

American Association for the Advancement of Science
Science serves its readers as a forum for the presentation and discussion of important issues related to the advancement of science, including the presentation of minority or conflicting points of view, rather than by publishing only material on which a consensus has been reached. Accordingly, all articles published in *Science*—including editorials, news and comment, and book reviews—are signed and reflect the individual views of the authors and not official points of view adopted by the AAAS or the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

Publisher: Richard S. Nicholson

Editor: Daniel E. Koshland, Jr.

Deputy Editor: Ellis Rubinstein

Managing Editor: Monica M. Bradford

International Editor: Alun Anderson

Deputy Editors: Philip H. Abelson (*Engineering and Applied Sciences*); John I. Brauman (*Physical Sciences*); Thomas R. Cech (*Biological Sciences*)

EDITORIAL STAFF

Assistant Managing Editor: Dawn Bennett

Senior Editors: Eleanor Butz, Martha Coleman, Barbara Jasny, Katrina L. Kelner, Phillip D. Szuroimi, David F. Voss

Associate Editors: R. Brooks Hanson, Pamela J. Hines, Kelly LaMarco, Linda J. Miller, L. Bryan Ray

Letters: Christine Gilbert, *editor*; Steven S. Lapham

Book Reviews: Katherine Livingston, *editor*; Teresa Fryberger

Contributing Editor: Lawrence I. Grossman

Chief Production Editor: Ellen E. Murphy

Editing Department: Lois Schmitt, *head*; Denise Gipson, Julianne Hunt, Steven Powell

Copy Desk: MaryBeth Branigan, Joi S. Granger, Margaret E. Gray, Beverly Shields

Production Director: James Landry

Production Manager: Wendy K. Shank

Art Director: Amy Henry

Assistant Art Director: Julie Cherry

Graphics and Production: Holly Bishop, Diana DeFrancesco, Linda C. Owens, Catherine S. Siskos

Systems Analyst: William Carter

NEWS STAFF

Managing News Editor: Colin Norman

Deputy News Editors: Tim Appenzeller, John M. Benditt, Jean Marx

News and Comment/Research News: Ivan Amato, Faye Flam, Troy Gately (copy), Ann Gibbons, David P. Hamilton, Constance Holden, Richard A. Kerr, Robert N. Langreth, Eliot Marshall, Joseph Palca, Leslie Roberts

Bureaus: Marcia Barinaga (West Coast), Michelle Hoffman (Northeast), Anne Simon Moffat (Midwest)

Contributing Correspondents: Joseph Alper, Jeremy Cherfas, Barry A. Cipra, Robert Crease, Elizabeth Culotta, M. Mitchell Waldrop, Karen Wright

BUSINESS STAFF

Marketing Director: Beth Rosner

Circulation Director: Michael Spinella

Fulfillment Manager: Marlene Zandell

Financial Analyst: Deborah Rivera-Wienhold

Classified Advertising Supervisor: Amie Charlene King

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

Director: Earl J. Scherago

Traffic Manager: Donna Rivera

Traffic Manager (Recruitment): Gwen Canter

Advertising Sales Manager: Richard L. Charles

Marketing Manager: Herbert L. Burkland

Employment Sales Manager: Edward C. Keller

Sales: New York, NY 10036: J. Kevin Henebry, 1515 Broadway (212-730-1050); Scotch Plains, NJ 07076: C. Richard Callis, 12 Unami Lane (201-889-4873); Hoffman Estates, IL 60195: Jack Ryan, 525 W. Higgins Rd. (708-885-8675); San Jose, CA 95112: Bob Brindley, 310 S. 16th St. (408-998-4690); Dorset, VT 05251: Fred W. Dieffenbach, Kent Hill Rd. (802-867-5581); Damascus, MD 20872: Rick Sommer, 11318 Kings Valley Dr. (301-972-9270); U.K., Europe: Nick Jones, +44(0647)52918; Telex 42513; FAX (0647) 52053.

Information for contributors appears on pages 35–37 of the 4 January 1991 issue. Editorial correspondence, including requests for permission to reprint and reprint orders, should be sent to 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Telephone: 202-326-6500. **Advertising correspondence** should be sent to Tenth Floor, 1515 Broadway, New York, NY 10036. Telephone 212-730-1050 or WU Telex 968082 SCHERAGO, or FAX 212-382-3725. **Subscription/Member Benefits Questions:** 202-326-6417. **Science:** 202-326-6500. **Other AAAS Programs:** 202-326-6400.

Sustainable Future for Planet Earth

Participants at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to be held in Rio de Janeiro on 1 to 12 June 1992 will attempt to address many issues fundamental to achieving sustainable development. What of substance will be achieved is not now clear. The meeting will bring together representatives (perhaps heads of state) of about 150 countries, many of them with differing resources, needs, aspirations, and priorities. However, in view of growing global concern about environmental matters, the occasion will certainly be a great media event with possible repercussions on a presidential election.

One of the reasons for questioning the likelihood of a substantive achievement at UNCED is the breadth of its projected agenda. A United Nations brochure lists topics that the conference will address, and these are paraphrased below:

- Protection of the (i) atmosphere (climate change, depletion of the ozone layer, and transboundary air pollution); (ii) land resources (combating deforestation, soil loss, desertification, and drought); (iii) fresh water resources; and (iv) oceans, seas, and coastal areas and the rational use and development of their living resources.
- Conservation of biological diversity.
- Environmentally sound management of biotechnology and hazardous wastes (including toxic chemicals).
- Prevention of illegal traffic in toxic products and wastes.
- Improvement in (i) the quality of life and human health and (ii) living and working conditions of the poor by eradicating poverty and stopping environmental degradation.

The U.N. agenda provided a stimulus for many disparate groups to hold meetings in advance of Rio. These included distinguished interfaith religious leaders, organized broadcast groups, and scientists and engineers. Examples follow:

On 20 June, the AAAS directorates for International Programs* and for Science and Policy Programs hosted a 1-day symposium on UNCED. Speakers from the United Nations, the State Department, the International Council of Scientific Unions, and other organizations discussed the UNCED agenda and the role of nongovernmental organizations in preparing for the Rio meeting.

A “1991 Forum on Global Change and the Human Prospect” is planned for 16 to 18 November 1991 and will be held near Washington, D.C. Sigma Xi is the primary sponsoring scientific society. Co-sponsors include AAAS and about 40 other scientific and engineering societies whose total membership is about 1 million. The three plenary sessions are titled, respectively, “What Kind of a World Do We Have?”; “What Kind of a World Do We Want?”; and “What Must We Do to Get There?”. Workshop sessions will facilitate participation by attendees. The banquet speaker will be Maurice Strong, who heads the influential Secretariat of UNCED.

On 2 and 3 June, a gathering of leaders of the religious community of the United States was briefed by some top scientists-environmentalists. The presentations were evidently very effective. At the conclusion of the meeting the religious participants issued a statement describing in detail “mounting evidence of environmental destruction and ever-increasing peril to life, whole species, whole ecosystems.” The statement also noted: “We believe a consensus now exists, at the highest level of leadership across a significant spectrum of religious traditions, that the cause of environmental integrity and justice must occupy a position of utmost priority for people of faith.” The religious leaders involved included members of the Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, and Protestant faiths. They “reach, teach, and counsel many millions of people.” The impact of UNCED will also be enhanced by television programs on development and environment. Twenty films will be broadcast during a period of 2 to 4 weeks in May 1992. Among them will be seven 50-minute films co-produced by BBC Television.

Perhaps the greatest impact of the media will occur at the time of the UNCED meeting in Rio and thereafter. Coverage of the event will be enormous. In addition to the official proceedings, a major secondary event involving 20,000 to 40,000 representatives of nongovernmental organizations will make news.—PHILIP H. ABLESON

*AAAS Directorate for International Programs, (202) 326-6650.

Sustainable Future for Planet Earth

PHILIP H. ABLESON

Science **253** (5016), 117.

DOI: 10.1126/science.253.5016.117

ARTICLE TOOLS

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/253/5016/117.citation>

PERMISSIONS

<http://www.sciencemag.org/help/reprints-and-permissions>

Use of this article is subject to the [Terms of Service](#)

Science (print ISSN 0036-8075; online ISSN 1095-9203) is published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1200 New York Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20005. The title *Science* is a registered trademark of AAAS.

1991 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science