# NOTICE

## WCB and FEC

At a meeting held on Saturday, 24 October 1992, in the Foundation's Headquarters (address given below), certain questions were debated and decisions taken *nemine dissentiente* which we feel should be recorded for our Members and world-wide readership. The participants of the meeting of the quorum number of eleven included several distinguished environmentalists but only three Councillors of WCB, and hence was informal as regards that body — a majority of the survivors among whom had either failed to respond effectively to the Notice, or given the undersigned their proxies — but included a majority of the Governing Board of FEC. Hence it seems permissible to treat the following decisions as binding — at least as regards administrative activities by the Foundation and reporting to our governmental supervisors in Geneva and Bern, the latter of whom had advised us to treat WCB from its beginning as a part of FEC .

1. WCB — the World Council For The Biosphere — should continue as a theme and title (as currently nr 6) on the notepaper of the Foundation for Environmental Conservation, but should cease separate functioning pending reconstitution as a rejuvenated body with its own administration, budget, and duly revised Constitution.* [This was proposed *inter alia* as many of WCB's intended functions had been taken over by new bodies — including *EarthAction* 'designed to mobilize global public pressure' for necessary world-wide action.]

2. The functions of, or planned for, WCB should be taken on directly by FEC — particularly Biosphere Day, its Fund and Prizes, for seeking the wherewithal to implement which effectively no effort must be spared. Whereas adequate endowment would be the best thing to seek, especially as The Biosphere Prizes should lead this part of our campaign to remind all humanity annually of the absolute necessity of safeguarding its fragile life-support and only home, any worthy source should be encouraged and donation therefrom welcomed. Other Biosphere prizes could bear the names of their donors, which could be concerns that really desired to look 'green' — provided, of course, they were sufficiently worthy in other ways. At least at first, nominations for such prizes could be called for through the Foundation's quarterly Journal, *Environmental Conservation*, and allied organs, being handled by the Foundation's confidential Awards Committee. The idea was favoured of national-level or even local-level Biosphere Prizes in due course, which might be linked with the Clubs mentioned in nr 7 below.

3. The desirability of a special International Court of Environment was debated but it was felt that there are already sufficient bodies (including two in The Hague) with competence to deal with environmental breaches and that yet another should not be contemplated at least as an urgent measure.

4. Also debated was the desirability of an International or World Council of Environmental Education, to collate the work of national and regional bodies which are apt to be very active on their own but without due reference to (or even sometimes knowledge of) the work of others. Several such attempts had been made in the past but never come to much — including ISEE which still exists on paper — though the IUCN Commission on Education was usefully continuing, and hopes could be entertained for the International Environmental Education Council recently established during the 'Earth Summit' in Rio. They and any new body must, however, manage to avoid the shortcomings of previous attempts to establish such a collating body and should deal with the need of environmental education at all ages and stages of practicability.

5. The Meeting heartily endorsed the emergence of Geneva as a leading environmental centre, nowhere else having such a galaxy of pertinent bodies and specialists to consult. Meanwhile it was felt that WCB had been a valuable, 'especially stimulating', body but that 'FEC offers the best [support] to carry [its] things on'.

6. Environmental and conservational books being now too numerous, voluminous, and/or expensive, for even libraries to keep up with, a plan had been evolved for a series of understandable but inexpensive 'Paperback Original "Readers by Leaders"', for which plentiful suggestions were already available. With the present 'shelving' of WCB, this enterprise (for such it is, being foreseeably self-supporting financially after 1,000 copies of the first, entitled *Environmental Challenges*, had been donated by a generous organization) would be taken on by FEC, which would be asked to give special attention to it at its next meeting and, doubtless, subsequent ones, its responsibility being duly acknowledged on the title-page of each booklet in the intended series.

7. Following a comment by a Director in the Department of Public Works of the Republic & Canton of Geneva, the idea was debated and enthusiastically endorsed, of encouraging local Biosphere lunch or other Clubs as widely as possible in the world, whereupon the Deputy Secretary of the Foundation generously volunteered to organize the first in Geneva. Individually such Biosphere Clubs should be for limited numbers of people desiring to hold group discussions under specialist leaders or with guest speakers, and should be self-supporting and largely autonomous but promoted and collated by FEC.

Nicholas POLUNIN, *President*
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*Although the matter was not raised at the Meeting, it is hereby suggested that Officers of the Council retain such rights indefinitely in order to constitute a body, together with any Councillors whose terms may not yet have expired, which could decide on, and if desirable guide helpfully, such living person, persons, or body, as might have the aspiration and means of reconstituting WCB in the future.



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