

EDITORIAL

This issue begins with an overview of the current and pending deliberations of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly, which will be mostly concluded before the New Year. The outcome of discussions on the numerous environmental matters will be featured in the next issue.

President of the session, Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser, is a veteran diplomat from Qatar and we look forward to him employing his expertise on sustainable development and South-South cooperation. He will surely benefit from the “PGA [President of the UN General Assembly] Handbook” prepared by his predecessor Joseph Deiss of Switzerland.

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Since the publication of our last issue, there have been a number of environment-related leadership changes within the UN family:

- José Graziano da Silva (Brazil) is the new Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO);*
- Koji Sekimizu (Japan) has been elected Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO);*
- Nikhil Seth (India) is the new Director for the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) and in this capacity will also serve as the Head of the Office of the Secretary-General of UNCSD (Rio+20); and*
- Shunji Yanai (Japan) recently assumed the position of President of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).*

We congratulate these new leaders and hope to report favourably on their successes in the future.

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As natural disasters become more numerous and intense, exacting greater impacts, more attention must be given to the victims and growing number of refugees. Thus, we welcome the UN Security Council recently considering the impact of climate change related to the “Maintenance of international peace and security” and the President’s Statement expressing the Council’s “concern that possible adverse effects of climate change may, in the long run, aggravate certain existing threats”.

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Recently in Germany, quite a discussion arose over whether it was appropriate to invite Pope Benedict XVI to speak before the Federal Parliament. Many people have criticised the fact that he has not addressed the necessary reforms within the Church, but positively recognised his entire paragraph appealing for better treatment of the environment as an ethical obligation.

5 October 2011

- Wolfgang R. Steyer -