



EDITORIAL

A sore point to many environmentalists is that the General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT) makes no reference to environmental goals in its Articles. The 'Greening' of Trade Policies promises to be one of the most complex and politically charged issues to be tackled in the post UNCED follow-up. Efforts are on to integrate environmental measures into rules and goals of International Trade. The issue is to strike a difficult balance between the drive for greater trade liberalisation with the urgent need to counter accelerating environmental degradation.

Although the Trade and Environment debate is moving simultaneously in many directions, at the heart of the debate are two core issues. First, what are the effects of Environmental Regulations on Trade Policy?. Here, issues revolve around compatibility of actions such as trade bans under CITES and GATT Articles which disallow trade bans. And secondly, what are the effects of Trade Liberalisation on the Environment?

GATT Articles are primarily with the Standards related to a Product which is traded and not with the Production Process from which the Product is made. Unless the Production Process is made 'green', GATT will continue to draw concern of environmentalists despite showing its 'Green Credentials' in form of Constitution of its Trade

and Environment Committees of Government Officials. It is hoped that the Committee will help GATT in formally adopting the Green Approach like 'Trumping' Clause of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) where priority is given to specified environmental accords - such as CITES, Montreal Protocol and Basel Convention - over the provisions of NAFTA.

It is universally agreed now that both Environmentalists and Business Advocates support the view that "hope for the future" lies in building more open, fair and accessible world markets, so as to enable lower consumption countries to compete fairly. In this situation it is but natural that the GATT Committee looks into the balance between Trade and Environment in a more enlarged fashion than the 3 Point Agenda before it. Necessary caution is to be taken to ensure that any move or proposal should not adversely affect the Trade and Environment of the Developing Countries at the same time provide necessary binding over the Developed Countries for compensating the Developing Countries for the environmental damages of transboundary nature caused by them.

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INDIA ASSUMES
CHAIRMANSHIP OF
SACEP CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE

As per Articles of Association of SACEP Mr J. S. Mukul, First Secretary (E&C) High Commission of India, Colombo assumed Chairmanship of the SACEP Consultative Committee for a period of one year.

Born on 22nd April 1957, Mr Mukul obtained his Bachelors Degree in Arts with History, Economics and Political Science. He did his Masters from University of Bangalore in Political Science with International Relations obtaining a Gold Medal.

Mr Mukul joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1981 and has served in important positions in Indian Missions in Damascus and Abu Dhabi. He was also Under Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs attached to the West Asia and North Africa Division from 1985 to 1988. He was posted to Sri Lanka in July 1992 and was Assistant High Commissioner for India in Kandy till August 1993 and thereafter as First Secretary, High Commission of India, Colombo.

He has been associated with work relating to multilateral organisations like SAARC, Colombo Plan and SACEP. He has been a Consultative Committee Member of SACEP since August 1993.

Mr Mukul is married and has one daughter.

COUNTRY NEWS

BANGLADESH

WASTE WATER TREATMENT

Lemnaceae, a variety of duckweed with high protein content which is easily available has been used in waste water treatment. It is a good fish and animal feed. Prism Bangladesh, a non profit society as part of Shobuj Sona (Green Gold) scheme has used three varieties of the weed in the ponds owned by another non-profit organisation Kumudini Welfare Trust near Dhaka.

According to a report of the UNDP where domestic waste water is available, the effluent of 100 people is estimated to be sufficient to fertilise one quarter of a hectare. The farmers must channel the polluted water into the ponds, then divide the ponds into production cells by floating bamboo booms. The annual production of carp fish is estimated to be over 10 tonnes per hectare without any mechanical aid and change of water. The waste water is also purified. The Duckweed is also being dried through solar heat for animal feed.

JUTE INDUSTRY

Bangladesh's jute industry may finally see better days. In what Bangladesh Industry Minister Hon A.M. Zahiruddin Khan calls a technological breakthrough, the country's scientists have developed the know how to manufacture packaging papers, hardboard and even a soft fibre akin to silk, using green jute plants.

Bangladesh, once the world's biggest jute producer, has had a hard time keeping the jute industry out of the red. Jute fibre, traditionally used to make sacking and carpet-backing cloth for export, is facing stiff competition from cheap, light,

synthetic fibres. However, now that scientists have found a way to substitute pulp from bamboo and wood in paper mills, with jute-based pulp, the future looks brighter.

BHUTAN

POTATO MARKETING

ESCAP trains Trainers for functional literacy among women farmers in areas of Potato Marketing. This area is selected because farmers in Bhutan are usually indebted to local shopkeepers owing to lack of awareness of marketing techniques. The shop keepers have a strong hold over the harvest, because the farmers are compelled to give all their harvest to them at very low prices in order to pay off their debts. There is a need to increase awareness among women farmers of the benefits of marketing potatoes themselves in nearby towns. This will help them to earn enough income to pay off their debts to shopkeepers and still have a good amount for their own use.



INDIA

ENERGY AUDITS

Desperate to conserve energy, the West Bengal Government is planning to follow Kerala in making energy audits compulsory for industries. According to Government Estimates, by 1996 -97, power supply during peak hours will fall short by 20% and total energy by 10%.

A High-Level Technical Committee, constituted by the State Power Minister, has recommended mandatory audits for units whose maximum annual power demand exceeds 550 kw or 1,000 kilo litres of fuel oil.

The Audits, covering fuels like Coal and Gas as well as Electricity, will be 2-tiered: a Preliminary Energy Audit every year followed by a detailed audit in the third year. Units that fall short of measuring up to the Audit Standards or failing to submit reports in time will be slapped with a levy.

BIRD SMUGGLING

A major bird-smuggling racket was literally uncovered on the tarmac of New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport. Just before four 'abnormal' packages wrapped in gunny were loaded on to a Pakistan International Airlines flight for Dubai, curious customs officials pounced on them and found that they were packed with more than 1,300 live birds. The owner of the packages, who was from Uttar Pradesh, was tracked down before he could board the flight.

The birds, worth Ind Rs 4 lakh in the International Market, were mynahs, munias and parrots, and included such exotic species such as the Alexandrine Parakeet and the Hill Mynah. Wildlife Officials later expressed apprehension that India might be turning into a transit point, like Brazil and Peru, for smuggled birds.

JETTY IN THE DOCK

The construction of a Fishing Jetty at Talchua near the Bhitara Kanika Sanctuary in Orissa has been stopped short by a Central directive. The decision was based on a report by a team appointed by the union Ministry of Environment and Forests which recommended that the Construction of the jetty be suspended until a study was conducted on the impact of

such development schemes on an extremely fragile marine eco-system.

Pressure had been building up against the construction of the Rs 84.95 lakh jetty and a connecting road running inside the estuarine forests. Even the State's Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and Chief Wildlife Warden is opposing the Project. He has written to the Principal Secretary of the Forest and Environment department, urging that in the interests of the State, the project should be scrapped. He has pointed out that the 200 Trawlers expected to operate from the jetty would destroy the Mangrove Forests. Even the efficacy of the jetty because of the shallowness of the water at Talchua is also doubted. The sanctuary is also the biggest nesting ground in India for the Olive Ridley Turtles.

THE VALUE-ADDITION OF A CLEAN-UP

To aid Industries in preparing their Annual Environmental Statements, a new concept of Waste Minimisation Circle (WMC), in which member units will share their expertise and experiences in Resource Conservation, is to be introduced soon by Indian Industry Associations, Institutions and the Government. The statements, which are to be submitted annually to the respective State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) by 30th September 1994 for the previous financial year, will be prepared by conducting an Environmental Audit.



MYANMAR

CONSERVATION STUDY OF PAGAN

UNESCO has sponsored a Conservation Study of Pagan, the historic city of Myanmar. In the mean while 2230 monuments have been identified, recorded, photographed and plotted on archaeological maps in Myanmar. The list includes, unexcavated brick mounds, temples, stupas and monasteries.

NEPAL

THE PRICE OF POWER

The Arun III controversy continues to dog Nepal. Just as loan negotiations for the construction of the Hydroelectric Power Project were about to begin with the World bank, the Asian Development Bank and Germany's KfW bank, electricity Tariffs were hiked by 38 %.

This is the third hike in 3 years and has agitated consumers and political parties alike. They are also apprehensive that the rates will escalate further from Rs 6.20 per unit after the hike to as much as Rs 9 when the project goes on line in 2001.

Some observers feel that the present hike is linked to pressure from foreign donors who support Nepal's hydroelectric power projects, but seek to link prices to the cost of production. Government Officials, however, deny that the hike was directly connected to the Arun III Project.

LIGHTING UP VILLAGES

The inauguration of a 400 kw mini hydro-electric Project, at Chilambu in Solukhumbu District, 249 km northeast of Kathmandu, has given boost to Hydrel Power Generation in Nepal. The US \$ 8 Million plant, set up with the help of the Swiss Government, is providing electricity to 30 villages in the Mount Everest region.

PAKISTAN

NEWS FROM SACEP FOCAL POINT

During the period September to November 1993, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) NWFP held meetings with different Associations and Functionaries from various walks of life. The aim was to know the general prevailing environmental conditions and to discuss various ways and means to curb pollution and make our land a worthwhile living place. In this connection, Meetings with the Religious Scholars, Transport Workers Union and Principals of different Schools/Colleges were conducted and the matter was discussed in details. All the participants assured of their fullest co-operation.

- * Public Awareness Campaigns were also conducted through Radio, Television and Press Media highlighting the cause and requesting the people to come forward and shoulder the responsibilities of the Government for a safer, greener and heal thier environment.

- * A Clean-up Operation was organised in September 1993 by EPA, NWFP with the collaboration of Coca Cola Bottlers and Administration of Hayat Shaheed Teaching Hospital, Peshawar. The Director General EPA and Deputy Medical Superintendent spoke on the occasion.

- * A Walk to celebrate "World Clean-up Day" was arranged in Charsadda, a District Town 30 kms from Peshawar, with the collaboration of the Local TB Association.

- * World Habitat Day was celebrated on 4th October 1993. keeping in view the theme of the year "Women & Shelter Development", certain Women NGO's, were invited along with other International Organisations like GTZ, IUCN & UNICEF.

Dr Basit Ali Shah, Vice Chancellor, Agriculture University presided over the function.

MOHENJO-DARO: TENSILE STRUCTURE TO PROTECT FRAGILE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Baked bricks in Mohenjo-Daro, Pakistan are fragile materials which needs protection from weather or the new environment. Mr Andre Stevens, Architect, Belgium has proposed a light tensile protective structure for this endangered world heritage site.

SRI LANKA

DRYING WETLANDS

According to some reports, the Wetlands in Sri Lanka are under attack from varying quarters. The major threats are their Conversion to Fisheries and Salt Pans, Siltation due to large scale Deforestation, Land Filling, Diversion of Water for Irrigation and the Clearing of Mangroves. To compound the problem, laws currently in existence to deal with the crisis lack adequate teeth.

A Wetlands Conservation Project, executed by the Central Environmental Authority of Sri Lanka is seen as the only way in which the indiscriminate exploitation may be combatted. The Project includes the Survey of the Wetlands, Demarcation of Boundaries, Pilot Conservation Efforts and a Public Awareness Programme.

PROJECT AGREEMENT WITH UNDP

A Project Agreement to phase out the Ozone depleting Substances in Sri Lanka, under the Country Programme sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme was signed recently in Colombo.

A grant of US \$ 150,000 will be made available to Sri Lanka for the purpose. Mr Henning Karcher, Chief, West and South Asia Division, Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific signed on behalf of the UNDP. Mr Lal Seneviratne Director-General, External Resources Department and Dr Devanesan Nesiah, Secretary,

Ministry of Environment and Parliamentary Affairs signed on behalf of the Sri Lankan Government.

BIO-GAS GENERATORS TO GOBBLE UP COLOMBO'S GARBAGE

The National Engineering, Research and Development (NERD) Centre in Ja-ela is constructing an experimental bio-gas generator that will digest 150 tons of garbage a day and it is expected to be ready sometime in August 1994.

According to the NERD Centre at least 120 such 'digesters' are needed merely to accommodate the Colombo Municipal Council's (CMC) pure market garbage of 100 tons per day. The CMC put out 500 tons of garbage daily.

The digesters will have to be accommodated in three acres and ideally, they should be located in one place, not scattered for management purposes.

The most offensive part of the waste is the Market Garbage and another 10 tons of offal from the slaughter houses and fish markets etc. These of course are collected separately, but part of the bio-gas produced can be used to 'cook' the offal for use as an ingredient in animal feed.

The NERD Centre undertook the experiment at the request of the CMC and the Ministry of Environment's Programme as part of a major drive to tackle Colombo's worsening garbage problem.

The Generator will take four months to digest the garbage, but will start emitting bio-gas after five days. The Production of Fertiliser and Animal Feed from garbage makes this an excellent and very profitable method.

A PLAN REBORN

According to a Report Sri Lanka's Forestry Master Plan is to be revived. The Plan, which was prepared between 1983 and 1986, with the

help of the Finnish Development Agency and the World Bank, had to be shelved because of fierce opposition from environmentalists. One of the main objections was that the Plan overestimated the forest cover of the country, proposed selective felling even in hitherto highly-protected areas and turned a blind eye to the threat to natural resources.

The Plan is now being revised with the help of NGOs, Scientists and Researchers. A Forestry Planning Unit, being established by the Government, will oversee the revision of the Plan.

PROVINCIAL LEVEL REGIONAL WORKSHOPS

For the first time, two Provincial Level Regional Workshops was conducted by the Centre for Regional Development (CRDS) with the Central and North-Western Provincial Councils, under the major devolution experiment in Sri Lanka. The outcome was that there were concrete recommendations for Provincial Level Environmental Resources Management Programmes.

Also a Joint Provincial Council/CRDS Action Group was established, and Two Sub-Committees, one of which was for formulating an Environmental Resources Management Plan, were set up at the request of the Chief Minister.

JOURNALISTS PREPARE FOR POPULATION CONFERENCE

The Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (SLEJF) is handling a Public Awareness Programme leading up to ICPD '94 in September. There will be three seminars organised to develop a discussion on population-related issues including Environment and Development for the Public, NGO Activists and Journalists. The SLEJF will also compile and maintain an Information File for Journalists and for those concerned with the



L - R. Mr Peter Schroder, Director, OCAPAC, UNEP, Nairobi, Dr R. Karim, Chief, Environment Section, ENRM Division, ESCAP & Mr V.P. Jauhari, Director, SACEP.

Population Conference. Included in its publicity drive is a series of Radio Programmes on both National and Provincial Broadcasting Services.

SACEP NEWS

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS / SACEP ENVIRONMENTAL NATURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTRE (SENIC)

The Training Manuals are now complete and the training is expected to commence in the month of July for the participants nominated by the Ministry of Environment and Parliamentary Affairs. As indicated in our earlier Newsletter, the training will be aimed at three levels to cover audience from the Management through to the Technical Level.

It is envisaged that the assessments will be done on the responses received from the Government Departments and the Capacity Building activity would commence during the later part of the year.

ESCAP/UNEP/SACEP INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING ON CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COASTAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH ASIAN SEAS REGION

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in co-operation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) is currently implementing the Project titled "Capacity Building in the Field of Planning and Management of the Coastal Areas in the South Asian Seas Region Phase 1."

Within the framework of the Project, ESCAP in co-operation with the UNEP and SACEP conducted Workshop on Management Strategies for the Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment in the South Asian Seas Region, which was held in Colombo from 20 - 23 December 1993.

The main objective of the Workshop was to Assess the Potential and

Modalities of Promoting Co-operation for Capacity Building among the Maritime Member Countries of SACEP on the basis of Country Studies on Coastal Zone Management prepared by National Experts from Bangladesh, India Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Workshop also reviewed Management Strategies for the Protection of the Coastal and Marine Environment, Assessed the Requirements for Capacity Building in the Management of Coastal and Marine Environment and Identified Priorities for Action and the Nature of Assistance that will be required to address the issues on the Protection of Coastal and Marine Environment.

The Workshop also carried out a thorough Assessment of Capacity-Building Requirements in the Countries of the Region and Formulated Recommendations for addressing needs. These included the fields of Integrated Coastal Zone Management, Ocean Resource Assessment, Data and Information Systems, Marine Pollution, Ocean Technology Development, Disaster Mitigation, Coastal Erosion, Sea Level

Monitoring, Education and Awareness and Human Resources Development.

Based on the Overall Assessment of Capacity-Building Requirements, the Workshop agreed on the following Areas for Priority Action to support Capacity-Building Activities in the South Asian Seas Region.

- i) ***An Umbrella Project for Regional Co-operation and Pilot Projects in Integrated Coastal Zone Management***
- ii) ***Development and Implementation of National and Regional Oil Spill Contingency Planning***
- iii) ***Human Resources Development through Strengthening of National Centres of Excellence***

Based on the findings of the Studies and the Recommendations of the Workshop, ESCAP in collaboration with SACEP developed a Set of Proposals to address to the above three areas for Capacity Building.

The Secretariat presented the outlines of Project Proposals addressing the above areas, as well as a Strategy for Project Development and Implementation to an Intergovernmental Meeting which was held from 17 -19 May 1994 in New Delhi.

These Project Profiles are to be developed into defined Project Proposals with the concurrence of National Focal Points and Institutions and Technical Assistance Activities.

The Meeting was attended by the five Marine States of SACEP, namely Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and UN and International Organisations such as ESCAP, FAO, IMO, IOC, International Ocean Institute, SACEP, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO & WHO was inaugurated by Dr Rama Rao, Secretary, Department of Ocean Development and Science & Technology, Government of India.

Mr Peter Schroder, Director, Ocean and Coastal Areas Programme Activity Centre of UNEP also attended this Meeting and presented the Meeting an Overview of the UNEP Regional Seas Programme for the South Asian Seas.

The Meeting not only unanimously endorsed the recommendations of the December Workshop and the proposed Project Outlines for further development but also made the following specific recommendations:

- (a) The Executive Director of UNEP and the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, in co-operation with SACEP, to finance and arrange a Project Formulation Mission in order to develop detailed Project Proposals in consultation with The National Focal Points of the Countries of the Region for eventual presentation for funding by GEF as well as other potential donors.
- (b) The Participating Governments should communicate to ESCAP, UNEP and SACEP by 30 June 1994 the designation of Nodal Agencies according to the provisions of the Project Outlines and in particular:
 - i) Nodal Agency for the Umbrella Project and Pilot Project in Integrated Coastal Zone Management;
 - ii) Nodal Agency for the Umbrella Project on Marine Pollution Emergencies Contingency Planning;
 - iii) Nodal Agency for the Umbrella project on Human Resource Development through strengthening of Centre of Excellence.
- c) In view of the gravity of the situation and urgency, as well as the recommendations of Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 and taking into account the Project Outlines as approved by the Meeting, recommended initiation of the process to update 1987

Action Plan for the South Asian Seas Regional Programme with a view to its early adoption.

- d) Requested the Executive Director of UNEP to take appropriate steps in order to convene in 1994 a Meeting of Plenipotentiaries of the Governments of the Region.
- e) Reiterated the earlier recommendations that SACEP be the Secretariat of the South Asian Seas Action Plan and requested UNEP to provide necessary support on the basis of its experiences in other Regional Seas Programmes.

SACEP GOVERNING COUNCIL TO MEET IN SEPTEMBER.

The Sixth Governing Council Meeting of SACEP is scheduled to take place on 1 September 1994 in Islamabad, Pakistan. All Ministers of Environment are expected to attend this Meeting which is of very great significance and importance to the region especially with the increase in Programme Activities of SACEP such as the SACEP Environment & Natural Resources Information Centre and the South Asian Regional Seas Programme.

Prior to this Meeting there will be a Preparatory Meeting of Senior Officials on 29 & 30 August 1994, where they will discuss the substantive issues of SACEP and present their findings to the Governing Council for formal ratification.

The previous meetings of the Governing Council were hosted by the Governments of Afghanistan (1988), Bangladesh (1985), India (1987) & Sri Lanka (1983 & 1992)

RECYCLING/WASTE MANAGEMENT

PIONEERING PROJECT

Drinking water in Delhi may soon be safer and potable. For the first time in India, the Delhi Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Undertaking (DWSSDU) expects to introduce, in May, the ozonisation process at the Okhla Water Treatment Plant. This Project is being undertaken with French Technology as part of an Indo-French Co-operation Programme in Water treatment and Environment Conservation.

According to DWSSDU Director (Projects), Ozone Treatment for contaminated water improves its odour, taste, colour and reduces bacteria in potable water. Another positive effect of ozonisation is that the level of chlorine in the water would be reduced. Other benefits would include better control of iron and ammonia content in water. The Okhla Water Treatment Plant was selected for the Project because it showed high levels of Iron and Ammonia.

HEALTH

ANTIDOTE TO CANCER

A compound derived from the female sex hormone Oestrogen has been found effective at suppressing tumour growth, without the horrendous side effects that normally accompany anti-cancer drugs.

Theodore Fotsis of Children's University Hospital in Heidelberg, Germany and his collaborators found that 2-Methoxy-oestradiol, formed in the body on the breakdown of Oestrogen, inhibits the formation of new blood vessels in solid tumours and suppresses their growth. New blood vessels are essential for providing nutrition to the rapidly multiplying tumour cells (Nature, Vol 368, No 6468)

GENERAL

UN EARTH CHARTER BY YEAR 2000 ?

The former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, President of the Environmental Group Green Cross International, signed an Agreement on 16th April 1994 intended to help create a United Nations "Earth Charter" by the year 2000.

Mr Gorbachev and co-signatory Mr Maurice Strong, a Canadian who chaired the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Brazil, agreed the Charter should "ensure the future sustainability and integrity of the Earth as a hospitable home for human and other forms of life".

"The process of self-destruction of the foundations of human development has gone too far. We need a new system of values" Mr Gorbachev said.

The Agreement, signed with Dutch Government co-operation, sets a framework for Mr Gorbachev's Green Cross and the Earth Council which is headed by Mr Strong, to work together on creating the Charter.

The Two Organisations plan to complete a First Draft in time for the United Nations' 50th Anniversary next year.

According to Messrs Gorbachev and Strong, a Final draft would be submitted to the UN in 1997 after a global discussion and an UN Earth

Charter could be proclaimed by the start of the next century.

Mr Strong also added that the Brazil Earth Summit has made important progress, but much work still had to be done. "Rio was a great occasion, it was historic, but Rio left a lot of unfinished business", he said.

US \$ 2 BILLION FOR RIO FOLLOW-UP

Agreement was reached in Geneva late on March 1994, to restructure and replenish the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the financing mechanism that will be used to implement parts of Agenda 21 and both the Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change. The negotiations, launched sixteen months ago in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, were concluded after a three day meeting attended by representatives from more than 80 countries.

The new GEF that emerged from the Geneva Meeting has been replenished with US \$ 2.022 billion. Twenty Six Countries announced pledges, including eight developing countries: Brazil, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, India Mexico, Pakistan and Turkey. The biggest contributions were from the USA at US \$ 430 million, Japan at US \$ 406 million, Germany at US \$ 238 million and France at US \$ 147 million.

After much negotiations, it was eventually agreed that the Governing Council of the GEF will be composed of 32 constituencies. Fourteen of these seats will be taken by developed or donor countries; two by countries with economies in transition, and sixteen by developing countries (six each to Africa and Asia, with four seats for Latin America).

Responsibility for the conduct of Meetings of the Council will be shared by a Chairperson elected from the Council's Membership and the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF's newly established Secretariat. The GEF Secretariat will be supported administratively by the World Bank,



but will "operate in a functionally independent and effective manner".

The Council will meet every six months and the Participants Assembly will meet only once every three years. A Special Participants assembly will be held to establish the Council formally, and the Council will hopefully meet in mid-July.

The GEF's three implementing agencies, the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), must now officially adopt the "instrument" agreed by the delegates at the Geneva Meeting.

The instrument says that the GEF will fund projects that are 'country driven and based on national priorities', though they must still represent 'the agreed incremental costs of measures to achieve global environmental benefits'. Some NGO Representatives who follow the negotiations closely expressed doubts about this seemingly irreconcilable contradiction. Answers on how it will be achieved have yet to be produced.

And while the instrument underlines the importance of transparency and the need to involve NGOs, some felt its provisions were not adequate.

The First Work Programme is expected to go to the Council for approval in December 1994. GEF Grant Resources are available to address Climate Change, Loss of Biodiversity, Pollution of International Waters and Depletion of the Ozone layer.

DESERTIFICATION CONVENTION ON TARGET

A great deal of progress was made in Geneva from 21 - 31 March in negotiations for the International Convention to Combat Desertification (INCD). While a number of issues still need to be resolved at the final Meeting in Paris from 6 - 17 June 1994, delegates are confident

the INCD will complete its mandate on time.

The remaining issues to be resolved include discussions on Financing, Institutional Arrangements, Definitions of Categories of Country Parties and Priority for Africa.

Before the Meeting, positions on the financial resources and mechanisms were polarised along North-South Lines. The G-77 repeated its position during the session that the Convention and its regional annexes would be pointless without new and additional financial resources. On the other side, developed countries claimed that a more co-ordinated approach to financing programmes to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought is needed.

Apart from financial issues, the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa was probably the most contentious issue. Questions have been raised by the African Countries about the annex's legal status in comparison to the main Convention. Another problem is the need to ensure priority for Africa, as originally intended in the Convention, since annexes for Asia and for Latin America have now been drafted following discussions between those countries in February and March this year. It now looks likely that all three regional annexes will be ready for signature in June and the need to ensure priority action for Africa will have to be resolved in the light of that.

TURNING POINT FOR EXPORT OF HAZARDOUS WASTES

On 25th March, Governments Meeting in Geneva adopted by consensus, a total ban on the export of toxic wastes from OECD Countries to non OECD Countries. The 64 Members of the Conference of the Parties of the Basel Convention on the Transboundary Movement of Hazardous Wastes adopted a ban

for all hazardous waste exports, including for recycling, beginning 31st December 1997. The Group of 77 (led by Sri Lanka), Denmark and China were credited with forcing the issue to a conclusion. A key decision by the European Union (EU) Council of Ministers the day before in Brussels brought all EU Countries in line to support the ban.

It also estimated that nearly 400 million tonnes of hazardous wastes are produced annually. Of this total the United States generates about 85%, which includes figures for diluted waste waters. The countries that are members of the European Union account for about 5 to 7 per cent of the global total, excluding sewage and sludge. The decision means that new markets of the OECD toxic waste which were beginning to form in Eastern Europe and Asia will be cut off.

GASPING FOR BREATH

Swelling concentrations of Carbon dioxide in the atmosphere are threatening the diversity of tree life on Earth, says 2 US Ecologists (Science Vol 263, No 5149).

O.L. Phillips of the Missouri Botanical Garden, USA and the Late A. H. Gentry (1945 - 1993) analysed independent surveys of tropical forests worldwide and discovered an increase in forest turnover, a measure of the number of trees coming up and dying out in an area.



The increase in turnover rates, the Scientists foresee, will seriously affect the diversity of tree species. There will be an increasing predominance of light-hungry plants and climbers and some slow-growing, shade-tolerant trees will eventually die out. Further, the light demanding trees have less dense wood than the shade-lovers. Thus mature tropical forests will sequester less carbon per unit area and may ultimately act as sources, not sinks, for atmospheric carbon.

Phillips and Gentry suggest that the most plausible explanation for this increased turnover is the rising carbon dioxide concentration in the atmosphere. This increase, they guess, may boost tree productivity, encouraging a rapid turnover. Their argument gains credence as observations reveal that the build-up of atmospheric carbon dioxide coincided with the period of enhance turnover in humid tropical forests.

However, linking global warming and the rise in atmospheric carbon dioxide to the changes in biodiversity has been a rather difficult task. For one, no two plant species (out of a possible 500,000) respond similarly to the laboratory-controlled increases in temperature and carbon dioxide; second surveys of tropical forests on a global scale and over a long period are rarely carried out.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
24 June - 3 July 1994	Global Forum on Cities and Sustainable Development	Manchester, United Kingdom
21 - 31 August 1994	Tenth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meeting for a Framework Convention on Climate Change	Geneva, Switzerland
29 - 30 August 1994	SACEP Meeting of Senior Officials of Environment	Islamabad, Pakistan
1 September 1994	Sixth Ministerial Governing Council of SACEP	Islamabad, Pakistan

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
5 - 13 September 1994	International Conference on Population and Development	Cairo, Egypt
27 - 29 September 1994	Meeting of SACEP Countries on Environmental Reporting	Kathmandu, Nepal
3 - 6 October 1994	Meeting of National Consultants of the SACEP Countries in connection with the Preparation of the State of Environment Report for South Asia 1995	Colombo, Sri Lanka

Acknowledgement

Some of the News Items in this issue are by courtesy 'Down to Earth' Magazine published by Centre for Science & Environment, New Delhi and 'The Network' published by Centre for Our Common Future, Geneva.

Welcome to SACEP

SACEP warmly welcomes Mr Thilak Senanayake who joined the SACEP Staff as **Technical Assistant SENRIC Project**. Mr Senanayake has a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and is presently following M. Phil Degree in Agricultural Engineering.



He also has undergone training in GIS/Remote Sensing at the Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok and ICIMOD, Kathmandu.

Before joining SACEP, Mr Senanayake worked as a Computer Programmer and GIS analyst at the Mahaweli Environmental and Forestry Division, Kandy. He has wide experience in GIS/Remote Sensing activities related to Watershed Management, Data Base Creation & Training.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- * **Coral Reef Ecosystems**
Gerald J Bakus
Publisher: Oxford and IBH
Publishing Co Pvt Ltd
Price; Ind Rs 350
- * **Environmental Challenges**
C.K. Varsheny & D.R. Sárdesai
Publisher: Wiley Eastern Ltd
Price: Ind Rs 350
- * **Towards Sustainable Growth
The Sri Lanka Experience**
K.H.J. Wijayadasa
Publisher: Central Environmental
Authority, Sri Lanka
Price: US \$ 15 (Postage Extra)
- * **Role of Non-Timber Forest
Produce in Village Economy**
K.C.Malhotra et al
Publisher: Indian Institute of
Bio-Social Research
Price: Ind Rs 150.
- * **Introduction to Environment and Development**
M.N. Sastri
Publisher: Himalaya
Publishing House
Price: Ind Rs 125
- * **The Methodology of Environment
and Development Management**
Prof C.Suriyakumaran
Publisher: Centre for Regional
Development Studies, Sri Lanka
- * **State of the World 1994**
Publisher: World Watch Institute
Price: US \$ 11.95

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION

- * **Art of River Water Cleaning
Indian Experience**
V.P. Jauhari, Director, South
Asia Co-operative Environment
Programme, Colombo.

MIRACLE GRASS

What on earth is miraculous about grass?. It seems a simple unobtrusive plant, not worth a second glance. But think about it and you'll realise that the grass family ...

- * is the world's most important crop
- * provides the bulk of fodder and forage
- * covers a quarter of the land surface of earth, from the snow covered Arctic Regions, to the dry desert areas
- * grows in saline soil, nutrient-poor soil, waterlogged soil
- * can with stand trampling, grazing and fires
- * provides raw materials for buildings and handicrafts
- * feeds large industries - Paper, Alcohol and Molasses, and home based industries such as brooms, mats, baskets and toys.
- * plays a major role in soil and water conservation
- * prepares the soil for other kinds of vegetation to grow
- * comes in various sizes - from the familiar lawn grass to the towering bamboos

So green with grass. It spreads rapidly because it not only regenerates by means of seeds, but also by putting out horizontal stems along and under the surface of a ground, each joint is able to sprout roots and leaves. But a word of caution: most grasses cannot grow in the shade.

Courtesy - CEE, Ahmedabad,
India

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GARDEN WISDOM

While you're outdoors, how about some environmentally sound practices for the garden?

- * Water the garden early in the morning or late in the evening. This reduces water loss due to evaporation.
- * There is always a temptation to overwater the garden. Water only till the soil becomes moist, not soggy.
- * Explore water efficient irrigation systems. Sprinkler irrigation and drip irrigation can be adapted to garden situations.
- * Make your garden lively - Plant trees and shrubs which will attract birds. You could also put up nest boxes and put out food. In the hot summer months, a bird bath is something which will really please the birds.
- * Put waste to work in your garden - sweep the fallen leaves and flowers into flower beds or under shrubs. This will increase soil fertility and also reduce the need for frequent watering.

Courtesy - CEE, Ahmedabad,
India

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