

# EDITORIAL

*It is unfortunate that the most noteworthy environmental development has been the unsatisfactory progress regarding the Law of the Sea Conference. There is little hope that the problems still outstanding will be resolved at the next round, which is scheduled for March in Geneva.*

*The marine area is also clouded by other difficult problems. The Consultative Parties to the Antarctic have nearly concluded negotiations for a treaty on the use and management of the living resources of the Southern Ocean around Antarctica. It is not possible to measure the impact which this will have on the environment, since the last draft has been declared secret by the Parties and has not yet been leaked from closed negotiations. We feel that the secrecy surrounding the most recent negotiations has not been warranted; interested members of the public will have an additional wait for conference results since differences among participants have resulted in a postponement of the meeting scheduled for January.*

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*Reference was made in a past editorial to the formation of "Green Parties". This movement had received surprisingly large recognition in Switzerland and France, and later in the Federal Republic of Germany. The established Parties in these countries feared that this movement could develop into a political force to be reckoned with. However, the results obtained in recent elections were so negative for the Greens that it is not worthwhile here to go into the whys and wherefores of such an outcome. Perhaps the most positive aspect was that established parties, particularly the liberals, were forced to reconsider the environmental aspects in their planned actions and to promise a more active environmental programme.*

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*In this issue we are presenting a special report on the IUCN General Assembly in Ashkhabad. As reported in our article, the atmosphere in the plenary session was smooth and businesslike. But behind the scenes, in corridors as well as in committee meetings, many strong disagreements and heated discussions took place, an aspect not covered in comments we have seen in other publications. We think the surprising element of the Conference was that a consensus was achieved, considering that such divergent opinions were expressed throughout the session.*

*It has to be noted that the concerted efforts of the hosts to make the Conference successful and the manner in which social and cultural programs were integrated with the working sessions was impressive. The resolution of thanks to the hosts was accepted with applause but was flawed by one incident – members of the Israeli delegation were refused extensions to their visas which would have enabled them to participate in excursions which followed the conference.*

*While not wishing to make any value judgment concerning the political regimes in North and South Korea, we feel that it should have been possible for the hosts to guarantee the personal safety of each guest to whom they had granted a visa. Although everything went well at official functions, the South Korean delegation was subjected to harassment –*

*Environmental Policy and Law, 4 (1978)*

*once at the hotel where they were staying and again at the airport in Moscow where they were forced to take refuge from North Koreans in the diplomatic vehicle of another delegation – and where the diplomatic status of the car was not respected.*

*Also of interest are the developments within the ECE Senior Advisers regarding a high level meeting, covered in an earlier issue as the follow-up to the "Breshnev Proposal". As reported in this issue, transfrontier air pollution and non-waste technology have been placed on the agenda. There are still discussions concerning transfrontier water pollution, flora, fauna, habitat and toxic wastes. The socialist countries favour inclusion of such topics, while others feel that the time is too short to suitably prepare these items for the high level meeting scheduled for next autumn. Whereas all of these topics concern environmental policy, one also is of special interest from the legal point of view, namely, the Draft Convention on Transfrontier Air Pollution presented by the Nordic States. The Nordic countries strongly favour this proposal, even in the event that sufficient data should not be available. Other countries, as expressed by France, are prepared to discuss the text of a treaty only if sufficient information is available. The importance which the Nordic countries attach to this issue was demonstrated by the fact that the Norwegian Minister of the Environment, Mrs. Brundtland (see interview in Environmental Policy & L, 3 (1977) Nr. 1, p. 40) personally addressed the meeting.*

*Many ECE delegates felt as if they could have been discussing arms limitation agreements because of the issues which arose; this was particularly the case since there was a general awareness that some nations would be reluctant to allow independent monitoring in order to verify data submitted by them.*

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*In several issues, we have voiced a concern regarding the development of wildlife conservation in Kenya. As the former vice-president assumes the presidency, we have to again recognize Kenyatta's environmental achievements, especially considering the fact that members of his own family engaged in activities during recent years which weakened his efforts. We trust President D. T. Arap Moi will not only continue Kenyatta's policy but that he will also take whatever additional measures are necessary, as indicated by his Statement at the Third International Parliamentary Conference on the Environment. "...it is we, parliamentarians, who can and must come forward to ensure that appropriate laws are enacted and funds made available for carrying out these vital (environmental) tasks..."*

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*This issue concludes the fourth year of the journal. Referring to the index, our readers will appreciate the wide scope of the issues dealt with and will realize that we have fulfilled our pledge to be flexible with respect to our coverage. We would only like to repeat our desire to receive more comments and criticism in order to assure that the journal meets reader needs.*