

EDITORIAL

The impression is that international ecological issues seem to be spilling over more and more into areas not traditionally thought of as being environmental concerns - from trade to foreign policy. However, these issues have already been there, but have not been dealt with adequately in all areas. Now that the Commission on Sustainable Development has been established (see page 58), everyone is curious to see how this will develop and work in conjunction with the long-established UNEP, whose Governing Council will meet in May with a new Executive Director. The first substantive meeting of the CSD will follow on immediately after this. One hears that Elizabeth Dowdeswell, UNEP's Executive Director and Nitin Desai (see page 59), have already made some arrangements, but these have not yet been aired - understandably. The Governments in the GC will be interested to see all the changes taking place in Nairobi: They have already noticed that even the GC papers look different!

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The last expert meeting in preparation for the UN/ECE "Environment for Europe" has just ended and the report of the Informal Group of Legal Experts is now ready (see page 112). The Lucerne meeting will be particularly interesting, as all the States in economic transition will be represented there. We shall report on the Ministers' discussions in the next issue.

We think, too, that there is a good chance that UNCTAD will replace the ITTA (see page 63 re the new drafts) with something more acceptable. As this will be an UNCTAD agreement it should stay firmly within the trade area. It was the first commodity agreement concerning things taken from the wild. As this in future can only be realised within the concept of sustainability, a new condition of taking, the task will not be as easy one, but must be solved. A report is also planned on this meeting.

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Earlier this month, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted the Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Resulting from Activities Dangerous to the Environment - the first international agreement to set out the general principle of civil liability for all environmental damage, except damage resulting from the transport of dangerous products and nuclear accidents. The Convention will be opened for signature by countries on 21 June in Lugano, during the informal meeting of the European Ministers of Justice.

We shall not print the final text, as this will be published in our series "Multilateral Treaties". Indeed, this publication received much recognition in the preparatory process for Lucerne as being a source for States on multilateral treaties in the field of international legal instruments.

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