

# EDITORIAL

*While completing this issue, we were informed that three pioneers in the field of national and international environmental policy have passed away:*

*James "Jim" MacNeill left us on 5 March. He developed Canada's basic environmental positions in the early 1970s, served as Director of Environment for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and was Secretary General of the World Commission on Environment and Development (the "Brundtland Commission"). As chief architect and lead author of the world-acclaimed report Our Common Future, Jim was a firm believer that the principles of environmental law and policy should be at the heart of its ground-breaking concepts, ideas and recommendations.*

*We lost Mostafa Tolba, the second Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), on 28 March. Mostafa led the Egyptian delegation to the Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972. For nearly 20 years at UNEP, he took a practical approach toward emphasising science-based decision making, consensus in multilateral environmental agreements, and strong financial support for proper implementation. He was architect of the Montreal Protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The Convention on Biological Diversity would not exist today if he had not recognised the importance of entire ecosystems and promoted the formative draft texts prepared by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources.*

*Hans-Dietrich Genscher, former German Federal Minister, departed on 1 April. As Minister for the Interior, he was Germany's first environment minister and architect of the first "Environment Programme of the Federal Government" in 1971. Well-recognised for his engagement as Foreign Minister to achieve the reunification of Germany, he was also a strong advocate that environmental conservation is a State responsibility.*

*We will never forget our close contact with each of them, often accompanied by wise advice and successful initiatives. The next issue will include profiles of these remarkable people and document their many valuable contributions to the protection of the environment.*

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*The United Nations is currently contemplating necessary leadership changes:*

*A new Secretary-General (SG) has to be appointed to succeed Ban Ki-moon as of 1 January 2017. Seven candidates have been nominated thus far, of which six are from Eastern European States. To date, there has not been a SG from that region. In addition, it is widely expected that the next leader of the UN will be female. As explained in EPL 46(1), UNGA President Mogens Lykketoft seeks to increase the transparency of the process by inviting all nominated candidates to informal dialogues with Member States. The final selection of the candidate to be proposed to the UNGA, however, remains in the hands of the five permanent members of the Security Council.*

*After leading UNEP through two regular terms, and an additional two years, Achim Steiner's mandate as Executive Director (ED) ends in June 2016. UNEA-2 in May in Nairobi will be the last governing body session that he will attend in that capacity. Eight candidates are known to have applied to succeed him. EPL will follow this process and report on developments.*

*We compliment SG Ban and ED Steiner on their achievements and wish them well in their future endeavours. The UNGA's work to appoint successors to these offices is very important. Member States must carefully consider not only each candidate's professional qualifications, but also their experience and potential to embrace and work across the system. We trust that UN Member States, aware of the growing ecological crisis and interrelationship with many pressing social and economic issues, understand the gravity of the decision before them. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Paris Climate Agreement are but some of the most recent rallying points for States to further demonstrate that they can overcome political divisions sometimes separating them and make wise decisions for the sake of the future that give proper weight to preserving the UN's leadership role in the conservation and sustainable use of the environment.*

4 April 2016

*- Wolfgang B. Steiner -*