

# EDITORIAL

*Economy, Environment and Development. Environment: Costs of Development. Economic Co-operation and Development.*

Any of these variations on the theme could sum up the main content of this issue. But whether it is the future of the IPCC (page 70), the preparatory process for the '92 Conference (page 72), the Montreal Protocol (page 75), the Bergen Conference (page 84), the World Bank/IMF programmes (page 86) or the International Interparliamentary Conference on the Global Environment (page 87), further progress hinges not only on the availability of continuing financial and administrative support but even more so on the support by parliaments.

A good illustration of this is supplied by the Parliamentary Conference. There have now been five international parliamentary conferences, all successful. The first two were held immediately before and after Stockholm and two in the following four years. Then for a long while nothing happened, until Senator Gore revived the idea. It was a deliberate decision to add the term "global" environment to the title of the recent conference, to reflect the growing awareness that the most urgent international environmental problems are global in nature and can only be dealt with successfully in this context. Such global effects were not so apparent at the time of the other conferences.

The organizers now face the most complicated part: building on the foundations laid by the Conference and ensuring a successful follow-up.

It is clear that the CSFR parliament, whose invitation to continue the work of the Conference was applauded by delegates, cannot carry the burden of the various aspects of support needed to undertake this task. Nor is likely that the French National Assembly, who also issued an invitation, will be in a position to establish a suitable structure between conferences. But it should be equally clear to all concerned that — finally — a structure must be found to enable parliamentarians to communicate more frequently on the international level, if they are to be in a position to tackle globally the enormous tasks facing them.

There is an inherent danger to the power of parliaments if governments — i.e., administrations, are asked to take on this follow-up function. The power of parliaments — "the voice of the people" — will decrease, if parliamentarians do not have the direct possibility of carrying out the recommendations, proposals etc, of the various international fora. And without subsequent implementation, all these conference could be considered superfluous.

The result of the IPCC meeting which ended this week in Geneva came too late to be added to the report on page 70. In addition to agreeing to put a plan of action to tackle global warming before Governments in the Autumn, delegates agreed to submit a string of recommendations to the ministerial conference in November, including a call for governments to "take steps now to attempt to limit, stabilise, or reduce the emissions of energy-related greenhouse gases".

The Meeting identified measures which could be taken in the short term (use of economic instruments such as carbon taxes), as well as longer-term strategies, including increased use of energy sources other than coal and oil. It would seem that the way is now clear for negotiations on an international global warming convention this year, or early next. But the Meeting was marked by a massive attempt by big oil producing and consuming countries, led by Saudi Arabia, to weaken the final report. The USSR, China and Saudi Arabia were for the first time warning about the costs of tackling global warming. Previously, the US had appeared isolated on this. The attitude was stated clearly by the leader of the Chinese delegation who said that "if we stabilise greenhouse gas emissions, that means we cannot develop the economy". Although a wider world participation was regarded as an important development, some environmental organizations present termed the compromises in the final report as "a depressing setback".

On the 15 June, the White House announced that the US will propose the establishment of a fund to assist less developed countries in meeting the additional costs of phasing out the production of ozone-depleting chemicals by the year 2000. The fund, which is to be operated and administered by the World Bank, will be proposed by US officials attending the second meeting of Parties to the Montreal Protocol in London from 27-29 June.

The President's proposal is intended to allow the Parties to conclude an acceptable agreement on a package of amendments (see page 75). The proposal includes specific requirements addressing the uses, the precedential nature, the administration, assessment, control, and voting rights within the fund.

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