

# EDITORIAL

*First, we have to correct our information from the last issue and report that Prof. Töpfer has not accepted the offer from Kofi Annan of a two-year extension to his appointment as UNEP Executive Director. Perhaps our hope that he would have accepted was a case of very wishful thinking! We have heard that the Secretary-General has postponed the replacement procedure until after next year's UNEP GC/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. We hope that, by then, they will have found an appropriate head for their law department.*

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*Following the recent natural catastrophes, it is good that some short-sighted politicians are starting to become more serious about the facts and questions surrounding climate change. While the forward thinkers are convinced that the Kyoto Protocol does not go far enough, those opposed use their energies to establish pacts that are more cosmetic than scientific. Whether technological change – the key element in the new US–Australia initiative – will lead to real and meaningful reductions in greenhouse gases remains to be seen.*

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*One has to question whether the international community will really be able to deal with the problems, not least following the results of the recent World Summit (see page 150), where the US lodged last-minute massive amendments to the Summit Declaration. (We shall print the relevant parts in the next issue.)*

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*Another problem, which can only be solved internationally, especially when taking into account the needs of over 200 million Africans, is that of over-fishing (see also pages 203 and 216). In order to meet food demands and to allow natural stocks to recover, an increase in fish farms is being seen as the quickest short-term method.*

*On the positive side we have to report that a century ago there were only 50 elephants in Kruger National Park. Today, there are 14,000 in an area which is only able to sustain 7,000 of them. To permit sustainable hunting would give financial income and food.*

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*Certain sounds have been coming from the Council of IUCN over the question of whether President Valli Moosa has accepted a position in an energy utility company (ESCOM), which would be a conflict of interest with his IUCN obligations. From New York we have received the information that he is also in the running to succeed Klaus Töpfer.*

13 October 2005

*- Wolfgang R. Steyer -*