

Foreword

The Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) was established by the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) in 1969 to advance knowledge of the influence of the human race upon its environment, as well as the effects of those alterations upon human health and welfare. It was intended to give particular attention to those effects which are either global or shared in common by several nations. It serves as a non-governmental, interdisciplinary and international council of scientists, and as a source of advice for governments and inter-governmental agencies with respect to environmental problems.

SCOPE seeks to synthesize environmental information from diverse scientific fields, identifying knowledge gaps, and disseminating the results. During the last several years, the main emphasis has been on the following topics:

1. Biogeochemical cycles;
2. Dynamic changes and evolution of ecosystems;
3. Environmental aspects of human settlements;
4. Ecotoxicology;
5. Simulation modelling of environmental systems;
6. Environmental monitoring;
7. Communication of environmental information and societal assessment and response.

A number of publications have resulted, including *SCOPE 10: Environmental Issues* which provides an overview of the environmental challenges of the next decade.

Few problems illustrate more concretely and visibly the international and multidisciplinary character of these issues than does the question of the origin, transport, and deposition of Saharan dust. The eolian particles from the Sahara are seen and have their effects at distances of thousands of kilometres from the Mediterranean to the Caribbean. Their mobilization is influenced by a wide range of physical, biological, and social factors. Understanding what produces them and shapes their movement, and their influence upon the receiving environment calls for research in biology, chemistry, geography, geology, meteorology, oceanography, pedology, and related social science.

SCOPE was happy to join in the initiative taken by the Secretariat for International Ecology of Sweden in organizing the workshop from which this volume of papers is drawn. The officers of SCOPE are grateful to Dr. Christer Morales for his

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