

The Author puts his earnest plea again before the world powers to leave the *Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace for Nature* — in order to preserve its wildlife and maintain the ecological balance of the area for conservation.

This should give support to the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to have the Indian Ocean set aside as a Whale Sanctuary — to protect not only the populations of great whales but also the smaller cetaceans, notably dolphins and porpoises (Oza, 1983).

Institutional Change Needed to Deal with Environmental Threats

The Hague Recommendations on International Environmental Law were adopted for consideration by UNCED at Rio and other appropriate international fora. Basic principles for the preservation of the environment and their enforcement need to be guaranteed at a global level. The main framework available today is the UN system, which States have failed to use and develop adequately to stop further deterioration of the global environment and its essential features.

At present, the UN system is not adequately equipped for this task. Therefore, in order to reach this goal, either the UN system has to be changed or a new body has to be established.

If the enhancement of UNEP, as referred to above, proves not to be feasible, a *World Environmental Authority* should be established to oversee and integrate international environmental efforts, and to deal with urgent problems affecting the environment of our 'only one Earth' (Oza, 1991).

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The Biodiversity* Treaty

On 30 September 1993, Mongolia had the distinction of being the 30th country to ratify the treaty on biological diversity*, triggering the 90-days countdown to the Treaty's entry into force. On 29 December 1993 the treaty will become a binding legal instrument, taking its place in international law.

'I congratulate the 30 countries whose recognition of the urgency of this Convention led to early ratification, propelling the world forward on this most important agenda', said Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. 'I especially appreciate the leadership of small island states, a dozen of whom are among this signal group, and the many countries which are pressing ahead to develop action plans for the conservation of biological diversity.'

The treaty has three objectives: (1) conservation of biological diversity; (2) sustainable use of its components (plants, animals, and microorganisms), and (3) fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that result from the use of genetic resources.

'We must reverse the tide of the devastating loss of the Earth's living resources', said Miss Dowdeswell. 'In the year 2093, I hope and imagine that our great-grandchildren will look out on a world even richer in biological diversity than ours is now, and trace it back to this date. It is our generation, which must act, now and with great energy, if we are to preserve the resources which hold the

key to future survival.'

While planet Earth is the home to an estimated 10 million species, only 1.5 million of them have been identified to date. No one knows what unidentified species might offer in terms of food, clothing, housing, or medicine — just to mention a few areas of our lives that are affected on a daily basis by biological diversity. This vast reservoir of genetic resources is also the source of the oxygen we breathe, many of our industries, and, perhaps most significantly, our ability to adapt to changing circumstances such as global warming.

The 30th ratification comes on the eve of the first major intergovernmental meeting on the biodiversity treaty since Rio. It will take place in Geneva during 11–15 October. This will prepare the way for the Conference of the Parties — all countries which have ratified — to meet for the first time next year.

In chronological order the following countries were the first 30 to ratify the biological diversity treaty: Mauritius, Seychelles, Marshall Islands, Maldives, Monaco, Canada, China, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Ecuador, Fiji, Antigua & Barbuda, Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, Cook Islands, Guinea, Armenia, Japan, Zambia, Peru, Australia, Norway, Tunisia, Saint Lucia, Bahamas, Burkina Faso, Belarus, Uganda, New Zealand and now Mongolia.

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* It is most important to note that, in the words of the communication specialist of the Interim Secretariat, Biodiversity or 'biological diversity is an umbrella term for Nature's variety — ecosystems, species, and genes.' — Ed.