

# EDITORIAL

*This is the last issue of 1996, and we have not been able to cover everything we had hoped. So much happened too close to the publication deadline: Not only the investiture of the judges to the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea in Hamburg, with the election of Thomas Mensah (Ghana) as President and Rüdiger Wolfrum (Germany) as his deputy but also the World Conservation Congress of the IUCN (new Statutes, regulations and rules of procedure, 127 motions, many covering several pages).*

*The former we shall certainly cover in the next issue, but we cannot predict when all the decisions taken by IUCN in Montreal will be in their final form. At this stage we can announce that Yolanda Kakabadse (Ecuador) was elected President, in a very close vote with Parvez Hassan (Pakistan), one of our Board of Advisors. We are proud that after six years leading the Law Commission he was a well-respected candidate who, after the finalisation of his immense work as Chairman of the Review Committee for the Statutes was given two standing ovations by the Congress, attended by more than 2500 people.*

*Nicholas Robinson (USA), running against P.N. Bhagwati (the well-known former Indian Supreme Court judge), was elected as Chairman of the IUCN Environmental Law Committee. Already as Deputy Chairman he delivered, but now he has to deliver twofold!*

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*We read recently with interest two criticisms:*

*The first, in the "Financial Times", states that the World Bank has admitted to weaknesses on the environment and agreed that its methods for screening projects for environmental damage needed improvement. (An internal memorandum states that environmental assessments carried out by States seeking World Bank finance are often drawn up too late to influence projects.) However, it was agreed that Bank loans were already playing an important role in helping countries build up the expertise and administrative machinery they needed to incorporate successfully environmental concerns into their economic decision-making.*

*The second, in the highly-regarded, non-sensational London "Independent", under the headline "Fat Cat Leaders Condemned by Founders" says that the report from the founders claims that "Greenpeace's leaders are paid too much, have lost their focus and must become more democratic". They complain about falling membership and a loss of "inspirational initiative".*

*We have not yet seen the "devastating" report (we have requested a copy), so will return to this topic at a later stage.*

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*The General Council of the WTO has now finalised its recommendations to the Singapore meeting of trade ministers in December. One of the main areas of disagreement has been the relationship between world trade rules and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) which contain trade measures. Environmental groups had urged explicit recognition of the legitimacy of these measures by the WTO but according to the restricted draft report we have, the Committee on Trade and Environment has rejected this plea and the WTO has also not agreed any rule changes to accommodate measures in its dispute settlement procedures.*

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*We would like to take this opportunity to thank our subscribers for their continued support, and to wish all our readers a very successful 1997.*

*Wolfgang R. Steury -*

8 November 1996