

more specialized nature made this January 1976 event actually the fourth environmental seminar to be held at CEI.

Dr Mostafa K. Tolba, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, opened the seminar with an address on the 'State of the Environment' and a review of the major environmental issues facing mankind. These issues of human well-being, the natural environment, and development, were explored in more detail throughout the first week of the seminar, being viewed from the standpoint of health, energy, economics, legislation, conflict, and land-use planning. Particular emphasis was given to matters of industrial project planning, plant location, and pre-market environmental testing of products.

Formal contributions to the seminar were made by speakers in leading positions in international organizations, national governments, and industrial enterprises. An important feature of the Seminar was the free exchange of views and experience among participants working in small groups on cases dealing with current environmental problems (e.g. PVCs, fluorocarbons, nuclear energy, etc.).

The second week of the seminar was devoted to an in-depth study of the principles and methods of environmental impact assessment and minimization of conflict. The seminar participants concentrated their attention on impacts and conflicts associated with a major industrialization project at Fos-sur-Mer on the Mediterranean coast of France.

The Seminar proved to be highly successful in helping to identify, develop, and clarify, the necessary tools and techniques for management of the environment. It further helped to reinforce the view that the central concern of environmental management is the formulation and implementation of policies and decisions towards providing for long-term, sustainable, and broad-based, human well-being. Perhaps the foremost achievement of the Seminar was to demonstrate clearly how industry, governmental bodies, and international organizations, can indeed work together on a continuing basis for promoting management of the human environment more effectively than has been accomplished to date.

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CONFERENCE OF PLENIPOTENTIARIES OF THE COASTAL  
 STATES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION ON THE PROTECTION  
 OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA,  
 HELD IN BARCELONA, SPAIN, 2-16 FEBRUARY 1976

Over the last two years, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and several United Nations specialized agencies (particularly FAO, IAEA, IMCO, UNESCO, UNIDO, WHO, and certain UN Economic Commissions) have intensified efforts towards the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to protect and enhance the Mediterranean region. The Mediterranean 'action plan', which was adopted at a regional Intergovernmental Meeting in Barcelona early in 1975,\* contains recommendations for activities in four main areas: research and monitoring, integrated planning of development, legal obligations, and institutional structures.

\* See the account by Stanley P. Johnson, Head of the Prevention of Pollution and Nuisances Division, Commission of the European Communities, published in *Environmental Conservation* (Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 235-6, Autumn 1975).—Ed.

Probably the main development in this field since the 1975 Intergovernmental Meeting was the above occasion, at which sixteen of the eighteen Mediterranean States participated (Albania and Algeria were not represented). On 13 February, the Conference adopted the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution, a Protocol for the Prevention of Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft, a Protocol concerning Cooperation in Combating Pollution of the Mediterranean Sea by Oil and other Harmful Substances in Cases of Emergency, and ten assorted resolutions. What makes the Barcelona Conference particularly noteworthy is that after the weekend, on 16 February, twelve states signed the Convention and the cooperation protocol, and eleven states signed the dumping protocol at a ceremony arranged by the Depositary Government, Spain.† Normally a great deal of time passes before a significant number of Governments actually sign a treaty.

The Convention itself is very broad and commits states in general terms to 'take all appropriate measures . . . to prevent, abate, and combat, pollution of the Mediterranean Sea area and to protect and enhance the marine environment in that area' (Article 4). The Convention then specifies the distinct sources of pollution for which controls should be implemented: pollution from dumping, ships, exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf and sea-bed, and land-based sources. There are also articles on cooperation in pollution emergencies, monitoring, scientific and technological cooperation, and liability and compensation.

By ratifying a protocol, states accept more detailed obligations to control pollution from the discrete sources listed above. When discussing the system of legal controls, the states felt that the Convention was too broad to provide meaningful protection on its own; therefore, no state may become a contracting party to the Convention without also becoming a party to at least one of the protocols. A protocol will enter into force when at least six states have ratified it, and the Convention will enter into force simultaneously with the first protocol.

The Dumping Protocol closely follows the precedent of the 1972 London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, and the 1972 Oslo Convention for the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping from Ships and Aircraft. The protocol prohibits the dumping of substances on the 'black' list, requires a prior special permit to be issued by the competent national authority for the dumping of substances on the 'grey' list, and requires a general permit for the dumping of all other wastes or other matter.

The second protocol adopted at Barcelona calls for cooperation among the parties 'in cases of grave and imminent danger to the marine environment, the coast or related interests . . . due to the presence of massive quantities of oil or other harmful substances resulting from accidental causes or an accumulation of small discharges which are polluting or threatening to pollute the sea' (Article 1). The protocol provides for information exchange, coordination of communications, and assistance in emergencies. Parties to the protocol may cooperate directly or through the regional centre. A regional oil-combating centre is to be established on Malta as a result of one of the resolutions adopted by the Conference. The functions of the centre will include information dissemination, preparation of contingency plans, maintenance of a commu-

† The twelve states were Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Spain, and Turkey. Greece did not sign the dumping protocol.

nications system, and encouragement of technological cooperation and of training programmes in the region.

The Barcelona Conference is a good example of states overcoming political differences in order to resolve a problem which transgresses national boundaries. Solutions to such problems are always numerous and multifaceted, as is evidenced in the four-part Mediterranean Action Plan adopted in 1975. Yet, the Conference of Plenipotentiaries brings to mind the importance of the law-making process as a management tool for implementing solutions that have been cooperatively agreed to at the international or regional level.

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FOURTH SESSION OF THE SENIOR ADVISERS  
 TO ECE GOVERNMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS,  
 HELD IN THE PALAIS DES NATIONS, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND,  
 9-13 FEBRUARY 1976

The fourth meeting of the Senior Advisers on Environmental Problems (SAEP) was something of a landmark in the short history of this body. As the Principal Subsidiary Body of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) having primary responsibility for environmental problems, the SAEP not only has its own extensive activities in this field but also the mandate to ensure (with the collaboration of other subsidiary bodies of a more sectoral nature) the development of a closely-knit environmental effort within the ECE.

What was so special about the fourth session of the SAEP? Most significant of all, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) had only recently been concluded, culminating in the historic signing in Helsinki of its 'Final Act' by thirty-five Heads of Government. One of the more important sections of this document dealt with problems of environment, wherein the participating states came to full agreement concerning the aims, areas, forms, and methods, of cooperation. With regard to forms and methods, they further agreed to advocate:

'the inclusion where appropriate and possible, of the various areas of cooperation into the programmes of work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, supporting such cooperation within the framework of the Commission and of the United Nations Environment Programme, and taking into account the work of other competent international organizations of which they (the signatories) are members'.

Thus, at this fourth session, the Senior Advisers on Environmental Problems were already beginning to feel the weight of this new and important responsibility settling upon their shoulders.

The most immediate evidence of this new responsibility was the decision by the Senior Advisers to incorporate into their programme of work two specific projects on which special attention had been focused in the Final Act of the CSCE:

- (1) The development, through international cooperation, of an extensive programme for the monitoring and evaluation of the long-range transport of air pollutants, starting with sulphur dioxide and with possible extension to other pollutants. — It was agreed that this project would be carried out in close collaboration with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), and an invitation was extended to the United Nations Environ-

ment Programme (UNEP) to assist in the implementation of the overall effort.

- (2) A study concerning the capabilities of member governments to predict adequately the environmental consequences of economic activities and technological development. — The assessment of environmental impact is a basic instrument designed to aid governments in formulating not only their environmental policies but also their economic and social policies.

Another development which aroused great interest at this session of the SAEP was the in-depth discussion on environmental policies and strategies. The topic which had been pre-selected for an all-day discussion was 'The Ecological Aspects of Economic Development Planning'—a topic which had been the subject of a major ECE seminar held in Rotterdam in mid-1975 under the chairmanship of Professor Jan Tinbergen. The Rotterdam seminar had provided a first opportunity within the ECE for ecologists, economists, and physical planners, to come together for an exchange of information and experience on comprehensive planning issues. Building on the foundation of that seminar, the Senior Advisers focused their attention on practical methods for integrating ecological considerations into socio-economic development planning. The follow-up activities agreed upon by the Senior Advisers include:

- (a) The elaboration of a conceptual framework for integrated planning. — The essential task here is to reduce this broad subject to a manageable scale and to present relevant information and data in a form useful to decision-makers;
- (b) A study on 'Environmental Perspective'. — This study would not be a mechanical evaluation of the environmental consequences of present economic trends; instead, taking into account the growing determination (by governments and citizens alike) to halt the deterioration of the environment, the study would consider the measures which must be taken towards this goal and the impact of these measures both on the economy and on society; and
- (c) A study on the ways and means for ensuring participation of the general public and of non-governmental organizations in the debate during the planning process.

The incorporation of the above five items into the programme of the SAEP is a clear indication of a significant shift in emphasis of the work of that body. Greater stress is now being laid on planning and management problems, i.e. on preventive policies, rather than on anti-pollution measures *per se*.

Finally, during the latter part of the session, the Senior Advisers turned to a review of (and guidance concerning) their extensive on-going programme of work (including a close collaborative effort with UNEP). Among other things, they instituted a specific procedure for a continuing evaluation of the usefulness and effectiveness of each and every pertinent project.

All in all, it was a full and stimulating session, heralding an era of intensified environmental activity on problems of critical importance and concern to the ECE member governments. These represent thirty-four countries of North America, Western Europe, and Eastern Europe (including the Soviet Union).

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