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## UNIDO and Appropriate Industrial Technology

A Forum on Appropriate Industrial Technology in New Delhi on 20 to 25 November 1978 was sponsored by the U.N. Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the government of India. Thirteen U.S. participants from universities, the Agency for International Development, the National Science Foundation, the State Department, and Congress joined some 300 participants from 60 countries. About one-third of the participants were from India; there was strong Asian representation.

In the UNIDO definition of appropriate technology (AT), the developmental objectives of nations are of key importance. The emphasis at the forum was on technologies conducive to labor-intensiveness, decentralization, and meeting the needs of the large percentage of people in rural areas. This emphasis was reinforced by the focus on AT in the policies of the government of India, the host country for the forum.

Several things stood out. The developing countries dominated the forum, but in a constructive way. It was not suggested that AT was a plot by the West to keep the Third World in a state of dependence; however, it was not to be pushed at the expense of important developments in the "modern" or "high technology" sector. Employment rather than scale was considered important. Elimination of human drudgery was emphasized as being appropriate.

The recommendations of the forum were threefold. The first was for cooperation among developing countries. By sharing experiences and information, developing countries can gain the self-confidence that can help to uplift their people. The second was for international cooperation in science and technology so that all countries can take advantage of new developments to upgrade traditional technologies with direct relevance to the rural poor. Finally, the developed countries were called on to provide assistance in key areas, such as specialized equipment and know-how.

The forum was an encouraging prelude to the 1979 U.N. Conference on Science and Technology for Development (UNCSTD). Differences were skillfully hammered out by the participants and the final report was unanimously approved. Sentiments about a code of conduct for technology transfer and a new international economic order were expressed but were played down. I came away feeling that the United States did indeed have a role to play in science and technology for development, that U.S. scientists and engineers in universities and research institutes should support the initiatives of colleagues in the developing countries. (Many of the participants from developing countries were educated in the United States and many had continuing ties with this country.) Furthermore, the United States has much to learn from those in other countries about technologies such as polycrystalline silicon solar cells and gasohol production from organic material.

We have no guarantee that UNCSTD will go as smoothly in 1979 as did the UNIDO forum. For one thing, UNCSTD may be much more of a political event; for another, the developing countries may put more emphasis on building up the U.N. system than on bilateral modes of cooperation, which the United States has been emphasizing. Budget constraints may dampen the enthusiasm of U.S. scientists, engineers, and planners who see UNCSTD as a real opportunity to become involved in cooperative research and development projects with their counterparts in developing countries.

India is important to the United States, as is the rest of the Third World. Our response at UNCSTD, our commitment to President Carter's call for a new Foundation for International Technological Cooperation, our willingness to provide our fair share of funds for development cooperation, and our ability to listen and respond to the needs and aspirations of developing countries will be important indicators of the future role of the United States in the world community.—ROBERT P. MORGAN, *Chairman, Department of Technology and Human Affairs, and Director, Center for Development Technology, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri 63130*