

EDITORIAL

This year we are reporting earlier than usual on the annual session of the United Nations General Assembly (see page 2). We have done this on the basis of the reports and discussions in Committee and have not waited to include the final resolutions.

In Plenary, one point was of particular interest: the US administration has announced its readiness to accede to the Law of the Sea Convention (see also page 4). Even though we heard on the following morning, that some members of the Senate were less than pleased.

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The UN Secretary-General has appointed Joke Waller-Hunter as Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to succeed Michael Zammit Cutajar, who has retired. She was Head of the Environment Directorate at the OECD and before that Director of the UN Division for Sustainable Development. On her departure from New York, I told her that I was very sorry she was leaving but I was happy that she had taken the Paris post. She replied "exactly my thinking." I could now repeat this sentiment, particularly in view of the added advantage that she is now near to us in Bonn!

We report on page 14 on the Seventh Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC. You will see that there were mixed reactions to the results achieved, but a set of binding decisions relating to the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol were agreed.

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One of the many questions surrounding the collapse of the Enron Corporation, is the extent to which the company was able to influence the Bush administration's energy policy. Rumours have persisted that the Corporation, a major contributor to the Republican Party, influenced the energy plan, which eases environmental rules, opens public land to drilling and provides tax incentives to energy companies for exploration. Enron executives have acknowledged that they met five times last year with Vice-President Dick Cheney or members of his staff about energy. However, the Secretary has said he will not reveal to Congress's General Accounting Office the contacts between his energy task force and Enron, as part of the investigation into any influence the Corporation had in formulating the administration's energy policy. He now expects to have to fight the release of such documents in Court. It will be interesting to follow developments in this policy.

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We mourn the loss of Elisabeth Mann-Borgese. We shall return to this in the next issue.

Walter B. Stuey -

14 February 2002