

Speech at the UN Earth Summit, 1992

In my anger I am not blind, and in my fear I'm not afraid to tell the world how I feel. In my country we make so much waste. We buy and throw away, buy and throw away. And yet northern countries will not share with the needy.

Even when we have more than enough, we are afraid to lose some of our wealth, afraid to let go.

Two days ago here in Brazil, we were shocked when we spent some time with some children living on the streets.

And this is what one child told us:

“If I become rich, I will give all the street children food, clothes, medicine, shelter and love and affection.”

If a child on the street who has nothing is willing to share, why are we who have everything still so greedy?

I can't stop thinking that it makes a tremendous difference where you are born. I could be one of those children living in the favelas of Rio, I could be a child starving in Somalia 8\*, a victim of war in the Middle East or a beggar in India.

At school, even in kindergarten, you teach us how to behave in the world. You teach us:

not to fight with others

to work things out

to respect others

to clean up our mess

not to hurt other creatures

to share, not be greedy

Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do? Do not forget why you are attending these conferences, who you are doing this for – we are your own children. You are deciding what kind of world we will grow up in.

Parents should be able to comfort their children by saying.

“Everything's going to be all right”; “We're doing the best we can” and “It's not the end of the world.”

But I don't think you can say that to us anymore.

My dad always says, “You are what you *do*, not what you *say*.” Well, what you do makes me cry at night.

You grown ups say you love us. I challenge you, *please* make your actions reflect your words.

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