

The theme of the Symposium and the papers presented by over 250 participants, including 62 from foreign countries, covered a wide range of topics dealing with ecology and resource management in the tropics. Highlights of the programmes were seven plenary talks on various aspects ranging from ecosystem management to environmental education in the tropics; paper-reading and discussions as per the programme; panel discussions on aspects of ecodevelopment involving administrators, industrialists, and ecologists, who all participated in highlighting the national and international aspects involved in planning and development activities in the Third World; excursions to Sanchi and nearby forest and places of cultural importance; two cultural programmes presented by the Madhya Pradesh Art Academy; and a fête organized by the ladies' club of the MACT.

The Symposium also provided an opportunity to discuss the Man and the Biosphere Programme activities in tropical countries, whence delegates from over 15 tropical countries, besides those from U.S.S.R. and Afghanistan, also participated. The MAB meetings extended for two sessions and were well attended. This meeting gave an opportunity to the workers to discuss the methodology and the data from the various projects. The valedictory function was held in the afternoon on 10 October 1981.

It is expected that the proceedings of the Symposium will be published in the form of a book by the end of 1982. For this purpose a multinational editorial board has been constituted and the undesigned will be responsible for the publication of the proceedings, which will include important papers and plenary talks presented in the Symposium.

The Symposium was sponsored by UNESCO-MAB, the Department of Environment of the Madhya Pradesh Government, the University of Bhopal, and Maulana Azad College of Technology.

K. C. Misra, *Organizing Secretary*  
*Silver Jubilee Symposium of the*  
*International Society for Tropical Ecology*  
*c/o Department of Botany*  
*Banaras Hindu University*  
*Varanasi 221005*  
*India.*

FIFTEENTH TRIENNIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF IUCN,  
 HELD IN CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND,  
 DURING 13–23 OCTOBER 1981

The World Conservation Strategy in Action was the theme of IUCN's 15th triennial General Assembly which concluded its October 1981 session in New Zealand with the adoption of 29 resolutions aimed at promoting many aspects of world conservation. Forty-two action points were also developed and referred to the IUCN Council for further action. Over 400 delegates from 62 nations approved the Union's programme for the next three years.

The resolutions of the General Assembly reinforced the objectives of the World Conservation Strategy, and the Union's Secretariat was requested to monitor and evaluate actions that were to be taken in various parts of the world to further these objectives. Emphasis was

placed on appeals to development agencies to integrate conservation elements into their development plans. All governments were urged to incorporate environmental concerns into their national education programmes. The Union's commitment to support nations in elaborating policies, strategies, and plans, directed towards achieving sustainable development, was confirmed.

The General Assembly acknowledged the need for responsible national population policies, and encouraged the development of educational programmes in this area of endeavour. The role of traditional life-styles of local peoples in conservation and development was also recognized, and further research into their relationships with their environments was recommended.

The resolutions passed included calls for greater protection of the Antarctic, of tropical moist forests, and of mangrove ecosystems—also for increased emphasis on renewable energy resources, more research on genetic resources, and greater efforts to save endangered species such as many whales.

The Assembly urged all States to conclude and then ratify the proposed Convention on the Law of the Sea, and pledged itself to make IUCN expertise available to States and other bodies and organizations regarding the implementation of the proposed Convention. States which are not yet contracting parties to the Ramsar Convention on wetlands were called upon to become such as soon as possible—in particular in the Western Hemisphere, in the tropics, and in the case of any State whose accession is required to complete the network of Contracting Parties in the Western Palearctic region.

The Australian Government was urged to give greater protection to the Great Barrier Reef by declaring the whole of the Reef as a marine park.\* IUCN further urged the Australian Government to prohibit drilling for oil in the Great Barrier Reef region. In passing this resolution, IUCN congratulated the Government of Australia on the excellence of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park legislation, but expressed concern that, in the six years since the legislation was enacted, only 2.4% of the Reef region had so far been included within the marine park.

The Assembly called upon the Tasmanian Government to refrain from adopting any proposals to dam the Franklin and Gordon Rivers. IUCN noted that Southwest Tasmania is one of the last great temperate wilderness areas, and that it has been approved by the Tasmanian Government for nomination for the World Heritage List. The Federal Australian Government was called upon to protect the Southwest Tasmanian wilderness from further hydroelectric, forestry, or mineral, industry incursions—in order to establish in Tasmania a secure area of world significance in the preservation of wilderness reserves.

The delegates attending the Assembly encouraged States to set aside, permanently, representative examples of their free-flowing rivers or sections of such rivers from hydro-damming and other river engineering works—in order to balance those now permanently lost by modification, and to protect the diversity of ecological, recreational, scenic, and landscape, values that are only ensured by retaining the natural flow of rivers. The problem of environmental effects of acid rain, snow, and other de-

\*See Dr Warren Nicholls's note on 'The Great Barrier Reef and the Australian Heritage Commission', published on page 10 of this issue.—Ed.

position, was addressed, and support was urged for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution.

'In our quest for economic development, maintenance, and improvement of the quality of life, we must come to terms with the reality of resource-limitation and [that of] the carrying capacity of ecosystems', Dr Lee M. Talbot, IUCN's Director-General, said also: 'We must take into account the needs and aspirations of future generations'. This key message of the World Conservation Strategy can be coupled with another equally important one which was reaffirmed by the IUCN General Assembly—that conservation and development are essential to each other.

Raisa Scriabine  
Director of Public Affairs  
IUCN  
1196 Gland, Switzerland.

---

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON EMERGENT ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, HELD AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN  
DURING 26–27 NOVEMBER 1981

What light-years we seem removed from 'Stockholm 1972'—that occasion when environmentalists gathered from around the world for the UN Conference on the Human Environment. What high hopes were then raised, and what disillusionment has followed. True, 1972 saw only a dozen nations at most with an institutional agency for environmental matters, whereas there are now over 100 nations in that category. But many observers of the environmental scene believe that fewer than half of the scores of items on the Stockholm Action Plan have been adequately tackled; some would believe as few as one-fifth. And then there has been the establishment of UNEP; what can one say?\*

Although, of course, much was said and done by dedicated people in earlier decades, 1982 marks the tenth anniversary of the environmental movement's birth in institutionalized terms at the international level. It was therefore fitting that the Royal Academy of Sciences in Sweden should plan to commemorate the occasion with a special meeting in November—partly to look back and assess how far we have advanced, and why we have not advanced farther; and partly to look at new environmental issues that will presumably emerge during the next ten years. To prepare the way for this gathering of scientists and other experts, the Academy convened an International Seminar in November 1981, in order to identify goals and formulate strategies. Some 33 Swedish experts gathered around a table, together with about one dozen persons invited from overseas.

Although it was 'only' a preparatory and planning session, the Seminar turned out to be a substantive one. Several salient points emerged from the discussions. One was that, whereas in 1972 the developing nations felt that environmentalism was a marginal affair that conflicted with economic growth, in the early 1980s it is the developed nations that often believe environmentalism

must take a back seat until they can sort out problems of inflation, unemployment, and other economic ills (despite evidence that the said economic ills are due, in part at least, to over-use of our natural-resource base in the past, when we have been living off the capital rather than the interest of ecological life-support systems that underpin society's long-term welfare). Moreover, whereas in 1972 the developed nations were promoting environmentalism as a key ingredient of sustainable economic advancement, it is now developing nations that are often more 'sold' on that theme—hence their growing emphasis on renewable management of forests, water systems, soils, and other resource stocks.

Secondly, the Stockholm Conference made much play with the concept of 'Only One Earth', and the seamless web of the planetary set of ecosystems. But that was more of a rhetorical gesture than an operational reality in those far-back days. Spacecraft photos of the blue planet notwithstanding, environmentalism was perceived by far too many in the early 1970s as essentially a national affair: especially, pollution was mainly a problem within national frontiers, and we had yet to hear much of major transboundary 'spill-over effects' of pollution, let alone of acid precipitation as a continent-wide phenomenon.

In the early 1980s, by contrast, we now find ourselves confronting a generic set of challenges that are intrinsically international in Nature: not only acid rain, but pollution that encompasses entire seas, such as the Mediterranean and the Caribbean; major watershed conflicts that concern a series of countries; *plus* problems of toxic contaminants, etc. Certain problems are more than international, they are inherently supranational, if not global, in scope: significant instances are the stratospheric ozone shield and atmospheric carbon dioxide build-up.

During the 1970s, environmentalism made a good start: no less, and no more. Our environmental awareness must be greatly enhanced, if, as citizens of the global village, we are to come to grips with the much larger problems that lie ahead of us in the 1980s. All credit to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for undertaking a systematic analysis of what we must aim at, and how we get from here to there.

Norman Myers  
Consultant in Environment and Development  
P.O. Box 48197  
Nairobi  
Kenya.

---

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE 'UNITED ANIMAL NATIONS' (UAN), HELD IN THE CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE CONFERENCES, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND,  
DURING 26–27 NOVEMBER 1981

This was the 2nd General Assembly of the 'United Animal Nations' (UAN), and it had about 60 participants from different parts of the world. It was organized by the Fondation Franz Weber, Montreux, Switzerland, and the credit for its successful completion must go to Franz Weber, the Secretary-General, and Judith Weber, a Member of the Board.

Some of the subjects discussed in the working sessions were: A re-definition of Man's role in the universe, Ani-

---

\*At least that UNEP is now undertaking some very important things to the extent of its often fund-limited capacity, as indicated elsewhere in this issue.—Ed.