

Inaugurating the Seminar, Dr Monkombu S. Swaminathan, Director-General, International Rice Research Institute, Los Banos, Philippines, observed that the pest-repellant properties of Neem could be exploited to evolve an integrated strategy for pest control. The genetic resistance against pests in new crop varieties, though highly desirable, tended to break down with time. The use of Neem and other vegetable products could go a long way towards prolonging the period of usefulness of improved crop varieties. He further observed that a great deal of interest has been generated in some advanced countries, such as West Germany and the USA, in the utilization of Neem products in agriculture. Future research in this field should not only concentrate on evolving new uses of these products but also on agronomic aspects of propagation and growth of Neem plants. The fertilizer companies and proposed National Fertilizer Development Centre should jointly evolve ways and means of increased use of Neem products in improving the efficiency of chemical fertilizers.

Dr Swaminathan suggested the launching of an augmented research programme in India for conducting interdisciplinary research on basic and applied aspects of Neem, which has numerous uses in agriculture and pharmaceuticals. He also suggested that major strains of Neem, found in India and abroad, should be significantly catalogued, so that the more useful ones among them could be propagated on a mass scale through social forestry programmes.

Dr H.K. Jain, Director of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, which hosted the Seminar, pointed out that the Institute was first to discover, in the early 1960s, the insect-repellant properties of Neem seed. During the locust invasion in India in July–August of 1962, crops were protected by spraying Neem kernel suspension on the plants. Further research has shown that it is also effective against several other insect pests. Similarly, grain can be safeguarded against storage pests by adding Neem leaves or kernels to the storage bins. Dr Jain also pointed out that the Institute has done pioneering work on increasing the efficiency of fertilizer nitrogen with the help of Neem cake*. Coating of urea prills with Neem cake improves their nitrogen fertilizer efficiency by from 15 to 20%. Field data are available for Rice (*Oryza sativa*) and Sugar-cane (*Saccharum officinarum*) which indicate that coating of fertilizing prills of urea with Neem cake can be highly profitable. Dr Jain pointed out that the main objective of this Seminar was to revive the interest of research workers and concerned agencies in the economic exploitation of the good properties of this tree, which grows abundantly in India and many other tropical countries.

A number of papers were presented by participating scientists on the insect-repelling and -controlling properties, and on the fertilizer use, of Neem cake and kernels. It was also brought out that Neem could be an excellent source of renewable energy in the form of oil, which could also be used for medicinal purposes and for making soap.

The discussion emphasized the need for research to be intensified towards improving the formulation, shelf-life, and standardization, of Neem products, as well as towards evolving improved methods of their application.

It was decided that the Indian Agricultural Research Institute should bring out a *Neem Newsletter* for dissemination of knowledge about the useful aspects of the

* 'Neem cake' is the residue left after extraction of oil from Neem kernels.—Ed.

Neem Tree. The seminar recommended the launching of a massive programme for planting Neem Trees in India, with a goal of 'one Neem Tree for each Indian'; this would amount to an ultimate target of 700 million Neem Trees in India.**

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** And would surely have pleased the late Richard St Barbe Baker—see the account on pp. 170–1 of this issue.—Ed.

FOURTH MEETING† OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
TO THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN EN-
DANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA
(CITES), HELD IN GABORONE, BOTSWANA,
FROM 19 TO 30 APRIL 1983

Some 300 delegates from 59 out of the then 80 Parties (there are now 81) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), 3 observer States, and more than 70 organizations, participated in this meeting, which was inaugurated by His Excellency Dr Quett Ketumile Jonny Masire, President of the Republic of Botswana.

In this year of the tenth anniversary of the Convention (it was signed in 1973 and entered into force in 1975), one of the most significant results of the meeting was the evidence that CITES has reached maturity at an international level. The Meeting also revealed a more evident tendency than formerly towards the recognition of the necessity for many countries, in the developing world in particular, to utilize their natural resources on a rational and sustainable basis for the benefit of the resources themselves and of their people. Such a tendency is in line with the World Conservation Strategy, of which CITES is an important element.

Although considerable progress has been realized in the implementation of the Convention, there are still some loopholes—including the circumstance that such countries as Belgium, Mexico, and several African and eastern European states, are not yet Parties to the Convention. Among the decisions adopted to improve the implementation of the Convention, the following should be mentioned: several resolutions to harmonize the interpretation of CITES provisions, such as the period of validity of export permits; the definition of the notion of transit (which is not covered by the Convention and leads to abuses); the interpretation of pre-Convention acquisition; the control of transit souvenirs; the control of captive breeding operations; and a standardized vernacular nomenclature for mammals.

The lists of species covered by the Convention were amended in Gaborone, pursuant to a ten-years' review of the appendixes and also to include new species. Despite vigorous opposition from whaling countries, seven species of whales were given the highest protection rating. A similar status was afforded to several Saharo-Sahelian species, such as the Addax (*Addax nasomaculatus*) and species of *Oryx*, as well as to some very rare Bolivian parrots and more than 30 species of cacti from the United States and Mexico.

For the first time since the resolution authorizing trade in ranching products was adopted at its previous meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention adopted a proposal of transfer from Appendix I (species

† The Third such meeting was reported in *Environmental Conservation*, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 251, 1981, and the Second in our Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 162–3, 1979.—Ed.

for which no commerce is authorized) to Appendix II (species for which the trade is controlled to avoid overexploitation) of a specific population; hence Zimbabwe, having been able to prove that ranching can be a means of improving the conservation of certain species, will now be authorized to export products of ranches Nile Crocodiles (*Crocodilus niloticus*). On the other hand, the Parties refused to downgrade the Leopard (*Panthera pardus*) populations of eastern and southern Africa in order not to reopen the trade in furs of Leopards and other spotted cats. Recognizing, however, that the Leopard is no longer endangered in this region, the Parties adopted a resolution which will permit the countries concerned to sell legally-obtained Leopard skins as personal effects under very strict control measures, including a quota system.

On 30 April 1983, the Parties to the Convention were convened in an extraordinary meeting and adopted an amendment to the text of the Convention. This amendment, when it enters into force (i.e. after formal acceptance by a statutory minimum 54 of the 80 States that were Parties to the convention at the date of adoption of the amendment), will allow regional economic integration organizations to become Party to CITES—such as, in particular, the European Economic Community.

The next regular meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES is scheduled to be held in Colombia in 1985. Further information may be obtained from the CITES Secretariat at the address given below:

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MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS FOR PROTECTED AREAS, HELD AT THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, STRASBOURG, FRANCE, DURING 9–10 MAY 1983

The Committee of Experts for Protected Areas met in Strasbourg on 9 and 10 May to examine the annual reports from the 19 protected areas which hold the European Diploma. The reports make it clear that, despite the areas' official status as protected zones, some of them are threatened by activities which might in the medium term jeopardize their ecological value. The Committee accordingly proposed ways of countering their deterioration.

After studying experts' reports on three new applications, the Committee of Experts recommended that the European Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources award a category C Diploma to the Purbeck Heritage Coast in the United Kingdom and postpone the application by the Berchtesgaden National Park in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Committee of Experts recognized the European significance of the following four new applications submitted:

- Scandola Nature Reserve, in Corsica, the most important of the French marine reserves;
- Sasso Fratino Nature Reserve in Tuscany, the oldest of the Italian nature reserves;
- Fair Isle, the most southerly of the Shetland Islands in the United Kingdom, which is scheduled as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and
- Coto Doñana National Park, the celebrated Spanish wetland area.

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SEMINAR ON ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT, HELD AT THE TUFTS UNIVERSITY EUROPEAN CENTER, TALLOIRES, FRANCE, DURING 15–19 MAY 1983

Environmental assessment, previously either the angel or the stepchild of planning experts, has now earned a solid place, equal in partnership with economic and social planning, in the complex arena of development assistance planning. At the above meeting in Talloires, France, the relationship between environmental assessment and the other tools of development planning was debated in a forum representing many of the key sectors—whether corporate or concerned with international development or environmental planning.

While no consensus was sought, there was general agreement that environmental assessment was essential in the design of projects if they are to contribute to sustainable development. Only with meaningful integration of environmental goals and the other traditional social and economic goals that are sought by the concerned world community, can such development be achieved. But although the group agreed that environmental assessment should be integrated into the planning process, there was no agreement on whether environmental structures in governments should remain separate or also be integrated.

The twenty-five participants from various parts of the world proposed a number of themes which they wanted to pursue in future meetings. These involved defining the levels of responsibility and decision-making authority, the length of time required for sound development projects, information and training needs, and adequate ongoing public participation.

Proposals offered for follow-up included:

- 1) The corporate sector can propagate environmental concerns at the regional and national level and within its own sector;
- 2) International lending institutions can focus on various parts of the financial investment community, drawing attention to environmental implications of development projects—especially in regional lending institutions and national and private banks;
- 3) The international technical consulting firms can integrate social and cultural factors into their work-plans and throughout the project experience; and
- 4) Nongovernmental organizations, especially local community groups and environmental organizations, can work towards reaching a broad local population—to build better awareness and public input into the assessment process.

The meeting was the first in a series of seminars dealing with global resource management in the public and corporate sectors, sponsored by the Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy, the Sierra Club International Earthcare Center, the Commission on Environmental Planning of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, and the World Resources Institute, in association with the Bird Company Foundation and the Exxon Corporation, USA. The series is intended to help create a more effective base for advance planning and coping with the environmental impacts accompanying development initiatives than is currently available.

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[For an Important Prospect, see bottom of page 184]