

later, thanks to the WCED report and work by an intergovernmental group on long term environmental perspectives, the UN General Assembly was ready, specifically, "to propose long-term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development to the year 2000 and beyond."²¹

From a variety of sources have come new ideas for institutional arrangements to deal with emerging environmental problems and the key issue of sustainable development. Some of these have been voiced by heads of state and of government, others by intergovernmental expert meetings and notable private citizens associated with the UN and with environmental issues. None have received more attention than the WCED findings whose report - "Our Common Future" - was released in 1987 and presented to the General Assembly at its 42nd session that Fall. When established in 1983, the "Brundtland" commission was given three objectives:

- to re-examine the critical environment and development issues and to formulate realistic proposals for dealing with them;
- to propose new forms of international co-operation on these issues that will influence policies and events in the direction of needed changes; and
- to raise the levels of understanding and commitment to action of individuals, voluntary organizations, businesses, institutes, and governments.

The Commission's report notes the process of change underway in which "human activities and their effects were neatly compartmentalized within nations, within sectors (energy, agriculture, trade), and within broad areas of concern (environmental, economic, social). These compartments have begun to dissolve. This applies in particular to the various global 'crises' that have seized public concern, particularly over the past decade. These are not separate crises: an environmental crisis, a development crises, an energy crisis. They are all one."

To remind us of the dimensions of current change, with which future institutions must cope, WCED cautions -

"Our human world must make room in a finite environment for another human world. The population could stabilize at between 8 billion and 14 billion sometime next century, ... More than 90 percent of the increase will occur in the poorest countries, and 90 percent of that growth in already bursting cities. Economic activity has multiplied to create a \$13 trillion world economy, and this could grow five- or tenfold in the coming half-century. Industrial production has grown more than fiftyfold over the past century, four-fifths of this growth since 1950. Such figures reflect and presage profound impacts upon the biosphere, as the world invests in houses, transport, farms, and industries. Much of the economic growth pulls raw material from forests, soils, seas, and waterways."

Noting the fragmented nature of most of the institutions facing the challenges of growth in an interdependent world, the commission devoted an entire chapter to proposals for institutional and legal change as a part of