



**United Nations Conference on Environment & Development
Conférence des Nations Unies sur l'Environnement et le Développement**

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PRESS RELEASE

**STEPHAN SCHMIDHEINY APPOINTED PRINCIPAL ADVISER FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY
BY SECRETARY-GENERAL OF UN ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE**

Mr. Maurice F. Strong, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, has appointed Dr. Stephan Schmidheiny of Zurich, Switzerland, as Principal Adviser for Business and Industry. In this capacity, Dr. Schmidheiny will provide leadership for the UNCED Secretariat's efforts to facilitate the contribution of business and industry to the Conference (ECO'92) and its preparatory process. Special attention will be given to the participation of leaders of business and industry from developing countries and to the issues that are of particular importance to these countries in integrating the environmental dimension into their economic development policies and practices.

ECO'92 will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992. It is expected to be attended by Heads of State or Government which would make it the largest "summit" conference ever. At the Conference, Governments will be called upon to take decisions on a wide range of concrete actions designed to lead to basic changes in economic behaviour and economic relations and establish the future direction of human society and its prospects for a secure and sustainable future in the 21st century.

Business and industry, and key sectors within it, are being challenged to undertake a self-examination from the point of view of environmentally sound and sustainable development. They are being invited to develop a set of targets and goals aimed at achieving sustainable development. In doing so they should consider what they are prepared to commit themselves to within their existing cost and profits criteria and what they would be prepared to do given a conducive policy, fiscal and regulatory context.

Dr. Schmidheiny will be joined in this task by a Council of some 40 eminent business leaders from all world regions and a broad range of business sectors. Dr. Schmidheiny and the Council will work closely with other important business and industry groups which are already committed to making substantial contributions to ECO'92. These include the International Chamber of Commerce and the World Economic Forum, together with its Industry Fora.

Stephan Schmidheiny, a leading Swiss industrialist, inherited a business manufacturing construction materials which had been in his family for three generations; he has completely transformed it by diversifying his interests. His privately-owned group today comprises activities in various sectors of manufacturing industry (electrical and electronic apparatus, building controls, optical and scientific instruments, water supply systems, construction materials) and of trade (consumer goods, machinery, steel). He is a member of the Boards of ABB Asea Brown Boveri, Landis & Gyr, Leica, Nestlé, SMH and Union Bank of Switzerland.

For a number of years, Dr. Schmidheiny has shown an active interest in environment and development issues. On the strength of his belief that not only high level industrial development but also extreme poverty can cause severe environmental damage, he created FUNDES, a foundation fostering small business enterprises in

Latin American countries, and ECOS, a private company investing in development projects based on criteria of sustainable development.

At the 1990 Bergen Conference, "Action for a Common Future", Dr. Schmidheiny stated that global ecological problems could not be addressed effectively without including the perspective of third world development. In his concluding remarks, he said: "The laws of natural processes cannot be changed. It is up to human civilization to adapt itself so that the two can develop in harmony without destroying each other. The solution lies in the concept of sustainable development. The industrial entrepreneur has an opportunity and, therefore, an obligation to make a substantial contribution to its implementation".

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