

EDITORIAL

As promised in our last editorial this issue includes three memorial tributes to pioneers of environmental policy, who, coincidentally, were also personal friends. As sad as these events were when they occurred, our world is better because these people lived and we owe it to them to carry on.

One of the most remarkable developments in the area of environment policy has been the broad international support given to the concept of sustainable development, including the establishment of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aim to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. Numerous articles in this issue address various aspects of sustainable development.

After the Paris Climate Agreement, we have also seen equally remarkable developments in the area of climate change. Demonstrating rare harmony on this global issue, President Barak Obama and President Xi Jinping of China formally made public statements of their commitments to move their respective countries – two of the world's largest economies – to ratify the Agreement.

Pledging to work together, the leaders of the US and China, two of the biggest emitters of carbon pollution, seek to offer a strong example for other nations – an example that will be all the more meaningful when formal ratifications are actually completed and submitted to the UN. Early enactment of the Paris agreement will require ratification from 55 countries, representing 55 percent of global CO₂ emissions. As of this date, 24 parties have already ratified, representing 39 percent of global omissions. This suggests that, assuming the US and China do in fact ratify, that the world would be very close to the ultimate 55/55 goal, should the European Union ratify.

A damper could come from the UK. After the Brexit vote, it is not clear whether the UK will uphold its promise to ratify the Agreement. In that event, it may be up to Germany to lead other EU nations to ratification.

Everyone hopes the treaty will go into effect by the end of the year.

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- Wolfgang R. S. -