

EDITORIAL

World Environment Day 2012 will no longer fall during UNCSD (Rio+20), as the Conference has now been rescheduled to take place from 20–22 June in Rio de Janeiro. The Rationale provided for the change of dates is to “ensure opportunity for participation at the highest possible level” coinciding with the next G-20 Summit in Mexico from 18–19 June and to avoid overlap with commitments of Commonwealth Members to the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. In this connection, official preparatory meetings will be reshuffled, as will related conferences to be convened prior to and directly after Rio+20.

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Inputs and contributions to the preparatory process were due in writing to the Conference Secretariat by 1 November and will now be included in the compilation text to be presented to Member States and other stakeholders for their comments and further guidance at the next Intersessional Meeting. Although it would be very valuable to have a focused overview of the law and policy-related proposals, this may be next to impossible, as there are currently 670 submissions available for viewing on the Conference website. With 196 days remaining until the Conference, it cannot yet be foreseen how many of these will actually end up on the agenda.

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I, as well as many others accustomed to the challenges inherent in such conferences, remain surprised that there were only three days allotted for Rio+20, especially considering that Stockholm '72 and Rio '92 each transpired over 11 days. I have the feeling that the Conference in June will only just be able to hammer through what was already decided in the preparatory process. Once all the ceremonial events are concluded, how is the information going to be digested in the remaining time? Will this new approach work and will it all be worth it?

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We are very happy to publish the views of Sha Zukang, Secretary-General of UNCSD (Rio+20), as the first article in this issue. I warmly greet his optimism in light of the challenges and wish him all the best as the pace now quickens in 2012.

6 December 2011

- Wang Binyu -