

## *Foreword*

The International Working Seminar on Environmental Risk Assessment, June 8-14 1977 was organized by the Scientific Committee on Problems of Environment (SCOPE) of the International Council of Scientific Unions, and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The Biological Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences at Tihany, located on the shore of Lake Balaton, was chosen as a host to the seminar.

Lake Balaton, on the shores of which there are over 500,000 holidaymakers on weekends in summer, is one of the most precious natural resources of Hungary. In addition, intensive agricultural production and food processing have been developed in the lake's surroundings. Consequently, during the past decades eutrophication has speeded up. This urged the respective Hungarian scientific bodies and regional administrative organs to elaborate a long-range programme for the slowing-down of eutrophication through preserving the lake's nutrients and for the solution of other environmental problems (i.e. noise, air pollution, etc.) of the resort areas.

The example of Lake Balaton demonstrates that certain conflicts between nature and society may arise during the process of economic development. Generally, there are no measures which have only favourable impacts, but concrete actions can be taken only after the careful assessment of favourable and unfavourable effects.

Usually, considerable funds are needed for every operative action enhancing the values of the environment. Since there is no country which would have unlimited financial resources for these purposes, the selection of top priorities and their ranking through the estimation of the risks of unfavourable impacts is of the utmost importance. A powerful environmental policy cannot function without risk assessment. This is particularly important in the case of countries where the difficult task of industrial development is being carried out in our time.

Environmental risk assessment is a new method and means for the elaboration of the economic and science-based alternatives of processes applied in protecting human health. This was why the Hungarian Academy of Sciences was pleased to be a host to the above-mentioned seminar, where experts from 23 countries could have a beneficial scientific exchange of views and could part in mutual respect and friendship.

**I. LÁNG**

*Deputy Secretary General  
Hungarian Academy of Sciences*

