

several international organizations—particularly Professor Abdel Aziz El-Sayed, Director-General of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO). This arrangement constituted a forum of informal discussion for scientists from both sides of the development fence. The forum was extended and merged in the second, 'Plenary' week of considering the reports prepared by the working groups and the papers presented by their representative members. The Plenary modified the reports and approved a final version for each topic which it is hoped will serve as a guideline for decision-makers in developing countries when they plan for development without the drawbacks from which developed countries are suffering, while perhaps eliminating already-existing difficulties.

As was explained by the President of SCOPE, Professor Victor A. Kovda, the Symposium was held in Kenya because it is a country which is typical of the developing world, and many of the participants had an opportunity to see some of the Kenya environmental problems and how they are being tackled during a weekend excursion to the Rift Valley area.

The opening session of the plenary week was inaugurated on behalf of the Kenya government by the Minister of Natural Resources, who requested that the meeting should produce concrete and practical recommendations that could be readily implemented by government agencies which knew what to do and how to do it but did not have the vital financial support. Professor Mostafa Tolba, Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, welcomed the participants on behalf of UNEP. Professor Mohammed Kassas, Vice-President of SCOPE, pointed out the ability of SCOPE to muster the services of volunteering scientists from all over the globe.

To produce the final versions of reports on each topic was not an easy matter. Discussions reflected the uncertainty of the scientific community concerning what is right and what is wrong on certain matters such as river-basin development, industrial planning, and human population. It became apparent that still much thinking was needed to decide whether we should continue to build dams and if so how, whether we should allow pollution and to what extent, and whether population control was in the best interests of the developing world.

Some scientists from developing countries spoke on these vital issues quite independently of the writings of scientists from the developed world. This trend was much appreciated, and was really what the Symposium was organized for—namely, to allow 'third world' environmental scientists to think for themselves, quite free from the attitudes of the 'rich man's' environmental concepts and precepts, and to create a body and a system of thinking on environmental issues that will fit well with the conditions prevailing in the poor peoples' environment. This independent thinking needs to be developed further by setting priorities right, and by reconciling peoples' aspirations for a better quality of life with environmental considerations. Only 'third world' environmental scientists can do it for their own peoples. The knowledge of the developed world's scientists is indispensable, but it should be integrated with local philosophy and experience. Perhaps the Nairobi Symposium should be taken as only a precursor of further meetings to clarify those issues for which there was no consensus of opinion, and it happens that indecision fell precisely where the most promising development schemes lay.

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SAMIR I. GHABBOUR
Department of Natural Resources
Institute of African Research & Studies
University of Cairo
Giza, Egypt

INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON THE USE OF ECOLOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE AMERICAN HUMID TROPICS, HELD AT CARACAS, VENEZUELA, 20–22 FEBRUARY 1974

Tropical forests, provided they are properly used, can make important contributions to the long-term stability and well-being of tropical countries and their economies. Yet because they often appear to make only minor contributions to economic development in many countries, they are prime targets for human intervention that aims at transforming them or replacing them with other land-uses. However, experience to date in the carrying through of such development projects in tropical rain-forests has been disappointing, and such projects have often resulted merely in the destruction of the potential of these important renewable natural resources.

The formulation of the principles that would lead towards a better use of the rain-forests was covered in the publication 'Ecological Principles for Economic Development' by Raymond F. Dasmann, John P. Milton, & Peter H. Freeman, prepared for IUCN and the Conservation Foundation, Washington, D.C. (John Wiley & Sons, London, 1973). IUCN accordingly decided, as part of the extension of this initiative, to prepare guidelines for improving the development process in tropical forest areas of certain regions of the world based on ecological principles and taking into account conservation objectives.

The Caracas meeting was planned as part of this process. It brought together ecologists and planners along with specialists from appropriate disciplines and officers from Government agencies in Latin America dealing with agriculture, forestry, and land-use. The meeting took into account existing knowledge of tropical forest ecology, including the findings of a number of meetings and conferences that had been held on this topic in recent times.

The conclusions of the meeting are expressed in guidelines which are of particular interest to development planners and decision makers. They provide a planning tool summarizing, in easily understood language, the ecological imperatives that must be taken into account by the planner.

The meeting was convened by IUCN under the sponsorship of the United Nations Environment Programme and support was given from the Fund of UNEP. FAO, UNDP, the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, and the Organization of American States, co-sponsored the meeting. Support was given by the Swedish International Development Authority and WWF. The Instituto Venezolana de Investigaciones Cientificas provided facilities for the meeting at its hilly campus high above Caracas.

Field trips to outstanding National Park and virgin forest areas as well as to various development schemes in the scarcely-settled forested areas south of the Orinoco in Venezuela were arranged for participants following the meeting. English and Spanish were the working languages, and IUCN will publish the proceedings in both languages.

GERARDO BUDOWSKI, *Director-General*
I.U.C.N.
1110 Morges, Switzerland