



UNEP

THE FIRST 40 YEARS

A NARRATIVE

BY STANLEY JOHNSON





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In addition to UNEP's staff, the author is immensely grateful to members of UNEP's Governing Council, both individually and collectively. In a very real sense, UNEP's Governing Council has been one of the principal actors, if not the principal actor, in this unfolding drama. In an ideal world, the UN would still have retained the verbatim reports of its meetings which would have made it possible for the historian to identify the part played

by different countries, and indeed different individual personalities, in some of the key decisions. Those reports are no longer available. Nor is it easy to locate, after a lapse of time, the actual texts of speeches delivered by country representatives in the Governing Council and elsewhere.

But the reality is not in doubt. Though UNEP — as this account will make clear — has benefitted immensely from the inspired leadership of successive Executive Directors, as well as a loyal and hard-working staff, the contribution of the Governing Council has without doubt been the single most important factor in assuring the Organization's viability and success.

It seems likely, following the decisions taken at the United Nations "Rio+20" Conference on Sustainable Development in June 2012, that the United Nations General Assembly will soon decide to open the membership of UNEP's Governing Council to all the members of the United Nations.

If that does indeed happen, it can be seen as a well-earned tribute to the dedicated and often inspired work of the Governing Council as currently constituted over the last 40 years, work which has been chronicled, in part at least, however imperfectly, in the pages of this book.

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