

EDITORIAL

The Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, adopted in Montreal on 16 September, has met with a mixed reaction.

Some of the participants left the Conference in a euphoric "we've saved the world" mood, while others found that even this agreement was better than no agreement at all. The latter felt that the achievements were too weak so that any improvement — i.e., the slowing-down of ozone depletion — would take too long, making such an agreement worthless.

When questioned recently, Mostafa Tolba, UNEP's Executive Director, said that he found the Montreal agreement to be historic for three reasons. Firstly, it is the first really global agreement concerning the environment; secondly, it is the first such agreement that is pre-emptive, and thirdly, it sets a precedent for similar agreements to control other hazards. So even for these reasons alone, the Protocol could be seen as a complete success. The Protocol, and an accompanying article, is scheduled for the next issue of the journal.

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In the past, the World Bank's policy with regard to development projects has been the subject of much criticism. Either as a result of this pressure or as a follow-on to the personnel changes now taking place at the Bank, it has been decided to set up a department of the environment. The Bank intends to give environmental issues top priority, and has approached UNEP for advice and guidance in this task. Senior members of the Bank will be going to Nairobi to talk to the experts in their various fields and to see UNEP actually "at work" and a continuing dialogue between the two organizations has been promised. This sounds like good news for both the developing countries and the environment.

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We have always given a lot of coverage to UN activities in the field of the environment since the greater part of its policy decisions are unknown to most people. In this issue we have brought little information on this sphere as the General Assembly is still in progress and the Brundtland report, the Perspective and the relevant resolutions (see last issue at pages 159, 160 and 162), are on the G.A.'s agenda for to-day's date. We also hope to bring Dr. Tolba's opinion on events there, as he will be seeing the Editors at the beginning of November.

In this issue most attention has been given to progress in other international fora and at the national level. The recommendations and resolutions adopted by the Third Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention and the Sixth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Washington Convention (CITES) are printed on pages 201 and 204 respectively.

With regard to progress at the regional level, the Environment Ministers of the Council of Europe Member States recently agreed to draw up a European Conservation Strategy to step up environmental protection in the Organizations's 21 Member States. Such a Strategy should be based on prevention rather than cure as the Ministers agreed that longer-term preventive action is more cost-effective. They also advocated that the "polluter-pays" principle should be fully applied and whenever possible extended to all forms of environmental damage. The Conference also recommended a series of detailed guidelines for use by policy-makers in the management of rural areas with particular reference to the protection of the natural heritage, agricultural and forestry policies, research, tourism, energy, transport and housing, etc.

19 October 1987

