

# EDITORIAL

We would like to highlight the words of two leaders who have been guiding the processes that have produced two pivotal UN achievements in recent months:

- 1) After the General Assembly passed its first-ever resolution focused solely on wildlife trafficking (see p. 174), UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner released this statement:

*This General Assembly resolution is an historic step forward, and one I believe will spark the firm and concerted international action needed to combat poaching and those who profit from it...In calling for wildlife crime to be treated as a serious crime, both nationally and across borders, the resolution sends a clear signal to organized criminal networks involved in this illicit trafficking that their time will soon be up...In particular, I hope this resolution will help curb the rampant poaching of elephants and rhinos, whose slaughter threatens not only the health of species, but also local ecosystems, communities and livelihoods.*

- 2) UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, addressing the plenary of the General Assembly on 1 September, applauded delegates' decision to transmit the draft resolution "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" to the upcoming Summit:

*Today is the start of a new era.... For 15 years, our pursuit of development has been inspired by eight Millennium Development Goals that captured our ambition to eradicate extreme poverty and appalling social ills....*

*We are ready to hand over [Agenda 2030] to world leaders for endorsement at the Summit later this month. [This agenda] aims high. It puts people at the centre of development... [and] marks a paradigm shift. It completes the unfinished business of the MDGs, lifts the level of ambition and tackles emerging issues and challenges. It recognizes the close interdependence of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It breaks new ground in the way it links peace and security to sustainable development, highlighting the centrality of the rule of law, accountable institutions and access to justice....*

*The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an agreement of which you can be proud.*

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The latest round of negotiations to prepare a primary draft text for the Paris Climate Summit was held from 31 August to 4 September in Bonn, Germany. The first comprehensive draft, of what many hope will be a universal climate change agreement, is being drawn up by the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action, under the co-chairmanship of Ahmed Djoghlaif (Algeria) and Daniel Reifsnyder (USA), which is tasked with delineating clear options and ways forward on all elements of the agreement and the decisions necessary to operationalise it from 2020 onwards. Starting the meeting with a 76-page working draft, the Co-chairs divided the process into three "baskets": one in which elements of the agreement will be legally binding and require ratification; a second where Parties will agree on the details that are not legally binding, but provide directions on implementation; and a third where elements require further negotiation to decide on their inclusion or place within the text.

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As noted above, the UN has planned a scheduling "coup" for the Agenda 2030 Summit. Instead of the traditional practice of heads of State arriving at the end of negotiations, the event is set to occur before the commencement of the Annual UNGA session, with the goal of giving the final process additional strength and momentum. The intention is to overcome what many expect could otherwise be a mediocre reaction to the decision.

11 September 2015

*- Wolfgang R. Steiner -*