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23803, memorandum 22 January 1971, 2.

<sup>109</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23804, letter 29 March 1971, from the Department of International Organisations, The Hague, to the State Secretary of Social Affairs and Public Health, The Hague.

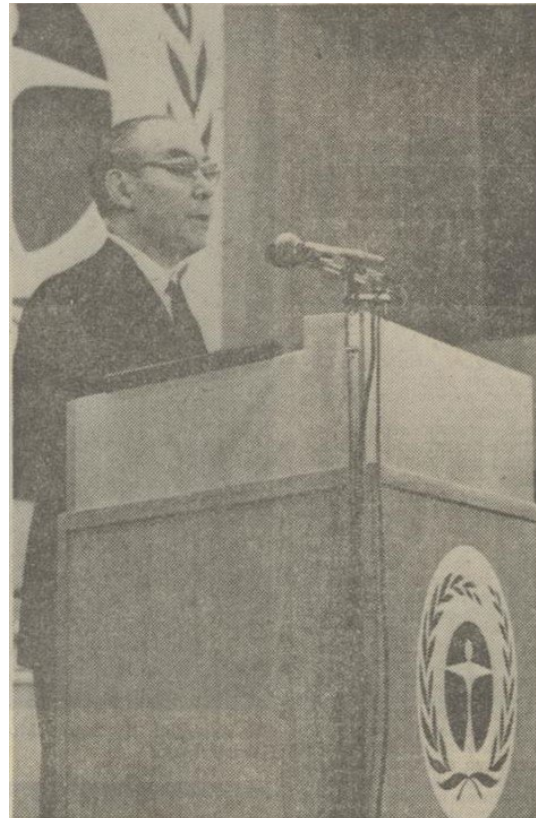
<sup>110</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23804, memorandum 25 March 1971.

<sup>111</sup> Paglia, 'The Swedish Initiative and the 1972 Stockholm Conference', 6.

footnote of the Stockholm process, but indicative of the Dutch foreign environmental policy process between 1968 and 1972.

These tensions did not mean that cooperation between Dutch bureaucrats, diplomats and scientists failed to take shape entirely. For example, Dutch scientists proposed the idea for a global data registry of the most important manmade chemicals, after which the delegation to the Stockholm Conference, which included bureaucrats from various ministries, decided that the Netherlands should submit such a registry to the conference.<sup>112</sup> In Stockholm, Dutch diplomats then argued to the rest of the world that such a registry could serve as a resource for investigating environmental disruptions, and developing safer chemicals.<sup>113</sup> This Dutch initiative was accepted by the Conference.<sup>114</sup>

In order to accomplish such cooperation the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did have to comply with some of the wishes of the other ministries. For example, several departments were displeased with the absence of civil servants in the Dutch PREPCOM delegation. So, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided at the end of 1971 to remove most scientists from the delegation, in favour of government officials. At the same time, the Department of International Organisations kept arguing that the scientists on the delegation had facilitated a prominent role for the Netherlands during the preparatory period.<sup>115</sup> This is in sharp contrast to the hesitance the head of this department showed towards involving scientists in the PREPCOM two years earlier.



**Image 4:** Louis Stuyt, Minister of Health and Environment of the Netherlands, making a statement at the plenary of the Stockholm Conference.

**Source:** ‘Minister Stuyt spreekt de milieuconferentie in Stockholm toe’, *NRC Handelsblad*, 7 June 1972, 5, Delpher (8 June 2023), <https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=KBNR C01:000033045:mpeg21:p005>.

---

<sup>112</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.21.340, nr 23810, ‘Verslag van de op 9 mei 1972 gehouden tweede vergadering van de Koninkrijksdelegatie naar de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties inzake het Leefmilieu (Stockholm, 5 – 16 juni 1972)’, 4-5.

<sup>113</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.21.340, nr 176, ‘Intervention by Mr W.C. Rey in Commission II on the identification and control of pollutants of broad international significance, Wednesday, 7 June 1972’.

<sup>114</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23812, telex message 8 June 1972, from stockholm, to min bz, ‘haersolte 83463’.

<sup>115</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, copy-memorandum 11 November 1971.

## Conclusion of chapter one

The UNCHE was not the only international environmental conference that took place between 1968 and 1972, so the impacts of the Stockholm Conference should continue to be seen as part of larger developments. However, it is possible to conclude from primary sources that the foreign environmental policy of the Netherlands was fundamentally shaped by the Stockholm process. Not only did the Dutch perception of international environmental issues take a more concrete form during this time, but also how those issues should be addressed within the Netherlands. These developments were characterised by a lack of coordination between government departments, as well as the relatively large influence of a small group of individuals, particularly a scientist who was not part of the government itself, Luis Mostertman. The position he was able to garner within the Stockholm process showed the Dutch government the benefits of using scientists as diplomats. Apart from scientists the Netherlands also attempted to involve youth activists in the process. This last group of new actors can be regarded as particular to the Dutch case.

The Netherlands considered the preparatory period of the Stockholm Conference to be uniquely successful at raising global awareness about environmental issues. According to the Dutch, the most important source of this success was the leadership shown by both Sweden and Maurice Strong. They particularly appreciated that they had involved the Netherlands at practically every phase of the Stockholm process.<sup>116</sup> The Netherlands itself did not take a leading role at the beginning of that process, in 1968 and 1969.

In Stockholm, on the sixth of June 1972, Dutch Minister of Health and Environment Louis Stuyt took part in the general debate of the conference. All the elements discussed in this chapter were present in his speech. Stuyt described how the highly exploited environment of his country made the Dutch people understand the dangers of pollution and resource exhaustion, with particular relevance for water-related issues, and he reflected on how the Dutch had consistently advocated for the involvement of young people. Furthermore, Stuyt also dedicated a lot of time to discussing the correlation between development and environment as well as the declaration on the human environment.<sup>117</sup> These last two subjects have already been hinted at, but will be explored further in chapter two.

---

<sup>116</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23813, ‘Verslag van de Koninkrijksdelegatie naar de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties inzake het Leefmilieu (Stockholm, 5 – 16 juni 1972)’, 1.

<sup>117</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.10.26, nr 696, telex message 6 June 1972, from stockholm, to min bz, ‘haersolte 83433’, 1-6.



## Chapter 2: North and South

### Declaring the interrelation between environment and development

In 1968 most countries in the Global South felt either apathetic or outright mistrust towards the environmentalism of the Global North. From the perspective of the South the environmental rhetoric of the North sounded neo-imperialistic. A country did not just have to be economically developed, but also environmentally enlightened in order to be seen as an effective state.<sup>118</sup> Brazil even referred to the UNCHE as a “green imperialism conference”.<sup>119</sup> Developing countries were especially anxious that development cooperation could be replaced by environmental protection.<sup>120</sup> For example, development funds would diminish, international environmental norms could function as de facto trade barriers, and environmentally friendly practices would not be financially viable for the poorer nations.<sup>121</sup>

The theme of this second chapter is the position of the Netherlands within the tensions between the Global North and the Global South during the Stockholm process, with regard to the interrelation between environment and development. It will become evident that the Netherlands was one of the first Western countries to point to those tensions. The Dutch asserted, from 1969 onwards, that environment and development should be regarded as complementary, not antagonistic. I will also argue that the Dutch were occasionally able to play a mediating role between the most assertive countries within the industrialised and developing camps, since the Netherlands was willing to cooperate more with countries from the Global South than some other western states. Analysing these developments allow for an in-depth inquiry into the Dutch role, and how this compared to the position of other countries.

### Economy above ecology

In October 1969, during an informal meeting of Western countries at the UN in New York, the Netherlands first warned that the Preparatory Committee of the Stockholm Conference should not become dominated by the West, since this would only increase the existing rifts between developing and industrialised countries.<sup>122</sup> In her statement at the UN a few weeks later senator

---

<sup>118</sup> Caldwell and Weiland, *International environmental policy*, 57.

<sup>119</sup> Ivanova, ‘Designing the United Nations Environment Programme’, 343.

<sup>120</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23802, ‘Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de informele vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het leefklimaat New York 9 – 10 november 1970’, 10-11.

<sup>121</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23813, ‘Verslag van de Koninkrijksdelegatie naar de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties inzake het Leefmilieu (Stockholm, 5 – 16 juni 1972)’, 18-19.

<sup>122</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1464, code message 31 October 1969, from pv new york, to min bz.

Schouwenaar-Franssen made clear that the human environment should be ‘part and parcel’ of the discussion on development.<sup>123</sup> The Netherlands was one of the first western countries to emphasise this link between environment and development. According to Van Dam, the Netherlands was a forerunner when it came to development cooperation. Since the 1950s, civic actions took place to address global economic inequality. Political parties took on the issue and a number of civil society organisations were formed, such as a National Organization for International Assistance (NOVIB). Frustrated with the lack of concrete action, these activists demanded that the Dutch government took responsibility and work towards a more equal distribution of wealth across the globe.<sup>124</sup> The focus of this civic action was purely on economic development, but it would have certainly influenced the position of the Dutch government when the Global South expressed concerns that solving environmental problems would distract from solving socio-economic problems.

At the first meeting of the PREPCOM in March 1971 the Netherlands made its views on these issues clear. Professor Mostertman stated that the Dutch government regarded the ‘interrelations between control of the environment and economic development’ as particularly important.<sup>125</sup> He described how the price of pollution from Western industrial products could be forced on consumers in the developing world, making the poorer countries pay for the environmental improvement of the richer ones. In Mostertman’s view ‘Diseconomies caused by environmental pollution should be compensated for by adding to the price of the products which cause such pollution.’<sup>126</sup> More research was necessary to properly assess these processes, as well as identify solutions, but according to Mostertman the world could not wait, as action was needed now.<sup>127</sup> However, if environmental action could be detrimental to the development of a country’s economy, the question remains how the countries of the Global South could be inspired to still take that action.<sup>128</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, ‘Verklaring afgelegd door Mevrouw Drs. J.F. Schouwenaar-Franssen in Commissie II op 10 november 1969’, 1.

<sup>124</sup> Van Dam, ‘Attracted and repelled’, 185-187.

<sup>125</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, ‘Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970’, 19.

<sup>126</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, ‘Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970’, 20.

<sup>127</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, ‘Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970’, 20-21.

<sup>128</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23803, copy-memorandum 15 January 1971.

To this end, the UN decided that the Stockholm Conference was to produce a Declaration on the Human Environment.<sup>129</sup> The governments of the world needed to learn how to enact environmental cooperation effectively, which would be facilitated by starting with a list of common principles.<sup>130</sup> At the beginning of the Stockholm process this declaration was an innocuous issue, but according to Canadian journalist Wade Rowland it became highly controversial over the course of 1970 and 1971.<sup>131</sup> The Netherlands viewed it as a primarily educational document, which should be concise enough to be widely read, but also detailed enough to serve as a basis for concrete action. The Dutch government regarded the interrelation between environment and development as fundamental to the declaration, since this would allow for the incorporation of the views of the developing countries.<sup>132</sup> The Dutch therefore proposed, at the first PREPCOM meeting, that the Declaration on the Human Environment should take into account the different levels of prosperity around the world.<sup>133</sup> It is significant that the Netherlands was the country that made that proposal.

In order to draft the declaration in preparation for the conference the PREPCOM established an intergovernmental working group. At a meeting of this working group in May 1971 disagreements flared up, between Canada, the Eastern bloc, and the developing countries, about the legally binding nature of the declaration. The Soviet Union made it clear that they did not want the declaration to have any binding effects, which would encroach upon their national sovereignty. The Canadians on the other hand did want a legal document.<sup>134</sup> According to Manulak, Canada partially aimed for this, because they wanted to solve a bilateral dispute with the US over pollution of the Arctic.<sup>135</sup> Meanwhile, the developing countries, led by Brazil, questioned whether the declaration was even necessary at all. When the disagreements became seemingly too large to overcome the Netherlands was, reportedly, able to play a mediating role by proposing compromises to the text.<sup>136</sup> The Dutch themselves believed that the declaration

---

<sup>129</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970', 13.

<sup>130</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23814, copy-memorandum 18 January 1971, 3.

<sup>131</sup> Wade Rowland, *The plot to save the world; the life and times of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment* (Toronto 1973), 87-88.

<sup>132</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23803, telex message 3 February 1971, from min bz, to pv new york.

<sup>133</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, 'Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970', 13.

<sup>134</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1469, telex message 14 May 1971, from pv new york, to min bz, 2-3.

<sup>135</sup> Manulak, 'Multilateral solutions to bilateral problems', 20.

<sup>136</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1469, telex message 14 May 1971, from pv new york, to min bz, 2-3.

should be comprised of general principles<sup>137</sup> However, Dutch diplomats deliberately refrained from taking a position on certain issues, such as the responsibility to pay remedies for the environmental damage caused by overdevelopment, in order to facilitate mediation.<sup>138</sup> In this instance, the Netherlands thus actively sought out a leadership role.

In early 1972 the intergovernmental working group was able to draft a declaration that was regarded as an adequate compromise of the philosophies of the different countries.<sup>139</sup> Since Dutch diplomats had worked hard to reach this compromise minister Schmelzer decided that the Netherlands would not be encouraging any changes during the Stockholm Conference itself.<sup>140</sup> Even Brazil was against making alterations.<sup>141</sup> This all changed when the Chinese arrived. In Stockholm they made a major issue of the declaration, by demanding in the general debate on June fourteenth that the preamble of the declaration would condemn capitalist imperialism.<sup>142</sup> However, Rowland argues that, in private, Chinese diplomats made clear that they simply wanted to express their own perspective, since they had not had that chance during the preparatory period.<sup>143</sup> In response to the Chinese efforts, nine African countries made a push for incorporating new principles on ending racial practices and financial compensation.<sup>144</sup> Proposals for changes continued to mount into the dozens and the Dutch were concerned that formulating a final declaration in Stockholm would not be possible.<sup>145</sup> In the end a drafting group, which the Netherlands was a part of, was able to reach a compromise, but according to Dutch diplomats this was mostly due to the mediating efforts of Maurice Strong, not the Dutch themselves.<sup>146</sup> There was only one principle in the declaration on which an agreement could not be reached in Stockholm. Interestingly, this was not due to the divide between the Global

---

<sup>137</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1469, code message 9 March 1971, from pv new york, to min bz.

<sup>138</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1469, telex message 17 May 1971, from pv new york, to min bz.

<sup>139</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1469, telex message 14 March 1972, from pv new york, to min bz, 2.

<sup>140</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23810, code message 24 May 1972, from min bz, to the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the European Community in Brussels.

<sup>141</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1469, telex message 14 March 1972, from pv new york, to min bz.

<sup>142</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.10.26, nr 696, telex message 14 June 1972, from stockholm, to min bz, 'haersolte 83519', 1-2.

<sup>143</sup> Rowland, *The plot to save the world*, 89-94.

<sup>144</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.10.26, nr 696, telex message 14 June 1972, from stockholm, to min bz, 'haersolte 83541'.

<sup>145</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.10.26, nr 696, telex message 14 June 1972, from stockholm, to min bz, 'haersolte 83517'.

<sup>146</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.10.26, nr 696, telex message 15 June 1972, from stockholm, to min bz, 'haersolte 83551'.

North and the Global South, but a bilateral dispute between Brazil and Argentina over pollution of the river La Paz.<sup>147</sup>

The tensions between the Global North and Global South nearly derailed the Declaration on the Human Environment. The primary sources show that the Netherlands was willing to cooperate with the countries of the Global South, but was only able to play a minor mediating role.

### **A Dutch initiative?**

Besides the Declaration on the Human Environment there were also other ways through which the involvement of the Global South in the Stockholm Conference was accomplished. A well-known example of this are the visits Strong made to over ninety countries throughout 1971 in order to spark their interest. According to Engfeldt, during these visits Strong personally made clear to the leaders of the Global South that environmental protection was not just a pet project of the rich, meant to distract from underdevelopment and poverty, but a necessity.<sup>148</sup>

To this same end the Netherlands, along with Denmark, Japan, Sweden and Canada, financially facilitated the drafting of national reports in several developing countries.<sup>149</sup> The aid of Netherlands did focus on its former colonies, Indonesia, Suriname and the Dutch Antilles.<sup>150</sup> The Dutch government also largely financed a panel of twenty-seven experts from around the world, who discussed development and environment in June of 1971 in the village of Founex, Switzerland.<sup>151</sup> The funds the Dutch government provided did not only allow for the organisation of the panel, but also for experts from developing countries to travel there, as well as other preparatory meetings taking place all over the world, such as the five inter-

---

<sup>147</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23799, 15 September 1972, 'Notities over kwesties die in de drie commissies en de werkgroep algemene declaratie aan de orde zijn geweest'.

<sup>148</sup> Engfeldt, 'The United Nations and the Human Environment', 400.

<sup>149</sup> Engfeldt, 'The United Nations and the Human Environment', 400.

<sup>150</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23803, 'Informeel zitting van de commissie voorbereiding conferentie 1972 leefmilieu', 'Punten Nederlandse interventie (prof. L. Mostertman)', New York, 11 November 1970.

<sup>151</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23804, code message 18 March 1971, to the Minister of Development Aid, from the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the United Nations in Geneva (hereafter: pv geneve).

governmental working groups established by the PREPCOM to deal with specific issues, like drafting the final declaration.<sup>152</sup> Dutch diplomats even described the meeting in Founex as a Dutch initiative.<sup>153</sup> It is difficult to assess the validity of this statement, since neither the existing literature, nor the sources from the National Archive, point to a specific moment at which the Netherlands proposed the idea. However, the Dutch did offer to finance the panel of their own volition.<sup>154</sup>



**Image 5:** A general view of the Second Committee (Development and Environment) of the Stockholm Conference as it met on the seventh of June 1972.

**Source:** UN Photo Digital Asset Management System, Yutaka Nagata, UN7629056.

It is important to establish to what extent the panel in Founex was a Dutch initiative, since the report that meeting produced, the so called Founex Report, was the first UN sponsored document that made a distinction between environmental problems that were the result of overdevelopment, and environmental problems that had to be solved through development, which was quickly recognised by the Dutch government.<sup>155</sup> From a contemporary point view this principle might seem obvious, but at the time it was an important step towards the creation of concepts like sustainable development. According to Haas, the Founex Report ‘contributed to transcending the environment/development dichotomy in the framing of international environmental policy.’<sup>156</sup> Caldwell also argues that the report was quickly recognised for its significant implications.<sup>157</sup> A month after the panel took place, Strong argued in front of the

---

<sup>152</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23804, letter 24 May 1971, from Jan Meijer, Director-General for International Co-operation, The Hague, to Maurice F. Strong, Secretary-General of the U.N. Conference on Human Environment, Genève.

NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23806, memorandum 30 August 1971, 2.

<sup>153</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23809, ‘Kort verslag van de op 7 april 1972 gehouden interdepartementale vergadering te voorbereiding van de Leefmilieu-Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties te Stockholm (juni 1972)’, 3.

<sup>154</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23804, code message 18 March 1971, to the Minister of Development Aid, from the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands at the United Nations in Geneva (hereafter: pv geneve).

<sup>155</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, document December 1971, ‘Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken’, ‘Directoraat-Generaal Internationale Samenwerking’.

<sup>156</sup> Haas, ‘UN Conferences and Constructivist Governance of the Environment’, 76.

<sup>157</sup> Rowland, *The plot to save the world*, 48.

UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) that the Founex Report proved the importance of environmental issues for developing nations. Strong stated that it would be foundational to many aspects of the preparatory documents for the Stockholm Conference.<sup>158</sup> The Netherlands similarly argued for the integration of the Founex Report. For example, Dutch representatives stated that it proved that industrialised countries should recognise the difficulties faced by poorer nations.<sup>159</sup> The Netherlands was so pleased with the results of the Founex Report that, in May 1972, they decided to initiate a second, more quantitative, study of the advantages and disadvantages of environmental action in developing nations, as well as a symposium on the issue.<sup>160</sup>

Despite Dutch convictions about the coupling of environment and development, there were still major disagreements between the Netherlands and the countries in the Global South. For example, the Dutch argued that the financing of environmental projects should be viewed as part of development funds, not additional to them, because the two were so closely related.<sup>161</sup> As Warde, Robin and Sörlin have argued, the principle that environmental funds would be additional to development funds was important to many countries in the Global South.<sup>162</sup> Countries like Brazil and Argentina were also against the inclusion of population growth on the agenda of the Stockholm Conference, whereas the Netherlands was actively pleading for it to be included.<sup>163</sup> Dutch diplomats even expressed concerns that the critical perspective of the Brazilian military dictatorship was becoming dangerously influential among the developing countries that were just starting to become interested in the Stockholm Conference.<sup>164</sup> So, the relationship the Netherlands had with nations in the Global South could be antagonistic, but they were still willing to cooperate with them, which was not always the case for all western countries. After the third PREPCOM meeting in September 1971 the UK, US and to a lesser extent France expressed negative feelings about its proceedings. They thought Strong was focussing excessively on the perspective of developing countries, especially Brazil, as well as the conclusions of the Founex Report. British and American diplomats disapproved of Strong forming a closed group of experts to advise him on the conference's preparatory documents,

---

<sup>158</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23805, telex message 14 July 1971, from pv geneve, min bz.

<sup>159</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, memorandum 26 November 1971.

<sup>160</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23810, telex message 5 May 1972, from mn bz, to pv new york, 1-2.

<sup>161</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1469, telex message 21 May 1971, from min bz, to pv new york.

<sup>162</sup> Warde, Robin and Sörlin, *The environment*, 146-147.

<sup>163</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23801, 'Verslag van de Nederlandse delegatie naar de eerste vergadering van de voorbereidende commissie voor de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties voor het leefklimaat New York 10 – 20 maart 1970', 12.

<sup>164</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1469, telex message 25 May 1971, from pv new york, to min bz, 2.

which would hamper the ability of their respective governments to influence those documents. Dutch diplomats neglected to mention to them that Mostertman's participation in the group of experts allowed the Dutch government to do precisely that.<sup>165</sup>

## **Conclusion of chapter two**

Throughout the Stockholm process the Netherlands advocated for the interrelation environment and development. Today, the concept of sustainable development is central to the activities of the UN, but in 1968 the connection between environment and development still had to be popularised and the Netherlands contributed to this. Just as with environmental issues, the actions of the Dutch government were the result of domestic political pressures for development cooperation. The collaborative stance towards the Global South sometimes allowed Dutch diplomats to play the role of mediators, and relief some of the tensions between the two sides. However, they were not nearly as successful in this as other actors, most notably Maurice Strong. Still, the Dutch support for the Founex Report was significant, since this became one of the most influential documents of the Stockholm process.

The Dutch influence on the relations between North and South at the Stockholm Conference should not be dismissed. They were more willing to approach countries from the Global South as equal actors than some other Western countries. In private meetings American and British officials heavily critiqued the Founex Report as well as the large role of developing countries in the PREPCOM. Decades after the conference, Caldwell, who was one of the major architects of US environmental policy, still argued that recognising the supplementary relationship between solving environmental problems and stimulating economic development was a concession done to the Third World, in order to quell their antagonism about past so-called "injustices".<sup>166</sup>

Based on the findings of this chapter it is possible to conclude that the Netherlands made a meaningful effort to garner attention for environmental issues across the globe, through both its words and actions, in order to incorporate new state actors in Global Environmental Governance. Still, these actions had their limits, as we shall see in the next chapter.

---

<sup>165</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23806, memorandum 7 October 1971, 2.

<sup>166</sup> Caldwell and Weiland, *International environmental policy*, 67.



## Chapter 3: East and West

### Stockholm as a victim of the Cold War

In 1973, Engfeldt described the Stockholm Conference as ‘one of the last victims of the cold war [sic]’.<sup>167</sup> In retrospect, this might have been slightly optimistic, but his statement does show that contemporaries were already aware of the huge impact of the Cold War political context on the UNCHE. This third chapter lays out how the proceedings, dynamics and results of the Stockholm Conference were influenced by that context. It continues this thesis’ reflection on how the Netherlands contributed to raising awareness about and creating political and technical capacity for solving environmental problems, by analysing the following three subjects.

Firstly, as was briefly mentioned in the introduction, the Eastern bloc boycotted the UNCHE, because the West did not formally recognise the German Democratic Republic (DDR), and thus refused the country full participation at the conference.<sup>168</sup> This problem was regarded by many outside the diplomatic circle as long overdue for a solution. Rowland, for example, described it as a ‘dinosaur of a world problem’.<sup>169</sup> The Dutch role in this issue is the topic of the first section of this chapter. The second section delves into the relations within the Western bloc. I argue that with regard to the Stockholm process the Netherlands preferred cooperation with the more environmentally conscious countries, rather than within the EEC or NATO. Thirdly, the institutional design process of the UN Environment Programme will be discussed. According to Ivanova, UNEP, like any international institution, was the result of political compromises, exchanges of thought and negotiations between participants that all had their own interests.<sup>170</sup> This chapter adds to the complex story of how UNEP was established, by uncovering how the Dutch participated in this process.

#### **The issue of East German participation**

According to Dutch historian Duco Hellema, Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns, who was in office from 1956 to 1971, is regarded one of the chief architects of Dutch Atlanticism and anticommunism. By the time Norbert Schmelzer took over in July 1971 the focus of Dutch foreign policy was shifting away from the US and more towards Europe. Both Western European integration and the relations with Eastern Europe intensified during the early 1970s.

---

<sup>167</sup> Engfeldt, ‘The United Nations and the Human Environment’, 406.

<sup>168</sup> Ivanova, ‘Designing the United Nations Environment Programme’, 344.

<sup>169</sup> Rowland, *The plot to save the world*, 39.

<sup>170</sup> Ivanova, ‘Designing the United Nations Environment Programme’, 351.

Nonetheless, the Dutch position did not reverse overnight.<sup>171</sup> In line with these developments, the Netherlands was pursuing constructive environmental cooperation with Eastern Europe, wanting to involve as many countries in the Stockholm Conference as possible, with the goal of achieving environmental consciousness across the globe. However, it will become evident in this section that the Dutch regarded their commitments to NATO allies as more important than universal participation in the conference.

One of the most pressing issues in Cold War Europe was the question of the two Germanies. By October 1969 Dutch diplomats already concluded that the question of East German participation would be the most significant hurdle for successfully organising the Stockholm Conference. There were hopes however that the relations between the DDR and the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD) would soften within the next few years, so the issue of which states would be invited to the conference was postponed.<sup>172</sup> However, by the end of 1971 the BRD, and in extension its western allies, still only allowed the DDR to be represented by experts, thus depoliticising their participation.<sup>173</sup> Under the “Vienna formula”, countries that were members of the UN or one of its subsidiary organisations were invited to send government representatives to Stockholm. Since West Germany was a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency they would be able to do so, but the East Germans would not.<sup>174</sup> In December 1971, the Swedes told the Dutch in confidence that they were getting signals from the Russians about an Eastern European boycott of the conference if the DDR was not allowed to participate on equal grounds as the BRD.<sup>175</sup> That same month the USSR even proposed to postpone to conference to 1973.<sup>176</sup> The Netherlands thought that such a postponement was worthy of consideration, but not explicit support, if the issue of DDR participation seriously endangered cooperation between Eastern and Western Europe on environmental issues.<sup>177</sup> In the end the Soviet proposal was, nevertheless, overwhelmingly rejected by the General Assembly.<sup>178</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> Duco Hellema, *Nederland in de Wereld. De Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland* (Houten 2016) 268-269.

<sup>172</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23800, code message 20 October 1969, from pv new york, to min bz.

<sup>173</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, code message 25 November 1971, from pv new york, to min bz, 1-2.

<sup>174</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, memorandum 7 January 1972.

<sup>175</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, code message 3 December 1971, from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Rome, to min bz.

<sup>176</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, telex message 15 December 1971, from pv new york, to min bz.

<sup>177</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, telex message 17 December 1971, from min bz, to pv new york.

<sup>178</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, telex message 20 December 1971, from pv new york, to min bz, 1-2.

It was already evident by this stage that the Netherlands thought East German absence could undermine the validity and success of the Stockholm Conference, but in 1972 East German participation turned into a major diplomatic issue for the Dutch. At the beginning of January the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia announced that they would not be participating in the Stockholm process as long as East Germany was not welcome at the conference. Strong, who was aiming to salvage the situation, was even denied to visit those countries.<sup>179</sup> He was very concerned that the UNCHE might not even take place if East Germany was alienated from it.<sup>180</sup> The Swedes were also quite agitated about the situation and blamed western governments for the possible communist boycott.<sup>181</sup>

The issue reached such prominence that it was discussed in the Dutch Council of Ministers on the seventh of January. State Secretary Westerterp, of Foreign Affairs, explained that the West Germans had urged their allies not to allow the DDR full participation at the UNCHE, since this could give the East Germans access to the UN system via a backdoor, which would hinder ongoing negotiations about normalisation between the two Germanies. Minister Stuyt, of Health and Environment, questioned whether supporting West Germany was worth the risk of an Eastern European boycott. Minister Schmelzer, of Foreign Affairs, added that it was not inconceivable that even Sweden would abandon the conference if all of Eastern Europe refused to attend. Due to these concerns the cabinet decided that ‘Minister Schmelzer would continue his efforts to come to a formula of an acceptable presence of the DDR at the conference.’<sup>182</sup>

Throughout January 1972 discussions took place within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on how to act. Schmelzer himself was of the opinion that his colleagues in the cabinet were right to be concerned about a boycott, but that the Soviet threats should also be received with a certain amount of ‘cold bloodedness’.<sup>183</sup> According to his advisors though, the Netherlands needed to tread carefully, so as not to agitate the West Germans, or appear as the weak link in the Western alliance. If the Netherlands were to take diplomatic action, the first step should be to inform their closest allies about their concerns, before even considering to even speak to the

---

<sup>179</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, memorandum 5 January 1972.

<sup>180</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, code message 7 January 1972, from min bz, to pv geneve.

<sup>181</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, letter 14 January 1972, from Ambassador C.A.W. Baron van Haersolte, Stockholm, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, The Hague.

<sup>182</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, memorandum 7 January 1972. My own translation from the original Dutch.

<sup>183</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, code message 11 January 1972, to min bz, from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bonn, 2.

Eastern Europeans themselves.<sup>184</sup> The Dutch permanent representative at the UN in Geneva, M.J. Rosenberg Polak, argued that if the Netherlands were to give in to the Russian threats this could significantly backfire. Rosenberg Polak even stated that it could lead to a communist reunification of Germany.<sup>185</sup> Within the ministry in the Hague this last point was dismissed as being too farfetched, but they did agree that the Soviet Union was attempting to use the Stockholm Conference as a way to enhance the international political standing of East Germany.<sup>186</sup> On the other hand, several cabinet ministers pointed out to Schmelzer that the members of parliament would not understand why the Netherlands participated in alienating the DDR from the conference.

On the twenty-fourth of January 1972 Schmelzer sent instructions to the embassies in Stockholm and Geneva to relay the Dutch concerns to the Swedish government and Maurice Strong.<sup>187</sup> In response, a number of diplomats that had little to do with the Stockholm Conference suddenly felt the urgent need to interfere. The Department of European Affairs warned that a push for East German participation could have ‘far reaching consequences’ for the Dutch relationship with its allies.<sup>188</sup> The permanent representative to NATO in Brussels told Schmelzer that, if the Netherlands initiated consultations with Eastern Europe on the issue of DDR participation, this would constitute a fundamental break with the collective NATO position towards the DDR.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the ministry, Diederik van Lynden, argued to Schmelzer the Netherlands was unable to put actual pressure on Bonn, but could only continuously ask for clarification of the West German position.<sup>190</sup> Some diplomats even suggested to assure the BRD that the Dutch government did not actually believe a compromise could be reached, but that they simply wanted to make it appear to parliament as if they had made serious efforts.<sup>191</sup> The Dutch ambassador in Paris informed Schmelzer that France was in a similar position. President Georges Pompidou valued environmental

---

<sup>184</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, copy-memorandum 24 January 1972.

<sup>185</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, letter 24 January 1972, from M.J. Rosenberg Polak, Genève, to D.W. Baron van Lynden, The Hague.

<sup>186</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, memorandum 27 January 1972, ‘Nr. 21’.

<sup>187</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, code message 26 January 1972, from min bz, to stockholm and pv geneve.

<sup>188</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, memorandum 27 January 1972, ‘DDR en leefmilieu conferentie Stockholm’. My own translation from the original Dutch.

<sup>189</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, memorandum 28 January 1972, ‘Deelname DDR aan Leefmilieuconferentie te Stockholm’, 2.

<sup>190</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, memorandum 3 February 1972.

<sup>191</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, memorandum 28 January 1972, ‘VN-conferentie inzake milieuhygiëne te Stockholm en kwestie ddr’, 1-2.

cooperation with Eastern Europe, but could not oppose the West German line in any way, or he would risk seriously damaging the relationship.<sup>192</sup>

Schmelzer took heed to all of this advice. When Prince Bernard, husband of Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, who was set to give a speech at the Stockholm Conference as the president of the World Wildlife Fund, asked Schmelzer about the Dutch position towards East German participation in March 1972, Schmelzer responded that

The importance of the Conference for the whole world is recognised by the Dutch government, but should not be overstated. The Netherlands should give priority to the agreements made within the NATO-alliance, but remain open to working towards an alternative formula for participation of the German Democratic Republic, as long as this formula is acceptable to the NATO countries most directly involved, especially the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>193</sup>

In May, State Secretary Westerterp spoke on the issue of East German recognition of front of the Dutch Senate. He openly stated that the Netherlands did not want the DDR to enter the UN system via a backdoor, in order to support Bonn in its bilateral negotiations.<sup>194</sup> Despite attempts by Sweden and Strong to come to a compromise at the eleventh hour, no solution was reached and the Eastern bloc boycotted the Stockholm Conference.<sup>195</sup>

The events surrounding DDR participation show that the Netherlands was willing to put its “political” agreements above international environmental cooperation, in order to support the position of its allies. The West was willing to cooperate with East Germany on a technical level, but left no room for participation at the political level. The relations between East and West clearly influenced the proceedings of the Stockholm Conference, but the issue of DDR participation is equally emblematic of the relations within the Western bloc. NATO countries were limited in their actions by the agreements made with Bonn. This leads to the question of how the Netherlands cooperated with other Western countries towards Global Environmental Governance during the Stockholm process.

---

<sup>192</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23808, code message 2 February 1972, from min bz, to the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Paris (hereafter: paris).

<sup>193</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23809, letter 13 March 1972, from W.K.N. Schmelzer, The Hague, to the Prince of the Netherlands, 2. My own translation from the original Dutch.

<sup>194</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23811, code message 25 May 1972, from min bz, to pv geneve, 1-3.

<sup>195</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23812, telex message 2 June 1972, from min bz, to pv new york.

## The Brussels Group

Interestingly, cooperation within Western Europe was rather limited during the Stockholm process. In August 1970, Mostertman visited Brussels to inform the Belgian government about the proceedings of the PREPCOM.<sup>196</sup> This informational exchanges continued over the next few years, but no meaningful coordination between the Benelux countries took shape.<sup>197</sup> The European Economic Community also barely played a role during the Stockholm Conference, according to reports from Dutch diplomats.<sup>198</sup> Before the conference, EEC member states agreed to strive to consensus in Stockholm, which would be coordinated by Luxembourg.<sup>199</sup> However, Dutch archival sources make no mention of such cooperation during the Stockholm Conference. Only after it was over did the Dutch delegation report that EEC collaboration had been a disaster, specifically the coordination by Luxembourg. If the Netherlands wanted it to yield results, EEC cooperation would require more attention at future conferences.<sup>200</sup> A single code message also mentioned that the Netherlands formed a joint contact group with negotiating capacity with Australia and Canada during the Stockholm process, but it is not discussed what this entailed.<sup>201</sup>

Western coordination did take place within the so called “Brussels Group”, a secret alliance that met informally in the year leading up to the UNCHE. According to historian Jacob Hamblin, this group emerged out of a NATO Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS). The informal consultations were initiated by Belgium, and consisted of high level officials from the respective ministries of external affairs of the US, UK, France, West Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. Hamblin argues that the Brussels Group was mainly a forum for European diplomats to voice their discontent with the environmental leadership of Washington. This was especially applicable to the American idea for an environment fund.

---

<sup>196</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23802, letter 2 September 1970, from prof. ir L.J. Mostertman, Delft, to dr. J. Vixseboxse, The Hague.

<sup>197</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23803, letter 2 December 1970, from L.J. Mostertman, to the Director-General for International Co-operation.

<sup>198</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23813, ‘Verslag van de Koninkrijksdelegatie naar de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties inzake het Leefmilieu (Stockholm, 5 – 16 juni 1972)’, 28.

<sup>199</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23812, ‘Kort verslag van de op 31 mei 1972 gehouden derde vergadering van de Koninkrijksdelegatie naar de Leefmilieu-Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties te Stockholm (5 – 16 juni 1972)’, 4.

<sup>200</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23813, memorandum 4 July 1972.

<sup>201</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23812, code message 1 June 1972, from stockholm, to min bz, ‘haersolte 24’, 1-2.

Most countries of the group were fundamentally opposed to this idea, which will be discussed further in the next section of this chapter.<sup>202</sup>

The idea for informal consultations amongst a select group of NATO countries was first initiated at a meeting of the CCMS in April 1971. There, the Americans, represented by State Department official Christian Herter Jr, expressed that they had little trust in UN environmental cooperation, and preferred collaborating within NATO and the OECD.<sup>203</sup> This statement is in line with the existing research, since Ivanova argues that in the US ‘a widespread dissatisfaction with UN agencies had taken hold in the 1970s’.<sup>204</sup> According to Hamblin, the other members of the Brussels Group agreed, since they were all concerned about developing countries gaining influence in international environmental politics.<sup>205</sup> However, in internal documents Dutch government officials contended with the American position. According to them, a united West would only stimulate conflict with the communist and developing countries, which would drive those countries into an even more negative stance towards environmental cooperation. As has been previously established, the Netherlands aimed to avoid this, since they regarded the environment as a global issue, not just of the industrialised world. As a result, Dutch diplomats were still open to attending the proposed informal meetings in Brussels, but would have to approach them with care.<sup>206</sup>

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, at the second meeting of the Brussels Group in September 1971 the Americans, British and French expressed their discontent with the inclusive conduct of Strong towards developing countries during the third PREPCOM meeting. The Dutch reports described the British position as especially negative, for



**Image 6:** Conferring before the opening of a meeting of the Second Committee held on the twelfth of June are (left to right): Gordon J.F. MacDonald (United States), D.M. Kitching (United Kingdom) and A. Van Tilburg (Netherlands).

**Source:** UN Photo Digital Asset Management System, Yutaka Nagata, UN7613295.

<sup>202</sup> Jacob Hamblin, ‘Environmentalism for the Atlantic Alliance: NATO's Experiment with the "Challenges of Modern Society"’, *Environmental History* 15 (2010) 1, 54-75, 66-67.

<sup>203</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23804, copy-memorandum 7 May 1971, 2.

<sup>204</sup> Ivanova, ‘Designing the United Nations Environment Programme’, 348.

<sup>205</sup> Hamblin, ‘Environmentalism for the Atlantic Alliance’, 66.

<sup>206</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23804, copy-memorandum 7 May 1971, 2.

example towards involving Sweden in the Brussels Group.<sup>207</sup> These descriptions are in line with research by Simone Turchetti. She concludes that the stance of the United Kingdom (UK) within NATO towards environmental issues was characterised by a ‘distinctly hollow pragmatism’.<sup>208</sup>

Dutch participation in the Brussels Group is a curious case. On one hand, they thought that intimate Western cooperation could have detrimental results and disagreed with the negative position taken by other members of the Brussels Group. On the other, they regarded these secret and informal exchanges of thought as valuable, since some countries expressed rather different opinions within the confidential setting of the Brussels Group than at the PREPCOM.<sup>209</sup> This critical stance contrasts sharply with the positive reflections mentioned in previous chapters on Dutch collaboration with Sweden and the conference’s secretariat. The Netherlands therefore favoured collaboration with the industrialised countries that were more environmentally conscious, rather than NATO or the EEC.

## **The Institutionalisation of an Endeavour**

The original aim of the Stockholm Conference was to raise environmental consciousness across the globe. In the Netherlands, this awareness had already been largely achieved by the time the conference actually started, through initiatives like the 1972 *Limits to Growth* report by the Club of Rome. In order to make the conference successful in the eyes of the Dutch public, their government therefore needed the conference to produce concrete results, by institutionalising the environment within the UN system.<sup>210</sup>

As was previously established, the United Nations Environment Programme is regarded as one of the main practical achievements of the Stockholm process. According to Warde, Robin and Sörlin, it was an important step in the institutionalisation of transnational science as a network and fund for the exchange of research.<sup>211</sup> The work of American international relations and environmental policy scholar Maria Ivanova into uncovering the story of UNEP’s establishment has already been repeatedly mentioned. Her main conclusion is that

---

<sup>207</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23806, memorandum 7 October 1971, 3.

<sup>208</sup> Simone Turchetti, ‘The UK government’s environmentalism: Britain, NATO and the origins of environmental diplomacy’, in: Jon Agar and Jacob Ward (eds.), *Histories of Technology, the Environment and Modern Britain* (London 2018) 252-270, 265.

<sup>209</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23806, memorandum 7 October 1971, 3.

<sup>210</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23809, ‘rede t 27-4-1972’, 1-2.

<sup>211</sup> Warde, Robin and Sörlin, *The environment*, 136-138.



Traditional wisdom claims that the system for global environmental governance was deliberately designed as weak. Through a historically grounded analysis, this article has shown that UNEP's functions, institutional form, financing, and location were determined by political decisions in 1972 which were not purposefully taken to incapacitate the organization.<sup>212</sup>

The aim of this section is to show how the Dutch galvanised administrative reform through their contribution to the establishment of UNEP, while reflecting on how these actions were influenced by the wider political context, starting with defining what the Dutch position was.

In June 1972, Schmelzer sent clear constructions to the delegation on the Dutch designs of the institutional implications of the Stockholm Conference. Schmelzer did not want a new intergovernmental organisation, since this would attribute to the fragmentation of the UN system. Alternatively, the Dutch delegation was to lobby for an environmental secretariat that would be overseen by a committee of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In the view of the Dutch government the secretariat would have to be financed from the regular UN budget, so that the environment could become a more permanent part of the UN than if it relied on voluntary funding. The fund for the activities the secretariat was to oversee would have to be voluntary.<sup>213</sup> The Netherlands evidently held quite a coherent position on this issue, but how did this view come to be?

UNEP is widely regarded as an American initiative. At the principal meeting of the Brussels Group in July 1971, the American Herter first floated the idea of a UN environment fund. The financing for this fund would be voluntary and outside of the UN budget. This would allow donators, read the Global North, to have considerable sway over its actions. At the meeting, both the UK and France were against the idea. The British representative, Ronald Arculus, believed that no new significant UN environmental projects were necessary, and that giving more aid to the developing countries should be avoided.<sup>214</sup> In September 1971, the PREPCOM also came to a general agreement at its third meeting that any institutional results of the UNCHE should focus on the coordination of environmental policy, not establishing new international organisations.<sup>215</sup> Due to fundamental disagreements on this issue, a substantive discussion on the institutionalisation of environmental policy coordination was pushed to the

---

<sup>212</sup> Ivanova, 'Designing the United Nations Environment Programme', 358.

<sup>213</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.10.26, nr 696, telex message 10 June 1972, from min bz, to stockholm, 'schmelzer 83556'.

<sup>214</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1469, 'Bespreking over milieuvraagstukken in internationale organisaties op 7 en 8 juli te Brussel (Val Duchesse)'.

<sup>215</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23806, code message 21 September 1971, from washington, to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 3.

fourth PREPCOM meeting.<sup>216</sup> In this lack of agreement, the Americans saw an opening for their own initiative. At the second meeting of the Brussels Group in September Herter expressed how valuable the State Department considered the environment fund. They were planning on formally submitting the idea before the fourth PREPCOM meeting in March 1972. Both France and the Netherlands expressed reservations about the voluntary nature of the fund, since it would have to be well financed to be effective.<sup>217</sup>

Over the following months the Netherlands formed a concrete position towards the American initiative. They were positive about the proposal, but thought the fund should be complementary to the environmental action taken within the UN.<sup>218</sup> Whatever form the environment fund would take, the Netherlands wanted it to confirm environmental policy ‘as an essential dimension of economic and social development.’<sup>219</sup> This is why the Dutch considered it ‘inevitable’ that a UN environmental secretariat would be established, as well as an environmental committee within the ECOSOC.<sup>220</sup> If the environment was brought under a new specialised agency, it would be regarded as a separate issue, when it should be seen as all-encompassing. By making the ECOSOC the body of oversight it would be possible to link the environment to socioeconomic issues, like development, natural resources and science and technology.<sup>221</sup> Despite these aims, the Netherlands, along with the other countries of the Global North, thought the new fund should focus on technical environmental projects with global benefits, not development projects in specific countries.<sup>222</sup> On the other hand, the Dutch did want the developing countries to be proportionally represented in the environment committee, when the original American allowed for it to be dominated by the industrialised world.<sup>223</sup>

When compared to the position of other countries, the Netherlands stood relatively alone with regard to some of its preferences. The US, along with Canada, Japan, the UK and Sweden, wanted the environment secretariat to be financed from the fund, instead of the regular UN budget.<sup>224</sup> Sweden thought that the secretariat should be overseen by the General Assembly,

---

<sup>216</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23806, telex message 4 October 1971, from min bz, to pv new york, 3.

<sup>217</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23806, memorandum 7 October 1971, 2.

<sup>218</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23809, telex message 14 March 1972, from min bz, to pv new york.

<sup>219</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, ‘Aantekening voor DGES en Chef DIO’, 2. My own translation from the original Dutch.

<sup>220</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23807, ‘Aantekening voor DGES en Chef DIO’, 1-2. My own translation from the original Dutch.

<sup>221</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1466, telex message 14 April 1972, from pv new York, to min bz, 2.

<sup>222</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23813, ‘Verslag van de Koninkrijksdelegatie naar de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties inzake het Leefmilieu (Stockholm, 5 – 16 juni 1972)’, 22.

<sup>223</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23809, telex message 9 maart 1972, from pv new york, to min bz, 2.

<sup>224</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23809, telex message 14 March 1972, from pv new york, to min bz

since the ECOSOC was an ineffective institution with little interest in environmental issues.<sup>225</sup> A large number of countries agreed, but the Dutch were convinced they would be able to change minds.

In April 1972, when discussions about the institutional results of the Stockholm process were getting into full swing, Schmelzer decided that Dutch diplomats should actively lobby in favour of establishing an ECOSOC committee. He aimed to convince the Swedes in particular, but diplomats were also instructed to lobby with a number of developing countries.<sup>226</sup> In early May, Mostertman reported that at an informal meeting of around thirty countries, the US, Denmark, Canada, the UK, West Germany, Japan and Kenya all spoke positively about an ECOSOC committee. Brazil, Finland and Yugoslavia wanted it to permanently fall under the General Assembly. Sweden and Norway thought environmental issues should fall under the General Assembly for at least the next few years, until the ECOSOC had been sufficiently reformed to take on these issues.<sup>227</sup> Maurice Strong was also in favour of this last option.<sup>228</sup>

Throughout May 1972, the Dutch permanent mission in New York lobbied extensively in favour of an ECOSOC committee, with varying results. Diplomats from Ghana, Indonesia, Lebanon, Niger and Tunisia agreed with the position of the Netherlands, but stated that they could only refer the Dutch position to their respective governments. The Norwegians even told Dutch diplomats in confidence that their government was in full agreement, but that the Norwegian delegation to the conference was largely comprised of environmentalists, who would not settle for a mere UN subcommittee. Denmark and Yugoslavia were willing to assist the Dutch with advancing this goal in Stockholm, but the Brazilians remained unconvinced and kept pushing for a subsidiary of the General Assembly.<sup>229</sup> Dutch diplomats in Geneva also attempted to win over Strong, but he persisted that Sweden's proposal for a temporary subsidiary of the General Assembly would be an adequate compromise.<sup>230</sup>

At the conference itself, the Dutch kept arguing in favour of an ECOSOC committee. However, in the end a drafting group, consisting of the US, Kenya, Brazil, Sweden, Canada, Egypt and Indonesia,<sup>231</sup> reached a compromise for a new "governing council" of the UN environmental secretariat to become a standing committee of the General Assembly. Still, the

---

<sup>225</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.273, nr 1466, telex message 14 April 1972, from pv new York, to min bz, 2.

<sup>226</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23809, telex message 26 April 1972, from min bz, to pv new york, 1-3.

<sup>227</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23810, telex message 5 May 1972, from geneve, to min bz, 1-2

<sup>228</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23810, code message 18 May 1972, from pv new york, to min bz.

<sup>229</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23811, code message 30 May 1972, from pv new york, to min bz.

<sup>230</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23810, code message 24 May 1972, from geneve, to min bz.

<sup>231</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23812, telex message 8 June 1972, from Stockholm, to min bz, 'haersolte 83467'.

governing council would report to the assembly via the ECOSOC on a yearly basis.<sup>232</sup> So, the Dutch largely failed to achieve their desired outcome, but it is not inconceivable that the compromise reached would not have taken this form without the extensive lobbying by Dutch diplomats. After all, another result they had aimed for was reached, since the funding for the environment secretariat was to come out of the regular UN budget.<sup>233</sup>

It is clear that the Dutch aimed to build technical capacity for addressing environmental problems, by contributing to the establishment of UNEP. In fact, the eventual institutional form of UNEP looked as much like the Dutch position, as the original American proposal. The two were similar from the start, but a major difference was that the Americans wanted the environment fund to be as separate from the UN as possible, in order to influence its spending, whereas the Dutch wanted the new institutions to underline the environment as a fundamental part of the UN system.<sup>234</sup> The Netherlands evidently took into account the political dynamics within the UN when putting forth their arguments. The Dutch were keen to approach Sweden and Maurice Strong, since they regarded them as two of the most influential actors during the Stockholm process. With regard to integrating the governing council into the ECOSOC, it is impossible to say what effects this would have had. From a contemporary viewpoint, the concern expressed by the Netherlands, as well as Sweden and Strong, that interest in the environment within the UN could fall as quickly as it had risen was not unfounded. Ivanova argues that UNEP had a lot of potential, but was mostly an institutional endeavour of which the results remained to be seen.<sup>235</sup>

## **Conclusion of chapter three**

One of the main goals of the Stockholm Conference was to bring environmental issues into the geopolitical sphere. This naturally meant that the politics dynamics of the time had a significant influence on the conference, as evidenced by the issue of East German participation, the divisions within the Western alliance, and the institutional design of UNEP.

The first two chapters showed that the Netherlands aimed to integrate more state actors into Global Environmental Governance. This clearly did not apply to Eastern Europe if they threatened Western strategic interests. The issues of East German participation shows how

---

<sup>232</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23813, 'Verslag van de Koninkrijksdelegatie naar de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties inzake het Leefmilieu (Stockholm, 5 – 16 juni 1972)', 24.

<sup>233</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23813, 'Verslag van de Koninkrijksdelegatie naar de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties inzake het Leefmilieu (Stockholm, 5 – 16 juni 1972)', 23.

<sup>234</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23809, telex message 27 April 1972, from pv geneve, to min bz.

<sup>235</sup> Ivanova, 'Designing the United Nations Environment Programme', 352.

small the margins of manoeuvre a small state like the Netherlands could have, or perceive to have. Dutch diplomats responded with haste when they thought West Germany might perceive willingness towards environmental cooperation with East Germany as weakness. However, it is also apparent that larger states, like for example France, were subject to these same agreements. Thus, the position of the Netherlands was not simply the result of the whims of more powerful nations. Although, the Dutch did take their opinion very seriously. Through the Brussels Group, Dutch top diplomats were able to gage the attitudes of other Western representatives. The group can also be regarded as an example of backroom diplomacy between some the most classic actors of global politics, sovereign Western states. Still, As far as the Dutch were concerned collaboration within the EEC and Benelux was largely irrelevant, preferring to work with actors like Sweden and Maurice Strong. The Netherlands also intentionally avoided the formulation of a common Western position, since they thought this could negatively affect relations with the Global South. Building political capacity for Global Environmental Governance was thus considered as an important objective. The Netherlands also contributed to creating technical capacity through their input on how environmental issues should be institutionalised within the UN. Dutch representatives lobbied extensively for a larger role of the ECOSOC and closer ties between the UN and the environmental fund than the Americans had envisioned. These objectives were determined by the political reality that environmental cooperation within the UN was not a given, but needed to be firmly established in order to continue, let alone succeed, in the future.

## Conclusion: Influence Within the Margins

On the twenty-seventh of April 1972, Dutch State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Tjerk Westerterp, stated that at the Stockholm Conference ‘the basis will have to be laid for an environmental policy that will be determinative for the future of this planet.’<sup>236</sup> Before the conference even started the Dutch were thus acutely aware of its potential impact on Global Environmental Governance. In order to fill a gap in the existing academic research, this thesis aimed to uncover whether the Netherlands played a leadership role within international environmental politics between 1968 and 1972, and can be regarded as one of the Western protagonists of global environmentalism during that time. The focus was on discovering the role the Netherlands played in constructing GEG throughout the Stockholm process. How can a UN environmental conference contribute to GEG? According to Peter Haas,

The effects of the most successful conferences have been to increase national concern and to increase government capacity to address problems politically and technically by means of agenda setting, consciousness raising, expanded participation, monitoring, knowledge generation and diffusion, target setting, norm development and diffusion, and administrative reforms. In addition, they have helped to channel financial, technological, and scientific resources to needy countries.<sup>237</sup>

However, before coming to a conclusion it is important to repeat the limits of this research. Firstly, the narrative presented in this thesis is a Western one. Any holistic and critical work on early GEG would have to include the perspectives of countries from the Global South, like Brazil, India and China, as well as Eastern Europe, but these remain beyond the scope of this thesis. Secondly, the sources used are all from the same government archive, which leaves out the perspectives of civil society actors. This bias is reflected in the aims of the thesis. It lays out and explains the proceedings within the Dutch government, not the Netherlands as a diverse whole.

Based on the parameters defined by Haas it can be concluded that the Netherlands was indeed one of the main contributors to the Stockholm process. However, the Netherlands barely played a leading role. Most often, the Dutch looked toward other actors for leadership, such as the US, Sweden and most interestingly the Secretary-General of the Conference, Maurice Strong, while at the same time still striving for the success of the conference. The Netherlands

---

<sup>236</sup> NL-HaNA, 2.05.313, nr 23809, ‘rede t 27-4-1972’, 2. My own translation from the original Dutch.

<sup>237</sup> Haas, ‘UN Conferences and Constructivist Governance of the Environment’, 77.

sought this success, because of a genuine conviction within the government that environmental problems were global problems, domestic pressures to take concrete environmental action, and a belief that stronger global governance could protect the interests of small countries like the Netherlands. Furthermore, the success of the Stockholm process convinced the Netherlands that the UN could be capable of confronting environmental problems.

This is similar to Swedish position, as laid out by Paglia, which has served as a point of comparison throughout this thesis. Unlike the Swedish however, the Dutch permanent mission in New York prioritised spending time on “political” issues, rather than the environment. Thus, in 1968 and 1969 the Dutch government already knew they wanted to contribute to the conference, but barely took concrete action to that end. This changed when the Netherlands became a member of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference. Interestingly, the lack of priority for the environment within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led them to outsource the PREPCOM work to a group of experts. One of these experts, Louis Mostertman, was able to garner an influential position during the Stockholm process, through his work for the Dutch government and the conference’s secretariat. This showed the Dutch government the benefits of using scientists as diplomats, but these benefits were primarily self-interested. Apart from Mostertman however, most Dutch scientists were involved on a technical level, not a political one.

The Netherlands did employ experts to prove the necessity of environmental governance to political leaders from the Global South. One of the most significant contributions the Dutch made during the Stockholm process was their support for to the 1971 Founex Report, which laid an academic basis for the compatibility of environment and development. In fact, the Netherlands was one of the first Northern countries to point to this relationship and urge for meaningful participation of the Global South. Similarly to the environment, this focus on cooperation with developing countries was the result of domestic civil actors calling for development aid. Through this contribution the Netherlands helped put environment and development on the agenda of the UN, generate new information for governments and promote the involvement of state actors from the Global South, thus building political capacity for GEG. The Dutch also sought to incorporate the dichotomy of environment and development into the Declaration on the Human Environment. On a few occasions, the cooperative stance of the Dutch towards the Global South allowed them to propose compromises between states like Canada and Brazil, who stood on opposite sides of the debate. As was shown by the positions stipulated in the confidential meetings of the Brussels Group, other countries from the Global North, such as the US, France and the UK, were not as positive about the involvement of the Global South

in GEG. Expanding participation in GEG was evidently important to the Dutch, since they also set themselves apart by calling for youth participation in the conference, thus involving more civic actors. The issue of youth participation also lays bare the disagreements within the Dutch government, since the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was less enthusiastic about involving civil society actors than other ministries. In fact, the coordination of the conference preparations by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were heavily criticised. Throughout the Stockholm process international environmental cooperation became significant enough to the Dutch government that an effective system of domestic coordination on this issue had to be developed. The endeavour to involve as many state actors as possible also had its limitations, as shown by the fact that the Netherlands openly regarded strategic commitments to West Germany as more important than the involvement of the communist bloc in the Stockholm Conference. Still, it can be concluded that the Netherlands sought to build interest in and political capacity for GEG.

The Netherlands also contributed to building technical capacity by initiating a registry of dangerous chemical pollutants, thus adding to a system for warnings of new threats. The country also had their own view of UNEP's design. Dutch diplomats actively lobbied to make the new environment secretariat of the UN part of the regular budget, and to make the governing council a subsidiary of the UN Economic and Social Council, instead of the General Assembly, which partially succeeded. These findings underline Ivanova's conclusion that UNEP was shaped by the political dynamics of the time. This example also shows that by 1972 Dutch diplomats at the UN and within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were much more involved in the Stockholm process than in 1968. For the Dutch, the environment went from a subject that was expected to garner little debate within the UN, to an issue that was to be regarded as fundamental to the UN system.

The role of the Netherlands during the Stockholm process should not be overstated, but it can truly be regarded as one of the central Western actors. The theoretical lens provided by Haas has been crucial in coming to this understanding, but his approach also has its limitations. My assessment of the Dutch role is not simply a balance sheet of results achieved in Stockholm in June 1972, but always takes into account the developments of the wider Stockholm process. It shows how crucial the preparatory phase can be for a small country like the Netherlands to contribute to the success of UN environmental conferences. Furthermore, Haas regards UN environmental conferences too much as isolated events with a concrete output, a problem also visible in the wider popular imagination of these conferences. He also argues that the success of the Stockholm Conference was largely due to the absence of political tensions at that time,



when in reality the conference was defined by them.<sup>238</sup> The novelty of international environmental politics allowed a relatively small number of actors to produce momentum for resolving these tensions and take the first steps towards Global Environmental Governance. This kind of inspiration and momentum is needed to make environmental cooperation a success in the future, but we should also not blind ourselves to the realities of global politics.

---

<sup>238</sup> Haas, 'UN Conferences and Constructivist Governance of the Environment', 79-80.

# Bibliography

## Primary Sources

Report of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, 5-16 June 1972 (New York 1973) 37-38.

*National Archive, The Hague.*

2.05.273, Archief van de Nederlandse Permanente Vertegenwoordiging bij de Verenigde Naties te New York, 1955 – 1974.

Inventory number 1464, 1968-1970.

Inventory number 1466, 1972 jan. 04 – okt. 20.

Inventory number 1469, Werkgroep declaratie menselijk leefmilieu. 1971 – 1974.

2.05.313, Code-archief van het Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 1965 – 1974.

Inventory number 23799, Algemeen, 1970-1973.

Inventory number 23800, 1968 – 1969 okt.

Inventory number 23801, 1969 nov. – 1970 mrt. 5.

Inventory number 23802, 1970 mrt 6 – nov. 9.

Inventory number 23803, 1970 nov. 10 – 1971 feb.

Inventory number 23804, 1971 mrt. – mei.

Inventory number 23805, 1971 juni – aug. 25.

Inventory number 23806, 1971 aug. 26 – okt.

Inventory number 23807, 1971 nov. – dec. 23.

Inventory number 23808, 1971 dec. 29 – 1972 mrt. 3.

Inventory number 23809, 1972 mrt. 6 – apr. 27.

Inventory number 23810, 1972 apr. 28 – mei 24.

Inventory number 23811, 1972 mei 25 – 30.

Inventory number 23812, 1972 mei 31 – juni 15.

Inventory number 23813, 1972 juni 17 – 1973.

Inventory number 23814, Ontwerpdeclaratie inzake het leefmilieu, 1971-1972.

2.10.26, Inventaris van het digitaal duplicaat van het archief van de Gouverneur van Suriname: Kabinet, (1934) 1951-1975 (1982).

Inventory number 696, Stukken betreffende een V.N.-conferentie over het *menselijk leefmilieu* in Stockholm. 1971 – 1972.

2.17.03, Archief van de Centrale Sector van het Ministerie van Volkshuisvesting, Ruimtelijke Ordening en Milieubeheer, 1940 – 1981.

Inventory number 4119, Conferentie betreffende het leefmilieu gehouden te *Stockholm*. 1972.

2.21.340, Archief van L.B.J. Stuyt (1914-2000) over de jaren 1951-2000.

Inventory number 175, Ingekomen vergaderstukken van de conferentie van de Verenigde Naties in Stockholm, met teksten van interventies van de buitenlandse mogendheden. April-juni 1972.

Inventory number 176, Brochures en folders van de organisatoren van de VN-conferentie in Stockholm en van enkele deelnemende landen. April-juni 1972.

2.27.19, Archief van het Ministerie van Cultuur, Recreatie en Maatschappelijk Werk, Beleidsterrein Recreatie, 1949 – 1982.

Inventory number 105, Verslagen en correspondentie ter voorbereiding van de Conferentie van de Verenigde Naties over het leefmilieu te *Stockholm*, 1971 – 1972.

## Literature

Biermann, Frank, 'Institutions for scientific advice: Global environmental assessments and their influence in developing countries', *Global Governance* 8 (2002) 2, 195-220, 195.

Bomert, Bert, *Nederland en Oost-Europa: meer woorden dan daden: het Nederlands Oost-Europa beleid, geanalyseerd binnen het kader van het CVSE-proces (1971-1985)* (Nijmegen 1990).

Caldwell, Lynton Keith, and Paul Weiland, *International environmental policy: from the twentieth to the twenty-first century* (Durham 1996).

Cass, Loren, 'The discipline of global environmental politics. A short history', in: Paul G. Harris (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics* (London 2022) 19-32.

Church, Jon Marco, ea., 'Sustainability. From ideas to action in international relations', in: Paul Harris (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Global Environmental Politics* (London 2022) 217-227.

Crump, Laurien, 'Nederland en het Warschaupact', in: Jacco Pekelder, Remco Raben and Mathieu Segers (eds.), *De Wereld Volgens Nederland. Nederlandse Buitenlandse Politiek in Historisch Perspectief* (Amsterdam 2015) 107-127.

- Crump, Laurien, and Susanna Erlandsson, 'Conclusion: shedding a new light on Cold War Europe', in: Laurien Crump and Susanna Erlandsson (eds.), *Margins for Manoeuvre in Cold War Europe. The Influence of Smaller Powers* (New York 2020) 240-250.
- Dam, Peter van, 'Attracted and repelled. Transnational relations between civil society and the state in the history of the fair trade movement since the 1960s', in: Ruud van Dijk ea. (ed.), *Shaping the international relations of the Netherlands, 1815-2000: a small country on the global scene* (London 2018) 183-200, 186-187.
- Death, Carl, 'Disrupting Global Governance: Protest at Environmental Conferences from 1972 to 2012', *Global Governance* 21 (2015) 4, 579-598.
- Engfeldt, Lars-Goran, 'The United Nations and the Human Environment- Some Experiences', *International Organization* 27 (1973) 3, 393-412.
- Hellema, Duco, *Nederland in de Wereld. De Buitenlandse Politiek van Nederland* (Houten 2016).
- Ivanova, Maria, 'Designing the United Nations Environment Programme: a story of compromise and confrontation', *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics* 7 (2007) 4, 337-361.
- Kaufmann, Johan, *Conference diplomacy: an introductory analysis* (Dordrecht 1988).
- Liefferink, Duncan, Daan Boezeman and Heleen de Coninck, 'The Netherlands: a case of fading leadership', in: Rudiger Wurzel, James Connelly and Duncan Liefferink (eds.), *The European Union in International Climate Change Politics. Still Taking a Lead?* (London 2016), 131-144.
- Haas, Peter, 'UN Conferences and Constructivist Governance of the Environment', *Global Governance* 8 (2002) 1, 73-91.
- Hamblin, Jacob, 'Environmentalism for the Atlantic Alliance: NATO's Experiment with the "Challenges of Modern Society"', *Environmental History* 15 (2010) 1, 54-75.
- Maas, Fernie, '*Franssen, Johanna Frederika*' (version 23 July 2015), <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vrouwenlexicon/lemmata/data/franssen> (31 May 2023).
- Mahrane, Yannick ea., 'From Nature to Biosphere. The Political Invention of the Global Environment, 1945-1972', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire* 113 (2012) 1, 127-141.
- Manulak, Michael, 'Multilateral solutions to bilateral problems: The 1972 Stockholm conference and Canadian foreign environmental policy', *International Journal* 70 (2015) 1, 4-22.
- Masood, Ehsan, 'Maurice Strong (1929–2015)', *Nature* 528 (2015) 24, 480.

- Melgert, Willy J.C., and G. Philip Mok, *Het Relaa van het Begin. De Stockholm Conferentie over het Leefmilieu* (Amsterdam 1974).
- Noort, W.J. van, 'De Fluctuerende Milieupolitiek', *Beleid en Maatschappij* 17 (1990) 3, 132-156.
- O'Neill, Kate, *The environment and international relations* (Cambridge 2009).
- Paglia, Eric, 'The Swedish initiative and the 1972 Stockholm Conference: the decisive role of science diplomacy in the emergence of global environmental governance', *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 8 (2021) 1, 1-10.
- Slaughter, Anne-Marie, Andrew S. Tulumello and Stepan Wood, 'International Law and International Relations Theory: A New Generation of Interdisciplinary Scholarship' *The American Journal of International Law* 92 (1998) 3, 367–397.
- Sörlin, Sverker, and Eric Paglia, 'Stockholm and 1972 -- Capital of Environmental Memory', *Kungl. Skogs- och Lantbruksakademiens Tidskrift*, 161 (2022) 1, 89-95.
- Turchetti, Simone, 'The UK government's environmentalism: Britain, NATO and the origins of environmental diplomacy', in: Jon Agar and Jacob Ward (eds.), *Histories of Technology, the Environment and Modern Britain* (London 2018) 252-270.
- Warde, Paul, Libby Robin and Sverker Sörlin, *The environment: a history of the idea* (Baltimore 2018).
- Willets, Peter, 'From Stockholm to Rio and Beyond: The Impact of the Environmental Movement on the United Nations Consultative Arrangements for NGOs', *Review of International Studies* 22 (1996) 1, 57-80.

## PLAGIARISM RULES AWARENESS STATEMENT

### **Fraud and Plagiarism**

Scientific integrity is the foundation of academic life. Utrecht University considers any form of scientific deception to be an extremely serious infraction. Utrecht University therefore expects every student to be aware of, and to abide by, the norms and values regarding scientific integrity.

The most important forms of deception that affect this integrity are fraud and plagiarism. Plagiarism is the copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement, and it is a form of fraud. The following is a detailed explanation of what is considered to be fraud and plagiarism, with a few concrete examples. Please note that this is not a comprehensive list!

If fraud or plagiarism is detected, the study programme's Examination Committee may decide to impose sanctions. The most serious sanction that the committee can impose is to submit a request to the Executive Board of the University to expel the student from the study programme.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the copying of another person's documents, ideas or lines of thought and presenting it as one's own work. You must always accurately indicate from whom you obtained ideas and insights, and you must constantly be aware of the difference between citing, paraphrasing and plagiarising. Students and staff must be very careful in citing sources; this concerns not only printed sources, but also information obtained from the Internet.

The following issues will always be considered to be plagiarism:

- cutting and pasting text from digital sources, such as an encyclopaedia or digital periodicals, without quotation marks and footnotes;
- cutting and pasting text from the Internet without quotation marks and footnotes;
- copying printed materials, such as books, magazines or encyclopaedias, without quotation marks or footnotes;
- including a translation of one of the sources named above without quotation marks or footnotes;
- paraphrasing (parts of) the texts listed above without proper references: paraphrasing must be marked as such, by expressly mentioning the original author in the text or in a footnote, so that you do not give the impression that it is your own idea;
- copying sound, video or test materials from others without references, and presenting it as one's own work;
- submitting work done previously by the student without reference to the original paper, and presenting it as original work done in the context of the course, without the express permission of the course lecturer;
- copying the work of another student and presenting it as one's own work. If this is done with the consent of the other student, then he or she is also complicit in the plagiarism;
- when one of the authors of a group paper commits plagiarism, then the other co-authors are also complicit in plagiarism if they could or should have known that the person was committing plagiarism;
- submitting papers acquired from a commercial institution, such as an Internet site with summaries or papers, that were written by another person, whether or not that other person received payment for the work.


The rules for plagiarism also apply to rough drafts of papers or (parts of) theses sent to a lecturer for feedback, to the extent that submitting rough drafts for feedback is mentioned in the course handbook or the thesis regulations.

The Education and Examination Regulations (Article 5.15) describe the formal procedure in case of suspicion of fraud and/or plagiarism, and the sanctions that can be imposed.

Ignorance of these rules is not an excuse. Each individual is responsible for their own behaviour. Utrecht University assumes that each student or staff member knows what fraud and plagiarism



entail. For its part, Utrecht University works to ensure that students are informed of the principles of scientific practice, which are taught as early as possible in the curriculum, and that students are informed of the institution's criteria for fraud and plagiarism, so that every student knows which norms they must abide by.

I hereby declare that I have read and understood the above.	
Name:	Peer Greve
Student number:	6547273
Date and signature:	<p>15 June 2023</p> 

Submit this form to your supervisor when you begin writing your Bachelor's final paper or your Master's thesis.

Failure to submit or sign this form does not mean that no sanctions can be imposed if it appears that plagiarism has been committed in the paper.