

THE BIO-ENVIRONMENT CENTRAL AND LOCAL POLICY

The Honorable Ismet Sezgin

Minister of the Interior
Turkey

I am very happy that this international conference on the environment and the role of universities and technology is organized by the Biopolitics International Organisation in our country. I would like to welcome and express my best wishes to all the participants and guests.

Undoubtedly, the reunion of so many scientists, specialists, researchers, politicians and industrialists, discussing such a multi-disciplinary subject as the environment, will contribute to the enhancement not only of the biopolitics goals, but also of the cooperation and solidarity among nations. On this occasion, we all wish to express our steady determination to protect the common values of humanity. Parallel to this, we may benefit from this occasion to renew the feelings of fraternity and friendship among the representatives of countries friends.

Twenty years have passed since the World Conference on the Environment, held by the United Nations in Stockholm, in 1972. The world developments in the field of the environment will be assessed during a new international meeting organized by the United Nations in Rio de Janeiro. The Rio Conference has to be considered as an important point of triangulation in the history of the environment.

Apart from other successful results obtained during the last twenty years, it must be admitted that a great distance has been covered in both developed and developing countries regarding the awareness by the public of the responsibility due to the environment. Very important steps have been made at both the national and international level, toward warranting environmental values through jurisdiction. Besides, it has been understood that the apparent contradiction between the goals of economic development and environmental protection does not exist in reality. Through the adopted concept of sustainable development, both goals have been included in law, constitution, international treatments and economic plans.

The interest of public opinion in protecting the environment increases rapidly. Environmental awareness is being developed in all levels of society. Ideological, geographical or political restrictions lose importance compared to such high ideals as the protection of the values of the environment. Governments stress the need for close cooperation between public organizations, industry and universities, in facing the problems of technological development and legislation, as related to the needs of the environment. The activities of the Biopolitics International Organisation in this direction have reached praiseworthy dimensions.

For the last ten years, the Turkish State has made efforts to organize environmental policy on two levels: central and local. Article no. 56 of the Constitution recognizes the 'right to the environment'. A Code for the Environment and a Ministry for the Environment were created.

Within a democratic parliamentary state, people may easily understand their tasks regarding the environment and development on the local scale. The enhancement of local institutions and the promotion of democratic participation in the administration are of vital importance for the protection of the environment.

Since the deeper sense of democracy is participation, no decision neglecting public opinion may be effective in safeguarding the environment and natural life. Furthermore, the degree of participation of the public in the preservation of the values of the city and the environment is a measure of the existence of a country's democratic institutions.

Our government has worked extensively in developing local administration and providing people with the legal and financial means needed to uphold the proper values, in accordance with the principles adopted by the European Charter of Local Autonomy.

Placing the environment in the consciousness of people at every age is more valuable than any legal imposition. No measure may be as effective as society's self control. People need to use all their energy in requesting the preservation of the environment. It is evident that the discussions on educational matters in this Conference contribute to the realization of the above goal.

We believe that the organization of this conference in our country may acquire a special meaning, since important steps are being made on the issue of democratization, human rights, local administration and participation. Please allow me to conclude by congratulating once again the Directors of the Biopolitics International Organisation.

The Honorable **Ismet Sezgin** is Minister of Interior of Turkey. He graduated from the School of Economics and Commerce of Izmir. Being active in politics for several years with the Democratic Party, he was elected Mayor of Aydin province in 1955. In 1961 he was elected Member of Parliament with the Justice Party, of which he was Member of the Board, Member of the Administrative Board, General Accountant and finally Vice-President. He was President of the Planning and Budget Commission of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and served as Minister of Youth and Sports and Minister of Justice in successive Justice Party Governments. He took an active role in the foundation of the True Path Party, being a Member of the Administrative Board, elected Member of the Parliament and Minister of Interior in the new Turkish Government on 20th November, 1991. His publications include articles and books on finance and population growth.