

EDITORIAL

Many things have changed worldwide since our last journal; and although we deal only with a specific area, we have problems in prioritising with respect to the space available each time. So in addition to what is covered in this large issue, I feel obliged to mention the following:

- In a letter sent to Hans Blix following his period as Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, the UN Secretary-General expressed his “profound gratitude and admiration” for the way he had handled his job. Kofi Annan spoke, among other things, of Hans Blix’s “steadfast integrity, objectivity and sound judgment.” There can be no dispute on these points. I told Hans we hoped, that as a member of our Editorial Board, he would now have more time for us!*
- The press has reported that, “Bush is seeking a profile as an environmental politician.” We cannot judge if his recent image-building tour of several US states was a help in this endeavour, but we do want to announce his nomination of Mike Leavitt as the next Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (i.e., “Environment Minister”). The nomination was welcomed by industry and Republicans, but we have heard that the opposition will use the Senate confirmation hearings for a reckoning with the environment policy of the Bush administration.*
- The UN Economic and Social Council has rethought its development policy. In addition to the aid aspect, more emphasis is being given to trade preferences for the developing countries and to a gradual phasing out of the export subsidies from developed countries for their agricultural products. A draft ministerial declaration will be on the agenda of the WTO meeting in Cancun. We will report in the next issue.*
- The UN Secretary-General has published a very critical “Human Development Report” this year. He criticised sharply the so-called “Washington Consensus” on which the stabilisation and development programmes of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are based. The report also states that at the present tempo, the Millennium Goals are unattainable.*
- The decision of the European Parliament to ensure greater compliance with Community legislation through recourse, where necessary, to criminal law, has instigated a lot of discussion. The Parliament already passed a resolution in 2001 on “the legal bases and compliance with Community law”, which expressly refers to the protection of the environment through criminal law, as well as the introduction of sanctions, including criminal sanctions, for serious pollution offences, and which deals with the problems raised by such action. This was adopted on 3 September 2003.*

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These points speak for themselves and require no further commentary.

11 September 2003

- Wolfgang B. S. -