

of allowing the economy to stagnate and, as a result, setting in motion a brain drain that has deprived Israel of thousands of scientists and engineers.

But many specific questions remain unanswered. Will, for instance, Labour create a Science Authority or even a Ministry of Science to take over from the virtually moribund National Council for Research and Development?

Also unclear is the amount of government support that can be expected for basic research, hitherto dependent on overseas grants, and whether there will be more funds for universities, which have suffered a drop of more than 30 per cent in real income over the past few years.

Peres will say no more than that he plans to "upgrade science, technology and education". How this will be reflected in Labour government budgets remains to be seen.

Nechemia Meyers

Caribbean anti-pollution plan Jamaican entente

Montego Bay, Jamaica

Temporarily forgetting their many political and cultural differences, government officials from 23 Caribbean nations met in Jamaica recently and agreed on guidelines for coordinating efforts to minimize the pollution of their seas and coastlines. The meeting was the latest in a series organized under the Regional Seas Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), most widely publicized of which have been those aimed at cleaning up the Mediterranean.



The plan of action agreed in Jamaica will probably have less immediate impact than the Mediterranean agreement, in part because the Caribbean is not a completely closed sea, and the level of pollution is therefore considerably lower.

Nevertheless, delegates to the Jamaican meeting stressed that the prime goal of the Caribbean plan should be preventative. According to Dr Stepan Keckes, director of the UNEP programme, "the governments have decided to tackle marine pollution not as a problem in itself but as the consequence of the problems which lie on the land".

The principal goal is to integrate concerns for the state of the marine environment into development plans for

the Caribbean region. The four projects already selected as being of top priority under the action programme include a regional oil-spill contingency plan, guidelines for managing watersheds, efforts to improve national environmental health services and broad measures to improve environmental education.

Relatively little money has been promised so far. A trust fund which is being set up as part of the action plan failed to reach its target of \$1.5 million, as a result of which UNEP secretary general Mostafa Tolba said that his organization would contribute an extra \$1.38 million. The principal donors to the fund have been Mexico, Venezuela and France, the first two being the main economic forces in the Caribbean region. Britain is prepared to make a contribution that reflects the specific interests of its dependent territories in the region (which include Antigua and the Caymans) but is unlikely to match the \$375,000 promised by France.

UNEP officials, however, as well as those from other aid bodies, hope that the plan will act as a stimulus for action at a national level. Jamaica in particular is hoping to take a leading role in coordinating development policies in the region. Addressing the closing session of the meeting, Jamaica's recently elected prime minister, Mr Edward Seaga, said that the agreement on marine pollution was "the greatest collaborative effort in the Caribbean to date, and may be a vanguard of future efforts to bond Caribbean nations in a common cause".

Jamaica is to become the base for a regional coordinating unit that will be established to facilitate the technical implementation of the action plan. The island has also put in a bid to become the home of the international sea-bed authority which would result from a successful outcome of the Law of the Sea negotiations now taking place at the United Nations in New York.

In the long term, the success of the Caribbean action plan is likely to depend primarily on procedures that individual states can be persuaded to adopt to minimize the sources of marine pollution. A top priority is to draw up a draft regional convention, and UNEP officials hope that a treaty committing countries to reducing sources of potentially damaging pollution can be agreed within two years.

The fate of the plan is also likely to be important to UNEP itself. Moves in Washington to reduce, or even eliminate, the US contribution to UNEP could cripple many of its programmes. US officials, however, are keen to cement political ties in the Caribbean — particularly with the new Jamaican government — and have indicated that the United States might in future be prepared to contribute to the trust fund. If UNEP can prove its value to the United States in the region, its medium-term prospects could be significantly improved.

David Dickson

Philosophy wrangle

Doubts persist about academic freedom in post-Tito Yugoslavia. Last month, the Yugoslav Secretariat for Information announced the reinstatement of the seven Belgrade professors of philosophy dismissed last January for their association during the early 1970s with the independent Marxist journal *Praxis*. Apparently the seven are to receive new appointments in an "Institute for Social Studies" specially created for them. Members of the group, however, say that no definite settlement has been reached.

Since *Praxis* was closed down in 1975, and the members of the group were suspended on 60 per cent salary, forbidden to teach or to publish within Yugoslavia, the authorities have repeatedly tried to persuade them to find new posts.

In June last year, the Serbian republic's law on universities was amended to permit dismissal after six months' suspension on the grounds of "damaging social interests". During the next six months, the authorities tried to persuade the suspended professors to find jobs. Two were even offered non-teaching posts within the philosophical faculty of Belgrade University, but they replied that they could not accept the post unless the other five were also reinstated.

Dismissal became effective in January, but the authorities later suggested that posts might be found in the Belgrade "Institute of Social Studies" — not part of the university but the authorities suggested that it could be rapidly converted into one.

Official plans, it turned out, envisaged that three of the group would retire, and the other four would be scattered among the existing centres of the Institute of Social Studies, covering areas such as "public opinion" and law. When these plans became known to the seven, they refused emphatically: they were, they said philosophers, and wished to work as such.

The vice-premier of Serbia, Milan Dragovic, who was acting as official negotiator, had already said that the transfer of the Institute for Social Studies to the university was nothing to do with the seven's demands, but was something that had long been necessary. He also conceded that a Centre of Philosophy within the institute would be a good idea.

On 3 April, the acting director of the institute, Dr Svetozar Culibrk, called in the whole group for talks, the first time that the authorities have been willing to negotiate with the professors *en bloc*. Dr Culibrk said that he "liked the idea" of a centre and would lay it before the institute's council. The seven are understood to be cautiously optimistic.

Vera Rich