

EDITORIAL

UNEP has invited States to participate next week in a meeting at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, to finalize (they hope!) the draft of the Convention on the Transboundary Transport of Hazardous Wastes (see also page 2 in this connection).

How times are changing!

When, during the days of the early Governing Councils, lawyers from different countries tried to push for meetings to draft "under the auspices of UNEP" international legal instruments, instead of 'only' soft-law or guidelines, they were met with insurmountable resistance. At the beginning, there was practically no place for legal activities in UNEP and it was a big task to convince the majority that in many aspects, new law was inevitable. But these teething problems are already almost history and we, of course, are more than happy about this.

Since we are on the subject of UNEP and since we have not, in the past, published only favourable articles on the organization and its Executive Director, we have to note at this point that we admire the open and critical words Dr. Tolba has employed in recent months in pinpointing the problems. Two occasions we should particularly like to mention. In November last year, at the first public gathering of the German Committee for UNEP when, after an introduction, he was ready to answer questions for nearly three hours on current and critical questions; and especially as these did not only relate to his own, but also to other parts of the UN system. He discussed very openly and quite a number of the 130 people present stated how they admired his broad knowledge and capability to tackle the points.

Again, during the Dakar Conference on Environment and Development at the beginning of January, he spoke of the need for more African self-reliance as a means of combatting the continent's "environmentally-induced crisis". His statement there, which requires nothing further to be added, will for this reason be printed in the next issue of the journal.

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By the time the next issue has been published, many events of interest to our readers will have occurred. In addition to what we have already announced, the General Assembly of IUCN with its elections will be over and the new Director General, Martin Holdgate — not a new name to our readers — will have taken over (see cover photo of Vol. 11, 1/2 and Vol. 17 at page 103). The European Year of the Environment will have ceremonially ended and the Nairobi meeting on the Ozone Protocol will have taken place. The Inter-Sessional meeting of the UNEP Governing Council on the famous 'SWMTEP' (the System-wide Medium-term Environment Programme), and for which the components of the UN family should all have contributed their slice to the cake, should then be behind us.

We shall keep you informed!

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Wolfgang R. Steiner