

## First Meeting for Montevideo III

The “*First Meeting of the International Group of Experts to Develop Components of the Montevideo Programme III*,” met in Washington, DC, from 15– 18 January 2000.

By its decision 20/3, the UNEP Governing Council had requested the Executive Director “to undertake a process for the preparation of a new programme for the development and periodic review of environmental law, in consultation with Governments and relevant organisations.” Pursuant to that decision, the UNEP Secretariat convened the International Expert Group to prepare the components for such a Programme for the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – *i.e.*, Montevideo Programme III.

This international Group was conceived as regionally-balanced and consisting of experts from senior government and academic lawyers. All experts acted in their personal capacities. Equally important was the participation by observers, including competent agencies, convention secretariats, institutions and leading legal NGOs, which provided substantive input into the deliberations of the Group.

The Meeting elected Dr. Andronico Adede as its Chairperson, Prof. Durwood Zaelke and Prof. Dr. Hunter as Collective Rapporteur and designated Dr. Alexandre Timoshenko (UNEP) as Executive Secretary. It was noted that each consequent meeting shall elect its Chairperson and that the rotation of Chairperson may be an option.

The Meeting commenced with a round of general discussion, assessing the implementation of Montevideo I and II, reviewing the new environmental challenges and the needs for further development of international environmental law.

It was stressed that Montevideo III ought to focus particularly on both implementation of, and compliance by States with their international and national environmental

commitments and regimes. The Programme would need also to continue to promote the development of legal rules to address new environmental challenges, and part of the task of the Group would be to identify the appropriate balance between these two aspects. The development of new instruments would have to be selective, focussed and cost-effective, be in accordance with the overall UNEP mandate and be based on sound criteria regarding the need for and feasibility of such instruments.

Following the general discussion, the Group undertook a detailed review of the Background Paper for the Preparation of UNEP’s Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law for the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, prepared by the Secretariat.

The review took the form of a section-by-section discussion and provided valuable comments and suggestions. It was suggested that the Background Paper should serve as reference material through the process of preparation of the Montevideo Programme III, and that it be reorganised around individual components of the Montevideo Programme III to provide substantiation of relevant objectives, strategies, activities and actions.

The Group then proceeded with identification of possible components of the Montevideo III and a number of such components were suggested.

The Secretariat was requested to take the discussion at the Meeting and the suggestions made as guidance in preparing a first outline of the Components of the Montevideo Programme III and in reviewing the Background Paper, for consideration at the second meeting of the group. It was agreed that any additional comments received by the Rapporteur from the experts by 1 February 2000 would be taken into account in revising the paper.

The Group decided to hold its Second Meeting in Washington, D.C., from 8–11 April 2000. □