

# EDITORIAL

*The result of the Paris Climate Summit will already be known by the time that you receive this issue. Prior to the conference, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon published a statement directed to the 150 world leaders who were expected to attend, noting that a political moment like this may not come again. Numerous observations in the media express a definite lack of optimism, doubting that any agreement that may come out of the meeting will even limit the increase of global temperatures to no more than 2 degrees Celsius, as was agreed in 2010 in Cancún. There is still a small window of time available, in which we can cut emissions sharply and immediately, thereby avoiding further ecological instability. We urge that, regardless of the form of the Paris outcome document, States recognise that they have enough scientific evidence and a common interest to act together and confront the fact that dealing with climate change demands new understandings of humanity's role within nature.*

\*\*\*

*As reported at p. 238, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted on 25 September 2015 at the opening of the organisation's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary session. Referred to by some observers as the "17 Steps Toward a Better World", the SDGs are a universally accepted guide to right the "environment-development ship" within the next 15 years. The new goals provide an historic opportunity to place law and policy making for the environment at the heart of implementation of the international community's ambitious objectives. Experts in environmental law and policy are uniquely qualified to demonstrate to the world how efficient and effective implementation can be achieved across States and institutions. Therefore, everyone active in the field should collaborate in common efforts to take ownership of the UN's 2030 Agenda. We must now maximise our contributions across disciplines and invest our resources wisely to realise the goals together.*

\*\*\*

*We are sorry to hear that former Ambassador and President of the UN General Assembly, John Ashe, is facing tax fraud charges linked to an alleged bribery scheme to try and build a UN conference centre in Macau. The UN Secretary-General has announced a number of steps to address issues raised in a US federal court complaint, including a request for an audit by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the establishment of an internal Task Force to review financing and staffing arrangements for the Office, and how to enhance transparency and accountability.*

\*\*\*

*As 2015 comes to a close, the sad news that Maurice Strong passed away was announced today. We started many international initiatives together at the Stockholm Conference and will duly honour his contribution to the field of environmental law, policy and sustainable development in our next issue.*

27 November 2015

*- Wolfgang R. Breyer -*