

Speech to Greenpeace Business Conference by Greenpeace Executive Director, Stephen Tindale

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Thanks. Almost half way through day, but nevertheless as the only Greenpeace representative on the platform today I'd like to welcome you - speakers and delegates - the sixth annual Greenpeace Business Conference

- This year is 30th anniversary of Greenpeace. In Sept 1971 a small group of individuals - brave idealists who believed they could confront the odds - set sail to try to prevent a US nuclear test. The following year the first voyage to confront the whalers took place.
- From these beginnings we have grown to a global organisation. We now have over 2 and a half million supporters in 158 countries. From our North American roots we have spread to Europe, Latin America, the Mediterranean, the Far East and most recently to China, India and South East Asia. Greenpeace India describes itself as an organisation for those who would be a voice, not a victim. When we talk about the threat posed by Genetic Modification to agricultural development, or the need for clean energy for all the world's people, we do so not from the perspective of the North, but on behalf of our supporters everywhere.
- Greenpeace takes pride in its achievements. The moratorium on commercial whaling, which has saved many species from extinction. The Antarctic Treaty, stopping mining in that last great wilderness on earth for at least fifty years. The ban on dumping radioactive waste and redundant oil installations at sea. And, earlier this year, the Stockholm treaty to ban the twelve most toxic Persistent Organic Pollutants - the culmination of a fifteen year Greenpeace campaign, and the agreement to protect the Great Bear Rainforest from logging.
- As you know, Greenpeace achieves its victories through non-violent direct action. We act to confront environmental abuses. That, to me, is the heart of Greenpeace - the energy, determination and willingness to take risks. Some people say that Greenpeace should grow up, that direct action is no longer necessary. I don't agree. It has been central to our last 30 years, and will be central to our next 30 years.

After I became Executive Director, my first direct action was at Menwith Hill, exposing the role the British Government was planning to play in George Bush's Star Wars system. Two weeks later, fifteen of my colleagues and two independent journalists were arrested following a similar protest against a Star Wars test in California. They were held in prison for a week, forced to appear in court manacled hand and foot, and are now confined to Los Angeles facing charges with a six-year sentence attached. All for a peaceful protest. We don't ever seek to evade responsibility for what we do: we are prepared to defend our actions in court. These charges are incredibly harsh, though. We do not believe anyone should go to prison for peaceful protest.

But charges like this will not deter us from taking action. We do so because we are angry at the abuse of our world. Yet to be angry is not to be irrational. We do not just confront wrongs; we also offer solutions. From the start, when we promoted whale watching as an alternative to the slaughter; it is now an industry worth over \$1 billion globally. It suits our opponents to ignore this, to claim that Greenpeace is only 'against things'. That is and always has been a lie. Over the last decade we have worked with manufacturers to produce and sell millions of Greenfreeze fridges world-wide; which do not damage the ozone layer and a climate-friendly. In August this year we launched Juice, a green electricity product marketed by Npower. Juice is linked to a proposed offshore wind farm at North Hoyle in Wales. By signing up, individuals demonstrate their support for offshore wind, so making it more likely that this windfarm, and others, will get planning permission.

As the Greenfreeze and Juice examples show, we have we are focusing increasingly on corporations. The reason is obvious: as free market economics has come into vogue, as politicians have ceded ever more power and influence to the private sector, and as trade liberalisation has swept away traditional instruments of public policy; it is increasingly transnational corporations who wield the real power. This is a familiar observation. What is less often noted is that this new-found freedom companies enjoy - and I know I risk sounding like a New Labour minister here - carries with it increased responsibilities. Because the move to liberalisation and deregulation and liberalisation hasn't just happened. It hasn't been driven by politicians. It has been driven by corporations, spending millions of pounds on lobbying, relentlessly pushing the message that if only governments would get out of the way, the public interest will be safe in their hands.

Having helped create this neo-liberal world, companies cannot turn round and say - as they sometimes do - that social or environmental problems are nothing to do with them; that their role is simply to make money.

Business thinking is in some ways more developed and more visionary than politicians. Take the case of timber procurement. Anders Dahlvig told us this morning that Ikea only buys wood from ancient forests if it has an FSC certification. Not ifs and buts. No weasel words. They just do it. Compare that to the British Government policy, announced last year after the Okinawa G8 summit, where Tony Blair threw his personal prestige behind ancient forest protection. It says the Govt will try to buy sustainable timber, where possible, and that it might or might not be certified.

It doesn't take a genius to see that this policy has some serious loopholes in it. And in fact it has - as far as we can tell - done little to change behaviour.

Or take the issue of incineration. The British Government, despite signing an international treaty committing it to reduce dioxin levels, says we need new incinerators to deal with our waste issue. Progressive voices in the industry like Shanks and Biffa, meanwhile, talk about sustainable waste solutions which do

not require incinerators. Perhaps this is an occasion when a little more industry lobbying would be in order!

So working with business is in many respects easier and more rewarding than working with governments. And it's gratifying that many in business are interested in working with Greenpeace - the attendance today is confirmation of that. Or perhaps it's simply that people want to avoid becoming a target of Greenpeace campaigns! We're often asked how we go about choosing our targets. Without giving away trade secrets: the key factors are that we are a global organisation and work on global priorities, we are a focussed organisation and work only on what we think are the greatest threats - climate being the overriding one - and we run campaigns that we believe we can win. We are not interested in heroic failure.

One campaign that fits all these criteria is against the use of persistent chemical in everyday items like furniture and washing up liquid. Chemicals which are often untested to see their effect on humans, and which turn up in human breast milk as well as in remote places like the Arctic. Take the issue of brominated flame-retardants. Ikea has shown that fire-safe furniture need not poison the planet. We will shortly be challenging other high profile manufacturers and retailers to end the use of BFRs. We will see then whether the commitment matches the rhetoric.

There is a myth about Greenpeace campaigning that we pick on those who have been brave enough to put their heads above the parapet. We don't. If companies are genuinely trying to change, we are happy to work with them. As Anders said, improving environmental performance is a process; it'll never be finished. No company can afford to rest on its laurels - Greenpeace or another environmental NGO is always likely to be back with a new demand. But we know that everything can't be done overnight. And we have no interest in cheap exposes.

To win any plaudits from Greenpeace, a company has to be confronting the real issues, even if this means changing the core nature of the business. Processes alone are not enough. It's no good just having environmental reports, stakeholder dialogues. BNFL has these, yet remains a company unsustainable to the core. And no good just cleaning up own activities. Producing a damaging product more efficiently is not a path to sustainability. For oil companies simply to cut their own emissions is a bit like a cigarette company encouraging its own employees to smoke less.

The other thing to avoid is overhyping what you're doing. By all means tell people about it - we think it's good that companies see it as adding value to their brand to be improving their environmental performance. But be honest about what is happening and what the limitations are. BP is a case in point. John Browne deserves credit for speaking out early on climate change, and though we don't think they're going far enough, BP *is* developing its solar and hydrogen businesses. But by no stretch of the imagination does this add up to going beyond petroleum - not when the company is spending fifty times as much on oil and gas exploration as on renewables. In the interests of fairness, I should say

that some of Shell's current adverts are dangerously close to overhype and misrepresentation too.

Despite their failings, BP and Shell are not the worst of the oil majors. That title belongs clearly to Exxon, a company showing contempt for the global environment. Despite our desire to engage with business, there are some companies whose behaviour is so appalling that confrontation is the only option. Exxon Mobil is the most profitable company the world has ever seen. Its profits are based entirely on fossil fuels - it invests absolutely nothing on renewable energy and its boss, Lee Raymond, is sneeringly dismissive of renewables' potential. Exxon Mobil uses its money and influence to undermine the international community's attempts to tackle climate change; under its own name and through a web of front organisations. The company's greatest success came in March when George Bush, remembering Exxon's generous campaign contributions, did Lee Raymond's bidding and withdrew from the Kyoto Protocol.

The Stop Esso campaign, which includes Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and the student group People and Planet, is our response. We are calling on individuals and companies to boycott Esso. Otherwise your money is going to fund the attempts to scupper Kyoto.

Companies need also to declare where they stand on the Kyoto Protocol. Kyoto is far from perfect, full of loopholes and doesn't go nearly far enough. But it's the only game in town. If you want to tackle climate change, you have to support the protocol. To use a phrase, which might be familiar to President Bush: you're either with us or you're against us. Companies cannot claim in the type of world we live in that climate change is not an issue for them. So all of you need to declare where you stand.

Some of you may have noticed that there is a paradox - the less charitable word would be a confusion - in what I've been saying. I've been talking about the retreat of governments and the increasing influence of business, yet Greenpeace's central demand on climate is that an agreement between governments be ratified. The explanation for this is that despite all the changes, the deregulation and the rolling back of the state, governments remain essential to the environmental agenda. We cannot give up on politics, however much we might feel like giving up on politicians.

Governments set the framework for economic activity. Outside economics textbooks, there is no such thing as a free market. Markets are affected by the way in which governments levy taxes, the extent and way in which monopoly power is controlled and, even after 20 years of the Thatcher Reagan revolution, by social and environmental obligations placed on companies. And we should be glad that this is so. The market alone cannot reflect all the aspects of an economic transaction: the environmental externalities, the long-term consequences. We need taxes to do that: like the Climate Change Levy, a good step in the right direction, though it needs to be higher. Regulations are needed to protect responsible companies against free riders, because although high environmental standards make good business sense in the medium and long

term, in the short term companies are vulnerable to undercutting by the cowboys.

On top of this, governments still have the capacity, when they are really determined, to transform societies and economies, in relatively short spaces of time. The New Deal in 1930s America. The creation of the British welfare state in the five years after 1945. The German economic recovery in the 1950s. All examples of how societies can change and be changed.

In the last month we have seen an extraordinary political mobilisation. Many of the assumptions have had to change. A US Government drifting towards isolationism has woken up to the necessity of multilateral diplomacy. New alliances are being built. Enormous sums of money - \$40 billion in the US alone - are suddenly available.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of military action against the Taliban, it is surely clear that it will not tackle the root causes of insecurity. To do that, we need to mobilise similar political effort, similar sums of money, to build real security.

Greenpeace doesn't claim to have a blueprint for this. We don't know the answer to ideological or religious conflict. But we do have, on the basis of our 30 years of campaigning, ideas to contribute on key planks of it.

Hunger feeds fanaticism. We have just co-funded with the UK DFID and the development organisation Bread for the World the largest ever study of socially and environmentally responsible agricultural projects, covering 52 countries. These show how hunger and poverty can be overcome, without the expensive and dangerous distraction of GM. We oppose GM because of the inherent and unavoidable risks to health and the environment. But perhaps equally worrying is the way it is siphoning off attention and resources from the real, workable and available solutions.

The international community must step up efforts to get rid of weapons of mass destruction. That means strengthening treaties, not abandoning them. Harebrained schemes like national missile defence, which offer the illusion of security at the price of sparking a new arms race, must now be abandoned.

The non-proliferation regime must be tightened up. Instead, George Bush has effectively given his blessing to Pakistan's nuclear weapons, as a quid pro quo for getting them on board for the fight against Bin Laden. That's a classic case of buying short term advantage by storing up trouble for the future - exactly the mistake the US made in the region throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Not to be outdone in the proliferation stakes, the British Government has chosen this moment to step up the international trade in plutonium by allowing the Sellafield Mox plant to open. An incomprehensible decision, and probably illegal too. We are challenging it in the Courts. To be expanding the plutonium cycle shows Tony Blair's fine rhetoric about a New World order to be cynical hypocrisy.

There has always been a direct link between nuclear weapons and nuclear power. If we want to stop the spread of one, we need to shut down the other.

Relatively easy - in theory at least - to prevent nuclear proliferation - control supply of uranium and plutonium.

So should shut down nuclear industry worldwide. Terrorist targets and potential bomb factories. Also environmental impact - discharges and waste. Greenpeace may have some new campaigns, but some things don't change. We'll campaign against nuclear industry until last plant in the world is decommissioned. Attempt to pass it off as the answer to climate change is, again, cynical attempt to manipulate public opinion in favour of a failed technology. It is hard to believe that a British government in the 21st century is seriously contemplating the nuclear option, but this appears to be the case. They should be aware that we and the rest of the environmental movement will oppose them all the way.

To build real energy security, need to phase out nuclear and fossil fuels. Dependence on oil and gas not only fuels global warming, with all attendant floods, drought, human misery and environmental destruction. It also distorts the west's relations with much of the rest of the world. Oil is clearly a factor in the hostility between the US and parts of the Arab world.

The tragedy - but also the opportunity - is that we do not need oil. There is enough energy available in the world, in the forms of wind, wave, solar, tidal, biomass, to provide our needs. What is needed is political will to harness it, and to overcome the vested interests which will fight hard to prolong the hydrocarbon age. We need our governments to declare that we are moving to renewable energy on an emergency footing - responding to our energy and environmental crisis in the way we have responded to the security crisis.

Here in the UK, we could provide three times our current electricity needs from offshore wind alone. Wave power is another enormous resource. Biomass could regenerate rural communities as well as reducing reliance on fossil fuels. And even in the UK, solar could make a major contribution - 85% of current electricity need.

Technologies for energy storage - like Innogy's regenesis system - are developing fast. So we do not need to limit our ambition by concerns about intermittence - will the wind blow at the right time. And as we have heard, hydrogen from renewable sources will soon enable us to run transport and provide space heating from renewable sources too.

Greenpeace submitted a paper to the Government's energy review arguing that by 2050 we could be 100% renewable: having cut our primary energy use in half through efficiency measures. This is totally achievable. With real political will, it could be achieved much earlier.

Sadly, though, political vision seems lacking, as I will illustrate with what I'll call the parable of the two Brians. Last week I shared a platform at Labour Party Conference with Energy minister Brian Wilson and the CEO of Innogy, Brian Count. The minister spoke first and said that unless we built new nuclear power stations we would become dependent on imported gas. Renewables barely rated a mention. I spoke next and outlined Greenpeace's vision, and then Brian Count stood up and said "I basically agree with Stephen Tindale on the potential for

renewables". Since I had said, then as now, that renewables could replace both nuclear and fossil fuels by 2050, I thought this was a very encouraging thing for the head of one of our major energy companies to say!

Globally, the picture is similar, though the mix of technologies will be different. There is no shortage of renewable resource: only a shortage of imagination, political will and money. That is why Greenpeace is challenging the international community to scale up renewables far faster than in the past.

We were encouraged when the G8 set up a task force last year to look at the issue of making renewable energy available to the 2 billion people who today have no access to electricity. It came up with a fairly good report - not as ambitious as it should have been, but not bad as a start. The US blocked it, and it was quietly shelved at the meeting in Genoa.

We're not going to let the politicians forget about it, though. At the end of September, we launched a joint campaign with the Body Shop called "The Power to Tackle Poverty". The objective is to get power to those 2 billion people. Being without power means they have to spend many hours collecting firewood - denuding the surrounding area and making erosion worse. There are direct health effects from woodsmoke. And being without light makes it hard to study. Installing fossil-fuelled electricity grids for this two billion would be catastrophic for the global climate. The obvious solution is to roll out renewables: decentralised; practical and in many cases cheap. Our aim with The Body Shop is to mobilise people throughout the world to demand a change to business as usual.

This, then, is our agenda for building real security. Better food security. Tackling weapons of mass destruction. Ending the nuclear menace - both military and civil. And phasing out fossil fuels through a global renewables revolution. It sounds ambitious - as indeed it is. But not impossible. People are always telling Greenpeace that our demands are impossible: that we will never stop the whalers, or save Antarctica, or save the Great bear rainforest. They are constantly telling us that we need to be more pragmatic. And they are constantly being proved wrong.

So I hope you will join us, as individuals, and the companies you represent, in pressing this agenda. Because together, we have the power to make it happen.

Thank you.