

ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

Multilateral

The UNEP Senior Level Meeting on Environmental Law will be held in Montevideo, Uruguay, from October 28 to November 6, 1981. The decision to convene the meeting was taken by the UNEP Governing Council at its eighth session in April, 1980, in response to a joint initiative by Canada and Sweden. The Governing Council also decided that the UNEP Working Group of Experts on Environmental Law would meet as a Preparatory Committee for the Senior Level Meeting.

In April, 1981, Canada participated in a meeting of a small drafting group which produced a draft resolution for the Governing Council setting out the mandate for the Senior Level Meeting, and suggesting dates for it and the meeting of the Preparatory Committee. Decision 9/19 A taken by the Governing Council at its Ninth Session in May, 1981, based on this draft, provides that the mandate of the Senior Level Meeting shall be, "To establish a framework and methods for the development and periodic review of environmental law, by focussing upon..." a number of elements including " the identification of major subject areas - such as marine pollution from land-based sources, protection of the ozone layer, and disposal of hazardous wastes - suitable for increased global and regional coordination and cooperation in elaborating environmental law, with particular regard to the interests of developing countries;". The decision also directs the Senior Level Meeting, "To set out a programme, including global, regional and national efforts in furtherance of the above elements".

The Working Group of Experts on Environmental Law met in Geneva from September 9 to 18 as a Preparatory Committee for the Senior Level Meeting. This meeting was immediately preceded by a meeting of representatives of a number of developing countries to identify their particular concerns. The Preparatory Committee adopted a program of action which will be the basic working document for the Senior Level Meeting.

In February, 1980, the UNEP Working Group of Experts on Environmental Law completed its work on liability and compensation, the fourth and final part of its study on the legal aspects of offshore mining and drilling carried out within the limits of national jurisdiction. The report of the Working Group of Experts was considered by the UNEP