

EDITORIAL

Against the background of all the new developments at the UN level, this issue includes several reports dealing with the concept of sustainable development. The next issue – already at the layout stage – will bring the first report on discussions in the UN General Assembly concerning those topics of most interest to us.

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With the African Kofi Annan, we have had for two periods a UN Secretary-General with an excellent understanding of the challenges facing the environment and sustainable development. We will always reflect with gratitude on this period.

Ted Turner, who donated \$1 billion to UN causes and to raise additional funds through partnership efforts, said that one of the great legacies of Kofi Annan's tenure at the UN had also been his embrace of the private sector and civil society – his efforts to transform the United Nations into a partnership organisation.

We wish the UN Secretary-General-elect Ban Ki-moon (South Korea) every success in his difficult task. Our hope is that he will continue in the footsteps of his predecessor in confronting the unprecedented problems facing the planet.

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From the environmental community, we have heard positive echoes on the outcome of the recent mid-term US elections. However, we hope that these are accurate, especially regarding the US position e.g. on the Law of the Sea and the Kyoto Protocol, because we have also heard voices urging us not to expect too much too soon.

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There are several recent news items which will surely have an effect on environmental policy, and probably on lawmaking too:

– The latest climate data with regard to the Alpine glaciers paints a horrendous picture. The climate in the Alps is now predicted to increase by up to 4° by the end of this century, as opposed to the world-wide projection of 2.5°–3.5°. Goodbye glaciers?

– A new OECD report states that farm support is undermining the sustainable use of water.

– Scientists have recommended installing an artificial sun-screen in the atmosphere to reduce global warming. They state that billions of tiny disks (sunglasses) placed between the Earth and the sun could reduce the latter's intensity by 2 per cent. Life through shades?

– The US Environment Protection Agency has proposed several short-term greenhouse gas reduction initiatives, including a clean energy–environment state partnership, with a combined heat and power (CHP) partnership and methane voluntary programmes. They hope that the emission reductions achieved through these initiatives will help the US achieve its intensity goal.

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The Proceedings of the 2nd International Elizabeth Haub Symposium 2006 will be printed in a special 2007 issue of the Journal.

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Wolfgang R. Steury