

## Subject: Condolence Letter

Dear all,

**Mr. Maurice Strong**, an internationally recognized environmentalist passed away in Toronto on Nov 28 2015 at the age of 86. He was the founding executive director of UNEP, Secretary General of the Stockholm and Nairobi Environmental conferences, Rio Earth Summit in 1992, Chairman of North South Roundtable, a philanthropist, and a member of the Advisory Board of Mahbub ul Haq Centre. Mr Strong was a personal friend of Dr and Mrs Haq for over half a century. Mahbub ul Haq Centre was deeply sorry to lose this friend of the developing countries. Please find below a relevant article.

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Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre

### **Maurice Strong, Environmental Champion, Dies at 86**

*By Sam Roberts, The New York Times, December 2, 2015*

Maurice Strong, a former industrialist and confessed ecological sinner who was in the vanguard of placing environmentalism on the world's agenda as a high-ranking United Nations official, died Saturday. He was 86.

His death came on the eve of the United Nations negotiations in Paris on [global warming](#), attended by President Obama and other world leaders.

Achim Steiner, United Nations under secretary general and executive director of the United Nations Environment Program, announced the death but did not say where Mr. Strong, a Canadian, died or give the cause.

He credited Mr. Strong with making "history by launching a new era of international environmental diplomacy."

For years Mr. Strong, a self-made [oil](#) and gas billionaire, sounded the alarm on [climate change](#) and tried to goad the governments of developed countries to take responsibility for the ecological degradation wrought by industrialization.

"The environmental crisis is largely of our making," Mr. Strong said of the industrial nations in 1970, adding that it was therefore incumbent on them to enlist and assist developing nations in addressing the problem.

"We cannot expect them to attach the same priority to environmental action as we do," he said, "confronted as they are with the compelling and immediate pressures of meeting the basic needs of their people for food, shelter, health care, education and employment."

Mr. Strong helped globalize the environmental movement early on as secretary general of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, held in 1972. Two decades later he organized the United Nations [Earth](#) Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

After the Stockholm conference, Mr. Strong became the first executive director of the Environment Program.

It was one of several leadership posts he held at the United Nations. In the mid-1980s he directed the agency's Office for Emergency Operations, mobilizing famine relief for drought-ravaged Africa. More than a decade later he served as Secretary General Kofi Annan's executive coordinator for bureaucratic reform and as special envoy to North Korea and the Far East.

(He stepped aside as the envoy in 2005 after Tongsun Park, a South Korean with a scandalous past, was found to have been an unregistered lobbyist for Iraq in the United Nations [oil](#)-for-food program and to have invested \$1 million in a company controlled by Mr. Strong. Mr. Strong was cleared of any involvement in the scandal.)

Maurice (pronounced MORR-iss) Frederick Strong was born on April 29, 1929, in Oak Lake, a prairie hamlet in southern Manitoba. His father, Frederick, was an unemployed railway telegraph operator. The family was so poor that Maurice would collect lumps of coal that had fallen from passing trains to heat their house.

At 14, he left home to become a merchant mariner and a fur trader and to live briefly among the Eskimos. When the United Nations set up its headquarters early on in Lake Success, N.Y., he wangled a job as a guard.

Returning to Manitoba, he enlisted as a securities analyst in Winnipeg, the capital, and was recruited by the legendary oilman John E. P. Gallagher, who was known as Smiling Jack, to work for Dome Petroleum in 1951.

Mr. Strong later scouted service station sites for an oil company in the Middle East and started a graphite mine in Tanzania before returning to Dome in 1955. There he profited from stock options, then served as president of the Canadian Industrial Gas and Power Corporation of Canada. He was later chairman of Petro-Canada and of the Canadian Development Investment Corporation.

As a tycoon, he confessed to The New York Times in 1992, he had been "an environmental sinner." But he later realized, he said, that "we were running the Earth without a depreciation account, in effect spending our capital."

In the 1960s, he was appointed to run what became the Canadian International Development Agency by Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson. His success in increasing foreign aid brought him to the attention of U Thant, the secretary general of the United Nations at the time, who selected him to convene the 1972 Stockholm conference.

The 1992 Rio summit meeting Mr. Strong organized attracted delegates from 178 nations, including 118 heads of state or of government. It produced an acknowledgment that eradicating poverty was necessary to achieve environmentally sustainable development. But it ended without setting specific, tangible goals. And though donor nations agreed to provide \$7 billion in aid to poorer ones, the sum was far short of the \$70 billion that the United Nations said was needed annually.

Mr. Strong was the author in 2000 of “Where on Earth Are We Going?” in which he predicted that in three decades environmental catastrophes could wipe out as much as two-thirds of the world’s population.