

EDITORIAL

We reported in the second issue this year of the progress regarding the draft Charter for Nature. Since then, the Executive-Director of UNEP, on behalf of the UN Secretary General, has sent a letter to Member States, thanking all those governments which had already communicated their views on the draft Charter and soliciting the views of those governments which had not yet done so. By 31st August 1982, replies had been received from an additional 15 Member States.

We are now glad to report that consultations are at present taking place, and the revised version of the Charter (see Vol. 2 1982, page 62), is scheduled to be submitted to the UN General Assembly for plenary decision next week.

The UN Conference on the Law of the Sea will meet in Montego Bay in Jamaica from 6-10 December 1982, to sign the Convention (see also article on page 108). The USSR has stated that it will become a signatory, the USA that it will not. The European Commission recommended on 13th October that the EC and its 10 Member States sign the Convention. In its statement, the Commission welcomed clauses on fishing rights and the recognition of a 200 mile zone. But it said provisions on exploration and exploitation of the seabed should be clarified before the Convention is ratified. It now remains to be seen which Member States will individually add their signature.

A report on the World National Parks Congress, now taking place in Bali, is planned for a coming issue of the journal. At the beginning of the Conference, draft articles of an international agreement on tropical timber, prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat, were discussed by Members of the IUCN Committee on Environmental Policy, Law and Administration (CEPLA), and later in a public meeting. This proposed agreement — submitted by the government of Japan, which is at the same time the principal importer (over 50%) of such timber — is completely contradictory to everything so far undertaken for the protection of forests. CEPLA submitted a statement on this agreement to the Parks Conference, spotlighting some features of the draft: it gives only lip service to conservation — but gives primary emphasis to increasing markets, to utilization of more species, developing more manufacturing facilities, improving marketing intelligence and economics. Reforestation is oriented toward simplified ecosystems and it pre-empts the opportunity for a conservation oriented treaty. Participants are dominated by trade specialists.

It has been reported that one of the Bali resolutions will ask the producing and consuming countries to postpone action on the Agreement until adequate conservation measures are incorporated, or alternative legal structures developed for the same purpose.

19th October 1982