

# EDITORIAL

*As we prepare to send this issue to print, we happily note that awareness of the climate change issue has grown very strong. Even the US has offered to take the lead in climate change technology (although some would still claim this is taking “baby steps”). Compare this to the EU and many other countries who are taking “giant steps” – committing to serious reductions in carbon emissions and other intensive measures.*

*Discussions of climate change and the urgent need for action appear daily in every level of news media and intergovernmental conferences. This good news has a darker side: the climate change issue threatens to obscure developments of importance regarding other environmental concerns.*

*Accordingly, we are making efforts to ensure that decision-makers receive a balance of environmental information and priorities. This does not devalue the real importance of climate change action, as shown by our cover.*

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*Recently, the critical importance of compliance with environmental laws has taken centre stage. On one hand, to prevent the creation of “pollution havens” the EU is considering a Directive to treat “serious environmental violations” as crimes, and setting minimum sanctions across all 25 countries. By contrast, reports from a watchdog organisation in the US note that the costs for polluters are dropping, especially the likelihood of investigation, prosecution or penalty. Similar rumours are circulating about other countries that strongly advocate increasing globalised trade.*

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*You may have heard that budget discussions in the Desertification Convention’s COP have broken down. Surprisingly, groundbreaking decisions in the Montreal Protocol’s MOP regarding expedited national commitments for emission reduction were reached. Both of these topics will be reported in the next issue.*

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*Concerning the implementation of international environmental law, we refer you to a recent development concerning the Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review on page 425.*

25 September 2007

*- Wolfgang R. Steury -*