

FOREWORD

On 1 and 2 September 1989, the Commonwealth Science Council, acting in cooperation with the Federation of Asian Chemical Societies, UNESCO and other regional and international agencies organised a Symposium on Chemistry and the Environment during the Chemistry International Conference in Brisbane, Australia. The Symposium sought to bring together eminent scientists to identify and discuss major environmental issues of consequence to the Asia-Pacific region having a direct association with chemistry.

Earth's atmosphere is influenced by a number of chemical reactions involving many chemical species. An understanding of the chemistry of the environment, therefore, has many-fold ramifications and implications. To an academician, chemistry of the environment could be a curiosity. To the humanity at large, this understanding is vital to preserving the environment through policy initiatives and legislative measures. The chemical dynamics of the earth's environment constitute a fascinating and scientifically exciting field of endeavour. It is one of the underlying themes in the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme: "To describe and understand the interactive physical, chemical and biological processes that regulate the total Earth system, the unique environment that it provides for life, the changes that are occurring in this system, and the manner in which they are influenced by human actions".

Presentations and discussions in the Symposium covered a wide range and included the International Geochemical Mapping Project, fossil fuels utilisation, ozone hole, greenhouse gases and effects, specific environmental impacts of several chemicals, atmospheric and urban air modelling, major chemical accidents, and environmental monitoring aspects. Scope for regional and international cooperation was discussed in a Forum, as a result of which an Asia-Pacific regional project on Chemical Research and Environmental Needs (CREN) is being set in motion.

The Commonwealth Science Council was fortunate to secure the combined association of Dr M.S. Chadha and Dr B.N. Noller for editing the papers presented in the Brisbane Symposium. They were easily the natural choice having co-organised the Symposium itself successfully. I am profoundly grateful to both of them. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the excellent cooperation extended by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, India, in particular by Dr A.P. Mitra, FRS, Director-General, Dr G.P. Phondke, Director, Publications & Information Directorate and Mr. K.N. Johry, Head, International Scientific Collaboration for enabling this publication to be produced in such a short time and at a reduced cost.

The Commonwealth Science Council is pleased to make this publication available to students of the environment, scientists, policy-makers and the wider international community concerned about contemporary environmental issues.