UN/GA

High-Level Dialogue on Globalisation

The United Nations General Assembly held a high-level dialogue on globalisation from 20-21 September, 2001 at UN Headquarters in New York.

The themes were “Promoting the integration of developing countries into the world economy and generating new public and private financing resources to complement development efforts” and “Enhancing the integration of developing countries in the emerging global information network, facilitating access to information and communication technology for developing countries.”

During the general discussion, participants sought to contribute to the implementation of the UN Agenda for Development and other relevant intergovernmental processes. General Assembly President Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea), in summarising the debate, commented on the main points raised. He stressed:

– the importance of “humanising” globalisation to assist developing countries to integrate smoothly into the world economy by opening world markets and generating new flows of financing for development;

– creating a favourable international economic environment for mobilising financial resources;

– improving governance at the national level and creating an environment conducive to investment; and

– promoting the role of information technology in economic and social development.

He also supported narrowing the digital divide as a priority requiring bold policies for development of human resources and the institutional capacity to manage the changes. (MJ)

UNEP/IEG III

“Building Blocks” of Environmental Governance

by Michael A. Buenker*

The third meeting of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers or their Representatives on International Environmental Governance (IEG) was convened at the Palais des Nations in Algiers, Algeria on the 9/10 September 2001. Despite the fact that this meeting was not scheduled parallel to another international ministerial meeting or Conference of Parties, as the previous meetings in New York and Bonn had been, it was well attended. In fact, the number of participants had increased, drawing over 250 participants from over 91 countries, including 25 at the ministerial level.

The previous meetings consisted of interactive debates between government representatives, United Nations officials and spokespersons of non-governmental organisations targeted at identifying the problems of international environmental governance and what proposals can be realistically considered. To this end, the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), Klaus Töpfer, had distributed a catalogue of questions (UNEP/IGM/2/CRP.1) to be considered on this subject. A series of governments, such as the European Union, Australia, the Czech Republic, Kenya and the United States took this opportunity to respond in writing. Their responses were distributed during the meeting. The Executive Director, in addition to these comments, had also integrated the points of convergence of the last two meetings as well as the other meetings that took place during the intersessional period into his so-called “living document,” his report on IEG which was presented in its third revised form as UNEP/IGM/3/2. Taking up earlier suggestions that were made in the course of the last meetings, another paper on the Harmonisation of National Reporting (UNEP/IGM/3/CRP.2) was introduced, which gives details on a recently initiated pilot project for streamlining national reporting under biodiversity-related conventions.

Cherif Rahmani, Minister of Landscape Development

* Administrative Officer, International Council of Environmental Law.