

EDITORIAL

Following a two-year break, UNEP's Governing Council met from 8-19 June in Nairobi. The report of that session is the main theme of this issue, since the decisions adopted there not only point the direction for international environmental policy until the next meeting, but will also affect our environment into the 21st century. It has now finally been decided to hold Governing Council sessions at two-yearly intervals, with one agreed exception. This concerns the First Special Session on 'SWMTEP', for non-insiders, the system-wide medium-term environment programme, scheduled from the 14-18 March 1988.

It was generally agreed that this Council meeting went quite well, although it was feared until the evening before the final day that consensus would not be reached on the Environmental Perspective, a document which we are reprinting in full as a Selected Document, since it will accompany us for some time to come. Although several states, while joining the consensus, made certain reservations, these concern more political aspects which are not considered to be fundamental to the body of the Perspective. So there was a general feeling of relief on the final day when delegates realized that the last hurdles had been taken, largely thanks to Dr. Al-Gain's talent for organizing and leading the negotiations.

Just before the end of the African Ministerial Conference, when deliberations had reached a crucial stage delegates, following a warning, were shocked to realize that the interpreters — members of surely one of the strongest unions in the world — had simply disappeared as their working hours had ended! This extremely difficult situation was overcome mostly as a result of the untiring efforts of Mr. Ferrari, the representative of the Executive Director who, in addition to his difficult duties, tried his best to help the Ministers from different African regions to understand each other. The report and the results of the meeting have to be seen, therefore, against the background of this curious situation. □

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