

2005 World Summit must move towards implementing the precautionary principle

Posted by

Tuesday, 13 September 2005 00:57 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 September 2005 00:57

2005 World Summit must move towards implementing the precautionary principle

The global community is living with the consequences of misapplication of the precautionary principle. Actions to prevent threats to the environment and human health have been superseded by actions to usurp the fundamental purpose of the United Nations- to prevent the scourge of war. 2005 World Summit must move towards implementing the precautionary principle

In the North, nothing profiles the lack of precaution more than the Hurricane in the Southern United States. For years governments have made a commitment to implement the precautionary principle which reads where there is a threat of environmental devastation lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent the threat. (Rio Declaration, UNCED, 1992).

In the South, nothing profiles the lack of precaution more than the Tsunami disaster in South Asia. It was not as though the global community did not recognize the urgency of having warning systems in place. In the statement from Rio + 5, every state acknowledged the following:

?Natural disasters have disproportionate consequences for developing countries, in particular SIDS. Programmes for sustainable development should give higher priority to implementation of the commitments made at the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction. There is a particular need for the promotion and facilitation of the transfer of early-warning technologies to those developing countries and countries with economies in transition which are prone to natural disasters.?

2005 World Summit must move towards implementing the precautionary principle

Posted by

Tuesday, 13 September 2005 00:57 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 September 2005 00:57

The precautionary principle has become a principle of international customary law, and as such should become part of the national legislation of each state. The principle has been adopted through numerous international instruments, and can be paraphrased as the following: where there is a threat to the environment or human health the lack of full scientific certainty should not be used to justify postponing measures to prevent the threat.

The precautionary principle is increasingly necessary, given the consequences of climate change, ozone depletion, deforestation, acid rain, toxic, hazardous and atomic waste build-up, genetically engineered foods and crops production, soil destruction through desertification and chemical dependent agriculture etc. The confluence of grave environmental and health consequences of the current model of overconsumption and reliance on technological fixes has given rise to an increased demand for the invoking and the implementing of the precautionary principle.

Given the urgency of the current global situation, rife with environmental degradation and disregard for human health, there is a global imperative to implement the precautionary principle in all policy and actions.

The purpose of the precautionary principle is to act with foresight not to react with hindsight.

Sadly, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, rather than recognize the urgency of acting with precaution, the member states proceeded to undermine the precautionary principle and limited its application.

The global community is living with the consequences of misapplication of the precautionary principle. Actions to prevent threats to the environment and human health have been superseded by actions to usurp the fundamental purpose of the United Nations- to prevent the scourge of war.

The member states at the 2005 Summit should be urged to guarantee the immediate implementation of the precautionary principle, and oppose the misapplication of this principle.