

another Washington-based tobacco association to get industry views of the future of this type of support, the receptionist who answered the phone said: "I'm sorry. No one is in the office today. They're all out of the country."

Fund for UN Science Center Short by \$200 Million

Think Big was the battle cry at the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, but the outcome, at least in terms of dollars, has been small.

Last August, 5000 professional and amateur problem-solvers descended on Vienna and sought a way to build up the science-based capacity of poor countries. Those representing the technological have-nots wanted a fund for the furtherance of Third World science that over a period of 10 years would automatically add up to \$4 billion. The technological haves did not. After much haggling in the cafés and conference rooms of Vienna, the long-time adversaries settled on a 2-year, voluntary fund of \$250 million.

At the UN pledging conference for this fund, held in New York on 27 March, the realities of world politics made still deeper cuts into the rhetoric of the Vienna accords. Actual donations came to a mere \$35.8 million.

Officials at the UN Development Program (UNDP) blame the shortfall on the inadequate time in which governments had to make dollar decisions, on the current chaos of the world economy, and on anger in some UN delegations resulting from a squabble over how to staff the new policy unit that was set up to help administer the fund (*Science*, 25 January). UN officials are optimistic about things picking up, however, saying other commitments have already pushed the fund to \$45.7 million.

A fact that puts these pledges in perspective is that the tab for the 2-week-long conference in Vienna—including five preparatory meetings held around the world and the travel, food, and lodging for the 5000 delegates and observers who flocked to Vienna—is said to be about \$50 million. Some estimates go as high as \$60 million.

The UN invited 163 governments to

attend the grand finale to all this globe-trotting and wine-drinking—the 27 March pledging conference. Seventy-eight showed up. Of the 35 countries who made donations, many were themselves technological have-nots. Lesotho, for instance, gave \$575, Fiji \$1000, the Dominican Republic \$3000, Kenya \$5000, and Paraguay \$3000. Several of the better-off developing countries agreed to contribute larger sums. Nigeria, for instance, gave \$250,000 and China agreed to contribute \$264,000.

As expected, major contributions came from the developed countries, Italy giving \$9 million, the Netherlands and Sweden each contributing \$5 million, Norway, Switzerland, and Austria putting in \$2 million apiece. France, Germany, and Japan said administrative reasons made concrete pledges impossible at the time. Canada said it has decided to put all funds for Third World science into its own International Development Research Center. The United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and the eastern European bloc did not show up at the conference.

The U.S. pledge, once expected to be the cornerstone of the fund, amounted to a mere \$7.2 million. Officials at the State Department say it was the victim of across-the-board cuts dictated by the Office of Management and Budget. In the past, U.S. support of UN projects has usually amounted to about 20 percent of their total cost. It was thus expected that the United States would put up \$50 million toward the Vienna goal of \$250 million. By autumn, however, the U.S. portion had shrunk to \$25 million. December saw another ominous development. The United States cast the lone negative vote in the General Assembly over the staffing issue—a move seen by the technological have-nots as a U.S. ploy to cover further retreat from dollar commitments. Sure enough, when President Carter's budget request went to Congress in January, the figure had dropped to \$15 million. During the 27 March pledging conference, U.S. delegate Vanden Heuvel said the contribution would be between \$10 and \$15 million—and that it would not exceed 20 percent of the total. Since all contributions of 27 March reached only \$35.8 million, the U.S. donation was 20 percent or \$7.2 million. Even if further contributions should greatly expand the fund—a

hope that UNDP officials still hang on to—the State Department now says there is a \$10 million ceiling on the U.S. donation.

All this has not set well with UNDP officials. "The Carter Administration has really distinguished itself for being weak-kneed in the last lap of this whole operation," said one. "They put on a great song and dance in Vienna, and got a lot of kudos for being visible, encouraging, helpful, firm—all the good things. Now all the United States has done is convince everybody that they are at best incompetent and at worst acting in bad faith. And I'm being polite."

In addition to the dollar ceilings announced at the 27 March conference, the United States said its donation is guaranteed only if "significant contributions are made by countries receiving large incomes from oil exports." These donations have not yet materialized, though delegates from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were present at the pledging conference and said their countries would eventually make some kind of donation. One oil exporter who did donate at the pledging conference was Venezuela, a country that had pushed hard at the Vienna conference for a large fund. Some observers expected that its contribution would be on the order of \$5 to \$10 million, but its pledge on 27 March came to only \$97,000. "We just don't know what went wrong," said one State Department official.

UN officials say they do. "Before the pledging, the U.S. delegation broadcast the fact that they were coming down to \$10 million," said one. "Other countries followed suit, and we have lost millions." State replies that the UN is using the United States as a whipping boy, and that global economic conditions probably accounted for the poor showing.

For whatever reasons, the slow start for the fund has left a gap that officials are anxious to fill. UNDP administrator Bradford Morse said at the pledging conference that the fund will become operational this May, and that an additional pledging conference will be held this fall. After the results from the 1980-1981 interim fund are in, he said, a team of specialists will decide if a larger, long-term fund for Third World science is an idea whose time has come.

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