

EDITORIAL

The UNCTAD negotiating conference on a new agreement governing world trade in tropical timber will resume from 4 - 8 October. A new consolidated draft is before the delegates, the last round having brought no success.

The general feeling is that any future agreement should not deal exclusively with wood from tropical forests, but should cover all trade in timber. However, one thing should be clear : The treaty should remain a trade agreement. While it must promote logging from sustainably managed forest, it should not deal with all the provisions concerning forest management, as these will have to be thrashed out in a separate legal instrument, taking into account the non-binding Forest Principles agreed at UNCED (see Vol. 22, at page 269).

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Jacques Delors, the EC President, recently made a far-reaching statement for a new global forum, within the framework of the UN, which should also deal with questions of the environment. On the same occasion, he also called for environmental taxes on scarce natural resources to replace excessive labour costs.

As we feel that this is not something we can comment on before publishing the full text, we are trying to obtain this to print next time.

On the same subject, a recent OECD report published by the Environment Policy Committee, together with the Committee on Fiscal Affairs, says the environmental taxes should be "easily understood, implemented gradually, and monitored". The Committee understood the complexity of such a question in considering not only new taxes, such as those on polluting emissions and/or products, but by taking into consideration other already existing taxes which should also take environmental factors into account.

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As this is the last issue of 1993 we would like to thank our readers - and especially our subscribers - for their cooperation and support during the past year. You will all notice that not only has the issue arrived earlier than usual, but that you have also been given - thanks to the publisher - an additional 52 pages this year!



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P.S. : The European Parliamentarians Conference on "Building Global Human Security" took place in Bonn from 17-18 September. This theme has many facets and the Declaration adopted states, inter alia, that security and development are, and must, be based on economic progress which is environmentally sustainable and that global human security has to include the environment.

As the conference closed after the deadline for this issue, we can only print the Declaration now (see page 290) but will report on the meeting and its high-level participants next time.