

EDITORIAL

Most press coverage of the World Summit on Sustainable Development has dwelt on the huge size of the Summit and what is considered to be meagre results. But the fact is that Johannesburg did bring a number of positive developments, even if not to the extent that the optimists had hoped for. We report on page 190.

It is important to bear in mind that if 190 individuals are gathered together anywhere it is not easy to reach a common position. If the 190 are sovereign States, then the task of agreeing on implementing requirements is immensely difficult.

Fortunately, more and more politicians are now aware that a State's social, economic and environmental aspects cannot be separated from one another. Moreover, the national and local problems of the States are so different that it will always be an uphill task to achieve anything in common. However, if the plan agreed in Johannesburg can be realised, then sustainable development will advance, poverty will decrease and the consequences for the environment will be very different.

Concerning the size of the gathering, this has to be seen in perspective. It is said that about 65,000 people had come to Johannesburg for the Meeting. More than 4000 of these were press and journalists. Volunteers, security staff and participant support groups also made up a large group. About half of the remaining number were advisers and members of Parliaments associated with delegations. In addition, there were nearly 800 international intergovernmental representatives, including the EU and the international secretariats of conventions. About half of the remaining number were representatives and deputy representatives of governments. In fact, those permanently active in the actual decision-making process accounted for about 1100 of the original 65,000!

Details of how the negotiations were carried out and in addition, the so-called "Vienna Process" adopted to streamline proceedings in the hands of authorised speakers, are given in the report.

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The "Johannesburg Principles on the Role of Law and Sustainable Development" were adopted just before the Summit at the Global Judges Symposium. As we consider these to be so important, we have decided to print them now (see page 236) rather than wait for the accompanying article, scheduled for publication in our next issue.

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