ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN CHILE

I.- GENERAL ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN CHILE

I.1.- INTRODUCTION

For the last decade, Chile has been engaged in an industrialization process that has permited diversification of its economy from a mainly copper exporting nation to a country that exports a variety of resources and products. This submersion into a vigorous developmental growth has proven economically attractive to national as well as international businessworld. Nevertheless, the environmental dimension has not being included as a prerequisite for the acceptance of new projects or ongoing ones, consequently, environmental problems are emerging. Few of them are impossible to ignore, such as the atmospheric pollution of Santiago, the Chañaral coasts contamination with copper mine tailings, or the steel, petrochemical and fish industry wastes that pollute Talcahuano's water, but other are yet not perceived by the general public as an environmental hazard.

After the 1987 Brundtland Report, many developed nations have adopted the principle of a **sustainable development** that promotes the use of natural resources in such a way that not only present needs are fulfilled but also future generations will be able to benefit theirs. This concept is now being incorporated into many speeches of government authorities, as well as, of the productive sector. Although that environmental issues have not been a priority in government policies, several Chilean organizations have been interested and