

think-tank of oceanography; an attempt is being made to enlist third-world countries in thinking and planning schemes; and there is a plan to create an interface between scientists and planners with a starting date of 1997.

Of the programme itself, several things can be said. The logistic, social, and gastronomic, aspects were unexcelled. The absence of the all-too-common high registration fees (registration was 'gratis') made the conference accessible to a wide range of registrants, and to students as well as seasoned researchers. The (also free) two excursions were outstanding and exhausting (more than 12 hours apiece), and the usual procession of politicians who want to be seen and heard (a common occurrence nowadays at many symposia) had been curtailed. The scientific programme was not as finely tuned as the physical and financial hostmanship: cancellations of speakers were hardly, if at all, announced, leaving blocks of time unused; chairmen often did not control necessary time-limits, so that in one instance the last speakers in one session were left with two minutes each for their presentations. Furthermore, most of the content of some papers had been heard at previous meetings, while other papers presented generalities that contributed little to the avowed aims of the conference.

The conference had four aspects, including an attractive exhibit in the hall of the Hôtel de la Région; but being placed one floor below 'where the action was', this did not get the attention it deserved, although the effort of the IOC was meritorious and educative.

Of actual proceedings there were plenary sessions, a few parallel meetings, special events, and a large display of posters (153 announced, with close to 95% actually displayed). The major subdivisions of the programme, exclusive of political presentations, were evolutionary processes, case studies, international organizations' presentations, natural and major risks in the coastal zone (CZ), processes and modelling, informatics and the CZ, education and training (perhaps the thinnest attended), legal matters (where little new was told), and matters of Nature having importance to developing areas.

The major public debates, labelled as roundtables but with very little input from the audience, dealt with the 'Nouvelle politique française d'aménagement du territoire pour les zones littorales' and 'study of the coasts of Aquitaine'.

Synthesis and conclusions were presented on the morning of the last day. It was refreshing that, instead of the common platitudes and self-congratulatory statements, the analysis was straightforward, the summaries reflected what had been said and focused on the new ideas brought forth, and that it was freely admitted that close contacts between various disciplines — between scientists and their social counterparts, and between researchers and policy-makers (an aim of the conference) — has not truly, in the view of many, been achieved. It may be regretted that little or no analysis was made of the posters, many of which were excellent, informative, and innovative, though apparently not much favoured as a means of expression of serious scientific facts and circumstances.

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INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS, HELD AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, PLACE VAREMBÉ, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, ON 6 MARCH 1995

The second trial by the International Court of Justice for Animal Rights brought the plight of butchery animals in transit once again into the limelight. The earlier trial was held on 1st March 1993. The further public hearing *cum* trial was organized by Franz Weber, Secretary-General of the United Animal Nations.

The presentations by experts and extensive filmed evidence revealed that, in spite of persistent public protests, over 250 million butchery animals still cross European frontiers every year, being made to travel thousands of kilometres under monstrous conditions for profit. For, shipping the animals alive is much cheaper than slaughtering them in the nearest abattoir and transporting the meat in refrigerated trucks.

Animals Tormented for Gain

It was shameful to watch the filmed agony and horror which the animals had to endure during these transportations. The sequence commences with packing the animals like sardines in three- or four-storeyed trucks, in which they are apt to be starved of food and often deprived of water for days on end, and often face glaring sun or severe cold. The professional transporters kick the animals and may knock them down. They are also apt to be beaten and prodded with current-laden pokers. Shall the world citizens ever imagine that their lunch and supper dishes served with meat are the end-products of the pitiful fate of butchery animals on their long death journey?

It is horrible to witness punched-out eyes, torn-off ears, broken horns, smashed limbs, hipbones, and backbones — rated as 'normal' transport damages, 'trifles' in the jargon of the shippers.

At the end of film-projections, highlighting monstrous treatment of animals, one of the Authors (G.M.O.), who served on the 12-member international jury, put a pertinent question before the audience and the witnesses, as to whether we deserved a right to be classified as civilized members of society in view of our toleration of such behaviour! Surely, alternative human diet or due caution would put an end to such inhuman acts. However, the preferences and priorities are accorded to profits for traders and insurers; even huge subsidies are granted to exporters and horrible transport of animals is of least concern.

Purpose of the Trial

The primary purpose of the trial was to call publicly to account the trade associations and politicians responsible for such unworthy deeds, and with the support of public opinion bring the European governments and MPs to take, finally, the only decision worthy of a civilized continent — to ban these shameful transports.

The named accused included Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission; Boris N. Yeltsin, President of the Federation of Russia; Lech Valensa, President of the Republic of Poland; the ministers of agriculture of the 15 countries of the European Union; the Swiss Federation of Horse Breeders and the Veterinary Office of Switzerland. The case heard the Plaintiffs, Witnesses, Experts, and Defence. The Court members were from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, India, Switzerland, and USA.

The verdict of the International Court of Justice for Animal Rights asked the Patriarch of Constantinople to condemn solemnly the horror transports of livestock and to give urgent instructions to the clergy by reminding them that animals are God's creatures — the same as human beings. The Court further asked the churches to break their guilty silence by condemning openly and publicly the contempt of Man towards the animal world and the unnecessary suffering he inflicts on animals for his own greed and pleasure.

Verdict Regarding Persons

The Court found the President of Russia (Boris N. Yeltsin), the President of Poland (Lech Valensa), and agriculture ministers of the 15 countries of the European Union, guilty of tolerating and encouraging the described treatment of animals and for not taking remedial measures.

The Court renewed its sentence against the accused for ignoring, and treating with contempt, the will of vast numbers of Europeans who demanded abolition of cruel animal transports. The Court also appealed to European citizens to accept no longer the criminal activities of politicians and others who, for profit, continue to send hundreds of millions of animals to the horror of international livestock transit and thereby also endangering public health.

The Court also appealed to the European consumers to demand that the origin of meat and the duration of transport which the animals had had to endure before slaughter be clearly indicated in the butcher's shop and on all wrapping at every place of sale. Overproduction of slaughter animals was considered a crime by the Court which stressed the fact that domestic animals, unlike wheat and tomatoes, were sensitive and conscious creatures which felt pain and anguish in much the manner of human beings.

Public Actions Contemplated

The Court is prepared to file lawsuits before ordinary Courts against States which are guilty of serious and systematic transgressions of the laws protecting animals. Meanwhile the complete and motivated Judgement is to be sent to the Presidents of States, ministers, and commissioners, who were condemned. It will also be sent for information to the members of the European Parliament, to the Pope, to the Patriarch of Constantinople, and to the Heads of other European churches.

The Court solemnly rendered homage to Mrs Jill Phipps, who had been mercilessly run over and killed by a cattle lorry which she was attempting to stop.

Mrs Judith Weber and Miss Vera Weber coordinated the event with smooth success. They deserve warm congratulations for so serving the cause of the animals and civilized humanity.

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UNESCO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON BIOSPHERE RESERVES, HELD IN SEVILLE, SPAIN, DURING 20–25 MARCH 1995

This was the Second International Conference on Biosphere Reserves, the First having been held in Minsk in 1983. The first Biosphere Reserves were designated in 1976, and by the time of the Minsk Conference, the number had grown to 243 reserves in 65 countries. Since then 98 additional sites have been added, bringing the total to 324 Biosphere Reserves in 82 countries.

The Conference in Seville was a gala celebration of Biosphere Reserves — an unrivalled opportunity for those who had worked with them all over the world to share experiences and, most important, a working meeting dedicated to setting Biosphere Reserves on course for the 21st Century.

The Conference was jointly organized by the following Spanish authorities: Ministerio de Obras Públicas, Transporte y Medio Ambiente, Secretaría de Estado de Medio Ambiente y Vivienda, Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Medio Ambiente, ICONA, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca y Alimentación, the Spanish MAB Committee, and the Spanish UNESCO National Commission. The opening ceremony was presided over by HRH the Infanta Doña Christina and opening addresses were made by the Mayor of Seville, the Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee of MAB and of the Spanish MAB National Committee, the Counsellor for the Environment of the Government of Andalucía, the State Secretary for Environment and Housing (who was also elected President of the Conference), the Minister of Public Works, Transport and Environment of Spain, the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries and Food of Spain, the Director-General of UNESCO, and the President of the Government of Andalucía. The range of interest is shown by the number of participants — 387 persons from 102 countries and 15 regional and international organizations. The introductory speeches were enthusiastic about the role and prospects of Biosphere Reserves — especially those in the host country. The only note of caution was sounded by the Director-General of UNESCO in relation to the increase in world population and the prevalence of poverty.

The Conference set itself two main tasks: to examine past experience in implementing the concept of Biosphere Reserves, and to look into the future to identify what emphases should now be given to the three functions of conservation, development, and logistical support. This work was based on a review of the achievements of the Action Plan developed at Minsk, a large number of papers and posters about experiences throughout the world, and a few visionary papers.

In relation to the first task, the Conference concluded that, in spite of problems and limitations encountered in applying the concept, the programme as a whole had been innovative and had had many successes. The reasons for the limitations were complex, but two important ones appeared to be the lukewarm support of other international agencies (even IUCN) in a period when resources available to most of them were declining in real terms; the other was that the composition of MAB National Committees and the sectoral nature of institutions did not readily lend itself to action in the field of protected areas. The Conference President presented the very encouraging Spanish experience with Biosphere Reserves.

The most important part of the Conference was devoted to producing two documents which will be presented to the