

increasing by 50% during the 1980s to an average of nearly 17 million hectares per year.

Although the above findings on global soil degradation are preliminary, the figures in Table I offer the best available estimates of this serious environmental problem. The report is drawn from a three-years' Global Assessment of Soil Degradation (GLASOD) survey sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme and coordinated by the International Soil Reference and Information Centre

in The Netherlands. The data were provided by more than 250 soil scientists around the world, the survey being part of a large-scale, 15-years' global soil study.

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### St Petersburg A-Ya Society Looking for Foreign Collaborators

The St Petersburg A-Ya Society is organized to support environmental and other scientists and others who aspire to establish businesses of their own but need juridical and financial help and general guidance. The Society is a non-commercial but self-supporting organization of humanitarian orientation. Its most desirable task is to guide scientists and others through the hardships of the reconstruction period in Russia, in conditions of chronic destruction of the centralized state structures, to create independent, private establishments of high professional level.

At the present time the Society consists of an administrative staff (3 directors, 2 economists, a lawyer, and several assistants) and 80 independent private companies, realizing artistic, scientific, and technical, programmes under the Society's supervision. Among the companies are two former collective farms and a group of biologists in the geological-ecological company 'United Laboratories'.

United Laboratories is one of the companies duly organized within the structure of the A-Ya Society. It deals with geological and ecological problems (both fundamental and applied), and consists of several research groups, scientific laboratories, and individual professionals who were formerly working in such state structures as St Petersburg University, the Petroleum Institute, the Institute of Toxicology (Petersburg), and some geological groups in Ukhta (Timan-Pechora region), etc.

All of the specialists working for the United Laboratories are experienced professionals with Doctoral degrees. They are studying the basic problems of geology and ecology together with such specific practical tasks as geochemical mapping (of polluting elements), drug, toxic, and bioactive substances' effects, testing the influence of polluting substances on living organisms, and other special problems.

The St Petersburg A-Ya Society aims to promote international activities by establishing representative offices for foreign companies, societies, and other organizations, and is concerned about the exchange of scientific and cultural achievements in the form of exhibitions, conferences, international expeditions, concerts, etc. The Society is especially interested in active participation in international ecological programmes, and can suggest broadly-oriented specialists working in several neighbouring scientific areas (microbiology, toxicology, geochemistry, etc.). For further information please telephone Geneva (022) 346-3132 or 786-9383, or St Petersburg 259-1111, or otherwise contact the undersigned.

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### Solid Waste Association of North America

The Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA) was established as the Governmental Refuse Collection and Disposal Association (GRCDA) in 1961, primarily to assist municipal solid-waste management professionals who were working for local government, to meet their responsibilities in refuse collection and disposal.

Since that beginning, GRCDA has grown to address the entire spectrum of municipal solid-waste management, has broadened its membership to include both publicly and privately employed municipal solid-waste management professionals, has changed its name to reflect how the field has changed from refuse collection and disposal to municipal solid-waste management, and is now the largest member-based solid-waste association in the world. SWANA membership is principally from the US and Canada, but SWANA also has members in more than 10 other countries.

SWANA, in serving its membership and involved professionals, has a dual mission:

1. To serve as the centre of technical excellence in municipal solid-waste management; and

2. To represent the interests of the municipal solid-waste management professional.

To carry out this dual mission, SWANA has a number of programmes which are directed to serving the membership, nine of which are the following:

- SWANA trains over 6,000 individuals every year in all areas of municipal solid-waste management (MSWM).
- SWANA offers a number of speciality conferences and technical symposia in all aspects of MSWM.
- SWANA has the largest solid-waste library in the world.
- Through SWICH (Solid Waste Information Clearinghouse), SWANA provides electronic access as well as direct access to literature services and technical information.
- SWANA provides technical assistance and networking to assist practitioners in carrying out their responsibilities.
- SWANA conducts and supports professionalism in the field through training and certification of practitioners.

- SWANA represents the interest of its membership before legislative and regulatory bodies.
- SWANA develops and advocates policies in the field of municipal solid-waste management.
- SWANA is a member of the International Solid Waste and Public Cleansing Association (ISWA). Through this mechanism, SWANA provides a means for its membership to interact with their peers in other countries.

SWANA services are available to anyone working in the field of MSWM, or to any individual who is interested

in the subject of MSWM. Most services are available at little or no cost, but SWANA members receive a discount for all services for which there is a charge. For further information please contact the undersigned.

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### International Wilderness Leadership (WILD) Foundation

The International Wilderness Leadership (WILD) Foundation is now doing business as the WILD Foundation. The original name has been in use since 1974 and will continue to serve as the organization's full legal name. However the new, easy-to-remember name has been established for more popular use.

The mission of the WILD Foundation remains the same: developing and supporting projects that link wilderness and people. This is accomplished through the protection of wilderness and wildlife, the promotion of the wise use of wildlands world-wide, and the provision of environmental education and training. The Foundation works internationally through an active Board of Directors, associates in the field, and local governmental and nongovernmental conservation organizations.

WILD has a special focus on wilderness and people issues in southern Africa. For example, in Botswana, the focus is on training, education, and resolving critical issues in the Okavango Delta. The Foundation has provided a patrol aircraft to be used in the Zambezi Valley in Zimbabwe to help control poaching and assist in translocating the Black Rhino (*Diceros bicornis*). WILD supports the Cheetah Conservation Fund in Namibia, where two skilled research workers are striving to save the Cheetah (*Acinonyx jubata*) from extinction. WILD also works in South Africa to develop environmental education, wilderness designation, wilderness experience, and training programmes. In Mozambique, WILD is helping to supply equipment for the new Bazaruto Archipelago National Park.

The WILD Foundation is probably best known for periodically convening the World Wilderness Congress (WWC). The Congress, an ongoing international, action-

oriented forum, has so far convened on four occasions (South Africa, 1977; Australia, 1980; Scotland, 1983; and United States, 1987), and has involved thousands of delegates from more than 70 countries. From throughout the world, politicians, corporate executives, scientists, teachers, tribal people, philosophers, and the general public, meet to discuss — and act on — issues and projects involving wilderness, world-wide conservation, and sustainable development. The 5th WWC is earmarked to convene in Norway in September 1993 and will focus on wild Nature and sustainable living in the circumpolar regions. The celebrated Norwegian explorer and conservationist Dr Thor Heyerdahl, of *Kon Tiki* fame, will serve as the Honorary Chairman.

The WILD Foundation also produces books, their most recent to appear, published in cooperation with the US Forest Service, being the second edition of *Wilderness Management*, which is the major sourcebook in this field. The Foundation's newsletter, the *Leaf*, is published three times per year (\$20 subscription); it serves to review the status of WILD's programmes and to provide an experienced perspective on critical international conservation issues.

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### Biological 'Hotspots' Face Most Serious Threats

Rain-forest 'hotspots', containing the planet's greatest diversity of plant and animal species, also face the greatest threat of deforestation. Moreover they are located in countries which are among the least prepared — economically and scientifically — to conserve their biological resources, according to a document recently published by Conservation International, a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC, USA. This document is in the form of a large and coloured, three-times-folded poster entitled *Biodiversity at Risk: A Preview of Conservation International's Atlas for the 1990s*. Priced at US \$9.95, it combines for the first time data on biological richness, human disturbance, and local conservation capacity, in virtually all of the world's nations,

including those that harbour 15 rain-forest 'hotspots' and 3 tropical wilderness areas. Rain-forest 'hotspots' are considered the most diverse and most threatened on Earth.

The data on the large poster are displayed on a series of maps and maplets produced by Conservation International's geographic information system (CI/SIG), a computer programme that allows researchers to integrate biological and ecological data with socio-economic and physical-environment data. New data on human disturbance reveal that more than half the world's land-area has been changed from its natural state, and show that the majority of Earth's richest habitats have been already altered significantly by human intervention. With the exception of tropical and cold deserts and polar tundra, the