

Hard pressed world leaders gather for Earth Summit

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Leaders of a world low on water, high on carbon dioxide and growing less green by the day opened a week-long summit today to answer a basic question: Are we better off now than five years ago? The official answers being debated at the U.N. Earth Summit were not encouraging — a choice between “worse” and “not much better.”

“Our task for the coming days must be to chart the course for the years to come,” Vice President Al Gore said as he welcomed representatives from 170 nations to New York to review progress on the environment and Third World development since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The conference chairman, Razali Ismail, said bluntly that progress has been “paltry.”

“We face a major recession. Not economic, but a recession of spirit,” the Malaysian diplomat said. “We con-

tinued to consume resources, pollute, spread and entrench poverty as though we are the last generation on Earth.”

Many delegates hoped the United States, the world’s No. 1 polluter, would take the lead in setting clean-up goals, particularly on the tough issue of global warming. But it was Germany’s Helmut Kohl who promised an action plan for “Earth Summit Plus 5.”

The German chancellor was joining with Brazil, South Africa and Singapore to draft a joint plan for adoption by the U.N. session “to achieve concrete progress on key issues.” The centerpiece was understood to be a proposal for a new World Environment Organization.

Kohl, Japan’s Ryutaro Hashimoto, Britain’s Tony Blair and France’s Jacques Chirac, all fresh from the Denver summit with President Clinton, topped today’s lineup of U.N. speakers, leading off a week-long marathon of five-

minute addresses. Clinton speaks Thursday.

Those coming from Denver can act as “catalysts” in breaking through negotiating logjams over the documents to be approved here, said summit chairman Razali, the U.N. General Assembly president.

“I hope the political leaders will come to the rescue,” he said.

In 1992 in Rio, governments endorsed the goal of “sustainable development” — developing the global economy to benefit all while protecting the environment.

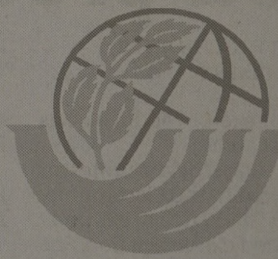
That summit was historic, but the steps it agreed on

were mostly voluntary — in reducing such “greenhouse gases” as carbon dioxide, for example, to combat global warming, and in better preserving forests.

The record since then is spurring calls for tougher mandatory actions.

Carbon emissions have actually increased — in the United States by more than 13 percent. Fresh water is increasingly scarce. Forest is being lost at a rate of one Iowa — 55,000 square miles — per year. On the development side, the number of “absolute” poor — people living on less than \$1 a day — has edged above 1.1 billion.

In closed-door, pre-summit talks, diplomats debated what conclusion to reach in the political statement that will end the summit: Is the environmental outlook “worse” than five years ago, or “not much better”?



Shabazz dies of burn complications

NEW YORK (AP) — Betty Shabazz, who witnessed the assassination of her husband, Malcolm X, and became a civil rights figure herself, died Monday of burns suffered in a fire allegedly set by her 12-year-old grandson. She was 61.

Shabazz suffered third-degree burns over 80 percent of her body in the June 1 blaze at her Yonkers apartment. She had been in extremely critical condition since the day of the fire, and underwent five operations to replace burned tissue with artificial skin.

“My father lived strong, mother did honorably,” Attallah Shabazz, the oldest of the couple’s six daughters, told reporters outside Jacobi Medical Center. “Now we must adapt to living a life without parents.”

Along with Coretta Scott King and Myrlie Evers-Williams — whose husbands were also assassinated during the civil rights movement — Shabazz emerged as a powerful symbol in her own right.

“Like her husband before her, Betty Shabazz has become a tragic American figure, and like him, she will be remembered not for her death but for the principled life she lived and the tower of strength she became,” said Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C.

Said King: “The nation has lost a committed civil and human rights activist whose life and contributions have made a significant difference. ... I will miss her greatly.”

The Rev. Jesse Jackson, who was a frequent visitor to

the family at the hospital, remembered Shabazz as a “champion of solid dignity and quiet strength.”

“She leaves today the legacy of one who epitomized hope and healing,” he said, “and the burden is upon us to keep fighting the tragic recycling of violence.”

In 1965, pregnant with twins, she was in the audience at Harlem’s Audubon Ballroom with her four children when gunmen pumped 16 shots into her husband as he preached on stage.

“Sister Betty came through the people, herself a nurse, and people recognizing her moved back; she fell on her knees looking down on his bare, bullet-pocked chest, sobbing, ‘They killed him!’” Alex Haley wrote in “The Autobiography of Malcolm X.”

Shabazz went on to become a university administrator and spokeswoman for civil rights.

She made headlines in recent years by accusing Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan of orchestrating the assassination. She later reconciled with him, and defended her daughter Qubilah Shabazz against charges that she plotted a revenge attack on Farrakhan.

It was Qubilah’s son who was arrested in the fire. Malcolm Shabazz was said to be unhappy that he had been sent to live with his grandmother and wanted to return to his mother in Texas. He is being held in juvenile custody.

WEATHER OUTLOOK

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Thunderstorms High: 94° Low: 75°	Thunderstorms High: 94° Low: 74°	Partly Cloudy High: 94° Low: 74°

Sketch



By Quatro

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Wed. 25th, Noon-1pm
Wed. 25th, 4pm
Thu. 26th, 1pm

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