

STATEMENT BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

TO SBI-7

Bonn, 20 October 1997

Welcome to the Beethovenhalle, the third of the meeting locations that we will be using this year in Bonn. We hope that you will find the facilities satisfactory and that next year we will be able to provide you with an adequate and predictable meeting location.

The task of the SBI at this session, as is also the case for the SBSTA, is to reach **consensus on decisions to recommend for adoption by COP 3**. It is to be hoped that the temptation to allow discussion to drag out until Kyoto will be avoided. There is too much at stake at Kyoto for energies to be distracted by questions that are less vital. This is not to deny the importance of issues which have their dedicated followers, such as AIJ or the review of the GEF. It is rather to suggest that whatever could be achieved on these questions in December can also be achieved now. The next month will not produce any significant new inputs to decisions.

I am sure that, under the guidance of the two experienced Chairmen of these bodies, it will be possible to achieve the desired results, including joint recommendations of the two bodies when necessary - as was already done at the previous sessions.

The agenda of the SBI is a varied one. I will speak on Wednesday to the question of arrangements for intergovernmental meetings and in particular for COP 3. At this time, I would like to briefly flag a few institutional or administrative matters.

The first point concerns **the need of developing countries for support in preparing their initial national communications and in strengthening related national capacities to address climate change**. I am still not convinced that there is a full realization of the extent of these needs. The observations of the secretariat on this subject, drawn from participation in a number of workshops and seminars on the subject, are contained in one of the documents before you (SBI/1997/INF.3). They point to weaknesses in capacities at the national level and to possible inadequacies in the provision of international support.

You are aware of the efforts of the Convention secretariat to promote a project that will provide timely and pointed support for national communications. In its initial form, proposed some years ago, this project would have been carried out by a consortium led by the secretariat. Advised against this role by the Parties, we turned our energies to promoting a GEF project, to be carried out by UNDP and UNEP. During the Convention meetings last March, we thought that the right formula had been found for the respective contribution of these two implementing agencies. Alas, this proved to be a false Spring and inter-agency discussions on the project have continued through to this Autumn. I was, however, assured personally last Saturday by the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the GEF that discussions will be concluded in the next few days and that the project will be under way in the very near future. I am confident that his decisive intervention will produce the long awaited result.