the Pacific is seriously considering adopting a similar approach to that of the ECE to control air pollution. For the past twenty years the ECE has used the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to control air pollution. The Convention has been recognized as a unique forum for successful advancement of international environmental law and for effective regional cooperation.

Implementing global and regional environmental agreements needs money, a lot of money. A healthy environment is not something we can buy at the supermarket. It is a benefit we can all create by taking matters of environmental protection into our own hands, and as shareholders in the world’s nature we will have to pay for it. Therefore, mandatory environmental taxation of all of us seems necessary combined with successful financing schemes, for example, debt for nature swaps or voluntary contributions.

Taxes can be primarily imposed on fossil fuels (carbon tax) and extended to motor fuels (gasoline and diesel) and aviation fuel (kerosene). Despite the unwillingness of many governments and even competent international organizations dealing with maritime and all traffic, pressure for such taxes will grow, particularly from strong subregional organizations such as the European Union. Recently, the Norwegian government introduced a tax on kerosene, sparking off an instant rebellion by leading airlines. Within two days, the airlines bad obliged the government to withdraw the tax. But the precedent has been set.

Collected taxes should be channeled to a Global Environmental Fund, and from there, redistributed to regional economic and social commissions for (he problems they are dealing with. Such funding could then be used to support the financial regimes designed under the implementation protocols.

A debt for nature swap is another successful way to finance environmental obligations, particularly in countries with economies in transition such as Poland or in developing countries such as Brazil. It involves converting a country’s debts into an environmental fund for mitigative measures with the consent of the creditor. The creditor’s main interest is to avoid at home the effects of transboundary pollution originating on the territory of the debtor. This depends primarily on the political will of donor countries.

Most of these proposals do not require amendments to the UN Charter or to the treaties establishing the UN regional commissions and specialized agencies. However, the mechanisms to generate funding for implementing global environmental instruments should be put on the agendas of the Group of Seven and the World Economic Forum. It is well known that unsolved environmental problems have the potential to undermine stability and security at regional and even at global level. Therefore, if globality is to avoid instability and insecurity, and if we are all willing to couple development with environmental responsibility, then the time for action has come. Let us make globality environmentally responsible.

WTO

Global Trade and the Environment

At a meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on 8 September, to discuss future global trade negotiations, developing countries rejected a series of proposals put forward by the United States, the European Union and other countries, aimed at achieving consistency between trade and environment goals.

Many developing countries fear that environmental provisions in trade agreements could be used to shut out their products from rich-country markets.

The proposals made included one by the EU to clarify the relationship between WTO rules and the trade provisions of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and a US suggestion that the WTO’s trade and environment committee assess the environmental impact of the forthcoming talks. However, there was substantial backing for negotiations to tackle fishing and farming subsidies that distort trade and damage the environment.

A new round of WTO trade liberalisation talks is due to be launched at a ministerial meeting in Seattle from 30 November–4 December. Trade diplomats in Geneva will begin detailed negotiations on 20 September on the ministerial declaration, which will set the agenda for the talks.

One NGO – the WWF-World Wide Fund for Nature – has already published its proposals for “greening” the new trade round. These include clarifying WTO rules to prevent challenges to trade measures taken under MEAs, greater transparency and accountability in the negotiations, and priority for negotiations that would benefit developing countries.