

EDITORIAL

Many events of interest to our readers will be taking place within the United Nations system during the course of this year. We shall report on all developments, including the first part of 51st session of the General Assembly – now almost finished – together with any environmental decisions adopted. As we had to complete the layout for this very big January issue in December, we were sorry not to have received the GA Decisions – an exception is what you see in the box on page 5.

An important event of this fifty-first session will be the Special Session on the Review of the Implementation of the outcome of the 1992 UNCED. This session has now been postponed for two weeks until the 23 June, although some States wanted to hold it at the same time as the regular General Assembly session in Autumn: the reason being that some Heads of State have made a special commitment to be present at that time.

Later issues will report on the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) inter-sessional ad hoc open-ended working group from 24 February – 7 March, and the several meetings in February and March concerning various aspects of the UN Convention on Climate Change. Also, the Meeting of the States Parties to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea from 10–14 March, and the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development from 7–25 April.

The nineteenth session of the UNEP Governing Council will be held from 27 January – 7 February, and a full report is scheduled for the next issue (see also box on page 5).

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We have still not brought the promised article on US environmental policy – we have already apologised once! But we now have another “excuse”, because although the November election brought no change politically speaking, we do expect some positive movement now in the environmental field.

There is one area especially where initiative is sadly lacking: The urgently needed protocol on liability to the Antarctic Convention would soon be possible, according to experts’ opinion, if the United States Administration would not take such an extremely restrictive position; but some delegations have the feeling that the US would prefer to have nothing at all on this subject. We will return to this at a later date.

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We have had several queries concerning the Council of Europe’s Convention on Landscape. The confusion came from a distributed paper which they named the “non-legal text of this draft Convention” (!) We can only say that there is nothing to report on yet, as the lawyers now intend to turn this into a legal convention.

- Wolfgang Breyer -

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