

# EDITORIAL

*Major preparations on the basis of UN-General Assembly decisions marked the Session of a Special Character (SSC) of the UNEP Governing Council, held to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Stockholm Conference.*

*There were many good general statements, but the discussion on the conference report already showed the chief concern of many delegations to be how they would later be reflected in the conference proceedings rather than the task before them. A similar criticism is, unfortunately, also valid for members of the UN family, whose statements were more a summary of past and present activities, than an answer to the agenda points: future perspectives.*

*Already during the SSC, discussion arose on political matters having nothing directly to do with the agenda at all, but which supplied the basis for debate on bilateral difficulties between neighbouring countries in the field of shared natural resources. The most striking example of this was the exchange between Bangladesh and India. Although only the report stood for discussion at the time, the delegations continually reverted to points of substance as if the rules had ceased to exist, and the President showed amazing patience with this parallel "debate".*

*Additional experience shows there would appear in the future to be no reason for a vote under rule 44, on the competence of the Council. There will always be a majority who feel that the Council is competent for almost anything.*

*It was thanks to the many long hours of hard work carried out by the Committee of the Whole and the Drafting Committee, that the Conference finally produced two documents — Action on the Environment: Retrospect and Prospect, and the Nairobi Declaration (see page 000). Particular thanks are due to the two committee chairmen, Martin Holdgate (UK) and Lopez Portillo (Mexico) for their competence and*

*guidance. Both documents, inter alia, aim for the development of national, regional and international environmental law and its implementation.*

*This trend continued at the 10th Governing Council which, for the first time, really gave special emphasis to environmental law, following the impetus given by the Montevideo Conference. The covering resolution, endorsing the results of the conference, was sponsored by more than half of the Member States of the Governing Council.*

*It is not possible to analyze the development at this point; those closely concerned with environmental law should read the Nairobi report in conjunction with the Montevideo report in Environmental Policy and Law, 8 (1) (1982) page 2. Developments clearly demonstrate a new positive trend in UNEP for its future work in this field, and appreciation must be expressed to delegates of many Member States for their performance in reaching this goal.*

*We hope that the planned four governmental conferences on different subject areas of environmental law — a follow up to the now endorsed recommendations of Montevideo — will bring positive results. At the same time, the fact cannot be ignored that there is a very small number of governments — in particular, the United States — who have not been in favour of this development.*

*Insufficient space was available in this issue to report on the ceremony where, at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, in collaboration with the International Council of Environmental Law, Ambassador Magarinos de Mello received the Elizabeth Haub Prize. The jury, who made their decision prior to the UNEP sessions, honoured him as a prominent member of the team responsible for the Montevideo accomplishments. The outcome of the Nairobi meeting has confirmed the wisdom of this choice. □*