

EDITORIAL

The text of the ASEAN Agreement is printed on page 64. Even though the Agreement was signed sometime ago, the official text has only now become available.

The Agreement is remarkable for two reasons. Firstly, it is probably the first such Convention which is eco-system and not resource, oriented; and secondly, rather than contenting itself with broad and rather bland principles, it elaborates upon those principles by giving precise indication of the manner in which they may be implemented in the signatory states.

It will still be necessary, however, for those states to undertake an extensive programme of examination and revision of their national laws and policies in order that some lasting and practical results may be achieved. The Agreement gives them a firm foundation on which to operate and it is now the responsibility not only of those states signatory, but also of the international community, both governmental and non-governmental, to look for the resources necessary to carry the Agreement into effect.

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The question of Antarctica is once again on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.

Readers will remember that last year the documents (see Environmental Policy and Law, Vol. 14, 1985 at page 2) were presented late to the Assembly, with the result that no real discussion could take place.

Already in July this year, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) adopted a resolution on Antarctica at its meeting in Addis Abeba. The operative paragraphs declare Antarctica to be the common heritage of mankind, call upon all OAU member states to take appropriate steps at the 40th session of the UNGA to seek recognition of Antarctica as such, and request the UN Secretary-General to monitor developments and report to the Council of Ministers at its next ordinary session. Subsequently, the report of the Non-Aligned Meeting (NAM) held in Luanda, Angola, on 2-7 September notes that the Ministers there reaffirmed their position (see Environmental Policy and Law, Vol. 11 at page 54).

During the general debate at the 40th anniversary session of the UNGA, eleven nations' representatives mentioned Antarctica in their speeches. There is now movement in the status quo, and when the session is over, we shall report on the proceedings and decisions adopted.

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On page 71 are printed the "Suggestions for Action" to be taken by the First African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, prepared by UNEP and scheduled to be held in Cairo next month.

The proposals seem ideal, but anyone fully aware of the actual situation would say that they are much too ambitious. For despite economic and social development efforts, the balance between population, resources, environment and development has deteriorated.

The journal will be represented at the Conference, and we shall be able to bring a first-hand account of the proceedings in the January issue.

26 November 1985

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