

EDITORIAL

The final issue in the year leads to reflection on how far hoped-for goals have been achieved and which have fallen short of the desired results. For example, many saw the Millennium Review Summit, as “half-hearted”, others as a “qualified success” (document on page 264). We leave it to our readers to form their own opinions.

In this connection it is shocking to hear from the UN that three billion people are facing the prospect of living in slums if present trends continue.

However, there have been positive recent developments. The United Nations has been able to report that more landmines come out of the ground than are planted each year. In the relevant report, it described strides being made to expand and bolster its support to affected areas.

There have also been positive moves with regard to the international management of chemicals. As a result of the draft text, now amended, SAICM is expected to be finalised and adopted at the International Conference on Chemicals Management (Dubai, 4–6 February 2006). On the same topic, the EU’s decision on REACH is still before us.

The Montreal Meeting was not an unqualified success, but was certainly more than the participants had dared to hope in the final days.

But as we all know, sometimes the question of success can merely be a combination of judgment and chance. As in the unfortunate case of the Greenpeace ship, which rammed a protected coral reef while patrolling the area against unlawful interference!

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The negotiations of the United Nations Compensation Commission have been understandably confidential. But now that a specific part of the work has ended, we were able to convince one of the members of the environmental claims panel to explain how the project was approached and the work undertaken. We are grateful that Peter Sand has answered our request. The streamer text refers to the relevant UNCC decision as sensational (see pages 244 and 276).

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The 60th session of the General Assembly is still going on. The first insights into the meeting (see page 222) will interest everybody. The results will be covered in the next issue.

12 December 2005

- Wolfgang R. S. -