

EDITORIAL

*It has been common at the beginning of this decade for a number of studies to be issued on a variety of subjects predicting developments up to the year 2000. One such study, *The Global 2000 Report*, commissioned by President Carter on the state of the world by the year 2000, is an extensive look at the interrelated problems of population, the uses of natural resources, the state of the environment and economic development. The authors submit that the report should be seen as a companion document to the *World Conservation Strategy*, which is predicated on the belief that conservation and development must be mutually supportive (see *Environmental Policy & Law* 6 (2) 1980, pp. 77 and 102).*

The report concluded that, despite undoubted technological progress, life for most people on the globe will be more difficult than it is now. If present trends continue, the world in the year 2000 should be even more densely populated, more polluted and ecologically more unsound than the present world in which we live.

What can decision makers do to modify such a future? The authors recommend heightened international concern, such as that reflected in the "mega-conferences" convened by the United Nations in the last decade ranging from the Stockholm Conference on the Environment in 1972 to the conference on New and Renewable Sources of Energy scheduled for 1981.

Against the background of this report, one would have expected these issues to have played a larger role in the US election campaign. On the contrary, it has even been possible to contest the election on a platform containing anti-environment measures. If elected, Ronald Reagan has promised to abolish the Department of Energy, a creation of the Carter administration, and to cut what he terms government "interference" in environmental matters. This led Douglas Costle, EPA Administrator, to comment that Reagan as President would precipitate "a major retreat on environmental issues".

Another recent report deals with energy problems in the future. The internationally sponsored World Coal Study, compiled by experts from the 16 biggest coal producing and using countries, says that coal use must be tripled and steam coal exports increased at least tenfold, if the world is to solve its short-term energy problems and achieve a moderate economic growth.

Environmentalists have always been reluctant to return to coal. It has a bad reputation with regard to

health, safety and the environment. Coal's greatest threat is thought to be the "greenhouse effect" — due to increased carbon dioxide building up in the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels — which at the same time is aggravated by the reduction of natural forest cover in the tropics (this journal will report on the latter problem in the next issue). Regarding this "greenhouse effect", the World Coal Study notes that there are many uncertainties as to whether such changes do, in fact, occur. If this is accurate, then the verdict on increased coal use in the future should be held back until further proof of possible dangers exists.

At the World Energy Conference in September, delegates were unanimous in their opinion that the earth's manifold energy reserves should be used with the greatest possible diversity, and not on the "coal yesterday, oil and gas today and nuclear tomorrow" basis. This policy, along with the disastrous rise in the price of oil has led to economic chaos and the near ruin of many Third World countries. Addressing the conference, Federal German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt stated that for the same amount of oil, Germany paid DM 15 billion in 1973 and the bill for 1980 will be DM 65 billion. The Federal Republic, as one of the rich nations, can breach this gap at the moment; but those developing countries with no oil reserves, are in a situation where they cannot even afford the bare necessities, if minimum oil requirements are to be met. Uganda, for example, has to spend every penny of its foreign currency to finance its oil bill.

These problems also played a large role in the Environmental Law Meeting held in Addis Ababa in October. In consideration of these, delegates focussed on legal requirements for the sustained use of resources in Africa. A very valuable and constructive discussion was held under the able chairmanship of Paul Engo, Cameroon (who is also Committee I Chairman at the UN Conference on the Law of the Sea). The next issue will report on the recommendations of the meeting.

Also at the regional level, the ASEAN Workshop on Nature Conservation was held in September. Those countries subsequently requested IUCN and UNEP to assist in the simultaneous elaboration of an ASEAN action plan on nature conservation and an ASEAN convention on nature conservation (see also p. 135). This is a significant development, as the region presently lacks a conservation coordination framework.