

areas programme. This is obviously an arbitrary listing and may set an unpleasant precedent. In actual fact these NGOs, though they operate on the international scale on the strength of their funds, do not have an open membership, democratic election of leadership or adequate representation of Southern citizens in their governance structures. I just hope that such arbitrary recognition of NGOs would not set a precedent.

Emil Salim, who chaired the UN Preparatory Committee for the Johannesburg Summit, asked his colleagues on the podium, in desperation, at the adjournment of an inconclusive session during the critical final meeting of the committee,

'What shall we do with the US?' (The saintly Salim had forgotten to switch his microphone off and the next day, NGO representatives appeared at the meeting venue wearing T-shirts printed with the quote). How could CBD achieve the 2010 target of substantially reducing the loss of biodiversity without bringing the country with the largest number of endangered reptilian, amphibian and fish species in the world into its ambit? Nobody has raised the issue of bringing the US to accede to the Convention, not even the Ministerial Declaration which has called on all countries to accede to the Biosafety Protocol. It may not be entirely true that delegates were happy not hav-

ing the intimidating voice of the US in the negotiation halls. The US can be brought into the fold of the treaty only if a forthcoming CoP decides not to provide access to biodiversity for non-Parties.

CBD is a fair, international legal mechanism available for the sustainable management of biodiversity, but its implementation would depend on the strength that the South could gather in the future negotiations, without forgetting their own responsibilities.

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## BOYSCAST programme

It has been well recognized that in order to keep abreast with latest developments in science and technology (S&T), Indian scientists and technologists, particularly the younger ones, should have opportunities to interact with the international scientific community and get first-hand information about the developments taking place at the international level. The 'Better Opportunities for Young Scientists in Chosen Areas of Science and Technology' (BOYSCAST) programme of the Department of Science and Technology provides opportunities to young Indian scientists/technologists below the age of 35 years, who hold regular positions in recognized S&T institutes in India to visit international institutions and interact with scientists/technologists abroad, get exposure to latest research techniques, and

participate and contribute to the latest developments in specially chosen areas of S&T. The fellowships under the BOYSCAST programme are of three to twelve months duration and are provided every year. The selected Indian scientist/technologist should be accepted by a foreign scientific/technological institution, which is internationally recognized as an outstanding institution where major work in the identified area is in progress. It is envisaged that the expertise gained by these young scientists/technologists during the fellowship period will lead to initiation/strengthening of the national programmes in these areas as well as further generation and spread of expertise at the national institutes.

During the last year, the fellowships were awarded to about thirty scientists/

technologists in the following areas: atmospheric and earth sciences, chemical sciences, engineering sciences, life sciences, mathematical sciences and physical sciences.

The overseas host institutions included universities/institutes in USA, UK, France, Germany, Austria, Japan, Australia and Singapore. The BOYSCAST Fellowship for the year 2004–05 has recently been announced (see <http://dst.gov.in>; <http://www.serc-dst.org> and 10 May 2004 issue *Current Science*).

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