

## BIOSPHERE DAY: A Half-dozen Chosen Prior Reactions

From among the numerous messages of support received following the announcement of our intention to declare 21 September 1991 as the first Biosphere Day, we chose the following six for reading out after having made the Declaration in the headquarters of the Foundation for Environmental Conservation, Geneva, Switzerland (and we hope similarly by correspondents on all continents):

1. From the President of the Swiss Confederation, Federal Councillor Flavio Cotti, a long and gracious message of encouragement headed 'DO NOT QUOTE OR CITE', but of which we are permitted to use the concluding paragraph: 'When this [need of safeguarding] is realized, we shall all remember with gratitude the utopians who had the vision and resolve to declare the [21st] of September 1991 as the first Biosphere Day.' Subsequently His Excellency's Chief-of-Staff in his capacity as Swiss Federal Minister of Environment, Forests, and Landscape, Dr Wilhelm Schmid, terminated his letter to us of 19 September 1991, after explaining his inability to attend our ceremony, with 'Permit me... to congratulate you once again on your impressive initiative and to wish you the best of success.'

2. The International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) being the world's scientific summit, its Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) is the most pertinent to our cause, and so it was gratifying to receive, under the date of 16 September 1991, the following statement from SCOPE's Executive Secretary:

'The Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) is pleased to support the initiative of the Foundation for Environmental Conservation to recognize the 21st September as Biosphere Day. As the 21st century approaches, it is timely to focus attention on and concern for the world Biosphere, increasingly threatened by human intervention.'

3. From a senior and celebrated, ecologically-trained member of staff of the World Bank, Washington, DC, Dr Robert Goodland, we received a faxed message dated 9 September, worded as follows:

'Profound congratulations on your "Declaration of Biosphere Day". This is a crucial need. The more people espouse these essential habits, the more hope there is for some modicum of sustainability — before it is too late. I shall endeavor to disseminate this important message widely. Thank you for your global leadership and initiatives.'

4. From the Vernadsky International Centre for Biosphere Studies, a special unit of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, we received last week a cable sent by its Executive Director and two other senior members as follows:

'Congratulations on Biosphere Day Undoubtedly This Idea Will Inspire Mankind Vernadsky Centre Will Always Participate.

Dmitrieva Kovda Pachepsky'

5. From the Executive Director of the Adirondack Park Agency, Ray Brook, NY, a letter of grave concern on behalf of the Executive Department of the State of New York, USA, signed also by its Chairman Herman F. Cole, Jr, following a concluding statement that:

'The Foundation for Environmental Conservation's guiding principle — "Every Day a Biosphere Day" — is excellent. The Adirondack Park Agency fully endorses your efforts to educate all peoples — man and woman, rich and poor alike — [regarding] their responsibility to preserve the Biosphere.'

6. Mr Maurice F. Strong, Secretary-General of the forthcoming vital United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, popularly called the 'Earth Summit', concludes his '**Very Important Prospect**' notice of it in our Journal, *Environmental Conservation* (Vol. 18, No. 2, Summer 1991, p. 102) by stating categorically that 'The protection of The Biosphere as the indispensable basis for the maintenance and well-being of life on Earth must become our highest priority'. He has also sent us the following message:

'As the health of The Biosphere is indispensable to the well-being of life on our planet and to the very maintenance of human existence, it is fitting that we set aside this special day each year to focus attention world-wide on our human responsibilities towards the rest of The Biosphere and to the fundamental importance of caring for it.'

NICHOLAS POLUNIN