

# EDITORIAL

*As the layout for this issue took place just one day after the close of the Sixth Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), it was not possible to include a report this time. This is scheduled for the next issue, together with a report on the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme. UNEP's Executive Director has already announced that, in future, the Governing Council will convene before the CSD, to enable proposals or decisions to be submitted to the Commission for its consideration.*

*You will see that the next issue will be a very comprehensive one, and in view of this, we had hoped to make this one a little thinner – unsuccessfully, as the material is pressing! But we hope that the second part of the year will be a little quieter.*

*There has been much discussion on how the CSD should be organised, and criticism has come from the G77 concerning its preparation. But now that UNEP appears to be on the road to improvement, perhaps the CSD could limit its tasks in several fields and concentrate more on a political dialogue. The outgoing chairman urged again and again, in particular during the High-Level Segment, to move away from prepared statements and to commence a true exchange of opinions. Some representatives reacted positively, but only some – not the majority. You will be able to see the statements and corresponding report in the next issue.*

*In all the discussions in the corridors, there was a feel-good factor with respect to UNEP and its new Executive Director, whose tireless and visible mobility when it is needed, is doing much to raise UNEP's profile. We are curious as to the results of the Special Session of the Governing Council and what Klaus Töpfer will present, already next month, to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan from the deliberations of the Environmental and Human Settlements Task Force.*

*The terms of reference of this Task Force include the review of existing structures and arrangements through which environment and environment-related activities are carried out within the United Nations, with particular reference to those departments, funds and programmes that report to the Secretary-General, while taking into account the relevant programmes and activities of the specialised agencies; and then prepare proposals for consideration, and subsequent submission to the General Assembly.*

*Much is expected from the Task Force, and we are hoping for imaginative and creative proposals.*

*- Wolfgang R. Steiner -*

7 May, 1998